

MERTHYR TYDFIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2006-2021

ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT
For the period
1st April 2015 – 31st March 2016

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Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	2
2.0	Policy performance.....	5
3.0	Policy assessments.....	7
4.0	Community infrastructure levy.....	64
5.0	Sustainability performance.....	65
6.0	Sustainability assessments.....	67
7.0	Conclusions and recommendations.....	87
	Appendix 1: Quick-reference to policy achievements...	91

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan 2006-2021 was formally adopted by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council on 25th May 2011.
- 1.2 Under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, all Councils have a duty to produce an LDP Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) which must be submitted to the Welsh Government at the end of October each year.
- 1.3 This report represents the fifth AMR of the Merthyr Tydfil LDP and is based on the period 1st April 2015 – 31st March 2016 with referrals to earlier parts of the plan period where indicators dictate this to be necessary. The Report has two primary roles – the first is to consider whether the policies identified in the monitoring framework are being implemented, and secondly, to consider whether the plan as a whole is working successfully.

The requirement for LDP monitoring

- 1.4 In order to monitor performance consistently, the plan needs to be considered against a standard set of monitoring targets and indicators. Chapter 6 of the LDP sets out the monitoring targets and indicators that will be used as a basis for this AMR and reflect the information that is required to be included by LDP Regulation 37. In this context, the AMR is required to:
 - Identify policies that are not being implemented, and for each such policy
 - identify reasons why the policy is not being implemented
 - identify steps that can be taken to enable the policy to be implemented
 - explore whether a revision to the plan is required.
 - Specify the housing land supply from the current Joint Housing Land Availability Study Report for that year, and for the full period since the adoption of the plan,
 - Specify the number of net additional affordable and general market dwellings built in the LPA area for that year, and for the full period since the adoption of the plan.
- 1.5 The LDP Manual Edition 2 (August 2015) supplements the above requirement by setting out additional factors that should be included in the AMR, namely:
 - Significant contextual change, including a review of the fortunes of any significant local industries, emerging national planning guidance or a significant planning application;
 - Sustainability monitoring related to the Strategic Environmental Assessment /Sustainability Appraisal (SEA/SA) report and integrated assessment process;
 - Strategy monitoring, to assess whether the plan is achieving its main objectives, and whether it is “on track” in terms of the level of implementation;
 - Policy monitoring, to highlight any policies which are not functioning effectively, and to highlight how such issues will be addressed;
 - The need for new Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) or further research and analysis; and

- Conclusions and recommendations, which identify any improvements/changes to key parts of the plan that would need to be considered in a future review and possible plan revision. (Paragraph 9.4.4)

Format and content of the Annual Monitoring Report

- 1.6 The AMR has been designed as far as possible to be a succinct and easily accessible document that can be used as a convenient point of reference to ascertain the Plan's performance over the period under review.
- 1.7 Inevitably, the monitoring process involves the collection and interpretation of significant amounts of data, but the Council considers that the inclusion of this more detailed information within the AMR would lead to the report being overly long and cumbersome to use. Content has therefore been restricted to the pertinent results.
- Sections 2 and 3 consider the extent to which each of the LDP's strategic objectives is being realised with reference to **policy performance** and relevant **policy assessments**. As part of this consideration, the report also examines any contextual changes that have occurred during the period under review.
 - Section 4 reports on the implementation of the **Community Infrastructure Levy** during the monitoring period.
 - Sections 5 and 6 consider **sustainability performance** through the **assessment of sustainability indicators** and outline the principal findings of monitoring against the indicators identified in the SEA/SA report, identifying the main effects and whether a review of the plan is necessary on sustainability grounds.
 - Section 7 contains the **conclusions** and **recommendations** with reference to the analysis made in the preceding sections.
 - **Appendix 1** sets out a quick-reference summary to policy achievements based on the template for the full monitoring framework included at Chapter 6 of the LDP Written Statement.

Policies considered to be failing

- 1.8 If policies are found to be failing, clear recommendations on what needs to be done to address these failings are identified as part of Section 3.
- 1.9 However, just because a policy reaches one (or more) of its trigger levels, it should not be assumed that the policy is necessarily failing. There may be extraneous circumstances that are causing the poor performance which the plan has no control over, or the policy may be failing in part due to over-achievement in other policy areas. It is the role of the AMR to consider whether the policy is failing or whether there are mitigating circumstances that could not be influenced by the Plan. Where it is found that the Monitoring Framework results are affected by factors outside the remit of the plan, amending the plan will have no effect and will not ensure the

implementation of policy as required by the Regulations. In these instances, the policy cannot be construed to be failing and will not be identified as such in its consideration in the AMR.

- 1.10 Furthermore, whilst there is a significant amount of statistical information gathered and used in monitoring, the information gained through this process must be balanced against a complete consideration of the policies and issues raised. It would be inappropriate for the statistical information to solely and directly dictate when policies, or the plan as a whole, require amendment. Such a literal and rigid assessment would fail to take account of the multitude and variety of factors that influence the performance of the plan. A more measured and considered approach, that takes account of these factors, whilst acknowledging the findings of the monitoring information, provides the best approach to ensure effective monitoring of the plan.

Future Monitoring

- 1.11 The monitoring process is dependent upon a wide range of statistical information that is sourced from both local authority and external sources. Whilst the Council can control information that it supplies, it is recognised there is a risk of change in respect of external data which lies beyond the control of the Local Planning Authority. Even minor changes to external data have the potential to render certain existing Indicators ineffective or obsolete. As a consequence, the Council envisages that the Monitoring Framework will inevitably evolve during the course of the plan period and each AMR will be used as a means of drawing attention to unavoidable change.

Review of the LDP

- 1.12 In May 2015, the Council commenced a full review of the adopted LDP which was informed by the findings of preceding AMRs, updates to the evidence base and ongoing surveys. The review process culminated with the production of a Review Report¹ which recommends the preparation of replacement LDP following the full revision procedure. This significant contextual change has influenced many of the policy and sustainability assessments, conclusions and recommendations made in sections 3, 6 and 7 of the AMR.

¹ The Review Report was approved by Full Council on 20th April 2016.

2.0 Policy Performance

- 2.1 This section considers the extent to which the LDP's strategy is being realised with reference to the performance of particular policies against the indicators, targets and triggers contained within the LDP monitoring framework. The structure of the section is as follows:

Strategic objective

- 2.2 This is the starting point for the monitoring process. The AMR replicates each of the 12 overarching LDP objectives from which the LDP policies flow.

Contextual changes

- 2.3 Before the performance of the policies is considered, it is important for the AMR to identify any significant contextual changes that have occurred since the LDP was prepared. Such changes are likely to be circumstantial in nature and will lie outside the remit of the Plan.
- 2.4 In identifying any relevant contextual changes, the AMR is able to consider the implications of each change and whether or not the performance of an individual policy is likely to have been affected.

Indicators

- 2.5 The LDP monitoring framework contains a variety of core and local indicators which will inform policy progress and achievement. The selection of these indicators has been guided by the need to identify output indicators which are able to measure quantifiable physical activities that are directly related to the implementation of LDP policies.
- 2.6 Several of the core indicators are either prescribed by LDP Regulation 37 or recommended by the LDP Manual for their ability to enable an assessment of the implementation of national policy. Further core indicators were identified on the basis of their ability to provide useful information on whether the delivery of the LDP strategy is progressing as anticipated.
- 2.7 The local indicators supplement the core indicators and have been selected based on the availability and quality of data and their relevance to the local area. Some local contextual indicators have also been included which cover key local characteristics against which LDP policies operate.

Targets

- 2.8 The policy indicators are associated with corresponding targets which provide a benchmark for measuring policy implementation. Given the length of the plan period, it is necessary to incorporate 'milestone' targets to determine whether the Plan is progressing towards meeting the overall strategy. The timeframe attributed to such targets primarily relates to the anticipated delivery of development. The Council will investigate any policy that fails to meet its target. The level of consideration given to

such policies within the AMR will depend on the reasons identified for the failure and the significance of the policy for the delivery of the overall plan strategy.

Triggers

- 2.9 Trigger levels have also been included for certain targets to ensure that any potential failings in policy implementation are identified at an early stage enabling an early review of the Plan if necessary. They will provide a clear indication of when policy targets are not being met, or insufficient progress is being made towards meeting them.

Analysis

- 2.10 Having set out the results of policy performance with reference to the indicators, targets and triggers of the LDP's monitoring framework, the AMR proceeds to provide an analysis of those results and includes the identification of any policies that have reached their trigger points. This analysis also considers whether those policies require amendment taking into account any mitigating circumstances.

Recommendations

- 2.11 Following the analysis of policy performance, appropriate recommendations are put forward including a statement of any actions that are required to be taken. For instance, certain policies may need adjusting or amendments to the plan may be required to secure successful implementation overall.

Overall findings for each strategic objective

- 2.12 Finally, for each strategic objective, an overall statement of performance is provided and a conclusion made on whether that particular objective is being achieved through the combination of policies identified.

Explanation of performance criteria

- 2.13 As a visual aid in monitoring the effectiveness of individual policies, and to provide a quick reference to collective policy performance, a colour coded assessment is included based on the criteria set out below. Colour coding in certain cells may be split to reflect the fact that performance against targets may sometimes differ from performance against trigger levels.

Targets / objectives are being achieved.	
Targets have not been achieved but there are no concerns over the implementation of policy / objectives.	
Targets have not been achieved with resulting concern over implementation of policy / objectives.	

3.0 Policy Assessments

- 3.1 The following pages set out the policy assessments with reference to the relevant strategic objectives.

Strategic Objective SO1: To capitalise on Merthyr's strategic position, further developing its role as the main commercial, service and employment centre in the Heads of the Valleys area by focusing development within the main Town of Merthyr Tydfil.

3.1.1 Contextual Changes

Retail

The report "Town Centres and Retail Dynamics: Towards a Revised Retail Planning Policy for Wales" (April 2014), which examined the effects of our current retail planning policies on town centres, found that Wales has a negative 'balance of trade' and pointed to the need to refresh parts of our existing retail planning policy. Following this, The Minister for Natural Resources agreed to review and update Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Chapter 10: Planning for Retail and Town Centres and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 4: Retailing and Town Centres so that they are in line with the Welsh Government's objective to enhance the vitality, attractiveness and viability of established centres as the most appropriate locations for retailing and other complementary functions.

Consultation on proposed changes to PPW Chapter 10 and TAN 4 took place between September and November 2015. The principal areas of change to Chapter 10 include revised objectives for retail planning policy including the need for flexibility in responding to market changes, a stronger emphasis on the need for LDP retail policies to be framed by a retail strategy and a requirement for LDPs to set-out a locally-derived hierarchy of centres. The proposed revision to TAN 4 is comprehensive and reflects and supports the guidance set out in the updated draft of PPW Chapter 10.

The proposed changes to national retail policy, if adopted by the Welsh Government, will result in the need to revise elements of retail policy within the LDP. This work will be undertaken as part of preparing a replacement LDP.

3.1.2 Policy Monitoring

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
BW1 AS1	Number of new homes built in the primary growth area	Between 1,890 and 2,110 net completions by April 2016	-	1,288 completions by the end of March 2016

Analysis

The data collected shows that 1,288 dwellings were built in the Primary Growth Area between the start of the plan period (2006) and the end of March 2016. In terms of spatial distribution across the County Borough, this figure, when compared to the number of dwellings built in the Secondary (323) and Other Growth Areas (45), indicates that the greatest proportion of dwellings has been built in the Primary Growth Area. The total number of completions is, however, significantly below the level required to meet the lower end of the target range of delivering at least 1,890 dwellings by April 2016.

The statutory four year review of the LDP was undertaken over the monitoring period and it has been found that the Plan's enhanced growth strategy which, amongst other things, requires ambitious levels of housing delivery, is not currently being delivered. While there are signs of improving economic conditions, there remains uncertainty over when delivery rates can reach the level necessary to meet the requirements of the Strategy. Consequently, it is considered that both the level and spatial distribution of growth needs to be reconsidered in order to establish whether the Strategy is the most appropriate for the delivery of future growth.

Recommendations

The LDP review has identified the need to prepare a replacement LDP following the full revision procedure. The latter will involve the reconsideration of both the level and spatial distribution of housing provision through the identification of strategic options for development up to 2031. The most appropriate strategic option will form the basis of the replacement LDP's preferred strategy.

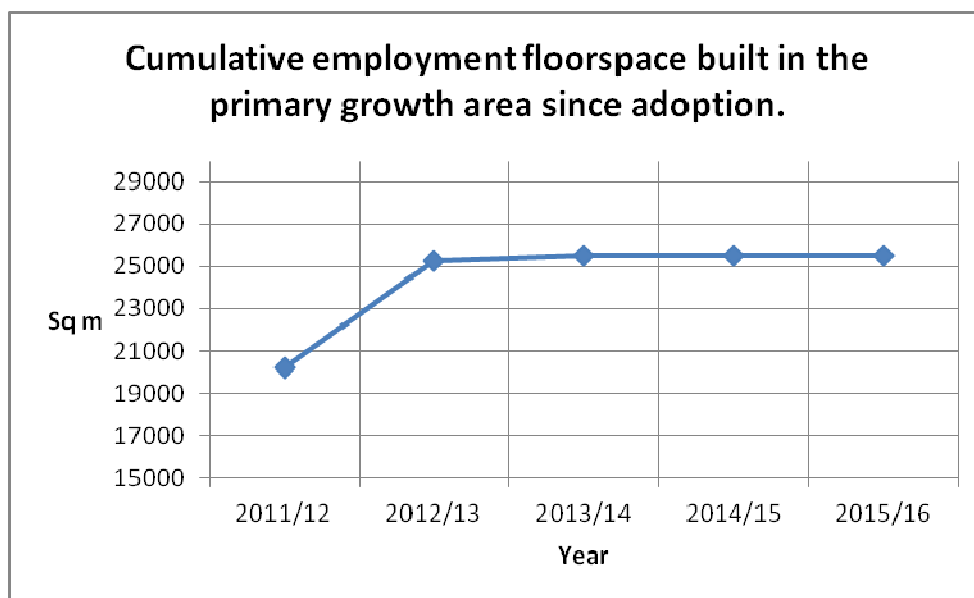
LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance	
BW1 AS14	New employment floor-space built in the primary growth area	Between 36,490 and 40,470 sq m net floor-space by April 2016	Greater than 14,700 sq m per annum or less than 1,834 sq m per annum for 2 consecutive years.	Current figure at end of March 2016 is 25,494 sq m	0 sq m of floor-space delivered during 2015/2016

Analysis

The monitoring framework contains a performance indicator which relates to Policies BW1 and AS14, namely a net target for employment floor-space built in the Primary Growth Area by April 2016, and a trigger level figure.

As reported in the first AMR, the target indicator for the delivery of new employment floor-space up to April 2011 (the end of the first phase of the plan) has been met. Whilst progress has been made towards meeting the employment floor-space target for 2016, there has been a significant slowdown in amount of employment floor-space delivered over the last three monitoring periods, with only 206 sq m delivered during 2013-2014 and 0 sq m delivered during both 2014-15 and 2015-2016 (see Graph 1 below which shows the cumulative floor-space built in the Primary Growth Area since LDP adoption).

As a consequence, the cumulative amount of employment floor-space delivered remains at 25,494 sq m and the trigger level continues to be reached as the amount of employment floor-space delivered has been less than 1,834 sq m for three consecutive annual monitoring periods. The employment floor-space target for April 2016 (between 36,490 and 40,470 sq m) will not be met, reflecting the fact that employment allocations E8 (Car Park, Hoover Factory), E6 (Rhydycar) and E4 (Goatmill Road) have not been delivered by 2016 as anticipated in Appendix 5 of the LDP. It is therefore increasingly unlikely that the longer term target for 2021 (at least 110,080 sq m) will be met. It should also be noted that part of the allocation E5 (Ffos-y-Fran) is to be used for sustainable drainage as part of the approved restoration strategy for the land reclamation site.



Graph 1

Recommendations

The reduction in the amount of new employment floor-space delivered over the last three monitoring periods means that future delivery requirements will increase, and in turn, will be more difficult to achieve. Consequently, there is now less certainty over whether the employment floor-space targets for 2021 will be met.

Further analysis of the employment market, including site delivery and market requirements, will need to be undertaken through the preparation of the replacement LDP. In doing so, there will be an opportunity to reconsider the LDP's strategy, policies and allocations in respect of employment.

Notwithstanding the above, further efforts need to be made to raise awareness of available sites within the County Borough and to promote Merthyr Tydfil as a suitable location for employment. More detailed recommendations on the marketing of employment sites can be found in the policy assessment section of Strategic Objective S07, which relates specifically to economic development.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
AS18 AS20	New retail floor-space built in the town centre (sq m)	Approximately 1,460 sq m net floor-space by the end of 2016	No application registered by the end of 2014	No retail application registered by the end of the March 2016

Analysis

The monitoring framework contains a core performance indicator which relates to Policies AS18 and AS20, namely, a net target retail floor space figure for the Town Centre by the end of 2016, and a trigger level figure by the end of 2014. Meeting this target primarily depends on the delivery of the Central Bus Station allocation (R1).

In order to enable the early identification of any potential failings in the aforementioned retail policies, a trigger level was set requiring the registration of a planning application by the end of 2014. The AMR of 2014-2015 highlighted the fact the trigger level had been hit and indicated that the retail allocation on the Central Bus Station may not come forward as anticipated. This situation remains unchanged with no planning application being registered over the current monitoring period (2015-2016). Consequently, it is evident that the target of building 1,460 sq m of new retail floor-space in the Town Centre by the end of 2016 will not be met.

Notwithstanding this, the development of the Central Bus Station for retail is dependent on

the relocation of the bus station to Swan Street on the combined sites of the former Hollies Health Centre and the Central Police Station. In terms of progress, both community services have been relocated to other sites within the County Borough and both buildings have now been demolished. A planning application for the new 'Intermodal Transport Facility', which includes a small amount of ancillary retail floor-space, was also submitted and subsequently approved in February 2016 and July 2016 respectively. It is anticipated that the new 'Intermodal Transport Facility' will be completed in 2017/2018.

Even though the Central Bus Station is unlikely to be available for redevelopment until 2017/2018, there remains the prospect of new retail floor-space being delivered in the town centre by 2021. Therefore, although retail development will not have come forward within the timescale anticipated, it could reasonably be delivered within the remaining plan period.

Recommendations

To closely monitor the progress on delivering the new 'Intermodal Transport Facility', and to revisit Policies AS18 and AS20 as part of preparing a replacement LDP. The latter will need to take into account any changes to national retail policy and guidance, and future requirements for additional **convenience and comparison floor-space** up to 2031.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance	
AS18 AS19	<u>Local - Town Centre Health Checks</u> i) Total annual vacant floor space in Town Centre (Vacancy rate currently at 13% - Retail, Commercial and Leisure Capacity Study, 2009)	Vacancy rate to reduce to 9% (UK average 2009)	Vacancy rate increasing for 1 year or remaining static above target for 2 consecutive years	15.9%	Decreased (0.8%)
	ii) Percentage of A1 retail uses in primary shopping area	Maintain a percentage of at least 83%	Percentage less than 83%	81%	A1 units decreased by 1.3%

Analysis

The monitoring framework contains two indicators which provide an insight into the health of the town centre, namely the total amount of vacant floor-space in the town centre and the percentage of A1 retail uses in the primary shopping area.

In respect of the town centre vacancy rate, the current percentage of vacant units is 15.9%, which represents a decrease of 0.8% from the previous AMR; meaning that although this is above the **targets** rate, it does not hit the trigger level, which is favourable.

There is considerable variation between the UK and Welsh town centre vacancy rates. The British Retail Consortium reported that the UK town centre vacancy rate was 8.7% in January 2016, which is an improvement on the vacancy rate of 10.4% in January 2015. In Wales, it has similarly dropped from last year's rate of 15.5% in January 2015 to 13.7% in January 2016.

Although the monitoring target is based on the national figure, it is considered more appropriate to compare Merthyr Tydfil's vacancy rate with the Welsh figure given the closer similarity in economic circumstances. Therefore, although Merthyr Tydfil is 7.2% higher than the national average, in comparison to the Welsh average it is only 2.2% higher.

It should also be noted that the Townscape Heritage Initiative is underway in the town centre with several properties currently under renovation. As a result, it is anticipated the vacancy rate will fall further over the next monitoring period (2016/2017) as more buildings are brought back in to beneficial use. The Vibrant and Viable Places regeneration programme will also bring certain disused town centre buildings back in to use in the near future. Given these circumstances and the fact that the vacancy rate has reduced by 0.8% over the monitoring period, it is considered that the vacancy rate is less of a concern than it was in last year's AMR.

With regard to the percentage of A1 retail uses in the primary shopping area, the figure has dropped by a further 1.3% over the monitoring period to 81%. The percentage of A1 retail uses therefore continues to be below the target and associated trigger of less than 83%. The marginal decrease does, however, result from planning permissions for the change of use of two properties from A1 to other commercial uses which were deemed suitable in a town centre location. The planning permissions also ensured that otherwise vacant properties were brought back in to beneficial use and that the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the town centre was maintained. Policy AS19 is therefore considered to be functioning effectively.

Recommendations

The health of UK and Welsh economy undoubtedly continues to impact on the health of the town centre and, in particular, the failure to decrease the vacancy rates to the set target. The effectiveness of LDP Policies AS18 and AS19 are therefore difficult to fully quantify.

Whilst there remains concern over Merthyr Tydfil's town centre's vacancy rate continuing to be above the Welsh average, it is promising that it has begun to fall alongside the UK and Welsh average. It is, however, recognised that Merthyr Tydfil's town centre vacancy rates have fluctuated since adoption of the LDP and future monitoring is necessary in order to identify whether the aforementioned regeneration initiatives are having a beneficial effect and this downward trend in vacancy rates has been firmly established.

Although the percentage of A1 retail uses in the Primary Shopping Area has slipped further below the relevant trigger, the loss of two A1 retail units was justified in planning terms and there are currently no concerns over the effectiveness of LDP Policy AS19 at this point in time. However, if future monitoring identifies that a downward trend has been established, amendments may be required to this policy through the preparation of the replacement LDP.

3.1.3 Overall summary on policy performance and conclusion on whether the strategic objective is being achieved

For the purposes of this annual monitoring report, the level of achievement towards Strategic Objective SO1 is based on the performance of 6 separate LDP policies as outlined above.

It is clear that the level of development in the Primary Growth Area has been lower than expected, particularly in respect of the number of new homes being constructed. There are also concerns over the slowdown in the amount of new employment floor-space delivered over the last three monitoring periods. Consequently, it appears increasingly unlikely that the LDP's enhanced growth strategy will be delivered by 2021 and the review of the LDP has identified the need to reconsider the level and spatial distribution of growth in order to establish whether the current Strategy is the most appropriate for delivering future growth. The preparation of a replacement LDP will therefore need to consider both housing and employment provision through the identification of alternative strategic options for development up to 2031. A review of all undeveloped housing and employment allocations in the LDP will also be necessary to ensure that development on these sites remains viable and the allocations will be delivered over an extended plan period.

In terms of the town centre, new retail floor-space has not come forward as quickly as anticipated; however, progress is being made with the relocation of the central bus station and there remains a reasonable prospect of new retail development being delivered by 2021. Although it is of concern that town centre vacancy rates remain higher than the Welsh average, the fact that the rate has decreased over the monitoring period is positive and further monitoring is necessary in order to establish whether a downward trend has been established. In addition, despite the percentage of A1 retail uses in the primary shopping area dropping further below its target, future monitoring is necessary in order to identify whether a new trend has been established and whether policy amendments will be required.

It is therefore considered that this Strategic Objective is only partially being met and the issues identified above will need to be considered further as part of the preparation of the replacement LDP.

3.2 SO2: To focus appropriate levels of development within the County Borough's smaller valley communities to create affordable and attractive places to live with good access to jobs and services.

3.2.1 Contextual Changes

No significant contextual changes relating to this strategic objective have been introduced during the monitoring period.

3.2.2 Policy Monitoring

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
BW2 AS2	Number of new homes built in secondary growth area	Between 280 and 320 net completions by April 2016	-	323 completions by the end of March 2016
<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p>The monitoring data collated shows that 323 dwellings have been built in the Secondary Growth Area between the start of the plan period (2006) and the end of March 2016. This figure indicates that the Secondary Growth Area has met the LDP target in terms of housing delivery by April 2016. This is predominantly the result of completions taking place on H48 (adjacent to the Shingrig Estate, Trelewis) which is likely to contribute a similar volume of housing over the next several years.</p> <p>As a consequence, in terms of spatial distribution, the correct proportion of housing has been built in the Secondary Growth Area in comparison to the Primary and Other Growth Areas of the County Borough.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>This element of policy is being achieved, and as such, no action is required.</p>				

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
BW3 AS3	Number of new homes built in other growth areas.	Between 200 and 240 net completions by April 2016	-	45 completions by the end of March 2016

Analysis

The monitoring data collated shows that 45 dwellings have been built in the Other Growth Areas between the start of the plan period (2006) and the end of March 2016. This figure indicates that the target for dwelling completions in the Other Growth Areas by April 2016 has not been met.

The majority of completions in the Other Growth Areas will take place on Project Riverside, Merthyr Vale. The infrastructure works have been completed on the site, and a marketing exercise was undertaken earlier this year, with the disposal of the site being processed over summer 2016.

Whilst housing development on the site has not made any contribution to completion rates to date, it is considered that the 150 anticipated dwellings can be delivered on the site by 2021. It is therefore considered that achieving the longer term target of delivering 245 new dwellings by 2021 remains a reasonable possibility and a 'yellow' score has again been given accordingly.

Recommendations

Whilst the housing completion target for April 2016 will not be met for the Other Growth Areas, there is no immediate concern given the progress made on Project Riverside, including the completion of infrastructure works and the disposal of the site to a private developer. Anticipated housing development on this site, therefore, has the potential to meet the longer term target of delivering 245 new dwellings by 2021.

Close monitoring of Project Riverside should therefore continue in conjunction with the preparation of a replacement LDP where the appropriateness of the housing strategy, policies and allocations will be considered in more detail.

3.2.3 Overall summary on policy performance and conclusion on whether the strategic objective is being achieved

The level of achievement towards Strategic Objective SO2 is based on the performance of 4 separate LDP policies as outlined above.

The number of homes being constructed in the LDP's Secondary Growth Area indicates that the Plan's future aspirations have a realistic prospect of being realised in this part of the County Borough. Whilst there is also a realistic prospect of delivering the required number of houses in the Other Growth Areas in the longer term, this very much depends on the successful delivery of Project Riverside. On balance, it is considered that progress is being made towards achieving Strategic Objective 2, but it is essential that progress on the delivery of Project Riverside is closely monitored.

Notwithstanding the above, it must be recognised that the lower than required number of homes being constructed in the LDP's Primary Growth Area is inextricably linked to development within the Secondary and Other Growth Areas. The appropriateness of the LDP's housing strategy in terms of both levels of growth and spatial distribution will therefore need to be reconsidered as part of the preparation of a replacement LDP which will cover an extended plan period of up to 2031.

3.3 ***SO3: To promote regeneration through the use of suitable and appropriate brownfield land rather than greenfield sites.***

3.3.1 **Contextual Changes**

No significant contextual changes relating to this strategic objective have been introduced during the monitoring period.

3.3.2 **Policy Monitoring**

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
-	Amount of development permitted on previously developed land as a percentage of all development permitted (N.B. this would exclude householder applications and change of use from one non-residential use to another) (ha)	Maintain a percentage of at least 80% over the plan period	Less than 80% for 2 consecutive years	2015/16 – 26% permitted on previously developed land.

Analysis

The total amount of development permitted during the monitoring period was 26.25ha with 6.92 ha of this total area permitted on previously developed land. This equates to 26% of development being permitted on previously developed land.

This figure is significantly lower than the target of 80%; however, this year's data has been distorted due to the fact that planning permission was granted for a solar farm which resulted in 15 hectares of development on greenfield land. If this permission was not taken into account, the percentage of development permitted on previously developed land would be 62%, which is more in line with previous year's data.

Recommendations

Whilst this year's figure is considered to be anomalous and a no action is currently deemed necessary, it is important that this issue is closely monitored in order to ensure that the amount of development granted on previously developed land does not consistently fall below the 80% target.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
-	Amount of greenfield land lost as a result of inappropriate development on sites not allocated in the LDP	No land lost	1 or 2 developments permitted for 2 consecutive years, or, 3 or more developments permitted in 1 year	No greenfield land lost
<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p>During the monitoring period, no inappropriate developments were permitted which resulted in the loss of greenfield land on sites not allocated in the LDP.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>This element of policy is currently being achieved, and as such, no action is required.</p>				

3.3.3. Overall summary on policy performance and conclusion on whether the strategic objective is being achieved

The level of achievement towards Strategic Objective SO3 is based on compliance with the LDP's land-use strategy, particularly the Plan's spatial priorities and development allocations.

Overall it is considered that this strategic objective continues to be achieved, despite failing to meet the Plan's 80% target for the amount of development approved on previously developed land, for the following reasons. Firstly, the approved solar farm on 15 hectares of greenfield land is acceptable in land use terms and the site will be restored to its agricultural use at the end of the solar farm's operational life. Consequently, no greenfield land was lost as a result of inappropriate development over the monitoring period. Secondly, without the solar farm development, 62% of development was on brownfield rather than greenfield land, demonstrating that regeneration continues to be promoted through the regeneration of suitable brownfield land rather than greenfield sites.

Notwithstanding, it is recognised that a number of allocated housing and employment sites, which are classified as brownfield, have not come forward in the timescales anticipated. The preparation of a replacement LDP will therefore involve the review of all undeveloped housing and employment allocations to ensure that development on these sites remains viable and the allocations will be delivered.

3.4 ***SO4: To support the principle of sustainability via an energy efficient land use/transport strategy.***

3.4.1 **Contextual Changes**

The Active Travel (Wales) 2013 Act, which came in to force in September 2014, aims to increase levels of walking and cycling by making them the most attractive option for shorter every day journeys. The Act requires local authorities in Wales to produce active travel maps and deliver year on year improvements to active travel routes and facilities.

A direction was issued to local highways authorities in Wales to prepare existing route maps, intended to inform the public of safe and suitable routes for active travel, by January 2016. Supported by Welsh Government funding, this entailed carrying out initial local data surveys based on a central data management system. Consultation took place on the Active Travel Existing Route Maps for the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough area between July and October 2015.

The 27 existing routes identified within Merthyr Tydfil were approved by the Welsh Government in April 2016 and work has now commenced on the preparation and production of an Integrated Network Map which will identify new active travel routes and facilities, as well as improvements to existing routes and facilities. Together they will contribute to the development and enhancement of an Integrated Active Travel Network, which will inform the preparation of the replacement LDP.

3.4.2 **Policy Monitoring**

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
BW4	Percentage of new residential development within 400 m of bus stop and 600 m of primary facilities including a shop and school	Maintain a percentage of at least 80% over the plan period	Less than 80% for 2 consecutive years	91%
<u>Analysis</u> Over the monitoring period, 33 new residential developments were granted planning permission with 91% located within close proximity to local facilities. It is therefore considered that Policy BW4 is functioning effectively, guiding new residential development to sustainable locations where local facilities can be accessed by foot or bicycle.				
<u>Recommendations</u> This element of policy is currently being achieved, and as such, no action is required.				

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
-	Percentage of new dwellings completed at:		More than 25% of new dwellings at less than 25 dph for 2 consecutive years	
	(1) less than 20 dph;	Approximately 12%		13%
	(2) 20 dph or greater and less than 25 dph;	Approximately 13%		3%
	(3) 25 dph or greater and less than 30 dph;	Approximately 25%		29%
	(4) 30 dph or greater and less than 50 dph; and	Approximately 48%		50%
	(5) 50 dph or greater	Approximately 2%		5%

Analysis

The figures collected for the monitoring period show that new dwellings were constructed broadly in line with the indicator's target. Moreover, it is anticipated that the majority of dwellings in the County Borough will be constructed at approximately 25 to 35 dwellings per hectare (dph) and this years' results also follow this trend.

The fact that nearly 80% of completions were between 25 and 35 dph is largely down to a significant proportion of dwellings being completed on the Redrow development in Trelewis, which has a density of just under 30 dph and two other developments at Marigold Close and Old School Close, which have a density of 33 dph and 34 dph respectively.

Recommendations

This element of policy is currently being achieved, and as such, no action is required.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance	
-	Percentage of allocated sites developed (ha)	Approximately 65% of allocations developed by the end of 2016	Less than 25% of phased delivery rate for 2 consecutive years (Trigger level 25% / approximately 4.5 ha)	Approximately 34% of allocations developed by March 2016	Delivered approximately 15% (2.65 ha)

Analysis

Over the monitoring period, approximately 2.65 ha of allocated development sites have been delivered, which is less than 25% of the phased delivery rate. When combined with the amount of previously developed first and second phase sites, this equates to 34% of allocated development sites developed by the end of the current monitoring period.

Whilst it is encouraging that allocated development sites continue to come forward, the anticipated phased delivery rate is not currently being met. The target is for approximately 65% of allocations to be delivered by the end of 2016, which is clearly no longer achievable.

The statutory **four year** review of the LDP was undertaken over the monitoring period and it has been found that the Plan's enhanced growth strategy is not currently being delivered. While there are signs of improving economic conditions, there remains uncertainty over when delivery rates can reach the level necessary to meet the requirements of the Strategy. As a consequence, it is considered that the 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 delivery future growth up to 2031.

Notwithstanding this, it should be noted that there are differences in the delivery of different types of development and accordingly, a brief overview is provided below.

In respect of community facilities, all health and education facilities have been delivered as anticipated.

In terms of housing, a further 2.65 ha of allocated housing sites has been developed over the monitoring period. This includes contributions from 4 LDP second phase allocated housing sites and 2 LDP first phase allocated housing sites that are being developed at a slower rate than anticipated. The delay in the delivery of housing sites is largely attributable to the economic downturn which has caused a contraction in the housing industry and a tendency for housing developers to focus on the more secure prime market opportunities in areas such as Cardiff and the M4 corridor.

In order to stimulate development on allocated housing sites, the Council is utilising funding from the Welsh Government's Vibrant and **Vibrant** Places regeneration programme to undertake survey work and secure planning permission on a number of selected sites. In doing so, it is anticipated that development costs will be reduced and developers will have more certainty with regard to the level of risk in developing allocated sites.

Notwithstanding this, there remains a need to review all undeveloped housing allocations in the LDP to ensure that development on these sites remains viable and the allocations will be delivered over an extended development plan period.

With regard to employment, no further development has occurred on allocated employment sites over the monitoring period. As a consequence, E6 (Rhydycar) continues to have approximately 1.78 hectares of land still to be delivered, while no development has begun on the LDP's second phase allocated employment sites, namely E4 (Goatmill Road) and E8 (Former Hoover car park).

In previous monitoring reports, recommendations were made in respect of encouraging and supporting the development of additional business units for small to medium sized enterprises. With regard to this, the Economic Development Department has continued to work towards the delivery of a new incubation facility for start-up businesses, which will have a similar function to the existing Orbit Centre. This facility will complement the existing Orbit Centre, which will refocus on high quality general office facilities to meet the needs of growing businesses.

Recommendations

The LDP review has identified the need to prepare a replacement LDP following the full revision procedure. The latter will need to reconsider both the level and spatial distribution of housing and employment provision through the identification of alternative strategic options. Consideration will also need to be given to the future need for community facilities as the Plan is rolled forward to 2031.

In the interim, funding from the Vibrant and Viable Places regeneration programme should continue to be used to stimulate development on housing sites, while the Council's Economic Development Section should continue to investigate opportunities for development on allocated employment sites and continue to focus on marketing and targeted funding.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
-	Percentage of total development permitted on allocated sites (ha)	Maintain a target of approximately 85% over the plan period	Less than 80% for 2 consecutive years	Approximately 8.5%

Analysis

Over the monitoring period, approximately 8.5% of the total development permitted was on allocated sites. This figure is significantly below the target of 85%, and the trigger level of less than 80% has not been met for four consecutive monitoring periods. Allocated development sites are evidently not coming forward as anticipated and while there are signs of improving economic conditions, there remains uncertainty over when delivery rates can reach the level necessary to meet the requirements of the Strategy.

The delayed delivery of allocated development sites is considered to be primarily the result of the economic downturn. Whilst the economy grew between 2013 and 2014 (provisional estimate of GVA in Wales is an increase of 2.4%), output from the construction sector still remains below the levels experienced at the pre-downturn peak in 2007 and there is little anecdotal evidence of any significant increase in local construction activity over the monitoring period.

The delivery of allocated development sites should improve as construction activity increases alongside economic growth, and the use of funding from the Welsh Government's Vibrant and Viable Places regeneration programme should also assist in stimulating development. However, it remains very unlikely that the LDP's enhanced growth strategy will be delivered by 2021 given the extent to which anticipated delivery timescales have already been missed.

Recommendations

To reconsider both the level and spatial distribution of housing and employment provision through the identification of alternative strategic options as part of the preparation of the replacement LDP.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
AS10	Highway network improvements (1) Aberfan – Merthyr Vale Link (T1)	Deliver by the end of 2011	-	Completed during 2015/2016
	(2) Pentwyn	Deliver by the	No planning	

	Road, Quakers Yard (T2)	end of 2021	application registered by the end of 2019	
	(3) Dualling of A472 at Fiddlers Elbow (T3)	Deliver by the end of 2021	No planning application registered by the end of 2019	
<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p>This highway network improvement (Golwg yr Afon), which is directly linked to the redevelopment of the former Merthyr Vale Colliery site (Project Riverside) was opened during this monitoring period.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>Continue to monitor the delivery of the remaining core high network improvements safeguarded by Policy AS10.</p>				

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
AS12	Remodelling of Merthyr Tydfil Central Bus Station	Deliver by the end of 2016	No application registered by the end of 2014	Application registered during monitoring period.
<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p>Merthyr Tydfil's central bus station is to be relocated to Swan Street on the combined sites of the former Hollies Health Centre and the Central Police Station. In terms of progress, both community services have been relocated to other sites within the County Borough and both buildings have now been demolished. A planning application for the new 'Intermodal Transport Facility', which includes a small amount of ancillary retail floor-space, was submitted and subsequently approved in February 2016 and July 2016 respectively. It is anticipated that the new 'Intermodal Transport Facility' will be completed in 2017/2018.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>To closely monitor the progress on delivering the new 'Intermodal Transport Facility', and to revisit Policy AS12 as part of the preparation of a replacement LDP.</p>				

3.4.3 Overall summary on policy performance and conclusion on whether the strategic objective is being achieved

For the purposes of this annual monitoring report, the level of achievement towards Strategic Objective SO4 is based on the performance of 2 separate LDP policies and compliance with the LDP's land-use strategy, particularly the Plan's spatial distribution of development allocations.

This objective is partially being achieved with both successes and areas of concern identified. In terms of the former, developments are continuing to come forward in sustainable locations where there is good access to local facilities and increased opportunity for using more sustainable modes of transport, such as walking and cycling. Housing density targets also continue to be met, reflecting a more efficient use of land resources. Finally, the Aberfan-Merthyr Vale link road (Golwg yr Afon) has been delivered, improving the efficiency of the local transport network and facilitating redevelopment of the former Merthyr Vale Colliery site (Project Riverside).

The continued failure to meet targets relating to the delivery of allocated development sites remains an area of concern, particularly given that it is becoming increasingly unlikely that the LDP's strategy will be delivered by 2021. Whilst improving economic conditions and progress in the implementation of the Vibrant and Viable Places regeneration programme are steps in the right direction, it is evident that the level and spatial distribution of growth needs to be reconsidered as part of the preparation of a replacement LDP. A review of all undeveloped housing and employment allocations in the LDP will also be necessary to ensure that development on these sites remains viable and the allocations will be delivered over an extended plan period of up to 2031.

3.5 SO5: To manage natural resources wisely avoiding irreversible damage in order to maintain and enhance their value for future generations.

3.5.1 Contextual Changes

Minerals

Planning permission was granted on 9th December 2015 for the consolidation of two existing planning permissions for quarrying at Gelligaer Quarry, including an extension to the end date for quarrying and the deepening of the quarry within the existing footprint. The winning and working of minerals and the deposit of mineral waste is now permitted up to 2076 and the reserve at the quarry as a result of the permission has increased to 18.5 million tonnes of high specification pennant sandstone.

3.5.2 Policy Monitoring

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance	
BW10	The tonnage (Mt) of primary land-won aggregates produced in accordance with the Regional Technical Statement for Aggregates	Minimum of 4.92 Mt produced by the end of 2016 (N.B. targets are based on joint production with Brecon Beacons National Park)	Less than 0.82 Mt per annum for 2 consecutive years	Circa 3.5 Mt of primary aggregates jointly produced since 2011	Circa 0.58 Mt of primary aggregates jointly produced in 2015
	Aggregates land bank	Minimum 10 year land bank maintained throughout the plan period	Land bank falling below target	Adequate current land bank	

Analysis

The monitoring framework contains two indicators which relate to Policy BW10, namely the annual production of aggregates and maintenance of a minimum 10 year land bank. Each indicator is considered separately below.

With regard to the tonnage of primary land-won aggregates produced, the combined aggregates production for Merthyr Tydfil and Brecon Beacons National Park was approximately 0.58 Mt in 2015. When combined with the amount of primary aggregates jointly produced since 2011, the cumulative total is approximately 3.5 Mt, which is below the anticipated level of aggregate production set out in the RTS 1st Review (2014). The trigger

level of less than 0.82 Mt per annum for 2 consecutive years also continues to be hit.

Aggregate production is directly influenced by aggregate use or demand. The constrained economic climate and suppressed levels of activity in the building and construction industry has resulted in relatively low levels of crushed rock sales within the South Wales region, reflecting a weak demand. The South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party Annual Reports continue to show this trend and it is considered that the failure to produce the expected amount of aggregates in 2015 is a result of economic conditions and that there are no policy constraints impeding the production of aggregates at the quarries within Merthyr Tydfil. On the contrary, the recent grant of planning permission at Gelligaer quarry affords a more effective development scheme that enables the deepening of the quarry to release an additional 16 million tonnes of high specification pennant sandstone.

In respect of the aggregates land bank, Merthyr Tydfil's land bank has increased as a result of the planning permission granted at Gelligaer Quarry and remains sufficient to maintain a minimum 10 year land bank throughout the plan period. It is considered that Policy BW10 is functioning effectively and that there are no policy constraints that would hinder future aggregates production.

Recommendations

This element of policy is currently being achieved, and as such, no action is required.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
BW8	Amount of development (by TAN 15 paragraph 5.1 development category) permitted in C1 and C2 floodplain areas not meeting all TAN 15 tests (paragraph 6.2 i-v)	No development permitted	1 or more developments permitted	No developments granted planning permission in C1 or C2 floodplain areas that do not meet all TAN 15 tests
	Developments incorporating sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS)	All developments to include SuDS where appropriate (N.B. Excludes developments that have not incorporated SuDS for environmental or practical reasons)	1 or 2 developments permitted without SuDS for 2 consecutive years, or, 3 or more developments permitted without SuDS in 1 year	All developments granted planning permission incorporate SuDS where appropriate

Analysis

The monitoring framework contains two indicators which seek to monitor separate elements of Policy BW8, namely reducing flood risk and securing the incorporation of sustainable drainage systems in new developments. Each element is considered separately below.

In respect of flood risk, 18 developments were granted planning permission in zone C over the monitoring period. In all instances, the developments were justified in their location and the consequences associated with flooding were acceptable. As no developments were permitted in zone C that did not meet TAN 15 tests, it is considered that Policy BW8 is functioning effectively in respect of this matter.

In terms of securing SuDS in new developments, no developments have been granted planning permission without incorporating SuDS into the design of the scheme unless there have been environmental or practical reasons for not doing so. As such, it is considered that Policy BW8 is also functioning effectively in respect of securing SuDS in new developments.

Recommendations

This element of policy is currently being achieved, and as such, no action is required.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
AS7	Amount of new licensed waste management facilities permitted	Between 1.1 and 3.2 hectares of B2 employment land developed for waste management facilities (N.B. New facilities will be delivered in partnership Rhondda Cynon Taf)	No new facilities granted planning permission by the end of 2012	One new multipurpose waste treatment facility granted planning permission over monitoring period
	Landfill capacity at Trecatti	To maintain spare capacity over the Plan period	Input at the maximum of 625,000 tpa for 3 consecutive years	Input below maximum in 2014.

Analysis

The monitoring framework contains two indicators which seek to monitor separate elements of Policy AS7, namely the delivery of waste management facilities on B2 employment sites

and the safeguarding of Trecatti landfill site for continued disposal of residual waste.

Whilst no further waste management facilities were granted planning permission on B2 employment sites over the monitoring period, a number of waste management facilities, including waste sorting and transfer facilities, have been granted planning permission in previous monitoring periods, demonstrating that B2 employment sites are meeting the needs of the waste management industry. In addition, a multipurpose waste treatment facility was granted planning permission on the southern part of Trecatti landfill site over the monitoring period. This open-air facility, which is more suited to a countryside location, will be used to treat both contaminated soils (30,000 tpa) and compost green waste (30,000 tpa) in open air windrows.

With regards to collaborative arrangements for the treatment of municipal waste, food waste and residual waste are now being processed at the Biogen anaerobic digestion treatment facility at Bryn Pica, Aberdare and the Viridor energy recovery facility at Cardiff respectively. Green waste is also being composted at Bryn Compost, Gelligaer.

In respect of the continued disposal of residual waste in Trecatti landfill site, the amount of waste inputted in 2014 was below the maximum of 625,000 tonnes per annum. Consequently, there are currently no concerns over maintaining space capacity during the Plan period.

Recommendations

This element of policy is currently being achieved, and as such, no action is required.

3.5.3 Overall summary on policy performance and conclusion on whether the strategic objective is being achieved

For the purposes of this annual monitoring report, the level of achievement towards Strategic Objective SO5 is based on the performance of 3 separate LDP policies, relating to minerals, waste and the water environment.

Targets relating to waste and the water environment have been achieved and the associated policies are considered to be functioning effectively. Whilst the tonnage of land-won aggregates produced in Merthyr Tydfil and Brecon Beacons National Park have failed to meet the target during the monitoring period, it is considered that this reflects the relatively low level of demand in the building and construction industry, rather than policy constraints. It is therefore considered that Strategic Objective SO5 is currently being achieved.

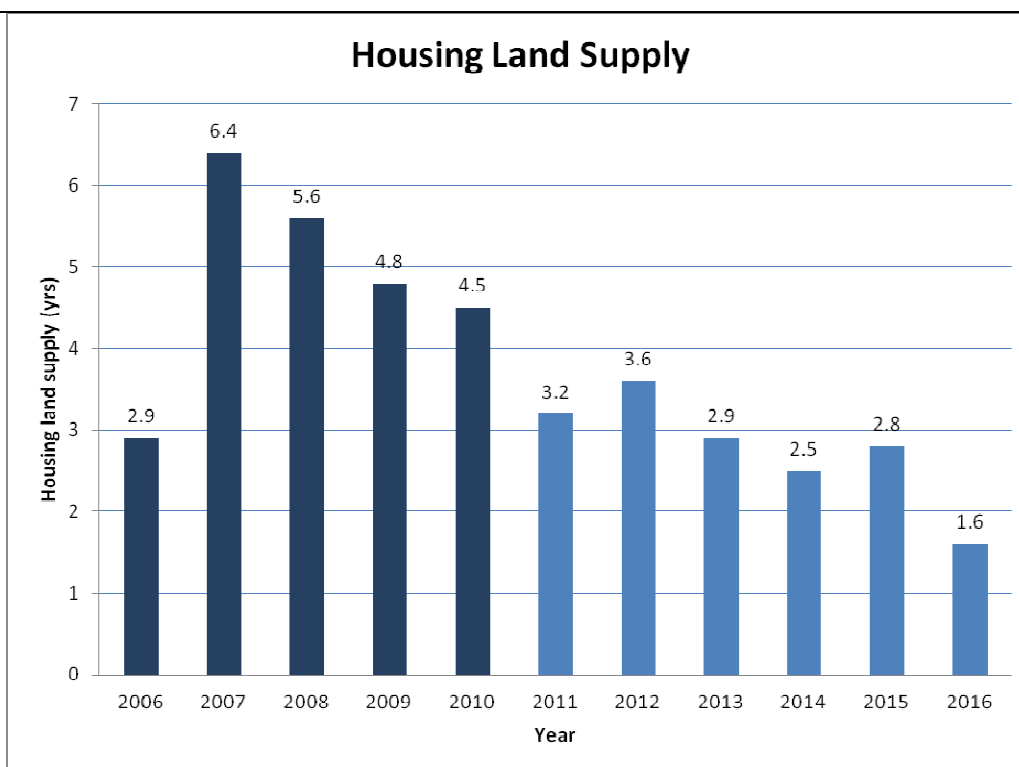
- 3.6. ***SO6: To provide a range of dwelling sizes and types, including affordable and special needs housing, which support the needs of the local community, attract new inhabitants to the area and create mixed and socially inclusive communities.***

3.6.1 Contextual Changes

No significant contextual changes relating to this strategic objective have been introduced during the monitoring period.

3.6.2 Policy Monitoring

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
-	Housing Land Supply	Maintain a minimum of 5 years supply (ha)	Less than a 5 year supply for 1 year	1.6 years
<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p>Merthyr Tydfil's 5 year land supply is now calculated using the residual method rather than the past build rates method that was used prior to the adoption of the Local Development Plan.</p> <p>The 2016 Joint Housing Land Availability Study (JHLAS) has calculated a 1.6 years housing land supply, which is a decrease from 2.8 years calculated in 2015 (see Graph 2 below). This decrease reflects the fact that housing sites continue to be developed at a slower rate than anticipated, primarily due to the economic downturn which has caused a contraction in the housing industry and a tendency for housing developers to focus on more profitable housing market areas, such as Cardiff and the M4 corridor areas.</p>				



Graph 2

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 1 states that where there is a land supply below the 5 year requirement, local planning authorities must take steps to increase the supply of housing land. This may include steps such as releasing land in the Local Authority's ownership or securing infrastructure for particular sites.

During 2015/16, the Council secured the delivery of highway and flood infrastructure on Project Riverside, Aberfan and commenced a marketing exercise for the site. The Council has also completed all survey work on other sites under its ownership in order to give potential developers more certainty in regard to the level of risk on site; in turn increasing the attractiveness of these sites to housebuilders.

The Council is in the process of producing a portfolio of the sites to take to the market which will include the completed survey work and any other relevant documentation. There may also be scope for Vibrant and Viable Places (VVP) funding to contribute towards physical works on some sites, such as ground remediation or access improvements.

One of the key issues that still needs to be addressed in bringing the VVP regeneration programme forward, and delivering higher levels of housing, is that the majority of housing sites currently under the control of the Council are subject to 100% clawback to Welsh Government. In order to dispose of these sites, the Council require various permissions from Welsh Government. Some flexibility in terms of land receipts and associated issues may therefore be required from Welsh Government, if these sites are to be brought forward as soon as possible. Discussions with officers from Welsh Government have already taken place on these issues and will be ongoing as the sites progress.

Recommendations

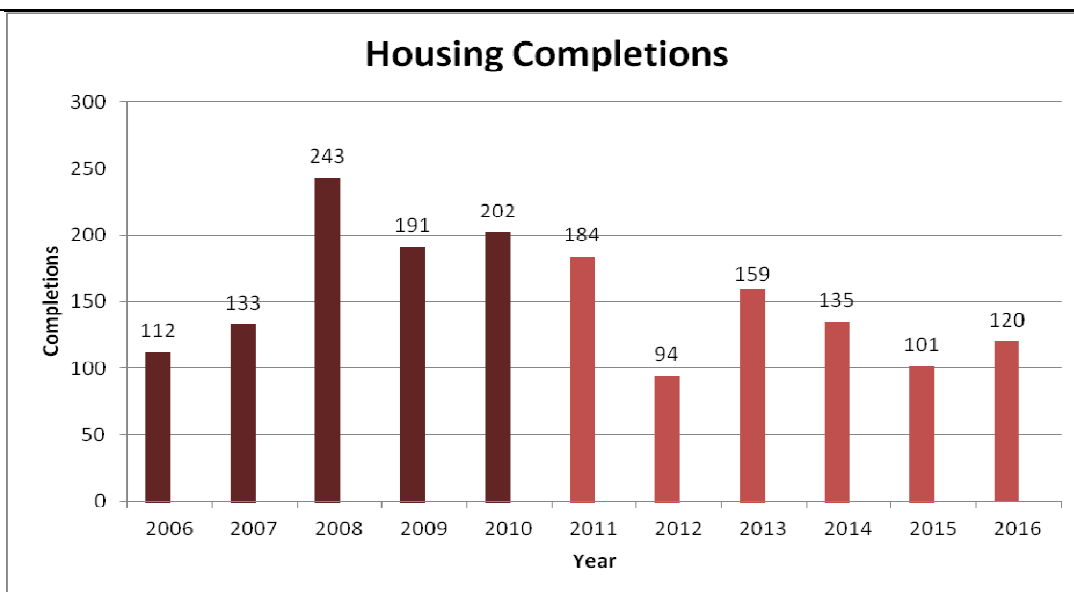
The level of housing delivery continues to be below that which is required to meet the adopted LDP's enhanced growth strategy and it remains highly unlikely that the housing strategy of the Plan can be met without changes being affected.

The LDP review has identified the need to prepare a replacement LDP following the full revision procedure. The latter will, amongst other things, involve the reconsideration of both the level and spatial distribution of housing provision through the identification of strategic options for development up to 2031. The most appropriate strategic option will form the basis of the replacement LDP's preferred strategy.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
	Number of all dwellings built	Between 2,400 and 2,720 net completions by April 2016	20% less or greater than LDP strategy build rate for 2 consecutive years	1,656 completions at end of March 2016

Analysis

Housing completions have been in general decline since 2008, reflecting the economic recession (see Graph 3). Over the monitoring period, the level of dwelling completions has increased slightly from 101 in 2014/2015 to 120 completions during 2015/16, which is a welcome improvement. The target of delivering at least 2,400 dwellings by April 2016 will not, however, be met and the dwelling completions per annum continues to be well below that which is required to fulfil the LDP's enhanced growth strategy. There are also currently no clear signs that house building activity will increase to the level required to meet the Strategy in the short term.



Graph 3

Recommendations

The level of housing delivery continues to be below that which is required to meet the adopted LDP's enhanced growth strategy and it remains highly unlikely that the housing strategy of the Plan can be met without changes being **affected**.

The LDP review has identified the need to prepare a replacement LDP following the full revision procedure. The latter will, amongst other things, involve the reconsideration of both the level and spatial distribution of housing provision through the identification of strategic options for development up to 2031. The most appropriate strategic option will form the basis of the replacement LDP's preferred strategy.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
-	Number of new general market dwellings built	Between 2,110 and 2,390 net completions by April 2016	20% less or greater than LDP strategy build rate for 2 consecutive years	1,328 completions by the end of March 2016 (79 during 2015/2016)

Analysis

The number of market dwelling completions has increased slightly from 75 during 2014/15 to 79 during 2015/16; however, it is evident that the target of delivering 2,110 general market dwellings by April 2016 will not be met and that the current level of house building is still well below the level required to meet the housing strategy of the LDP. Approximately 400 market dwellings would need to be built per year in order to meet the target of at least 3,330 completions by April 2021.

Recommendations

The level of market housing delivery continues to be below that which is required to meet the adopted LDP's enhanced growth strategy and it remains highly unlikely that the housing strategy of the Plan can be met without changes being **affected**.

The LDP review has identified the need to prepare a replacement LDP following the full revision procedure. The latter will, amongst other things, involve the reconsideration of both the level and spatial distribution of housing provision through the identification of strategic options for development up to 2031. The most appropriate strategic option will form the basis of the replacement LDP's preferred strategy.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
-	Number of affordable dwellings built	Between 225 and 255 net completions by April 2016	20% less or greater than LDP strategy build rate for 2 consecutive years	328 completions by end of March 2016 (41 during 2015/2016)

Analysis

The data collected shows that 328 affordable dwellings were completed in the County Borough by the end of March 2016. This indicates that there has been a higher level of affordable housing built than initially anticipated and has resulted in the indicator scoring 'yellow' as this is beyond the anticipated build rate of the LDP.

As the overall affordable housing target in the monitoring framework is "at least 350 net completions by 2021" and the most recent Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA, 2015) has identified a much higher need for affordable housing, the fact that there has been more affordable housing built than anticipated is not considered to be a matter for concern.

Recommendations

This element of policy is currently being over achieved, and as such, no action is required.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance	
AS22	Number of affordable dwellings secured as a planning obligation	Approximately 130 by April 2016	10% Area: delivering less than 7.5% or more than 12.5% 5% Area: delivering less than 2.5% or more than 7.5%	43 dwellings by the end of March 2016	10% delivered
					N/A (No relevant housing applications granted planning permission over monitoring period)

Analysis

Over the monitoring period, a 10% on-site affordable housing contribution was secured on housing schemes at Rhydycar Leisure Village and Former Victoria House, Dowlais; 2 units were secured on each development. Financial contributions were also secured via a section 106 agreement on the Former Meals on Wheels building, Cefn Coed and at Maesynant, Grove Park. This was in-line with Policy AS22's affordable housing requirement for the Primary Growth Area and accordingly, has resulted in the indicator scoring 'green'.

It should also be noted that 100% affordable housing sites are progressing at the former Labour Exchange, Penydarren (24 units), Twyncarmel (10 units) and the former St Paul's and St Peter's Church, Abercanaid (13 units). As such, there remains a steady supply of affordable housing within the Primary Growth Area.

In terms of the Secondary and Other Growth Areas, no housing applications which require an on-site affordable housing contribution were granted planning permission over the monitoring period. Moreover, no financial contributions were secured on minor housing schemes due to concerns over development viability.

The overall target of securing 130 affordable dwellings as a planning obligation by April 2016 will not been met with only 43 dwellings secured to date. This low number is primarily due to the fact that a significant number of allocated housing sites have not come forward as anticipated; nevertheless, the preparation of a the replacement LDP will need to consider whether the affordable housing requirements of Policy AS22 remain appropriate, particularly in relation to the requirements of the most recent LHMA (2015) and the implementation of the community infrastructure levy in June 2014.

Recommendations

The low amount of affordable housing secured as a planning obligation needs to be considered in the context of the lower than anticipated levels of housing delivery to date, and will therefore need to be reconsidered as part of the preparation of the replacement LDP's strategy, policies and allocations in relation to housing. This process will also need to consider the significant increase in the affordable housing need within Merthyr Tydfil alongside viability factors.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
TB13	Number of affordable dwellings secured through affordable housing exceptions policy (Applies only to the Other Growth Areas)	Approximately 10 by April 2016	No planning application submitted by the end of 2014	No planning application submitted

Analysis

The affordable housing exceptions policy has a target to deliver 10 affordable dwellings by April 2016 and an associated trigger level of no planning application submitted by the end of 2014. No planning application was submitted by the end of March 2016 for an affordable housing development in a countryside location which meets the affordable housing needs of the Other Growth Areas, and as such, the indicator now scores 'red'.

With no application submitted, no affordable dwellings have been secured on a rural exceptions site. This is matter of concern as the number of affordable houses delivered in the Other Growth Areas is below the requirement, despite the overall target for the County Borough in 2016 already being met.

Recommendations

The low amount of affordable housing secured in the Other Growth Areas needs to be considered in the context of the low levels of housing delivery experienced to date, and will therefore need to be reconsidered as part of the preparation of the replacement LDP's strategy, policies and allocations in relation to housing. This process will also need to consider the significant increase in the affordable housing need within Merthyr Tydfil alongside viability factors.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
AS22	Average house price (Baseline: Approximately £86,900 at 2010, amended in line with Land Registry Data to £73,153)	-	+/- 10% change from base level	£68,529 (6.6% below baseline)

Analysis

House prices have increased over the monitoring period with a rise of over £5,000. As a consequence, the average house price is 6.6% lower than the baseline data and results in the indicator scoring 'green'. Notwithstanding, the Council has already updated its LHMA which provides an up to date assessment of housing need and affordability within the County Borough.

Recommendations

The most recent LHMA, which was published in March 2015, provides the initial evidence in respect of housing need and affordability that should inform the preparation of the replacement LDP. It is also worth pointing out that the LHMA will now be revised by the Council every 2 years in line with Welsh Government requirements.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
-	Average income (gross weekly pay) (Baseline: Approximately £380 at 2009, amended in line with NOMIS data to £392)	-	+/- 10% change from base level	£426.20 (8.6% above baseline)

Analysis

Average income has fallen from £434.50 to £426.20 between 2014/15 and 2015/16. In doing so, average income is 8.6% above the baseline which results in the indicator scoring a 'green'.

Recommendations

The most recent LHMA, which was published in March 2015, provides the initial evidence in respect of housing need and affordability that should inform the preparation of the replacement LDP. It is also worth pointing out that the LHMA will now be revised by the Council every 2 years in line with Welsh Government requirements.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
	Vacancy rates of existing housing stock (Baseline: 6% at 2010)	--	Vacancy rate increasing for 1 year or remaining static for 2 consecutive years	4.5%

Analysis

The vacancy rate has remained static this monitoring period at 4.5%. The fact that there has been no change in this indicator could be seen as a reflection of a housing market in the County Borough that is, at present, in a slow period where there is limited activity.

Grant funding through the Townscape Heritage Initiative and the Vibrant and Viable Places regeneration programme will, however, continue to bring vacant residential buildings, particularly upper floor flats in the town centre, back into beneficial use in the near future and improvements to the vacancy rate are anticipated over the next monitoring period.

Recommendations

No action required at present.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
-	Percentage of relevant planning applications complying with Affordable Housing SPG	All (Post SPG adoption)	-	All relevant applications complying with SPG.
<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p>All relevant applications have complied with the Affordable Housing SPG over the monitoring period.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>No action required at present other than continuing to maintain accurate records of all planning applications where there is an identified requirement for affordable housing.</p>				

3.6.3 Overall summary on policy performance and conclusion on whether the strategic objective is being achieved

For the purposes of this annual monitoring report, the level of achievement towards Strategic Objective SO6 is based on the performance of housing related LDP policies, Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing, and compliance with the LDP's land use strategy, particularly the Plan's spatial distribution of development allocations.

The failure to achieve a 5 year housing land supply and the low number of dwelling completions, particularly general market dwellings, continues to be a concern. The adopted LDP is based on an enhanced growth strategy which, amongst other things, requires ambitious levels of housing delivery. The level of housing delivery over the plan period to date has been much lower than anticipated and accordingly, the housing target of delivering at least 2,400 dwellings by 2016 will not be met. It also appears highly unlikely that the housing target of delivering at least 3,800 dwellings by 2021 will be achieved as this would require approximately 400 dwellings per annum for the remainder of the plan period.

The delivery of affordable dwellings has exceeded the target for 2016, although the number of affordable dwellings secured through planning obligations has been lower than anticipated. The latter is considered to reflect the fact that a significant number of allocated housing sites have not come forward as anticipated.

For these reasons, it is considered that Strategic Objective SO6 is only partially being achieved. The statutory review of the LDP has found that whilst there are signs of

improving economic conditions, there remains uncertainty 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. The preparation of a replacement LDP will therefore need to reconsider the level and spatial distribution of housing through the identification of alternative strategic options for future development up to 2031. A review of all undeveloped housing allocations in the LDP will also be necessary to ensure that development on these sites remains viable and the allocations will be delivered over an extended plan period.

3.7 S07: To improve and diversify the economy, safeguarding existing jobs and creating a range of new job opportunities in a sustainable manner.

3.7.1 Contextual Changes

No significant contextual changes relating to this strategic objective have occurred during the monitoring period.

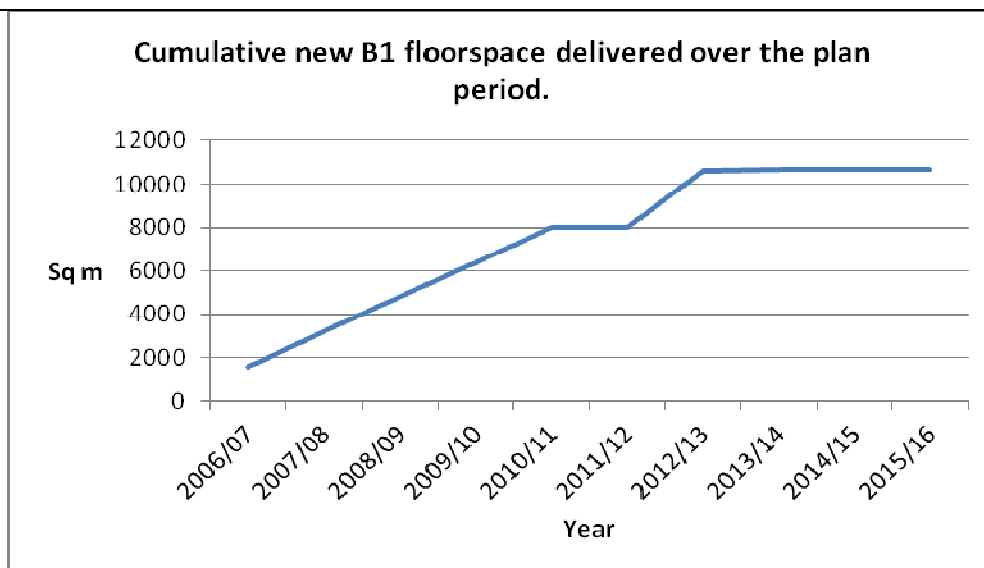
3.7.2 Policy Monitoring

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance	
BW14 AS14 AS24	New B1 floor-space delivered	Between 28,500 and 30,790 sq m net floor-space delivered by April 2016 At least 53,400 sq m net floor-space by April 2021	Greater than 7,120 sq m per annum or less than 890 sq m per annum for 2 consecutive years	10,661 sq m delivered by the end of March 2016	0 sq m delivered 2015/2016 0 sq m delivered 2014/2015

Analysis

The overall delivery of new B1 floor-space remains low with no new floor-space delivered over the monitoring period. The cumulative amount of new B1 floor-space delivered since the start of the plan period (2006) therefore remains at 10,661 sq m (see Graph 4) and it is evident that the target of delivering between 28,500 – 30,790 sq m of B1 floor-space by April 2016 will not be met. This reflects the fact that part of allocation E6 (Rhydycar) and the whole of allocation E8 (Car Park, Hoover Factory), which were anticipated to be delivered by 2011 and 2016 respectively, have not been developed.

In addition, the amount of B1 floor-space delivered is below the minimum requirement (890 sq m) for the third consecutive year and as such, the trigger level is met and a 'red' score has been given.



Graph 4

The delivery of a significant amount of B1 floor-space in the short term appears unlikely given that planning permission was granted for just five, primarily small scale B1 related developments over the monitoring period. One major office development (approximately 1,450 sq m) was approved relating to the relocation of Merthyr Valley Homes to the Gellideg Estate; however, even with this major office development, it appears unlikely that the longer term target for 2021 (53,400 sq m) will be met.

Recommendations

The following should be considered to increase the delivery rate of B1 floor space in future:

- **Improved Marketing** – Market awareness of Merthyr Tydfil's available employment sites/units remains low but steps are being taken to improve the situation. The Goatmill Road employment site (LDP allocation E4) which involves approximately 10 hectares of land suitable for B1, B2 and B8 uses has been marketed, and the *Invest in Merthyr Tydfil* website continues to be developed which will advertise vacant business properties and land within the area of Merthyr Tydfil. It is essential that such actions continue to be progressed and further efforts are made to raise awareness of available employment sites within the County Borough and to promote Merthyr Tydfil as a suitable location for employment.
- **Provision of further B1 office incubation space** – The Orbit Centre at Rhydyar was built to foster smaller, start-up businesses and provides varying size B1 office space for companies to rent in the initial years of their business development. The intention is for these companies to grow and eventually move to larger premises within the County Borough. The Orbit Centre continues to provide excellent facilities for start-up and existing businesses and the occupation rate remains high.

The Economic Development Department has been working towards the delivery of a new incubation facility for start-up businesses, which will have a similar function to the existing Orbit Centre. This facility will complement the existing Orbit Centre, which will refocus on high quality general office facilities to meet the needs of growing businesses.

Scoping work has previously been undertaken for the creation of the enterprise centre within Cyfarthfa Castle and an initial stage 1 Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) application has been unsuccessful. While the intention is to re-submit the HLF application, the options for the future use of Cyfarthfa Castle are currently being reconsidered.

- Development of an economic development evidence base – Work will commence on developing an economic development evidence base to inform the preparation of the replacement LDP. This will provide an opportunity to review the existing B1 allocations and ensure that the level of provision remains in sync with the needs of the employment market.

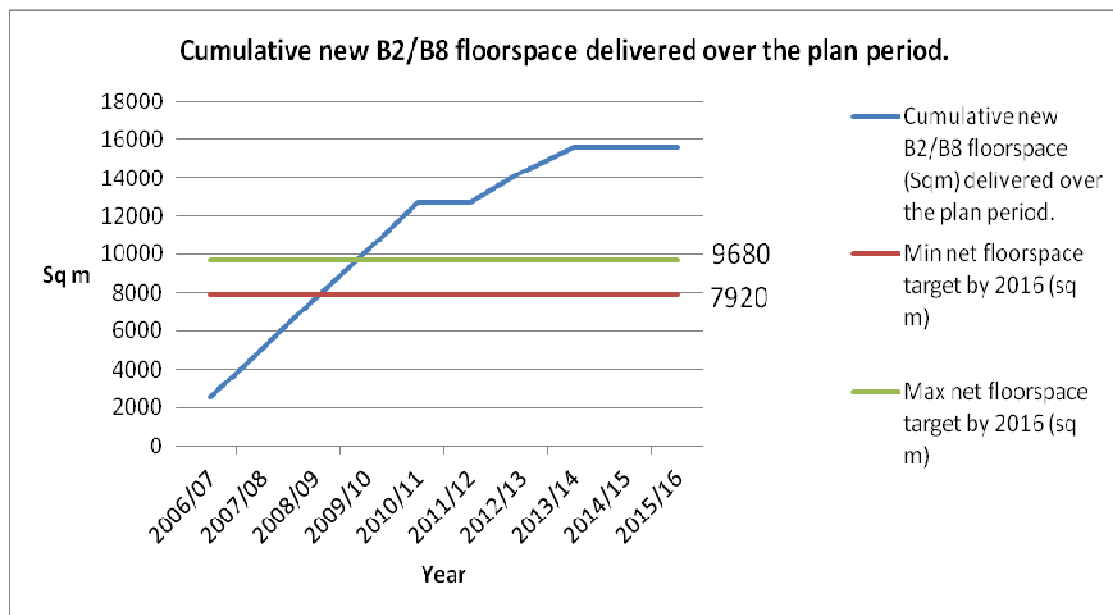
LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance	
BW14 AS14 AS24	New B2/B8 floor-space delivered	Between 7,920 and 9,680 sq m net floor-space delivered by April 2016 At least 56,500 sq m net floor-space by April 2021	Greater than 7,540 sq m per annum or less than 940 sq m per annum for 2 consecutive years.	15,601 sq m delivered by the end of March 2016	0 sq m delivered 2015/2016 0 sq m delivered 2014/2015

Analysis

This performance indicator contains 2 elements, namely a target floor-space figure by 2016, and an associated trigger level figure. Detailed analysis of the relevant data shows these elements to be performing differently; the performance of each is considered below.

No new B2/B8 floor-space was delivered over the monitoring period (April 2015 – March 2016); nevertheless, the amount of B2/B8 floor-space previously delivered (15,601 sq m) has already exceeded the 2016 target of between 7,920 and 9,680 sq m (see Graph 5). In addition, a further 835 sq m of B2/B8 floor-space is anticipated to come forward in the short term, reflecting the four planning permissions granted for B2/B8 related development over

the monitoring period. The amount of B2/B8 floor-space delivered is, however, below the minimum requirement (940 sq m) for the second consecutive year and the trigger level has now been met with a 'red' score given.



Graph 5

As per the previous AMR, the data collected shows that the employment land delivered has been on existing business / employment sites, often as extensions to existing buildings which meets the needs of the current market. Whilst such developments have exceeded current B2/B8 floor-space targets, it must be recognised that meeting the longer term target of delivering at least 56,500 sq m of B2/B8 floor-space by 2021 remains a significant challenge and the lack of activity and progress on developing allocated employment sites needs to be closely monitored. These allocations are primarily large sites aimed at single, large employers, and with their associated infrastructure costs, may only prove to be more attractive when market conditions improve and/or when **specialists users** are found.

Recommendations

The following should be considered in order to successfully deliver B2/B8 floor-space in future:

- **Improved Marketing** – Market awareness of Merthyr Tydfil's available employment sites/units remains low but steps are being taken to improve the situation. The Goatmill Road employment site (LDP allocation E4) which involves approximately 10 hectares of land suitable for B1, B2 and B8 uses has been marketed, and the *Invest in Merthyr Tydfil* website continues to be developed which will advertise vacant business properties and land within the area of Merthyr Tydfil. It is essential that such actions continue to be progressed and further efforts are made to raise awareness of available employment sites within the County Borough and to promote Merthyr Tydfil

as a suitable location for employment.

- Development of an economic development evidence base – Work will commence on developing an economic development evidence base to inform the preparation of the replacement LDP. This will provide an opportunity to review the existing B2/B8 allocations and ensure that the level of provision remains in sync with the needs of the employment market.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance	
BW14 AS14 AS24	Minimum number of net additional jobs delivered (B class uses only)	Between 1,800 and 1,980 jobs delivered by April 2016	Greater than 592 jobs per annum or less than 74 jobs per annum for 2 consecutive years.	1819 jobs delivered by the end of March 2016	492.5 jobs delivered 2015/2016

Analysis

This performance indicator contains 2 elements, namely a target jobs figure by 2016 and an associated trigger level figure. Detailed analysis of the relevant data shows these elements to be performing similarly with each being considered further below.

Over the monitoring period, 492.5 jobs were delivered with General Dynamics a significant contributor. This figure is at the higher end of the range for the anticipated number of jobs to be delivered per annum and accordingly a 'green' score is given. Moreover, the cumulative jobs delivered since the start of the monitoring period (2006) has increased to 1,819 jobs which meets the target of delivering between 1,800 – 1,980 jobs by 2016.

Recommendations

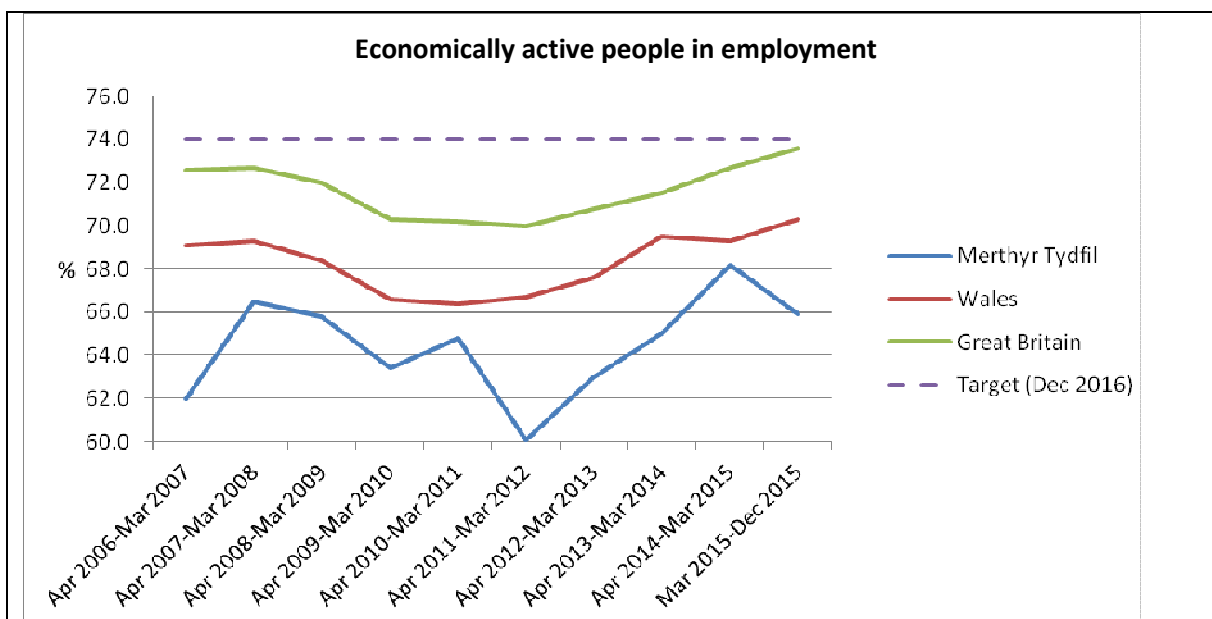
The additional jobs target has been met, and as such, no action is required.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
AS24	Developments granted planning permission that result in a loss of employment land within employment sites protected under Policy AS24	No loss of employment land on protected employment sites except where justified within the terms of the policy	1 or 2 developments granted planning permission for 2 consecutive years, or, 3 or more developments granted planning permission in 1	No unjustified loss of employment land

			year	
<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p>Within this monitoring period, four planning applications were approved for developments which resulted in the loss of employment land on protected employment sites. These related to a revised scheme for the erection of a 20MW embedded power plant and the erection of a gas meter kiosk at Plot 2, Pengarnddu Industrial Estate; a change of use of land to a car sales office and valet centre on land adjacent to Jack Matthews Garage, and a change of use of land and siting of a mobile catering unit, both at Pant Industrial Estate. All developments were justified in accordance with LDP Policy AS24 and the associated policy clarification note. The latter is proving invaluable in providing decision-makers with further clarity on the evidence that is required to be submitted as part of any change of use application that would result in the loss of protected employment land/ units.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>This element of policy is currently being achieved, and as such, no action is required.</p>				

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance	
AS14 AS24	Percentage of economically active people in employment (Baseline: 64% at 2009)	Approximately 74% by the end of 2016	Reduction of 5% or failure to increase for 2 consecutive years.	65.9%	Decrease of 2.3% from last year

<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p>The percentage of economically active people in employment is highly dependent on external factors such as the current economic climate. Over the monitoring period, the proportion of economically active people in employment was 65.9%, which represents a decrease of 2.3% compared with the level reported in the 2014-2015 AMR of 68.2%.</p> <p>Although the 2011 target of 67% was met, the recent decline means that it is unlikely that the 2016 target of 74% will be met and accordingly, a 'red' score has been given. It is also worth noting that the percentage of economically active people in Merthyr Tydfil is now moving away from the average figures for Wales (70.3%) and Great Britain (73.6%) which have both seen improvement over the current monitoring period. (See Graph 6).</p>					
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Graph 6

ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 20 April 2016]

The LDP's employment land requirements are, amongst other things, based on an assumption that, by 2021, Merthyr Tydfil achieves an employment growth that places 80% of economically active people in employment². As it appears increasingly unlikely that this target will be met, it is important that the Merthyr Tydfil employment land review is updated to ensure that the current employment allocations are appropriate to both deliver new employment floor-space to meet short term demand and provide for likely longer-term employment land requirements up to 2031.

Recommendation

The ability of the LDP to directly affect the percentage of economically active people is limited. Notwithstanding this, it is considered that the AMR's recommendations to help deliver improvements to employment floor-space provision elsewhere under Strategic Objective SO7 will assist in improving the situation across the County Borough.

In addition, Merthyr Tydfil's employment land review should be updated in order to inform the preparation of the replacement LDP.

² See Merthyr Tydfil CBC Employment Land Review, Roger Tym & Partners (July 2010).

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
BW14 AS14 AS24	Vacancy rates of existing employment buildings	Maintain vacancy rate within range of 5-10% of existing stock	+ or – 2.5% beyond range for 2 consecutive years	20%

Analysis

Data has been gathered to inform the economic development evidence base. Survey work includes the vacancy rates on each industrial / business park and a general assessment of the appearance / upkeep of each facility. Over the monitoring period, the overall vacancy rate for all 'B' use employment units on employment sites in the County Borough has been surveyed.

The table below simply looks at vacancy levels on employment sites, irrelevant of the use and size of the unit. Undeveloped plots are included as units. For the first time in an AMR, results for Cyfarthfa and EFI employment sites are included.

Over the monitoring period, the vacancy rate has increased to 20% which represents an increase beyond the acceptable range of +/- 2.5 for two consecutive years, resulting in a red score. Whilst further monitoring is considered necessary in order to identify whether a firm trend of increasing vacancy rates has been established, it is recognised that the vacancy rate is firmly outside the expected optimal market range of between 5-10% and further analysis is required through an update to Merthyr Tydfil's employment land review.

Site Name.	Total Units.	No. Vacant.	% Vacant.
Pant Ind. Est.	118	17	14
Pengarnddu Ind. Est.	15	1	7
Willows Ind. Est.	24	9	38
Merthyr Ind. Est.	69	17	25
Plymouth St. Arches.	14	9	64
Rhydycar Business Park.	5	1	20
Abercanaid Ind. Est.	7	2	29
Goatmill Rd. Ind. Est.	37	3	8
Triangle Business Park.	9	1	11
Cyfarthfa	13	5	38
EFI	16	1	6
Overall	327	66	20

Recommendations

Continue to monitor vacancy rates in order to establish whether the relatively high figure is temporary or more permanent in nature.

Update Merthyr Tydfil's employment land review in order to inform the preparation of the replacement LDP.

3.7.3 Overall summary on policy performance and conclusion on whether the strategic objective is being achieved

For the purposes of this annual monitoring report, the level of achievement towards Strategic Objective SO7 is based on the performance of 3 separate LDP policies and compliance with the LDP's land use strategy, particularly the Plan's spatial distribution of development allocations.

A shortfall in the delivery of B1 employment floor-space has been identified as a primary issue of concern within a number of AMR's, and the situation has not improved over the current monitoring period. Additional concern is arising from the reduced levels of B2/B8 floor-space delivery, the reduction in the percentage of economically active people in employment and the increase in vacancy rates of existing employment buildings.

On a more positive note, net additional job targets for 2016 have **been for met**, with an additional 492.5 jobs delivered over the monitoring period, and LDP Policy AS24 continues to function effectively in preventing the loss of protected employment land to inappropriate uses.

A variety of recommendations are set out above, but it is recognised that the LDP may be constrained in its ability to have a direct influence on current employment market conditions which are the main factor at play. Notwithstanding, the preparation of the replacement LDP, which will include an update to Merthyr Tydfil's employment land review, will allow for further analysis of the employment market, including a re-assessment of the requirements of business and industry in the area and consideration of any site delivery issues. In doing so, the appropriateness of the LDP's employment strategy, policies and allocations will be reconsidered to ensure that they meet the employment needs of the County and Borough and wider region up to 2031.

3.8 SO8: To promote social inclusion and ensure equality of opportunity through reducing the need to travel and providing better access by sustainable means to employment opportunities, community facilities and services.

3.8.1 Contextual Changes

No significant contextual changes relating to this strategic objective occurred during the monitoring period.

3.8.2 Policy Monitoring

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
BW15	Number of community facilities lost through change of use	No loss of viable community facilities below identified need (except where justified within the terms of the policy)	1 or 2 community facilities lost for 2 consecutive years, or, 3 or more community facilities lost in 1 year	No unjustified loss of a community facility

Analysis

Within this monitoring period, eight planning applications relating to seven schemes were approved for developments resulting in the loss, or partial loss, of a community facility. These related to the demolition of a former public toilet and replacement with houses in Trelewis; the conversion of Rock Chapel to flats; the change of use of public house to residential at The Railway Inn, Troedyrhiw; the change of use from Post Office (A1) to hot food takeaway (A3), High Street, Trelewis; the change of use of former bank to dwelling, Aberfan; the change of use of Mount Pleasant School (Use Class D1) to a bunk house; and Demolition of toilet block, near the Bowls Pavilion, Cyfarthfa Park.

All developments were justified in accordance with LDP Policy BW15 and the associated community facilities flow chart. The latter aids the consideration of planning applications involving the potential loss of community facilities, providing further clarity as to what constitutes a community facility and the evidence that will be required from applicants when a development proposal involves the loss of such a facility.

Recommendations

This element of policy is currently being achieved, and as such, no action is required.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
BW17 AS17	Amount of planning obligations secured on allocated housing developments	Secure contributions on 33 (67%) of the allocated housing developments	1 or 2 sites failing to secure planning obligations for 2 consecutive years, or, 3 or more sites failing to secure planning obligations in 1 year	No allocated sites failing to secure identified contributions

Analysis

Continuing to secure planning contributions on all identified sites is an important part of the LDP's strategy; however, negotiating obligations continues to be challenging owing to the unfavourable economic climate.

One allocated housing site, with an identified need for planning obligations, was granted planning permission over the monitoring period. This related to outline permission for residential development on allocated housing site H31 Rhydycar Leisure Village, which is located to the rear of Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Village, where affordable housing was secured by condition.

Recommendations

No action is required as this element of policy is currently being achieved. However, there are wider concerns over the delivery of the LDP's housing strategy (see recommendations under Strategic Objective 6).

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
BW17	Percentage of relevant planning applications complying with Planning Obligations SPG	All (Post SPG adoption)	-	All applications complying
<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p>All qualifying applications have been assessed against the relevant adopted SPG and were either found to comply or amended to comply.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>All qualifying applications received should continue to be assessed against the adopted SPG.</p>				

3.8.3 Overall summary on policy performance and conclusion on whether the strategic objective is being achieved

For the purposes of this annual monitoring report, the level of achievement towards Strategic Objective SO8 is based on the performance of 3 separate LDP policies as outlined above.

It is considered that this strategic objective is being achieved with community facilities being appropriately protected and planning obligations being secured as anticipated.

3.9 SO9: To promote health and wellbeing by providing accessible and varied opportunities for leisure and recreational activities.

3.9.1 Contextual Changes

A draft Merthyr Tydfil Open Space Strategy (OSS), which is based on a local assessment of need and an audit of existing open space, was placed on public consultation on 3rd March 2016 for a period of six weeks. The Strategy identifies 9 types of locally important open spaces, sets the standards for each type of open space and establishes the need for further open space provision. It is anticipated that the final version will be published in summer 2016.

It is evident from the draft OSS that there are shortfalls in a number of types of open space. The situation does, however, vary across the County Borough, with some wards having better open space provision than others. It is also clear that there is much variation between wards in terms of the type of open space provided. The findings of the OSS, in particular the need for additional open space, will therefore need to inform the preparation of open space related policies to be included within a replacement LDP.

Merthyr Tydfil's Single Integrated Plan (SIP) 2013 – 17 was revised and approved by the Merthyr Tydfil Local Service Board (LSB) in July 2014 and includes 'Healthy Lifestyles' as a priority outcome promoting the use of green spaces to increase the opportunities for adults and children to be physically active. The SIP will be replaced by a local well-being plan prepared by the new statutory Public Service Board (PSB).

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 became law in Wales in April 2015. The act strengthens existing governance arrangements for improving the well-being of Wales to ensure that present needs are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It comprises 7 well-being goals including '*A Healthier Wales - A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.*' It further places a duty on PSBs to prepare and publish local well-being plans setting out local objectives that will contribute to achieving the well-being goals within the area.

Whilst there are no immediate implications for the adopted LDP, the preparation of the replacement LDP will need to have regard to the land use implications of the forthcoming Merthyr Tydfil local well-being objectives and the Cwm Taf local well-being plan.

3.9.2 Policy Monitoring

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
BW16	Amount of public open space, including play space and informal recreational areas, lost to development (ha) which is not allocated in the development plan	No loss below identified need		0.0ha
<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p>Over the monitoring period, only 0.25 ha of protected open space has been lost. However, since this is located within an allocated site it is considered acceptable and outside the remit of the indicator.</p> <p>It is therefore considered that Policy BW16 continues to function as intended and there is no concern over its effectiveness.</p> <p>A contributing factor to the success of this policy is the on-going work towards publishing an OSS for Merthyr Tydfil. The ability to reference the emerging OSS over the past 12 months has continued to be useful to the planning policy team to help inform and interpret the policy. It has proved useful for both pre-application discussions and during the planning application process. The detailed analysis contained within the Strategy has helped provide a solid evidence base to support the raising of objections to proposals that would otherwise entail the loss of open space and also to fulfil the requirement to provide equivalent alternative provision nearby.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>This element of policy continues to function effectively, and as such, no action is required.</p>				

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
AS15	New leisure / recreational development ii) Parc Taf Bargoed	Deliver by the end of 2016	No planning application by the end of 2014	Developments delivered
<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p>Parc Taf Bargoed, which comprises 3 former colliery sites, has been transformed into community parkland. A number of leisure/recreational related developments have been completed since the LDP adoption, including 3 Parc Gateway Projects and an extension to the Parc Pavilion.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>Leisure/recreational related developments have been delivered, and as such, no action is required.</p>				

3.9.3 Overall summary on policy performance and conclusion on whether the strategic objective is being achieved

For the purposes of this annual monitoring report, the level of achievement towards Strategic Objective SO9 is based on the performance of 2 separate LDP policies as outlined above.

It is considered that this strategic objective is being achieved with public open space continuing to be adequately protected and leisure/recreational related developments coming forward at Parc Taf Bargoed. The latter also complements leisure/recreational developments delivered at Cyfarthfa Park, allowing Merthyr Tydfil to make a significant contribution to the Valleys Regional Park.

3.10 SO10: To ensure good quality design of new development and the creation of safer communities.

3.10.1 Contextual Changes

No significant contextual changes relating to this strategic objective have been introduced during the monitoring period.

3.10.2 Policy Monitoring

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
BW7	Percentage of relevant schemes incorporating “secured by design principles”	All major applications	-	All major applications granted planning permission incorporated “secured by design principles”
<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p>Over the monitoring period, all relevant major developments incorporated “secured by design principles”. It is therefore considered that Policy BW7 is functioning effectively in respect delivering safe built environments.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>This element of policy is currently being achieved, and as such, no action is required.</p>				

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
BW7	Percentage of planning applications complying with sustainable design SPG	All (post SPG adoption)	-	All relevant applications complying with SPG
<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p>All relevant applications have complied with the adopted sustainable design SPG, resulting in key elements of sustainable design being incorporated into new developments.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>This element of policy is currently being achieved, and as such, no action is required.</p>				

3.10.3 Overall summary on policy performance and conclusion on whether the strategic objective is being achieved

For the purposes of this annual monitoring report, the level of achievement towards Strategic Objective SO10 is based on the performance of a single LDP policy as outlined above.

Targets relating to the delivery of safe and sustainable developments have been achieved and the associated policy and supplementary planning guidance are considered to be functioning effectively. It is therefore considered that this strategic objective continues to be achieved.

3.11 *SO11: To ensure continued protection and enhancement of the natural, cultural, built and historic environment.*

3.11.1 Contextual Changes

The Historic Environment (Wales) Act which became law in March 2016 makes important changes to the two main UK laws that provide the legislative framework for the protection and management of the historic environment: the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Act gives more effective protection to listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments, improves the sustainable management of the historic environment and introduces greater transparency and accountability into decisions taken on the historic environment. In addition, Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales, 'The Historic Environment', has been revised to reflect the changes made by the new legislation and released for public consultation between March and June 2016.

The Environment (Wales) Act, which became law in March 2016, puts in place the legislation needed to plan and manage Wales' natural resources in a more proactive, sustainable and joined-up way. It includes provision to help tackle environmental challenges, set emission reduction targets, improve waste management processes and clarify regulations in relation to water, including flood risk management and land drainage.

In September 2014 the Minister for Natural Resources consulted on the 'Nature Recovery Plan for Wales,' which will be launched early in 2016. The plan aims to address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by: putting nature at the heart of decision-making; increasing the resilience of the natural environment and taking specific action for habitats and species. Part 1 sets out how action proposed by the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and through the sustainable management of natural resources will contribute to reversing the loss of biodiversity in Wales. Part 2 comprises an Action Plan to take forward the actions specifically identified to reverse the decline through setting targets and milestones and identifying funding mechanisms. Part 3 currently in development, will comprise the Nature Recovery Framework which will outline the governance structure, roles and responsibilities and accountability measures required to ensure delivery of the Nature Recovery Plan.

3.11.2 Policy Monitoring

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
BW6	Developments granted planning permission that do not preserve or enhance scheduled ancient monuments, registered historic parks and gardens, listed buildings or conservation areas	No developments that would fail to preserve or enhance heritage features granted planning permission	1 or 2 developments failing to preserve or enhance features for 2 consecutive years, or, 3 or more developments failing to preserve or enhance features in 1 year	No developments granted planning permission failed to preserve or enhance heritage features

Analysis

Policy BW6 seeks to preserve or enhance various elements of Merthyr Tydfil's built heritage, including Scheduled Ancient Monuments, registered Historic Parks and Gardens, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

Over the monitoring period, a total of 83 developments were granted planning permission that impacted on built heritage assets. These developments can be broken down as follows:

- 1 development was granted planning permission in the vicinity of a Scheduled Ancient Monument;
- 7 developments were granted planning permission within an Historic Park and Garden (which were also within a Conservation Area);
- 58 developments were granted planning permission impacting on a Listed Building (41 of which were also within a Conservation area); and
- 58 developments were granted within a Conservation Area (41 of which were Listed Buildings).

The majority of approvals relating to townscape and built heritage ranged from variation of conditions, advertisement consents, installation of new shop fronts, changes of use and the renewal of planning permissions or listed building consents. A small number of approvals were for internal alterations and repairs and the erection of new dwelling houses. Individual planning permissions were also granted for external repairs, replacement garages, construction of a new squadron building, new shared footpath/cycleway at Merthyr College, improvements to Merthyr Train Station forecourt, retention of an heritage trail, erection of a garage, single storey extension and dormer and installation of a new boundary wall, railings, gates and CCTV cameras at Cyfarthfa Park. All permissions granted complied with Policy BW6.

Furthermore, 8 inappropriate developments within Conservation Areas (3 of which also affected listed buildings) and 4 inappropriate listed building developments were refused.

Recommendations

This element of policy is currently being achieved, and as such, no action is required.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
BW5 AS6	Developments granted planning permission that cause harm to the overall nature conservation value of SINC's or the LNR	No development that would cause harm to the overall nature conservation value of SINC's or the LNR granted planning permission	1 or 2 developments resulting in overall harm for 2 consecutive years, or, 3 or more developments resulting in overall harm in 1 year	All developments granted planning permission do not cause harm to the overall nature conservation value of SINC's or the LNR
	Developments granted planning permission that cause harm to a SSSI	No developments that would cause harm to a SSSI granted planning permission	1 or more developments resulting in harm to a SSSI	All developments granted planning permission do not cause harm to a SSSI

Analysis

The monitoring framework contains two indicators which relate to Policy BW5, namely, the number of developments causing harm to the overall nature conservation value of a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) or Local Nature Reserve (LNR) (this indicator also relates to Policy AS6), and the number of developments causing harm to a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Each indicator is considered separately below.

Over the monitoring period 16 developments were granted planning permission that had the potential to affect a SINC, but in all instances, the overall nature conservation value of the SINC was safeguarded. In addition, over the monitoring period planning permission was refused for 3 inappropriate development proposals within a SINC and no developments were received that could potentially cause harm to a Local Nature Reserve.

In respect of the impact of development on a SSSI, 1 application was approved for the retention of a clay pigeon shooting facility, which also impacted on a SINC. However, it was considered that the development would not have an adverse impact on the conservation value of either the SSSI or the SINC.

As a consequence of the above, it is considered that Policies BW5 and AS6 are functioning effectively.

Recommendations

This element of policy is currently being achieved, and as such, no action is required.

3.11.3 Overall summary on policy performance and conclusion on whether the strategic objective is being achieved

For the purposes of this annual monitoring report, the level of achievement towards Strategic Objective SO11 is based on the performance of 3 LDP policies, relating to the historic and natural environment.

Targets relating to the preservation and enhancement of both the historic and natural environment are being met and the associated policies are considered to be functioning effectively. It is therefore considered that this strategic objective continues to be achieved.

3.12 SO12: To contribute towards reducing the impact of climate change through reduced carbon dioxide emissions in new developments.

3.12.1 Contextual Changes

The Welsh Government's 'Planning for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy' toolkit was updated in September 2015. This toolkit will be used to inform renewable and low carbon energy related policies as part of the preparation of the replacement LDP.

3.12.2 Policy Monitoring

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
BW7	Percentage of planning applications complying with sustainable design SPG	All (post SPG adoption)	-	All relevant applications complying with SPG
<u>Analysis</u> All relevant applications have complied with the adopted sustainable design SPG, resulting in key elements of sustainable design being incorporated into new developments.				
<u>Recommendations</u> This element of policy is currently being achieved, and as such, no action is required.				

3.12.3 Overall summary on policy performance and conclusion on whether the strategic objective is being achieved

For the purposes of this annual monitoring report, the level of achievement towards Strategic Objective SO12 is based on the performance of a single LDP policy as outlined above.

The target relating to the delivery of sustainable development, which helps reduce the impact of climate change, has been achieved and the associated policy and supplementary planning guidance are considered to be functioning effectively. It is therefore considered that this strategic objective continues to be achieved.

4.0 Community Infrastructure Levy

- 4.1 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough on 2nd June 2014. It is a compulsory charge that is levied against all new qualifying development.
- 4.2 In order to ensure that the implementation of CIL is open and transparent, the Council must prepare an annual report on CIL. This can be a bespoke report or can be included in an existing reporting mechanism, such as the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) which reports on the LDP. This is a sensible mechanism for reporting on CIL as it is inextricably linked to the LDP. This is the second year in which the AMR has reported on the implementation of CIL.
- 4.3 The CIL monitoring report must be published by the Council, by the 31st December each year, for the previous financial year. In this instance, the reporting period is 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016.
- 4.4 CIL becomes payable upon commencement of the chargeable development and as such, there is likely to be a delay between the implementation of CIL and CIL monies being received. Only planning applications approved after 2nd June 2014 are liable for CIL, and only those that have then commenced development will have generated income.
- 4.5 The CIL balance at 1st April 2015 was £0.00. Over the monitoring period, the Authority received a total of £124,125 in CIL from two developments relating to retail and housing respectively. No CIL monies were spent of the monitoring period, and accordingly, the CIL balance at 31st March 2016 was £124,125.

5.0 Sustainability Performance

- 5.1 The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive requires local authorities to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as an integral part of their plan preparation. In addition, the LDP Regulations require that local authorities undertake Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of their plan. It is recognised as best practice for local authorities to undertake SEA and SA together as an iterative part of the development plan process throughout plan preparation. In preparing its LDP, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council commissioned a joint SEA and SA and produced and published its SEA/SA Report in conjunction with the publication of the LDP.
- 5.2 The SEA Directive also requires that the Council monitors the state of the environment through monitoring the sustainability objectives set out in the SEA/SA Report. Table 7.1 of the Final SA Report for the LDP (May 2011) sets out potential SA targets and indicators with reference to the relevant topic area in the SEA directive and each of the 15 SA objectives identified during the plan preparation process. The table refers to potential targets rather than confirmed / absolute targets owing to the fact that the Council recognises changes to the monitoring framework may be necessary in future. Notwithstanding, the table set out in the Final SA Report remains the basis of sustainability monitoring for the LDP at this point in time.
- 5.3 The targets were set as aspirations to be reached by the end of the plan period rather than being achievable milestones during particular periods of the LDP. Consequently, it is recognised that they may not always be measurable, and even where they are, they may not always provide a direct indication of whether the LDP is having the intended benefit for the environment as a whole as it is unlikely that the LDP will have realised these aspirational targets during the early part of the plan period. As a result, SA Monitoring will consider whether there is movement towards the target rather than the absolute position of whether the target has been reached, and this will require a significant level of officer interpretation to the background information / indicators.
- 5.4 Furthermore, whilst the AMR sets out a variety of objectives and targets to assess performance, the Council has found that monitoring each of the background indicators (not published in this document) has often proved difficult owing to the availability and /or timeliness of various data sources. In addition, there are often conflicting results from certain background indicators that may have the effect of masking any notable trends or movements. In circumstances such as these, where there are large, diverse and potentially conflicting sources of information, it has proved difficult to draw an overall picture of the effect of the plan on the environment. The inherent tension between certain indicators does not lend itself to the production of meaningful results.
- 5.5 To help overcome the above difficulties and to present an assessment of sustainability performance in the most coherent and meaningful manner, the Council has restricted its AMR evaluation to a simple commentary on each of the 15 SA Objectives. This commentary is subdivided into the relevant SA targets and its

composition is guided / informed by the background **indicators** wherever possible. In this way, the AMR avoids dwelling overly on the intricacies or inadequacies of the various data sets.

- 5.6 Given that SEA Monitoring should take a strategic view of the effects of the plan on the environment, the Council considers it entirely appropriate for the SEA Monitoring to use the Strategic Objectives as the top tier measuring unit for the process. The **effect- pl?** of some background indicators can be aggregated together to form a more comprehensive and more balanced method of assessment which should help overcome potential conflicts and aid performance evaluation across a wider perspective.
- 5.7 The traffic light system used in policy evaluation has not been taken forward to this section owing to the fact that many of the SEA targets and indicators are aspirational and much less specific than their policy equivalents. Evaluation of success is therefore likely to be less quantifiable, and though the degree of progress toward a target is explained in commentary, this does not translate sufficiently readily into a quick-reference colour-coded assessment.

6.0 Sustainability Assessments

6.1 The following pages set out the sustainability assessments with reference to the relevant sustainability objectives.

SA Objective Number	Sustainability Objective
1 - Housing	<p>SA Objective 1: Meet the overall housing requirement through a mix of dwelling types catering for all needs to promote integrated and thriving communities.</p> <p>This SA Objective is informed by 1 target and 7 background indicators.</p> <p>SA Target: Reduce discrepancies between housing requirement, especially for affordable and special need housing and stock.</p> <p>Further progress has been made towards meeting this objective in Merthyr Tydfil with 1,656 new dwellings built in the County Borough since 2006. However, this rate of housebuilding is well below the level required to fulfil the strategy of the LDP.</p> <p>Further affordable housing has also been delivered over the monitoring period with the completion of 12 dwellings at Old School Close, Georgetown and 27 dwellings at Marigold Close, Gurnos. Work is also progressing on several affordable housing schemes, including developments at the former Abercanaid Primary School and the Labour Exchange, Pontmorlais.</p> <p>There has been an increase in the average house price during the monitoring period and a decrease in wages. The updated Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) was published in March 2015, highlighting the housing need in the County Borough up to 2019. Work will, however, commence on a new LHMA in Autumn 2016 in order to give the most up to date assessment of affordable housing need, with publication due in Spring 2017.</p> <p>Nearly all social housing in the County Borough now meets Welsh Housing Quality Standard, and the largest Registered Social Landlord in the County Borough (Merthyr Valley Homes) is able to construct new dwellings after improving the quality of its existing stock to an appropriate standard. Further schemes to improve energy efficiency on social housing stock are also being carried out, such as installation of external wall insulation.</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Progress continues to be made towards the delivery of a mix of housing types; however, the SA objective is not being fully achieved due to the lower than anticipated level of housing delivery.</p>
2 - Cultural Heritage	<p>SA Objective 2: Promote and protect Welsh Culture and Heritage including landscape and archaeology.</p> <p>This SA Objective is informed by 1 target and 6 background indicators.</p> <p>SA Target: Increase proportion of new development that protects or enhances sites of historical and cultural interest.</p>

	<p>All relevant developments granted planning permission during 2015/2016 either protected or enhanced heritage features as part of that permission.</p> <p>In terms of positive or negative change in the Buildings at Risk Register, it is anticipated that CADW will complete their survey in September 2016, and as such, an update will be provided in next year's AMR.</p> <p>The percentage of Merthyr Tydfil's residents who say they can speak Welsh has seen a decrease from 25.1% in 2015 to 21%³ in 2016. The percentage does, however, continue to be much higher than the 9% of residents who were recorded as being able to speak Welsh in the 2011 Census.</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Progress continues to be made towards meeting this SA objective in terms of protecting historical assets, although the decrease in Welsh speakers is an issue that needs to be closely monitored in order to establish whether there is a trend of decreasing Welsh speakers within the County Borough.</p>
3 - Communities	<p>SA Objective 3: Encourage population retention and growth; and promote integrated and distinctive communities with opportunities for living, working and socialising for all.</p> <p>This SA Objective is informed by 3 targets and 6 background indicators.</p> <p>SA Target 1: All people to have access to a GP, post office, play area, pub and village hall.</p> <p>The availability of local services is an integral part of the decision-making process on the location of new residential development. For this reason, all residential allocations within the LDP have been located within defined settlement limits and situated within close proximity to existing services and facilities.</p> <p>Over the monitoring period, 91% of residential development granted planning permission in the County Borough was located within 400m of a bus stop and 600m of primary facilities including a shop and school.</p> <p>The percentage of residents with access to a GP, Post Office, play area and pub is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Welsh Government began collecting management data on GP opening hours and GP appointment times in 2010 and 2012 respectively. The data is collected for every GP practice (main surgery) in Wales. The latest release provides results for the end of November 2015 at Health Board and national level only. In 2013, 60% of GP surgeries were open all day in the Cwm Taf University area rising to 67% by 2015. This compares favourably to the Welsh average which was 43% in 2013 rising to 45% by 2015. GP appointments offered at convenient times (before 8:30am every week day) in the Cwm Taf University area was 10% in 2013 rising to 11% by 2015. This matches closely to the Welsh average which was also 10% in 2013 rising to 12% by 2015. GP appointments offered at convenient times (between 5pm and 6:30pm every

³ Annual Population Survey estimates of persons aged 3 and over who say they can speak Welsh (Source – StatsWales)

week day) in the Cwm Taf University area was 93% in 2013 rising to 95% by 2015. This compares favourably to the Welsh average which was 76% in 2013 rising to 79% by 2015.

- There are currently 9 Post Offices and 2 sub Post Offices in the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough area. Comparative data was not included in the previous AMR.
- Surveys undertaken for the Council's Draft Open Space Strategy (OSS) found that 37% of the County Borough's households had access to a play area within 600m of their home.
- There are currently 72 Public Houses in the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough area. Comparative data was not included in the previous AMR.

Statistics for accessibility to village halls do not exist at local authority level.

In terms of variation in car ownership at the national and local level, the 2011 Census showed car ownership rates of 77.1% and 70.3% for Wales and Merthyr Tydfil respectively. Within Merthyr Tydfil, levels of car ownership between wards varied greatly, from 48.7% in Gurnos to 88.3% in Treharris. Detailed information on car ownership trends will not be available until analysis of the 2021 Census.

SA Target 2: Increase percentage of people with qualifications and improve skills.

Increasing the proportion of the population with qualifications is not directly related to land use planning policy, although access to improved education and skills facilities remains a fundamental part of the LDP's strategy which is being fulfilled via a number of LDP policies.

Highest qualification levels of working age adults					
December 2011	No Qualifications	Qualified to below level 2	Qualified to NQF level 2 or above	Qualified to NQF level 3 or above	Qualified to NQF level 4 or above
Merthyr	18.7	18.4	62.9	39.7	22.4
Wales	11.0	15.1	73.9	52.4	31.5
December 2015	No Qualifications	Qualified to below level 2	Qualified to NQF level 2 or above	Qualified to NQF level 3 or above	Qualified to NQF level 4 or above
Merthyr	13.7	18.0	68.3	47.3	27.0
Wales	9.5	13.4	77.1	57.5	36.1

Since Plan adoption the level of adults with no qualification has decreased in Merthyr by 5% compared to 1.5% in Wales. Moreover, the level of adults Qualified to NQF level 2 or above has increased by 5.5% in Merthyr compared to only 3.2% in Wales as a whole.

SA Target 3: Reduce the number of wards that are among the 100 most deprived in Wales.

	<p>The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales. It is designed to identify those small areas where there are the highest concentrations of several different types of deprivation. The most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are ranked from 1- 191. WIMD 2014 outputs were revised in August 2015 and show that in general, the valleys and urban local authorities have higher concentrations of multiple deprivations. Merthyr Tydfil had 5 LSOAs wards that were among the 100 most deprived in Wales in 2014, this compares with 6 LSOAs wards that were among the 100 most deprived in Wales in 2011.</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: : Progress continues to be made towards meeting this SA objective, particularly in relation to the number of adults gaining qualifications and the reduction in the number of LSOAs in the most deprived 10% in Wales.</p>
4 - Health	<p>SA Objective 4: Promote services and facilities that encourage a healthy and safe lifestyle.</p> <p>This SA Objective is informed by 3 targets and 9 background indicators.</p> <p>SA Target 1: Increase access to physical recreation facilities.</p> <p>LDP Strategic Objective SO9 seeks to promote health and wellbeing by providing accessible and varied opportunities for leisure and recreational activities. Seven LDP policies flow from this objective including Policy BW16, which seeks to protect and enhance the County Borough's network of leisure facilities; Policy AS17, which requires new outdoor sport / play space that will help to meet Fields in Trust Standards; and Policy BW7, which requires new development to contribute to the provision of usable open and outdoor play space.</p> <p>Surveys undertaken for the Council's Draft Open Space Strategy (OSS) found that 37% of the County Borough's households had access to play area within 600m of their home. In addition, data from the OSS shows that 56% of households within the County Borough currently live within 400m of a natural / semi natural green space. It is anticipated that the OSS will assist in working towards national play space, sport and recreation standards across the County Borough.</p> <p>The County Borough presently monitors nitrogen dioxide, a pollutant associated with vehicle emissions, at various locations throughout the County Borough using non-automatic and automatic monitoring. This monitoring detected elevated levels of nitrogen dioxide on Twynyrodyn Road, Twynyrodyn. Following this the Authority undertook a detailed assessment which concluded that it is necessary to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). This is in progress and will be the first to be declared in the County Borough. Other pollutants do not require monitoring at this time.</p> <p>SA Target 2: Design to encourage walking and cycling.</p> <p>The close proximity of housing, employment, retail and other land uses has been a major consideration in the pattern of land allocation in the LDP, and will assist in minimising the need to travel whilst helping to ensure there is sufficient incentive to undertake journeys by means other than the car.</p>

	<p>Equally important is the need to provide sustainable links between communities including better use of existing footpaths/cycle networks and the creation of new routes and links.</p> <p>During 2015/2016, 4.03M km of footpath was created in the County Borough over the monitoring period. This compares favourably with the 2.94 km created in the previous monitoring period.</p> <p>People will only walk or cycle within the local and wider area if they feel safe to do so. The Crime survey for England and Wales released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimates that 90.1% of males and 64.2% of females in Wales felt very/fairly safe walking alone after dark, in the year ending March 2015. This results in an average of 87.1% which compares favourably to last year's AMR average figure of 80%. Unfortunately, no more up-to date or comparable data is available at a local authority level.</p> <p>SA Target 3: Decrease in the number of people with limiting long-term illness or general health 'not good'.</p> <p>In August 2015, the Public Health Wales Observatory published Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) maps of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) for 2014. This data shows that 29.4% of Merthyr Tydfil (Small Town and Fringe) had a limiting long term health problem, whereas 27.9% of Merthyr Tydfil (Large Town) had a limiting long term health problem. This compares unfavourably to a Welsh figure as a whole of 22.7%.</p> <p>The latest Welsh Health Survey (WHS) data regarding the percentage of adults who reported their own health in general as 'fair or poor' relates to the period between 2003 and 2015. At a national level, there has been a decrease of Welsh adults from 22% to 19% reporting their own general health status as 'fair or poor'. Similarly the data for Merthyr Tydfil shows a general decrease over this period from 30% to 24%. Although the latest figure for Merthyr Tydfil is 5% above the Welsh Average, it is promising that the percentage decrease between 2003 and 2015 has been greater in Merthyr Tydfil than across Wales as a whole.</p> <p>Life expectancy data is published by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) every two years. The latest data available for Merthyr Tydfil indicates that male life expectancy has risen slightly from 76.9 years in 2011-13 to 77.3 years in 2012-14. However, female life expectancy has dropped slightly from 80.9 years to 80.5 years over the same time period. A further update will be provided when data relating to 2014-16 becomes available.</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Some progress has been made towards meeting this SA objective, particularly in respect of additional footpath provision and decreases in adults reporting their general health status as 'fair or poor'. There are, however concerns regarding the declaration of an AQMA in the Twynrodyn Area and the slight decline in female life expectancy. The latter will require further monitoring in order to identify whether the decrease is short term in nature or an unwelcome, established trend.</p>
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SA Objective 5: Encourage a thriving and sustainable economy with a diverse range of job opportunities.

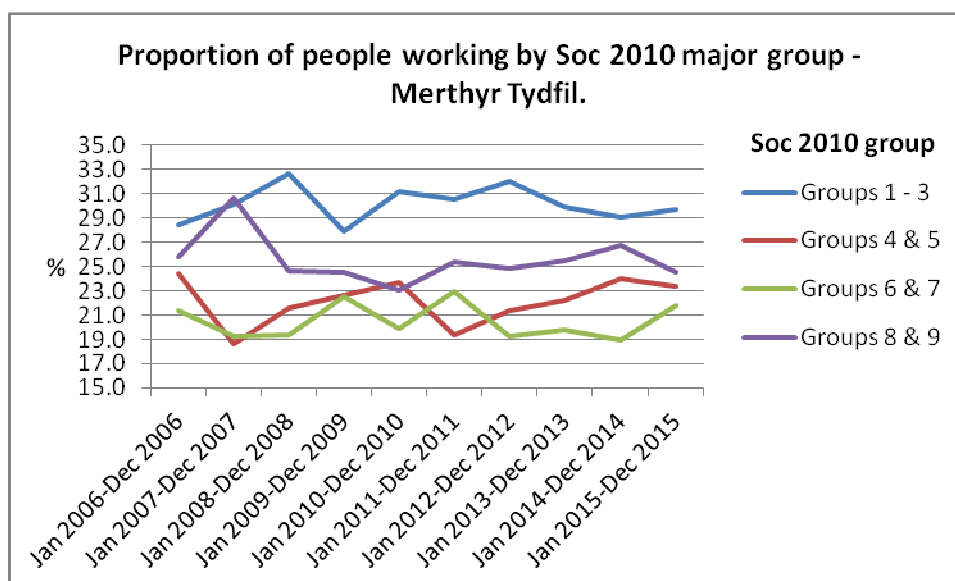
This SA Objective is informed by 3 targets and 16 background indicators.

SA Target 1: Broaden economic base.

LDP Strategic Objective SO7 seeks to improve and diversify the economy, safeguarding existing jobs and creating a range of new job opportunities in a sustainable manner.

Nine LDP policies flow from this objective including those covering employment land allocations, existing and proposed leisure developments, and retail development. The performance of each of these policies has been assessed and results published in Section 3 of this AMR.

The following graph shows the proportion of people working in higher level managerial, director and professional roles (Soc 2010 major group 1-3); the proportion of those working within skilled trades or administrative work (Soc 2010 major group 4 & 5); the proportion of those working within the caring, leisure & sales, and customer service areas (Soc 2010 major group 6 & 7); and the proportion of people working in elementary occupations and as plant / machine operatives (Soc 2010 major group 8 & 9).



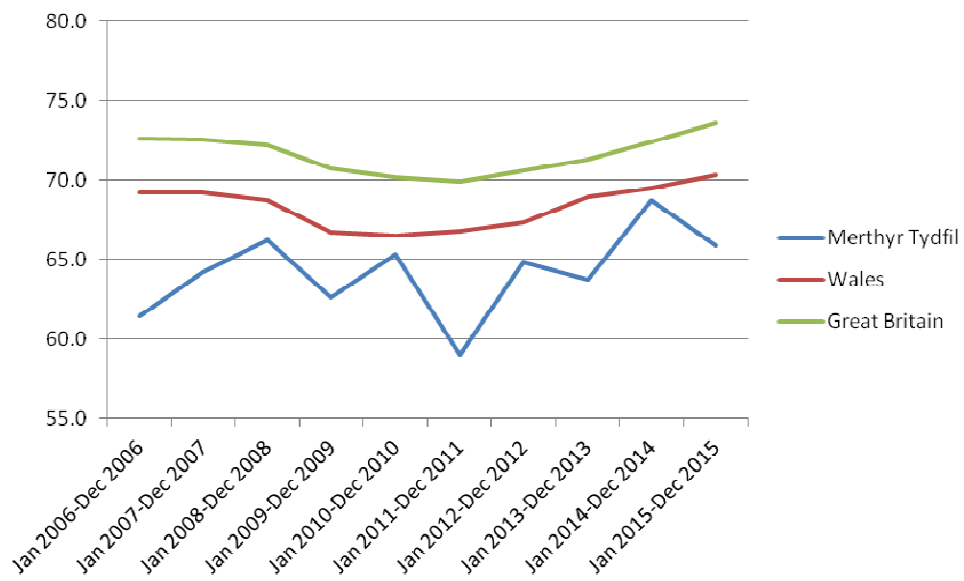
ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 21 April 2016]

The proportion of people working in higher level managerial, director and professional roles (Soc 2010 major group 1-3) is still the highest employment sector within the County Borough (29.7%) in 2015/16.

The proportion of those within skilled trades or administrative work (Soc 2010 major group 4-5) has been fluctuating for the past 5 years, with a decrease to 23.4% in December 2015.

	<p>The proportion of those working within the caring, leisure & sales, and customer service areas (Soc 2010 major group 6-7) remains the lowest employment sector in the County Borough, but the proportion of those employed within this sector has risen to 21.8% in December 2015.</p> <p>The proportion of people working in elementary occupations and as plant / machine operatives remains the second highest employment sector within the County Borough. However the proportion of those employed within this sector has dropped to 24.5% in December 2015.</p> <p>SA Target 2: Increase opportunities to work within the County Borough.</p> <p>No new employment floor space was built in the LDP's Primary Growth Area over the monitoring period. However, 492.5 new jobs were delivered with the opening of the General Dynamic plant on the 'Linde' site.</p> <p>The take up of LDP land from the start of the plan period to the end of the monitoring period equates to 34% of the total land allocated. This figure being lower than the target range set out within the Monitoring Framework.</p> <p>In terms of vacancy rates, Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre has experienced a decrease of 0.8% over the monitoring, although it does remain above the Welsh average. Across the County Borough as the whole, information from non-domestic rates exemptions shows that 251 of 1773 properties (approximately 14%) are receiving rate relief due to them being vacant. This percentage remains unchanged from the last monitoring period.</p> <p>SA Target 3: Decrease unemployment.</p> <p>The number of economically active people in employment in the County Borough has decreased over the monitoring period from 68.2% to 65.9% in 2015. The following graph shows, however, that the employment rate has fluctuated each year since the beginning of the plan period.</p>
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Employment rate - aged 16-64.



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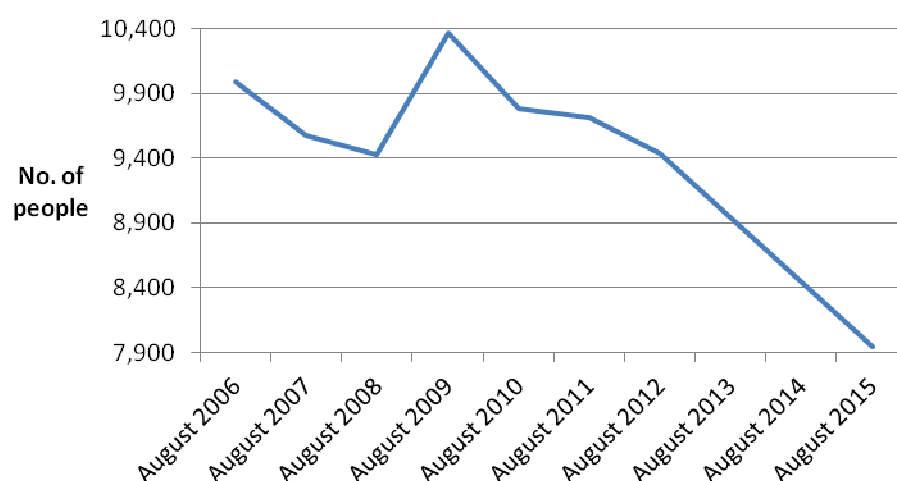
Data for the percentage of people living as well as working within the County Borough is only available every 10 years owing to the fact that it is collected through the Census. Therefore, there is no new data to allow comparison during this monitoring period.

Data for household disposable income is only available at a regional level, which includes the 'Central Valleys' area within which Merthyr Tydfil is located. This data shows the Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) has steadily increased over recent years. The most recently available information shows that in 2013, the Central Valleys had the highest GDHI since 2005.

Following four consecutive years where there was an increase in the proportion of people of working age being qualified to NVQ Level 4 or above, there was a slight increase in the 2015 calendar year from 25.3% to 25.4%. This figure remains below the levels of both Wales (33.6%) and Great Britain (37.1%).

The number of people of working age receiving benefits within the County Borough continues to fall with 7,940 recipients in August 2015 (See graph below).

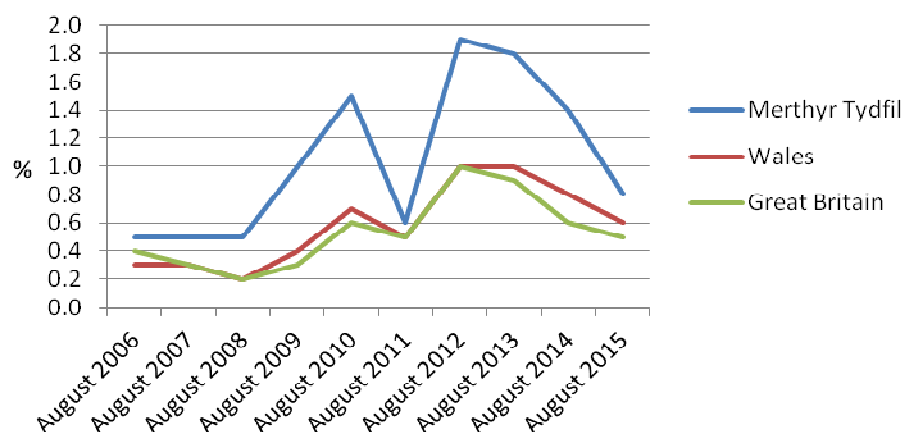
Working age benefit claimants - Merthyr Tydfil.



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The rate of those claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) that have been out of work for more than a year within the County Borough has decreased to 0.8%; moving closer to the Welsh average (See graph below).

The rate of those claiming Job Seekers Allowance that have been out of work for more than a year.



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SA Target 4: Support the rural economy.

No development proposals were granted permission during this monitoring period relating to this target.

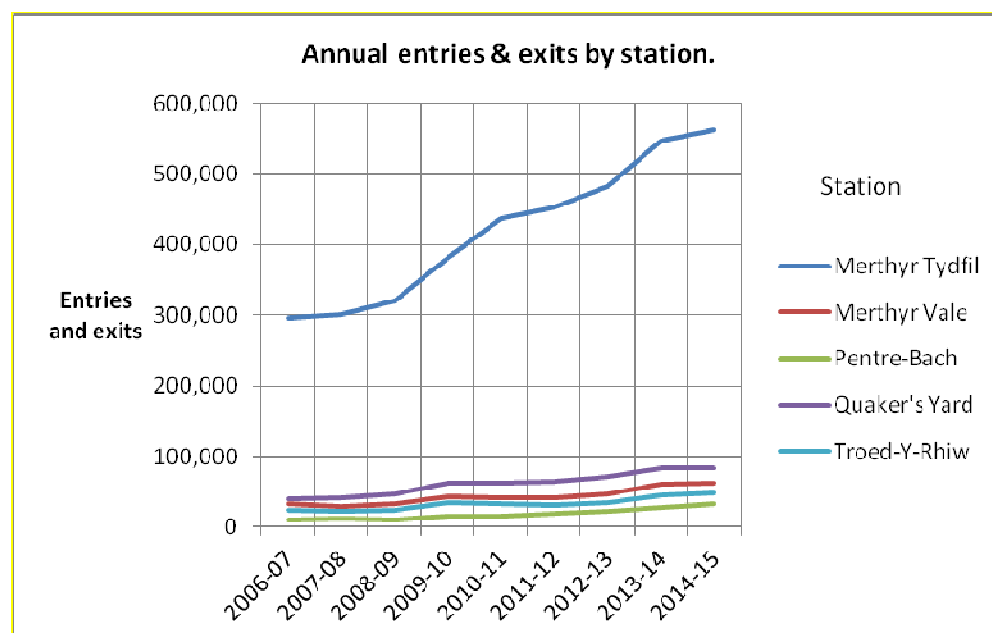
SA Target 5: Support potential funding to provide basic infrastructure, develop human resources, and invest in research, innovation and the information society.

A range of programmes are being delivered across the County Borough. Developments over the monitoring period include the following:

	<p>In April 2014, Welsh Government approved an allocation of £12.873 million for the implementation and delivery of the Merthyr Tydfil Regional Centre Regeneration programme (Vibrant and Viable Places Programme (VVP)). The Programme, through its delivery, aims to revitalise and promote the sustainability of the town centre, build a vibrant and sustainable community which is more prosperous, tackling poverty by creating jobs and helping people into work and encouraging wider investment in housing and deliver strategic projects of a significant scale within the area. The financial year of 2016/17 is the final year of delivery for the 3 year Programme.</p> <p>A key project completed within year 2 is St. David's Church Community Hall. The project, funded through VVP and the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI), has created a new, centrally located facility in the Town Centre. The Enterprise Centre was also launched in 2015 and VVP funding created a physical unit on the High Street, managed by Tydfil Training that will be the first point of engagement for individuals needing business advice and support. The Meanwhile Use Scheme has formed a key part of the Enterprise Centre Programme and provides new businesses with the opportunity to test trade their product or service for a six month period in a High Street unit. The first two meanwhile schemes in Merthyr, Deli of the Valley and Jols, were officially launched in 2015. The Bus Station project is also progressing well, with a detailed community consultation undertaken in Summer 2015 and a planning application submitted in February 2016.</p> <p>The Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Regeneration Programme and Taff Bargoed Regeneration Programme were completed in June 2015. The Town Centre Programme delivered its final project namely the construction of the new access to the railway station from Masonic Street, creating an attractive, safe and accessible area for all. The final project delivered as part of the Taff Bargoed Programme was the Bedlinog Square Enhancements.</p> <p>Further Welsh Government funding has been secured for the successful 'Effect' project that provides an innovative, community-based enterprise development structure in four of the South East Wales County Boroughs. The funding was approved in March 2016 for a delivery period of one year.</p> <p>The THI is a historic building improvements grant scheme funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) programme. Its main objectives for Merthyr Tydfil County Borough are to increase awareness of the qualities of the built heritage and to encourage people back into the Pontmorlais Heritage Quarter. Its purpose is to ensure high quality, traditional repair and reinstatement by encouraging grant applications. The current programme will come to an end in 2016 and a number of buildings have been completed in the past year, with several to be completed in 2016/17. A Stage 1 application to HLF for a Townscape Heritage 2 project has recently been awarded for further development of buildings within the Pontmorlais Area.</p> <p>Cyfarthfa Castle is widely regarded as the best preserved and grandest ironmaster's house in Wales. The building, which is Grade I listed, is of national historical and architectural significance. It acts as the centrepiece of Cyfarthfa Park. Feasibility studies are currently underway to re-develop a large proportion of</p>
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	<p>Cyfarthfa Castle. The Council are working in conjunction with Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust on the re-development.</p> <p>Cyfarthfa Park, the largest public park in Merthyr Tydfil, is currently undergoing major redevelopment thanks to a £3.3 million investment from the HLF, Welsh Government, CADW and Merthyr Tydfil CBC. The funding is for a four year programme which commenced in 2012. Over the monitoring period (2015/16) work has continued on the enhancement of the parks key heritage features, including the icehouse and the continuation of its volunteering schemes across the facility. Again, the Parks for People Programme is being delivered in conjunction with Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust.</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Progress has been made towards meeting this SA objective, although the fall in the employment rate will require further monitoring in order to identify whether the decrease is short term in nature or an unwelcome, established trend.</p>
6 - Transport	<p>SA Objective 6: Assist in reducing the need to travel and promote more sustainable modes of transport.</p> <p>This SA Objective is informed by 2 targets and 4 background indicators.</p> <p>SA Target 1: Promote more sustainable modes of transport.</p> <p>The requirement to reduce the need to travel is one of the guiding principles of the LDP's spatial development strategy. Where travel remains necessary, it is proposed that a greater proportion of journeys are undertaken by public transport than previously.</p> <p>Data from the 2001 and 2011 Censuses, reported in the 2012/13 AMR, showed an increase in the use of public transport over the 10 year period. The next comparable dataset will not be published until the Census of 2021.</p> <p>SA Target 2: Locate new development in sustainable locations, reducing the need to travel.</p> <p>In taking into account the inter-relationship between land use planning and transport, the LDP focuses the majority of new development within or adjacent to established settlements where services and facilities already exist, or where they can realistically be provided as part of new development.</p> <p>Car ownership data taken from the 2001 and 2011 Censuses showed an increase of 17.2% in the number of cars/vans per 1000 people and an increase of 8.4% in the percentage of households with a car/van over the 10 years. The next comparable dataset will not be published until the Census of 2021.</p> <p>Data is available to compare rail passenger numbers using the five stations within the County Borough (Merthyr Tydfil, Pentrebach, Troedryhiw, Merthyr Vale and Quakers Yard). The graph below shows annual usage by station over the plan period. It can be seen that all stations have experienced an increase in passenger numbers over the plan period, particularly Merthyr Tydfil Station.</p>

This is a positive sign that suggests people are changing their mode of transport in favour of rail. Bus passenger figures are unavailable so a comparison of bus and rail passenger figures is not possible at this time.



<http://orr.gov.uk/statistics/published-stats/station-usage-estimates>

Accessed 21st April 2016.

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Progress has been made towards meeting this SA objective, particularly in respect of increasing the use of rail.

7 – Built Environment

SA Objective 7: Encourage a high quality built environment that promotes community pride.

This SA Objective is informed by 3 targets and 4 background indicators.

SA Target 1: Seek a high standard of design in all new development.

Over the monitoring period, new developments have continued to comply with the sustainable design SPG and have incorporated “secured by design principles” where appropriate. September 2015 also saw the approval of “Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 6: A Design Guide for Householder Development” which gives specific guidance for an array of householder developments in order to ensure all proposals are well designed.

SA Target 2: Increase opportunities for community participation in design of new development.

All planning applications that are deemed to require a Design and Access Statement are not registered unless an appropriate statement is submitted. It is worth noting that Design and Access Statements are now only required on major developments.

	<p>SA Target 3: Improve public spaces.</p> <p>During 2015/16, progress has been made on a number of initiatives that will result in long-term improvements to the public realm. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public realm improvements at Bedlinog Square, which will create a new public open space in the centre of the village; • The construction of the new access to the railway station from Masonic Street, creating an attractive, safe and accessible hard landscaped area; and • The continuation of various developments at Cyfarthfa Park. <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Further progress has been made towards meeting this SA objective, particularly in relation to the adoption of supplementary planning guidance for householder developments and public realm improvements.</p>
8 - Landscape	<p>SA Objective 8: Facilitate the protection and enhancement of the countryside and landscape character.</p> <p>This SA Objective is informed by 1 target and 7 background indicators.</p> <p>SA Target: Achieve favourable conditions of nationally and locally important landscape designations.</p> <p>During the monitoring period, no nationally or locally important land has been given over to inappropriate development, and no developments have been granted consent that would have an adverse effect on either of the sites of special scientific interest in the County Borough.</p> <p>The most recent figures published for fly-tipping show a further decrease in incidents from 1,406 incidents in 2012/13 to 1,010 in 2014/15. Data for 2015/16 has not yet been published and it will be important to monitor this data to see if this positive trend continues in light of the recent changes to the Council's municipal waste management practices.</p> <p>There is still a lack of available data regarding levels of night blight.</p> <p>The monitoring period saw no inappropriate development granted on common land, nor any loss of protected trees and woodlands.</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Progress has been made towards meeting this SA objective.</p>
9 - Biodiversity	<p>SA Objective 9: Protect and enhance the diversity and abundance of wildlife habitats and native species.</p> <p>This SA Objective is informed by 2 targets and 8 background indicators.</p> <p>SA Target 1: Protect and enhance biodiversity.</p> <p>There are 5,248 ha of LBAP priority habitats in Merthyr Tydfil including broadleaf</p>

	<p>woodland, grassland, heath land, wetland, inland rocks and mineral spoil habitat. These areas are not monitored annually, however; new figures will be available once all the sites of importance for nature conservation have been resurveyed by the end of 2016.</p> <p>There has been no loss of habitats during the monitoring period, compared with a small net loss reported in the last AMR.</p> <p>Taf Fechan Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) remains at an unfavourable conservation status; however, it is under favourable management which, given time, will allow it to reach favourable status. Although Cwm Glo and Glyndryys SSSI has not yet been assessed, it is currently under favourable management.</p> <p>In terms of non-native species, 0.125 ha of land and 97 individual properties were treated for Japanese Knotweed over the monitoring period. This compares with 1.67 ha of Japanese Knotweed eradicated during 2013/2014. No Himalayan Balsam was recorded as being removed over the monitoring period and there are no records of Giant Hogweed occurring within the County Borough.</p> <p>With regard to local biodiversity action plan selected local characteristic species, the Lapwing Population at Ffos-y-Fran is in decline, while the population of Great Crested Newt is stable. There is, however, no contextual information available to make a judgement as to the particular significance of these changes.</p> <p>Over the monitoring period, all of the 8 relevant planning approvals incorporated ecological mitigation measures, which represents a 40% increase compared to the last monitoring period. Mitigation measures related to the protection of an aquifer as a habitat from potential contamination; mitigation plans for protected European Species including, Bats, Otters and Great Crested Newts; and landscaping and management schemes introducing hedgerows and trees.</p> <p>No new habitat has been created within the monitoring period. However, 1.5 km of linear habitat has been maintained and 2ha of habitat has been enhanced. This is considered to compare favourably with the last monitoring period where 9.35km of linear habitat was created, maintained or enhanced.</p> <p>SA Target 2: Achieve an improvement in the water environment.</p> <p>Since there is no relevant background indicator under SA Objective 9, the water environment is considered under SA Objective 10 below.</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Further progress has been made towards meeting this SA objective, particularly in respect of the increased incorporation of mitigation measures in new developments, the eradication of non-native species, the enhancement and maintenance of habitats and no loss of habitat.</p>
10 - Water	<p>SA Objective 10: Ensure the protection and enhancement of the water environment.</p> <p>This SA Objective is informed by 2 targets and 6 background indicators.</p>

	<p>SA Target 1: Improve water quality.</p> <p>Two indicators have been identified which relate to this target. The first monitors river quality by looking at the percentage of total classified river length of “good status”, while the second considers development within groundwater source protection zones.</p> <p>The European Water Framework Directive (WFD) requires that all inland and coastal water bodies reach at least “good status” by 2015, subject to certain exemptions. The term “good status” means the status achieved by a surface water body when both its ecological status and its chemical status are at least good.</p> <p>No rivers in Merthyr Tydfil currently meet “good status”, nor are they expected to achieve it by 2015. The current overall objectives are for all water bodies within Merthyr Tydfil to meet “good status” by 2027. WFD River Catchment Maps for 2015⁴ indicate that the status of water bodies within Merthyr Tydfil remain unchanged from those reported in last year’s AMR, apart from the Nant Morlais waterbody (source to confluence with river Taff), which has deteriorated to an overall status of ‘bad’. Potential reasons for deterioration include abandoned mines and land contamination affecting ground water, and sewage discharge affecting rivers.</p> <p>Only a relatively small area of land in the north east extremity of the County Borough falls within a groundwater source protection zone. No developments have occurred within this zone over the monitoring period.</p> <p>SA Target 2: Flood risk to be mitigated or avoided.</p> <p>Over the monitoring period, no developments were granted planning permission in Flood Zone C that did not meet TAN15 tests. The avoidance of development within the floodplain allows these areas to continue to fulfil their flood flow and water storage functions, preventing physical changes to water bodies.</p> <p>SA Target 3: New development to incorporate sustainable drainage systems.</p> <p>Over the monitoring period, no developments have been granted planning permission without incorporating SuDS into the design of the scheme unless there have been environmental or practical reasons for not doing so. This increase in the use of SuDS will contribute to reducing risks of flooding and the pollution of surface waters during high rainfall events.</p> <p>SA Target 4: Encourage more efficient water use.</p> <p>Two indicators have been identified that relate to this target. The first relates to the number of water efficient developments, and the second to water consumption per household.</p> <p>Water efficient developments have continued to be secured over the monitoring</p>
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⁴Water Framework Cycle 1 Comparison Map [<http://waterwatchwales.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/en/>]

	<p>period through the promotion of water conservation/efficiency measures under Policy BW7. Reducing the amount of water consumption in new developments will assist in minimising additional pressures on the water environment.</p> <p>In respect of water consumption per household in Wales, the last update of data provided by StatsWales was in 2010/2011. It is not therefore currently possible to provide an update on changes to the amount of water consumption per household in Wales. Further consideration will be given to this matter when new data becomes available.</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Overall, progress has been made towards meeting this SA objective; however, the deterioration in the overall status of the Nant Morlais waterbody to ‘bad’ is a matter of concern and further consultation with Natural Resources Wales and Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water, as part of the preparation of the replacement LDP, is considered necessary. This will ensure that sufficient sewerage capacity exists for current and future development needs; new developments help to deliver the required water quality standards; and opportunities are taken to mitigate and remediate land contamination.</p>																																								
11 - Climate Change	<p>SA Objective 11: Help to minimise the cause and effects of climate change.</p> <p>This SA Objective is informed by 2 targets and 5 background indicators.</p> <p>SA Target 1: Decrease greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>Two indicators have been identified which relate to this target. The first monitors the emissions of greenhouse gases and the second tracks the ecological footprint of Merthyr Tydfil.</p> <p>Merthyr Tydfil’s per capita emissions of CO₂ has reduced from 5.7 to 5.2 tonnes between 2012 and 2013, which continues the general decline experienced since the start of the Plan period (2006) (see Graph below). This general decline in CO₂ emissions will help mitigate the effects of climate change.</p> <div><p>Annual tonnes of Carbon Dioxide emitted per person.</p><table><thead><tr><th>Year</th><th>Merthyr Tydfil</th><th>Wales</th><th>National</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>2005</td><td>6.5</td><td>11.0</td><td>8.8</td></tr><tr><td>2006</td><td>6.8</td><td>11.2</td><td>9.0</td></tr><tr><td>2007</td><td>6.5</td><td>11.0</td><td>8.8</td></tr><tr><td>2008</td><td>6.3</td><td>10.8</td><td>8.5</td></tr><tr><td>2009</td><td>5.5</td><td>9.2</td><td>7.5</td></tr><tr><td>2010</td><td>5.8</td><td>10.0</td><td>7.8</td></tr><tr><td>2011</td><td>5.2</td><td>9.0</td><td>7.0</td></tr><tr><td>2012</td><td>5.5</td><td>8.8</td><td>7.2</td></tr><tr><td>2013</td><td>5.2</td><td>9.5</td><td>7.0</td></tr></tbody></table></div>	Year	Merthyr Tydfil	Wales	National	2005	6.5	11.0	8.8	2006	6.8	11.2	9.0	2007	6.5	11.0	8.8	2008	6.3	10.8	8.5	2009	5.5	9.2	7.5	2010	5.8	10.0	7.8	2011	5.2	9.0	7.0	2012	5.5	8.8	7.2	2013	5.2	9.5	7.0
Year	Merthyr Tydfil	Wales	National																																						
2005	6.5	11.0	8.8																																						
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2008	6.3	10.8	8.5																																						
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2013	5.2	9.5	7.0																																						

	<p>As indicated in the last AMR, the ecological footprint of Merthyr Tydfil was last calculated by the Stockholm Environment Institute in 2006. At this time, the figure for Merthyr Tydfil was just over 4.1 global hectares per person; the second lowest ecological footprint in Wales. It is currently not possible to assess whether the ecological footprint of Merthyr Tydfil is being successfully reduced towards the global average, due to the infrequency of data updates. This indicator will be considered at a later stage when further data becomes available.</p> <p>SA Target 2: Decrease impacts from the effects of climate change.</p> <p>Two indicators have been identified under this target which both relate to flooding. The first considers the number of properties at risk from flooding, while the second tracks the number of flood incidents. Climate change is anticipated to affect flood risk in Merthyr Tydfil by increasing levels of rainfall over winter months and increasing the frequency of extreme weather conditions.</p> <p>As indicated in last year's AMR, the Authority's Engineering Department has undertaken an analysis of the number of properties at risk of flooding in the County Borough and the figure remains at 2,283 properties.</p> <p>In respect of flood incidents, no significant flooding occurred in the County Borough between 2015 and 2016.</p> <p>Both positive outcomes demonstrate that the County Borough is coping well with the effects of Climate Change.</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Further progress has been made towards meeting this SA objective in terms of mitigating, and adapting to, the effects of climate change.</p>
12 - Energy	<p>SA Objective 12: Encourage the supply of renewable energy and a reduction in energy consumption.</p> <p>This SA Objective is informed by 2 targets and 5 background indicators.</p> <p>SA Target 1: Encourage energy efficient design in development.</p> <p>Three indicators have been identified under this target. Two relate to the proportion of developments meeting BREEAM and Code for Sustainable Homes standards respectively, while the third considers energy consumption.</p> <p>National planning policy requirements for sustainable building standards were removed and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 22: Planning for Sustainable Buildings was cancelled by the Welsh Government on 31st July 2014. As an alternative, energy conservation matters have been incorporated into Part L of Building Regulations which requires a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2010 Building Regulations levels of: 8% for new domestic buildings and 20% for non-domestic buildings.</p> <p>In respect of Merthyr Tydfil's total energy consumption, the latest information available is from 2013 (updated in September 2015). The data provides a comparison of consumption at a household level with Wales and Great Britain.</p>

	<p>Households in Merthyr Tydfil consume more energy and tonnes of oil equivalent than households across Wales and Great Britain.</p> <p>SA Target 2: Maximise the use of renewable energy.</p> <p>Two indicators have been identified which relate to this indicator. The first considers the amount of energy generated from renewable sources, while the second measures the proportion of energy needs being met from renewable sources.</p> <p>In terms of energy generated from renewable sources, an additional 5.5MWe installed capacity has been granted permission during the monitoring period.</p> <p>With regard to the proportion of energy needs met from renewable energy sources, relevant local data provided by the Department of Energy and Climate Change was discontinued in 2011. However, in respect of national targets, the European environment agency's publication 'Trends and projections in Europe 2015' explains the UK is on track to meet its greenhouse gas and energy efficiency targets, although it is not on track to meet its renewable energy targets.</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Some progress has been made towards meeting this SA objective, particularly in respect of granting permission for additional renewable energy capacity.</p>
13 – Land and Soils	<p>SA Objective 13: Promote efficient use of land and soils.</p> <p>This SA Objective is informed by 2 targets and 4 background indicators.</p> <p>SA Target 1: Percentage of development on previously developed land.</p> <p>Promoting an efficient use of land is one of the key elements of the LDP's strategy as outlined at Para 2.5.22 of the LDP Written Statement. At least 75% of the total land allocated for development in the Plan can be categorised as brownfield.</p> <p>Over the monitoring period, 26% of all development permitted occurred on previously developed land. This figure is significantly lower than the target of 80%; however, this year's data has been distorted by the fact that a single development of a solar farm resulted in 15 ha of development on greenfield land. If this permission was not taken into account, then the percentage of development permitted on previously developed land would be 62%, more in line with previous year's data.</p> <p>This year, 70% of new dwellings in Merthyr Tydfil were constructed on previously developed land. Nearly 80% of these completions were at a density of between 25 -35 dwellings per hectare, which is in accordance with the targets included in the LDP monitoring framework.</p> <p>SA Target 2: Decrease percentage of contaminated land.</p> <p>The LDP recognises that primarily because of Merthyr Tydfil's industrial legacy, certain areas of land in the County Borough are potentially contaminated.</p>

	<p>Furthermore, that the remediation of such land may be required before it can be brought back into beneficial use.</p> <p>The schedule of allocated housing sites listed at Appendix 4 of the LDP Written Statement recognises that potential ground conditions on many sites will require appropriate technical investigation prior to the submission of any planning application. However, as such sites continue to be developed during the course of the plan period, the Council considers that more and more contaminated land will be remediated in accord with the requirements of Policy BW18.</p> <p>The onus to identify site contamination rests with the developer but no data is currently available to quantify progress towards this target.</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Progress continues to be made towards meeting this SA objective.</p>
14 - Waste	<p>SA Objective 14: Promote the minimisation of waste, especially waste to landfill.</p> <p>This SA Objective is informed by 2 targets and 5 background indicators.</p> <p>SA Target 1: Move up the waste hierarchy.</p> <p>Four indicators have been identified under this target. The first indicator considers municipal reuse/recycling/composting rates (percentage); the second considers municipal waste arisings; the third considers waste service access to households; and the final indicator measures the quantity of commercial waste produced, recycled and landfilled. The latter will only be considered when further data updates become available.</p> <p>The amount of reuse, recycling and composting has been steadily increasing in the County Borough for a number of years. The recycling/composting rate for 2015/16 has increased further to 59% (provisional figure) from 56% in 2014/15. Steady progress has been made with a further 5.5% increase and the Authority is on course to meeting the statutory recycling and composting target of 70% by 2024/25.</p> <p>As discussed in last year's AMR, Merthyr Tydfil CBC has restructured its waste collection service through investment in new vehicles, containers and equipment, and waste management facilities in order to move to a kerbside sort system of recycling. This has increased the quantity and improved the quality of materials recycled, and enabled the Council to progress towards national targets.</p> <p>In terms of access to waste service provision, 100 per cent of households in Merthyr Tydfil have access to a weekly recycling and composting service with a fortnightly general waste service. This kerbside waste collection service encourages residents to manage waste more effectively and increases the amount of waste being reused, recycled and composted.</p> <p>Merthyr Tydfil's municipal waste arisings declined year on year from 2008/09 to 2011/2012 and this trend was expected to continue as waste policies took effect. However, municipal waste arisings remained stationary between 2012/13 (29, 518</p>

	<p>tonnes) and 2013/2014 (29,641 tonnes), and have increased to 30,170 tonnes in 2014/15 and 32,366 tonnes 2015/16. It therefore appears that the earlier decline in waste arisings has halted and has now begun to increase. Further monitoring is, however, necessary in order to identify whether this increase has become an established trend.</p> <p>SA Target 2: Reduce tonnage of waste to landfill/incineration.</p> <p>The amount of Merthyr Tydfil's waste going to landfill has reduced from 11,115 tonnes (2014-2015) to 9,841 tonnes (2015-2016) over the monitoring period. Provisional information on the amount of waste reused, recycled or composted, or incinerated with energy recovery will not be available until November 2016 and so will be reported in the next AMR. The reduction in waste going to landfill is encouraging and demonstrates that Merthyr Tydfil's waste is being successfully diverted up the waste hierarchy.</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Progress continues to be made towards meeting this SA objective, particularly in respect of increased reuse, recycling and composting rates and reduced amounts of waste going to landfill.</p>
15 - Minerals	<p>SA Objective 15: Promote efficient and appropriate extraction and use of minerals in a manner that minimises social and environment impacts.</p> <p>This SA Objective is informed by 1 target and 2 background indicators.</p> <p>SA Target 1: Increase percentage use of aggregates from secondary and recycled sources.</p> <p>A construction and demolition (C&D) waste survey undertaken by Natural Resources Wales in 2012 indicates that 87% of C&D waste material generated in Wales was being prepared for re-use, recycling and other material recovery.</p> <p>Over the monitoring period, planning permission was granted for four housing related developments, a change of use to a training centre, a multipurpose waste treatment facility and a solar farm within the buffer zone of the Ffos-y-Fran land reclamation scheme. The multipurpose waste treatment facility and solar farm represent non-sensitive development, while the housing developments are all located within an existing built up area which already encroaches into the buffer zone.</p> <p>Two housing developments were also granted planning permission within the buffer zone of Vaynor Quarry. Both developments are located within an existing built up area which already encroaches into the buffer zone.</p> <p>In conclusion, all developments granted planning permission over the monitoring period are in accordance with the guidance set out in paragraph 40 of Minerals Planning Policy Wales and it is considered that the percentage of land that has been taken up by inappropriate sensitive development is zero.</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Progress continues to be made towards meeting this SA objective.</p>

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7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 7.1 The conclusions and recommendations section of preceding AMRs was based on seven key questions set out in paragraph 4.43 of LDP Wales, which has now been superseded by LDP Manual Edition 2 (August 2015). Whilst these questions do not directly feature within the latter document, it is considered appropriate to continue to address the seven questions given that they remain relevant to the purpose of an AMR and the LDP Manual recommends that: *‘the broad structure of the AMR should remain the same from year to year in order to provide ease of analysis between successive reports and build on preceding results’* (Section 9.4.6).
- 7.2 Therefore, the following section sets out the conclusions and recommendations in a manner that directly relates to the seven key questions.

Does the basic strategy remain sound?

- 7.3 The evidence collected through the AMR process indicates that whilst many aspects of the LDP strategy are being achieved, certain elements of the Plan are currently not being realised. In particular, it is evident that the housing and employment elements of the LDP strategy are not being delivered as quickly as anticipated. Whilst there is little doubt that poor economic conditions over much of the plan period has significantly influenced this situation, delivery rates continue to be suppressed despite improvements to the economy and uncertainty remains over when they can reach the level necessary to meet the requirements of the Strategy.
- 7.4 Consequently, it is considered that the both the level and spatial distribution of growth needs to be reconsidered as part of the preparation of a replacement LDP in order to establish whether the LDP’s enhanced growth strategy is the most appropriate for the delivery of future growth. A review of all undeveloped housing and employment allocations in the LDP will also be necessary in order to ensure that development on these sites remains viable and the allocations will be delivered over an extended plan period of up to 2031.

What impact are the policies having globally, nationally, regionally and locally?

- 7.5 It should be noted that the SA monitoring, which incorporates SEA requirements, contains a high proportion of indicators that have not provided results, either because of the requirement for time-series data, or due to relevant data sources being amended, or due to information now being completely unavailable. It will therefore be appropriate to continue to refine / adjust certain background indicators to provide more realistic results, thus leading to the publication of more comprehensive and meaningful assessments in future.
- 7.6 Globally, the SA Monitoring identifies that the Plan is maintaining a balanced effect on economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainability. In terms of SEA requirements, no significant unforeseen adverse environmental effects have been identified that would affect other EU Member States.

- 7.7 Nationally, the LDP policy framework continues to deliver development that helps meet national requirements and projections, particularly in respect of affordable housing, minerals, waste and renewable energy generation.
- 7.8 From a regional perspective, the LDP is assisting in meeting regional objectives relating to minerals, waste and leisure/tourism facilities.
- 7.9 Locally, policy intervention and the delivery of allocations are assisting with the process of regeneration, delivering well-designed development in sustainable locations, protecting the natural and historic environment, and helping to meet local community needs.

Do any policies need changing to reflect changes in national policy?

- 7.10 Changes to national policy or guidance that may have an effect or impact upon the planning responsibilities of the LDP are set out in Section 3 of this AMR as necessary and appropriate. Having reviewed the relevant documents and strategies, it is considered that, in themselves, these changes do not require the LDP and its associated policy framework to be immediately amended or changed.
- 7.11 Notwithstanding this, the full review of the LDP, which was undertaken over the monitoring period, has identified a number of policy areas which require amending in order to reflect changes to national policy. This work will be undertaken as part of the preparation of a replacement LDP.

Are the policies and related targets being met or is progress being made towards meeting them (including publication of relevant SPG)?

- 7.12 Information collected through the AMR process indicates that many of the Plan's policies are being met and that there continues to be positive movement towards related targets. In terms of LDP policy, Para 7.17 below summarises the policy areas that have been triggered for detailed consideration as part of the preparation of a replacement LDP.
- 7.13 From an SEA/SA perspective, Chapter 6 sets out the results of the SEA Monitoring process which concludes that the overall effects of the plan are in balance. There is, however, some concern over the elevated levels of nitrogen dioxide at Twynyrodyn Road, Twynyrodyn, and the deterioration in the overall status of the Nant Morlais waterbody to 'bad'. The implications of these unforeseen environmental effects will need to be considered further through an updated SA/SEA, which will be prepared alongside the production of the replacement LDP.
- 7.14 Six SPG documents have been published and adopted by the Council since the adoption of the LDP in 2011; these relate to Affordable Housing, Planning Obligations, Shopfront Design, Sustainable Design, Nature and Development and Householder Design. A Policy Clarification Note has been produced in respect of the requirements of LDP Policy AS24 – Employment Site Protection, and a process flow

chart also prepared to aid the consideration of planning proposals involving the potential loss of community facilities against LDP Policy BW15 – Community Facilities.

Where progress has not been made, what are the reasons for this and what knock on effects may it have?

- 7.15 Between 2011 and 2016, clear trends have emerged as to which policies are performing as expected and which are not. Some policies and allocations are clearly progressing slower than intended or may even be static, whilst a handful may be progressing at a faster rate than originally envisaged.
- 7.16 A variety of recommendations are set out in the relevant sections of this AMR, and these include undertaking further research and analysis of pertinent issues as part of the preparation of a replacement LDP. Continued close monitoring will also be necessary in helping to ensure identified under-performance in certain areas does not become a more acute, extensive, and longer-term trend. However, it is recognised that the LDP may be constrained in its ability to have a direct influence on economic conditions or the state of the market which are the main factors at play.

Do any aspects of the LDP need adjusting or replacing because they are not working as intended or are not achieving the objectives of the strategy and / or sustainable development objectives?

- 7.17 The monitoring process has identified several aspects of the plan and its strategy that are not working or are not progressing towards their stated objectives. These are:
- The number of dwellings built in the Primary Growth Area;
 - The supply of housing land;
 - The number of dwellings being built, particularly general market dwellings;
 - The amount of employment floor-space built in the Primary Growth Area;
 - The delivery of B1 employment floor-space;
 - The vacancy rate of existing employment buildings;
 - The percentage of LDP land allocations delivered;
 - The percentage of total development permitted on allocated sites; and
 - The vacancy rate for retail premises in Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre.

If policies or proposals need changing, what suggested actions are required to achieve this?

- 7.18 A variety of recommendations are set out in the relevant sections of this AMR, and these include undertaking further research and analysis of pertinent issues as part of the preparation of the replacement LDP. In respect of the latter, it will be necessary to reconsider the Plan's strategy and individual policies based on the findings of AMRs, updates to the evidence base, on-going S61 surveys and reconsideration of the SA/SEA. It is likely that even though only certain aspects of the plan are under-

achieving, the process of revisiting them or adjusting / replacing them may have wider ranging implications for the LDP as a whole. There is a close interrelationship between many strands of the LDP's strategy, and the advancement towards a particular outcome at a particular time is dependent on a number of factors coming together in a measured and co-ordinated manner.

Recommendations

7.19 As a result of the above, the Annual Monitoring Report for 2016 concludes and recommends as follows:

1. AMR recommendations should be followed to help ensure identified under-performance in certain areas does not become a more acute, extensive, and longer-term trend. Close monitoring will also be necessary in this regard.
2. Amongst the AMR recommendations is the need for further research and analysis of pertinent issues as part of the preparation of a replacement LDP. The latter will consider the level and spatial distribution of growth in order to establish whether the current Strategy is the most appropriate for delivering growth up to 2031. It will also involve a review of all undeveloped housing and employment allocations to ensure that development on these sites remains viable, and revisions to the Plan's vision, primary aim, objectives and policies, where necessary.

APPENDIX 1

Quick-reference to policy achievements

SO1: To capitalise on Merthyr's strategic position, further developing its role as the main commercial, service and employment centre in the Heads of the Valleys area by focusing development within the main town of Merthyr Tydfil.				
Core and Local Indicators	Policy Targets	Policy Achievement	Trigger Level	Performance
<u>Core</u> Number of new homes built in the primary growth area. (Linked to SO6)	Between 1,890 and 2,110 net completions by April 2016	1,288 completions by end of March 2016	-	R
	At least 3,020 net completions by April 2021	-		N/A
<u>Core</u> New employment floorspace built in the primary growth area (Linked to SO7)	Between 36,490 and 40,470 sq m net floorspace by April 2016	25,494 sqm delivered at end of March 2016. 0 sqm delivered during 2014/15 0 sqm delivered during 2015/16	Greater than 14,700 sq m per annum or less than 1,834 sq m per annum for 2 consecutive years.	R R
	At least 110,080 sq m net floorspace by April 2021	-		N/A
<u>Core</u> New retail floor-space built in the town centre (sqm)	Approximately 1,460 sqm net floorspace by the end of 2016	No application registered	No application registered by the end of 2014	Y

<u>Local - Town Centre Health Checks</u>				R	G
i) Total annual vacant floor space in Town Centre (Vacancy rate currently at 13% - Retail, Commercial and Leisure Capacity Study, 2009)	Vacancy rate to reduce to 9% (UK average)	15.9% (0.8% increase)	Vacancy rate increasing for 1 year or remaining static above target for 2 consecutive years		
ii) Percentage of A1 retail uses in primary shopping area	Maintain a percentage of at least 83%	81% (1.3% decrease)	Percentage less than 83%	Y	Y
<u>Core</u>				G	
New social and community infrastructure					
i) Merthyr Tydfil Health Park	Deliver by the end of 2013	Delivered	No planning application registered by the end of 2011		
ii) Merthyr College	Deliver by the end of 2016	Delivered	No planning application registered by the end of 2014		
iii) Ysgol Santes Tudful (Linked to SO8)	Deliver by the end of 2010	Delivered			

SO2: To focus appropriate levels of development within the County Borough's smaller valley communities to create affordable and attractive places to live with good access to jobs and services.

Core and Local Indicators	Policy Targets	Policy Achievement	Trigger Level	Performance
<u>Core</u> Number of new homes built in secondary growth area (Linked to SO6)	Between 280 and 320 net completions by April 2016 At least 550 net completions by April 2021	323 completions by end of March 2016 -	-	G N/A
<u>Core</u> Number of new homes built in other growth areas. (Linked to SO6)	Between 200 and 240 net completions by April 2016 At least 245 net completions by April 2021	45 completions by end of March 2016 -	-	Y N/A
<u>Core</u> New social and community infrastructure (i) Primary Health Care at Treharris (ii) Ynysowen Community Primary School (Linked to SO8)	Deliver by the end of 2010 Deliver by the end of 2010	Delivered Delivered	-	G

SO3. To promote regeneration through the use of suitable and appropriate brownfield land rather than greenfield sites.				
Core and Local Indicators	Policy Targets	Policy Achievement	Trigger Level	Performance
<u>Core</u> Amount of development permitted on previously developed land as a percentage of all development permitted (N.B. this would exclude householder applications and change of use from one non-residential use to another) (ha)	Maintain a percentage of at least 80% over the plan period	2015/16 – 26%	Less than 80% for 2 consecutive years	G
<u>Core</u> Amount of greenfield land lost as a result of inappropriate development on sites not allocated in the LDP	No land lost	No greenfield land lost	1 or 2 developments permitted for 2 consecutive years, or, 3 or more developments permitted in 1 year	G

SO4. To support the principle of sustainability via an energy efficient land use/ transport strategy.				
Core and Local Indicators	Policy Targets	Policy Achievement	Trigger Level	Performance
<u>Local</u> Percentage of new residential development within 400m of bus stop and 600m of primary facilities including a shop and school. (Linked to SO8)	Maintain a percentage of at least 80% over the plan period	91% of new residential developments that were granted planning permission over the monitoring period were within specified distances to local facilities	Less than 80% for 2 consecutive years	G
<u>Local</u> Percentage of new dwellings completed at: (1) less than 20	Approximately 12%	13%	More than 25% of new dwellings at less than 25 dph for 2 consecutive years	G

dph; (2) 20 dph or greater and less than 25 dph; (3) 25 dph or greater and less than 30 dph; (4) 30 dph or greater and less than 50 dph; and (5) 50 dph or greater (Linked to SO6)	Approximately 13% Approximately 25% Approximately 48% Approximately 2%	3% 29% 50% 5%			
<u>Core</u> Percentage of allocated sites developed (ha)	Approximately 65% of allocations developed by the end of 2016 Approximately 100% of allocations developed by the end of 2021	Approximately 34% of allocations developed by March 2016. Delivered approximately 2.65 ha (15%) over the monitoring period (Trigger level approximately 4.5 ha) -	Less than 25% of LDP phased delivery rate for 2 consecutive years	R	Y
				N/A	
<u>Core</u> Percentage of total development permitted on allocated sites (ha)	Maintain a percentage of approximately 85% over the plan period	Approximately 8.5% of total development permitted on allocated sites over the monitoring period	Less than 80% for 2 consecutive years	R	

<u>Local</u>				Y
Highway network improvements				
(1) Aberfan – Merthyr Vale Link (T1)	Deliver by the end of 2011	Completed during 2015/2016	-	
(4) Pentwyn Road, Quakers Yard (T2)	Deliver by the end of 2021	-	No planning application registered by the end of 2019	N/A
(5) A472 at Fiddlers Elbow (T3)	Deliver by the end of 2021	-	No planning application registered by the end of 2019	N/A
<u>Local</u>				Y
Remodelling of Merthyr Tydfil Central Bus Station	Deliver by the end of 2016	Application registered during monitoring period	No planning application registered by the end of 2014	

SO5. To manage natural resources wisely avoiding irreversible damage in order to maintain and enhance their value for future generations.					
Core and Local Indicators	Policy Targets	Policy Achievement	Trigger Level	Performance	
<u>Core</u>				Y	Y
The tonnage (Mt) of primary land-won aggregates permitted in accordance with the Regional Technical Statement for Aggregates	Minimum of 4.92 Mt produced by the end of 2016	Approximately 3.5 Mt jointly produced since 2011	Less than 1.1 Mt per annum for 2 consecutive years		
	Minimum of 9.02 Mt produced by the end of 2021	Approximately 0..58 Mt produced in 2015		N/A	
	(N.B. targets are based on joint production with Brecon Beacons National Park)				

<u>Core</u> Aggregates landbank	Minimum 10 year land bank maintained throughout the plan period	Current land bank sufficient to maintain a minimum 10 year land bank throughout the plan period	Landbank falling below target	G
<u>Core</u> Amount of development (by TAN 15 paragraph 5.1 development category) permitted in C1 and C2 floodplain areas not meeting all TAN 15 tests (paragraph 6.2 i-v)	No developments permitted	No developments granted planning permission in C1 or C2 floodplain areas that do not meet all TAN 15 tests	1 or more developments permitted	G
<u>Local</u> Developments incorporating sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS)	All developments to include SuDS where appropriate (N.B Excludes developments that have not incorporated SuDS for environmental or practical reasons)	All developments granted planning permission over the monitoring period incorporate SuDS where appropriate	1 or 2 developments permitted without SuDS for 2 consecutive years, or, 3 or more developments permitted without SuDS in 1 year	G
<u>Core</u> Amount of new licensed waste management facilities permitted	Between 1.1 and 3.2 hectares of B2 employment land developed for waste management facilities. (N.B. New facilities will be delivered in partnership with Rhondda Cynon Taf)	One new multipurpose waste treatment facility granted planning permission over monitoring period	No new facilities granted planning permission by the end of 2012	G

	New civic amenity site in the south of the Borough to be delivered by the end of 2016	Replacement civic amenity site approved at Aberfan	No planning application registered by the end of 2014	G
<u>Local</u> Landfill capacity at Trecatty	To maintain spare capacity over the Plan period	Input below maximum in 2014	Input at the maximum of 625,000 tpa for 3 consecutive years	G

SO6: To provide a range of dwelling sizes and types, including affordable and special needs housing, which support the need of the local community, attract new inhabitants to the area and create mixed and socially inclusive communities.				
Core and Local Indicators	Policy Targets	Policy Achievement	Trigger Level	Performance
<u>Core</u> Housing Land Supply	Maintain a minimum of 5 years supply (ha)	1.6 years	Less than a 5 year supply for 1 year	R
<u>Core</u> Number of all dwellings built	Between 2,400 and 2,720 net completions by April 2016	1,656 completions by end of March 2016	20% less or greater than LDP strategy build rate for 2 consecutive years	R
	At least 3,800 net completions by April 2021	-		N/A
<u>Core</u> Number of new general market dwellings built	Between 2,110 and 2,390 net completions by April 2016	1,328 completions by end of March 2016 79 completions during 2015/2016	20% less or greater than LDP strategy build rate for 2 consecutive- years	R

	At least 3,330 net completions by April 2021	-		N/A	
<u>Core</u> Number of affordable dwellings built	Between 225 and 255 net completions by April 2016	328 completions by end of March 2016 41 completions during 2015/2016	20% less or greater than LDP strategy build rate for 2 consecutive- years	Y	
	At least 350 net completions by April 2021	-		N/A	
<u>Local</u> Number of affordable dwellings secured as a planning obligation	Approximately 130 by April 2016	43 dwellings by end of March 2016 10% delivered in 10% Area. No relevant housing applications granted planning permission in 5% Area	10% Area: delivering less than 7.5% or more than 12.5% 5% Area: delivering less than 2.5% or more than 7.5%	Y	G
	Approximately 240 by April 2021	-		N/A	
<u>Local</u> Number of affordable dwellings secured through affordable housing exceptions policy	Approximately 10 by April 2016	No planning application submitted	No planning application submitted by the end of 2014	R	
	Approximately 20 by April 2021	--		N/A	
<u>Local</u> Average house price (Baseline: Approximately £86,900 at 2010, amended in line with Land Registry	-	£68,529	+/- 10% change from base level	G	

data to £73,153)				
<u>Local</u> Average income (gross weekly pay) (Baseline: Approximately £380 at 2009, amended in line with NOMIS data to £392)	-	£426.20 (8.6% above baseline)	+/- 10% change from base level	Y
<u>Local</u> Vacancy rates of existing housing stock (Baseline: 6% at 2010)	-	4.5%	Vacancy rate increasing for 1 year or remaining static for 2 consecutive years	G
<u>Local</u> Preparation and adoption of Affordable Housing SPG Percentage of relevant planning applications complying with SPG	By the end of 2011 All (post SPG adoption)	SPG adopted March 2012 All applications complying		G

SO7. To improve and diversify the economy, safeguarding existing jobs and creating a range of new job opportunities in a sustainable manner.					
Core and Local Indicators	Policy Targets	Policy Achievement	Trigger Level	Performance	
<u>Core</u> New B1 floorspace delivered	Between 28,500 and 30,790 sq m net floorspace delivered by April 2016 At least 53,400 sq m net floorspace delivered by April 2021	10,661 sq m delivered by end of March 2016. 0 sqm delivered 2015/16 0 sqm delivered 2014/15	Greater than 7,120 sq m per annum or less than 890 sq m per annum for 2 consecutive years	R	R
				N/A	

<u>Core</u> New B2/B8 floorspace delivered	Between 7,920 and 9,680 sq m net floorspace delivered by April 2016	15,601 sq m delivered by end of March 2016. 0 sqm delivered 2015/16 0 sqm delivered 2014/15	Greater than 7,540 sq m per annum or less than 940 sq m per annum for 2 consecutive years	Y	R
	At least 56,500 sq m net floorspace delivered by April 2021			N/A	
<u>Core</u> Minimum number of net additional jobs delivered	Between 1,800 and 1,980 jobs delivered by April 2016	1,819 jobs delivered by end of March 2016 492.5 jobs delivered 2015/2016	Greater than 592 jobs per annum or less than 74 jobs per annum for 2 consecutive years	G	G
	At least 4,440 jobs delivered April by 2021			N/A	
<u>Local</u> Developments granted planning permission that result in a loss of employment land within employment sites protected under Policy AS24	No loss of employment land on protected employment sites except where justified within the terms of the policy	No unjustified loss of employment land	1 or 2 developments granted planning permission for 2 consecutive years, or, 3 or more developments granted planning permission in 1 year	G	
<u>Local</u> Percentage of economically active people in employment (Baseline: 64% at 2009)	Approximately 74% by the end of 2016	65.9% for 2015/116 (-2.3%)	Reduction of 5% or failure to increase for 2 consecutive years.	R	Y
	Approximately 80% by the end of 2021			N/A	

<u>Local</u>				
Vacancy rates of existing employment buildings (Baseline vacancy figures as of 2009: B1 = 5.6%; B2/B8 = 9.7%)	Maintain vacancy rate within range of 5-10% of existing stock	20%	+ or – 2.5% beyond range for 2 consecutive years	R

SO8. To promote social inclusion and ensure equality of opportunity through reducing the need to travel and providing better access by sustainable means to employment opportunities, community facilities and services.				
Core and Local Indicators	Policy Targets	Policy Achievement	Trigger Level	Performance
<u>Local</u>				
Number of community facilities lost through change of use	No loss of viable community facilities below identified need (except where justified within terms of policy)	No unjustified loss of a community facility	1 or 2 community facilities lost for 2 consecutive years, or, 3 or more community facilities lost in 1 year	G
<u>Local</u>				
Amount of planning obligations secured on allocated housing developments	Secure contributions on 33 (67%) of the allocated housing developments	No allocated sites failing to secure identified contributions.	1 or 2 sites failing to secure planning obligations for 2 consecutive years, or, 3 or more sites failing to secure planning obligations in 1 year	G
Percentage of relevant planning applications complying with SPG	All (Post SPG adoption)	All applications complying	-	G

SO9. To promote health and wellbeing by providing accessible and varied opportunities for leisure and recreational activities.				
Core and Local Indicators	Policy Targets	Policy Achievement	Trigger Level	Performance
<u>Local</u> Amount of public open space, including play space and informal recreational areas, lost to development (ha) which is not allocated in the development plan.	No loss below identified need.	0 ha loss	-	G
<u>Local</u> New leisure/recreational development ii) Parc Taf Bargoed	Deliver by the end of 2016	Development delivered	No planning application by the end of 2014	G

SO10. To ensure good quality design of new development and the creation of safer communities.				
SO12. To contribute towards reducing the impact of climate change through reduced carbon dioxide emissions in new developments.				
Core and Local Indicators	Policy Targets	Policy Achievement	Trigger Level	Performance
<u>Local</u> Percentage of relevant schemes incorporating "secured by design principles"	All major applications	All major applications granted planning permission incorporate "secured by design principles"	-	G
<u>Local</u> Preparation and adoption of Sustainable Design SPG	By the end of 2012	SPG adopted July 2013	-	G
<u>Local</u> Percentage of	All (Post SPG	All relevant	-	G

planning applications complying with sustainable design SPG	adoption)	applications complying with SPG		
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SO11. To ensure the continued protection and enhancement of the natural, cultural, built and historic environment.				
Core and Local Indicators	Policy Targets	Policy Achievement	Trigger Level	Performance
<u>Local</u> Developments granted planning permission that do not preserve or enhance scheduled ancient monuments, registered historic parks and gardens, listed buildings or conservation areas	No developments that would fail to preserve or enhance heritage features granted planning permission	No developments granted planning permission failed to preserve or enhance heritage features	1 or 2 developments failing to preserve or enhance features for 2 consecutive years, or, 3 or more developments failing to preserve or enhance features in 1 year	G
<u>Local</u> Developments granted planning permission that cause harm to the overall nature conservation value of SINCs or the LNR	No developments that would cause harm to the overall nature conservation value of SINCs or the LNR granted planning permission	No development that would cause harm to the overall nature conservation value of SINCs of the LNR granted planning permission	1 or 2 developments resulting in overall harm for 2 consecutive years, or, 3 or more developments resulting in overall harm in 1 year	G
<u>Local</u> Developments granted planning permission that cause harm to a SSSI	No developments that would cause harm to a SSSI granted planning permission	No developments that would cause harm to a SSSI granted planning permission	1 or more developments resulting in harm to a SSSI	G