

Pembrokeshire County Council  
Local Development Plan 2  
2017-2033

Sustainability Appraisal Report – Deposit Plan  
Non-Technical Summary

Public Consultation Version  
15<sup>th</sup> January 2020 – 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020

# Chapter 1: Non-Technical Summary

## Introduction

- 1.1. Pembrokeshire County Council is preparing a Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP2). The Local Development Plan 2 is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This will replace the Local Development Plan 2013-2021 and set out the development strategy and policy framework for the development and conservation needs of the area of Pembrokeshire excluding the National Park for the period from 2017 to 2033. As part of the process for preparing the plan a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will test the LDPs contribution towards sustainable development. This is a statutory requirement.
- 1.2. Section 3.4.2 of the LDP Manual (Edition 2) states that the methodology of the original SA is likely to be most appropriate. This is the approach taken. The SA framework remains relevant and therefore the SA objectives would be taken forward and have been reviewed where appropriate to account for changes in legislation and other matters.

## SA/SEA process

- 1.3. There are five stages in the SA process comprising:
  - Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline evidence and deciding on 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 preferred option of the development plan and the findings of the SA Report
  - Stage E: Monitoring significant effects of implementing the development plan.
- 1.4. The first stage of the SA process was to produce a Scoping Report (See SA Scoping Report). 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 LDP2 will be tested against these objectives to ensure the plans contribute towards sustainable development. The SA Scoping Report was consulted on with the statutory consultees and agreed. This document should be read in conjunction with the Scoping Report, and its Appendices, which will be updated accordingly throughout plan production.
- 1.5. An Initial SA Report assessed the Local Development Plan 2 Preferred Strategy (see Initial SA Report 2018). The Preferred Strategy and Initial SA Report were consulted upon. Comments made on the Preferred Strategy were incorporated into the LDP Deposit 2.
- 1.6. This SA Report provides an assessment of the LDP 2 Deposit.

1.7. The SA of the Pembrokeshire County Council LDP 2 Deposit has been carried out in accordance with guidance from the Welsh and UK Governments.

## **Sustainability Appraisal Framework**

1.8. 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. The health objective also incorporates mental health and well-being.

1. Develop and maintain a balanced population structure.
2. Promote and improve human health and well-being 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. Maintain, enhance and value biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems.
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 2 Deposit**

- 1.9. The Deposit evolved from the Preferred Strategy and developed from informal consultations on a range of documents<sup>1</sup> including a Draft Vision which describes the type of place that Pembrokeshire should be in 2033 and sets Objectives which need to be met to make this happen. The Strategy sets out how the Council considers new growth should be apportioned and delivered across the Plan area, with Strategic Policies setting out specific approaches in different locations and for different development types. The Draft Issues, Vision and Objectives 2018 was produced and consulted upon as well as a Strategic Housing Options 2018. These informed the Preferred Strategy and underwent sustainability appraisal and are available on the website.
- 1.10. The Deposit includes the vision, objectives, strategy and policies which were developed further following the consultation on the Preferred Strategy.

## **LDP Vision**

- 1.11. The LDP vision states:

**In 2033 Pembrokeshire is a place with strong resourceful communities, where challenges of rurality and climate change are successfully tackled. A distinctive sense of place exists based on its natural landscape, cultural, built and linguistic heritage. Homes are provided for all and a strong economy enables people of all ages to live, work and thrive in the County. Employment opportunities linked to start-up businesses, tourism, rural diversification, the green and blue energy industry and new sectors linked to the strategic opportunities provided by the Milford Haven Waterway and links to Ireland are promoted. Town Centres are vibrant places where a range of uses take place. Development is supported by key infrastructure. Across the County green infrastructure and biodiversity are enhanced with accessible and healthy environments delivered for both people and wildlife.**

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<sup>1</sup> See reports on Vision, Issues and Objectives and Strategic Housing Options and respective SA documents at <https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/local-development-plan-review/strategic-options>

## **LDP Objectives**

- 1.12. The 11 LDP Objectives were developed from the LDP vision, County Councillor and key stakeholder involvement, and consultation of the Preferred Strategy and set out the issues identified to be addressed through the LDP.
- A) Mitigate and respond to the challenge of Climate Change.
  - B) Deliver high quality development where place-making is supported by sustainable design which responds appropriately to cultural and built heritage, landscape and townscape.
  - C) Sustain and enhance the rural and urban economy by supporting start-up businesses, rural diversification, changing agricultural practices, the visitor economy, and the expansion of Small and Medium Enterprises
  - D) Sustain resourceful communities by providing a range and mix of homes supported by key community facilities and services.
  - E) Build on the County's strategic location for green/blue energy, maritime and port related development
  - F) Protect and promote the Welsh language.
  - G) Support a range of uses in Town Centres to assist regeneration.
  - H) Promote accessible and healthy environments for both people and wildlife through the protection and delivery of green infrastructure.
  - I) Improve access to goods and services by facilitating improvements in infrastructure<sup>2</sup> and community facilities and directing development to sustainable locations.
  - J) Protect and enhance the County's environment, biodiversity and habitats.
  - K) Prevent waste arising and ensure resources are used responsibly.

## **LDP Strategy**

- 1.13. The LDP strategy has been developed based on a review of the evidence base and in conjunction with stakeholders. Levels of growth make provision for 6,800 new homes and 2,200 new jobs over the Plan period (or 425 new homes a year).
- 1.14. Growth is across the Plan area in accordance with a spatial strategy which promotes sustainable development. A Settlement Hierarchy groups settlements into different categories based on the level of services and facilities located within them and there is a urban rural split of housing

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<sup>2</sup> Note that infrastructure includes mobile and broadband provision, transport improvements and sewerage capacity.

allocations of 60%/40%. With a specific Rural Policy approach in what is defined as Local Villages in the Settlement Hierarchy. 19 Strategic Policies are supported by 47 General Policies. These seek to support the Plan in relation to the environmental and socio-economic characteristics of the area. Specific allocations have also been provided to support the Plan strategy.

## **Method of Appraisal**

- 1.15. The sustainability appraisal was carried out for the LDP Vision and Objectives, Spatial Options and Strategic Options and the Preferred Strategy, during their production. This report updates those assessments where they have changed and provides the SA of the Deposit.
- 1.16. The compatibility of the LDP Objectives with the SA Objectives was assessed using a matrix. The Spatial Options, Strategic and General Policies and allocations were assessed against the SA Objectives with a commentary to expand on the assessment setting out the reasoning behind the prediction of the effects of the Plan and hence its ability to meet the requirements for sustainable development. The appraisal of the Strategic Policies was carried out by comparing the Policies against the SA Objectives and in addition to the commentary/explanation column a further two columns were included in the table to determine whether the policy contributes to meeting the SA Objective and whether the policy is compatible with the SA Objective. Allocated sites were appraised by highlighting those SA Objectives of critical importance to the allocated site. The sites have already been through a screening process which included a variety of constraints, including sustainability.

## **Conclusions of Appraisal**

### **LDP Vision and Objectives**

- 1.17. The appraisal of the Vision and 11 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 and 2) revealed that the objectives are broadly consistent with the sustainability objectives.

### **Deposit Strategy**

- 1.18. The chosen Option for housing proposes a 60%:40% split of development which focuses on distributing housing in settlements according to the current level of services provided within them. With 60% in urban towns with an urban character and 40% in individual rural settlements with a good level of service, directing growth to a greater range of small and medium sized sites. In terms of the assessment this provides opportunities for positive impacts on the SA Objectives, particularly in terms of those social and economic objectives. Policies in the plan will seek to mitigate for any potential negative effects, particularly in relation to biodiversity.

## **Strategic and General Policies**

- 1.19. The 19 Strategic Policies and 47 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 planning and specialist officers to predict their impacts with regard to the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives. Specifically, the SA helped to ensure that the development of the 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**

- 1.20. 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**

- 1.21. 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.
- 1.22. The sustainability issues and the resultant SA Objectives identified for Pembrokeshire have been analysed to assess the likely scenario if there was no LDP for 2017-2033. This prediction was difficult as it is dependent upon a wide range of unknown factors. The current LDP is valid until 2021, after this national policy will apply. 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**

- 1.23. The temporal and cumulative nature of the predicted effects was explored where possible and details were provided in the commentary. More detailed determination of the temporal and cumulative aspects as well as consideration of mitigation measures will be undertaken iteratively through the SA/SEA stages in which more specific policies and strategic sites will be appraised.

## **Habitats Regulations Appraisal and other assessments**

- 1.24. 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 the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. There are a number of Natura 2000 sites designated for their habitats and species which were considered. HRA has been carried out throughout the 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 will be consulted on with the statutory consultees and as part of the wider LDP consultation. The LDP is unlikely to have a significant effect on European sites.

- 1.25. The LDP Manual states that an integrated appraisal can include signposting where some issues and objectives may need deeper assessments such as race, equalities, Welsh language or health impact assessments. The Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Local Development Plan Review will specifically consider public health issues as part of its requirements. However, if it is found that certain issues arising require more in depth assessment a Health Impact Assessment may be carried out as a separate process.

## **Next Steps**

- 1.26. A full public consultation on this SA Report (known as the Environmental Report according to the SEA Regulations) and the LDP Deposit takes place from 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020 to 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020.
- 1.27. Following consultation the SA Report will be updated according to the consultation responses. Alternatives and changed options and policies as a result of the consultation will be re-assessed where necessary.
- 1.28. This SA Report presents an extensive SA of the detailed policies, and allocated land and will also ensure the LDP contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. This SA Report will then be consulted on alongside the Deposit LDP, any changes to this will be re-assessed and incorporated before the plan is submitted for examination. Finally, the significant effects of implementing the plan will be monitored. In parallel with annual monitoring of the LDP2. This is 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**

- 1.29. This report will be subject to public consultation from 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020 to 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Please comment using the consultation comments form in Appendix 7.