



RECORD OF DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION

SUBJECT:

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2015.

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

The purpose of the report is to outline the contents of the Local Development Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2015 (LDP; AMR), prior to its submission to the Welsh Government.

DELEGATED DECISION (Date):

The Local Development Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2015 is agreed for submission to Welsh Government.


Chief Officer Signature

CHRIS BRADSHAW
Print Name

28-10-15
Date

The decision is taken in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act, 2000 (Executive Functions) and in the terms set out in Section 5 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution

Ben

CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE

23/10/2015

DATE

Alice

OFFICER CONSULTEE SIGNATURE

22/10/2015

DATE

Directorate:	
Contact Name:	
Designation:	
Tel.No.	

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014 - 2016
REPORT TO ACCOMPANY DECISION OF
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Part 1 (Non Confidential)
RHONDDA CYNON TAF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2016

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to outline the contents of the Local Development Plan Annual Monitoring Report (LDP; AMR) for the period 2014 -2015 prior to the submission of the document to the Welsh Government

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1** It is recommended that:

(1) The contents of the LDP; AMR are agreed prior to the Director of Regeneration and Planning submitting the document to the Welsh Government.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1** The Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP was adopted on 2 March 2011. As part of the statutory development plan process the Council is required to prepare an AMR. This is the fourth AMR prepared by the Council and provides monitoring of the effectiveness of the LDP core strategy and policies, the plan's sustainability performance and identifies any significant contextual changes that might influence its delivery. The AMR has to be submitted to the Welsh Government by 31 October each year. This year's AMR will form the basis of undertaking the statutory LDP Review.

4. KEY FINDINGS OF THE ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

- 4.1** The LDP sets out an ambitious program for sustainable economic growth and regeneration in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The approach taken in the Plan looks even more ambitious when set against the backdrop of global economic recession. Inevitably the results of the monitoring exercise indicate certain areas have fared better than others.
- 4.2** The following elements of the Plan are considered to be making good progress and are delivering the targets set out in the LDP. These include:

- **Retail Development** – Since the adoption of the LDP, 7,717 sqm of new retail floor space has been built at Pontypridd Retail Park. Following the previous permission for the 10,976 sqm gross floorspace superstore on the Mwyndy-Talbot Green Strategic Site (along with the wider infrastructure), during 2014-15 the wider Town Centre was approved for approximately 34,000 sqm of retail and further significant leisure, office and hotel floor space. The recent permission at the Llanillid Strategic Site will see the creation of the local centre there, with some retail element. There have also been recent approvals for supermarkets in the NSA. These were firstly on the local centre of the Strategic Site at Hirwaun, another within the Robertstown Strategic Site

and the third within the existing village of Hirwaun. It is recognised there has been considerable development interest within the retail sector in the County Borough including permission granted for a new local centre on the former Bryncae industrial estate.

Strategic Sites – Good progress is being made on delivering the Strategic Sites. There has been an approval for the construction of wind turbines on Maerdy Colliery, Section 106 planning obligations attached to the development will provide a significant contribution to the leisure elements of the strategic site.

There have been pre-application discussions on the former Phumacite plant and the former Fernhill colliery site.

Planning permission was granted for a supermarket on the Robertstown Strategic site, following call-in of the planning application by Welsh Government and a public inquiry being held in November 2014. The Council also resolved to approve a new college on this lower part of the site in July 2015. Although it is not specifically an employment use class, (as per the allocation), it is considered that it will provide significant numbers of new jobs for those working in the college whilst also contributing to the training and developing of skills of the local population.

In Hirwaun there has been an approval of an outline application for 2,000m² retail development within the local centre element of the site. It is anticipated that the determination of this application will provide more certainty on the ability of other parts of the Strategic Site to come forward.

There has been an approval of an outline application on the Cwm Coking Works site for the demolition of the existing structures, (retention of listed towers), site remediation, land restoration and development to provide a mix of uses including 851 residential units (use class C3), a primary school and open space.

Mwyndy/ Talbot Green benefits from full approval for a superstore within the proposed town centre element of the strategic site, along with the infrastructure for the wider new town centre. This town centre was given outline consent over the monitoring year and comprises A1 retail space, A2 financial and professional service space, A3 food and drink space, B1 office space, a cinema, hotel, carparking and related infrastructure.

On the Llanilid strategic site a section of the site has consent for 243 dwellings and is being developed, with most of these dwellings completed. There is also a resolution to approve a comprehensive 'hybrid' planning application (full and outline) on the remainder of the site, which now awaits the signing of a section 106 Agreements and CIL process. This proposal comprises of up to 1,850 dwellings and a neighbourhood centre, (including community & leisure facilities, primary

school, retail and commercial floorspace). Other elements in the proposal include highways infrastructure, strategic landscape areas and public open space. Further pre-application discussions have taken place with regards to the residential and employment elements of the site. Procedures have actively been set in motion to enable the numerous landowners of the site to come together to take forward its development. Work is currently taking place on a feasibility scheme to prepare a master plan for the site.

4.3 The AMR shows that the following elements of the plan are not fully meeting their targets, although it is considered that the situation can be improved without immediate intervention. These relate principally to:

- **House Building** – During 2014/15, a total of 553 new dwellings were constructed in Rhondda Cynon Taf. This takes the total number of new dwellings constructed in the County Borough since 2006, (the technical start of the plan period), to 4076. Applications for a further 1784 dwellings were permitted through this past year. Although these figures indicate a continued positive growth in the house building industry in Rhondda Cynon Taf (when comparing with the previous 3 years AMRs), the building rates do not meet those identified in the LDP. As indicated in our Joint Housing Land Availability Study (2014) we have a reduced housing land supply of just 2.4 years based on the residual method of calculation. However, if the method of calculation that looks at actual build rates over the past 10 years is considered, then there would be over 11 years housing land supply. Considering recent permissions and the scale of proposals that have been approved subject to Section 106 agreements, the housing targets are not an issue of immediate concern. It is however acknowledged in the LDP AMR that housing allocations in the Northern Strategy Area are not quite coming forward at the rate they were anticipated.
- **Affordable Housing** - During 2014/15, 114 new affordable homes were built in Rhondda Cynon Taf. This brings the total number of affordable homes built since 2006 to 603 dwellings. Although there has been this regular provision of affordable units, the building rates do not meet the identified need in the LDP. This again can be linked to the economic climate and the delivery of general market housing developments over the past few years. The affordable housing targets are not an issue of immediate concern.
- **Employment Led Development** – The LDP allocates 98 hectares of land for employment purposes. None of this allocated employment land has yet been developed, with permission granted on 4.17 hectares. As with the housing sector, the global economic recession has had an effect on commercial and industrial development. However, it should be noted that there is continued development and redevelopment of our existing 103 employment sites. The monitoring of these sites indicated that there was a vacancy rate of just 14% of the

1,550 employment units surveyed. Nevertheless, there is still a concern that the sector is not achieving its target in terms of the implementation of the LDP and the Council will review the options available to it during the next monitoring period, to intervene and stimulate growth. Additionally, it is intended that there may be an opportunity through the review of the LDP this year to amend the target and indicators relating to employment, which would give a truer reflection of the commercial and industrial sector in the County Borough. Furthermore, as the economy recovers, opportunities to secure meaningful employment related inward investment in Rhondda Cynon Taf will hopefully increase. However, it is not considered that a review of the employment allocations at this stage would necessarily have any direct impact on the delivery of economic development in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1** Whilst the pattern of growth in some areas is slower than anticipated at the time of writing the LDP, evidence collected through the monitoring process suggests that good progress is being made in the delivery of the majority of LDP targets. It is anticipated that the development that has taken place in Rhondda Cynon Taf since the adoption of the LDP, coupled with the projected future investment from the public and private sector will ensure that the LDP core strategy is successfully delivered. The review on the LDP which is underway will consider any issues arising from the AMR.

It is proposed that areas that are not performing to target can be addressed without a full review of the plan. For example, how the Plan is performing in economic terms can be assessed by revisiting the performance indicators which currently focus solely on the development of employment allocations rather than the how economy related development is being delivered through the plan. Furthermore, housing targets can be reassessed in light of the latest household projections and Census data, which appears to suggest that sufficient capacity exists to meet the housing needs of the County Borough.

