

MERTHYR TYDFIL
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
2006-2021

ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT
For the period
1st April 2016 – 31st March 2017

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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 sixth AMR of the Merthyr Tydfil LDP and is based on the period 1st April 2016 – 31st March 2017 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.
- 1.13 The Preferred Strategy of the replacement LDP has been published for public consultation between 14th July and 6th October 2017. This significant contextual change will continue to influence many of the policy and sustainability assessments, conclusions and recommendations made in 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

Chapter 10 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW), formerly known as *Planning for Retail and Town Centres*, and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 4, formerly known as *Retailing and Town Centres* were revised in November 2016 in order to align 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.

Chapter 10 now entitled *Retail and Commercial Development* reflects the fact that retail and commercial centres have had to adapt and transform themselves in recent times in order to compete in an increasingly diverse market. It recognises that although retailing should continue to underpin retailing and commercial centres, it is increasingly only one of the factors which contribute towards their vibrancy. It places a stronger emphasis on the requirement for LDPs to set-out a locally-derived hierarchy of centres and the need for retail policies to be framed by a retail strategy.

TAN 4, now also entitled *Retail and Commercial Development* supports the guidance set out in the revised Chapter 10 of PPW and should be read in conjunction with it. Policy for retail and commercial centres should be positive and flexible recognising the individual needs and potential of each centre, plan for their futures in a co-ordinated way, and not undermine the importance of retail and commercial centres as the sustainable locations they offer for businesses and the community.

In November 2016, Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners Ltd was commissioned by the Council to prepare a Retail and Commercial Leisure Capacity Study in line with the revised national retail and commercial policy. The report concluded that there is scope for limited new development within MTCB over the plan period between 2026 and 2031. Although, the priority should be the reoccupation of vacant floorspace in Merthyr Tydfil town centre and the smaller local centres mixed use developments, including food and beverage and leisure should be considered to broaden the attraction of the town centre. The existing Merthyr Tydfil Bus Station site is considered a potential site to deliver these types of facilities along with replacement retail floorspace.

The proposed changes to national retail policy and guidance and recommendations of the Commercial and Retail Leisure Study mean that elements of retail policy within the adopted LDP require some revision. This work is being undertaken as part of preparation of the 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. At least 3020 net completions by April 2021.	-	1409 completions by April 2017.

Analysis

The data collected shows that 1409 dwellings were built in the Primary Growth Area between the start of the Plan period and April 2017. This figure indicates that the correct proportion of housing has been built in the Primary Growth Area in comparison to the Secondary and Other Growth Areas of the County Borough. The number of completions, however, is well below that required to meet the adopted LDP strategy.

Recommendations

The rate of housing delivery required by the current LDP has not been achieved since adoption. The rate of completions has remained at around 60% of the number of dwellings required.

Since publication of the LDP Review Report, work has been undertaken on preparation of a replacement LDP, with a new Preferred Strategy published for consultation in July 2017.

A new, more deliverable, strategy for housing delivery is being proposed in the replacement LDP, based on the findings of the Review Report and other work undertaken such as Options Appraisals and a call for candidate sites.

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	Current figure at end of March 2017 is 26,494 sq m	1000sq m of floor-space delivered during 2016/2017

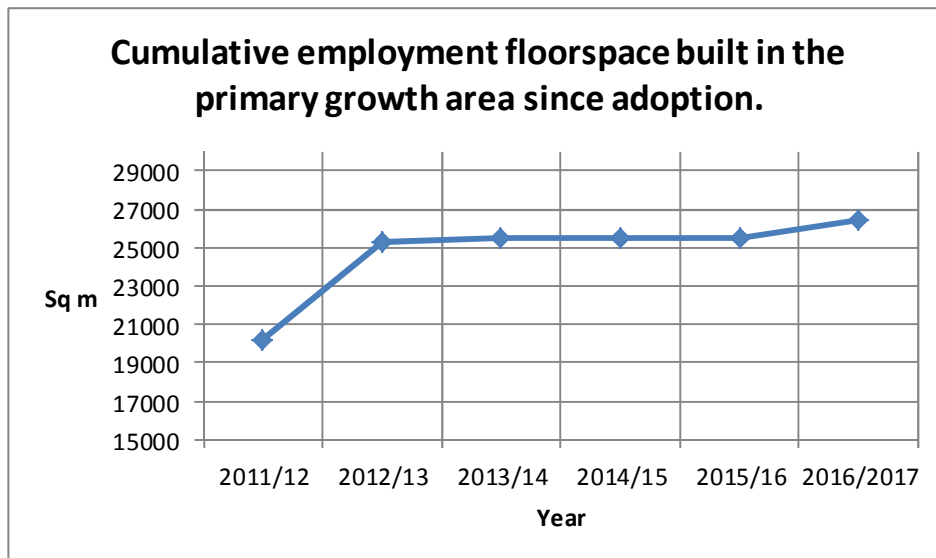
		At least 110,080 sq m net floor-space by April 2021	2 consecutive years.		
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Analysis

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 was a significant slowdown in the amount of employment floor-space delivered over the previous three monitoring periods, with only 206 sq m delivered during 2013-2014, and 0 sq m delivered during both 2014-15 and 2015-2016. However, 1000 sq m was built during this monitoring period. (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 is 26,494 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 four consecutive annual monitoring periods. Given that the employment floor-space target for April 2021 is 110,000 sq m, a significant amount of new employment floor-space is still required in the Primary Growth Area.



Graph 1

Recommendations

The low level of new employment floor-space delivered over the last four monitoring period's 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 2017.

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 was primarily dependent 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 2015-2016 highlighted the fact the trigger level had been hit and indicated that the retail allocation on the Central Bus Station had not come forward as anticipated. 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 was unmet.

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. Both buildings have been demolished and the community services relocated to other sites within the County Borough.

Planning approval was gained for a new 'Intermodal Transport Facility', which includes a small amount of ancillary retail floor-space, in July 2016. The land and funding required for

the new facility is in the process of being finalised. As of August 2017 a package of information on the project is being completed for consideration by WEFO and the Building for the Future Programme. In addition a new funding stream via the Metro is to be announced shortly by Welsh Government.

Whilst construction of the new transport facility is yet to commence, there is still a reasonable likelihood that the scheme will be delivered by the end of the current Plan period given that planning permission is in place and the majority of land ownership issues have been resolved.

Recommendations

Policies AS18 and AS20 have been revisited as part of preparation of the emerging replacement LDP, taking into account the changes made to national retail policy and guidance, and the future requirements identified in the Merthyr Tydfil Retail and Commercial Leisure Study. Given that the new 'Intermodal Transport Facility' has not come forward to date a site allocation for it will be included in the emerging replacement LDP. It's progress will continue to be monitored with the intention of including it as part of the Deposit LDP should the site not have come forward by that time.

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). ii) Percentage of A1 retail uses in primary shopping area.	Vacancy rate to reduce to 9% (UK average 2009). Maintain a percentage of at least 83%.	Vacancy rate increasing for 1 year or remaining static above target for 2 consecutive years. Percentage less than 83%.	From 15.9% to 11.1%. From 81% to 79.3%.	Decreased. No. of A1 units decreased to 3.7% below trigger.

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, it was also noted in the previous AMR that the Townscape Heritage Initiative was underway in the town centre with several properties under renovation and that the Vibrant and Viable Places regeneration programme was about to begin which would also bring certain disused town centre buildings back in to use. It was therefore anticipated that the vacancy rate would continue to fall over the next monitoring period as more buildings were brought back in to beneficial use. The current percentage of vacant units is 11.1%, which represents a substantial decrease from the previous AMR; meaning that although this is above the target's rate, it does not hit the trigger level, which is favourable. Given these circumstances it is considered that the vacancy rate is even less of a concern than it was in last year's AMR.

Moreover, 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 9.4% in January 2017, up from the very low vacancy rate of 8.7% reported in January 2016. According to WRC – Springboard footfall and vacancies monitor-January 2017², in Wales, it has decreased from last year's vacancy rate of 13.7% in January 2016 to 12.5% in January 2017.

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. In this case, the Merthyr Tydfil vacancy rate of 11.1% scores favourably when compared to the Welsh average of 12.5%.

With regard to the percentage of A1 retail uses in the primary shopping area, the figure has dropped once again over the monitoring period from 81% to 79.3%. The percentage of A1 retail uses therefore continues to be below the target and associated trigger of less than 83%. The decrease does, however, result from otherwise vacant properties being brought back into beneficial use and thereby ensuring that the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the town centre is maintained in line with national policy. Policy AS19 has therefore been revisited as part of preparation of the emerging replacement LDP, taking into account the changes made to national retail policy and guidance in respect of encouraging flexibility in responding to issues that different retail centres face.

Recommendations

The health of the 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.

² <https://brc.org.uk/news/2017/footfall-growth-in-wales-tempered-by-higher-vacancy-rate>

Whilst it is recognised that Merthyr Tydfil's town centre vacancy rates have fluctuated since adoption, it is safe to say that the aforementioned regeneration initiatives have had a beneficial effect so that a downward trend in vacancy rates has been firmly established. Although Merthyr Tydfil's town centre's vacancy rate continues to be above the UK average it is very promising that it has now fallen below the Welsh average.

Given that the percentage of A1 retail uses in the Primary Shopping Area has slipped further below the relevant trigger, amendments have been proposed to this policy as part of the preparation of the Preferred Strategy of the replacement LDP to reflect the objectives of national policy which recognise the changing nature of retail and commercial centres.

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 four monitoring periods. Consequently, it appears increasingly unlikely that the LDP's enhanced growth strategy will be delivered by 2021 and this was reflected in both the LDP Review Report (2016) which 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 offers this opportunity to re-consider the level and spatial distribution of growth through the identification of alternative strategic options for development up to 2031. A review of all potential housing and employment allocations in the LDP will also be necessary to ensure that development on these sites is 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. Although it is of concern that town centre vacancy rates remain higher than the UK average, the fact that the rate has further decreased over the monitoring period, and is now below the Welsh average, are positive signs and an indication that a downward trend has been established. However, given that the percentage of A1 retail uses in the Primary Shopping Area has dropped further below its target, policy amendments have been suggested as part of the preparation of the emerging replacement LDP.

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. At least 550 net completions by April 2021.	-	374 completions by April 2017.

Analysis

The monitoring data collated shows that 374 dwellings have been built in the Secondary Growth Area between the start of the Plan period and April 2017.

This figure indicates that the overall proportion of housing completions is still an appropriate distribution in line with the overall LDP strategy and that the target of 550 completions by 2021 is still achievable.

Recommendations

No action is required at present, however, housing policy is subject to review as part of the replacement LDP.

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. At least 245 net	-	46 completions by April 2017.

		completions by April 2021.		
<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p>The monitoring data collated shows that 46 dwellings have been built in the Other Growth Areas between the start of the Plan period and April 2017. The figure of 46 completions indicates that the Other Growth Areas have not delivered enough housing developments over the plan period; however the overall proportion of housing completions is still an appropriate distribution in line with the overall LDP strategy.</p> <p>The majority of completions in the Other Growth Areas will take place on Project Riverside, Merthyr Vale which is now starting to progress. Infrastructure works on site including an access road and flood defences were completed by Autumn 2015, and the site has now been marketed, with the Council currently in negotiation with a volume house-builder with formal pre-application proposals submitted for approximately 150 dwellings. This site will be crucial in any revised LDP in ensuring that the smaller communities in the County Borough remain viable settlements.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>The rate of housing delivery required by the current LDP has not been achieved since adoption. The rate of completions has remained at around 60% of the number of dwellings required.</p> <p>Since publication of the LDP Review Report, work has been undertaken on preparation of a replacement LDP, with a new Preferred Strategy published for consultation in July 2017.</p> <p>A new, more deliverable, strategy for housing delivery is being proposed in the replacement LDP, based on the findings of the Review Report and other work undertaken such as Options Appraisals and a call for candidate sites.</p>				

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 and Other Growth Areas indicates that the Plan's future aspirations have a realistic prospect of being realised in these parts of the County Borough, however, 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 as this development will make up the vast majority of dwellings in the Other Growth Areas.

Notwithstanding the above, 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 a plan period of up to 2031. The Preferred Strategy of the replacement LDP indicates that the spatial distribution of growth will be amended, with no Secondary Growth Area proposed. The Southern part of the County Borough will all be referred to as the Other Growth Area.

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	2016/17 – 73% permitted on previously developed land.

Analysis

The amount of development permitted during the period covered in this report added up to 19.37ha. 14.19ha of this total area was permitted on previously developed land. This equates to 73% of development being permitted on previously developed land.

During the present economic climate, data such as this has the potential to change dramatically year by year due to the variable levels of development currently taking place. The overall amount of development permitted decreased considerably this year from around 35 ha to 19 ha, therefore it will be important to continue to monitor this indicator closely over the coming years.

Recommendations

The proportion of allocations on previously developed land will be reviewed as part of work on the replacement LDP.

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>Like the previous indicator, data such as this has the potential to change dramatically year by year due to the lower levels of development currently taking place. Therefore it will be important to continue to monitor this indicator closely over the coming years.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>No action required, this part of the policy is currently being achieved.</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, 73% of development was on brownfield rather than greenfield land, a significant increase from last year's result of 26%, demonstrating that regeneration continues to be promoted through the regeneration of suitable brownfield land rather than greenfield sites. Secondly, no greenfield land was lost to inappropriate development during the monitoring period.

Notwithstanding this, 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 potential housing and employment allocations to ensure that development on these sites is viable and deliverable.

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 requires local authorities in Wales to produce active travel maps and deliver year on year improvements to active travel routes and facilities. This includes journeys to school, work and shops or to access services, such as health or leisure centres. Active Travel does not include walking and cycling for recreational purposes.

27 existing routes within the County Borough were approved by the Welsh Government in April 2016. Consultation on a draft Active Travel Integrated Network Map (INM) was concluded on October 7th and the final INM will be submitted to the Welsh Office for approval in November 2017, constituting a 15 year plan for improving walking and cycling routes across the County Borough, which will inform the emerging replacement LDP.

Transport for Wales sought views on the high level direction for the new Wales and Borders Rail Service including the South Wales Metro on behalf of the Welsh Government and the Department for Transport in May 2017, to help define what sort of rail service is desirable. The South Wales metro is a proposed integration of heavy rail and development of light rail and bus-based public transport services and systems in South East Wales around the hub of Cardiff Central.

Chapter 8, of PPW has been updated to account of Local Transport Plans superseding Regional Transport Plans.

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	91.7%

Analysis

Over the monitoring period, 44 applications were granted full planning approval, 16 outline approvals, 6 were refused permission, 5 were withdrawn and 5 are pending a decision for residential development. 91.7% of all residential approvals were located within close proximity to local facilities, compared with 91% reported in the last AMR. It is therefore considered that Policy BW4 is consistently functioning effectively, guiding new residential development to locations where local facilities can sustainably be accessed.

Recommendations

Given that this element of policy is currently being achieved, it is proposed to take it forward into the emerging replacement LDP, predominantly drawing the settlement boundaries around existing settlements and directing new development towards previously developed land where primary facilities already exist.

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%		0%
	(3) 25 dph or greater and less than 30 dph;	Approximately 25%		26%
	(4) 30 dph or greater and less than 50 dph; and	Approximately 48%		50%
	(5) 50 dph or greater	Approximately 2%		11%

Analysis

The figures collected for the monitoring period show that dwellings were constructed broadly in line with the indicators' target.

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 again follow this trend.

The fact that over 70% 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 other developments of slightly higher densities at the Former Mardy Hospital, Cyfarthfa Mews and the Former School site in Abercanaid.

Recommendations

No action required, this part of the policy is currently being achieved.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance	
-	Percentage of allocated sites developed (ha)	Approximately 65% of allocations developed by the end of 2016 Approximately 100% of allocations delivered by the end of 2021	Less than 25% of phased delivery rate for 2 consecutive years (Trigger level 25% / approximately 4.5 ha)	Approximately 35% of allocations developed by March 2017	Delivered approximately 19% (3.45 ha)

Analysis

Over the monitoring period, approximately 3.45 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 35% 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. In order to meet the target of delivering all sites by 2021, over 60% of allocated sites would need to be delivered in the remaining 4 years of the Plan period. As a consequence, it is considered that the both the level and spatial distribution of growth needs to be reconsidered as part of the replacement LDP.

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 3.45 ha of allocated housing sites has been developed over the monitoring period. The delay in the delivery of housing sites is largely attributable to the

economic downturn, but it is also linked to level of growth proposed as part of the existing Enhanced Growth Strategy. There will be a need to review all potential housing allocations in the replacement LDP to ensure that development on these sites is viable and deliverable.

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 report (2016) identified the need to prepare a replacement LDP following the full revision procedure and the Preferred Strategy of the replacement LDP proposes a new strategy in terms of both the level of growth proposed, and the spatial distribution of any growth. 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 various regeneration programmes 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 17%

Analysis

Over the monitoring period, approximately 17% 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 five 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 2014 and 2015 (provisional estimate of GVA in Wales is an increase of 2.8%), 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. However, it remains very unlikely that the LDP's enhanced growth strategy will be delivered and work on the replacement LDP should include the promotion of more deliverable allocations in order to improve the performance of this indicator.

Recommendations

The LDP Review report (2016) identified the need to prepare a replacement LDP following the full revision procedure, and the Preferred Strategy of the replacement LDP proposes a new strategy in terms of both the level of growth proposed, and the spatial distribution of any growth.

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 Road, Quakers Yard (T2)	Deliver by the end of 2021	No planning 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	

Analysis

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 2015/16. There has been no further progress in regard to the remaining two highway

network proposals.

Recommendations

Continue to monitor the delivery of the remaining core highway network improvements safeguarded by Policy AS10.

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 and approved during monitoring period.

Analysis

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’ was submitted and subsequently approved in July 2016. As of August 2017 a package of information on the project is being completed for consideration by WEFO and the Building for the Future Programme and addition a new funding stream via the Metro is to be announced shortly by Welsh Government. Whilst construction of the new transport facility is yet to commence, there is still a reasonable likelihood that the scheme will be delivered by the end of the current Plan period given that planning permission is in place and the majority of land ownership issues have been resolved.

Recommendations

A site allocation for the new ‘Intermodal Transport Facility’ has been included in the emerging replacement LDP, the progress of which will be continually monitored with the intention of including it as part of the Deposit LDP should the site not come forward by that time.

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 potential housing and employment allocations in the LDP will also be necessary to ensure that development on these sites is 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

In February 2016, the deadline for the Periodic Review ROMP (Review of Mineral Permission) for Vaynor Quarry was extended until 1st January 2019.

Whilst falling outside the period of the AMR, it is noteworthy that the South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party annual report for 2014 was published in July 2017.

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 Minimum of 9.02 Mt produced by the end of 2021 (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 3.95 Mt of primary aggregates jointly produced since 2011	Circa 0.45 Mt of primary aggregates jointly produced in 2016
	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 0.45 Mt in 2016. When combined with the amount of primary aggregates jointly produced since 2011, the cumulative total is approximately 3.95 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 2016 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 relatively 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 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, however, minerals policy will be reviewed as part of work on the replacement LDP

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	1 or 2 developments permitted without SuDS for 2 consecutive	All developments granted planning permission incorporate

		incorporated SuDS for environmental or practical reasons)	years, or, 3 or more developments permitted without SuDS in 1 year	SuDS where appropriate
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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 C2 over the monitoring period. In all but two instances, the developments were justified in their location and the consequences associated with flooding were deemed acceptable as they met TAN 15 tests. Although no objections were raised to these two applications by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), they consider it good practice for a Flood Consequence Assessment (FCA) to be undertaken to ensure all parties are aware of the risk to and from developments to ensure that the risks of flooding are minimised as far as possible. In both cases the developers were sent a copy of NRW's response and suitably worded informatives were added to the decision notices. It is therefore 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 during previous

				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 2015.

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, as previously reported, a waste treatment facility was granted planning permission on the southern part of Trecatti landfill site during the previous 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 2015 was again 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, however, waste management policy will be reviewed as part of work on the replacement LDP.

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.

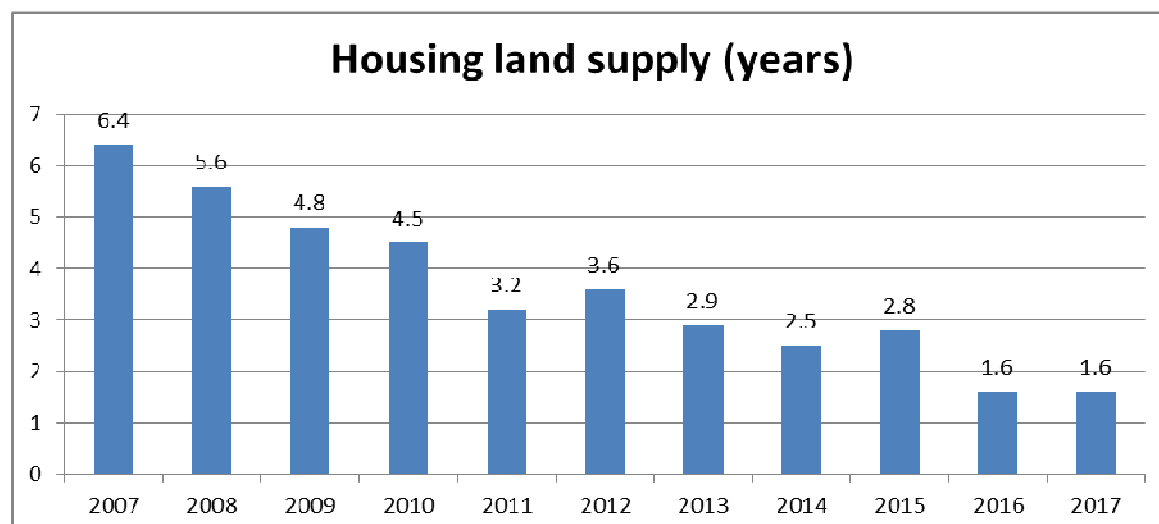
3.6.2 **Policy Monitoring**

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

Analysis

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. If land supply was assessed against a 5 year past build rate, the land supply figure would be 5.04 years.

The 2017 Joint Housing Land Availability Study (JHLAS) has calculated a 1.6 years housing land supply, which is the same land supply figure that was calculated in 2016 (see Graph below). This level of housing land supply 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.



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.

Of the 2100 units that sit in Categories 3 and 4, the Council are the landowners on approximately 1500 units, therefore, it is possible for the Council to have a positive direct effect on housing land supply prior to adoption of a replacement LDP.

The Vibrant and Viable Places regeneration programme has now concluded, and the Council has been successful, through this funding, in carrying out a significant amount of survey work on a number of sites under Council ownership which in total could provide 600-700 dwellings. Furthermore, the Council has gained outline planning permission on one of these sites, and is currently in discussions with developers on a further two of these sites. Continuing this work over the next two years will ensure that a greater number of units can be added to the land supply and ensure that a replacement LDP has an adequate housing land supply.

Recommendations

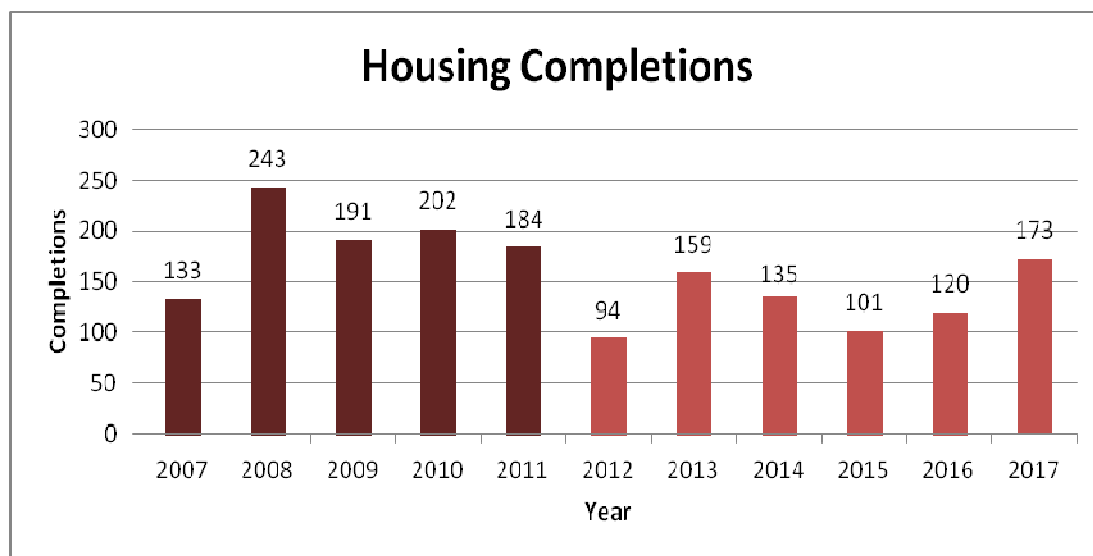
The housing land supply has consistently decreased against the residual method since adoption of the LDP in 2011, and this is regarded as a key indicator in the performance of a Local Development Plan. Since publication of the LDP Review Report, work has been undertaken on the preparation of a replacement LDP, with a new Preferred Strategy published for consultation in July 2017.

A new, more deliverable, strategy for housing delivery is being proposed in the replacement LDP, based on the findings of the Review Report and other work undertaken such as Options Appraisals and a call for candidate sites.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
	Number of all dwellings built	Between 2,400 and 2,720 net completions by April 2016. At least 3800 net completions by April 2021.	20% less or greater than LDP strategy build rate for 2 consecutive years.	1829 completions at April 2017. (173 completions during 2016/17)

Analysis

The level of completions has risen during 2016/17 as 173 units were built in comparison to 120 units in 2015/16. However, this still results in the indicator again scoring a 'red' as the figure is still well below the level of building required to fulfil the LDP's strategy (253 per annum).



Graph 3

Recommendations

The rate of housing delivery required by the current LDP has not been achieved since adoption. The rate of completions has remained at around 60% of the number of dwellings required.

Since publication of the LDP Review Report, work has been undertaken on preparation of a replacement LDP, with a new Preferred Strategy published for consultation in July 2017.

A new, more deliverable, strategy for housing delivery is being proposed in the replacement LDP, based on the findings of the Review Report and other work undertaken such as Options Appraisals and a call for candidate sites.

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	1482 completions by April 2017 (154

		At least 3330 net completions by April 2021	years	completions during 2016/17)
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Analysis

The number of market completions increased significantly from 79 during 2015/16 to 154 during 2016/17. However, this has still resulted in the indicator again scoring 'red' as the level of completions remains well below what is required in order to fulfil the LDP strategy.

Recommendations

The rate of housing delivery required by the current LDP has not been achieved since adoption. The rate of completions has remained at around 60% of the number of dwellings required.

Since publication of the LDP Review Report, work has been undertaken on preparation of a replacement LDP, with a new Preferred Strategy published for consultation in July 2017.

A new, more deliverable, strategy for housing delivery is being proposed in the replacement LDP, based on the findings of the Review Report and other work undertaken such as Options Appraisals and a call for candidate sites.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
-	Number of affordable dwellings built	Between 225 and 255 net completions by April 2016. At least 350 net completions by April 2021	20% less or greater than LDP strategy build rate for 2 consecutive years	347 completions by April 2017 (19 completions during 2016/17)

Analysis

The data collated shows that 347 affordable dwellings were completed in the County Borough by April 2017. This indicates that there has been a slightly higher level of affordable housing built than initially anticipated and has resulted in the indicator scoring a 'yellow' as this is higher than proposed LDP build rate.

As the overall affordable housing target in the monitoring framework is "at least 350 net

completions by 2021”, the fact that there has been more affordable housing built than initially anticipated by this point in time is not a matter for concern.

Recommendations

No action is required, however housing policy will be reviews as part of work on the replacement LDP.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance	
AS22	Number of affordable dwellings secured as a planning obligation	130 by April 2016 240 by April 2021	10% Area: delivering less than 7.5% or more than 12.5% 5% Area: delivering less than 2.5% or more than 7.5%	45 dwellings by the end of March 2017	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 a scheme at the P & R Motors site, Pentrebach. Financial contributions were also secured via a S106 agreement on schemes at Sweetwater Park, Beacon Heights, Maesyant and Greenacres.

Whilst this results in a ‘yellow’ score for this indicator, this situation needs to be closely monitored as the delivery of affordable housing through planning obligations is dependent upon large housing sites coming forward, which previous indicators have again highlighted as an issue in the County Borough.

Recommendations

Given that there has been a much lower level of housing delivery than that required by the LDP strategy since its' adoption in 2011, it follows that the number of affordable dwellings secured through planning obligations will also be lower than anticipated.

Housing strategy and delivery (including affordable housing) will form an integral part of the revision of the LDP.

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. Approximately 20 by April 2021	No planning application submitted by the end of 2014	No planning application submitted

Analysis

The affordable housing exceptions policy has a target of 20 units by April 2021. As there has not been an application submitted at this time, and the trigger point has now been reached, the indicator now scores a 'red'.

Recommendations

Given that there has been a much lower level of housing delivery than that required by the LDP strategy since its' adoption in 2011, it follows that the number of affordable dwellings secured through the rural exceptions policy has also been lower than anticipated.

Housing strategy and delivery (including affordable housing) will form an integral part of the revision of the LDP.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
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AS22	Average house price (Baseline: Approximately £86,424 at 2010, line with Land Registry Data)	-	+/- 10% change from base level	£94,978
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Analysis

House prices have increased over the monitoring period with a rise of approximately £4,000 over the 12 month period. The average price is 9% higher than the baseline data and results in the indicator scoring 'green'.

Recommendations

The most recent LHMA was published in March 2015 and provides the initial evidence in respect of housing need and affordability that forms part of the review/revision of the LDP. The LHMA has not been updated this year as the Council believe it will be more appropriate to publish the assessment alongside the Replacement Deposit LDP during summer 2018, as this will present the most up to date information regarding housing need at the most appropriate point of LDP preparation.

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	£447

Analysis

Average income has risen during this monitoring period to £447 per week which results in the indicator scoring a 'red' as the figure varies 14% from the baseline data.

Recommendations

The most recent LHMA was published in March 2015 and provides the initial evidence in respect of housing need and affordability that forms part of the review/revision of the LDP. It is also worth pointing out that the LHMA will be revised prior to publication of the Deposit version of the Replacement LDP.

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	4.4% -2016/17

Analysis

2015/16 has seen another small decrease in the vacancy rate of existing stock from 4.5% to 4.4%. This decrease can be linked to an improving housing market in the County Borough where properties are being purchased quicker, partially due to increased confidence in buy to let/investment properties, as well as the fact the prices remain relatively affordable. There has also been grant funding available over the past few years which has been aimed at bringing empty properties and empty space above shops back into use.

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

Analysis

All relevant applications have complied with the Affordable Housing SPG. A 10% on-site

affordable housing contribution was secured on a scheme at the P & R Motors site, Pentrebach and financial contributions were also secured via a S106 agreement on schemes at Sweetwater Park, Beacon Heights, Maesynant and Greenacres.

Recommendations

With the SPG now adopted it will be important to continue to keep accurate records of all planning applications where there is a requirement for affordable housing.

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 was not met. It also appears highly unlikely, despite 173 completions during 2016/17, that the housing target of delivering at least 3,800 dwellings by 2021 will be achieved as this would require in excess of 450 dwellings per annum for the remainder of the plan period.

The delivery of affordable dwellings exceeded the target for 2016 with another 19 affordable dwellings delivered this year, 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. A new, more deliverable, strategy for housing delivery is being proposed in the replacement LDP, based on the findings of the Review Report and other work undertaken such as Options Appraisals and a call for candidate sites.

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

In a referendum on 23 June 2016, the UK electorate voted to leave the European Union (EU). On 29 March 2017, the British government invoked Article 50 of the Treaty on the European Union and the UK is on course to leave the EU in March 2019, in the short to medium term this could potentially bring uncertainty to investors.

In January 2017, the Council, along with other Local Authorities in South East Wales, committed to the formal establishment of the Cardiff Capital Region Joint Cabinet, this being a requirement of the 'City Deal' agreed for the region. Published in December 2016, The Cardiff Capital Region Growth and Competitiveness Commission Report, prepared by an independent commission chaired by international city-region expert Professor Greg Clark, recommends how Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) can best achieve the region's economic growth ambitions. Furthermore, the Council has commenced preparation of an 'Economic Growth Strategy for Merthyr Tydfil', although at the time of writing this remains to be completed.

In 2015, the Welsh Government issued practice guidance on 'Building an Economic Development Evidence Base to support a Local Development Plan'. Supplementing this, in 2017, a regional approach to monitoring employment land was agreed 'in principle' rather than 'in detail' by the South East Wales Strategic Planning Group, following work undertaken by the region's Local Development Plan Pathfinder group.

3.7.2 Policy Monitoring

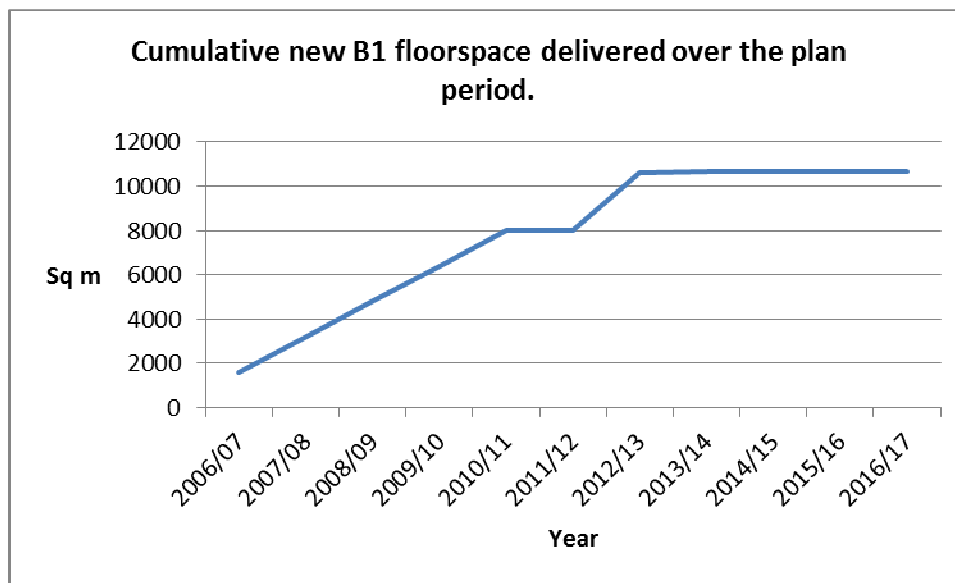
LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance	
BW14 AS14 AS24	New B1 floor-space delivered	Between 28,500 and 30,790 sq m net floor-space delivered by April 2016 At least 53,400 sq m net floor-space by April 2021	Greater than 7,120 sq m per annum or less than 890 sq m per annum for 2 consecutive years	10,661 sq m delivered by the end of March 2017	0 sq m delivered 2016/2017 0 sq m delivered 2015/2016

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 has not been met. Additionally, if this annual rate continues, the target of 53,400 m² by 2021 will also 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 fourth 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 only two B1 related developments (comprising 446m² of floor-space) were granted planning permission over the monitoring period. Therefore, 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 Rhydycar 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.

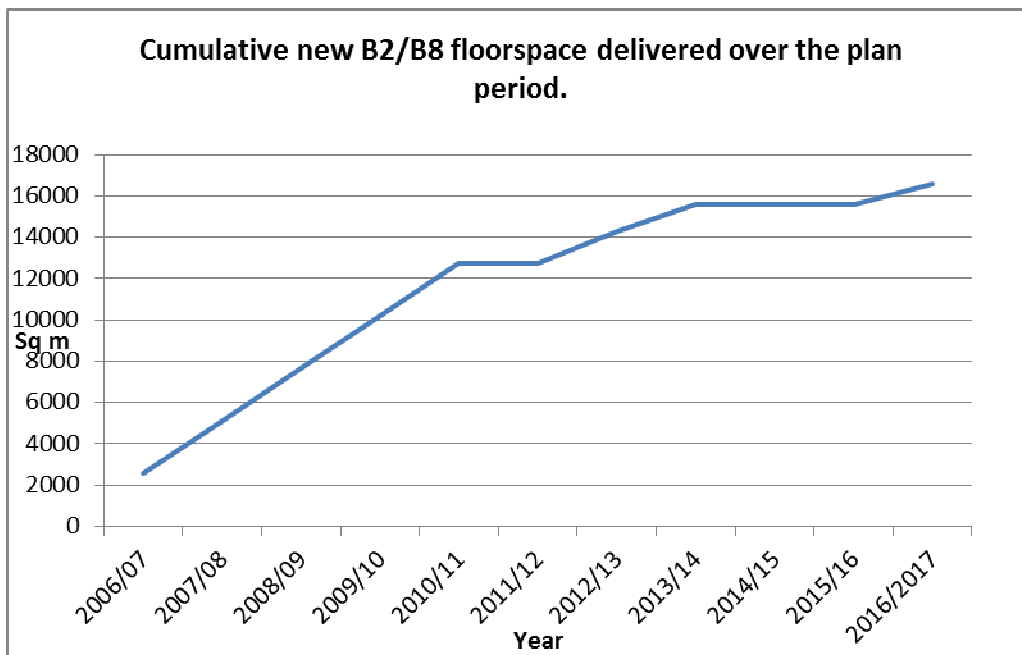
- Development of an economic development evidence base – Work has commenced on developing an economic development evidence base to inform the preparation of the replacement LDP. This will provide an opportunity to review the existing B1 allocations and ensure that the level of provision remains in sync 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.	16,601 sq m delivered by the end of March 2017	1000 sq m delivered 2016/2017 0 sq m delivered 2015/2016

Analysis

This performance indicator contains 2 elements, namely a target floor-space figure by 2021, and an associated trigger level figure.

No B2/B8 floor-space was delivered over the previous two monitoring periods. However, this increased over the current monitoring period to 1000m² of new B2/B8 floor-space. This is above the annual minimum requirement of 940 m² & therefore the score has improved from a 'red' to 'yellow'. Nevertheless, if this annual rate continues, it will not be enough to meet the 2021 target of 56, 500 m². In addition, a further 580m² of B2/B8 floor-space is anticipated to come forward in the short term, reflecting the two planning permissions granted for B2/B8 related development over the monitoring period.



Graph 5

As per the previous AMR, the data collected shows that the employment land delivered has been on existing business / employment sites. 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 specialist 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 has commenced 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. At least 4400 jobs delivered by April 2021	Greater than 592 jobs per annum or less than 74 jobs per annum for 2 consecutive years.	1873 jobs delivered by the end of March 2017	54 jobs delivered 2016/2017

Analysis

This performance indicator contains 2 elements, namely a target jobs figure by 2021 and an associated trigger level figure.

Over the monitoring period, 54 jobs were delivered. This figure is below the minimum specified in the trigger level for the range of jobs to be delivered per annum and accordingly a ‘yellow’ score is given. The cumulative jobs delivered since the start of the LDP period (2006) has increased to 1,873 jobs. Whilst this rate of delivery enabled the 2016 target to be met (between 1800 and 1980 jobs), the amount of jobs delivered per annum is going to need to increase significantly to meet the target of 4400 jobs by 2021.

Recommendations

Recommendations made under previous indicators relating to floorspace delivery are also relevant here. In order to deliver a higher number of jobs, it is likely that overall delivery of

employment floorspace will need to increase significantly.

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 year.	No unjustified loss of employment land

Analysis

Within this monitoring period, one planning application was approved for a development which resulted in the loss of employment land on a protected employment site. This related to a scheme for the change of use of land and the siting of a mobile catering unit and the erection of an associated shelter at Abercanaid Industrial Estate. This development was 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.

Recommendations

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

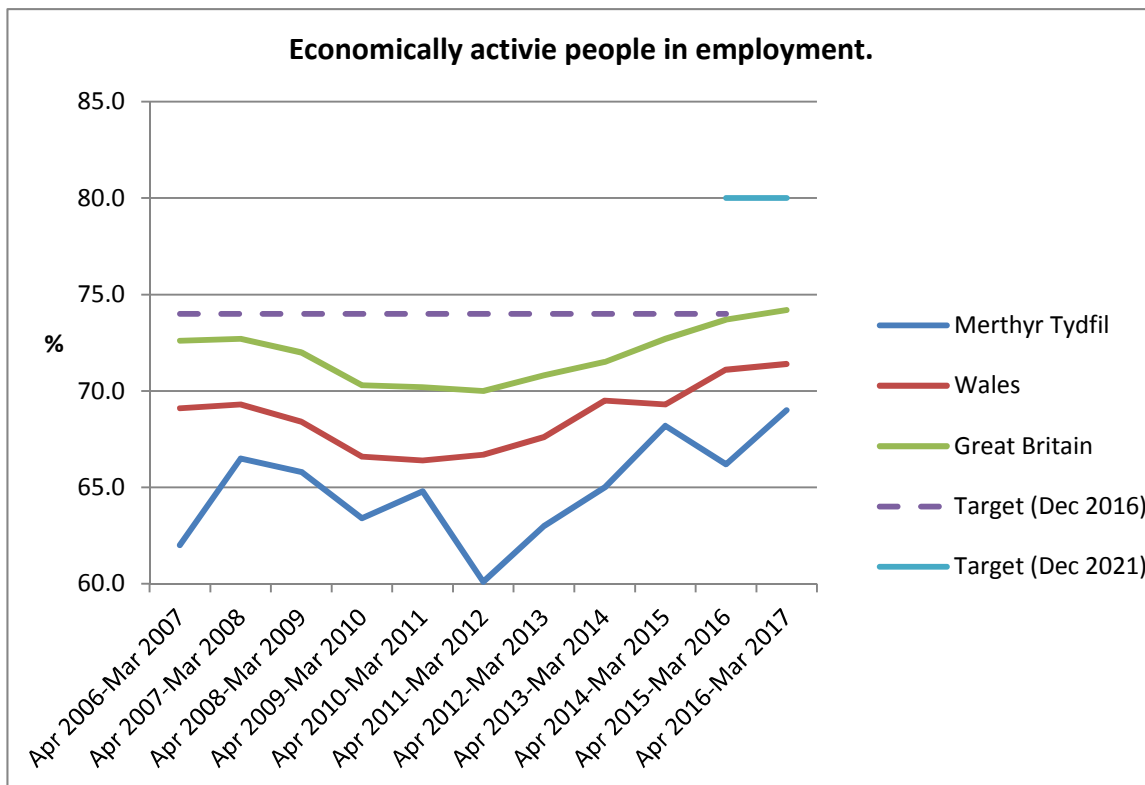
LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
AS14 AS24	Percentage of economically active people in employment (Baseline: 64% at 2009)	Approximately 74% by the end of 2016/Approx. 80% by end of 2021	Reduction of 5% or failure to increase for 2 consecutive years.	69% Increase of 2.8% from last year

Analysis

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 69%, which represents an increase of 2.8% compared with the level in the 2015-2016 AMR of 66.2%.

The December 2016 target of 74% was not met. However, the December 2021 target of 80% became active during this monitoring period. Considering the increase in the level of economically active people since the last monitoring period, a 'yellow' score has been given in relation to this target. It is also worth noting that the percentage of economically active people in Merthyr Tydfil is now moving closer to the average figures for Wales (71.4%) and Great Britain (74.2%) which have both seen improvement over the current monitoring period. (See Graph 6).



Graph 6
ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 8 September 2017]

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 employment³. 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.

³ See Merthyr Tydfil CBC Employment Land Review, Roger Tym & Partners (July 2010).

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 evidence base supporting LDP employment policies will be updated prior to the replacement LDP Deposit Plan being published.

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	11%

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.

Over the monitoring period, the vacancy rate has decreased to 11% which represents a higher level than the 5-10% target. However, this is not more than 2.5% increase beyond the acceptable range, and so results in a 'yellow' score. Whilst further monitoring is considered necessary in order to identify whether any trends are forming, the vacancy rate is considerably closer to the acceptable range than last year which is a positive outcome.

Site Name.	Total Units.	No. Vacant.	% Vacant.
Pant Ind. Est.	118	14	12
Pengarnddu Ind. Est.	15	1	7
Willows Ind. Est.	24	2	8
Merthyr Ind. Est.	69	9	13
Plymouth St. Arches.	14	2	14
Rhydycar Business Park.	5	1	20
Abercanaid Ind. Est.	7	0	0
Goatmill Rd. Ind. Est.	37	0	0
Triangle Business Park.	9	4	44

Cyfarthfa	13	2	15
EFI	16	1	6
Overall	327	36	11

Figure 1

Recommendations

Continue to monitor vacancy rates in order to establish longer term trends.

Update Merthyr Tydfil's employment land evidence base 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, as well as the increase that is required with regard to the number of jobs being delivered.

Positive aspects of the Plan's employment strategy are that Policy AS24 continues to function effectively in preventing the loss of protected employment land to inappropriate uses; the percentage of economically active people has increased; and the vacancy rate on existing employment sites has decreased.

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 appropriateness of the LDP's employment strategy, policies and allocations will be reconsidered as part of work on the replacement Plan in order 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, seven planning applications were approved for proposed developments resulting in the loss of a community facility, two were refused and one was withdrawn. The refusals related to the demolition of a former public toilet and replacement with houses in Edwardsville and an A1 to an A3 in the town centre. The withdrawn scheme related to the change of use from an A1 use to a Sui generis use in the town centre.

Of the approved schemes, four involved the loss of an A1 unit; two to the loss of a D1 use (i.e. church/chapel) and one the loss of a D2 unit (football changing room).

All relevant developments were justified in accordance with LDP Policy BW15. One proposal demonstrated an alternative facility was provided nearby, three had been vacant for over two years and confirmed as no longer viable, and three had been vacant for two years or more and confirmed as surplus to community needs.

Recommendations

Given that this element of policy is currently being achieved, it is intended to take forward a criteria based policy in the Deposit Plan, potentially with supporting Supplementary Planning Guidance, to provide 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.

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 contributions on all identified sites is an important part of the LDP strategy, however negotiating planning obligations at present is proving difficult due to the current economic climate. Continued monitoring of this indicator will be important in ensuring the additional infrastructure required as part of the LDP Strategy is delivered.

Parts of two allocated sites, with an identified need for planning obligations, were granted permission during the monitoring period, Sweetwater Park and Beacon Heights. Both sites secured a financial contribution towards affordable housing via a S106 agreement.

However, the fact that only two allocated sites have come forward during the monitoring period is an issue that needs to be addressed alongside the issues raised under the monitoring of Strategic Objective 6.

Recommendations

No action required, this part of the policy is currently being achieved.

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

The Merthyr Tydfil Open Space Strategy (OSS) and associated Action Plans were approved in June 2016. 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. The findings of the OSS including the desire to enable access to well-designed and maintained spaces have informed the preparation of open space related policies in the emerging replacement LDP. This includes designating additional Local Nature Reserves.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on Public Service Boards to prepare and publish a Well-being Assessment and Local Well-being Plans, setting out local objectives that will contribute to achieving the well-being goals within the area. The Cwm Taf Public Services Board published its Well-being Assessment in April 2017, following a series of facilitated stakeholder workshops which took place in October and November 2017.

The facilitated workshops were designed to also inform the replacement LDP, with the Environmental well-being workshop focussing on key issues for the plan. Issues raised together with key issues identified in the SEA Baseline Scoping Report also helped to inform the Sustainability Appraisal objectives used to appraise the Preferred Strategy and Candidate Sites, nominated to be included in the emerging LDP.

Up-dates to Chapter 4: Planning for Sustainability of PPW have been made due to the Act coming into force, in particular with regard to the use of well-being goals in the absence of locally set well-being objectives. The Merthyr Tydfil Local Well-being Plan is due for publication in May 2018.

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		0.7ha

Analysis

An application for creation of residential garden areas lying within an area of protected open space was refused, demonstrating that Policy BW16 continues to function as intended. However, over the monitoring period, 0.7 ha of amenity grassland has been identified as being potentially lost. This is through approval of an application for the proposed erection of two detached bungalows designed to accommodate occupants with disabilities and a pair of semi-detached general needs bungalows, in Merthyr Vale. Should the development go ahead it would utilise 0.7 ha of existing amenity grassland.

Recommendations

This element of policy has been taken forward into the emerging replacement LDP. However, given that the policy does not cover all areas of functional open space, protected areas should, in the first instance, be increased to include all priority opens spaces identified within the approved Open Space Strategy.

Secondly, compensation for the loss of other areas of functional amenity greenspace identified within the strategy should also be required. These spaces afford opportunities for informal recreational activity; enhance the appearance of an area; and provide a meeting place or focal point for communities.

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

Analysis

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.

Recommendations

These leisure/recreational related developments have been delivered, and as such, these allocations need not be taken forward in the emerging replacement Plan.

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. Public open space is continuing to be adequately protected, and leisure/recreational related developments coming forward at Parc Taf Bargoed and Cyfarthfa Park have made 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

From 16th March 2016, amendments to the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) order 2012 have been made, bringing in changes to pre-application procedures and Design and Access Statements arising from the Planning (Wales) Act 2015.

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 of 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

Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales, 'The Historic Environment', has been fully revised in conjunction with Cadw following Royal Assent of the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 24: the Historic Environment (2017) provides guidance on how the planning system considers the historic environment during development plan preparation and decision making on planning and listed building applications. It replaces 60/96 Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology, 61/96 Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas and 1/98 Planning and the Historic Environment: Directions by the Secretary of State for Wales.

In addition, three new non-statutory instruments came into being in June 2017. The Conservation Areas (Disapplication of Requirement for Conservation Area Consent for Demolition) (Wales) Direction (2017 No.27) directs that Conservation Area consent is not required for certain works to certain descriptions of buildings. The Listed Building Applications and Decisions (Duty to Notify National Amenity Societies and the royal Commission (Wales) Direction (2017 No.26) directs local planning authorities to notify the national amenity societies and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales of applications for listed building consent for demolition and of the decisions taken on such applications. The Listed Building Applications (Duty to Notify Welsh Ministers (Wales) Direction (2017 No.25) gives directions to local planning authorities that the notification process does not apply to an application for listed building consent for the carrying out of work affecting the interior only of a Grade II (un-starred) listed building.

During 2017, the Welsh government published 'Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers', together with a work programme for various public, private and third sector bodies in Wales in order to promote the use of Welsh.

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 48 developments were granted planning permission that impacted on built heritage assets. These developments can be broken down as follows:

- No developments were granted planning permission in the vicinity of a Scheduled Ancient Monument or within an Historic Park and Garden;
- 11 developments were granted planning permission impacting on a Listed Building (5 of which were also within a Conservation area); and
- 42 developments were granted planning permission within a Conservation Area (5 of which were Listed Buildings).

The majority of approvals relating to townscape and built heritage ranged from discharge of conditions, changes of use, conversions or extensions. A small number of approvals were for advertisement consents, refurbishments or demolition and new build housing schemes. One application related to the creation of a bronze plaque paving trail and another for the erection of flagpoles.

All permissions granted complied with Policy BW6. Furthermore, 4 inappropriate developments within Conservation Areas were refused planning permission.

Recommendations

This element of policy is currently being achieved, and as such, will be taken forward in the emerging replacement plan.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
BW5	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
AS6	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 five developments were granted planning permission that had the potential to affect a SINC. However, in all instances the overall nature conservation value of the SINC was safeguarded, either due to minimal harm being caused by the development or through measures to mitigate any potential harm that might be caused. Moreover, during the monitoring period planning permission was refused for 1 inappropriate development proposal within a SINC.

No developments were received that could potentially cause harm to a Local Nature Reserve or SSSI.

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

Recommendations

Given that this policy is currently being achieved, it should be taken forward into emerging the replacement LDP.

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 Environment (Wales) Act 2016 marks a change in the approach to tackling emissions and places a duty on the Welsh Government to ensure emissions are reduced. The duties contained in the Act include:

2050 Target Net emissions reduced by 80% compared to baseline	By 2018 Set interim targets for 2020, 2030 and 2040	By 2018 Carbon budgets set for 2016-20 and 2021-25	Internationally Take into account international agreements
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Figure 2

The first two carbon budget periods will run from 2016 to 2020 and 2021 to 2025. For both of these periods, the Welsh Government must set maximum net emission targets. In order for Wales to meet its 2050 target, emissions need to be reduced by a further 62% over the next 35 years. These emission targets are in addition to the duties in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This Act reinforces the commitment of the Welsh Government to sustainable development and well-being in Wales. There is also a target to reduce emissions within devolved competence by at least 3% per year for each year from 2011 to 2020.

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
<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>				

3.12.3 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 third 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 2016 to 31st March 2017.
- 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 2016 was £124,125. Over the monitoring period, the Authority received a total of £0 in CIL. No CIL monies were spent during the monitoring period, and accordingly, the CIL balance at 31st March 2017 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 effects 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 1909 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 19 affordable dwellings at sites in Abercanaid and Penydarren.</p> <p>There has been an increase in the average house price during the monitoring period and a rise 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. An updated LHMA will be produced prior to publication of the Deposit version of the Replacement LDP.</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 2016/2017 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, regular Buildings at Risk surveys have been carried out across Wales since the mid-1990s. The proportion of Buildings at Risk in Wales has fallen between 2013 and 2015 from 8.92% to 8.54%. Generally, since 2012, each local authority area is resurveyed every five years by Cadw appointed consultants. Merthyr Tydfil was surveyed in 2016, and the results indicate that the number of buildings at risk decreased from 20 in 2012, to 16 in 2016 (7.66%)</p> <p>According to latest StatsWales figures the percentage of Merthyr Tydfil's residents who say they can speak Welsh has seen an increase from 20.5% in 2016 to 22% in 2017 compared to a Welsh average of 27.8%. 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, and more recent data from the most recent National Survey for Wales where the figure has remained between 10-12%.</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Progress continues to be made towards meeting this SA objective in terms of protecting historical assets, although the trend of decreasing Welsh speakers within the County Borough may be addressed through the County Borough's Welsh language promotional Strategy.</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, 91.7% 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"> • In 2016 in Wales there were a total of 441 GP Practices 42 of which were located in the Cwm Taf University area. The percentage of weekly total open hours in Cwm Taf was 67% in 2016 compared to 65% in 2015 and 51% in Wales in 2016 compared to 45% in 2015. • There are 11 Post Offices and 1 sub Post Office in the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough area, compared to 9 Post Offices and 2 sub-post offices reported in the previous AMR. • Surveys undertaken for the Council's Open Space Strategy (OSS)

published in 2016 found that 37% of the County Borough's households had access to a play area within 600m of their home. This slightly increased to 37.4% during the monitoring period.

- There were 72 Public Houses or Inn's operating in the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough during 2015/16. No comparative data is available for this monitoring period.

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.

Highest qualification levels of working age adults				
December 2015	No Qualifications	Qualified to NQF level 2 or above	Qualified to NQF level 3 or above	Qualified to NQF level 4 or above
Merthyr	14.5	67.9	47.0	27.2
Wales	10.3	76.2	56.5	35.8
December 2016	No Qualifications	Qualified to NQF level 2 or above	Qualified to NQF level 3 or above	Qualified to NQF level 4 or above
Merthyr	16.2	67.1	45.2	25.5
Wales	9.5	77.7	59.9	37.4

Figure 3 StatsWales Education and Skills

In comparison with the previous AMR the level of adults with no qualification in Merthyr has increased by 1.7% whereas in Wales as a whole it has decreased by 0.9%. Similarly the level of adults Qualified to NQF level 4 or above has decreased by 1.7% in Merthyr compared to only 1.4% in Wales as a whole.

	2014	2015	2016
% of Year 11 school leavers that are NEET 			
Merthyr Tydfil	2.6	1.6	1.0
Wales	3.1	2.8	2.0

Source: Careers Wales

Figure 4

The percentage of young person's leaving school at 16 that are **NEET** (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) has decreased from 2.6% in 2014 to 15 in 2016.

	2014	2015	2016
% of Year 13 school leavers that are NEET ⁱ			
Merthyr Tydfil	3.3	5.6	11.1
Wales	4.9	3.8	3.1

Source: Careers Wales

Figure 5

The percentage of young person's leaving school at 18 that are **NEET** (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) has increased from 3.3% in 2014 to 11.1% in 2016.

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

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

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. In 2014 Merthyr Tydfil had 36 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) of which 22.2% rank in the 10% most deprived LSOAs in the overall index, which equates to the second highest percentage in Wales. This compares well to 2011 figures when Merthyr Tydfil was regarded as the most deprived local authority in Wales with 25% of its LSOAs ranking in the 10% most deprived LSOAs in the overall index.

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.

4 - Health

SA Objective 4: Promote services and facilities that encourage a healthy and safe lifestyle.

This SA Objective is informed by 3 targets and 9 background indicators.

SA Target 1: Increase access to physical recreation facilities.

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.

Surveys undertaken for the Council's Open Space Strategy (OSS) published in 2016 found that 37% of the County Borough's households had access to play area within 600m of their home. This slightly increased to 37.4% during the monitoring period. In addition, the latest data shows that 61% of households within the County Borough currently live within 400m of a natural / semi natural green space. This compares well to the figure of 56% reported in the and demonstrates that the OSS Action Plan published in 2016 is assisting in working towards national play space, sport and recreation standards across the County Borough.

On 30th January 2017 an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) was declared on Twynyrodyn Road. It was necessary to declare an AQMA as nitrogen dioxide levels exceeded the National Air Quality Objective at a number of monitoring locations along this road. Nitrogen dioxide is a pollutant associated with vehicle emissions. The new bus station at Swan Street is predicted to comply with relevant standards. However, in order to confirm this, diffusion tubes will be used once the bus station begins operating.

SA Target 2: Design to encourage walking and cycling.

The close proximity of housing, employment, retail and other land uses has been a major consideration in the pattern of land allocation in the adopted 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.

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.

During 2015/2016, 4.03 km of footpath was created in the County Borough. No comparative data is available for this monitoring period.

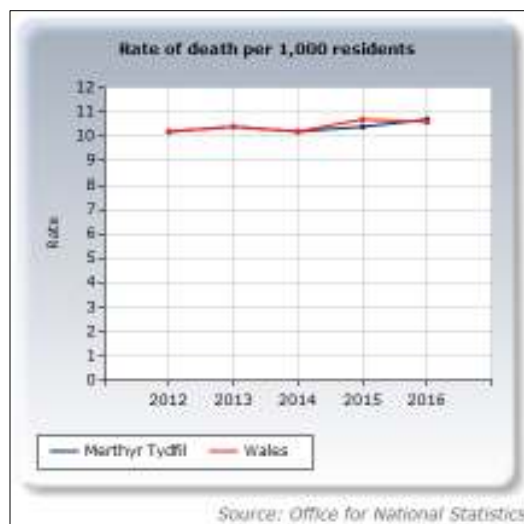
People will only walk or cycle within the local and wider area if they feel safe to do so. The Crime survey for England and Wales released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimates that 92% of adults felt safe walking alone after dark, in the year ending March 2016. This compares favourably to last year's AMR average figure of 87.1%. Unfortunately, no more recent comparable data is unavailable at a Welsh only or local authority level.

SA Target 3: Decrease in the number of people with limiting long-term illness or general health 'not good'.

The latest StatsWales data regarding the percentage of adults with general health status as 'fair or poor' relates to the period between 2003 and 2015. At a national level, there has been a decrease of Welsh adults with the status 'fair or poor' from 22% to 19%. Similarly the latest Welsh Health Survey (WHS) data for the same time period for Merthyr Tydfil shows a 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.

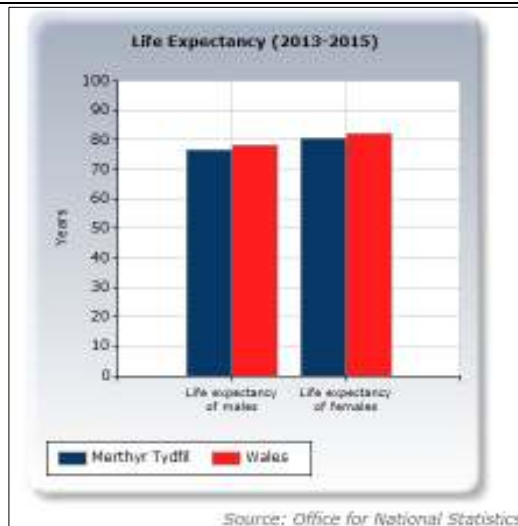
In August 2015, the Public Health Wales Observatory published Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) maps of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) for 2014. This data shows that 29.4% of Merthyr Tydfil (Small Town and Fringe) had a limiting long term health problem, whereas 27.9% of Merthyr Tydfil (Large Town) had a limiting long term health problem. This compares unfavourably to a Welsh figure as a whole of 22.7%.

According to ONS, in 2016, there were 10.7 deaths per 1,000 residents in Merthyr Tydfil. This figure has increased by 0.3 since 2015, when there were 10.4 deaths per 1,000 residents.



Graph 7

The latest Local Authority level data for Life expectancy published by StasWales, indicates Merthyr Tydfil that male life expectancy rose slightly from 76.9 years in 2013 to 77.1 years in 2014 and female life expectancy from 80.5 years to 80.9 years. The latest ONS figures are shown below.



Graph 8

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 Twynyrodyn Area which will need to be closely monitored in the future.

5 - Economy & Employment

SA Objective 5: Encourage a thriving and sustainable economy with a diverse range of job opportunities.

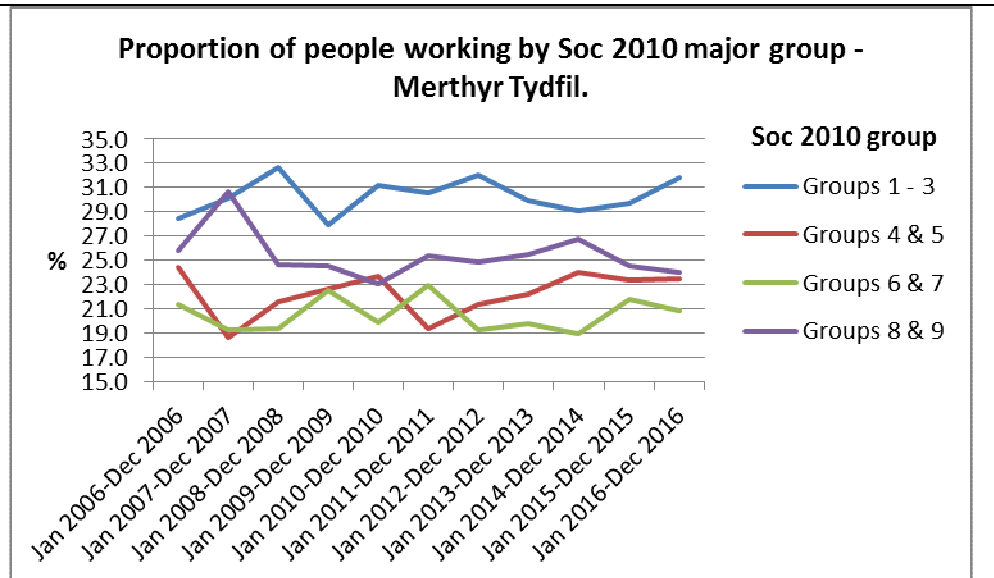
This SA Objective is informed by 3 targets and 16 background indicators.

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).



Graph 9 - ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 30 August 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 (31.8%) in 2016/17.

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 slight increase to 23.5% in December 2016.

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, with the proportion of those employed within this sector decreasing slightly to 20.8% in December 2016.

The proportion of people working in elementary occupations and as plant / machine operatives (Soc 2010 major group (8-9) remains the second highest employment sector within the County Borough. However the proportion of those employed within this sector has dropped to 24.0% in December 2016.

SA Target 2: Increase opportunities to work within the County Borough.

1000m² of new employment floor space was built at Merthyr Tydfil Industrial Park, Pentrebach during the monitoring period.

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 has not changed since the previous monitoring period). This figure being lower than the target range set out within the Monitoring Framework.

In terms of vacancy rates, Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre has experienced a decrease of 4.8% over the monitoring period to 11.1%, which is below the

Welsh average of 12.5%. Across the County Borough as the whole, information from non-domestic rates exemptions shows that 231 of 1801 properties (approximately 13%) are receiving rate relief due to them being vacant. This percentage has decreased slightly from the last monitoring period (which reported 14%).

SA Target 3: Decrease unemployment.

The number of economically active people in employment in the County Borough has increased over the monitoring period from 65.9% to 68.8% in 2017. The following graph shows, however, that the employment rate has fluctuated each year since the beginning of the plan period.



Graph 10 ONS - Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 30 August 2017]

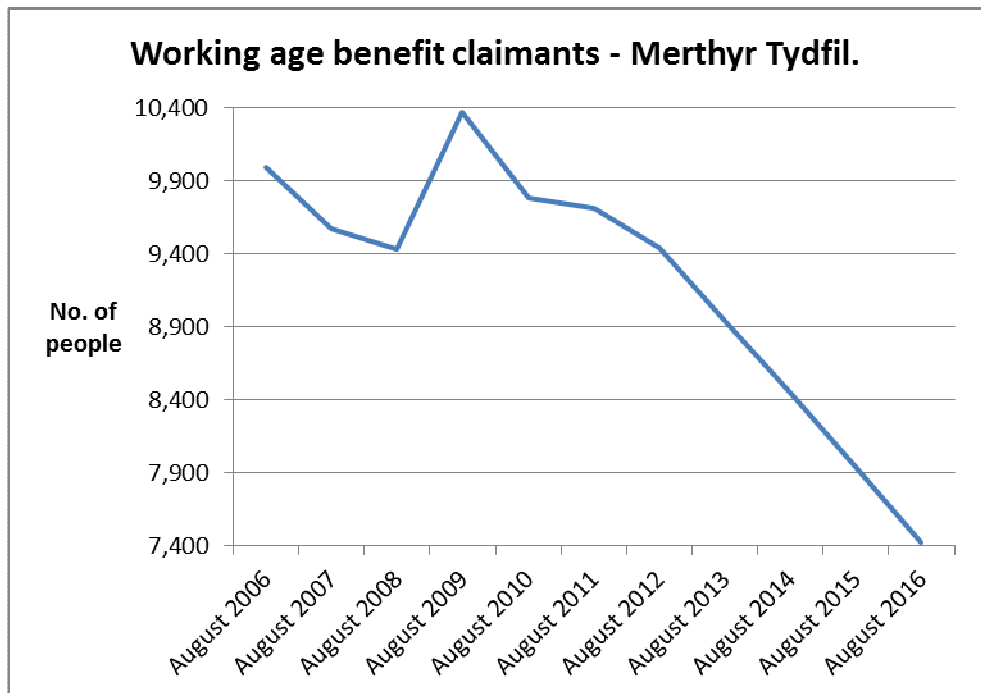
Data for the percentage of people living as well as working within the County Borough is only available every 10 years owing to the fact that it is collected through the Census. Therefore, there is no new data to allow comparison during this monitoring period.

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 since 1997.

The proportion of people of working age being qualified to NVQ Level 4 or above has decreased since 2013 to 24.1 in the 2016 calendar year. This figure remains below the levels of both Wales (35.1%) and Great Britain (38.2%).

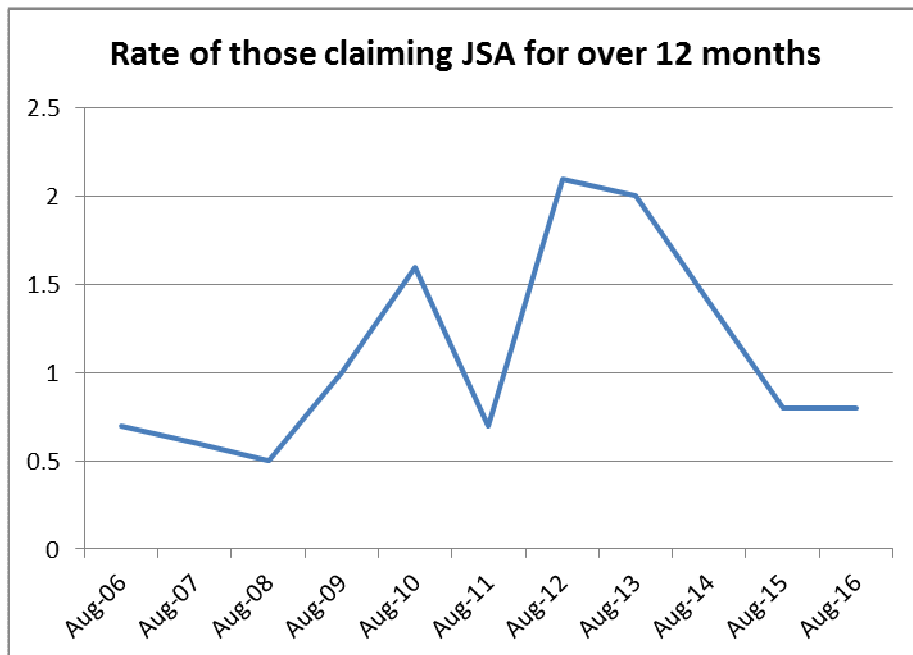
The number of people of working age receiving benefits within the County

Borough continues to fall with 7,420 recipients in August 2016 (See graph below).



Graph 11 - ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 30 August 2017]

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 a 0.8% average and has maintained this since the last monitoring period. (See graph below).



Graph 12 - ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 30 August 2017]

SA Target 4: Support the rural economy.

A number of development proposals were granted permission during this monitoring period relating to this target. These include: the addition of new facilities and the improvement of existing facilities at the Summit Climbing Centre; the addition of additional bike tracks and improved parking facilities at Bike Park Wales; and the erection of wind turbines at the Cwmbargoed Disposal Point and Valley Heights Filling Station.

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:

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.

A number of key projects were achieved through the Programme.

An example of a project delivered under the Sustainable Communities theme is the re-development of Penydarren Park. Through the funding secured, Merthyr Town Football Club have developed a new multipurpose function hall/banqueting suite to accommodate 100-120 people, re-developed and extended the club's present offices and buildings including the entrance and new turnstiles, improved the present stands using steel cladding, created hospitality boxes and created a larger car-park for users of the facility. The vision of the Football Club when securing the VVP funding was the completion of its final phase of the development, to create a Community sports engagement social enterprise and a high-quality community leisure facility enabling it to capitalise on its success as a club and community venue. The funding has created modern facilities on the perimeter of the Town Centre and has already attracted a number of new groups to utilise the facility.

An example of a project delivered under the Economic Vitality theme is the creation of the Merthyr Tydfil Enterprise Centre, based at 114 High Street within the Town Centre. The Enterprise Centre was 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. A number of successful Meanwhile schemes have been delivered through the Programme which has resulted in the creation of sustainable businesses in the Town Centre and reduced

vacancy rates.

An example of a project delivered under the Housing theme is St. John's Church in Dowlais. Funding was secured by the private sector owners, Graft Projects, towards the refurbishment of this key Grade II Listed Building. This funding, along with private finance from Graft Projects, was used to fully renovate the church which included works to the roof, the exterior of the building and a full renovation of the interior which enabled the church to be renovated into 20 Market Housing Units. St. John's Church was derelict for over twenty years and Graft acquired a lease on the property in 2015. The building has significant historic value. The Church contains the burial site for Sir Josiah John Guest, who was the owner of Dowlais Ironworks for over 30 years. At this time, the Dowlais Works was the largest Ironworks in the world. A viewing platform has been created as part of the development ensuring that the community has the ability to access the building and understand the local history associated with the Church.

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 first Townscape Heritage Programme delivered in Merthyr came to an end in 2016. The application for a second Townscape Heritage Programme was approved in September 2016, therefore this will enable the Council to continue to deliver on the key objectives and re-invigorate the Pontmorlais Area.

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 Cyfarthfa Castle. The Council are working in conjunction with Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust on the re-development. A Stage 1 HLF Grant was secured in September 2016. A multi-disciplinary team have also been appointed to support with designs and costs for the future HLF Programme. Funding was secured through the VVP programme to undertake urgent roof repairs to the Castle roof, to ensure the building remains watertight during the HLF Stage 2 application development phase.

Cyfarthfa Park, the largest public park in Merthyr Tydfil, underwent a major redevelopment thanks to a £3.3 million investment from the HLF, Welsh Government, CADW and Merthyr Tydfil CBC. The funding was for a four year programme which commenced in 2012 and ended in December 2016. Key projects included the re-development of the Bothy, icehouse and the continuation of its volunteering schemes across the facility. A Stage 1 application to HLF for the further Parks for People Programme, was approved in December 2016. The focus of this second phase will be a capital programme again targeting heritage features within the Park and an enhanced volunteering and events programme. Again, the Parks for People Programme is being delivered in conjunction with Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust.

	<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>The Valley Lines is a network of suburban rail lines in South East Wales into and out of Cardiff. Five stations operate within the Merthyr line namely, Merthyr Tydfil, Pentrebach, Troed-y-rhiw, Merthyr Vale and Quakers Yard which link Cardiff Central station with Merthyr Tydfil via Pontypridd and Abercynon. According to the latest Stats for Wales's Rail <i>Station Usage in Wales during 2015-16</i> published in May 2017, there was a rise in the number of station entries/exits for the majority of stations along the route. The largest growth, of 6.7 per cent was at Cardiff Central, the number of station entries/exits at the line's terminus at Merthyr Tydfil grew slightly at 3.1 per cent; and excluding Cardiff Central and Queen St, there was an average annual increase in station entries/exits of 1.2 per cent on this line compared to 2015-16. This is summarised in the table below.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Merthyr line station usage, 2014 -15 to 2015 -16</p>

Number and percent			
Station	2014-15 Entries & Exits	2015-16 Entries & Exits	Percentage change (a)
Cardiff Central	11,939,360	12,744,082	↑ 6.7
Cardiff Queen Street	2,523,314	2,643,568	↑ 4.8
Calhays	860,502	903,646	↑ 5.0
Llandaf	448,052	466,672	↑ 4.2
Radyr	475,106	478,946	↑ 0.8
Taffs Well	337,912	344,718	↑ 2.0
Treforest Estate	119,656	113,720	↓ 5.0
Treforest	809,660	800,548	↓ 1.1
Pontypridd	799,790	777,508	↓ 2.8
Abercynon	265,458	275,404	↑ 3.7
Quaker's Yard	82,728	84,404	↑ 2.0
Merthyr Vale	62,690	63,304	↑ 0.8
Troed-y-Rhiw	48,388	48,940	↑ 1.1
Penrhe-Bach	33,496	27,176	↓ 18.9
Merthyr Tydfil	562,656	580,554	↑ 3.1
Total (b)	4,906,434	4,965,540	↑ 1.2
All Stations Total	19,368,108	20,353,890	↑ 5.1

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

Notes:
(a) percentage change = change in 2015-16 when compared to 2014-15
(b) total without Cardiff Central and Cardiff Queen Street

Figure 6

This is a positive sign that suggests people are changing their mode of transport in favour of rail.

With regard to buses and coaches the usage has risen from 1,382 thousand miles in 2000 to 1,711 thousand miles in 2017. This increase is a positive sign suggesting an increase in bus and coach usage.

The figure below shows total traffic on major roads in Merthyr Tydfil, from 2000 to 2016.

Total traffic on major roads, in thousand vehicle miles, from 2000 to 2016																	
Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Count points	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	33	34
Pedal Cycles	107	92	92	95	83	76	92	85	92	102	110	107	99	102	104	107	125
Motorecycles	752	631	703	765	669	656	819	675	561	628	689	820	761	742	880	1,002	957
Cars	120,443	119,194	127,682	127,501	132,629	139,021	144,304	148,104	147,934	151,273	151,183	152,204	150,394	150,208	147,776	152,358	156,103
Buses & Coaches	1,382	1,278	1,293	1,429	1,246	1,283	1,262	1,197	1,317	1,363	1,533	1,571	1,627	1,604	1,624	1,648	1,711
Light Goods Vehicles	16,464	17,270	17,729	18,469	19,991	21,082	22,418	24,664	24,461	25,161	25,512	26,575	27,941	28,267	28,271	30,864	31,829
All HGVs	9,020	8,492	8,726	7,494	9,230	9,529	8,694	9,729	9,866	9,151	9,207	7,468	7,507	7,817	7,802	8,058	7,896
All Motor Vehicles	148,060	146,866	156,134	155,658	163,765	171,571	177,496	184,369	184,138	187,576	188,122	188,637	188,228	188,637	186,353	193,930	198,495

Figure 7

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

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, where appropriate, to comply with Supplementary Planning Guidance Note No.4 Sustainable Design, which incorporates secured by design principles. The advice of the Design and Heritage Officer has also been sought where design issues arise, clarity is needed or where the development may affect

	<p>a heritage asset. In addition, Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 6: A Design Guide for Householder Development has aided this process with regard to ensuring good design in householder developments.</p> <p>SA Target 2: Increase opportunities for community participation in design of new development.</p> <p>Although Design and Access Statements are now only required on major developments all planning applications that are deemed to require one are not registered unless an appropriate statement is submitted alongside the application. In addition the up-dated TAN 12: Design places attention on engaging end users and stakeholders in the design process from the offset and as such has been taken into account when appropriate.</p> <p>SA Target 3: Improve public spaces.</p> <p>During 2016/17, progress has been made on a number of initiatives that will result in long-term improvements to public spaces. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The installation of a moving sculpture tree at the entrance to Canolfan Soar (reminiscent of the lantern that once graced the metal archway), protruding into the High Street beyond the line of the buildings, to draw people in; • Installation of a 60 strong bronze plaque paving trail from Canolfan Soar to the Red House incorporating poetry relating to Merthyr's rich mining heritage with the area's natural beauty; • The installation of a giant steel heart sculpture inspired by the heart motif on the Iron Bridge in Penderyn Square; • A sculptural installation at College Plaza and trails and footpaths focussing on way-marking, signposting, and interpreting a network of pedestrian and cycle routes that intersect the town centre and the immediate surrounding countryside and Taff Trail and • The continuation of various developments and improvements at Cyfarthfa Park including the reconstruction of the Ice House and erection of new interpretation panels and sign-posting. <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Further progress has been made towards meeting this SA objective, particularly in relation to 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 by StatsWales in December 2016 show</p>

	<p>an increase in fly-tipping incidents in Merthyr Tydfil from 1,010 incidents in 2014/15 (reported in last year's AMR) to 1,682 incidents recorded in 2015/16. However, according to Data Unit Wales latest figures 95% of all incidents were cleared within 5 days between 2015 -16 which is consistent with the whole of Wales.</p> <p>Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP) became Wales's first Dark Sky reserve in 2012 and is only the fifth destination in the world to be granted international dark sky reserve status. It includes Pontsticill Reservoir accessible from Merthyr Tydfil and the idea is to combat the growing encroachment of light pollution or 'night blight' into the BBNP and the surrounding area which could save energy, aid wildlife and improve health. However, there is still a lack of available data regarding specific 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>
<p>9 - Biodiversity</p>	<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>According to the Merthyr Tydfil Biodiversity Action Plan 2014-2019 there are 5,248 ha of LBAP priority habitats in Merthyr Tydfil including broadleaf woodland, grassland, heath land, wetland, inland rocks and mineral spoil habitat. These areas are not monitored annually. As of March 2017 there were 3385.82ha of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation compared with 3389.11ha designated in the adopted Local Plan, showing a loss of 03.9ha over the plan period.</p> <p>There has been some 300m² net losses of SINC grassland habitat, trees and vegetation during the monitoring period, compared with no net loss reported in the last AMR. This is due to the creation of footpaths to obtain access to and from the Taff Trail and Cwm Fechan Local Nature Reserve respectively, as part of the Active Travel scheme. Mitigation measures were also employed to re-grass disturbed areas with suitable seed mixes including embankment and cutting works either side of the footpaths reducing the loss of habitat from 450m² to 300m².</p> <p>Taf Fechan Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) remains at an unfavourable conservation status. The last AMR reported that it was under favourable management which in time would allow it to reach favourable status. Favourable Management of the SSSI will be maintained when grazing is controlled from Gurnos Farm, which includes repairs and reinstatement of ineffective fencing. The conservation status of Cwm Glo and Glyndyrys is unknown at present.</p> <p>In terms of non-native species, 0.6 ha of land was treated for Japanese Knotweed over the monitoring period. This compares with 0.125 ha of</p>

	<p>Japanese Knotweed eradicated during 2014/2015. Additionally, a total of 0.01 ha of Himalayan Balsam was recorded as being removed compared to none in the previous monitoring period. 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, a colony of breeding lapwing has been observed at Dowlais Top on an island on the A465 Heads of the Valleys Road. This island will be removed as part of the A465 dualling. Welsh Government must fulfil their statutory duties in this regard and will be compulsory purchasing land in the immediate vicinity to replace this loss. Great Crested Newt populations remain stable and at an increased population from the onset of the Ffos-y-Fran development demonstrating MTCBC Planning and Countryside compliance with statutory environmental legislation.</p> <p>Over the monitoring period, all of the ten relevant planning approvals incorporated ecological mitigation measures, which is a continuing positive trend following on from the last monitoring period. Mitigation measures related to the protection of water courses and European Species including Great Crested Newts, removal of Japanese knotweed and woodland management. One application was refused due to an unacceptable intrusion into the countryside. There was a small amount of permanent loss of SINC due to the creation of a footpath; however compensation measures included the grassing of additional areas with suitable flora.</p> <p>Within the monitoring period 50m² of orchard, 1000m² of wildflower area and 60m of hedgerow have been created; 45 species habitats have been installed; 1ha grassland and 1ha of woodland has been enhanced and 30m² pond and 3km of linear habitat has been maintained. This compares very favourably with the last monitoring period where 1.5 km of linear habitat was maintained and 2ha of habitat was 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 continuing trend in incorporation of mitigation measures in new developments, the creation of new habitats and the eradication of non-native species.</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>

The European Water Framework Directive (WFD) required that all inland and coastal water bodies reach at least good ecological and chemical status by 22 December 2015, subject to certain exemptions.

The term ecological status looks at the abundance of aquatic flora and fish fauna, the availability of nutrients, and aspects like salinity, temperature and pollution by chemical pollutants. Good status means a slight deviation from human pressure. In Wales 37% of water bodies achieved good ecological status in 2011 compared to 36% in the UK, the ambition in Wales being to achieve 50% by 2015. In 2015, 39% of water bodies in Wales achieved 'good' ecological status.

To define good chemical status, environmental quality standards have been established for 33 new and eight previously regulated chemical pollutants of high concern across the EU. With regard to Chemical status, in 2009 6% of water bodies were at good status, 2% failed and 92% were not assessed due to not being at risk. In 2015 16% were at good status, 5% failed and 79% were not assessed due to not being at risk.

Merthyr Tydfil is covered by the Severn River Basin District and the South East Valleys catchment the main river being the River Taff. Within this management catchment 20% of surface waters are at good overall status.

The current status of the SE Valleys Management Catchment, (2015 classification)

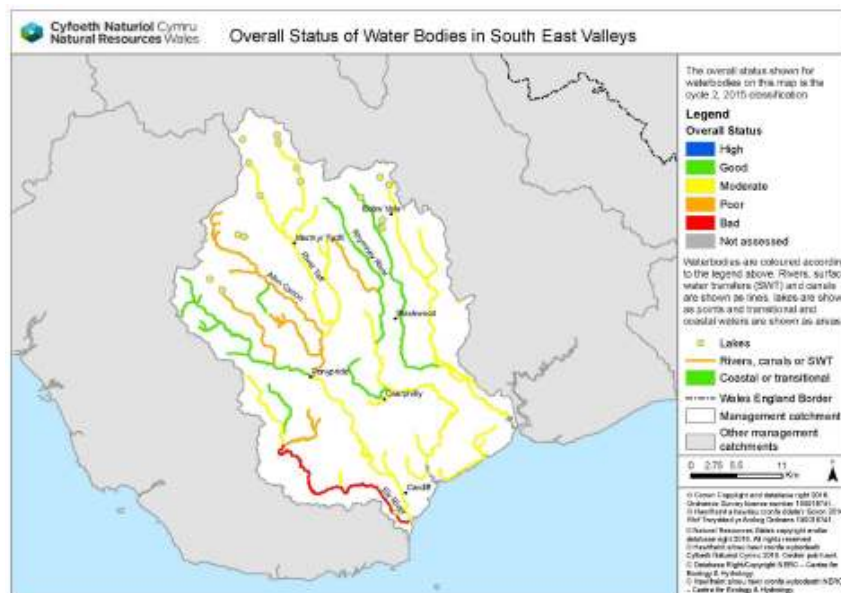


Figure 8

According to the WFD river catchment classification within Merthyr Tydfil the River Taff and the Taf Fechan are classified overall and ecologically as moderate but chemically good, the Taf Bargoed overall and ecologically as poor but chemically as good, and the Nant Morlais as bad mainly due to diffuse pollution from urban areas, sewage outfalls and misconnections and mine waters. This remains unchanged from the last AMR. The current

overall objectives are for all water bodies within Merthyr Tydfil to meet “good status” by 2027.

Only a relatively small area of land in the north east extremity of the County Borough falls within a groundwater source protection zone outside of the LPA’s jurisdiction.

SA Target 2: Flood risk to be mitigated or avoided.

Over the monitoring period, only two 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. In both cases Natural Resources Wales (NRW), advised that it is good practice for a Flood Consequence Assessment (FCA) to be undertaken to ensure all parties are aware of the risk to and from the development to ensure that the risks of flooding are minimised as far as possible. However, given that NRW did not raise any objections to the applications it was not considered justified requesting an FCA prior to determination. However in both cases the developers were sent a copy of NRW’s response and suitably worded in formatives were added to the decision notices.

SA Target 3: New development to incorporate sustainable drainage systems.

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.

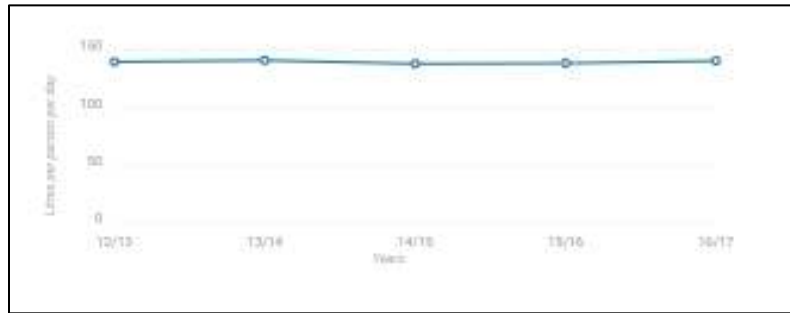
SA Target 4: Encourage more efficient water use.

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.

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.

Water efficient developments have continued to be secured over the monitoring 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.

In respect of water consumption according to Water UK; England and Wales, April 2017 – March 2016 as shown on graph 12 the percentage below of water used per person per day in England and Wales has risen very slightly from 14/15 to 15/16.



Graph 12

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.

11 - Climate Change

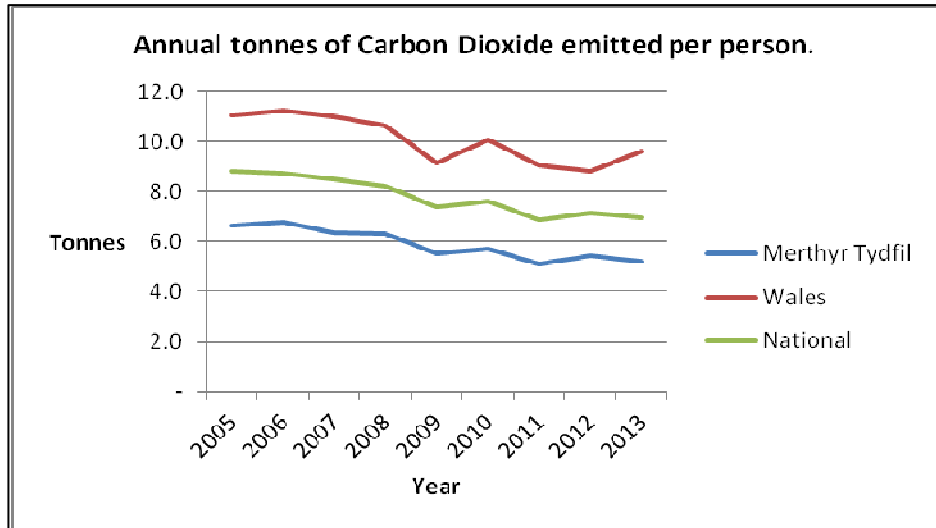
SA Objective 11: Help to minimise the cause and effects of climate change.

This SA Objective is informed by 2 targets and 5 background indicators.

SA Target 1: Decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

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.

In 2015 the total CO₂ emissions emitted per head in Merthyr Tydfil was 4.5 tonnes. This figure has decreased by 13.5% since 2011 when the plan was adopted. This general decline in CO₂ emissions will help mitigate the effects of climate change.



Graph 13

As indicated in the last AMR the ecological footprint of Merthyr Tydfil was last calculated by the Stockholm Environment Institute in 2006, as just over 4.1 global hectares per person; the second lowest in Wales at that time. A 2011 update published by the Institute shows that Merthyr Tydfil now has the lowest Ecological footprint at 3.06 global hectares per person.

Table 2: Ecological footprint of Wales and Local Authorities

Local Authority	gha/c	Local Authority	gha/c
Merthyr Tydfil	3.06	Conwy	3.28
Blaenau Gwent	3.10	Pembrokeshire	3.36
Torfaen	3.13	Carmarthenshire	3.36
Caerphilly	3.14	Gwynedd	3.38
Cardiff	3.16	Flintshire	3.41
Bridgend	3.20	Monmouthshire	3.42
Rhondda Cynon Taff	3.20	Denbighshire	3.44
Newport	3.20	Isle of Anglesey	3.46
Neath Port Talbot	3.20	Powys	3.53
Swansea	3.25	Vale of Glamorgan	3.53
Wrexham	3.27	Ceredigion	3.59
		Wales average	3.28

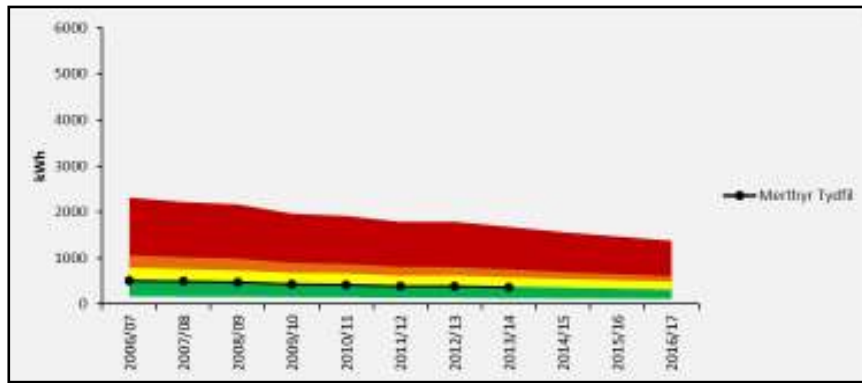
Figure 9

SA Target 2: Decrease impacts from the effects of climate change.

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.

There are currently 3369 residential and commercial properties lying within Flood zones B (areas known to have been flooded in the past evidenced by sedimentary deposits and where site levels should be checked against the

	<p>extreme (0.1%) flood level) and C2 (areas of the floodplain without significant flood defence infrastructure).</p> <p>In respect of flood incidents, no significant flooding occurred in the County Borough during the monitoring period.</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 energy consumption, the latest information available is shown in the tables below.</p> <div data-bbox="437 1402 1299 1778" data-label="Figure"> <table border="1"> <caption>Estimated data for Graph 14: Average domestic electricity sales per customer (kWh)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Merthyr Tydfil (kWh)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2006/07</td><td>3500</td></tr> <tr><td>2007/08</td><td>3400</td></tr> <tr><td>2008/09</td><td>3300</td></tr> <tr><td>2009/10</td><td>3300</td></tr> <tr><td>2010/11</td><td>3300</td></tr> <tr><td>2011/12</td><td>3300</td></tr> <tr><td>2012/13</td><td>3200</td></tr> <tr><td>2013/14</td><td>3500</td></tr> <tr><td>2014/15</td><td>3400</td></tr> <tr><td>2015/16</td><td>3300</td></tr> <tr><td>2016/17</td><td>3300</td></tr> </tbody> </table> </div> <p>Graph 14 - The average domestic (sales per customer) of electricity 9kWh)</p>	Year	Merthyr Tydfil (kWh)	2006/07	3500	2007/08	3400	2008/09	3300	2009/10	3300	2010/11	3300	2011/12	3300	2012/13	3200	2013/14	3500	2014/15	3400	2015/16	3300	2016/17	3300
Year	Merthyr Tydfil (kWh)																								
2006/07	3500																								
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2013/14	3500																								
2014/15	3400																								
2015/16	3300																								
2016/17	3300																								



Graph – 15 The average domestic consumption (sales per customer) of gas (kWh)

Although it is positive that the data shows that there is relatively low energy consumption when compared across Wales, the Local Authority has no control over domestic energy consumption.

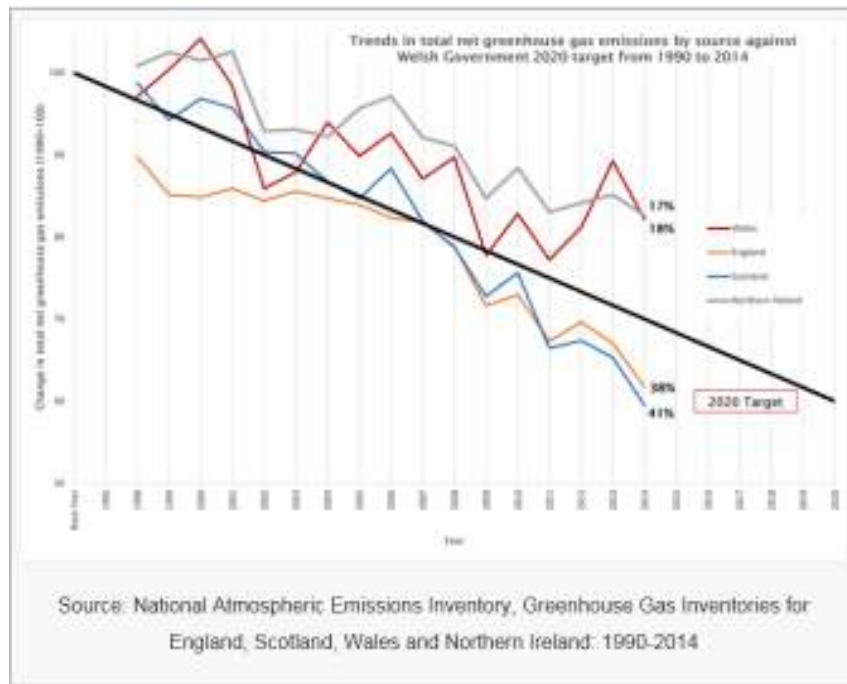
SA Target 2: Maximise the use of renewable energy.

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.

In terms of energy generated from renewable sources, an additional 5MW installed capacity for a photovoltaic park has been granted permission during the monitoring period.

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, according to *In Brief* the National Assembly for Wales Research Service blog greenhouse gas emissions of the six major gases decreased by 8% in Wales between 2013 and 2014. The reductions are primarily due to increased efficiency in energy production and business sector heating, the use of natural gas in place of coal, abatement in some chemical industries and a shift in manufacturing output.

The graph below shows the UK comparisons.



Graph 16

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Further Some progress has been made towards meeting this SA objective, particularly in respect of granting permission for additional renewable energy capacity.

13 – Land and Soils

SA Objective 13: Promote efficient use of land and soils.

This SA Objective is informed by 2 targets and 4 background indicators.

SA Target 1: Percentage of development on previously developed land.

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.

Over the monitoring period, 73% of all development permitted occurred on previously developed land. This figure is slightly lower than the target of 80% but is a significant improvement from last year’s figure of 26%

This year, 72% of new dwellings in Merthyr Tydfil were constructed on previously developed land. Over 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.

SA Target 2: Decrease percentage of contaminated land.

The LDP recognises that primarily because of Merthyr Tydfil’s industrial legacy, certain areas of land in the County Borough are potentially contaminated. Furthermore, that the remediation of such land may be required before it can be brought back into beneficial use.

	<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 6 background indicators.</p> <p>SA Target 1: Move up the waste hierarchy.</p> <p>Five indicators have been identified under this target. The first indicator considers recycling rates; the second considers municipal waste recovery; the third considers all waste service access to households; the fourth considers waste generated per household and the final indicator measures the quantity of commercial waste produced, recycled and landfilled etc.</p> <p>The amount of reuse, recycling and composting has been steadily increasing in the County Borough for a number of years. According to the Data Unit Wales latest figures 62% of all waste was recycled, reused or composted in Merthyr Tydfil in 2015-16 compared to 60% in the whole of Wales making Merthyr Tydfil joint 4th for recycling in Wales. This has increased from 56% in 2014/15 as reported in the last AMR, which easily exceeds the 58 per cent target for 2015/16. This also demonstrates that the Authority is on course to meet the statutory recycling and composting target of 64% by 2019/20 and the 70% recycling/composting of municipal waste target by 2024/25.</p> <p>Merthyr Tydfil also showed the largest increase in its combined municipal waste reuse/recycling/composting rates in 2015 -16, 25% more than reported in 2014/15.</p> <p>In terms of access to waste service provision, 100% cent of households in Merthyr Tydfil have access to a weekly recycling, food waste collection with a fortnightly general waste service and composting service. Recent figures show that 75.61% of Merthyr Tydfil householders are participating in the new recycling service launched in 2015 which comprises two recycling boxes—one for paper and one for glass bottles, jars and cardboard alongside a blue reusable sack used to collect plastic and aluminum, and a food waste bin together with the a garden waste sack collected fortnightly. In addition there are two Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRC's) open daily in the County Borough, sited in Aberfan and Dowlais, which had a combined average recycling rate of 90% per month over the monitoring period, an improvement on the 75% of waste being recycled at</p>

	<p>those sites between August 2015 and January 2016.</p> <p>According to Stats Wales figures the average amount of residual household waste produced by Merthyr Tydfil residents between April 2016 and March 2017 is 51.4 per person kilograms compared to 45.45 per person kilograms produced during the last monitoring period.</p> <p>The Van Permit scheme was introduced in November 2008 to minimise the illegal use of the HWRC's by traders and builders, both from Merthyr Tydfil and other Local Authority areas. Prior to the implementation of the scheme around 2,700 tonnes of non-recyclable residual waste was disposed of at the HWRCs per year; this was reduced to 787 tonnes in 2015 - 2016.</p> <p>SA Target 2: Reduce tonnage of waste to landfill.</p> <p>According to the Data Unit Wales latest figures, 30% of all waste was sent to landfill in Merthyr Tydfil in 2015-16 compared to 18% in the whole of Wales. Latest Stats Wales figures show that waste going to landfill has reduced from 11,115 tonnes in 2014/15 to 9,841 tonnes in 2015/16. 6,736 tonnes of this was biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) using 84.1% of the Council's allowance, which is progress from 2013/14, when according to NRW, the council exceeded its allowance,.</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 environmental 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>In November 2012, the Welsh Government published Towards Zero Waste a Construction and Demolition (C and D) Sector Plan. The reuse/recycling/composting baseline rate was around 85% in 2005-06; approximately 1.27 million tonnes (10.5%) was disposed of to landfill. C and D sector specific targets include an increase of C and D waste being prepared for reuse and recycling to 90% by 2020.</p> <p>Over the monitoring period, planning permission was granted for 12 housing related developments, erection of a changing room and a change of use from a salt store to a highway maintenance facility, within the buffer zone of the Ffos-y-Fran land reclamation scheme. The changing room and highway maintenance facility represent non-sensitive development, while the housing developments are all located within existing built up areas which already encroach into the buffer zone.</p> <p>Two housing related developments were also granted planning permission within the buffer zone of Vaynor Quarry. Both developments are located within an existing built up area which also already encroaches into the</p>

buffer zone.

In addition, one application for a wind turbine was refused within the Ffos-y-Fran reclamation scheme mineral buffer zone.

In conclusion, all developments granted planning permission over the monitoring period are in accordance with guidance set out in paragraph 40 of Minerals Planning Policy Wales and it is therefore considered that the percentage of land taken up by inappropriate sensitive development is zero.

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Progress continues to be made towards meeting this SA objective.

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 was 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 key 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, both the level and spatial distribution of growth have required reconsideration as part of the preparation of a replacement LDP. A review of all potential housing and employment allocations in the LDP will also be necessary in order to ensure that development on these sites is 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, a full replacement LDP is being prepared and this will reflect changes to national policy.

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 are subject to detailed consideration as part of the preparation of the 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, being 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 2017, 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 (although this has improved during this monitoring period).

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 2017 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. A new, more deliverable, strategy (particularly in regard to housing delivery) is being proposed in the replacement LDP, based on the findings of the Review Report, previous AMRs, and other work undertaken such as Options Appraisals and a call for candidate sites. It will also involve a review of all potential housing and employment allocations to ensure that development on these sites will be 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	1409 completions by April 2017.	-	R
	At least 3,020 net completions by April 2021	-		
<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	Greater than 14,700 sq m per annum or less than 1,834 sq m per annum for 2 consecutive years.	R
	At least 110,080 sq m net floorspace by April 2021	26,494 sqm delivered end of March 2017		
<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 by end of March 2017	No application registered by the end of 2014	R

<p><u>Local - Town Centre Health Checks</u></p> <p>i) Total annual vacant floor space in Town Centre</p> <p>(Vacancy rate currently at 13% - Retail, Commercial and Leisure Capacity Study, 2009)</p> <p>ii) Percentage of A1 retail uses in primary shopping area</p>	<p>Vacancy rate to reduce to 9% (UK average)</p> <p>Maintain a percentage of at least 83%</p>	<p>11.1% (4.8% increase)</p> <p>79.3% (1.7% decrease)</p>	<p>Vacancy rate increasing for 1 year or remaining static above target for 2 consecutive years</p> <p>Percentage less than 83%</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>Y</p>	<p>G</p> <p>R</p>
<p><u>Core</u></p> <p>New social and community infrastructure</p> <p>i) Merthyr Tydfil Health Park</p> <p>ii) Merthyr College</p> <p>iii) Ysgol Santes Tudful</p> <p>(Linked to SO8)</p>	<p>Deliver by the end of 2013</p> <p>Deliver by the end of 2016</p> <p>Deliver by the end of 2010</p>	<p>Delivered</p> <p>Delivered</p> <p>Delivered</p>	<p>No planning application registered by the end of 2011</p> <p>No planning application registered by the end of 2014</p>	<p>G</p>	

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	374 completions by April 2017.	-	G
	At least 550 net completions by April 2021	-		
<u>Core</u> Number of new homes built in other growth areas. (Linked to SO6)	Between 200 and 240 net completions by April 2016	46 completions by end of April 2017	-	Y
	At least 245 net completions by April 2021			
<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	Delivered	-	G
	Deliver by the end of 2010	Delivered		

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
<p><u>Core</u></p> <p>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)</p>	<p>Maintain a percentage of at least 80% over the plan period</p>	<p>2016/17 – 73%</p>	<p>Less than 80% for 2 consecutive years</p>	<p>R</p>
<p><u>Core</u></p> <p>Amount of greenfield land lost as a result of inappropriate development on sites not allocated in the LDP</p>	<p>No land lost</p>	<p>No greenfield land lost</p>	<p>1 or 2 developments permitted for 2 consecutive years, or, 3 or more developments permitted in 1 year</p>	<p>G</p>

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
<p><u>Local</u></p> <p>Percentage of new residential development within 400m of bus stop and 600m of primary facilities including a shop and school.</p> <p>(Linked to SO8)</p>	<p>Maintain a percentage of at least 80% over the plan period</p>	<p>91.7% of new residential developments that were granted planning permission over the monitoring period were within specified distances to local facilities</p>	<p>Less than 80% for 2 consecutive years</p>	<p>G</p>
<p><u>Local</u></p> <p>Percentage of new dwellings completed at:</p> <p>(1) less than 20 dph;</p> <p>(2) 20 dph or greater and less than 25 dph;</p> <p>(3) 25 dph or greater and less than 30 dph;</p> <p>(4) 30 dph or greater and less than 50 dph; and</p> <p>(5) 50 dph or greater</p> <p>(Linked to SO6)</p>	<p>Approximately 12%</p> <p>Approximately 13%</p> <p>Approximately 25%</p> <p>Approximately 48%</p> <p>Approximately 2%</p>	<p>13%</p> <p>0%</p> <p>26%</p> <p>50%</p> <p>11%</p>	<p>More than 25% of new dwellings at less than 25 dph for 2 consecutive years</p>	<p>G</p>

<u>Core</u> Percentage of allocated sites developed (ha)	Approximately 65% of allocations developed by the end of 2016	Approximately 35% of allocations developed by March 2017. Delivered approximately 3.45 ha (15%) over the monitoring period	Less than 25% of LDP phased delivery rate for 2 consecutive years	R	Y
	Approximately 100% of allocations developed by the end of 2021	(Trigger level approximately 4.5 ha) -		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 17% of total development permitted on allocated sites over the monitoring period	Less than 80% for 2 consecutive years	R	
<u>Local</u> Highway network improvements (1) Aberfan – Merthyr Vale Link (T1)	Deliver by the end of 2011	Completed during 2015/2016	-	Y	
	Deliver by the end of 2021	-	No planning application registered by the end of 2019		
	(4) Pentwyn Road, Quakers Yard (T2)	-	No planning application registered by the end of 2019		
(5) A472 at	Deliver by the end of 2021	-	No planning application registered by the end of 2019		

Fiddlers Elbow (T3)				
<u>Local</u> Remodelling of Merthyr Tydfil Central Bus Station	Deliver by the end of 2016	Application registered and permitted during monitoring period	No planning application registered by the end of 2014	R

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> 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 Minimum of 9.02 Mt produced by the end of 2021 (N.B. targets are based on joint production with Brecon Beacons National Park)	Approximately 3.95 Mt jointly produced since 2011 Approximately 0.45 Mt produced in 2016	Less than 0.82 Mt per annum for 2 consecutive years	R R
<u>Core</u> Aggregates landbank	Minimum 10 year land bank maintained throughout the plan period	Adequate current land bank	Landbank falling below target	G

<p><u>Core</u></p> <p>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)</p>	<p>No developments permitted</p>	<p>No developments granted planning permission in C1 or C2 floodplain areas that do not meet all TAN 15 tests</p>	<p>1 or more developments permitted</p>	<p>G</p>
<p><u>Local</u></p> <p>Developments incorporating sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS)</p>	<p>All developments to include SuDS where appropriate</p> <p>(N.B Excludes developments that have not incorporated SuDS for environmental or practical reasons)</p>	<p>All developments granted planning permission over the monitoring period incorporate SuDS where appropriate</p>	<p>1 or 2 developments permitted without SuDS for 2 consecutive years, or, 3 or more developments permitted without SuDS in 1 year</p>	<p>G</p>
<p><u>Core</u></p> <p>Amount of new licensed waste management facilities permitted</p>	<p>Between 1.1 and 3.2 hectares of B2 employment land developed for waste management facilities.</p> <p>(N.B. New facilities will be delivered in partnership with Rhondda Cynon Taf)</p>	<p>One new multipurpose waste treatment facility granted planning permission over monitoring period</p>	<p>No new facilities granted planning permission by the end of 2012</p>	<p>G</p>

	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 Trecatti	To maintain spare capacity over the Plan period	Input below maximum in 2015	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 At least 3,800 net completions by April 2021	1,909 completions by end of March 2017 -	20% less or greater than LDP strategy build rate for 2 consecutive years	R
<u>Core</u> Number of new general market dwellings built	Between 2,110 and 2,390 net completions by April 2016 At least 3,330 net completions by April 2021	1,482 completions by end of March 2017 154 completions during 2016/2017 -	20% less or greater than LDP strategy build rate for 2 consecutive years	R
<u>Core</u> Number of affordable dwellings built	Between 225 and 255 net completions by April 2016 At least 350 net completions by April 2021	347 completions by end of March 2016 19 completions during 2016/2017 -	20% less or greater than LDP strategy build rate for 2 consecutive years	Y

<u>Local</u> Number of affordable dwellings secured as a planning obligation	Approximately 130 by April 2016	45 dwellings by end of March 2017 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 N/A
	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				
<u>Local</u> Average house price (Baseline: Approximately £86,900 at 2010, amended in line with Land Registry data to £73,153)	-	£94,978	+/- 10% change from base level	G	
<u>Local</u> Average income (gross weekly pay) (Baseline: Approximately £380 at 2009, amended in line with NOMIS data to £392)	-	£447 (14% above baseline)	+/- 10% change from base level	R	

<p><u>Local</u></p> <p>Vacancy rates of existing housing stock (Baseline: 6% at 2010)</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>4.4%</p>	<p>Vacancy rate increasing for 1 year or remaining static for 2 consecutive years</p>	<p>G</p>
<p><u>Local</u></p> <p>Preparation and adoption of Affordable Housing SPG</p> <p>Percentage of relevant planning applications complying with SPG</p>	<p>By the end of 2011</p> <p>All (post SPG adoption)</p>	<p>All applications complying with SPG</p>		<p>G</p>

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	
<p><u>Core</u></p> <p>New B1 floorspace delivered</p>	<p>Between 28,500 and 30,790 sq m net floorspace delivered by April 2016</p> <p>At least 53,400 sq m net floorspace delivered by April 2021</p>	<p>10,661 sq m delivered by end of March 2016.</p> <p>0 sqm delivered 2016/17</p> <p>0 sqm delivered 2015/16</p>	<p>Greater than 7,120 sq m per annum or less than 890 sq m per annum for 2 consecutive years</p>	R	R
<p><u>Core</u></p> <p>New B2/B8 floorspace delivered</p>	<p>Between 7,920 and 9,680 sq m net floorspace delivered by April 2016</p> <p>At least 56,500 sq m net floorspace delivered by April 2021</p>	<p>16,601 sq m delivered by end of March 2016.</p> <p>1000 sqm delivered 2016/17</p> <p>0 sqm delivered 2015/16</p>	<p>Greater than 7,540 sq m per annum or less than 940 sq m per annum for 2 consecutive years</p>	Y	Y
<p><u>Core</u></p> <p>Minimum number of net additional jobs delivered</p>	<p>Between 1,800 and 1,980 jobs delivered by April 2016</p> <p>At least 4,440 jobs delivered by April 2021</p>	<p>1,873 jobs delivered by end of March 2017</p> <p>54 jobs delivered 2016/2017</p>	<p>Greater than 592 jobs per annum or less than 74 jobs per annum for 2 consecutive years</p>	R	Y

<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 Approximately 80% by the end of 2021	69% for 2016/17 (+3.1%)	Reduction of 5% or failure to increase for 2 consecutive years.	Y	G
<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	11%	+ or – 2.5% beyond range for 2 consecutive years	Y	

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.	0.7 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	All (post SPG adoption)	-	G
<u>Local</u> Percentage of planning applications complying with sustainable design SPG	All (Post SPG adoption)	All relevant applications complying with SPG	-	G

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