

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2006-2021)

Housing Topic Paper

April 2008

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BACKGROUND

In January 2007 the Council issued for public consultation the Local Development Plan: Preferred Strategy. The Strategy was the first stage of the new statutory local development plan (LDP).

The next stage in the plan making process is the production of a deposit draft LDP. In order to ensure the soundness of the emerging LDP and transparency in the plan making process, the Council has produced a series of topic papers.

The topic papers address the main area of policy to be considered in the LDP. **It should be stressed that these papers are a starting point for policy development, through the sustainability appraisal process and as the Council's evidence base develops, emerging LDP policy will evolve and be refined**

1. INTRODUCTION

The provision of good quality, affordable housing in safe neighbourhoods and sustainable locations is a fundamental objective of the modern planning system.

The LDP will establish a robust and meaningful policy context for the delivery of a strong and diverse housing market in Rhondda Cynon Taf that meets the needs of both current and future residents. In doing so the LDP will seek to ensure the provision of new, well-designed and affordable housing in a

manner that makes a positive contribution to the creation of sustainable communities.

In order to do this the topic paper will outline:

- **The policy context** for housing, including a explanation of national, regional and local policy;
- **Key Issues in Rhondda Cynon Taf**, which relate specifically to housing;
- **Preferred Strategy**, policy in respect of housing, representations to the Strategy and proposed policy response, and
- **Draft LDP Policy**, which provides a policy context for new housing development.

There is a separate Topic Paper that deals specifically with the issue of housing land requirements. The Topic Paper explain the statistical analysis and background to the dwelling requirement figures contained in the Local Development Plan: Preferred Strategy (LDP). Housing Land Requirement Topic Paper was issued for public consultation in January 2007.

2. NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

People, Places, Futures – The Wales Spatial Plan (adopted 2004)

The Wales Spatial Plan, provides a framework for the future spatial development of Wales. Rhondda Cynon Taf along with the neighbouring authorities of Cardiff, Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly and the Vale of Glamorgan has been

identified as part of the South East – Capital Network Zone. The vision for the Capital Network is:

“An innovative skilled area offering a high quality of life – international yet distinctively Welsh. It will compete internationally by increasing its global viability through stronger links between the Valleys and the coast and the UK and Europe, helping spread prosperity within the area and benefiting other parts of Wales”.

Whilst the Spatial Plan may not provide a detailed framework for the development of housing in South East Wales it does nevertheless provide a number of clear propositions. These include the following:

- The Valleys need to be strengthened as a desirable place to live, work and visit – combining a wider mix of types of housing and good access to jobs and services – in distinctive communities set in an attractive environment.

Private house building and the improvement of public sector housing stock have a key role to play in regenerating the Valleys. The Consultation draft **Wales Spatial Plan Update 2008: People, Places, Futures** sets out a vision for how each part of Wales should develop economically, socially and environmentally over the next 20 years. The document further develops the concept of a Capital Network and provides a more detailed context for the development of the Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP. The Wales Spatial Plan proposes that distinct approaches for the three areas that make up the Capital Network Region. The three areas are:

- City / Coast
- Heads of the Valleys Plus, and
- Connections Corridor

Rhondda Cynon Taf is within the Heads of the Valleys Plus and Connections Corridor.

The Spatial Plan Update identifies 14 hub settlements which it sees as vital to the success of the city-region. Included, are the Rhondda Cynon Taf settlements of Aberdare, Pontypridd and Llantrisant.

Turning Heads – A Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys 2020 (June 2006)

Turning Heads – A Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys 2020 as the name suggests, outlines a strategy for regenerating the northern Valley areas of South East Wales. In Rhondda Cynon Taf the strategy area includes Treorchy, Treherbert, Ferndale, Mountain Ash and Aberdare. The objectives of the programme reflect those of the Wales Spatial Plan in seeking to ensure:

- An attractive and well used natural, historic and built environment;
- A vibrant economic landscape offering new opportunities;
- A well educated, skilled and healthier population;
- An appealing and coherent tourism and leisure experience, and
- Public confidence in a shared bright future

With regards to housing and settlement, Strategy Programme 1: *A Sub regional Approach to Regeneration of Settlements* comments as follows;

“To preserve and make the most of historic patterns of settlement, we will identify roles for towns and villages in the Heads of the Valleys that enable them to complement each other and that serve the diverse need of those who live in, work in and visit the area. Our focus will be on retailing and service centres, tourist towns, and employment hubs. We will work with housebuilders to provide executive and other high quality and affordable housing to attract professionals and key workers, especially younger families and first time buyers. We will also seek to assist local authorities with planned and potential major upgrades of housing to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.”

Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement 01/2006: Housing (June 2006)

Assembly Government housing policy is embodied in the Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement (MIPPS) 01/2006. The MIPPS revises Chapter 9 of Planning Policy Wales (March 2002). Supplementary guidance in relation to housing land availability and affordable housing are contained in Technical Advice Notes 1 and 2. The Planning Policy Wales Companion Guide (2006) relates the MIPPS to the LDP system, identifying clear statements of national policy that should only be repeated in where local circumstance require.

The Assembly Government’s objectives for housing are to provide:

- Homes that are in good condition, in safe neighbourhoods and sustainable communities; and
- Greater choice for the people over the type of housing and the location they live in, recognising the needs of all, including those in need of affordable or special needs housing in both urban and rural areas.

In order to achieve this the Assembly Government will seek to ensure that:

- Previously developed land is used in preference to Greenfield land;
- New housing and residential environments are well designed, environmentally sound (especially energy efficient) and make a significant contribution to promoting community regeneration and improving the quality of life; and that
- The overall result of new housing development in villages, towns or edges of settlement is a mix of affordable and market housing that retains and, where practical, enhance important landscape and wildlife features in the development.

Local planning authorities should promote sustainable residential environments, avoid large housing areas of monotonous character and make appropriate provision for affordable housing.

Technical Advice Note 1: Joint Housing Land Availability (June 2006)

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 1 provides advice on the production of Joint Housing Land Availability Studies (JHLAS). These studies are produced annually for each local authority area in order to monitor the supply of housing land and to provide information about the adequacy of this supply

Technical Advice Note 2: Planning and Affordable Housing (June 2006)

TAN 2 gives advice on the assessment of need for affordable housing and affordable housing policies in development plans. It also provides guidance on securing affordable housing via the planning system and controlling occupancy and the content and discharge of planning obligations and conditions.

3. LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

A Better Life – Our Community Plan 2001 – 20014

A Better Life - Our Community Plan sets out a framework for creating a brighter future for everyone who lives and works in Rhondda Cynon Taff. The plan was developed through the Better Life Consortium, during 2003/2004. The Community Plan identifies 5 key themes under which are a series of local level aims. The key themes are:

- Safer Communities
- Our Living Space
- Our Health and Well Being
- Boosting Our Local Economy
- Learning for Growth

The key themes identified in the Community Plan has been developed into strategies for improving the quality of life in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Housing is considered as part of the Health Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy. The consultation draft Strategy (2008) sets the following themes:

- Healthy Environments;
- Community Collaboration and Prevention;
- Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing;
- Children and Young People;
- Work and Health;
- Maintaining Independence;
- Transport and Access

Of particular relevance to this topic area are two of the three priorities set out under the Healthy Environments theme. The priorities seek to promote:

- Sustainable home ownership, improved access to affordable housing, regardless of tenure, and the promotion of mixed, balanced communities, and
- Improve the visual amenity of the local neighbourhoods to build civic pride and develop sustainable environmental solutions.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Housing Needs Assessment (2006)

The housing Market Assessment for Rhoda Cynon Taf provides a detailed analysis of housing requirements in across the County Borough. The study looked at the current housing supply in Rhondda Cynon Taf, the local housing market, existing and newly arising need and the supply of affordable housing.

The assessment concluded that there was a short fall of 870 affordable dwellings per annum if all housing needs are to be met over a five-year period.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Housing Strategy (2007)

The Local Housing Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf 'Housing Matters' was issued by the Council in late 2007. The Strategy provides a context for the delivery of housing in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Development of the Strategy was based on the findings of the Local Housing Needs Assessment (September 2006).

The Strategy contains the following strategic aims:-

- To understand and influence the Local Housing market to enable an adequate supply of housing that meets the needs of all groups within our community;
- To encourage a Private Housing Sector that provides a quality living environment which promotes health and well being;

- To enable good quality social rented accommodation that meets the needs of our communities, promotes health and well being with customer focused housing management services creating balanced, socially inclusive, sustainable communities;
- To encourage housing-led regeneration which promotes sustainable development and maximises environmental benefits;
- To ensure that all groups have fair and equal access to housing and information, and
- To promote the homelessness prevention agenda whilst also ensuring appropriate support and sustainable housing options are available for vulnerable homeless people.

Housing Matters provide clear evidence of the need for new affordable housing in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The Strategy states "For the whole of Rhondda Cynon Taf, the Local Housing Market Assessment indicates that there is a shortfall of affordable housing of around 870 units per annum." The document continues, "Overall, for the county borough as a whole, almost a third of the net requirements for affordable housing is for intermediate housing. The greatest need is for one and two bedroom accommodation."

The Strategy recognises that that whilst the LDP will enable supply of new housing, this approach alone will not meet the shortfall in affordable housing. For this reason the Housing Matters advocates an empty property strategy which promotes the provision of affordable homes by maximising the opportunities for the reuse and rehabilitation of existing older housing stock in the County Borough.

Housing Matters also provides a context for understanding the requirements of Gypsies and Travellers. The Strategy and supporting research provide an assessment and analysis of the housing needs of Gypsy and Travellers in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Population and Household Projections (2006)

The population and household projections provides the detailed statistical basis from which the dwelling requirement figure for the LDP is derived. The projections use the 'Chelmer' model and forecast population, household and dwelling requirement rates for Rhondda Cynon Taf based on the following options:

- Recent population trends;
- Recent house building trends, and
- Welsh Assembly Government population and household projections

South East Wales Regional Housing Apportionment

In accordance with the guidance contained in paragraph 9.2.2 of the MIPPS, the Council as part of the South East Wales Planning Group (SEWPG) has been involved in the process of apportioning housing land requirement for the South East Wales region. The process requires SEWPG to work with a range of stakeholders to agree population and household projections and the apportionment of these projections for

each local authority area in the region. The process was completed in summer 2007. The results of the process informed the development of the of the housing land requirements of the emerging Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan: Housing Land Requirement Topic Paper (January 2007)

The LDP: Housing Land Requirement Topic Paper (January 2007) provides the statistical analysis and background to the dwelling requirement figures contained in the LDP: Preferred Strategy. In doing so the topic paper examines Population and house building trends in Rhondda Cynon Taf and outlines population and dwelling requirements for the plan period.

4. KEY ISSUES IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

The key issues to be addressed by the Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP have been identified by making an assessment of the following:

- The results of pre deposit consultation with key stakeholder;
- The results of the Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Exercise; and
- A review of baseline social, economic and environmental information.

The issues identified through this process will inform directly the development of the spatial strategy for the LDP.

Pre Deposit Consultation

Housing issues identified are as follows:

- Should better utilise valley floors which are allocated for employment but would provide good location for housing;
- Need better mix of housing including family housing and affordable housing;
- Should be more adventurous with construction techniques;
- Surplus housing stock due to out migration;
- Should the upper valleys be residential and/or mixed use?
- Quality land for affordable housing;
- Sewerage capacity for new development, and;
- Brownfield vs. greenfield development – contamination, costs, ecology Financial resources.

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment

The Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment identified the following housing issues:

- 17 of Rhondda Cynon Taf's 53 electoral wards are amongst the 100 most deprived in Wales;
- 53% of the housing is terraced;
- Depopulation affecting the Valleys, and

- Decreasing population overall but increases in south

Baseline information

Housing issues identified are as follows:

- The population of Rhondda Cynon Taf has remained largely unchanged between 1991 and 2001. However this masks significant local variation, between 1991 – 2001 the population of the central and northern valleys declined by 5% whilst the population the population of the south increases by 10% (Office for National Statistics)
- The population projections for South East Wales forecast an overall increase in population of 7.8 % between 2003 and 2023 (Welsh Assembly Government – Household Projections 2006)
- The number of households in South East Wales will increase by 18.6% from 583,700 in 2003 to 692,600 in 2023 (Welsh Assembly Government- Household Projections 2006)
- The number of households in Rhondda Cynon Taf is forecast to increase by 16.2 % or 17,627 between 2003 and 2023 (Welsh Assembly Government – Household Projections 2006)
- The highest levels of 'housing' deprivation in Rhondda Cynon Taf are located in the central and northern valleys (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2005);

- Of the 94,553 dwellings in Rhondda Cynon Taff 53% are terraced, 26% semi detached, 12% detached and 9% flatted (Office for National Statistics 2001);
- 75% of new housing constructed 2000 – 04 took place in the south of the County Borough (Joint Housing Land Availability Studied 2000 – 2004);
- Average house prices in the south of the County Borough are between 10 and 50 % higher than those in the central and northern valley areas (Draft Regional Housing Market Analysis 2006)
- There is an annual shortfall of 870 affordable homes in Rhondda Cynon Taf. (Housing Matter - A Local Housing Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf 2007 –12); and
- There are currently just under 4,000 empty properties in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Housing Matter - A Local Housing Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf 2007 –12);

5. PREFERRED STRATEGY

The preferred strategy provides the following policy framework for the development of new housing in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Objectives of the Local Development Plan

Paragraph 4.2 of the Preferred Strategy (January 2007) lists 16 objectives for the LDP. The following objectives are the most relevant to the topic area;

- Provide for the overall housing requirements through a mix of dwelling types catering for all needs to promote integrated and thriving communities;
- Promote integrated communities, with opportunities for living, working and socialising for all;
- Provide an environment that encourages a healthy and safe life style and promote well being;
- Promote efficient use of land and soils;
- Provide a high quality built environment that promotes community pride.

Development Strategy

Paragraphs 6.1 – 6.11 of the Preferred Strategy sets out a development strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf. The strategy area is divided into two distinct parts:-

- Northern Strategy Area, and
- Southern Strategy Area

The Northern Strategy area comprises the key settlements of Tonypany, Porth, Treorchy, Treherbert, Ferndale, Tylorstown, Mountain Ash and Hirwaun and the principal town of Aberdare. In this area the emphasis is on building sustainable communities and halting the process of depopulation and decline.

The Southern Strategy area includes the principal towns of Pontypridd and Llantrisant and key settlements of Tonyrefail and Llanharan. In the south of the County Borough the emphasis is on sustainable growth that benefits Rhondda Cynon Taf as a whole.

The strategy recognises the important role that principal towns and key settlements play in providing services of both local and county importance. Where possible, development will be focused on the principal towns and key settlements of the County Borough in order to support and reinforce the important role of these centres play as places for social and economic activity.

Residential Development

Paragraphs 6.12 – 6.16 of the Preferred Strategy provides a strategy for the development of new housing. The paragraphs are as follows;

“Population projections indicate that the number of households in South East Wales will increase by 108,900 between 2003 to 2023. During the number of new households in Rhondda Cynon Taf will increase by 17,627. In order to accommodate this growth the LDP will allocate land for 14,850 new dwellings to be constructed throughout Rhondda Cynon Taff to meet the needs of the increased population of the County Borough. This is a high rate of growth and will result in an increase in the house-building rate from 660 to 990 per annum. The construction and distribution of this number of dwelling will assist in halting the process of

depopulation and ensure a stable growth in the future population.

The Joint Housing Land Availability Study (2005) indicates that at that time Rhondda Cynon Taf had a 5 year residential land bank of 3,369. The 2006 residential land availability survey indicates that this figure has increased to 3,470. In order to provide sufficient land to accommodate the projected growth the LDP will therefore allocate land for the construction of 11,380 new dwellings.

In delivering the housing requirement identified, the strategy will focus opportunities for additional housing in sustainable locations. The scale of proposals will be based on an appraisal of locations to gauge their suitability to accommodate growth having regard to existing social and physical capacity, the presence of environmental constraints, and the extent to which development can provide, or compensate for necessary additional social or physical infrastructure. The strategy will seek to recognise the important role that the use of previously developed land can play in regenerating the communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf. However, it should be noted that there are a number of factors that guide against the use of previously developed land in all instances, these include locational considerations, biodiversity, and flooding. The availability of ‘developable’ brownfield land in Rhondda Cynon Taf is a finite resource and it is clear that it cannot accommodate the growth requirements of the County Borough. The development of brownfield and greenfield land will therefore be necessary to the strategy of the plan.

Of major importance to the strategy is the delivery of affordable housing. The draft Housing Needs Study (2006) shows that a significant proportion of the County Borough population is unable to meet their housing needs through the private housing market. The draft study indicates that 870 per annum affordable units need to be provided in Rhondda Cynon Taf over the next 5 years to meet this requirement. Whilst the planning system will not make up this shortfall in total, the LDP can play an important role in assisting to meet this need. The Council will therefore expand opportunities to maximise the provision of affordable housing in respect of both social rented and affordable housing for sale by establishing appropriate arrangements for sites and by promoting the reuse / rehabilitation of existing older housing stock in the County Borough.

An important element of the strategy will be the use of residential settlement boundaries to establish a settlement hierarchy. Residential settlement boundaries provide certainty for members of the public and developers about the development limits of urban areas, they maintain the integrity and character of towns and villages and protect the countryside from incremental urbanisation. The LDP will however, take a different approach to the application of residential settlement boundaries in the northern and southern strategy areas. In the Northern strategy area, except the principle town of Aberdare, development will be permitted within and, where appropriate, adjoining defined residential settlement boundaries. In the southern strategy area development will only be permitted within defined boundaries. This approach recognises the important role that development of small sites played in ensuring the provision of

new housing in the northern strategy area. Development will not be permitted in either the northern or southern strategy areas in small settlements that do not have defined residential settlement boundaries.”

Strategic Policy

The strategic housing policies are as follows;

SP 5 – Housing Requirements

Provision will be made for the development of 14,850 new dwellings in Rhondda Cynon Taf during the period 2006 – 2021. Where appropriate the construction of these new dwellings will take place on previously developed land.

SP 6 – Affordable Housing

Residential development proposals will be expected to contribute to the local housing needs. Where a community housing need has been established, the local planning authority will seek the provision of an appropriate proportion of affordable housing on large sites.

Representations to the Preferred Strategy

Representations made in respect of the housing element of the Preferred Strategy fall broadly into 3 areas – representations in respect of paragraph 6.12-16, Strategic Policy 5 and Strategic Policy 6.

Outlined below is a summary of the main representation submitted in respect of these 3 areas. Responses to each of the main representations are included

1. *Representations to Paragraph 6.12 –6.16 – Residential Development*

General: Objection is made to the emphasis is placed on building new houses in the Preferred Strategy

Proposed Response: The LDP: Housing Land Requirement Topic Paper (January 2007) provides the statistical analysis and background to the dwelling requirement figures contained in the LDP: Preferred Strategy. The emphasis placed on the provision on new housing in the Preferred Strategy is in recognition of the important role the development of housing will play in ensuring the regeneration of communities in Rhondda Cynon.

General: The approach of the Council to promote growth and to take measures to ensure an appropriate supply of housing for Rhondda Cynon Taf is welcomed.

Proposed Response: Support Welcomed.

General: Serious concern is expressed about the number of houses proposed during the plan period. The figure should correlate with the outcome of the Spatial Plan SEA process and not pre-empt it.

Proposed Response: The Council as part of the South East Wales Planning Group will continue to work with the Welsh

Assembly Government to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of new housing in South East Wales

General: Support is given to the approach to settlement boundaries.

Proposed Response: Support Welcomed

General: The flexible use of settlement boundaries in the northern strategy area is unqualified and would be inconsistent with national policy if there were not a criterion-based policy to prevent unfettered development in the countryside .

Proposed Response: The Draft LDP will provide a clear policy framework for the development of new housing in Rhondda Cynon Taf. As part of the framework the Council will ensure that criterion bases policies exist for the operation and management of settlement boundaries in the Northern and Southern Strategy areas.

General: Clarification is required of the type of affordable housing required to make up the shortfall in provision.

Proposed Response: The Draft LDP will provide a clear policy framework for the development of affordable housing in Rhondda Cynon Taf. As part of this framework the LDP will outline clearly the type of affordable housing required to make up the shortfall in provision this based on the evidence provided by the Local Housing Needs Assessment (September 2006).

General: Provision of affordable housing must be related to need and evidenced accordingly.

Proposed Response: The Draft LDP will provide a clear target for the development of affordable housing based on the evidence provided by the Local Housing Needs Assessment (September 2006).

General: The LDP must include an affordable housing target (or range).

Proposed Response: The Draft LDP will provide a clear target for the development of affordable housing in Rhondda Cynon Taf .

General: Emphasis should be placed on the development of Brownfield land.

Proposed Response: Comments noted. The draft LDP will, where appropriate, ensure the development of brownfield sites in preference to Greenfield sited.

General: The Preferred Strategy must address the needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

Proposed Response: Comments noted. The draft LDP will provide a policy context that addresses the needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

2. *Representation to Strategic Policy SP5 - Housing*

Policy SP5: Support for the housing requirement figure of 14,850.

Proposed Response: Support Welcomed.

Policy SP5: Objection because housing requirement figure of 14,850 should be higher.

Proposed Response: The LDP: Housing Land Requirement Topic Paper (January 2007) provides the statistical analysis and background to the dwelling requirement figures contained in the LDP: Preferred Strategy. The figure of 14,850 is consistent Welsh Assembly Government Regional Projection and will result a increase of 50% in house building activity in Rhondda Cynon. A higher figure is unsustainable and not realistic.

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Policy SP5: Is not necessarily consistent with the Assembly's policy on the reuse of brownfield land, which states that wherever possible previously developed land should be used in preference to Greenfield.

Proposed Response: Comments noted. The draft LDP will, where appropriate, ensure the development of brownfield sites in preference to Greenfield sited.

Policy SP5: The Preferred Strategy needs to clarify the relationship between the Housing requirement figure and the emerging apportionment work being undertaken by South East Wales Planning Group.

Proposed Response: The relationship between the Housing requirement figure and the emerging apportionment work being undertaken by South East Wales Planning Group is clearly outlined in the the LDP: Housing Land Requirement

Topic Paper (January 2007). The Topic Paper provides the statistical analysis and background to the dwelling requirement figures contained in the LDP: Preferred Strategy.

Policy SP5: The identified residential requirement is 14,850 over the plan period, however in the Preferred Strategy this is reduced to 11,380 dwellings (2006 to 2021).

Proposed Response: The housing requirement figure contained in the Preferred Strategy outlines the number of new units that need to be constructed over the plan period. The reasoned justification contained in the Preferred Strategy correctly takes into account the number of dwellings contained in the Councils 5 year housing landbank.

Policy SP5: it is suggested that a flexibility allowance of 20% should be included to reflect the fact that a number of the large strategic sites suffer from significant environmental and physical constraints and may not be brought forward.

Proposed Response: The policy framework provided by the Draft LDP will take fully into account the phasing of new housing development in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

3. *Representations to Strategic Policy SP6 – Affordable Housing*

Policy SP6: Support is expressed for this policy.

Proposed Response: Support is welcomed.

Policy SP6: The policy should allow for flexibility and not rigid percentages.

Proposed Response: In accordance with the requirements of MIPPS the LDP will provide a clear policy framework for the delivery of affordable housing.

Policy SP6: Amendment to the policy is sought to allow for a 25% affordable housing target to be applied to sites of over 1 hectare or where there is a minimum of 25 units being built.

Proposed Response: The Draft LDP will provide a clear target for the development of affordable housing based on the evidence provided by the Local Housing Needs Assessment (September 2006)

Policy SP6: does not establish an overall affordable housing target (or range) for the LDP, which is a requirement of the Housing Ministerial Interim Planning Statement 01/2006 (WAG, June 2006).

Proposed Response: The Draft LDP will provide a clear target for the development of affordable housing in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

6. DRAFT LDP POLICY

Revised Strategic Policies 5 and 6

SP 5 – Housing Requirements

Provision will be made for the development of 14,850 new dwellings in Rhondda Cynon Taf during the period 2006 –

2021. Where appropriate the construction of these new dwellings will take place on previously developed land in preference to Greenfield land.

SP 6 – Affordable Housing

Residential development proposals will be expected to contribute to the local housing needs. Where a community housing need has been established, the local planning authority will seek:

- i) The provision of an appropriate proportion of affordable housing on sites over 30 units;
- ii) Contributions for the reuse / rehabilitation of existing older housing stock on sites under 30 units, and
- iii) The development of sites in rural area.

Justification

Population projections indicate that the number of households in South East Wales will increase by 108,900 between 2003 and 2023. During the plan period the number of new households in Rhondda Cynon Taf will increase by 17,627. In order to accommodate this growth the LDP will allocate land for 14,850 new dwellings to be constructed throughout Rhondda Cynon Taff to meet the needs of the increased population of the County Borough. This is a high rate of growth and will result in an increase in the house building rate from 660 to 990 per annum. The construction and distribution of this number of dwelling will assist in halting the process of depopulation and ensure a stable growth in the future

population. Statistical analysis and background to the dwelling requirement figure is contained in the Population and Household Projections Study (2006) and in the Housing Land Requirement Topic Paper (2007).

In accordance with the guidance contained in paragraph 9.2.2 of the Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement, the Council in partnership with the other 10 authorities in South East Wales has been involved in the process of apportioning housing land requirement for the region. The housing requirement figure in policy SP5 accords with the agreed housing apportionment for South East Wales.

The Joint Housing Land Availability Study (2006) indicates that at that time Rhondda Cynon Taf had a 5 year residential land bank of 2803 on sites over 10 units. In order to provide sufficient land to accommodate the projected growth the LDP will therefore provide a policy framework for the construction of 12,047 new dwellings.

In delivering the housing requirement identified, the strategy will focus opportunities for additional housing in sustainable locations. The scale of proposals will be based on an appraisal of locations to gauge their suitability to accommodate growth having regard to existing social and physical capacity, the presence of environmental constraints, and the extent to which development can provide, or compensate for necessary additional social or physical infrastructure. The strategy will seek to recognise the important role that the use of previously developed land can play in regenerating the communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Where possible the development of brownfield land will take preference over the use of greenfield land. There are

however, a number of factors that guide against the use of previously developed land in all instances, these include locational considerations, biodiversity, and flooding. The availability of 'developable' brownfield land in Rhondda Cynon Taf is a finite resource and it is clear that it cannot accommodate the growth requirements of the County Borough. The development of brownfield and greenfield land will therefore be necessary to the strategy of the plan.

Of major importance to the strategy is the delivery of affordable housing. The Local Housing Strategy (2007) shows that a significant proportion of the County Borough population is unable to meet their housing needs through the private housing market. The Strategy indicates that 870 affordable units per annum are need to be provided in Rhondda Cynon Taf over the next 5 years to meet this requirement. Over the County Borough as a whole the greatest need is for the provision of one and two bedroom intermediate properties. Whilst the planning system will not make up this shortfall in total, the LDP will play an important role in assisting to meet this need. The Council will therefore expand opportunities to maximise the provision of affordable housing in respect of both social rented and low cost housing for sale by establishing appropriate arrangements for sites, by promoting the reuse / rehabilitation of existing older housing stock and by the application of a 'rural exceptions' policy which will allow the development of sites solely for affordable housing in the countryside.

An important element of the strategy will be the use of residential settlement boundaries to establish a settlement hierarchy. Residential settlement boundaries provide

certainty for members of the public and developers about the development limits of urban areas, they maintain the integrity and character of towns and villages and protect the countryside from incremental urbanisation. The LDP will however, take a different approach to the operation of residential settlement boundaries in the northern and southern strategy areas. In the Northern strategy area, except the principle town of Aberdare, development will be permitted within and, subject to site-specific considerations, adjacent to the defined settlement boundaries. In the southern strategy area development will only be permitted within defined boundaries. This approach recognises the important role that development of small sites played in ensuring the provision of new housing in the northern strategy area. Development will not be permitted in either the northern or southern strategy areas in small settlements that do not have defined residential settlement boundaries.

Area Wide Policies

The planning systems objectives for housing is to provide:

- Homes that are in good condition, in safe neighbourhoods and sustainable communities; and
- Greater choice for the people over the type of housing and the location they live in, recognising the needs of all, including those in need of affordable or special needs housing in both urban and rural areas.

In order to achieve this it will be necessary to ensure that:

- Previously developed land is used in preference to Greenfield land;
- New housing and residential environments are well designed, environmentally sound (especially energy efficient) and make a significant contribution to promoting community regeneration and improving the quality of life; and that
- The overall result of new housing development in villages, towns or edges of settlement is a mix of affordable and market housing that retains and, where practical, enhance important landscape and wildlife features in the development.

The housing market in Rhondda Cynon Taf varies significantly between the northern and southern part of the County Borough. The Key Issues Chapter of the LDP outlines the variations in terms of housing type, quality, affordability, distribution and supply that need to be addressed if a strong and diverse housing market is to be established.

The policy framework contained in the LDP will ensure the provision of new sustainable housing that meets the needs of existing and future residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Policy HOUS 1 - Housing Allocations

Land will be made available for an additional 14,850 dwellings to be constructed between 2006 –21. The provision will be met by:

- i) The development of sites in Rhondda Cynon Taf which have planning permission for housing;**
- ii) The phased development of sites allocated for residential development by policies HOUS S1 and HOUS N1;**
- iii) The development of unallocated land within the principal towns, key settlements and smaller settlements identified in policy HOUS 4;**
- iv) The development of small sites within the residential settlements defined by policies HOUS S 2 and HOUS N2;**
- v) The provision of affordable housing secured in accordance with policies HOUS 6, HOUS S 3 and HOUS N 4;**
- vi) The replacement of unfit and substandard housing; and**
- vii) The maintenance, rehabilitation and improvement of existing stock and the conversion of suitable structures to provide households.**

Justification

The Joint Housing Land Availability Study (2006) indicates that the housing land bank for Rhondda Cynon Taf contains (TBA) sites of over 10 units with planning permission for the construction of 2,803 new residential units. The sites are detailed in the following table:

TABLE OF SITES TO BE ADDEA

Land is allocated for the construction of (TBA) new houses on a range of sites which will accommodate 10 or more units throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf. The sites allocated for development are contained in the following table:

TABLE OF SITES TO BE ADDEA

The sites will be developed at a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare. In order to maintain a 5 year land bank release of the sites will be phased over the plan period. Site specific details are contained in policies HOUS S1 and HOUS N1 of the plan.

Development on unallocated or 'windfall' sites within urban areas has traditionally contributed a considerable number of new units to the supply of housing in Rhondda Cynon Taf. During the period 1998 – 2006 unallocated sites contributed (TBA) new dwellings to the overall housing supply. Trends in the housing market indicate that the development of unallocated sites will continue to make a significant contributions to the supply of future housing land in the County Borough. For this reason it is anticipated that unallocated sites will contribute (TBA) new units to the housing supply over the plan period.

The construction of housing on small sites, that is sites of less than 10 units, has contributed a significant number of new units to the housing land bank. Between 1996 and 2006 1172 units were constructed on small site. The Joint Housing Land Availability Study (2006) identifies a projected contribution of 709 units to the land bank. Extrapolated over

the plan period small sites will make a contribution of 2127 units to the housing supply.

Figure ? outlines the calculation for the housing requirement figure for the plan period.

Contribution	Units
Sites which benefit from planning permission at 30th June 2006	2,803
Allocated Sites identified in Policy HOUS 1	(TBA)
Contribution of Unallocated Sites 2006 - 2021	(TBA)
Contribution of Small Sites 2006 – 2021	2,127
Total Land Availability	14,850

Policy HOUS 2 – Housing Density

Proposal for residential development will be permitted where the net residential density level is a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare. Variation in density levels may be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposed development:

- (i) Does not adversely effect the character of the site or surrounding area;**
- (ii) Makes efficient use of the site, and**
- (iii) Has regard to the amenity of existing and future residents.**

Justification

Density levels in Rhondda Cynon Taf vary significantly with the age and type of housing. Traditional Victorian terraced housing, which makes up over 50 % of housing stock in the County Borough, has been constructed at density levels as high as 75 dwellings per hectare. In contrast, much of the modern housing that has been built in the County Borough over the last 20 years has been built at density levels as low as 20 dwellings per hectare. The result of these density levels is the creation of tightly developed housing with little amenity space and on street parking or low density mono use developments with little sense of place.

In order to ensure that land is used efficiently and results in the creation of mixed use sustainable communities a minimum density level of 30 dwelling per hectare will be required. Development that proposes lower density levels will be permitted but only where it can be demonstrated that the proposed density level makes the most effective use of the land and does not adversely effect the character of the site or surrounding area.

Policy HOUS 3 – Phasing of Development

The release of land for housing will be phased to take account of the overall target for housing delivery. The phase and timing of release will be made in accordance with policies HOUS 1, HOUS S1 and HOUS N1.

Justification

Paragraph 9.2.3 of the MIPPs requires local authorities to “ensure that sufficient land is genuinely available or will become available to provide a 5 year supply of land”. Past monitoring of land undertaken through the Joint Housing Land Availability process has clearly demonstrated that without strict management the housing land bank the Council will find it difficult to maintain a continual supply of developable land throughout the plan period. The aim of this policy is to ensure effective management of the housing land bank by ensuring a continual 5 year supply of developable land and ensuring an appropriate distribution of sites.

Policies SP 4 and HOUS 1 allocate land for the development of 14,850 new housing over the plan period. Site specific and phasing requirements for each allocated site are contained in policies HOUS S1 and HOUS N1. The release of land will take place over 3 phases. Between 2006 – 2011 3,960 units will be constructed, 2011 – 2016 5445 units and 2016 – 2021 5445 units. The phasing recognises that higher development rates are likely to be achieved through the first two phases of release.

Settlement Strategy

Policy HOUS 4 – Additional Housing Development

In order to ensure a sustainable pattern of residential development and maintain urban form residential settlement boundaries have been defined around:

- i) **The principal towns of Pontypridd, Aberdare, Llantrisant (including Talbot Green);**
- ii) **The key settlements of Tonyrefail, Tonypandy, Porth, Treorchy, Treherbert, Ferndale, Tylorstown, Mountain Ash, Hirwaun and Llanharan, and**
- iii) **Smaller settlements of Rhigos, Penywaun, Cwmbach, Aberaman South, Penrhiwceiber, Abercynon, Ynysybwl, Treherbert, Pentre, Maerdy, Ystrad, Tylorstown, Ynyshir, Cymmer, Glyncoch, Church Village, Efail Isaf, Beddau, Llanharry, Gilfach Goch, Glyncoch Cilfynydd, Hawthorn, Ton-Teg, Llantwit Fardre, Rhydyfelin and Taffs Well.**

Development within or adjacent to the defined residential settlement boundaries will be permitted in accordance with the requirements of policies HOUS S 2 and HOUS N 2.

Justification

The aim of this policy is to assist in defining a clear settlement strategy that promotes sustainable patterns of development. Residential settlement boundaries have been identified around the principal towns of Pontypridd, Aberdare, Llantrisant; key settlements of Tonyrefail, Tonypandy, Porth, Treorchy, Treherbert, Ferndale, Mountain Ash, Hirwaun and Llanharan and small settlements of Rhigos, Penywaun, Cwmbach, Aberaman South, Penrhiwceiber, Abercynon,

Ynysybwl, Treherbert, Pentre, Maerdy, Ystrad, Tylorstown, Ynyshir, Cymmer, Glyncoch, Church Village, Efail Isaf, Beddau, Llanharry, Gilfach Goch, Glyncoch Cilfynydd, Hawthorn, Ton-Teg, Llantwit Fardre, Rhydyfelin and Taffs Well.

The policy will promote housing development in established settlements that have a range of commercial and community services. Concentrating new housing development within residential settlement boundaries will prevent urban sprawl and incremental loss of the countryside, reinforce the role of urban centres, protect local services and promote the reuse of previously developed land and buildings.

Proposals for the development of land within residential settlement boundaries will be assessed in accordance with policies HOUS S2 and HOUS N2.

Policy HOUS 5 – Dwellings in the Countryside

The development of new dwellings in the countryside and in those settlements not identified in policy HOUS 4 will not be permitted unless it can be justified in the interests of agriculture and forestry.

Justification

Previous planning history indicates that a significant number of applications for new development in the countryside of Rhondda Cynon Taf were received during the previous plan period. The development of new housing outside the defined residential settlement boundaries of will promote

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unsustainable patterns of development and result in the urbanisation and incremental loss of the countryside. In order to safeguard the character and appearance of the countryside, to reduce the need to travel by car and to economise on the provision of services, new houses in the countryside away from the settlements identified in policy HOUS 4 or sites allocated in Policy HOUS 1 will be strictly controlled.

Policy HOUS 6 – Replacement or extension of Dwellings in the Countryside

Proposals for the replacement or extension of dwellings outside the residential settlement boundaries defined in policy HOUS 4 will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- i) The residential use of the derelict building has not been abandoned;**
- ii) The dwelling is not capable of Restoration;**
- iii) The scale, form and design of the proposed extension or replacement dwelling is commensurate with the countryside location;**
- iv) Any extension remains subordinate in scale and design to the original dwelling;**
- v) The proposed development does not result in the extension of the residential curtilage of the dwelling;**
- vi) Adequate utility or infrastructure services already exist or can be economically provided;**
- vii) The proposed development has safe access to the highway network, and will not cause traffic**

- congestion or exacerbate existing traffic congestion;**
- viii) Car parking and amenity space can be provided in accordance with the Council’s approved standards.**

Justification

The aim of the policy is to promote the reuse, restoration and replacement of existing dwellings in the countryside of Rhondda Cynon Taf. The policy provides a opportunity for those who wish to live outside the existing settlements to do so in a manner that is sustainable and respects the countryside.

Affordable Housing

The strategic context for the delivery of affordable housing in Rhondda Cynon Taf is provided by policy SP6. The reasoned justification for the policy identifies the need for 870 unit per annum to be provided over a 5 year period. Policy SP6 allows for the delivery of affordable housing through three policy mechanisms:

- The provision of an appropriate proportion of affordable housing on sites over 30 units;
- Contributions for the reuse / rehabilitation of existing older housing stock on sites under 30 units, and
- The development of sites in rural area.

The policy recognises that the planning system will not deliver all of the required affordable housing. The development of 4,350 affordable units over the 5 years of the plan period would effectively mean that almost 90% of new housing constructed in Rhondda Cynon Taf during this period would be affordable. Such an approach would impact significantly upon the operations of the housing market and the process of regeneration. The planning system will therefore seek to deliver 3000 units over a 15 year plan period. The Council in partnership with Registered Social Landlords will seek to provide the remainder of the deficit through operation of social housing grant.

Policy HOUS 7 – Exception Sites for Affordable Housing in the Countryside

Development proposals for the provision of affordable housing outside and adjoining the identified residential settlement boundaries will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- i) The proposed development cannot be accommodated within the defined residential settlement boundaries defined in policy HOUS 4;**
- ii) The proposed development is solely for the provision of affordable housing to meet an identified local need;**
- iii) Appropriate arrangements are made to ensure that the benefits of such housing are secured in perpetuity for initial and future residents;**

- iv) The site is commensurate in scale, design and location with the identified need;**
- v) The scale, form and design of the proposed development does not adversely effect the character of the site or surrounding area;**
- vi) The proposed development is not within a green wedge or a site designated for international, national or local nature conservation;**
- vii) The proposed development has safe access to the highway network, and will not cause traffic congestion or exacerbate existing traffic congestion;**
- viii) The layout and design of the proposed development accords with the requirements of policy (TBA)**
- ix) Open space is provided in accordance the requirements of policy REC (TBA), and**
- x) Car parking and can be provided in accordance with the Council’s approved standards.**

Justification

The aim of this policy is to allow the Registered Social Landlords operating in Rhondda Cynon Taf to provide affordable housing in areas where there is an identified local need. The Council’s preference will always be for development to take place within defined residential settlement boundaries. However, it is recognised that because of the availability of land and high land values it may not always for development to take place in these locations.

In permitting the development of affordable housing the Council will require Registered Social Landlords to demonstrate why development cannot take place within the defined residential settlement boundaries and that appropriate arrangements are in place to secure the units are secured in perpetuity.

Policy HOUS 8 – Gypsies and Travellers

Proposals for the use of land for the stationing of caravans occupied by gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposed development:

- i) Will meet an identified local need for gypsies, travellers or travelling showpeople with established links with the locality;**
- ii) Is accessible to local services by a range of modes of transport, on foot or by cycle;**
- iii) Has safe access to the highway network, and will not cause traffic congestion or exacerbate existing traffic congestion;**
- iv) Includes sufficient space for parking and manoeuvring of all vehicles associated with of all vehicles associated with the occupiers within the site curtilage;**
- v) Is provided with adequate on-site services for water supply; power; drainage; sewage disposal; and waste disposal facilities;**
- vi) Is well screened or capable of being well screened and will have no adverse effect on the**

- character or appearance of the surrounding area;**
- vii) Is not within a green wedge or a site designated for international, national or local nature conservation, and**
- viii) Accords with the requirements of policies HOUS 4, HOUS S2 and HOUS N2**

Justification

The aim of this policy is to allow the development of land for sitting of caravans for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people in appropriate locations. In order to safeguard the character and appearance of the area development proposals will need to demonstrate that do not adversely effect the amenity of existing residential areas, the safe operations of the highway network, the provision of car parking and visual amenities.

Northern Strategy Area Policy

The Northern Strategy area is characterised by steep valleys with linear settlements made up of high density Victorian housing constructed along the valley sides and bottoms. Much of this housing was constructed by to provide low cost housing for mine workers. The legacy of this approach to house building is a high level of sub standard and derelict housing.

Whilst there has been h house building in the Southern Strategy area has reached significant levels, the same cannot be said for the Northern Strategy Area. Between 2001 and 2006, only 287 dwellings were constructed in the Rhondda

Valleys and 605 dwellings in the Cynon Valley. Much of this development, 452 units, is as a result construction dwellings on small sites. The exception to this is Aberdare which has seen considerable growth over recent years.

In order to address these issues the LDP policy will seek to ensure growth which promote sustainable communities, rehabilitate derelict buildings, provide affordable housing and maximise the opportunities for small scale development.

Policy HOUS N1 - Housing Allocations

In accordance with the requirements of policy HOUS 1 the following land in the Northern Strategy area is allocated for residential purposes:

DETAILS OF EACH SITE TO BE ADDED

Policy HOUS N2 – Housing Development Within or Adjoining Settlement Boundaries

Development will be permitted within or adjoining the defined settlement boundaries of Rhigos, Penywaun, Cwmbach, Aberaman South, Penrhiwceiber, Abercynon, Ynysybwl, Treherbert, Pentre, Maerdy, Ystrad, Tylorstown, Ynyshir, Cymmer, Glyncoch, where it can be demonstrated that:

- i) The size of the site does not exceed 0.3 hectare;**

- ii) The scale, form and design of the proposed development does not adversely effect the amenity or character of the site or surrounding area;**
- iii) The proposed development does adversely effect the provision of open space;**
- iv) Where appropriate provision for open space can be provided in accordance the requirements of policy REC (TBA):**
 - i) The layout and design of the proposed development accords with the requirements of policy (TBA);**
 - ii) The proposed development is accessible to local services by a range of modes of transport, on foot or by cycle;**
 - v) The proposed development has safe access to the highway network, and will not cause congestion or exacerbate existing traffic congestion;**
 - vi) The proposed development does adversely effect the provision of car parking in the surrounding area;**
 - vii) Provision for car parking can be provided in accordance with the Council’s approved standards.**
 - viii) The proposed development is not within a green wedge or a site designated for international, national or local nature conservation;**
 - ix) The site is not contaminated or subject to land instability;**

Justification

The aim of policy HOUS N2 is to provide a framework for the development of unallocated land within the settlements of Rhigos, Penywaun, Cwmbach, Aberaman South, Penrhiwceiber, Abercynon, Ynysybwl, Treherbert, Pentre, Maerdy, Ystrad, Tylorstown, Ynyshir, Cymmer, Glyncoch, for residential purposes. Past completion rates have demonstrated that the development of unallocated or 'windfall' sites within existing settlements can make an important contribution towards housing land bank.

In the Northern Strategy area the development of small sites has made an important contribution to housing land bank. For this reason the policy will, where appropriate, allow for the construction of housing on sites of 0.3 hectares or less which are adjacent to the defined residential settlement boundaries.

Policy HOUS N3 - Housing Development Within Aberdare

Development proposals within the defined residential settlement boundary of Aberdare will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- i) The scale, form and design of the proposed development does not adversely effect the amenity or character of the site or surrounding area;**
- ii) The proposed development does adversely effect the provision of open space;**

- iii) Where appropriate provision for open space can be provided in accordance the requirements of policy REC(TBA);;**
- iv) The layout and design of the proposed development accords with the requirements of policy (TBA);**
- v) The proposed development is accessible to local services by a range of modes of transport, on foot or by cycle;**
- vi) The proposed development has safe access to the highway network, and will not cause congestion or exacerbate existing traffic congestion;**
- vii) The proposed development does adversely effect the provision of car parking in the surrounding area;**
- viii) Provision for car parking can be provided in accordance with the Council's approved standards.**
- ix) The proposed development is not within a green wedge or a site designated for international, national or local nature conservation;**
- x) The site is not contaminated or subject to land instability;**

Justification

Unlike many of the other settlements in the Northern Strategy area the Principal Town of Aberdare has seen considerable growth over the last decade. The allocations contained in Policy HOUS 1 will ensure that the settlement continues to

grow in at an appropriate and sustainable rate. Whilst further growth within the defined settlement boundary is encouraged, development outside the boundary will undermine the historic character of the area and result in the urbanisation of the countryside. Outside the defined residential settlement boundary of Aberdare development will only be permitted where it accords with the requirements of policy HOUS 5, 6 and 7.

Policy HOUS N4 – Rehabilitation / Conversion of Large Buildings

The rehabilitation and conversion of large buildings for residential purposes with in the Northern Strategy Area will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- i) The building is located within a settlement identified in policy HOUS N 2 and HOUS N 3;**
- ii) The building is of historic or architectural importance or is prominent and make valuable contribution the townscape of the settlement;**
- iii) That there is no economically viable alternative use for the building;**
- iv) Design, scale, form of the proposed development does not adversely effect the character of the building nor surrounding area;**
- v) Provision for car parking and amenity space can be provided in accordance with the Council’s approved standards.**

Justification

In 2005 the Council commissioned an urban capacity study for the upper and central Rhondda Fach and Fawr. The study examined the potential for new house building to take place on vacant land and in disused large buildings. The findings of the study indicated that there were 57 disused or under used buildings which presented opportunities for redevelopment / reuse. These buildings have a mixture of former uses including churches / chapels, retail units, former club houses and community buildings. Whilst the study looked specifically at the Rhondda Valleys opportunities also exist for the redevelopment of large buildings in other parts of the Northern Strategy area.

The Northern Strategy area has many important and prominent buildings that are an essential element of the character of the area and provide variety and relief in the townscape. The aim of this policy is to bring disused and under used buildings back into beneficial use. Whilst the redevelopment / reuse of these buildings for commercial and community use is desirable, the Council recognises that the redevelopment of these buildings for residential purposes can also make an important contribution to the process of regeneration. For this reason particular encouragement is given to the reuse of the buildings for a mixture of uses including commercial, community, educational and residential uses. Where the reuse of these buildings are well related to local services such as shops, public transport and open space consideration will be given to the relaxation of car parking and amenity standards.

Policy HOUS N5 – Affordable Housing

The provision of 20 % affordable housing will sought on site of 30 units or more. On sites under 30 units contributions will be sought for the reuse / rehabilitation of existing older housing stock in the County Borough.

Justification

In order to ensure the provision of affordable housing in the Northern Strategy Area, the Council will seek the provision of 20% affordable housing on sites of 30 units / 1 hectare or more and commuted sums will be sought for the reuse / rehabilitation of existing older housing stock in the County Borough on site of less than 30 units / 1 hectare. The percentage target for the Northern Strategy area recognises that site viability in the Northern Strategy area is a major consideration. In practice the number of units sought may be reduced depending upon the location of the site, presence of abnormal development costs and individual circumstance of the development.

Research undertaken for the Council in 2004 indicated that there were 4,000 empty properties within the County Borough. These vacant properties provide a significant opportunity to add to the supply of affordable housing. The presence of such a high number of empty properties can have a significant impact detrimental effect on the character and appearance of a settlement. In order to ameliorate this situation the Council will seek financial contributions from

developers of sites of less than 30 units / 1 hectare to bring empty properties back into beneficial occupation.

Further advice is contained in the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing.

Southern Strategy Area Policy

The Southern Strategy area is an area of extensively low lying, undulating land, which has allowed for the creation of nucleated settlement patterns. During the period 1991 to 2001 the population of the Southern Strategy area grew by 10%. House building rates for 2001 –2006 indicate that this trend is set to continue with 2,954 new dwellings being constructed during the period.

Whilst there are still significant numbers of traditional high density Victorian terraced houses in the Southern Strategy area, character of the area has been altered significantly by the construction of a number of large, low density, mono use housing developments. Much of the new house building has taken place around the settlements of Llantrisant / Talbot Green, Llantwit Fardre, Church Village, Tonyrefail and Beddau.

In order to address these issues LDP policy will seek to ensure sustainable growth within settlements, provide affordable housing, raise standards of design to create places rather than estates and protect the countryside from urbanisation and incremental loss.

Policy HOUS S1 - Housing Allocations

In accordance with the requirements of policy HOUS 1 the following land in the Southern Strategy area is allocated for residential purposes:

DETAILS OF EACH SITE TO BE ADDED

Policy HOUS S2 – Housing Development Within Settlement Boundaries

Development will be permitted within the defined settlement boundaries of Church Village, Efail Isaf, Beddau, Llanharry, Gilfach Goch, Glyncoch Cilfynydd, Hawthorn, Ton-Teg, Llantwit Fardre, Rhydyfelin and Taffs Well. where it can be demonstrated that:

- i) The scale, form and design of the proposed development does not adversely effect the amenity or character of the site or surrounding area;
- ii) The proposed development does adversely effect the provision of open space;
- iii) Where appropriate provision for open space can be provided in accordance the requirements of policy REC (TBA),;
- iv) The layout and design of the proposed development accords with the requirements of policy (TBA);

- v) The proposed development is accessible to local services by a range of modes of transport, on foot or by cycle;
- vi) The proposed development has safe access to the highway network, and will not cause congestion or exacerbate existing traffic congestion;
- vii) The proposed development does adversely effect the provision of car parking in the surrounding area;
- viii) Provision for car parking can be provided in accordance with the Council's approved standards.
- ix) The proposed development is not within a green wedge or a site designated for international, national or local nature conservation;
- x) The site is not contaminated or subject to land instability;

Justification

The aim of policy HOUS N2 is to provide a framework for the development of unallocated land within the settlements of Church Village, Efail Isaf, Beddau, Llanharry, Gilfach Goch, Glyncoch Cilfynydd, Hawthorn, Ton-Teg, Llantwit Fardre, Rhydyfelin and Taffs Well for residential purposes. Past completion rates have demonstrated that the development of unallocated or 'windfall' sites within existing settlements can make an important contribute towards housing land bank.

The settlements in the Southern Strategy area have absorbed a significant amount of new development during the last decade. In order to protect the identity of these settlements, ensure the efficient use of land and protect the countryside from urbanisation and incremental loss development will not be permitted outside the defined residential settlement boundaries. Development will only be permitted if it accords with the requirements of policy HOUS 5, 6 and 7.

Policy HOUS S3 – Affordable Housing

The provision of 30 % affordable housing will be sought on sites of 30 units or more. On sites under 30 units contributions will be sought for the reuse / rehabilitation of existing older housing stock in the County Borough

Justification

In order to ensure the supply of affordable housing in the Southern Strategy Area, the Council will seek the provision of 30% affordable housing on sites of 30 units / 1 hectare or more and commuted sums will be sought for the reuse / rehabilitation of existing older housing stock in the County Borough on sites of less than 30 units / 1 hectare. The percentage target for the Southern Strategy Area recognises that the comparative strength of the housing market. In practice the number of units sought may be reduced depending upon the location of the site, presence of abnormal development costs and individual circumstances of the development.

The Council will seek financial contributions from developers of sites of less than 30 units / 1 hectare. The contributions secured will be used to bring empty properties located throughout the County Borough back into beneficial occupation

Further advice is contained in the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing.

Policy HOUS S4 – Land at Beddau Caravan Park

Land is allocated at Beddau Caravan Park for a combination of residential development and for the provision of Gypsies and Travellers accommodation.

Justification

The redevelopment of the Beddau Caravan Park site for a combination of residential development and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation represents an excellent opportunity for the Council to maximise the potential for the site, whilst meeting an important need.

The Caravan Park has for a number of years provided important Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. However, the site has fallen into disrepair and is in need of significant refurbishment.

Development of the site will need to give careful consideration to the needs of existing and future residents of Beddau and Gypsies and Travellers.

7. Further Advice

If you require any further advice or assistance in respect this or other LDP documents or wish to be placed on the Council's consultation database please contact a member of the Local Development Plan Team at:

Development & Regeneration Unit,
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council,
Floor 5, Unit 3,
Ty Pennant,
Catherine Street,
Pontypridd
CF37 2TB

Email: LDP@rhondda-cynon-taf.gov.uk

Telephone: 01443 495193