

Non-Technical Summary

Introduction

1.1 Pembrokeshire County Council is preparing a Local Development Plan (LDP, the Plan). The Plan is a requirement of Part 6 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This will replace the Joint Unitary Development Plan and set out the development strategy and policy framework for the development and conservation needs of the area of Pembrokeshire excluding the National Park from adoption to 2021. As part of the process for preparing the plan a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will test the LDP's contribution towards sustainable development. This is a statutory requirement.

SA/SEA process

1.2 There are five stages in the SA process comprising:

Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding the scope;

Stage B: Developing and refining options/alternatives and assessing effects;

Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report. This is known as the Environmental Report according to SEA Regulations, however this report uses the term SA Report throughout;

Stage D: Consult on the draft plan or programme and the SA Report;

Stage E: Monitor the significant effects of implementing the plan or programme on the environment.

1.3 The first stage of the SA process was to produce a Scoping Report (See SA Scoping Report¹). The report set the context and scope of the assessment and included a report on the current state of the environment, and on the social and economic situation in the County. Key sustainability issues were identified and objectives set to address these sustainability issues. The LDP was tested against these objectives to ensure the plan contributed towards sustainable development. The SA Scoping Report was consulted on with the statutory consultees in July 2008 and the amended version published in January 2009.

1.4 An Initial SA Report then assessed the Local Development Plan Preferred Strategy (See Initial SA Report 2009²). However, the policies were expanded and changed following consultation on the Preferred Strategy and Initial SA

¹ SA Scoping Report January 2009 -

<http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/content.asp?id=13440&nav=109,141,1014>

² Initial SA Report March 2009 –

<http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/content.asp?id=13440&nav=109,141,1014>

Report. Comments made on the Preferred Strategy were incorporated where appropriate into the LDP Deposit.

1.5 The Preferred Strategy was superseded by the LDP Deposit. This is the version of the plan which establishes a vision based development strategy and includes both strategic and general policies with specific land allocations to guide development and the use of land in Pembrokeshire excluding the National Park from adoption to 2021.

1.6 Sustainability Appraisal of the LDP Deposit was carried out in accordance with guidance from the Welsh Assembly and UK Government.

Sustainability Appraisal Framework

1.7 A sustainability framework was developed from the current baseline, sustainability issues and context with other legislation, plans and programmes, which are defined in terms of Sustainability Appraisal Objectives (see below). The development of the SA Objectives is documented in the SA Scoping Report which was subject to statutory consultation.

1. Develop and maintain a balanced population structure
2. Promote and improve human health and wellbeing through a healthy lifestyle, access to healthcare and recreation opportunities and a clean and healthy environment
3. Improve education opportunities to enhance the skills and knowledge base
4. Minimise the need to travel and encourage sustainable modes of transport.
5. Provide a range of high quality housing including affordable housing to meet local needs
6. Build safe, vibrant and cohesive communities which have improved access to key services and facilities
7. Protect and enhance the role of the Welsh language and culture
8. Provide a range of good quality employment opportunities accessible to all sections of the population
9. Support a sustainable and diverse local economy
10. Prepare for and reduce the impact of Pembrokeshire's contribution to climate change
11. Maintain and improve air quality
12. Minimise the generation of waste and pollution
13. Encourage the efficient production, use, re-use and recycling of resources
14. Maintain and protect the quality of inland and coastal water
15. Reduce the impacts of flooding and sea level rises
16. Use land efficiently and minimise contamination

17. Safeguard soil quality and quantity
18. Protect, enhance and value biodiversity
19. Protect and enhance the landscape and geological heritage
20. Encourage quality locally distinct design that complements the built heritage
21. Protect, enhance and value the built heritage and historic environment

LDP Deposit

1.8 The Plan has been developed from a number of background papers and documents. It includes a vision and objectives of what the county should be like at the end of the Plan period – 2021. Strategic policies have been developed and Land allocations.

LDP Vision

1.9 The overall vision describes land use elements as set out in the Wales Spatial Plan (People, Places, Futures: The Wales Spatial Plan 2008 Update) and Pembrokeshire's Community Plan (Update 2009).

The LDP Vision:

“To ensure that Pembrokeshire is prosperous and that it remains vibrant and special by creating: a network of strong urban and rural communities in Hub Towns, Service Centres, Service and Local Villages supported by a robust, sustainable, diverse high value-adding economy underpinned by the Area’s unique environment, maritime access to the Milford Haven Waterway and Fishguard Harbour and internationally important energy and tourism opportunities.”

LDP Objectives

1.10 The 10 LDP objectives and 23 sub-objectives underpin the key principle of delivering sustainable development. The LDP vision determines what sort of place the plan area should be (LDP Manual, section 5.5). The LDP objectives were derived from the evidence base and specific issues in the area in order to deliver the Plan.

Objective	Sub objective
Mitigating and responding to climate change (A) AND Improving access to	• To retain best quality agricultural land for productive purposes. • To minimise development on areas of land at

goods and services (I)	flood risk. • To promote housing development in settlements where good levels of services already exist to reduce the need to travel. • To reduce the need to travel to access work, services and goods. • To be efficient in the use of resources and energy.
Building on the County's strategic location for energy and port related development (E)	• To ensure sufficient land is available for port and energy/renewable energy technologies both for research and for delivery in key sites on the Haven and in the Hub Towns. • To improve connectivity across the County and particularly to the Hub Towns and Haven. • To provide necessary infrastructure for development to take place.
Supporting the development of the distinctive role of Pembrokeshire's towns, especially within the Haven Hub (F) AND Regenerating Town Centres (G)	• To strengthen and improve the retail offer. • To strengthen Haverfordwest's role as a sub-regional centre.
Developing a quality visitor economy founded on a distinct sense of place and an outstanding natural and built environment (H)	• To encourage development that complements the natural and built environment. • To improve the range and quality of attractions and accommodation.
Sustaining and enhancing the rural and urban economy (C)	• To reduce the need to travel. • To facilitate agricultural diversification in rural areas • To safeguard the mineral resource and manage its development.
Developing vibrant communities providing a range and mix of homes and local services (D)	• To provide sufficient land to meet the housing needs arising within the County Council's planning area. • To provide housing which is affordable. • To protect local culture and language. • To enable the provision of community facilities.

Delivering design excellence and environmental quality (B) AND Protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment (J)	• To protect and enhance the natural environment, particularly designated nature sites and protected species and habitats across the plan area. • To manage waste sustainably. • To conserve and enhance the historic environment. • To achieve good sustainable design.
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LDP Strategy

1.11 The LDP strategy is designed to deliver the vision for Pembrokeshire, meet the objectives of the Plan and respond to the issues identified to deliver sustainable development. It is derived from national and regional policy principles and an evaluation of economic, social and environmental factors and the key issues and characteristics that make Pembrokeshire unique.

1.12 This strategy will be implemented through developments that comply with 16 strategic policies contained within this chapter and supported by general policies and allocations.

Method of Appraisal

1.13 Sustainability Appraisal was carried out for the LDP Vision, Strategic Policies, General Policies and allocated sites. The compatibility of the LDP Objectives with the SA Objectives was assessed using a matrix. The LDP policies were assessed against the SA Objectives with a commentary to expand on the assessment. The matrices also determine whether the policies contribute to meeting the SA Objective and whether the policies are compatible. The purpose of assessing the plan through the SA is to predict the social, environmental and economic effects of the policies being considered in the LDP preparation process. A commentary/explanation is provided which sets out the reasoning behind the prediction of the effects of the Plan and hence its ability to meet the requirements for sustainable development.

Conclusions of Appraisal

LDP Objectives

1.14 The appraisal of the 10 LDP Objectives sought to test their compatibility against the SA objectives, thereby identifying any potential conflict or omission between both sets of objectives. The appraisal matrices (see Appendix 1) revealed that the objectives are broadly consistent with the sustainability objectives.

Strategic and General Policies

1.15 The 16 strategic policies and 41 general policies were assessed against the SA Objectives. Most of the Policies were compatible and contributed

towards meeting the SA Objectives. The policies were assessed by the County Council's Sustainability Appraisal Officer, with input from planning and specialist officers to predict their impacts with regard to the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives. Informal advice was also sought from the statutory consultees. Specifically, the SA helped to ensure that the development of the Strategic Policies was in line with SA Objectives from the outset and the policies were refined and re-worded to ensure greater compatibility with the SA Objectives.

Allocations

1.16 The allocated sites that will deliver the LDP strategy have been assessed against the SA Objectives to ensure they contribute towards positive environmental, social and economic impacts on the county.

No-plan or business as usual scenario

1.17 The no plan or business as usual scenario was also assessed according to the requirements of the SEA Directive. This was to determine the sustainability effects in the absence of the plan and therefore further demonstrates the contribution of the new plan to sustainable development.

1.18 The key sustainability issues identified for Pembrokeshire have been analysed to assess the likely scenario if there was no LDP for the period to 2021. This prediction was difficult as it is dependant upon a wide range of unknown factors. The scenario is based on the likely implications for Pembrokeshire in the absence of a framework to guide the use and development of land. Where other plans, programmes and policies that may also influence these issues, such as national policy, these are given as an example.

Cumulative and in-combination effects

1.19 The temporal and cumulative nature of the predicted effects was explored where possible and details were provided in the commentary. The cumulative and in-combination assessments found that there were significant cumulative positive impacts predicted.

Habitats Regulations Appraisal

1.20 Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) of the likely significant effects of the LDP on Natura 2000 sites is also required under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the Habitats Regulations). There are a number of Natura 2000 sites or European sites designated for their habitats and species which were considered. HRA has been carried out throughout production of the Plan, and reported separately but parallel to this SA process. The LDP was assessed against the conservation objectives for the Natura 2000 sites and consulted on with the statutory consultees and as part of the wider LDP consultation. The LDP is unlikely to have a likely significant effect on European sites.

Next Steps

1.21 This SA Report will be subject to a full public consultation for a period of 6 weeks alongside the LDP.

1.22 This will be followed by the consideration of any alternatives suggested through the consultation process. Any substantial representations will also be discussed. Following examination of the LDP, there may also be further work undertaken. Monitoring of the LDP and SA will take place on adoption.

1.23 This SA Report presents an extensive SA of the detailed policies, and allocated land and also ensures that the LDP contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. This SA Report will then be consulted on alongside the LDP; any changes to this will be re-assessed and incorporated before the plan is adopted. Finally, the significant effects of implementing the plan will be monitored in parallel with annual monitoring of the LDP. This monitoring of the significant effects will be based on potential indicators which were suggested in the SA Scoping Report and Initial SA Report and have been developed as the plan progressed.

Commenting on this report

1.24 This report will be subject to public consultation from 26 January to 9 March 2011. Please comment on this SA Report using the response form in Appendix 10 of this report.