

**Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan (First Review) up to 2031
Stakeholder Event 23 June 2014
Llancaiach Fawr**

Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Candice Coombs	Welsh Government
Rebekah Stephens	Welsh Government
Cllr. J Criddle	Blackwood Town Council
Ryan Greaney	Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
Cllr. J Hughes	Rhymney Community Council
Caren Richards	Cardiff City Council
Matthew Sharp	Newport City Council
Rebekah Stephens	Welsh Government
Stephen Thomas	Torfaen County Borough Council
Matthew Todd-Jones	Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water
Justin Waite	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Vic Warren	Council for the Protection of Rural Wales
Clive Williams	Aneurin Bevan Health Board
Cllr. D Williams	Rhymney Community Council
Jill Edge	Monmouthshire County Council

Facilitators from Strategic & Development Plans Team, Caerphilly

Welcome and Introductions

Cllr James welcomed partners to the event and introduced the planning team (Rhian Kyte, Victoria Morgan, Kelly Collins, Ian Mullis and Timothy Norton).

Presentation: LDP First Review

The purpose of these sessions will be to obtain stakeholder input into the development of the alternative strategic options that will in turn inform the Preferred Strategy that will be subject of statutory public consultation in October 2014/November 2014.

The stakeholder feedback obtained through these mechanisms will serve to inform the Council of the appropriateness, or otherwise, of alternative spatial options and will help to determine the scale of future population and household growth that would result in the most sustainable future for Caerphilly County Borough up to 2031.

The Strategy that will be subject of consultation will be reported to Council in October 2014 (7.10.14).

The Call for candidate sites has taken place and submitted sites are in the process of being assessed. Approximately 170 sites have been received through this process.

Future Population and Household Growth up to 2031 – Facilitated Discussion

The groups discussed in depth how they would like to see Caerphilly County Borough grow and develop, and whether they would like to see the population decrease or to plan for growth.

The main outcomes from this facilitated discussions showed that all agreed that population increase can be positive, and that through growth there is the opportunity to create new housing that meets the needs for all. However, this should be balanced against providing opportunities for the young, and increasing their prospects so that they stay in the county borough. An increase in appropriate industry as well as infrastructure is key, as is balancing environmental factors against growth.

Overall, with regard to social, economic and environmental considerations, there needs to be a consistent approach between the LDP and other, complementary, strategies, particularly the Capital Region. In light of this, although growth in Caerphilly County Borough needs to be stimulated, the role of other LAs, particularly Cardiff, needs to be recognised. Therefore, ambition must be tempered by realism. Care must be taken to ensure that Caerphilly does not become regarded as an overspill for Cardiff.

Presentation on Facts and Figures: Future Population and Household Growth

A detailed presentation was given in respect of the assumptions that underpin population and household projections, in particular trends related to births, deaths and migration were outlined to aid the discussion.

Building on work undertaken with other stakeholders, 5 population & household growth scenarios were outlined as follows:

- Scenario 1 -Welsh Government Principal Projections
- Scenario 2 –Ten-Year Average Migration Projection
- Scenario 3 – Average Migration for SE Wales
- Scenario 4 – SE Wales migration - long term AHS decrease
- Scenario 5 – SE Wales migration - moderate AHS decrease

Facilitated discussion on Preferred Growth Scenarios

The issues raised by each group are outlined below:

Group 1

Future Population and Household Growth up to 2031

The point was made that the level of population and household growth to be planned for should be dependent on the level of economic growth that can be achieved. In other words, employment, rather than housing, should be the determining factor. What type of employment does the Council want to attract?

There is a need to look at additional scenarios when forecasting population growth, including jobs-led. The Council is undertaking a jobs-led scenario.

A key factor in planning for growth is what it will cost. Growth is beneficial if it aids in sustaining, rather than pressurising, facilities, particularly with regard to an ageing population. Housing affordability remains an issue – housing diversification is fine if affordability is addressed.

The question was asked whether growth in Caerphilly should be seen to satisfy its own ends or whether the strategy should be based on its role within the wider region. The view was given that Caerphilly needs to try and take advantage of Cardiff-based prosperity.

The Heads of the Valleys continues to experience economic decline. This is a key issue within the context of the County Borough that needs to be addressed. Improvements to the transport structure in the HOVRA may help. There could also be opportunities to maximise the HOVRA's potential as a tourist destination.

Viability and deliverability are key issues for an LDP. There can be a conflict between deliverability and aspiration – a balance needs to be realised.

Preferred Growth Scenario

The LDP should plan for issues and places, not numbers, although it is assumed that it shouldn't plan for decline. It is hard to look at the numbers without knowing what they mean.

Scenario 1 is not realistic or sensible.

Additional scenarios are necessary – a jobs-led one, and one factoring in the influence of Cardiff.

Why is the existing strategy not working? How does an ageing population fit in with the dwelling requirement? The Council could look at affordable housing requirements in each strategy area.

Scenarios 2 and 3 – is it realistic to assume that the economy will still be in recession over half of the plan period?

More analysis is needed on migration figures. The LHMA should be referred to in terms of determining those areas in greatest need.

Scenario 5 was generally felt by the group to be the most reasonable, within the context of the numbers presented.

Preferred Spatial Option

The group's thoughts regarding each option are as follows:

Option 1

Why repeat a strategy that hasn't worked up until now? The supply of brownfield sites has been largely exhausted, although there may be capacity for 300/400 units in Risca following the completion of the flood alleviation works.

Option 2

Focusing development on sites in the HOVRA would be undeliverable without significant public subsidy. Transport infrastructural improvements may help make the area more attractive to developers, but this in itself would rely on public money.

Option 3

Targeting development to the NCC and the creation of a Maesycwmmmer Bypass may help push development further north.

Option 4

Large-scale release of greenfield land in the SCC, and the development of a South Eastern Bypass, would be the most viable option from the perspective of developers but carries with it environmental concerns and would have no benefit to the HOVRA.

Option 5

Targeting development to the NCC and SCC could bring about development of a Maesycwmmmer Bypass and phase one of a South Eastern Bypass. Development in NCC could have benefits to the HOVRA.

The preferred order of options was:

- First – option 5;
- Second – option 3;
- Third – option 4;
- Fourth – option 1;

Group 2

Future population and household growth up to 2031

What time of place do we want to create?

- Economic growth & employment creation is key – economic growth strategy
- We need to provide somewhere to live – need to consider ageing population & relevant support
- Need to provide affordable housing – either adapt current stock or provide new builds. Caerphilly has a current Council Housing Stock that will be subject to an Investment Programme e.g. in HOVRA. However the need is in the south of the Borough.
- Ideally, more builds > price of new homes decreases.
- Want housing development in HOVRA to be diverse – however, viability and attracting developers is an issue. There is a line where developers won't go north.
- Incentives for house builders in the North (e.g. smaller % affordable housing threshold).

- However, we are trying hard to encourage developers to the North (i.e. Zero CIL Charge) – is this enough? We need WAG incentives and employment creation to attract workers/developers.
- Need to link HOVRA with a core road/links to the M4 - At the moment, accessibility is poor and public transport costs are high (for commuters).
- Regeneration of HOVRA will create opportunities for development.
- Need accessibility without harming the environment – environmental constraints have restricted land availability.
- Need office development & a job industry – these need to be close to the M4 (hence why HOVRA unattractive).
- Need to consider South Wales Metro and link it with the Valleys as well as Cardiff, Newport & Swansea – this will help attract a new worker population.
- Farming & food production needs to be considered.

Do we want to plan based on short or long-term trends and why?

- We need to base population growth projections on 2011 population (census) and 2008 migration figures.

What do short and long term trends in terms of household formation and size, past house-building rates, migration, housing need, and economic growth suggest?

- Inward migration is good as it adds to the economy
- CCBC has a lot of in-migration from the region but not a lot of immigration from outside Wales.

What are the implications for planning for an ageing, declining population? What impact will that have on the economy, social services, facilities (schools, libraries, leisure centres), town centres, public transport, etc.?

- Support needs such as residential/medical care
- Have specific housing requirements – we want to maintain people in their own environment (in terms of care).
- However, under-occupation of family homes is counter-productive
- We need to give residents options to move if they wish (e.g. 1-bed flats or sheltered accommodation) – this can add to the housing mix in the borough.
- However, CCBC doesn't have enough flats available apart from Government or Council owned.
- We have an ageing population with lower income and higher vacancy rates, which leaves a 'worklessness' population that is stuck in poverty.

What are the implications of planning for growth?

- Growth is necessary but it can't be continuous – it has to stop eventually.
- We need to keep our Greenfield land and encourage re-development of available brownfield.

Are we planning to attract economically active people into the area? If so what do we need to do to achieve this - where will they live/work? What facilities and services do they need?

- Employment creation – economic growth strategy

- However, it is difficult for youngsters/workers in HOVRA – we need to upskill the population across the Heads of the Valleys (including neighbouring authorities such as RCT).
- We need to sort out employment in the HOVRA to encourage worker spend.

Preferred growth scenario with reasons why – facilitated discussion

General Discussion

- Registered GP population hasn't grown by the projected amount since 1990s – is there another growth option based on this?
- There has been underestimation of population since Poll Tax introduced.
- Need to focus growth within the boundary but also be aware of the need for cross-boundary cooperation
- What age can 'working-age' be defined as nowadays – people are living longer?
- Concern that, even with an average of 450 homes/year, young people will still be unable to afford housing.
- Until we build over-average, we will still be looking at this issue in 10 years time – we should control development and ensure developers build within limited time periods (e.g. by way of planning conditions).
- We need to be building more housing than average, i.e. 530 homes needed to achieve affordable housing need – however, a plan for 20 years can't necessarily achieve this.
- CCBC is concentrating on upgrading the existing affordable housing stock so unable to build many new at present.
- We need growth that delivers affordable housing
- We need growth that delivers employment opportunities
- At what point will we be unable to accommodate new builds because of environmental constraints? – Restricting land in the south (e.g. Risca).
- We can't base economic growth on housing provision only.
- School rationalisation will release some brownfield sites but we are looking at Greenfield release.

Scenario 2

- Not spreading growth to valleys – instead house building will be concentrated in Cardiff.
- However, to achieve a 5-year land supply we need lower figures such as these.
- WAG commented that 5-year land supply requirement isn't necessarily all down to land allocation – there are other factors

Scenario 3

- Focus should be somewhere between 3&4 – we need to build more houses than we think.

Scenario 4

- Discussion with regards to 'average household size' not being a good enough basis for scenario 4
- CPRW thought this was over-provisional (although the previous LDP over-allocated) – this may be unachievable (e.g. 5 year housing supply).
- Over-providing may have a detrimental impact on services – unsustainable.

- It was noted that the statistics used were based on the LMHA survey and the development-industry fed into this.
- However, WAG commented that there is unattributed growth for 5,000 people that hasn't been factored into these population trends – RK to discuss further.
- One of the participants questioned whether scenario 4 was realistic for 2031 as a reversal of trends.
- WAG commented that we wouldn't want household projections are large as they are in 2031.
- Others favoured this option and commented that we need to take the 'mid-point' and take this forward as a 'best guess' option.
- Aneurin Bevan HB commented that we should use an average household size between 2 figures in order to get a range – however, existing figure for AHS was based on the survey results.

Preferred Option

- The majority preferred Option 4 or 5 – these would be key to promoting growth, delivering affordable housing & encouraging inward migration.
- It should be noted that CPRW disagreed/objected to this scenario as it is 'over-provisional' – preferred scenario 1 or 2.

Alternative spatial scenarios for growth

Advantages	Disadvantages	General Comments
Scenario 1		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most viable – the market is in the SCC • Developer's choice • Could be some ripple effect upwards towards NCC (evidence of this in past e.g. Ystrad Mynach Hospital & College – regeneration). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brownfield allocation would prevent ripple effect across valleys region (not good for regeneration of HOVRA). • Lose sites to Cardiff as not enough suitable land for development (e.g. Greenfield land). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLA or VILL need to be factored in to development • We will eventually find developers if we dictate where to go (i.e. NCC and HOV) – although this will displease larger developers/be unattractive.
Scenario 2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOV regeneration (ripple effect upwards) • Encourage developers/new builds in HOVRA • Good for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavily reliant on public subsidy • Release of sites in HOV won't be able to facilitate infrastructure delivery if viability comes into play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport is usually from 'Cardiff-upwards' – why not across the borough (NCC)? • Metro & upgrading

<p>environment – protect Greenfield in SCC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following existing discussed rail line • Growth & jobs • Preferred option IF we had the money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If no road built then strategy would fail – need to undertake feasibility study • Not deliverable – market (private housing) not attracted to HOVRA 	<p>existing lines will need to be factored in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council should dictate where we/the community wants development and take charge – shouldn't be developer led • We need partnership with developers to work out a strategy • The purpose of a plan-led system is to gain control – however this is subject to deliverability/viability issues •
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Scenario 3

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constrain development in South • Pontllanfraith & Oakdale brownfield school sites could be development opportunities (brownfield) • Open up railway line from Nelson-Merthyr – this would make Nelson an attractive place to live • Crumlin station to be built = good accessibility/solve bottleneck issues • Bypass would help alleviate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliant on strategic site in Maesycwmmmer (for the bypass) • Strategic site owned by multiple landowners – difficulties in securing land • Developer would need to finance part of the bypass (release of the Greenfield land will help fund this) – will be an issue if there isn't enough developer money to fund the bypass • Greenfield loss 	
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<p>bottleneck/traffic issues in Maesycwmmmer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good interim for the 2031 period before we consider other sites (e.g. HOVRA) as it will establish development and road infrastructure beforehand • CIL receipt can help fund bypass 		
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Scenario 4

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental benefits (remove congestion from the centre) • Massive site by Train Station in Caerphilly – central, remove highly contaminated site, good accessibility • Bring disused Machen railway line back into use • CIL receipts – could generate revenue to be used for northern regeneration in the future • Balance between good sites (Greenfield) & difficult sites (remediation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict between 40% affordable threshold and CIL charge in SCC – needs consideration • Doesn't initially benefit HOVRA but could fund development through CIL receipts 	
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Scenario 5

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crumlin & Nelson railway lines opened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building houses where people want to live 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a dispersal strategy across the NCC more
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equitable growth – win-win for most parties• Smaller releases of land in Caerphilly could encourage developers to move northwards (ripple effect)• Lower affordable housing threshold may encourage developers to go northwards	<p>drives prices up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is an affordable market in the south but this is lacking in the north	<p>viable than releasing strategic site/s in the centre of the Borough?</p>
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