

MERTHYR TYDFIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2006-2021



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

For the period
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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 eighth AMR of the Merthyr Tydfil LDP and is based on the period 1st April 2018 – 31st March 2019 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 Deposit version of the Replacement LDP underwent public consultation between 30th July and 10th September 2018. Focused Changes to the Replacement LDP subsequently underwent public consultation between 21st January 2019 and 4th March 2019. The Examination in Public (EiP) into the soundness of the Replacement LDP commenced on 20th March 2019 and the topic based Hearing Sessions took place from 25th June to 21st August 2019. Many of the monitoring indicators, policies and sustainability assessments have been considered in the Plan review process.

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

Where relevant this has been referenced in the conclusions and recommendations of this AMR which has been prepared with reference to the existing Adopted LDP to satisfy legislative requirements and to provide continuous monitoring and trend data.

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

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

Paragraph 4.3, of PPW, edition 10, which relates to *Retail and Commercial Development* reflects the fact that retail and commercial centres should be identified in development plans including established towns and local centres. These should provide a range of shopping, commercial and leisure opportunities as well as places of employment, education, civic identity and social interaction. It also places a requirement for LDPs to establish a hierarchy of retail and commercial centres, identify changing retail pressures and opportunities and devise appropriate responses to them in their retail strategies. The sequential approach applies to retail and all other uses complementary to retail and commercial centres.

These changes to national retail policy and guidance mean that elements of retail policy within the adopted LDP require some revision. This work has been undertaken as part of preparation of the replacement LDP.

As part of this work The Merthyr Tydfil Retail and Commercial Leisure Capacity Study published in June 2017, by Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners Ltd was commissioned by the Council to align with the revised national retail and commercial policy. The retail study projects a convenience goods expenditure deficit by 2021 but identifies there is scope for limited new retail development within MTCB over the remaining replacement LDP plan period from 2026 to 2031. Future retail development opportunities include a small local centre incorporated into the new development proposed as part of the Hoover Strategic Regeneration Area (HSRA) and redevelopment of the existing Merthyr Tydfil Bus Station site which has the potential to deliver mixed use developments, including food and beverage and leisure to broaden the attraction of the town centre. The report concluded that there is no retail floor space headroom requirement for new retail allocations and priority should be the reoccupation of vacant floorspace in Merthyr Tydfil town and local centres.

A Strategic Flood Consequence Assessment was prepared to inform the Replacement LDP. Amongst other sites, this considered the existing Central Bus Station site allocated for retail provision in the adopted LDP. The NRW Flood Map shows that this is affected by a 1% probability event, the main risk being from the Nant Morlais, a tributary of the River Taff. The study concluded that the site is

unsuitable for allocation, although a site specific FCA could demonstrate otherwise where TAN15 justification and acceptability tests can be satisfied as part of potential development proposals.

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.	-	1,497 completions by April 2019.
<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p>The data collected shows that 1,497 dwellings were built in the Primary Growth Area between the start of the Plan period and April 2019. 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.</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, a replacement LDP has been prepared, with a Deposit LDP published for public consultation in July 2018 which was submitted for examination in early 2019. It is anticipated that the replacement LDP will be adopted in early 2020.</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>				

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
BW1 AS14	New employment floor-space	Between 36,490 and 40,470 sq m	Greater than 14,700 sq m per annum or	Current figure at end of March 1,443 sq m of floor-space

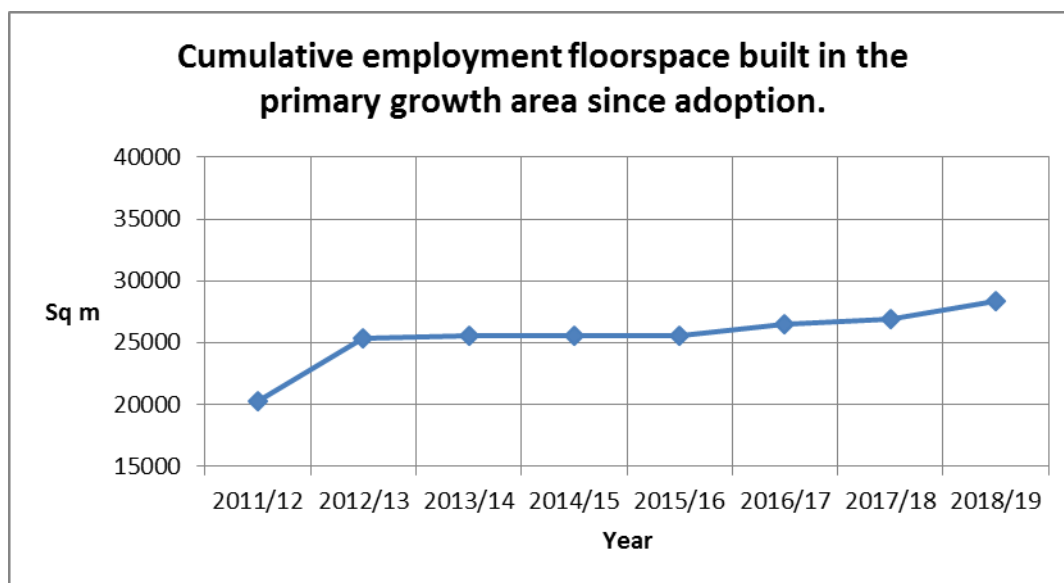
	built in the primary growth area.	net floor-space by April 2016. At least 110,080 sq m net floor-space by April 2021	less than 1,834 sq m per annum for 2 consecutive years.	2019 is 28,333 sqm	delivered during 2018/2019
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Analysis

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 April 2021, 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 was made towards meeting the employment floor-space target for 2016 (and subsequently the target for 2021), there was a significant slowdown in the amount of employment floor-space delivered over the previous four monitoring periods, with only 206 sq m delivered during 2013-2014, 0 sqm delivered during both 2014/15 and 2015/2016, 1000 sqm in 2016/17 and 396 sqm in 2017/18. In the 2018/19 monitoring period the amount of floor space built was 1,443 sqm. 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 28,333 sqm and the trigger level has been reached as the amount of employment floor-space delivered has been less than 1,834 sqm for this monitoring period. Given that the employment floor-space target for April 2021 is 110,000 sq m, a significant increase in new employment floor-space would need to be constructed in the Primary Growth Area to meet the target.



Recommendations

Whilst the amount of employment floor-space delivered over this monitoring period is an improvement in comparison to the previous five periods, the overall low level of new floor-space delivered over the last five monitoring period's means that future delivery requirements will increase, and in turn, will be more difficult to achieve. Consequently, there is less certainty over whether employment floor-space targets for 2021 could be met.

Further analysis of the employment market, including site delivery, market requirements, past build rates and labour force projections has been undertaken as part of the Employment Land Review prepared to inform the Replacement LDP. This has considered more realistic targets and has identified a new employment land requirement of 14.46 ha over the 15 years to 2031.

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 (sqm).	Approximately 1,460 sqm 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 2019.

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. This target relates to the delivery of the Central Bus Station retail 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 2016-2017 highlighted the fact the trigger level had been hit and indicated that the retail allocation on the current Central Bus Station had not come forward as anticipated. Consequently, the target of building 1,460 sqm of new retail floor-space in the Town Centre by the end of 2016 was unmet.

The development of the existing Central Bus Station site for retail is dependent on the development of the new bus station to Swan Street. Planning approval was gained for a new 'Intermodal Transport Facility' on the Swan Street site, which includes a small amount of ancillary retail floor-space, in July 2016. Welsh Government has provided £10m funding

for the new bus station and preparatory work has now begun on the redevelopment of the Swan Street site, with an expected completion date of autumn 2020.

However, as discussed above a Strategic Flood Consequence Assessment prepared to inform the Replacement LDP concluded that the existing Bus Station site is unsuitable for a retail allocation. Although a site specific FCA could demonstrate otherwise where TAN15 justification and acceptability tests could be satisfied as part of potential development proposals, the site is therefore unlikely to be developed for retail uses within the plan period.

Recommendations

Policies AS18 and AS20 should be revisited as part of preparation of the replacement LDP, taking into account the changes made to national retail policy and guidance, the future requirements identified in the Merthyr Tydfil Retail and Commercial Leisure Study and recommendations of the SFCA.

Given that the site is located in a flood zone C2 the existing bus station site should not be included as a retail allocation in the replacement Plan. Future proposals for the redevelopment of the site could still be considered as part of a planning application, if accompanied by a site specific Flood Consequence Assessment that demonstrates the proposed development satisfies the flood risk justification and acceptability criteria set out in national policy.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
AS18 AS19	<u>Local - Town Centre</u> <u>Health Checks</u> i) Total annual vacant floor space in Town Centre. (Vacancy rate currently at 13% - Retail, Commercial and Leisure Capacity Study, 2009).	Vacancy rate to reduce to 9% (UK average 2009).	Vacancy rate increasing for 1 year or remaining static above target for 2 consecutive years.	Decreased from 14.6% to 8.25%.
	ii) Percentage of A1 retail uses in primary shopping area.	Maintain a percentage of at least 83%.	Percentage less than 83%.	Proportion increased from 79.3% to 86.5%

Analysis

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

In respect of the town centre vacancy rate, the current percentage of vacant units is 8.25% which represents a decrease from the previous AMR at 14.6%; meaning that the recorded vacancy rate is below the trigger level. Whilst there can be fluctuations in annual snapshot surveys this is a favourable statistic and is the lowest level recorded since the adoption of the LDP. This indicates a general improvement and the impact of regeneration initiatives such as the Townscape Heritage Programme to refurbish historic buildings and to bring vacant properties back into use.

With regard to the percentage of A1 retail uses in the primary shopping area, the figure has risen to 86.5% from 79.3% over the monitoring period. This is the first time the percentage of A1 retail uses has risen above the trigger level of less than 83% of A1 retail uses in the primary shopping area. Whilst this is based on one annual snapshot survey it indicates an improvement in relation to the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the town centre and ongoing regeneration initiatives.

Recommendations

Fluctuations in the UK economy undoubtedly impacts on the health of the town centre and, the effectiveness of LDP Policies AS18 and AS19 are therefore difficult to fully quantify through an annual snapshot survey data until longer term trends emerge.

Whilst it is recognised that Merthyr Tydfil's town centre vacancy rates have fluctuated since adoption, these have often been below the UK rate and are now at its lowest since Plan adoption. This is particularly welcome, given that the UK vacancy rate at the end of March 2019, was 9.9%, with one in ten units across the UK remaining empty.

This is also the case with regard to the percentage of A1 retail uses in the Primary Shopping Area which until now has consistently remained below the required target level.

The town centre retail trends should continue to be monitored. The replacement LDP should more closely align with the Welsh economy and reflect the objectives of national policy which recognise the changing nature of retail and commercial centres and the retail hierarchy captured in the up-dated retail planning evidence base.

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 constructed. There are also continues to be concerns over the amount of new employment floor-space delivered over the last five monitoring periods when compared with the original growth targets. It remains unlikely that the LDP's enhanced growth strategy will be delivered by 2021. This issue was reflected in 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 the Replacement LDP has provided the opportunity to re-consider the level and spatial distribution of growth through the consideration of alternative strategic options for development up to 2031. The Deposit Replacement LDP was consulted on during the summer of 2018 and includes a range of reviewed housing and employment sites to facilitate the new strategy of sustainably growing the population of the County Borough.

With regards to the town centre retail allocation at the Central Bus Station site, new retail floor-space has not come forward within the timescales originally anticipated; however, progress is being made with the relocation of the bus station with preparation and construction works commencing at the new Central Bus Station site at Swan Street. Over the monitoring period town centre vacancy rates have reduced to below the identified trigger level and UK average of 9.9%. In addition, the percentage of A1 retail uses in the Primary Shopping Area has improved and is now above the identified trigger level. This indicates a general improvement, however, until longer term trend data can be established these results should be viewed with caution.

Policy amendments have been suggested as part of the preparation of the emerging replacement LDP to reflect the changing nature of retail and commercial centres and longer term retailing trends.

Overall therefore it is considered that this Strategic Objective is only partially being met. The issues identified above and considered as part of the Replacement LDP will continue to be monitored.

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.	-	382 completions by April 2019
<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p>The monitoring data collated shows that 382 dwellings have been built in the Secondary Growth Area between the start of the Plan period and April 2019.</p> <p>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.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>No action is required at present; however, housing policy is subject to review as part of the replacement LDP.</p>				

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
BW3 AS3	Number of new homes built in other growth areas.	Between 200 and 240 net completions by April 2016. At least 245 net completions by April 2021.	-	74 completions by April 2019

Analysis

The monitoring data collated shows that 74 dwellings have been built in the Other Growth Areas between the start of the Plan period and April 2019. The figure of 74 completions indicates that the Other Growth Areas have not delivered enough housing developments over the plan period to meet the 2016 target. However, the overall proportion of housing completions remains in line with the LDP strategy and delivery of the Project Riverside site at Merthyr Vale (site H39), in addition to other future development in the Other Growth area, means the target to 2021 could still be met.

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 construction work on the residential development commenced in Summer 2018. Whilst construction work is well underway and completions have since taken place, no residential units were completed during the monitoring period to 31st March 2019. This site will be crucial in any revised LDP in ensuring that the smaller communities in the County Borough remain viable settlements.

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 Deposit LDP published for public consultation in July 2018 which was submitted for examination in early 2019. It is anticipated that the replacement LDP will be adopted in early 2020.

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.

3.2.3 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 will depend 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 have been reconsidered as part of the preparation of a replacement LDP which will cover a plan period of up to 2031. The Replacement LDP amends the spatial distribution of growth, with no Secondary Growth Area proposed. The Southern part of the County Borough will all be referred to as the Other Growth Area, providing appropriately 30% of future housing growth.

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

3.3.1 **Contextual Changes**

A Welsh Government consultation on the delivery of housing through the planning system in Wales was undertaken between July and October 2018. Proposals that have arisen from this consultation include; removing the requirement in PPW for LPAs to provide a five-year supply of land for housing; revoking TAN 1 in its entirety; and replacing the monitoring of housing land supply, with monitoring based on LDP housing trajectories, to be reported in LDP AMRs. If these proposals are taken forward, they will result in significant change as to how housing delivery is monitored through the planning system in Wales. Future monitoring will therefore need to take account of new guidance published by Welsh Government relating to the delivery and monitoring of housing land supply.

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	2018/19 – 84.6% permitted on previously developed land

Analysis

The amount of development permitted during the period covered in this report added up to 46.1 ha, compared to 38.62 ha over the last monitoring period. Of this a total of 39 ha was permitted on previously developed land compared to 32.98 ha over the last monitoring period. This equates to 84.6% of total development being permitted on previously developed land compared to 85.4% during the last monitoring period.

The proportion of permissions on previously developed land has not hit the trigger level over this monitoring period. However, data such as this has the potential to change dramatically year on year due to the variable levels of development taking place and the prevailing economic climate.

Recommendations

It is important to continually monitor this indicator and review it as part of the 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

Analysis

During the monitoring period, no inappropriate developments were permitted which resulted in the loss of greenfield land on sites not allocated in the LDP.

As with the previous indicator likewise, 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.

Recommendations

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

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. Firstly, 84.6% of development was on brownfield rather than greenfield land, a slight decrease from last year's result of 85.4%, 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 some allocated housing and employment sites, which are classified as brownfield, have not come forward in the timescales anticipated. The replacement LDP includes a range of housing and employment allocations to ensure that development on these sites is viable and deliverable, whilst promoting regeneration through development of brownfield sites and vacant or underused sites within existing built up areas rather than relying on greenfield land.

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 required local authorities in Wales to produce active travel maps and deliver year on year improvements to active travel routes and facilities for short commuter trips to school, work and shops or to access services, such as health or leisure centres. The Council's Active Travel existing routes map was approved by the Welsh Government in April 2016 and the Integrated Network Routes Map (i.e. the proposed active travel improvement routes) was approved by Welsh Government in January 2019. Monies have been secured for improvements to the network in Merthyr Vale, Quaker's Yard, Treharris, new signage and investigating the re-opening of the Abernant/ Merthyr Tunnel.

As part of the wider South Wales Metro project, tram-trains² will increase from two an hour to four an hour by 2022 with journey times from Merthyr Tydfil to Cardiff reducing from 56 to 44 minutes. From 2023 there will also be two services an hour from Merthyr Tydfil to Cardiff Bay. The lines will not be fully electrified and will remain under Network Rail ownership, although monies have been secured to develop plans to assess the Metro Stations.

3.4.2 **Policy Monitoring**

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
BW4	Percentage of new residential development within 400 m of a 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	96.2%
<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p>Over the monitoring period, 1 application was granted full planning approval for the erection of over 10 dwellings, 18 for minor residential, 8 for outline permission for minor residential development, 7 for change of use to residential and 3 conversions to residential. 96.2% of all residential approvals were located within close proximity to local facilities, compared with 93.5% 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.</p>				

² Tram-train technology comprises light rail cars which can operate on conventional rail as well as in electric tram mode.

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: (1) less than 20 dph; (2) 20 dph or greater and less than 25 dph; (3) 25 dph or greater and less than 30 dph; (4) 30 dph or greater and less than 50 dph; and (5) 50 dph or greater	Approximately 12% Approximately 13% Approximately 25% Approximately 48% Approximately 2%	More than 25% of new dwellings at less than 25 dph for 2 consecutive years	16% 2% 52% 10% 20%

Analysis

The figures collected for the monitoring period show that dwellings were constructed broadly in line with the indicators' target and that the trigger level has not been reached.

It is anticipated that the majority of dwellings in the County Borough will continue to be constructed at approximately 25 to 35 dwellings per hectare (dph) with the majority of completions falling between the 25 to 30 dph and 30 to 50 dph indicator levels.

During this monitoring period, the higher proportion of dwellings constructed at over 50 dph can be explained by the completion of a development of 9 flats at the Adulam Chapel site (which are of a higher density), and the lower levels of overall completions.

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 37% of allocations developed by March 2019	Delivered approximately 3% (0.55 ha) in 2018/19

Analysis

Over the monitoring period, approximately 0.55 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 37% of allocated development sites developed by the end of the current monitoring period.

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 3 years of the Plan period. As a consequence, both the level and spatial distribution of growth have been considered 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 0.55 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. The level of growth and potential housing allocations in the replacement LDP have been revisited to ensure that the proposed level of growth is 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. In this respect, the Council's Economic Development Department is continuing 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. Such a facility would complement the existing Orbit Centre, which will refocus on high quality general office facilities to meet the needs of growing businesses.

Recommendations

Since publication of the LDP Review Report, work has been undertaken on preparation of a replacement LDP, with the Deposit LDP being published for public consultation in July 2018. This includes an updated employment land evidence base and set of supporting policies. The replacement LDP was submitted for examination in early 2019 and it is anticipated that the replacement LDP will be adopted in early 2020.

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 Department 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 4%

Analysis

Over the monitoring period, approximately 4% 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 six consecutive monitoring periods. Allocated development sites are evidently not coming forward as originally anticipated and development that is coming forward is from unallocated sites. 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 adopted LDP Strategy.

The delayed delivery of allocated development sites is considered to be primarily the result of the economic downturn. Whilst the economy has grown since 2015, 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 is apparent that the adopted LDP's enhanced growth strategy will not be delivered. The replacement LDP includes a reviewed growth strategy and has included a review of allocated sites to improve performance against this indicator.

Recommendations

The LDP Review report (2016) identified the need to prepare a replacement LDP following the full revision procedure, and the Deposit version of the replacement Plan underwent public consultation during Summer 2018. The replacement LDP, which includes a revised growth strategy and new site allocations, was submitted for examination in early 2019 and is anticipated to be adopted in early 2020.

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	No planning application received in 2018/19
	(3) Dualling of A472 at Fiddlers Elbow (T3)	Deliver by the end of 2021	No planning application registered by the end of 2019	Project delivered.

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.

Works began in August 2016 to up-date the 'Fiddler's Elbow' viaduct which carries the A472 over the River Taff, linking the A470 at Abercynon roundabout with the A4054 at Fiddler's Elbow roundabout. The wear and tear experienced over the last 30 years meant that these works could not be deferred any longer and so were completed in 2016.

Although the trigger point for Pentwyn Road, Quakers Yard (T2) has not been met, given that highway scheme, has yet to be delivered it has been included in the consultative draft document for the 'Cardiff Capital Region City Deal: Outline Transport Strategy to Connect

the Cardiff Capital Region³. The draft pipeline of existing rail, bus, highway, park & ride and access proposals will be reviewed and evaluated against City-Deal and Welsh Government targets. There is therefore no confirmation or guarantee that the scheme will be delivered within the Plan period.

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 approved in 2016. Construction commenced 2019.

Analysis

Merthyr Tydfil's central bus station is to be relocated to Swan Street on the combined sites of the former, now demolished, Hollies Health Centre and the Central Police Station. Planning consent for a new 'Intermodal Transport Facility' on the Swan Street site was granted in July 2016. Welsh Government has provided £10m funding for the new bus station and preparatory work has just begun on the redevelopment of the Swan Street site, with an expected completion date of autumn 2020, and will therefore be delivered within the adopted Plan period.

Recommendations

A site allocation for the new 'Intermodal Transport Facility' should be taken forward to the Replacement LDP, given that it falls within the replacement plan period from 2016 to 2031.

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.

³ <https://www.cardiffcapitalregion.wales/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/item5-outline-regional-transport-strategy-consultation.pdf>

The continued failure to meet targets relating to the delivery of allocated development sites remains an area of concern, particularly given that it is nearly impossible that the LDP's strategy will be delivered by 2021. Whilst improving economic conditions and progress in the implementation of the regeneration programmes are steps in the right direction, it remains evident that the level and spatial distribution of growth needed to be reconsidered as part of the preparation of a replacement LDP.

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 has been extended until 31st December 2020. Discussions with the operator regarding the submission of a ROMP are ongoing.

Since the last AMR, the South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party (SWRAWP) annual reports for 2017 and 2018 have been published, providing up-to-date production figures for the South Wales and amalgamated local authority areas. The cumulative production figure in indicator BW10 has been updated accordingly. For continuity with previous AMRs the figures are provided on a joint basis with Brecon Beacons National Park.

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	<p>Minimum of 4.92 Mt produced by the end of 2016</p> <p>Minimum of 9.02 Mt produced by the end of 2021</p> <p>(N.B. targets are based on joint production with Brecon Beacons National Park)</p>	Less than 0.82 Mt per annum for 2 consecutive years	Circa 4.18 Mt of primary aggregates jointly produced since 2011	Circa 0.59 Mt of primary aggregates jointly produced in 2018
	Aggregates land bank	Minimum 10 year land bank maintained	Land bank falling below target	Adequate current land bank	

		throughout the plan period		
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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 0.59 Mt in 2018. When combined with the amount of primary aggregates jointly produced since 2011, the cumulative total is approximately 4.18 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 generally has resulted in relatively low levels of crushed rock sales within the South Wales region, reflecting a weak demand. The SWRAWP Annual Reports continue to show this trend and it is considered that the failure to produce the expected amount of aggregates in 2018 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, the County Borough'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 policies have been 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	No development permitted	1 or more developments permitted	No developments granted planning permission in C1 or C2 floodplain areas that do

	tests (paragraph 6.2 i-v)			not meet all TAN 15 tests
	Developments incorporating sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS)	All developments to include SuDS where appropriate (N.B. Excludes developments that have not incorporated SuDS for environmental or practical reasons)	1 or 2 developments permitted without SuDS for 2 consecutive years, or, 3 or more developments permitted without SuDS in 1 year	All developments granted planning permission incorporate SuDS where appropriate

Analysis

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

In respect of flood risk, 19 developments were granted planning permission in zone C2, and 0 were granted permission in zone C1, over the monitoring period. In all instances, the developments were considered justified in terms of their location and consequences associated with flooding and deemed acceptable with regards to the TAN 15 tests. It is therefore considered that Policy BW8 is functioning effectively in respect of this matter.

In terms of securing SuDS in new developments, no relevant developments have been granted planning permission without incorporating SuDS into the design of the scheme. It should be noted that from 7th January 2019 the application of the Sustainable Drainage Systems Standards for Wales and SAB Approval has been mandatory for new developments of more than one dwelling house or construction of a building or other structure covering an area of land equal to or greater than 100 square meters. This matter has been considered as part of the Replacement LDP Examination and clarifications and policy wording amendments have been proposed where appropriate. Further information can be found in the Council's Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) Background Paper (Examination Document ED09).

Recommendations

This element of the adopted LDP is currently being achieved however minor policy wording amendments and clarifications have been made to take account of the latest policy and legislative requirements.

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 with Rhondda Cynon Taf and other local authorities where appropriate)	No new facilities granted planning permission by the end of 2012	Target has been met in previous monitoring periods.
	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 2018.

Analysis

The monitoring framework contains two indicators which seek to monitor separate elements of Policy AS7, namely the delivery of waste management facilities on B2 employment sites and the safeguarding of Trecatti landfill site for continued disposal of residual waste.

Whilst no further waste management facilities were granted planning permission on B2 employment sites over the monitoring period, a number of waste management facilities, including waste sorting and transfer facilities, have been granted planning permission in previous monitoring periods, demonstrating that B2 employment sites are meeting the needs of the waste management industry. In addition, a waste treatment facility was granted planning permission on the southern part of Trecatti landfill site during a 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 2018 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, the waste management policies have been 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 jointly 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. A Welsh Government consultation on the delivery of housing in Wales has been undertaken although formal changes to national policy with regards to monitoring housing land supply are yet to be confirmed. The next monitoring period and Replacement LDP will need to take account of any changes proposed to the monitoring of housing land supply and housing delivery.

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	1.3 years
<u>Analysis</u> <p>Merthyr Tydfil's 5 year land supply is 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 6.2 years.</p> <p>The 2019 Joint Housing Land Availability Study (JHLAS) has calculated a 1.3 years housing land supply (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.</p>				

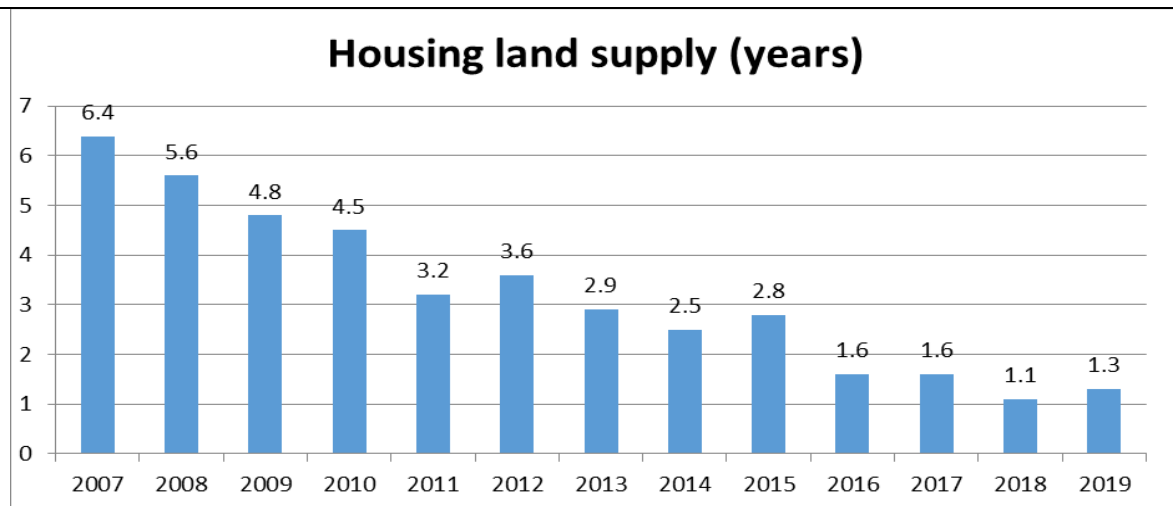


Figure 2 – Housing Land Supply by Year

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 more than 2,000 units that sit in Categories 3 and 4, the Council are the landowners on approximately 1,500 units; therefore, it is possible for the Council to have a positive direct effect on housing land supply.

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 in the future 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

Since the adoption of the LDP in 2011, the housing land supply figure has been below the required 5-year land supply level. With the exception of modest increases in 2012, 2015 and 2019 the prevailing trend has been a reducing land supply figure when calculated against the residual method. Since publication of the LDP Review Report, work has been undertaken on the preparation of a replacement LDP, with a Deposit LDP published for public consultation in July 2018 which was submitted for examination in early 2019. It is anticipated that the replacement LDP will be adopted in early 2020.

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.	1953 completions at April 2019. (44 completions during 2018/19)

Analysis

The level of completions has fallen during 2018/19 as 44 units were built in comparison to 80 units in 2017/18. This still results in the indicator again scoring a 'red' as the figure is well below the level of building required to fulfil the LDP's strategy (253 per annum).

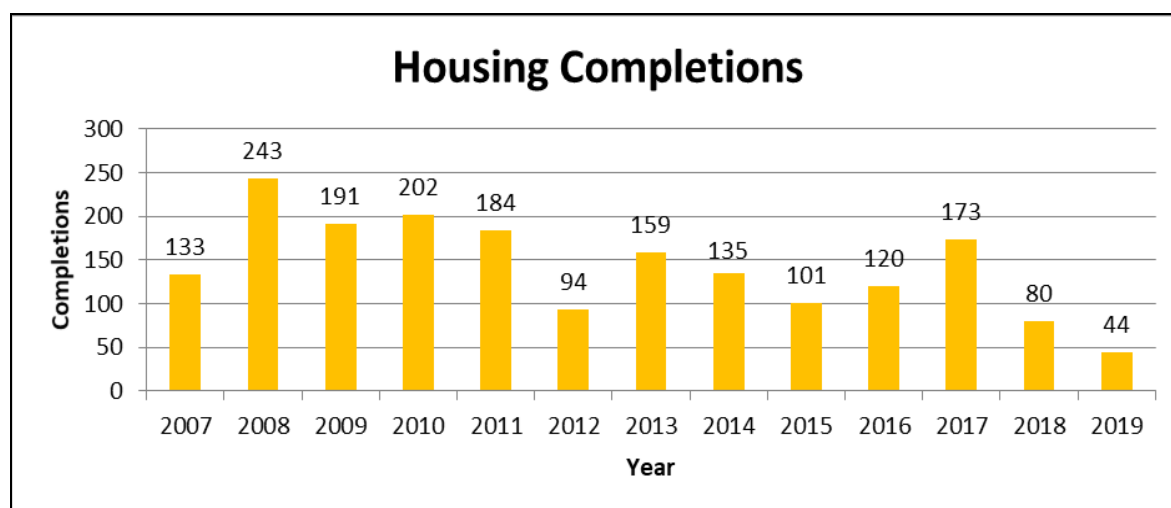


Figure 3 – Housing Completions by Year

Recommendations

The rate of housing delivery required by the current LDP has not been achieved since adoption. The level of completions remains 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 Deposit LDP published for public consultation in July 2018 which was submitted for examination in early 2019. It is anticipated that the replacement LDP will be adopted in early 2020.

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. At least 3330 net completions by April 2021	20% less or greater than LDP strategy build rate for 2 consecutive years	1562 completions by April 2019 (28 completions during 2018/19)

Analysis

The number of market completions fell from 52 during 2017/18 to 28 in 2018/19. This has 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 Deposit LDP published for public consultation in July 2018 which was submitted for examination in early 2019. It is anticipated that the replacement LDP will be adopted in early 2020.

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	391 completions by April 2019 (16 completions during 2018/19)

Analysis

The data collated shows that 391 affordable dwellings were completed in the County Borough by April 2018. 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 has been reviewed 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%	90 dwellings by the end of March 2019	10% delivered
					No applicable applications within monitoring period determined

Analysis

Over the monitoring period, financial contributions were secured via a S106 agreement on Y Goedwig and Former Ysgol Santes Tudful. Policy compliant on-site affordable housing provision was secured via condition on a development at Bryniau Road, Pant.

Whilst this indicator scores a 'green' in the Primary Growth Area and a 'yellow' in the secondary and other growth areas, 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.

The target of securing 130 affordable dwellings by planning obligations by 2016 and 240 by

2021 results in a 'yellow' score. While the figure falls below these targets, the overall level of affordable housing delivered in the County Borough through the planning system is above the overall affordable housing target. The delivery of affordable housing should continue to be monitored.

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.

A revised housing strategy (including affordable housing) forms an integral part of the replacement 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) forms an integral part of the replacement LDP.

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
AS22	Average house price (Baseline: Approximately £86,424 at 2010, line with Land Registry Data)	-	+/- 10% change from base level	£102,576

Analysis

House prices have increased over the monitoring period with a rise of approximately £6000 over the 12 month period. The average price is 19% higher than the baseline data and results in the indicator scoring 'red'.

Recommendations

The most recent LHMA was published in March 2015 and provides the evidence base in respect of housing need and affordability that as part of the LDP review. This evidence should be used alongside other contextual indicators, such as local housing waiting list data.

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	£441

Analysis

Average income has dropped during this monitoring period to £441 per week however this still results in the indicator scoring a 'red' as the figure varies 12.5% 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. The LHMA period expires in 2019 and the Council will need to prepare a new LHMA to ensure its housing evidence base is up to date.

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% in 2018/19
<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p>2018/19 has seen the vacancy rate of existing stock remain at 4.4%</p>				
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>Indicator is contextual and shows vacancy rates are below the 2010 baseline. No action required at present.</p>				

LDP Policy	Indicator	Target	Trigger Level	Performance
-	Percentage of relevant planning applications complying with Affordable Housing SPG	All (Post SPG adoption)	-	All relevant applications complying with SPG.
<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p>All relevant applications have complied with the Affordable Housing SPG. Financial contributions were secured via a S106 agreement on schemes at Y Goedwig and Former Ysgol Santes Tudful and policy compliant on-site provision was secured at Bryniau Road, Pant</p>				
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>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.</p>				

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

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

The failure to achieve a 5 year housing land supply and the low number of dwelling completions, particularly general market dwellings, continues to be a concern. The adopted LDP is based on an enhanced growth strategy which, amongst other things, requires ambitious levels of housing delivery. The level of housing delivery over the plan period to date has been much lower than anticipated and accordingly, the housing target of delivering at least 2,400 dwellings by 2016 was not met. It also appears that the housing target of delivering at least 3,800 dwellings by 2021 will not be achieved as this would require in excess of 900 dwellings per annum for the remainder of the plan period.

The delivery of affordable dwellings exceeded the target for 2016 with another 16 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 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 ***SO7: 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 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. The deal comprises a £1.28 billion programme to achieve five per cent uplift in the region's GVA through a range of programmes aimed to increase connectivity, improve physical and digital infrastructure and regional business governance.

The Council's Economic Development department has prepared a draft *Economic Growth Strategy for Merthyr Tydfil 2018 – 2023* which builds on the socio-economic analysis and labour market strategy reviews previously undertaken. An Economic Growth Partnership Task and Finish group has been established to oversee the strategy which is anticipated to be finalised during the next monitoring period. Its aim is to improve the County Borough's economic well-being and increase the pace of economic recovery by focusing on four priority areas: Economic Base, Infrastructure, Labour Market and Skills. Once finalised it is intended that the Economic Growth Strategy will be reviewed every 5 years.

On 29 March 2017, the British government invoked Article 50 of the Treaty on the European Union for the UK to leave the EU. Negotiations are ongoing and uncertainty for investors in the short to medium term may affect the performance of the local economy.

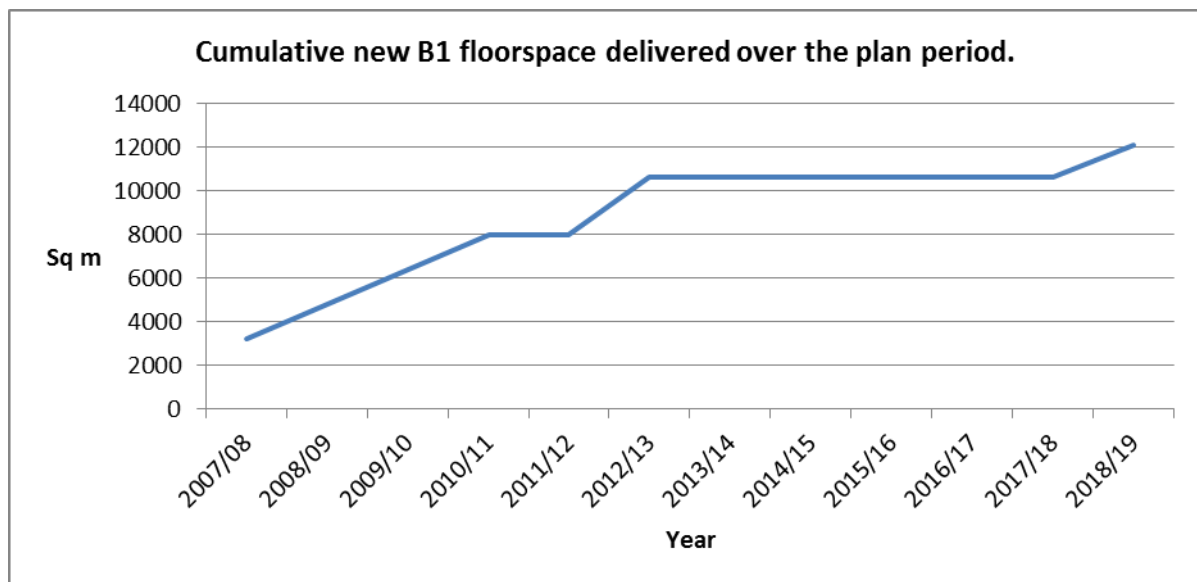
3.7.2 **Policy Monitoring**

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	12,104 sqm delivered by the end of March 2019	1,443 sqm delivered 2018/2019 0 sqm delivered 2017/2018

Analysis

The overall delivery of new B1 floor-space remains low, however 1443 sqm of new floor-space was delivered over the monitoring period. The cumulative amount of new B1 floor-space delivered since the start of the plan period (2006) therefore increases to 12,104 sqm (see Figure 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 sqm 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.

As the amount of B1 floor-space delivered is above the minimum requirement (890 sq m), the trigger level has not been met and a 'yellow' score has been given. A further 224 sqm of B1 floor-space is anticipated to come forward in the short term, reflecting the planning permission granted for B1 related development over the monitoring period.



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 sold. The Council's Economic Development department continues to promote vacant business properties and land within the County Borough through the *Invest in Merthyr Tydfil* website. This will be updated and refreshed over the next monitoring period. 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.

- Economic development evidence base – The economic development evidence base has been updated to inform the preparation of the replacement LDP. Existing B1 allocations have been reviewed and new allocations have been proposed to 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.	16,997 sqm delivered by the end of March 2019	0 sqm delivered 2018/2019 396 sqm delivered 2017/2018

Analysis

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

396 sqm of new B2/B8 floor-space was delivered over the previous monitoring period which is less than the minimum requirement. 0 sqm B2/B8 floor space was delivered over the

current monitoring period, which is also less than the minimum requirement. Therefore the trigger level has been met, and the score becomes 'red'. If this annual rate continues, it will not be enough to meet the 2021 target of 56,500 sqm. Over the monitoring period 17,710 sqm of B2/B8 floor-space was granted planning permission. This includes 10,720 sqm at the Willows and Abercanaid Industrial Estates, 3,526 sqm at Merthyr Tydfil Industrial Estate, 1,682 sqm at Pengarnddu Industrial Estate and 1,100 sqm at Goat Mill Road Industrial Estate.

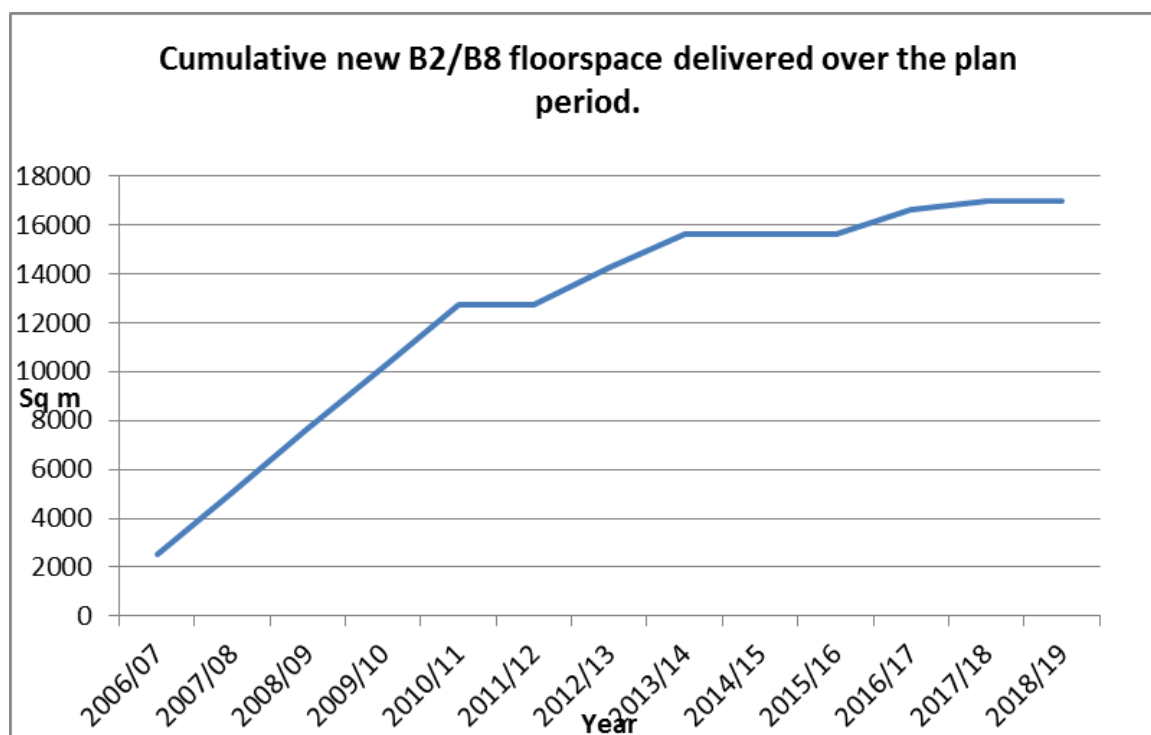


Figure 5 – Cumulative B2/B8 Floorspace delivered

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 2016 B2/B8 floor-space targets, it must be recognised that meeting the longer term target of delivering at least 56,500 sqm of B2/B8 floor-space by 2021 remains a significant challenge. 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 sold. The Council's Economic Development department continues to promote vacant business

properties and land within the County Borough through the *Invest in Merthyr Tydfil* website. This will be updated and refreshed over the next monitoring period. 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.

- Economic development evidence base – The economic development evidence base has been updated to inform the preparation of the replacement LDP. Existing B2/B8 allocations have been reviewed and new allocations have been proposed to 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.	1877 jobs delivered by the end of March 2019	4 B-Class use jobs delivered in 2018/2019

Analysis

This performance indicator contains 2 elements, namely a target number of jobs delivered through employment developments by 2021 and an associated trigger level figure.

During the monitoring period an application for offices was constructed at Gellideg (application P/15/0090). However, this resulted in only 4 new jobs being created, as the occupier relocated from other existing premises. There were no other B use class developments constructed during the monitoring period. This figure (and that of the previous monitoring period, 0 jobs delivered), is below the minimum figure of 75 additional jobs per annum set as the trigger level. Accordingly a 'red' score is given. Whilst the indicator relates to the number of B use class jobs delivered, 18 employment developments were consented during the monitoring period for B1/B2/B8 uses will provide additional jobs once constructed.

The cumulative jobs delivered as part of employment developments since the start of the LDP period (2006) is 1,877 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 will need to increase significantly to meet the target of 4400 jobs by 2021.

Recommendations

Recommendations made under previous indicators relating to employment 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, no planning applications were approved for developments which resulted in the loss of employment land on a protected employment site. The policy clarification note for LDP Policy AS24 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.	72.2%	Decrease of 1.8% 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 72.2%, which is 1.8% lower than the 74% level of economically active people in employment in the 2017-2018 AMR.

The December 2016 target of 74% was not met. However, the December 2021 target of 80% is now active as the next relevant target. Considering the slight decrease 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 lower than the average figures for Wales (73.1%) and the average figure for Great Britain (75.4%) which have both seen improvement over the current monitoring period.

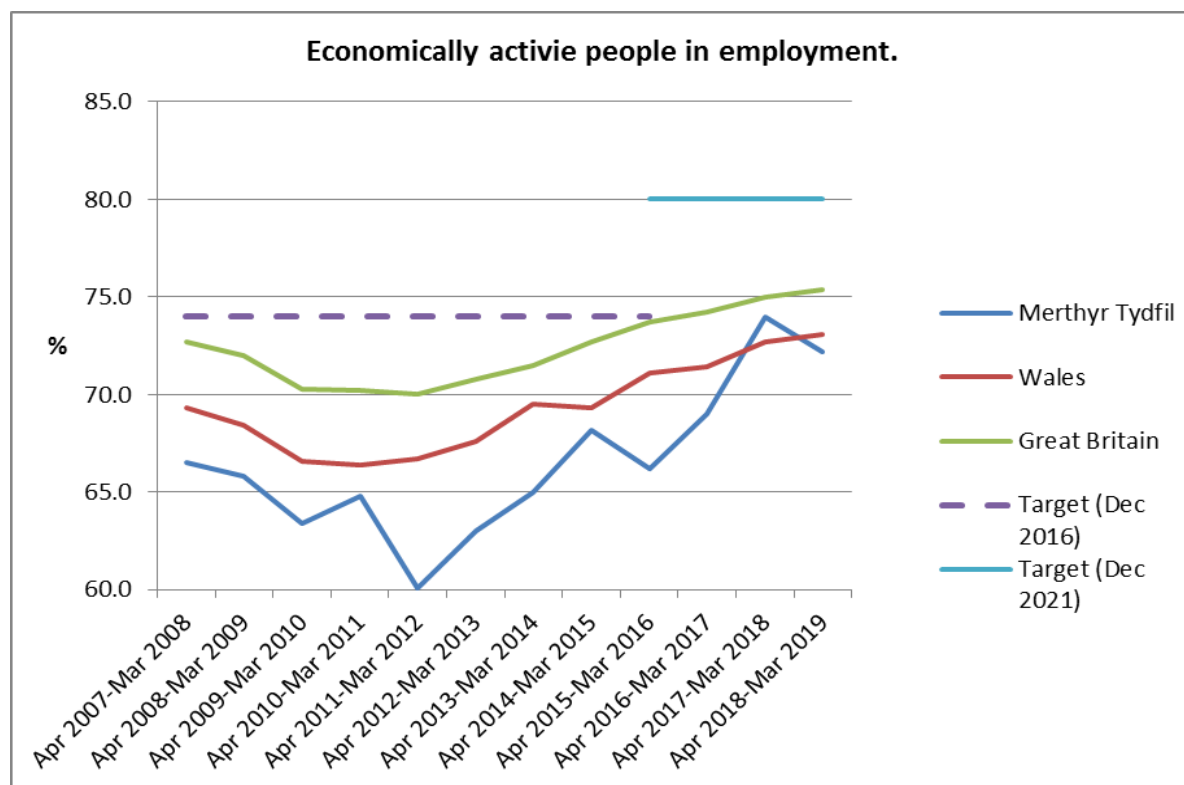


Figure 6 - ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from NOMIS on 28/08/19]

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 employment⁴. As it appears increasingly unlikely that this target will be met, it is important that the Merthyr Tydfil employment land review is updated to ensure that the current employment allocations are appropriate to both deliver new employment floor-space to meet short term demand and provide for likely longer-term employment land requirements up to 2031.

Recommendation

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

⁴ See Merthyr Tydfil CBC Employment Land Review, Roger Tym & Partners (July 2010).

In addition, Merthyr Tydfil's evidence base supporting LDP employment policies was 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	6%

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, quite significantly, to 6% (from 13% in the previous monitoring period), which is within the 5-10% target. As such, this results in a 'green' score. Whilst further monitoring is considered necessary in order to identify whether any trends are forming, the fact that the vacancy rate is within the acceptable range is encouraging.

Site Name.	Total Units.	No. Vacant.	% Vacant.
Pant Ind. Est.	118	8	7
Pengarnddu Ind. Est.	15	1	7
Willows Ind. Est.	25	1	7
Merthyr Ind. Est.	69	4	6
Plymouth St. Arches.	14	5	38
Rhydycar Business Park.	5	0	0
Abercanaid Ind. Est.	7	0	0
Goatmill Rd. Ind. Est.	37	1	2
Triangle Business Park.	9	0	0
Cyfarthfa	13	0	0
EFI	16	0	0
Overall	328	20	6

Figure 7 – Employment Site Vacancy Rates

Recommendations

Continue to monitor vacancy rates in order to establish longer term trends. Merthyr Tydfil's employment land evidence base has also been updated 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 whilst 1,443 sqm of new floor-space were delivered over the monitoring period, the overall delivery of new B1 floor-space remains low at 12,104 sqm. 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. The level of economic activity has also reduced slightly to 72.2%.

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.

Policy recommendations have been 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 this, the appropriateness of the LDP's employment strategy, policies and allocations have been reviewed as part of work on the replacement Plan in order to ensure that they meet the employment needs of the County Borough and wider region 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

Welsh Government published its *Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives 2016-20 - Working towards a Fairer Wales*, in November 2016 which aligned with *Prosperity for All: The National Strategy*, published in December 2016 and *The Well-being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*. In September 2017 it announced its *Equality and Inclusion Funding Programme 2017-2020* in order to implement the Plan by working towards a more equal Wales by ensuring fairer access to services and supporting opportunities for all.

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
<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p>Within this monitoring period, fifteen planning applications were approved for proposed developments resulting in the loss of a community facility. All relevant developments were justified in accordance with LDP Policy BW15. Eleven of the proposals demonstrated that an alternative facility was provided nearby, three had been vacant for over two years and one was confirmed as no longer viable or surplus to community needs.</p> <p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>Given that this element of policy is currently being achieved, a criteria based policy should be taken forward to the replacement LDP, 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.</p>				

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
<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p>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.</p> <p>No planning obligations have been secured on allocated housing development during this monitoring period as no allocated sites have gained permission during 2018/19.</p> <p>The fact that no 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.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>No action required this part of the policy is currently being achieved.</p>				

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 identifying a number of Priority Open Spaces. Since that time the OSS has been monitored to inform the emerging replacement LDP. *The Merthyr Tydfil Open Space Strategy – Monitoring Report for 2018-2019* was published in April 2019. It reports on the condition of open spaces (in particular Priority Open Spaces) and gives a measure of the areas of improvement made and the actions required to bring the spaces up to a standard that is equivalent to the Green Flag Award standard.

Our Cwm Taf – Cwm Taf well-being Plan 2018-2023 was published in May 2018, as required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Objective 2 relates to living healthy lives and includes goals to integrate outdoor activity into daily lives by using LDPs, amongst other things, to increase safe access to the outdoors. The long term vision is that “People of all ages spend time outdoors, using and enjoying their local environment to improve their health and well-being”.

The Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council’s *Statement of Well-being 2018-19* sets out local well-being objectives, which includes *Objective EW: Environmental Wellbeing: Communities protect, enhance and promote our natural environment and countryside*, which strives to ensure that “People, proud of the area’s outstanding landscape, regularly spend time outdoors in good quality, accessible greenspace. Communities help improve their local areas, learning new skills, building strong social bonds and helping wildlife flourish”. In addition, as part of the lessons learnt in year one of the wellbeing plan, reference to the ‘environment’; now includes the urban and natural environment and not just the natural environment.

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	-	0.9ha

Analysis

Over the monitoring period 0.9 Ha of public open space was lost to development at the Vayner and Penderyn School site. The land was required to provide access and car parking for the proposed new school and the adjoining recreational fields were retained as a facility. A Multi-Use Games Area facility was also provided as part of the development. In this case, the development was considered to be in accordance with policy BW16.

Recommendations

This element of policy should be taken forward into the replacement LDP. Given that the policy does not cover all areas of functional open space these should be identified for protection in the LDP.

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**

Planning Policy Wales Edition 10, published in December 2018⁵, puts ‘placemaking’ at the heart of national planning policy. “Placemaking” is a holistic approach to the planning and design of development and spaces, focusing on positive outcomes and drawing upon an area’s potential to create high quality development and public spaces that promote people’s prosperity, health, happiness, and well-being in the widest sense. Paragraphs 3.19 to 3.24 promote the role of the planning system in creating healthier places, recognising that the built and natural environment is a key determinant of health and well-being.

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” where appropriate. 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

⁵ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-02/planning-policy-wales-edition-10.pdf>

Analysis

All relevant applications have complied with the adopted sustainable design SPG, resulting in key elements of sustainable design being incorporated into new developments.

Recommendations

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

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**

In December 2017 the Welsh Government (WG) published their Economic Action Plan - Prosperity for All⁶, which aims, amongst other things, to draw on opportunities provided by the unique Welsh culture, heritage and language. Following this WG published Priorities for the Historic Environment of Wales⁷ in September 2018, which acknowledges the contribution that the historic environment can make to Wales's economic well-being and help to underpin the ambitions set out in the Economic Action Plan by recognising the special places that form the backbone of local economies which can contribute to the quality and vibrancy of these places.

Policy Advice relating to Local Development Plans is contained within the revised TAN 20: Planning and the Welsh Language published in October 2017. Following publication of 'Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers', published in tandem with the work programme 2017-21, an action plan for 2018-19 was prepared in accordance with Section 78 of the Government of Wales Act 2006, setting out how it will implement the proposals set out in their Welsh Language Strategy during that year. Objective 9.4 of that action plan states that *"When considering the content of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans, we will look for evidence that Welsh-medium education is fully considered as part of local authorities' policy and planning developments including opportunities for Welsh-medium provision through section 106 agreements"*.

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

⁶ <https://gov.wales/prosperity-all-economic-action-plan>

⁷ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-07/priorities-for-the-historic-environment-of-wales.pdf>

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 8 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;
- 5 developments were granted planning permission within a Conservation Area (3 of which were Listed Buildings);
- 6 developments were granted planning permission impacting on a Listed Building (3 of which were also within a Conservation area); and
- No developments were granted planning permission within a Historic Park and Garden (both also relating to a Listed Building located within a Conservation area).

The majority of approvals relating to townscape and built heritage were for restoration, or refurbishment works and conversions or extensions. One approval was for the attachment of a purple memorial plaque.

All permissions granted complied with Policy BW6.

Recommendations

This element of policy is currently being achieved, and as such should be taken forward in to the 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 planning permissions granted 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 planning permissions granted do not cause harm to a SSSI
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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 only one development was granted planning permission that had the potential to affect the Afon Taf SINC. However, in this instance the overall nature conservation value of the SINC was regarded as unharmed.

An application for a detached house within the Cwm Glo SINC, which also abutted the SSSI was refused.

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

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

Recommendations

Given that these policies are currently being achieved, they should be taken forward to 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 Welsh Government consultation on *Achieving our low Carbon Pathway to 2030*, prepared in response to the Paris Agreement, ended in October 2018. Its aim was to seek views on potential actions to cut emissions in eight emission sectors (power, transport, buildings, agriculture, land-use and forestry, industry, public sector and waste). Welsh Government published a summary of responses in February 2019.

The Low Carbon Delivery Plan 2019 was launched in March 2019 setting out how Wales will meet the first carbon budget (2016-2020), and consequently the 2020 interim target with the aim of reaching a reduction in carbon emissions by 80% by 2050 by the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

3.12.2 Policy Monitoring

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

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 fifth 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 2018 to 31st March 2019.
- 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 2018 was £124,271.25. Over the monitoring period, the Authority received a total of £9,550 in CIL. No CIL monies have been spent during the monitoring period and accordingly, the CIL balance at 31st March 2019 was £133,821.25

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 1953 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 16 affordable dwellings at sites in Merthyr Vale, Merthyr Tydfil town centre and Treharris.</p> <p>There has been an increase in the average house price during the monitoring period but a decline 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.</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 2018/2019 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</p>

	<p>Cadw appointed the Handley Partnership, to undertake an all-Wales condition review of listed buildings over a five-year rolling period, from 2012, surveying approximately 20% of listed buildings stock in Wales per year. Merthyr Tydfil was last surveyed in 2016, and the results indicate that the number of buildings at risk decreased from 20 in 2012, to 16 in 2016.</p> <p>The Council's regeneration department has secured funding for the restoration of buildings of historic and cultural interest, including at the Labour Exchange, the Miners Arms and the YMCA. St. David's Hall has now been refurbished and will complement the services offered at Soar Chapel and Redhouse (the Old Town Hall). Options are also being investigated for 115 High Street, the Theatre Royal and the Synagogue and further proposals to restore rooms at Cyfarthfa Castle are being considered. In addition, the Townscape Heritage Initiative will bring historic, derelict buildings in Pontmorlais back into use.</p> <p>MTCBC has 48 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM) and a monuments conditions survey will be undertaken by Cadw, based on the assessment of current condition and vulnerability to various threats. Following the publication of the Cyfarthfa Design Charrette 'Crucible Report', consultants have been commissioned to develop a 25 year masterplan for the Cyfarthfa Heritage Area. The 'Cyfarthfa Plan' will provide a visionary strategic masterplan for the development of the cultural, industrial heritage and landscape assets of the Cyfarthfa Estate and other heritage assets in Merthyr Tydfil that will identify and define the brief for a number of large and smaller projects to be implemented.</p> <p>According to the National Survey of Wales⁸ 11% of adults could speak Welsh within the County Borough in 2018/19, a marginal increase on the 10% figure recorded for 2016/17 (the next available comparison year). This compares to the Welsh average of 18% of adults who could speak Welsh in 2018/19 and 20% of adults in 2017/18.</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Progress continues to be made towards meeting this SA objective in terms of protecting historical assets, and increasing the number of Welsh speakers within the County Borough.</p>
3 - Communities	<p>SA Objective 3: Encourage population retention and growth; and promote integrated and distinctive communities with opportunities for living, working and socialising for all.</p> <p>This SA Objective is informed by 3 targets and 6 background indicators.</p> <p>SA Target 1: All people to have access to a GP, post office, play area, pub and village hall.</p> <p>The access and the availability of local services is an important consideration in the location of new residential development. For this reason, all residential allocations in 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, 96.2% of residential development granted</p>

⁸ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Welsh-Language/National-Survey-for-Wales-Welsh-Language>

	<p>planning permission in the County Borough was located within 400m of a bus stop and 600m of primary facilities including a shop and school. This compares favourably to 93.5% reported in the last AMR.</p> <p>There are limited datasets available at local authority level that provides annual comparative statistics relating to GP access issues. However, according to the National Survey for Wales for 2018/19, 68 out of 100 people accessed a GP about their health in the Merthyr Tydfil local authority area, with 44% being prescribed medication for more than a year, a decrease of 2% from the last AMR period.</p> <p>With regards to 'ease of getting appointment at convenient time' the survey found that within the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board area 25% of respondents found it very difficult, 18% difficult, 27% fairly easy and 30% very easy. This compares with 18%, 27%, 27% and 28% respectively in 2014/15 indicating a slightly higher proportion found it more difficult.</p> <p>There are 12 Post Offices and sub-post offices in the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough area. These are located within existing communities such as Merthyr Tydfil town centre, Troedyrhiw, Heolgerrig, Penydarren, Cefn Coed, Gelli-Deg, Dowlais, Aberfan, Trelewis and Bedlinog. This is unchanged from the previous AMR and is considered to provide good coverage across the County Borough.</p> <p>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 increased to 39% in this monitoring period, up from 37.4% reported in the last AMR. This indicates that the OSS Action Plan is assisting in working towards national play space, sport and recreation standards in the County.</p> <p>As at March 2019 there were 72 Public Houses in the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough, which remains the same as reported in 2015/16.</p> <p>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 the Gurnos to 88.3% in Treharris. Detailed information on car ownership trends will not be available until analysis of the 2021 Census.</p>
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SA Target 2: Increase percentage of people with qualifications and improve skills.

MTCBC delivers a range of courses to suit all levels, from complete beginners, to those with more experience. The Council also works with Merthyr Tydfil Adult Community Learning Partnership to provide learning opportunities.

Figure 8: Highest qualification levels of working age adults by NQF (National Qualifications Framework) level

December 2017	No Qualifications	Qualified to NQF level 2 or above	Qualified to NQF level 3 or above	Qualified to NQF level 4 or above
Merthyr	16.4	66.2	42.8	24.6
Wales	8.7	78.5	58.3	37.4
December 2018	No Qualifications	Qualified to NQF level 2 or above	Qualified to NQF level 3 or above	Qualified to NQF level 4 or above
Merthyr	14.8	64.1	41.7	24.1
Wales	8.4	78.9	59.1	37.8

Source: StatsWales

In comparison with the previous AMR the level of adults with no qualifications in Merthyr Tydfil has decreased by 1.6% whereas in Wales as a whole it has decreased more marginally by 0.3%. However, the level of adults qualified to NQF level 4 or above has decreased by 0.5% in Merthyr Tydfil compared with an increase of 0.4% in Wales as a whole.

In 2018/19, according to Data Unit Wales, 1.1% of pupils in Merthyr Tydfil left school and were not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) compared to a Welsh average of 1.6%. Whilst this is below the Welsh average it remains in line with the 2016/17 baseline figures of 1.03% of young people who were identified as NEET within the County Borough.

These statistics indicate that there have been marginal changes from the previous AMR or relevant baseline years. Whilst figures for young people classified as NEET are below the Welsh average, levels of working age adults with no qualifications remain above the national average. In addition, the proportions of adults with NQF levels 2 or above are below the national average. Improving performance in this respect will require the attention of various Council departments and external partners.

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 forms an important element of the adopted LDP's strategy which is being fulfilled via a number of LDP policies, for example, Policy BW17: Securing Community Infrastructure Benefits, Policy BW15: Community Facilities, Policy AS13: Life-long Learning Facilities, Policy AS14: Employment Site Allocations

	<p>and Policy AS24: Employment Site Protection.</p> <p>SA Target 3: Reduce the number of wards that are among the 100 most deprived in Wales.</p> <p>The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation for 1901 small areas in Wales. WIMD is used to give an overall deprivation rank for each of the lower super output areas (LSOA) in Wales. The last index was published in 2014 and an updated index is anticipated to be published in late 2019.</p> <p>In 2014, 22.2 of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough's LSOAs were ranked within 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.</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Some progress has been made towards meeting this SA objective, particularly in relation to the decline in the number of school leavers in Merthyr Tydfil not in not in Education, Employment, or Training and reducing the level of areas among the most deprived in Wales.</p>
4 - Health	<p>SA Objective 4: Promote services and facilities that encourage a healthy and safe lifestyle.</p> <p>This SA Objective is informed by 3 targets and 9 background indicators.</p> <p>SA Target 1: Increase access to physical recreation facilities.</p> <p>LDP Strategic Objective SO9 seeks to promote health and wellbeing by providing accessible and varied opportunities for leisure and recreational activities. Seven LDP policies flow from this objective including Policy BW16, which seeks to protect and enhance the County Borough's network of leisure facilities; Policy AS17, which requires new outdoor sport / play space that will help to meet Fields in Trust Standards; and Policy BW7, which requires new development to contribute to the provision of usable open and outdoor play space.</p> <p>Surveys undertaken for the Council's 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 increased to 39% in this monitoring period up from 37.4% reported in the last AMR. This indicates that the OSS Action Plan is assisting in working towards national play space, sport and recreation standards.</p> <p>MTCBC monitors air quality across the County Borough and an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) for Twynyrodyn Road was declared at the end of January 2017. Following this an Air Quality Action Plan was prepared and consulted on in June 2018 with the aim of reducing levels of nitrogen dioxide through a range of possible solutions that were informed by detailed studies of traffic flows and pollution distribution. The favoured option proposed was to reverse one-way traffic on both Pontmorlais High Street and Church Street. The Plan was approved by the Council on 27th</p>

	<p>June 2018 and submitted to Welsh Government for approval. Following a 6-month Traffic Regulation Order the measures were implemented in May 2019.</p> <p>SA Target 2: Design to encourage walking and cycling.</p> <p>The close proximity of housing, employment, retail and other land uses has been a major consideration in the location of land allocation in the adopted LDP, which will assist in minimising the need to travel and promoting use by means other than private car.</p> <p>A further important factor is the need to provide sustainable links between communities including better use of existing footpaths/cycle networks and the creation of new routes and links.</p> <p>During 2018/2019, 2.5km of additional footpath was created in the County Borough, with the majority located at Ty'r-Y-Wen Farm, Bedlinog.</p> <p>People are only likely to walk or cycle within the local and wider area if they feel safe to do so. There is limited information available of this indicator however the National Survey for Wales provides contextual information. The latest available figures from the National Survey for Wales in 2017-18 reported that 91% felt safe walking alone in their area, indicating an improvement with the comparable 2016-17 figure of 80%.</p> <p>SA Target 3: Decrease in the number of people with limiting long-term illness or general health 'not good'.</p> <p>There is limited information available for limiting long term illness at Local Authority level, however, the National Survey for Wales provides useful contextual information. The 2018-19 headline results found that 33% of adults reported a limited longstanding illness, whilst 28% reported their health as 'not good', a decrease from 34% and 30% respectively in 2017-18.</p> <p>In addition, the Public Health Wales Observatory has published Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) data from the latest 2014 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation. This data shows that 29.4% of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough (Small Town and Fringe areas) had a limiting long term health problem, whereas 27.9% of Merthyr Tydfil had a limiting long term health problem. This compares unfavourably to a Welsh national average figure of 22.7%.</p> <p>According to ONS, prior to the current decade, mortality rates had generally been decreasing rapidly likely due to improved lifestyles and medical advances. However, in recent years there has been a slowdown in mortality improvements. The latest figures show that in 2017, there were 10.5 deaths per 1,000 residents in Merthyr Tydfil. This figure has decreased by 0.2 since 2016, when there were 10.7 deaths per 1,000 residents. This level is comparable to the Welsh average mortality rate.</p>
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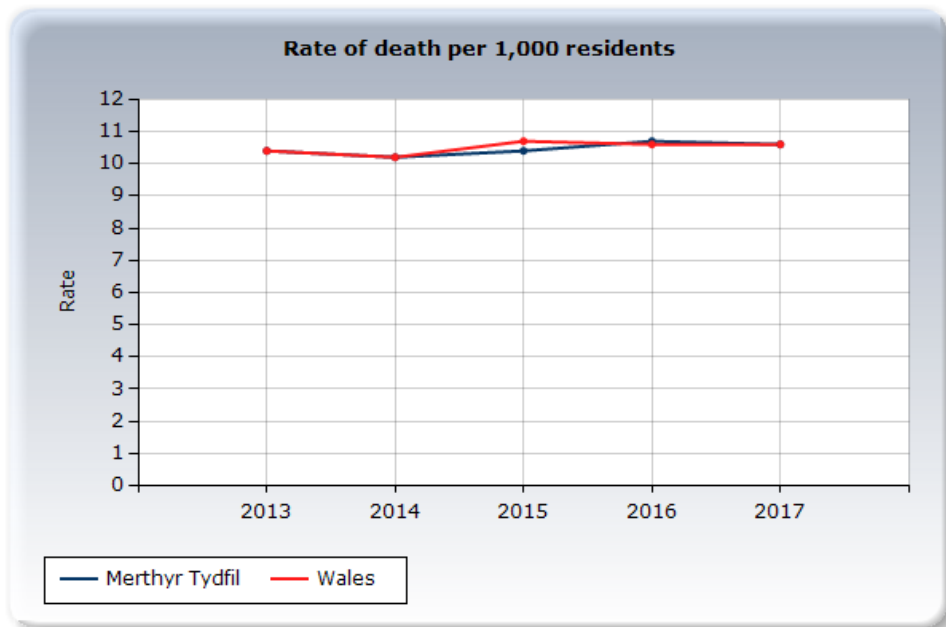


Figure 9: ONS - Rates of death per 1,000 residents

At Plan adoption in 2011 the average life expectancy for men in the County Borough was 74. By 2013 men in Merthyr Tydfil could expect to live to the age of 74.9 years whilst female life expectancy was 79.6 years at that time. The graph below published by the ONS shows that in 2017 life expectancy for men had increased to 78 years of age, whilst for women was marginally higher at 80 years of age, which are both lower than the Welsh average over the same time period. However, although life expectancy is lower in the County Borough than the rest of Wales it has been steadily improving since Plan adoption.

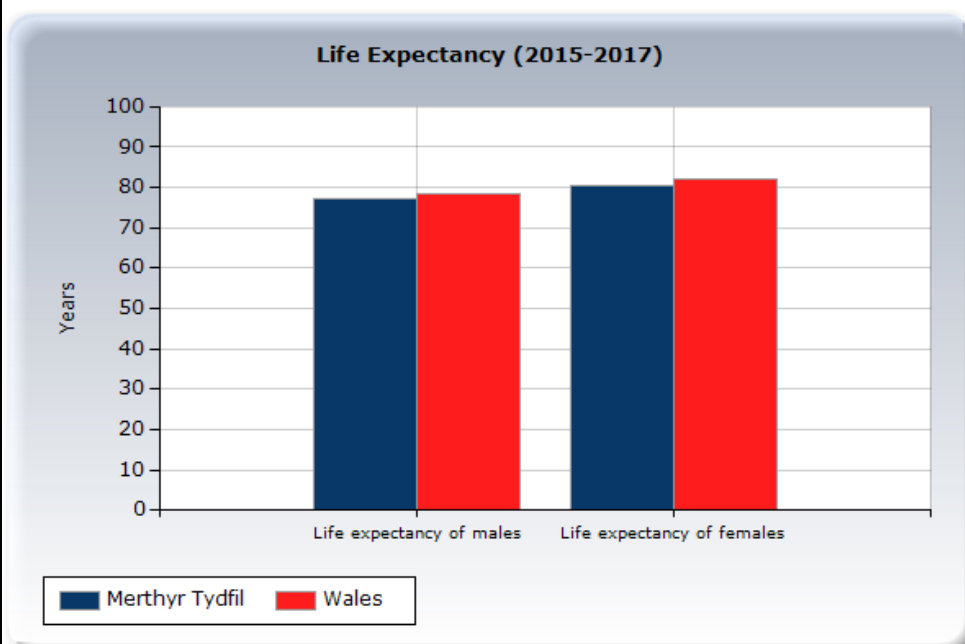


Figure 10: ONS – Life Expectancy per 1,00 residents

	<p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Some progress has been made towards meeting this SA objective, particularly in respect of increases in life expectancy and decreases in adults reporting their general health status as ‘not good’. Measures are also being put in place to address air quality concerns at the Twynyrodyn Area AQMA.</p>																																																																	
5 - Economy & Employment	<p>SA Objective 5: Encourage a thriving and sustainable economy with a diverse range of job opportunities.</p> <p>This SA Objective is informed by 3 targets and 16 background indicators.</p> <p>SA Target 1: Broaden economic base.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The following graph shows the proportion of people working in higher level managerial, director and professional roles (Standard Occupational Classification [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).</p> <div><p>Proportion of people working by Soc 2010 major group - Merthyr Tydfil.</p><table><thead><tr><th>Soc 2010 group</th><th>Jan 2007-Dec 2007</th><th>Jan 2008-Dec 2008</th><th>Jan 2009-Dec 2009</th><th>Jan 2010-Dec 2010</th><th>Jan 2011-Dec 2011</th><th>Jan 2012-Dec 2012</th><th>Jan 2013-Dec 2013</th><th>Jan 2014-Dec 2014</th><th>Jan 2015-Dec 2015</th><th>Jan 2016-Dec 2016</th><th>Jan 2017-Dec 2017</th><th>Jan 2018-Dec 2019</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Groups 1 - 3</td><td>30.5</td><td>32.5</td><td>28.5</td><td>31.0</td><td>30.5</td><td>32.0</td><td>30.0</td><td>29.5</td><td>30.0</td><td>31.5</td><td>29.5</td><td>28.1</td></tr><tr><td>Groups 4 & 5</td><td>19.0</td><td>21.5</td><td>22.5</td><td>23.5</td><td>20.5</td><td>21.5</td><td>22.5</td><td>24.0</td><td>23.5</td><td>23.5</td><td>23.5</td><td>24.0</td></tr><tr><td>Groups 6 & 7</td><td>19.5</td><td>19.5</td><td>22.5</td><td>20.5</td><td>23.0</td><td>19.5</td><td>20.5</td><td>19.5</td><td>21.5</td><td>20.5</td><td>23.5</td><td>25.5</td></tr><tr><td>Groups 8 & 9</td><td>30.5</td><td>24.5</td><td>24.5</td><td>23.5</td><td>25.5</td><td>25.0</td><td>25.5</td><td>27.0</td><td>24.5</td><td>24.0</td><td>22.5</td><td>22.0</td></tr></tbody></table></div> <p>Figure 11 - ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from NOMIS on 17/09/19]</p> <p>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 (28.1%) in 2018/19.</p>	Soc 2010 group	Jan 2007-Dec 2007	Jan 2008-Dec 2008	Jan 2009-Dec 2009	Jan 2010-Dec 2010	Jan 2011-Dec 2011	Jan 2012-Dec 2012	Jan 2013-Dec 2013	Jan 2014-Dec 2014	Jan 2015-Dec 2015	Jan 2016-Dec 2016	Jan 2017-Dec 2017	Jan 2018-Dec 2019	Groups 1 - 3	30.5	32.5	28.5	31.0	30.5	32.0	30.0	29.5	30.0	31.5	29.5	28.1	Groups 4 & 5	19.0	21.5	22.5	23.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	24.0	23.5	23.5	23.5	24.0	Groups 6 & 7	19.5	19.5	22.5	20.5	23.0	19.5	20.5	19.5	21.5	20.5	23.5	25.5	Groups 8 & 9	30.5	24.5	24.5	23.5	25.5	25.0	25.5	27.0	24.5	24.0	22.5	22.0
Soc 2010 group	Jan 2007-Dec 2007	Jan 2008-Dec 2008	Jan 2009-Dec 2009	Jan 2010-Dec 2010	Jan 2011-Dec 2011	Jan 2012-Dec 2012	Jan 2013-Dec 2013	Jan 2014-Dec 2014	Jan 2015-Dec 2015	Jan 2016-Dec 2016	Jan 2017-Dec 2017	Jan 2018-Dec 2019																																																						
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Groups 4 & 5	19.0	21.5	22.5	23.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	24.0	23.5	23.5	23.5	24.0																																																						
Groups 6 & 7	19.5	19.5	22.5	20.5	23.0	19.5	20.5	19.5	21.5	20.5	23.5	25.5																																																						
Groups 8 & 9	30.5	24.5	24.5	23.5	25.5	25.0	25.5	27.0	24.5	24.0	22.5	22.0																																																						

	<p>The proportion of people working in elementary occupations and as plant / machine operatives (Soc 2010 major group (8-9) is the lowest employment sector within the County Borough, with the proportion of those employed within this sector decreasing to 22.1% in December 2018.</p> <p>The proportion of those working within the caring, leisure & sales, and customer service areas (Soc 2010 major group 6-7) is the second highest employment sector in the County Borough, with the proportion of those employed within this sector increasing to 25.7% in December 2018.</p> <p>The proportion of those within skilled trades or administrative work (Soc 2010 major group 4-5), is the second lowest employment sector in the County Borough, but has been increasing slightly for the past 3 years, to 24.1% in December 2018.</p> <p>SA Target 2: Increase opportunities to work within the County Borough.</p> <p>1,443m² of new employment floor space was delivered at Merthyr Valleys Homes new headquarters, located in Gellideg, during the monitoring period.</p> <p>The take up of LDP allocations from the start of the plan period to the end of the monitoring period equates to 37% of the total land allocated. This figure being lower than the target range set out within the Monitoring Framework.</p> <p>In respect of the town centre vacancy rate, the current percentage of vacant units is 8.25% which represents a significant improvement from the previous AMR at 14.6%.</p> <p>Across the County Borough as the whole, information from non-domestic rates exemptions shows that 94 of 1903 properties (approximately 5%) are receiving rate relief due to them being vacant. This percentage has improved significantly from 13% during the last monitoring period.</p> <p>SA Target 3: Decrease unemployment.</p> <p>The number of economically active people in employment in the County Borough has increased over the monitoring period from 71.4% to 72.6% in December 2018. The following graph shows that the employment rate has fluctuated each year since the beginning of the plan period. However, there has been a general increase over the plan period and over the last 3 years.</p>
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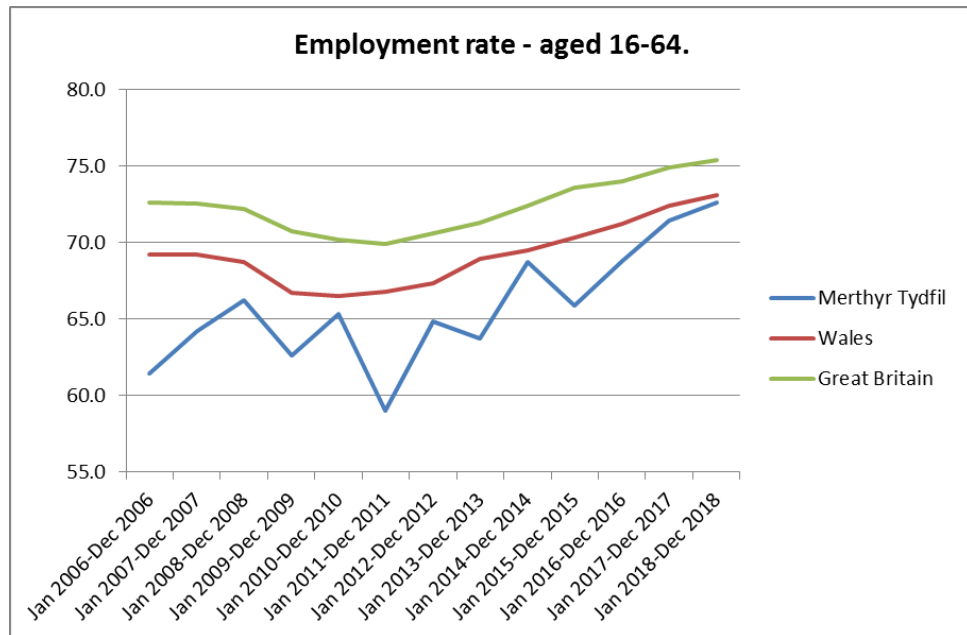


Figure 12: ONS - Crown Copyright Reserved [from NOMIS on 17/09/19]

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.

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 0.5% average (see graph below).

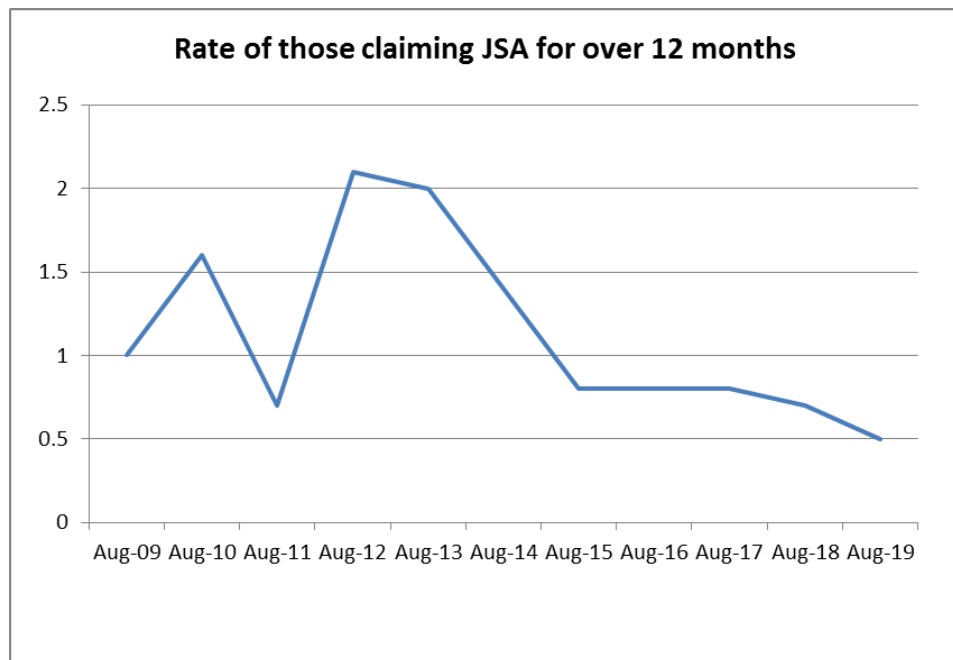


Figure 13 - ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 17/09/19]

SA Target 4: Support the rural economy.

	<p>A number of development proposals were granted permission during this monitoring period that support the improvement of the rural economy in the County Borough. These include: a barn conversion for residential use; the development of tourist accommodation; the creation of forestry tracks and shelves; the erection of agricultural buildings associated with a farming enterprise and a static caravan for use as an office for associated adjacent stables.</p> <p>SA Target 5: Support potential funding to provide basic infrastructure, develop human resources, and invest in research, innovation and the information society.</p> <p>The Targeted Regeneration Investment (TRI) Plan that has been developed for South East Wales is the Cardiff Capital Region Regeneration Plan 2018 – 2021. This Plan has been developed as a regional framework for the Capital Region and includes the ten South East Wales's authorities.</p> <p>The purpose of the Plan is to set out the objectives of the Cardiff Capital Region, and to outline the target areas and scope of activities possible under the Welsh Government TRI Programme from April 2018 for the following three years. In line with the Cardiff Capital Region Programme, the framework is looking to support projects that encourage community resilience and economic regeneration across the region (taking into consideration areas such as housing, better employment opportunities, job creation and improved business environments to support business growth).</p> <p>This Plan for the South East builds upon the substantial experience of partners and their wide ranging regeneration activities. The Regional Plan for Regeneration is not starting from scratch; rather it builds on the previous Welsh Government Vibrant and Viable Places (VVP) funding programme which ran from 2014 – 2017. In doing so, it recognised that working in partnership is essential to the successful delivery of the objectives set out in the plan. Projects have been prioritised and included by Merthyr Tydfil CBC as part of the regional plan for delivery during the TRI Programme period.</p> <p>In Spring 2019, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council secured £10million for the delivery of the Merthyr Tydfil Bus Station Project. The funding was awarded over a two year period with an offer of £3.6million in 2019/20 with the further allocation of £6.5million in 2020/21. The funding was secured through the Welsh Government's Local Transport Fund. The contractor appointed to construct the new Bus Station is Morgan Sindall, who positively for Merthyr, have a proven track record of delivering complex regeneration projects. The project has been co-designed with the Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority and the Council and the professional services of Capita will be used to support the management of the construction contract. Construction of the Bus Station started on the 15th July 2019 with an expected completion date of autumn 2020. The Bus Station will be located on the former police station site in Swan Street. The new Bus Station will be located closer to the Town's railway station creating a modern, high quality transport interchange facility. It will also allow new development opportunities to be considered for the current Bus</p>
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	<p>Station site.</p> <p>Work is well underway to produce a new Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Masterplan which is being financially supported by funding from the Valleys Taskforce of £200,000. The Council is working closely with Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to produce the masterplan, supported by advice from Mott McDonald, The Urbanists and Alder King. The draft plan should be completed by October and will ensure that the new bus and rail investments create an integrated transport solution as part of a new phase of regeneration for Merthyr Tydfil town centre and its wider communities.</p> <p>The Townscape Heritage Programme 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 and will enable the Council to continue to deliver on the key objectives and re-invigorate the Pontmorlais Area. Key buildings have been identified for re-development and capital work commenced in 2019.</p> <p>'The Crucible Report' has resulted in a proposal to develop a brief and procure a creative masterplan for the Cyfarthfa Heritage Area. The Regeneration Team issued the brief for the masterplan in March 2019 and Ian Ritchie Architects have been awarded the contract.</p> <p>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 the HLF for the '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. The application was submitted in August 2019.</p> <p>The Park has been successfully designated as a Discovery Gateway as part of the Valleys Regional Park (VRP) initiative. The proposal identified a plan to develop existing facilities at the Canolfan Visitor Centre to provide food and improved catering offer for visitors and a base for community activities. Funding was secured through the VRP Programme and will be delivered over the next two years.</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Progress has been made towards meeting this SA objective, with an increase in the employment rate since the last monitoring period and progress on a number of regeneration proposals.</p>
6 - Transport	SA Objective 6: Assist in reducing the need to travel and promote

	<p>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 initial AMR in 2013, 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 County Borough on the Merthyr line; Merthyr Tydfil, Pentrebach, Troed-y-rhiw, Merthyr Vale and Quakers Yard, and these stations link Cardiff Central station with Merthyr Tydfil via Pontypridd and Abercynon. The latest figures from Stats Wales indicate that there were 336,635 rail passenger journeys in Merthyr Tydfil in 2017-18. This shows a decrease compared with 357,006 rail passenger journeys in Merthyr Tydfil in 2016-17. At the time of writing, figures for 2018-19 were not yet available. Use of sustainable transport should continue to be closely monitored.</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Progress has slowed towards meeting this SA objective, particularly in respect of promoting the use of rail use as the overall number of rail passenger journeys in the County Borough has decreased. Investment in the rail and bus network is planned as part of the South Wales Metro proposals and performance against this objective will require close monitoring.</p>
7 – Built	SA Objective 7: Encourage a high quality built environment that

Environment	<p>promotes community pride.</p> <p>This SA Objective is informed by 3 targets and 4 background indicators.</p> <p>SA Target 1: Seek a high standard of design in all new development.</p> <p>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. In addition, Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 6: A Design Guide for Householder Development has aided this process, 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, TAN 12: Design now places attention on engaging end users and stakeholders in the design process from the offset, and as such has been taken into account where appropriate.</p> <p>SA Target 3: Improve public spaces.</p> <p>The presence of litter and waste is a significant deterrent to the enjoyment of open spaces in the County Borough, and results in a poor perception of public spaces in Merthyr Tydfil. Progress has been made on a number of initiatives to improve public spaces in 2018/19. Litter continues to be removed and the Council has worked with Keep Wales Tidy and Tidy Towns to assist in the targeted clean-up of open spaces. The Council's Countryside section and Parks department have also planted a significant number of fruit trees across the County Borough during 2018/19, along with numerous wild flowers, trees, shrubs and aquatic plants in order to improve public open spaces.</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Progress has been made towards meeting this SA objective, particularly in relation to improving the quality of areas regularly visited by the public.</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 November 2018 show an increase in fly-tipping incidents in Merthyr Tydfil from 1970 incidents</p>

	<p>recorded in 2016/17 to 2,273 incidents recorded in 2017/18. The Council has been proactive in the promotion of reporting fly-tipping, with posts on both Facebook and Twitter leading to increased reports via the Council website and telephone system. On average, a fly tipping incident in Merthyr Tydfil is cleared in one day, compared to a Wales average of 2 days. In addition, there have been 3 skips requested for the community clearance assistance.</p> <p>As reported in previous AMR's, Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP) became Wales's first Dark Sky reserve, and the world's fifth destination in 2013. It includes Pontsticill Reservoir, accessible from Merthyr Tydfil, and the aim is to combat the growing encroachment of light pollution or 'night blight' into the BBNP and the surrounding area, and the designation could also aid wildlife in the area. The BBNP Corporate Plan 2018/19 aims to support the Dark Skies initiative through high quality marketing and business engagement to maintain our Dark Sky Reserve status.</p> <p>The monitoring period saw no inappropriate development granted on common land, nor any loss of woodlands. Five applications were approved concerning trees with TPO's over the monitoring period. These concerned trimming single trees to retain their form and ensure longevity and the management of several trees subject to an area TPO to maintain health and longevity.</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Progress continues to be made towards meeting this SA objective.</p>
9 - Biodiversity	<p>SA Objective 9: Protect and enhance the diversity and abundance of wildlife habitats and native species.</p> <p>This SA Objective is informed by 2 targets and 8 background indicators.</p> <p>SA Target 1: Protect and enhance biodiversity.</p> <p>According to the Merthyr Tydfil Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) 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.</p> <p>Similar to the findings of the last AMR, no developments were approved that could potentially cause harm to a Local Nature Reserve or Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).</p> <p>Although, the Taf Fechan SSSI remains at unfavourable conservation status, a New Management Plan for the Taf Fechan LNR/SSSI has been prepared with the intention to implement it following land ownership and management changes. The Plan includes statutory duties and aims to regain Favourable Management status (through methods such as introducing grazing). The conservation status of Cwm Glo and Glyndyrys SSSI which is supervised by Natural Resources Wales remains unknown at the present time.</p> <p>A draft Merthyr Tydfil Nature Recovery Action Plan 2019 - 2023 is currently being prepared to replace the existing LBAP. This will contain actions for Woodlands, Grasslands, Wetlands, Urban Green Infrastructure, Bracken,</p>

	<p>Geology & Soils, Protected Species and Invasive Species.</p> <p>With regard to the existing LBAP, 9 biodiversity action plans have been undertaken, involving measures such as the distribution of habitat boxes across the County Borough; wetland habitat creation; and invasive species management. With regards to non-native species, a portion of land sale receipts is now used to treat invasive species that are likely to cause physical/environmental damage, increase risk and devalue other LA land.</p> <p>As of March 2019 there were 3386ha of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation compared with 3389ha designated in the adopted Local Plan, showing a loss of 3.9ha over the plan period to date. Over this monitoring period, one development was granted planning permission that had the potential to affect a SINC. However, in this instance, the overall nature conservation value of the SINC was regarded as being unharmed, and there was no loss of SINC. This is a continuing positive trend following on from the last monitoring period.</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 safeguarding the conservation value of SINC, 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> <p>The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 (WFD) requires the appropriate agency to protect, enhance and restore each body of surface water with the aim of achieving good ecological status and good surface water chemical status, if not already achieved, by December 2021. Good condition is that where the highest ecological and chemical status possible is achieved, given impacts that could not reasonably have been avoided due to the nature of the human activity or pollution.</p> <p>According to NRW, South East Valleys Management Catchment Summary 20% of surface waters are at good overall status, 65% at moderate, 13% at poor and 2% at bad. There are no surface water bodies at high overall status. The current status of all water bodies in Merthyr Tydfil the main rivers being the River Taf, the Taf Fawr, Afon Taf Fawr, Taf Fechan, Nant Morlais and Taf Bargoed is moderate (as per the 2015 classification which</p>

is the most recent data available).

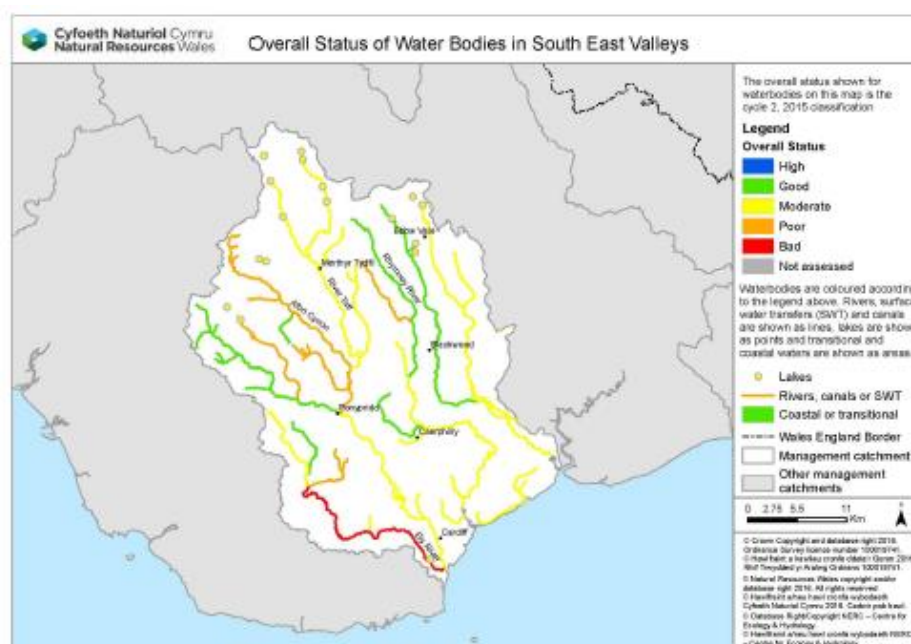


Figure 14: The currents status of the SE Valleys Management Catchment

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

In respect of flood risk, 19 developments were granted planning permission in zone C2 over the monitoring period. In all 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 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.

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 doing so.

Since 7th January 2019 the application of the Sustainable Drainage Systems Standards for Wales and SAB Approval has been mandatory for new developments of more than one dwelling house or construction of a building or other structure covering an area of land equal to or greater than 100 square meters. This increase in the use of SuDS will contribute towards reducing the risk of flooding and the pollution of surface waters during high rainfall events.

SA Target 4: Encourage more efficient water use.

	<p>Two indicators have been identified that relate to this target. The first relates to the number of water efficient developments, and the second to water consumption per household.</p> <p>Water efficient developments have continued to be secured over the monitoring period through the promotion of water conservation/efficiency measures under Policy BW8. Reducing the amount of water consumption in new developments will assist in minimising additional pressures on the water environment.</p> <p>In respect of water consumption according to Discover Water in April 2018 to March 2019, 143 litres of water was used per person per day in England and Wales, which is 2 litres higher than reported in last year’s AMR.</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Overall, progress has been made towards meeting this SA objective however water consumption per head has increased. Performance against this objective should continue to be monitored.</p>																		
11 - Climate Change	<p>SA Objective 11: Help to minimise the cause and effects of climate change.</p> <p>This SA Objective is informed by 2 targets and 5 background indicators.</p> <p>SA Target 1: Decrease greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>Two indicators have been identified which relate to this target. The first monitors the emissions of greenhouse gases and the second tracks the ecological footprint of Merthyr Tydfil.</p> <div><p>Tonnes CO2 emissions per resident - Merthyr Tydfil</p><table><thead><tr><th>Year</th><th>Merthyr Tydfil (Tonnes)</th><th>Wales (Tonnes)</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>2013</td><td>5.3</td><td>9.8</td></tr><tr><td>2014</td><td>4.6</td><td>9.1</td></tr><tr><td>2015</td><td>4.6</td><td>8.7</td></tr><tr><td>2016</td><td>4.7</td><td>8.1</td></tr><tr><td>2017</td><td>4.3</td><td>7.9</td></tr></tbody></table></div>	Year	Merthyr Tydfil (Tonnes)	Wales (Tonnes)	2013	5.3	9.8	2014	4.6	9.1	2015	4.6	8.7	2016	4.7	8.1	2017	4.3	7.9
Year	Merthyr Tydfil (Tonnes)	Wales (Tonnes)																	
2013	5.3	9.8																	
2014	4.6	9.1																	
2015	4.6	8.7																	
2016	4.7	8.1																	
2017	4.3	7.9																	

2017, total CO₂ emissions in Merthyr Tydfil has decreased by 17.4% since 2013 from over 5 tonnes per resident to 4.3 tonnes.

The latest figures for the ecological footprint of Merthyr Tydfil can be found in the 'Ecological and Carbon Footprints of Wales', dated 2015 and prepared by the Stockholm Environment Institute. Figure 16 below shows that Merthyr Tydfil had the lowest ecological footprint of all local authorities at 3.06 global hectares per capita in 2015. No later figures are available.

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 16: Ecological footprint of Wales and Local Authorities

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 3037 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 extreme (0.1%) flood level) and C2 (areas of the floodplain without significant flood defence infrastructure). This compares favourably with figures from the previous AMR when there were 3,336 properties situated within the aforementioned flood zones.

In respect of flood incidents, no significant flooding occurred in the County Borough during the monitoring period.

Both positive outcomes demonstrate that the County Borough is coping well with the effects of Climate Change.

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Further progress has been made towards meeting this SA objective in terms of mitigating, and adapting to, the effects of climate change.

reduction in energy consumption.

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

SA Target 1: Encourage energy efficient design in development.

Three indicators were previously 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.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 22: Planning for Sustainable Buildings was cancelled by the Welsh Government on 31st July 2014 removing national planning policy requirements for sustainable building standards. Alternatively, 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.

Energy consumption monitoring data (see figures overleaf) indicates that electricity consumption in the County Borough has decreased slightly, by 17.2GWh, since plan adoption. This trend has continued in the latest available monitoring data for 2017. Gas consumption has increased overall, by 47.8 GWh, since plan adoption. This is mainly due to an increase in the industrial and commercial sector whereas domestic consumption has reduced by 22.8 GWh. Notwithstanding this, the latest monitoring data indicates a slight reduction in gas consumption, by 6.2GWh, on 2016 levels.

Although it is positive that there is lower domestic energy consumption, it should be noted that the Local Authority has no direct control over industrial or domestic energy usage.

Electricity consumption (GWh)	Industrial & Commercial	Domestic	Total (per capita in brackets)
2011	131.4	89.0	220.5 (0.00375)
2016	122.9	84.5	207.4 (0.00352)
2017	120.2	83.0	203.3 (0.00339)

Figure 17: Electricity consumption in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough

Gas consumption (GWh)	Industrial & Commercial	Domestic	Total (per capita in brackets)
2011	131.3	386.8	518.1 (0.00880)
2016	222.6	349.5	572.1 (0.00958)
2017	201.9	364.0	565.9 (0.00944)

Figure 18: Gas consumption in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/total-final-energy-consumption-at-regional-and-local-authority-level>

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, the following table shows existing low carbon energy projects in Merthyr Tydfil between 2014 and 2017 according to latest figures released by StatsWales. This indicates an increase in renewable energy generation capacity on 2016 levels, particularly for heat generation which has increased by 12,283 MWh.

Merthyr Tydfil	No of Projects	Electricity Capacity (MWe)	Heat Capacity (MWth)	Electrical Generation (MWe)	Heat Generation (MWth)
2014	536	9	0	39,904	807
2016	734	9	2	34,966	6,184
2017	739	16	5	42,162	18,467

Figure 19: Low Carbon Energy Generation in Merthyr Tydfil by Energy Type

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. The graph overleaf shows the demand predictions up to 2031 in the *Renewable Energy Assessment for Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, June 2017*. This projects relatively stable growth in electricity consumption, with increasing levels of renewable electricity generation from 2025/26.

In addition, over the monitoring period, planning permission was granted for the provision of a renewable energy facility, which would accommodate a biomass boiler used to generate heat for drying of biofuels (logs and woodchip) at Penygarnddu Industrial Estate.

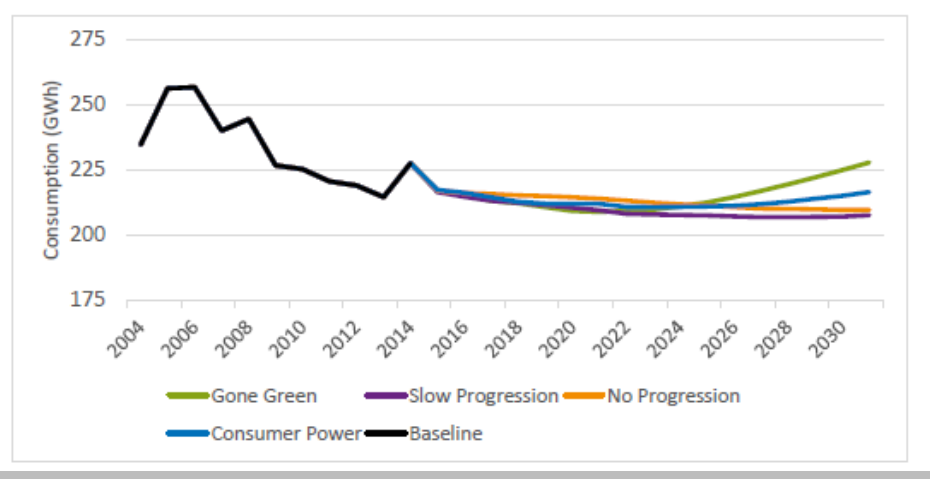


Figure 20: Growth in electricity demand up to 2031.

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Progress has been made towards meeting this SA objective in respect of increasing renewable energy capacity within the County Borough and this should continue to be monitored.

and Soils	<p>This SA Objective is informed by 2 targets and 4 background indicators.</p> <p>SA Target 1: Percentage of development on previously developed land.</p> <p>Promoting an efficient use of land is an important element of the LDP's Strategy as outlined at Para 2.5.22 of the LDP Written Statement. At least 75% of the total land allocated for development in the Plan can be categorised as brownfield.</p> <p>Over the monitoring period, 84.6% of all development permitted occurred on previously developed land. This figure is higher than the target of 80% indicating good performance, but is slightly lower than last year's figure of 85.4%.</p> <p>This year, over 95% of new dwellings in Merthyr Tydfil were constructed on previously developed land. Over half of these completions were at a density of between 25 -35 dwellings per hectare, which is in accordance with the targets included in the LDP monitoring framework.</p> <p>SA Target 2: Decrease percentage of contaminated land.</p> <p>The LDP recognises that primarily because of Merthyr Tydfil's industrial legacy, certain areas of land in the County Borough are potentially contaminated. Consequently, the remediation of such land may be required before it can be brought back into beneficial use.</p> <p>The schedule of allocated housing sites listed at Appendix 4 of the LDP Written Statement recognises that potential ground conditions on many sites will require appropriate technical investigation prior to the submission of any planning application. As such sites continue to be developed during the course of the plan period, more and more contaminated land will be remediated in accordance with the requirements of Policy BW18 (Contaminated Land).</p> <p>SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Whilst the council holds some internal records of sites with known land contamination this record is not complete. As brownfield sites or sites with historic industrial use come forward for development the Council should continue to require ground condition surveys where appropriate in order to ensure the remediation of contaminated land, compliance with LDP policies and progress 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 based on the waste hierarchy. The first indicator considers recycling rates; the second considers municipal waste recovery; the third considers all waste services access to households; the fourth considers waste generated per</p>

household and the final indicator measures the quantity of commercial waste produced, recycled and landfilled.

According to Stats Wales latest releases, 10,581 tonnes of waste was reused or recycled in Merthyr Tydfil in 2018-19 compared with 11,265 in 2017-2018. Whilst this demonstrates that the amount of waste re-used or recycled has reduced since the previous monitoring period the overall level remains above the 2011 base date.

However, 62.8% of municipal waste was recycled or composted in Merthyr Tydfil in 2018-2019, in comparison to 62.4% in 2017-2018. Whilst this is marginally below the Welsh Government recovery target for 64% by 2019/20 it marks an improvement on previous years. In addition, approximately 55% of households in Merthyr Tydfil participate in the weekly food waste scheme.

In terms of access to waste service provision, the Council has provided a weekly dry recycling service since 2002 and a food waste recycling service since 2007 and for items that can't be recycled on the kerbside, the council has two recycling centres sited in Aberfan and Dowlais, where a wider range of materials can be recycled. The Council is also running numerous projects to increase recycling to better inform people to make different choices in the future which will benefit the environment.

SA Target 2: Reduce tonnage of waste to landfill.

In 2017-18, 197 Kg of annual residual household waste was produced per person in Merthyr Tydfil compared to 205 Kg in 2016-17, indicating a marginal improvement. Residual waste is waste generated that is not included in separate recycling or composting collection rounds. That is, household waste that is not prepared for reuse, recycling or composting.

The figure below from Stats Wales shows the total tonnage of waste sent to landfill in Merthyr Tydfil has significantly reduced to 649 tonnes in 2018/19, compared with 14,610 tonnes in 2012/13. This reduction has been accompanied with significant increases in recycling and waste incineration for energy recovery which combined processed 96% of all municipal waste.

Measure	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Total Municipal Waste Collected/Generated	29,518	29,641	30,170	32,366	27,585	27,580	26,934
Total Waste Reused/Recycled/Composted (Statutory Target)	14,504	14,293	15,448	19,931	17,994	17,303	16,587
Waste sent for other recovery	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Waste Incinerated with Energy Recovery	395	311	2,690	2,090	8,330	9,140	9,316
Waste Incinerated without Energy Recovery	4	3	7	2	0	4	26
Waste Landfilled	14,610	15,099	11,115	9,841	1,009	531	649
Percentage of Waste Reused/Recycled/Composted (Statutory Target)	49.1	48.2	51.2	61.6	65.2	62.7	61.6

Figure 21: Annual management of waste by management method (tonnes)

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Some progress continues to be made towards meeting this SA objective, particularly in respect reduced amounts of waste going to landfill. Improvements in recycling rates should continue to be monitored.

use of minerals in a manner that minimises social and environmental impacts.

This SA Objective is informed by 1 target and 2 background indicators.

SA Target 1: Increase percentage use of aggregates from secondary and recycled sources.

The Table below shows sales of secondary aggregates (by-products of quarrying, mining operations and industrial processes) within the South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party (SWRAWP) region in 2016. This represents the latest published sales data for secondary aggregates in the region. This shows that secondary aggregate sales recovered during 2016 to the same level as 2014 following a significant drop in sales during 2015. Of this, 73% was sold for road-stone (up from 56%), 15% was used as concrete aggregate (down from 32%) and 12% for other constructional uses (no change).

Table 14 Secondary Aggregate Sales by end use 2016 (million tonnes)				
	Million Tonnes 2016	% 2016	Million Tonnes 2015	% 2015
Coated Roadstone	0	0	0	0
Uncoated Roadstone	0.53	73	0.14	56
Railway Ballast	0	0	0	0
Concrete Aggregate	0.11	15	0.08	32
Other Constructional Uses/Unknown	0.09	12	0.03	12
Artificial Aggregate	0	0	0	0
Total	0.74	100	0.25	100

Figure 22: Secondary Aggregate Sales by end use 2016 (million tonnes)

Recycled Aggregates are defined as aggregates obtained from the demolition or construction of buildings or structures or from civil engineering works, including asphalt road planings and railway ballast. Latest crushed rock sales for the combined Merthyr Tydfil and RCT area equated to 0.83 million tonnes in 2018, up slightly from 0.80 million tonnes in 2017. This is in line with the trend for the South East Wales as a whole which produced 8.67 million tonnes in 2017 and 8.92 million tonnes in 2018.

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Progress continues to be made towards meeting this SA objective. Monitoring of secondary aggregate production should continue to be monitored.

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. Uncertainty therefore remains over whether delivery rates can reach the level necessary to deliver the adopted LDP Strategy.

7.4 Consequently, both the level and spatial distribution of growth have required reconsideration as part of the preparation of a replacement LDP. The Replacement Deposit LDP was published for public consultation in July 2018 and was submitted for Examination in January 2019. The soundness of the Replacement LDP Strategy was considered as part of the Examination in Public and the Inspector’s Report is anticipated to be published in early December 2019.

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 meaningful information, thus leading to the publication of a more comprehensive and realistic assessment.

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.

- 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 assessment tables of this AMR where appropriate. Having reviewed the relevant documents and strategies, it is considered that, in themselves, these changes do not require the LDP and its associated policy framework to be immediately amended or changed.
- 7.11 Notwithstanding this, the replacement LDP that has been prepared does reflect the changes to national policy identified.

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 overall there continues to be positive movement towards related targets. In terms of LDP policy, Para 7.17 below summarises the policy areas that were 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 through the 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. Following Adoption of the Replacement LDP, these SPG documents

should be carried forward as a material consideration in planning decision until such time as they are reviewed to ensure all policy references have been updated.

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 2018, 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 the 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 since plan adoption has identified several aspects of the plan and its strategy that are not working or are not progressing towards their stated objectives. These are:
- The number of dwellings built in the Primary Growth Area;
 - The supply of housing land;
 - The number of dwellings being built, particularly general market dwellings;
 - The amount of employment floor-space built in the Primary Growth Area;
 - The delivery of B1 employment floor-space;
 - The vacancy rate of existing employment buildings;
 - The percentage of LDP land allocations delivered;
 - The percentage of total development permitted on allocated sites; and
 - The vacancy rate for retail premises in Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre.

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

- 7.18 A variety of recommendations are set out in the relevant sections of this AMR, and these include undertaking further research and analysis of pertinent issues as part of the preparation of the replacement LDP. In respect of the latter, the review of the Plan's strategy and policies has been informed by the findings of AMRs, updates to the evidence base, on-going surveys and reconsideration of the SA/SEA. There is a close interrelationship between many strands of the LDP's strategy, and the

advancement towards a particular outcome at a particular time will be 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 2018/19 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 be necessary in this regard, including future monitoring of the Replacement LDP against a revised monitoring framework.
2. Amongst the AMR recommendations is the need for further research and analysis of pertinent issues as part of the preparation of the Replacement LDP. A new, more deliverable, strategy (particularly in regard to housing delivery) is proposed in the Replacement LDP, based on the findings of the Review Report, previous AMRs, an updated evidence base and other work undertaken such as the Options Appraisals and call for candidate sites. Work on the Replacement LDP has involved 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, objectives and policies have been made, 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	2018/19 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 At least 3,020 net completions by April 2021	1497 completions by April 2019. -	-	R
<u>Core</u> New employment floorspace built in the primary growth area (Linked to SO7)	Between 36,490 and 40,470 sqm net floorspace by April 2016 At least 110,080 sqm net floorspace by April 2021	Current figure at end of March 2019 is 28,333 sqm 1443 sqm of floor-space delivered during 2018/2018	Greater than 14,700 sqm per annum or less than 1,834 sqm per annum for 2 consecutive years.	R
<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 2019	No application registered by the end of 2014	R

<u>Local - Town Centre Health Checks</u>					
i.) Total annual vacant floor space in Town Centre (Vacancy rate currently at 13% - Retail, Commercial and Leisure Capacity Study, 2009)	Vacancy rate to reduce to 9% (UK average 2009)	Decreased from 14.6% to 8.25%.	Vacancy rate increasing for 1 year or remaining static above target for 2 consecutive years	G	G
ii.) Percentage of A1 retail uses in primary shopping area	Maintain a percentage of at least 83%	Proportion increased from 79.3% to 86.5%	Percentage less than 83%	G	G

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	2018/19 Performance
<u>Core</u> Number of new homes built in secondary growth area (Linked to SO6)	Between 280 and 320 net completions by April 2016 At least 550 net completions by April 2021	382 completions by April 2019.		G

<u>Core</u> Number of new homes built in other growth areas. (Linked to SO6)	Between 200 and 240 net completions by April 2016 At least 245 net completions by April 2021	74 completions by April 2019.	-	Y
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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	2018/19 Performance
<u>Core</u> Amount of development permitted on previously developed land as a percentage of all development permitted (N.B. this would exclude householder applications and change of use from one non-residential use to another) (ha)	Maintain a percentage of at least 80% over the plan period	2018/19– 84.6% permitted on previously developed land.	Less than 80% for 2 consecutive years	G
<u>Core</u> Amount of greenfield land lost as a result of inappropriate development on sites not allocated in the LDP	No land lost	No greenfield land lost	1 or 2 developments permitted for 2 consecutive years, or, 3 or more developments permitted in 1 year	G

SO4. To support the principle of sustainability via an energy efficient land use / transport strategy.				
Core and Local Indicators	Policy Targets	Policy Achievement	Trigger Level	2018/19 Performance
<u>Local</u> Percentage of new residential development within 400m of bus stop and 600m of primary facilities including a shop and school. (Linked to SO8)	Maintain a percentage of at least 80% over the plan period	96.2% (of new residential developments that were granted planning permission over the monitoring period were within specified distances to local facilities)	Less than 80% for 2 consecutive years	G
<u>Local</u> Percentage of new dwellings completed at: (1) less than 20 dph; (2) 20 dph or greater and less than 25 dph; (3) 25 dph or greater and less than 30 dph; (4) 30 dph or greater and less than 50 dph; and (5) 50 dph or greater (Linked to SO6)	Approximately 12% Approximately 13% Approximately 25% Approximately 48% Approximately 2%	16% 2% 52% 10% 20%	More than 25% of new dwellings at less than 25 dph for 2 consecutive years	G
<u>Core</u> Percentage of allocated sites developed (ha)	Approximately 65% of allocations developed by the end of 2016 and 100% by 2021	Approximately 37% of allocations developed by March 2019.	-	R

		Delivered approximately 3% (0.55 ha) over the monitoring period.	Less than 25% of LDP phased delivery rate for 2 consecutive years. (Trigger level approx. 4.5 ha).	R
<u>Core</u>				
Percentage of total development permitted on allocated sites (ha)	Maintain a percentage of approximately 85% over the plan period	Approximately 4% 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
(4) Pentwyn Road, Quakers Yard (T2)	Deliver by the end of 2021	No application received in 2018/19.	No planning application registered by the end of 2019	Y
(5) A472 at Fiddlers Elbow (T3)	Deliver by the end of 2021	Project delivered.	No planning application registered by the end of 2019	G
<u>Local</u>				
Remodelling of Merthyr Tydfil Central Bus Station	Deliver by the end of 2016	Application approved in 2016. Construction commenced 2019.	No planning application registered by the end of 2014	Y

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	2018/19 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)	Circa 4.18 Mt of primary aggregates jointly produced since 2011. Circa 0.59 Mt of primary aggregates jointly produced in 2018.	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
<u>Core</u> Amount of development (by TAN 15 paragraph 5.1 development category) permitted in C1 and C2 floodplain areas not meeting all TAN 15 tests (paragraph 6.2 i-v)	No developments permitted	No developments granted planning permission in C1 or C2 floodplain areas that do not meet all TAN 15 tests	1 or more developments permitted	G

<u>Local</u>				G
Developments incorporating sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS)	<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>	All developments granted planning permission over the monitoring period incorporate SuDS where appropriate	1 or 2 developments permitted without SuDS for 2 consecutive years, or, 3 or more developments permitted without SuDS in 1 year	
<u>Core</u>				G
Amount of new licensed waste management facilities permitted	<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>	No new multipurpose waste treatment facilities were granted planning permission over monitoring period.	No new facilities granted planning permission by the end of 2012	
<u>Local</u>				G
Landfill capacity at Trecatti	To maintain spare capacity over the Plan period	Input below maximum in 2018.	Input at the maximum of 625,000 tpa for 3 consecutive years	

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	2018/19 Performance
<u>Core</u> Housing Land Supply	Maintain a minimum of 5 years supply (ha)	1.3 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	1,953 completions by the end of March 2019. (44 dwellings during 2018/19)	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	1562 completions by April 2019 (28 completions during 2018/19)	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	391 completions by April 2019 (16 completions during 2018/19)	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	90 dwellings by end of March 2019		Y
	Approximately 240 by April 2021	10% delivered in 10% Area.	10% Area: delivering less than 7.5% or more than 12.5%	G
		0% delivered in 5% Area -	5% Area: delivering less than 2.5% or more than 7.5%	W
<u>Local</u> Number of affordable dwellings secured through affordable housing exceptions policy (Applies only to the Other Growth Areas)	Approximately 10 by April 2016	No planning application submitted	No planning application submitted by the end of 2014	R
	Approximately 20 by April 2021	No planning application submitted		R
<u>Local</u> Average house price (Baseline: Approximately £86,424 at 2010, in line with Land Registry)	-	£102,576 (increase of 19% on baseline)	+/- 10% change from base level	R
<u>Local</u> Average income (gross weekly pay) (Baseline: Approximately £380 at 2009, amended in line with NOMIS data to £392)	-	£441 (increase of 12.5% on baseline)	+/- 10% change from base level	R
<u>Local</u> Vacancy rates of existing housing stock (Baseline: 6% at 2010)	-	4.4% in 2018/19	Vacancy rate increasing for 1 year or remaining static for 2	G

			consecutive years	
<u>Local</u>				G
Percentage of relevant planning applications complying with SPG	All (post SPG adoption)	All applications complying with SPG		

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	2018/19 Performance
<u>Core</u>				
New B1 floorspace delivered	Between 28,500 and 30,790 sqm net floorspace delivered by April 2016	1443 sqm delivered 2018/19 0 sqm delivered 2017/18	Greater than 7,120 sqm per annum or less than 890 sqm per annum for 2 consecutive years	Y
	At least 53,400 sqm net floorspace delivered by April 2021	12,104 sqm delivered by the end of March 2019		Y
<u>Core</u>				
New B2/B8 floorspace delivered	Between 7,920 and 9,680 sqm net floorspace delivered by April 2016	16,997 sqm delivered by the end of March 2019	Greater than 7,540 sqm per annum or less than 940 sqm per annum for 2 consecutive years	R
	At least 56,500 sqm net floorspace delivered by April 2021	0 sqm delivered 2018/2019 396 sqm delivered 2017/2018		R

<u>Core</u> Minimum number of net additional jobs delivered	Between 1,800 and 1,980 jobs delivered by April 2016	1,877 jobs delivered by the end of March 2019	Greater than 592 jobs per annum or less than 74 jobs per annum for 2 consecutive years	Y
	At least 4,440 jobs delivered by April 2021	4, B – Class jobs delivered 2018/2019		R
<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	72.2% for 2017/18 (1.8% lower than in 2017/18)	Reduction of 5% or failure to increase for 2 consecutive years.	Y
	Approximately 80% by the end of 2021			Y
<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	6%	+ or – 2.5% beyond range for 2 consecutive years	G

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	2018/19 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
<u>Local</u> 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	2018/19 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.	0.9ha loss	-	Y

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

Core and Local Indicators	Policy Targets	Policy Achievement	Trigger Level	2018/19 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> 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	2018/19 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 SINC's or the LNR	No developments that would cause harm to the overall nature conservation value of SINC's or the LNR granted planning permission	No development that would cause harm to the overall nature conservation value of SINC's 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

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	2018/19 Performance
<u>Local</u> Percentage of planning applications complying with sustainable design SPG	All (post SPG adoption)	All relevant applications complying with SPG	-	G