



Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan 2018-2033



Background Paper 22: RLDP Conformity with the Placemaking Charter

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BRIDGEND REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (RLDP) 2018-2033

BACKGROUND PAPER 22: RLDP CONFORMITY WITH THE PLACEMAKING CHARTER

1. Purpose of the Assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to evidence that preparation of the RLDP has given due consideration to the principles of the Placemaking Charter and that these can be implemented within the County Borough.

2. Introduction

Placemaking is a proactive and collaborative process of creating and managing places that involves working across sectors and disciplines to comprehensively consider the future development of distinctive and vibrant places.

2.1 The Placemaking Charter Wales has been developed in collaboration with the Placemaking Wales Partnership which is made up of stakeholders representing a wide range of interests. The Charter reflects the collective and individual commitment of these organisations to support the development of high-quality places across Wales for the benefit of communities.

2.2 As a signatory, the Council is equally committed to the Placemaking Wales Charter and its aims for development of high-quality places for the benefit of communities. The Charter outlines six placemaking principles (people and community, movement, public realm, location, mix of uses and identity) that cover the range of considerations that contribute to establishing and maintaining good places. These principles have both informed and are embedded within the RLDP. Strategic Policy 3: *Good Design and Sustainable Placemaking* ensures the principles of placemaking are enshrined within all development proposals across the County Borough, enabled through application of overarching and detailed criteria. Each of the criterion relate to detailed issues which are addressed further in other Strategic and Development Management Policies. This approach will enable the RLDP to deliver a sustainable placemaking approach to development.

2.3 The Council is equally committed to the National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes for Wales, included within Planning Policy Wales 11 (PPW 11), which seek to outline what a sustainable place will look like, characterised by the planning principles they relate to. Implementation of PPW 11's Placemaking Outcomes, together with the principles of the Placemaking Charter, will ensure development allocated within the RLDP contributes positively towards building sustainable places that support active and healthy lifestyles, with urban neighbourhoods that are compact and walkable, organised around mixed-use centres and public transport, and integrated with green infrastructure.

3. Principles of the Placemaking Charter

Signatories of the Placemaking Charter pledge to promote the following principles in the planning, design and management of new and existing places:

People and Community – The local community are involved in the development of proposals. The needs, aspirations, health and well-being of all people are considered at the outset. Proposals are shaped to help to meet these needs as well as create, integrate, protect and/or enhance a sense of community and promote equality.

Location – Places grow and develop in a way that uses land efficiently, supports and enhances existing places and is well connected. The location of housing, employment, leisure and other facilities are planned to help reduce the need to travel.

Movement – Walking, cycling and public transport are prioritised to provide a choice of transport modes and avoid dependence on private vehicles. Well designed and safe active travel routes connect to the wider active travel and public transport network and public transport stations and stops are positively integrated.

Mix of Uses – Places have a range of purposes which provide opportunities for community development, local business growth and access to jobs, services and facilities via walking, cycling or public transport. Development density and a mix of uses and tenures helps to support a diverse community and vibrant public realm.

Public Realm – Streets and public spaces are well defined, welcoming, safe and inclusive with a distinct identity. They are designed to be robust and adaptable with landscape, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage well integrated. They are

well connected to existing places and promote opportunities for social interaction and a range of activities for all people.

Identity – The positive, distinctive qualities of existing places are valued and respected. The unique features and opportunities of a location including heritage, culture, language, built and natural physical attributes are identified and responded to.

4. Conformity Assessment of the RLDP Against the Principles of the Placemaking Charter

The following sections demonstrate how, as a signatory of the Placemaking Charter, Bridgend County Borough Council has given due consideration to the aims of the Placemaking Charter and is in general conformity with each of the principles outlined above.

5. People and Community

In the first instance, signatories of the Placemaking Charter pledge to ensure that the local community are involved in the development of proposals. The needs, aspirations, health and well-being of all people should therefore be considered from the outset. Proposals should be shaped to help to meet these needs as well as create, integrate, protect and/or enhance a sense of community and promote equality.

5.1 Community Involvement Scheme (CIS)

In the context of the RLDP, the CIS is a statement of how the Council intends to involve members of the community and relevant stakeholders throughout the preparation of the RLDP. Contained within the Replacement Delivery Agreement (RDA), the CIS outlines the Council's principles of community engagement, its approach in relation to who, how and when it intends to engage with the community and stakeholders; how it will respond to representations and how these representations will inform later stages of plan preparation. The Council is committed to improving the quality of stakeholder and community involvement in plan making. Early and continued community involvement should help in addressing contentious issues and assist in resolving conflicts throughout plan preparation. It can also help in identifying common ground, and shared goals.

5.2 RLDP Consultation Process

The various stages of consultation undertaken to support preparation of the RLDP have provided an opportunity for all stakeholders to comment on both the policies and sites proposed. The consultation process was undertaken in accordance with the RDA and CIS, which recognised the need to rely more heavily on web-based, virtual and remote consultation methods as a result of the pandemic. At Deposit Stage, a longer consultation period (8 weeks, rather than the statutory 6-week period) was also utilised to make allowances for this situation.

5.3 As documented within the Deposit Consultation Report, these various means of consultation proved highly effective. The LPA received and responded to over 130 emails and telephone appointment requests combined during this period. This enabled officers to outline proposals, answer queries and provide bespoke planning advice to enable representors to submit more informed responses to the consultation. Whilst this advice was remote rather than face-to-face, this form of consultation was well-used by consultees and enabled detailed one-to-one discussions to take place. Indeed, 1,221 representations were subsequently made on the Deposit Plan.

5.4 In the first instance, the consultation phases undertaken during preparation of the RLDP have helped to provide a signpost to the Plan's supporting evidence, key issues and drivers. This enabled two-way dialogue to take place, allowing the Council the opportunity to engage meaningfully with a range of stakeholders and residents on future development and a variety of local issues across the Borough. The consultation process has been wide-ranging and adopted an inclusive approach, involving liaison with a diverse demographic including among others the Gypsy and Traveller community and Bridgend Youth Council. This approach builds upon the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment, which reviewed and identified the likely impact of the Plan on existing and future communities, considering relevant evidence in order to understand the likely or actual effect of policies and practices on a range of population groups.

5.5 In terms of housing delivery, the consultation process enabled the Council to undertake dialogue with site promoters and developers to promote a placemaking approach. This ensured better appreciation of viability concerns, establishment of

appropriate density and public open space levels, provision of affordable housing and formulation of a deliverable trajectory for the Plan period.

- 5.6 Discussions with the Local Education Authority have centred around provision to ensure each allocated site makes appropriate education contributions, with strategic sites providing new primary schools as a minimum. An Education Capacity Background Paper has been produced to duly consider the collective impact of development on education provision over the plan period, which has informed appropriate mitigation.
- 5.7 Liaison with key stakeholders such as the NHS, TfW and utility and infrastructure providers has taken public concerns into account to ensure that the RLDP contains suitable mitigation measures for supporting infrastructure, utilities, transport and active travel. This has ensured alignment of future service provision at the earliest possible stage.
- 5.8 Engagement with a variety of environmental bodies such as Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and local conservation groups has ensured that provision is included for appropriate mitigation and enhancement of a range of environmental designations and natural assets.
- 5.9 Undertaking effective public consultation has enabled the Council to consider a wide range of stakeholder views. This has ultimately resulted in development of a community-focussed spatial planning framework that accounts for the needs and aspirations of residents and promotes health and well-being, while demonstrating the RLDP's accordance with the Placemaking Charter.

6. Location

- 6.1 Signatories of the Placemaking Charter should also ensure that places grow and develop in a way that: uses land efficiently, supports and enhances existing places and promoted strong interconnections. The location of housing, employment, leisure and other facilities should be planned to help reduce the need to travel. The Charter states that Strategic and Local Development Plans are fundamental to successful placemaking. They should reflect the local context, guide growth and regeneration,

and identify the best locations for new development. A process of analysing and understanding the placemaking potential of particular locations should be integrated into the vision and site selection process.

RLDP Vision

- 6.2 The RLDP is underpinned by a Vision which appropriately addresses the key spatial challenges and opportunities facing the County Borough, including existing economic strengths in advanced manufacturing and the need for improved infrastructure, new employment opportunities and the decarbonisation of key sectors, each of which will have spatial implications, to deliver sustainable economic growth. The proposed RLDP Vision also calls for Bridgend, Porthcawl, Maesteg and the Llynfi Valley to accommodate the majority of growth and have distinct roles within a coherent network of settlements. In addition to supporting economic growth, the proposed RLDP Vision recognises that this approach will maximise positive wellbeing outcomes and help to protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- 6.3 The Vision outlines how Bridgend will remain the principal town, and supplementary growth will build on its success as a regional employment, commercial and service centre. Additional employment, commercial and residential development will be focussed around other established towns to achieve sustainable patterns of growth that support existing local services and facilities. Regeneration-led growth will also be channelled towards Porthcawl through redevelopment of its waterfront to capitalise on the town's role as a premier seaside and tourist destination. In addition, the valley settlements will be earmarked for sustainable regeneration, with a recognition that Maesteg and the Llynfi Valley has the largest potential capacity and infrastructure to accommodate future growth. This vision will be achieved through maintaining and developing strong, interdependent, connected and cohesive settlements, whilst also protecting and enhancing the County Borough's environmental and heritage assets. This will offer residents:
- the best start in life by providing effective learning environments to secure the best possible outcomes for learners;
 - opportunities to reduce social and economic inequalities; and

- an improved quality of life and a healthy environment for all people living, working, visiting and relaxing in the area.

6.4 This Vision covers the plan period 2018-2033 and is designed to integrate the RLDP with the Bridgend Local Wellbeing Plan, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Welsh Government's National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes and thematic priorities within 'Future Wales' National Development Framework (NDF) and Planning Policy Wales (PPW). In consequence, the proposed RLDP Vision is based around using placemaking to achieve economic and spatial outcomes in tandem. The seven Objectives under Strategic Objective 1 of the RLDP explicitly identify spatial priorities in the growth of key settlements, whilst many other RLDP Objectives seek socio-economic, environmental, cultural or infrastructure changes in specific places within the Bridgend County Borough area. The spatial rather than solely thematic nature of many RLDP Objectives support the implementation of the RLDP Vision and help to avoid tensions between underlying economic or environmental policies.

Growth and Spatial Strategy

6.5 The RLDP has been underpinned by the identification of the most appropriate scale of economic growth and housing provision, all of which have been based upon well informed, evidence-based judgements regarding need, demand and supply factors. A range of growth scenarios across the whole RLDP period have been analysed and discussed within the Strategic Growth Options Background Paper. This has considered how the County Borough's demographic situation is likely to change from 2018-2033 and informed the most appropriate response for the RLDP. As such the RLDP identifies an appropriate plan requirement to enable a balanced level of housing and employment provision that will achieve sustainable patterns of growth, support existing settlements and maximise viable affordable housing delivery.

6.6 The strategy prioritises the development of land within or on the periphery of sustainable urban areas, primarily on previously developed brownfield sites. It continues to focus on the delivery of the brownfield regeneration allocations identified in the existing LDP, hence, Porthcawl, Maesteg and the Llynfi Valley are still denoted as regeneration priorities through their designation as Regeneration Growth Areas. The ongoing commitment to brownfield development opportunities within these

settlements accords with the site-search sequence outlined in Planning Policy Wales and seeks to minimise developmental pressure on Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land. However, given the existing LDP's success in delivering development on brownfield land in other settlements (notably Bridgend and the Valleys Gateway), there are limited further brownfield regeneration opportunities remaining. Additional viable and deliverable sites (including some greenfield sites) are therefore required to implement SP1, deliver affordable housing in high need areas and ensure the County Borough's future housing requirements can be realised.

- 6.7 Therefore, SP1 also apportions sustainable growth towards settlements that already benefit from significant services, facilities and employment opportunities and are most conducive to enabling transit orientated development, known as Sustainable Growth Areas. These include the Main Settlements of Bridgend and Pencoed along with the grouped Main Settlement of Pyle, Kenfig Hill and North Cornelly. This Strategy seeks to ensure new development can come forward with necessary infrastructure improvements, including transport networks, utilities, green infrastructure, health, education, affordable housing and social facilities.

Bridgend County Borough Settlement Hierarchy

- 6.8 The Placemaking Charter states that early decisions regarding where development will take place are fundamental to the potential for placemaking. New places must have the potential for good connections to existing places or be of significant scale to be self-sustaining and support life and activity. New development should seek to support and improve the quality, connectivity and viability of existing places rather than compete against them.
- 6.9 In the context of Bridgend, the RLDP identifies and differentiates between the sustainability of places by defining a settlement hierarchy. This is informed by the conclusions of the Bridgend County Borough Settlement Assessment (2019, updated in 2021), which reflects Bridgend's historical and functional settlement pattern and seeks to achieve more sustainable places in a number of ways. The scale and type of growth apportioned to settlements is dependent upon their individual roles, functions and positions within the Settlement Hierarchy. This is to ensure the RLDP directs the

majority of growth towards areas that already benefit from good infrastructure, services and facilities, or where additional capacity can be provided.

Candidate Site Assessment (CSA)

- 6.10 As part of the RLDP process, a Candidate Site Assessment (CSA) has been undertaken to assess the feasibility of potential sites put forward for allocation to align with the Council's preferred growth and spatial strategy. The RLDP has also been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which has assessed the likely sustainability and significant environmental effects of all substantive components of the RLDP (strategy, policies, site allocations, etc.) and any identified reasonable alternatives.
- 6.11 Stage 1 of the CSA process incorporated sustainability criteria into the site assessment process, based on the 14 objectives developed for the SA. The SA (incorporating the SEA) provides an evaluation / validation of the site selection process in respect of the overall contribution (or otherwise) to sustainable development. Following a base level assessment of all Candidate Sites, the SA excluded some sites for consideration based on significant environmental or deliverability criteria e.g., flood risk or common land. Stage 1 specifically addressed sites identified with major constraints that have been excluded from further consideration. This provided an opportunity for site promoters to provide further information to demonstrate that identified constraints could be satisfactorily overcome before any decision was made at Deposit Stage as to which Candidate Sites should be allocated.
- 6.12 Stage 2 of the CSA involved scrutinising the sites that progressed from Stage 1 in greater detail. During Stage 2, sites were examined based on any specific issues they raised in terms of their deliverability, general location, neighbouring land uses, existing use(s), accessibility, physical character, environmental constraints, and opportunities. In addition, there was an assessment of the policy context, together with the local geographical context, including known infrastructure issues. Following completion of Stage 2, the Council obtained the views of a limited number of specific consultation bodies in respect of those sites considered suitable for future development and possible allocation in the RLDP (Stage 3). As a result of this assessment, a range of sites were identified for inclusion within the RLDP (Stage 4), acknowledging the

conclusions drawn from Stage 2 and comments received from Stage 3. The sites proposed for allocation aim to create healthier, more liveable communities over the RLDP period. The Strategic Site allocations demonstrates how each site will enable delivery of walkable neighbourhoods that are connected through a mix of land-uses, housing types and access to quality public transport, in accordance with the principles of the Placemaking Charter.

RLDP Strategic Allocations and their Sustainability Credentials

- 6.13 In order to enable the implementation of the Growth and Spatial Strategy, Strategic Policy 2 of the RLDP defines a suite of Strategic Allocations where growth will be focused. The combined development of these sites will result in the provision of sustainability-led, comprehensive residential, employment and commercial development whilst providing new transportation, affordable housing, community, education and recreation facilities to serve the respective sites and existing communities. These sites (together with all other candidate sites) have been subject to a proportionate SA, incorporating SEA, and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to identify the likely environmental and wider sustainability effects from their delivery, thereby informing the site allocations. The key sustainability principles of each Strategic Site are outlined within the RLDP through five Thematic Policies (PLA1-PLA5) which detail the site-specific requirements and demonstrate accordance with The Placemaking Charter.

Background Paper 19 - The 20-minute Neighbourhood

- 6.14 The 20-minute neighbourhood encapsulates 'living locally'—giving people the ability to meet most of their daily needs within a 20-minute walk or cycle ride from home, with safe cycling and local transport options. In the context of the county of Bridgend, a 20-minute neighbourhood is defined as the ability to access services within a 20-minute period either by walking or cycling, with public transport provision also available as a fallback option to ensure there is a range of sustainable travel options available within each neighbourhood. This principle is shared by the Placemaking Charter in ensuring that development is located close to nearby facilities and services with good active travel connections and public transport provision.
- 6.15 The sites allocated within the RLDP are all in alignment with the principles of the Placemaking Charter in this regard and have been identified to ensure they are within

close proximity of local services, facilities and active travel opportunities. All sites can be accessed via sustainable means of travel, either by walking or cycling, within a 20-minute period. This is evidenced in maps contained within Background Paper 19 (The 20-minute neighbourhood), which illustrate the associated services, facilities and sustainable travel options within close proximity to each site.

Future Wales National Development Framework 2040 (NDF)

6.16 The NDF also highlights the importance of applying placemaking principles to development. In particular, the document stresses that the public sector must prioritise design quality, innovation and sustainability, whilst ensuring that opportunities to create ecological networks, provide ecosystem services and green infrastructure are maximised. The RLDP's approach in focusing growth within the relevant tiers of settlements, according to service and facility provision is in direct alignment with Policy 2 of the NDF, assisting the regeneration of under-performing settlements. This urban focussed approach, based on strategic place making, compliments the approach set out in both the Placemaking Charter and the NDF whilst also seeking to redress regeneration issues within the Borough. An example of the RLDP's commitment to supporting regeneration using placemaking principles is demonstrated in the Porthcawl Waterfront allocation (PLA1). This allocation represents an opportunity to revitalise the Waterfront area of Porthcawl, with the site allocated for a residential-led, mixed use scheme that will deliver up to 1,110 dwellings with associated facilities, including tourism, leisure, retail, a bus terminus and community provision.

7. Movement

7.1 The Placemaking Charter states that walking, cycling and public transport should be prioritised to provide a choice of transport modes and avoid dependence on private vehicles. Well designed and safe active travel routes should connect to the wider active travel and public transport network and public transport stations and stops should be positively integrated.

Policy PLA12 - Active Travel

7.2 The RLDP supports the aims of the Placemaking Charter in prioritising active travel choices, and this is demonstrated within the policies of the RLDP. For example, Policy PLA12 supports new developments that incorporate well-designed safe features and

facilities that will be accessible to all people to walk and cycle for everyday journeys, reducing existing heavy reliance placed upon the private car. Consideration of active travel has been factored in from the early stages of master planning of the strategic sites in the County Borough and will continue to be considered until planning permission is granted. Policy PLA12 should be considered essential in the delivery of any strategic site or any proposal, ensuring that development is contributing to the promotion of a sustainable and healthy lifestyle.

Active Travel Maps

- 7.3 The RLDP aims to reduce private car reliance and help the County Borough achieve the principles set out by the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, NDF and the Placemaking Charter, with the ultimate aim of improving and expanding upon the current active travel routes as identified in the Active Travel Maps. The Council has produced an updated Active Travel Network Map to complement the RLDP in identifying the walking and cycling routes required to create fully integrated networks for walking and cycling to access work, education, services and facilities. The Council's proposed Active Travel Maps set out detailed plans for a network of active travel routes and facilities in the County Borough over the next 15 years.
- 7.4 Additionally, Policy SP5 also assists the RLDP in aligning with the Placemaking charter by emphasising that movement, connectivity and legibility of transport links are critical components in the creation of a successful, sustainable place. The policy requires all development proposals to consider improving and/or expanding corresponding active travel and public transport networks. This will prove fundamental in ensuring the increasing attractiveness of active travel as a credible alternative to the private car, thereby encouraging modal shifts away from unsustainable forms of transportation, helping to promote physical activity and reducing the impact of transport-based emissions.
- 7.5 The RLDP shares the Placemaking Charter's belief that residents should have a choice of mobility modes that will enable them to reduce private car use and ownership to improve connectivity through sustainable modes of transport. In practical terms, the RLDP seeks to reduce car dependencies and improve active travel infrastructure; deliver improved and expanded transport links, public transport, and enhanced

transport infrastructure, both to communities within the Council area and to key destinations in neighbouring authorities.

Public Transport

- 7.6 The Council has also undertaken feasibility work to explore proposals to deliver a bus terminus within the Porthcawl Regeneration Area. The bus terminus project is being brought forward in connection with the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) Metro Plus project and is seen as a key element of the wider regeneration plans. The Authority has a strong desire to facilitate and actively encourage a modal shift towards increased use of Public Transport and the provision of a new bus terminus is integral to this as well as being part of the wider Future Wales Plan. The reservation of 0.12 hectares of land for a future public transport terminus, which would serve to further enhance Porthcawl Waterfront's sustainable location and maximise active travel opportunities, will complement the improvements to existing and proposed active travel routes that will render walking, cycling and use of public transport viable alternatives to private vehicle use.
- 7.7 Policy PLA8 of the RLDP also identifies and allocates existing transportation proposals which will provide improvements to the public transport network and deliver more sustainable travel within the county borough.
- 7.8 As a result of the strategic sites allocated for development within the RLDP, there is also a need to assess the potential impact of subsequently increased commuter trips on the existing rail network. Background Paper 13 – Rail Commuter Trips and Infrastructure, provides an analysis of data collected by Transport for Wales (TfW) in October 2020 to assist the Replacement LDP in informing what demand can be expected on rail infrastructure as a result of the implementation of strategic development. The analysis concluded that the majority of rail commuters will travel to Cardiff or Bridgend (if living in areas outside of Bridgend), with very few commuters travelling west to Swansea.
- 7.9 On the South Wales Main Line, there would be sufficient on-board capacity of TfW services during peak periods, although this will likely be limited to standing room only.

It is, however, important to note that, depending on the specific service used, there may be potential for knock-on issues further along the line (at Pencoed, Llanharan and Pontyclun), where an increase in anticipated commuters from Bridgend may prevent boarding at these intermediate stations. Due to the anticipated increase in commuter trips by rail, as a result of the Pencoed Campus Strategic Site, it is suggested that the frequency of services to Cardiff be increased to effectively accommodate the demand.

7.10 Following subsequent liaison between the Council and Transport for Wales (TfW), a larger rolling stock and an increase in rail services per day (in each direction) from Bridgend to Cardiff is being considered, with 300 additional seats towards Cardiff in the morning peak period, and 350 additional seats from Cardiff in the evening peak anticipated to be provided. Implementation of these additional services will help alleviate and mitigate against any potential capacity issues of the rail services on the South Wales Main Line, as a result of the development of these strategic candidate sites.

7.11 The proposed Strategic Site allocation in Porthcawl would also generate several rail commuter trips, with the closest railway station being Pyle (approximately 6km to the north). TfW note that, as a result of this, it would be beneficial to create additional parking spaces (approximately 40) at the station. It is even suggested that consideration could be given to moving the station closer to the A48 to allow for a more suitable area for parking spaces to be created. The number of parking spaces required could be offset by improving bus services and frequencies, as well as improving Active Travel routes between Pyle and Porthcawl.

7.12 Services running from Pyle to Bridgend are currently close to seated capacity on average. However, it is likely that space will become available as passengers alight at Bridgend. Additionally, services on the Maesteg Line are likely to be unaffected, as the anticipated trip generation associated with the strategic sites within its vicinity are predicted to be low. Therefore, no change would be required.

8. Mix of Uses

8.1 The Placemaking Charter states that places should have a range of purposes which provide opportunities for community development, local business growth and access to jobs, services and facilities via walking, cycling or public transport. Development

density and a mix of uses and tenures helps to support a diverse community and vibrant public realm.

- 8.2 In this regard, the RLDP shares the principle of the Placemaking Charter and focusses on delivering well-connected, cohesive communities that are active, healthy and social. In addressing wider community needs, there is a particular emphasis on providing a mix of complementary uses that are accessible and will meet the needs of all members of society. Each of the Strategic Mixed-Use Sustainable Urban Extensions and Regeneration sites allocated within the RLDP feature a sustainable mix of uses which include residential, recreation, education and retail elements to complement existing settlements and communities.

Town Centre First

- 8.3 Policy SP12 of the RLDP supports the principles of the Placemaking Charter through the 'Town Centre First Approach' and the promotion of Town, District and Local Centres as hubs of socio-economic activity and the focal points for a diverse range of services which support the needs of the communities they serve. They act as the most appropriate and sustainable locations for new retail, leisure and supporting commercial development. The co-location of facilities and services at such locations will help support their long-term health and vitality as convenient and attractive places to live, work, shop, socialise, study, access services for health and well-being and to conduct business. This approach will also encourage linked trips and a reduction in travel demand, recognising that they are more than the extent of designated retail areas. Proposed major development must comply with the 'Town Centre First' policy contained within PPW11 to help build resilient communities and respond to the long-term impacts of Covid-19, which have not only re-focused the lives of people and communities but acted as a further driver towards making centres multi-functional places.
- 8.4 In recognising that Town, District and Local Centres are moving away from their traditional retail roles, Policy SP12 and its supporting policies seeks to ensure they become the focus of a wider variety of services and facilities. The 'Town Centre First' approach is key to enabling such centres to increasingly become multi-functional

places and helps to promote a wider range of social and community uses that increase local service provision. This will complement efforts to regenerate retail and commercial centres through the creation of more outside space, the re-use of underutilised areas, the start-up of remote co-working hubs, and the focus of more accessible public services.

Policy SP11 - Employment Land Strategy

- 8.5 Achieving a wide and balanced range of employment uses is central to the RLDP's economic strategy and helps to support the principles of the Placemaking Charter in providing opportunities for local business growth and access to jobs. This strategy will allow the local economy to attract higher value-added intensive employment uses including, life sciences, construction, energy and decarbonisation, and telecommunications sectors.
- 8.6 The strategic sites allocated within the RLDP are distinguished from other employment sites on the basis of their physical and locational characteristics, particularly their prominent locations adjacent to areas of countryside, and their proximity to the strategic road network. They represent the greatest assets to the area in terms of their propensity to attract high quality businesses plus investment and therefore generate high levels of jobs in a manner that will contribute to the local and wider economy. Given the sensitive locations of these sites, the requirement for consistently high design and environmental standards within an overall concept framework is a prerequisite for development, including access by means other than the car. This will create a mix of employment opportunities for the local labour force in a high-quality environment, meeting the employment objectives of the RLDP.
- 8.7 In order for Bridgend County Borough to retain its competitive employment base, it is imperative for the area to offer a broad portfolio of sites. Therefore, in addition to the Strategic Employment Sites, the plan also identifies a variety of allocated Employment Sites suitable for all types of employment uses of varying size and type. Policy SP11 sets out a framework to enable delivery of a balanced level of employment land to accommodate the new jobs identified through the Regeneration and Sustainable Growth Strategy. This approach is vital to help combat significant levels of out-commuting and is considered an unrestrictive and positive approach to ensure that a

range and mix of site types are available across the County Borough, providing plentiful scope for continued investment without frustrating housing supply. This helps the RLDP to support the principles of the Placemaking Charter in providing a framework to deliver a wide range of uses during the Plan period.

9. Public Realm

9.1 The Placemaking Charter highlights the importance of streets and public spaces that are well defined, welcoming, safe and inclusive with a distinct identity. These places should be designed to be robust and adaptable with landscape, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage well integrated. They should be well connected to existing places and promote opportunities for social interaction and a range of activities for all people. The RLDP considers these principles as fundamental to creating sustainable places where people want to live, work and socialise. In achieving sustainable development, the RLDP seeks to assist the aims of the Placemaking Charter by ensuring design that goes beyond aesthetics to include the social, economic, environmental and cultural aspects of development. Therefore, in order to achieve good design, development must consider how space is utilised, how buildings and the public realm can support this use and the relationship with the surrounding area.

9.2 In this regard, future development proposals within the Borough will be assessed against Policy SP3 to ensure that they make a positive contribution towards strengthening local identity, achieve sustainable communities, encourage a more sustainable way of living, and promote community cohesion and engagement. Policy SP3 also seeks to ensure that the viability and amenity of neighbouring uses and their users/occupiers is not compromised by new development. This Policy additionally seeks to promote connectivity for residents by maximising opportunities for active travel. Well-connected developments will assist in promoting the improvement of health and well-being by encouraging people to adopt healthier and active lifestyles, whilst also contributing to the creation of successful places.

Policy DNP8 - Green Infrastructure

9.3 Green Infrastructure is a network of multifunctional green spaces, natural features and environmental management systems which help to provide a natural life support

system for people and wildlife. They can provide opportunities for recreation and tourism, public access, education, biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, water management, the protection and enhancement of the local landscape and mitigation of and adaption to climate change. In this regard, Green Infrastructure networks included within the RLDP help to support the principles of the Placemaking charter by providing amenity value in addition to health and well-being benefits.

- 9.4 The design and functionality of streets is considered a fundamental aspect in achieving sustainable placemaking to this end. A sense of place is recognised within the policy to protect the historic and cultural heritage assets in the County Borough. When appropriately planned, designed and managed, Green Infrastructure has the potential to deliver a wide range of benefits for people and wildlife. By considering the multiple functions that a Green Infrastructure asset can provide simultaneously, it can significantly reduce costs for individuals, businesses and public bodies, whilst enhancing the quality of life and health of residents, workers and visitors to Bridgend.
- 9.5 All major developments proposed within the Borough will be expected to protect and enhance existing green infrastructure whilst mitigating harmful impact. They will also be required to enable the creation of new green infrastructure assets and landscape and ecological elements and features, to enhance the connectivity and multi-functionally of the green infrastructure network.

Policy SP5 - Sustainable Transport and Accessibility

- 9.6 Policy SP5 further supports the aims of the Placemaking Charter by emphasising that movement, connectivity and legibility of transport links are critical components in the creation of a successful, sustainable place where people want to live, work and socialise. Policy SP5 requires all development proposals to consider improving and/or expanding corresponding active travel and public transport networks. This will also prove fundamental in ensuring the increasing attractiveness of active travel as a credible alternative to the private car, thereby encouraging modal shifts away from unsustainable forms of transportation, helping to promote physical activity and reducing the impact of transport-based emissions. The RLDP will therefore seek to integrate both active travel routes and green infrastructure networks, where

appropriate, to incite creation of high-quality environments that encourage active lifestyles.

10. Identity

- 10.1 The Placemaking Charter states that the positive, distinctive qualities of existing places should be valued and respected. The unique features and opportunities of a location including heritage, culture, language, built and natural physical attributes should also be identified and responded to. In the context of Bridgend, the County Borough's natural and built environment is of high quality and represents one of its primary assets. The diversity of landscapes, habitats, species and geology, and their relationship with the urban area, contribute enormously to the County Borough's distinctive and attractive character and identity. The special and unique characteristics of the natural and built environment also help attract investment, promote the County Borough as a tourist location and provide cultural experiences and healthy lifestyles for its communities.

Policy SP17 - Natural Environment

- 10.2 The County Borough contains significant areas of international and national statutory environmental designations, as well as many sites of local wildlife importance, which the plan will identify to ensure their protection, and, where possible, enhancement. Policy SP17 seeks to conserve, and, wherever possible, enhance the landscape quality as part of the natural environment within the County Borough. Policy SP17 is supported by a number of Development Management Policies (DNP1-9) that strictly control development with the countryside and include natural assets such as Conservation Sites, Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Natural Habitats and Species. A high level of protection is afforded to all areas identified as having high and/or unique landscape importance, particularly the nationally important Glamorgan Heritage Coast and the outstanding historic landscapes of Kenfig and Merthyr Mawr Warren, and other regionally and locally important areas designated as 'Special Landscape Areas'. This helps the RLDP to support the principles of the Placemaking Charter by protecting and promoting the Borough's natural assets and sense of identity.

Policy SP18 - Historic Environment

- 10.3 The Historic Environment is also an important cultural asset and a finite, irreplaceable source of information about the past. It forms a central part of the national and local character, contributes to a sense of place and identity and plays a key role in education, leisure and tourism. A number of statutorily and non-statutorily recorded heritage assets are located within the County Borough as outlined in Policy SP18 of the RLDP. Bridgend County Borough Council strongly value these heritage assets, and any development proposals which affect any of the above historic assets, or the settings of any of these, must take full account of the relevant but separate legislation and national best practice guidance. Development Management Policy 10 (DNP10) helps to safeguard Listed Buildings and the Historic Environment within the Borough, ensuring that proposed development which affects historic assets is strictly controlled. Conservation Areas are defined at a local level and, therefore, an additional Development Management Policy (DNP11) is also included to support SP18.
- 10.4 The Historic Environment and its landscapes play a fundamental role in distinctive and natural placemaking through the planning system. Care for the Built and Historic Environment is fundamental to the RLDP Strategy and to achieving sustainable development. Therefore, the impact of any development proposal on the significance and heritage values of individual historic assets, their setting and their contribution to local distinctiveness and character must be fully considered by applicants through the preparation of a heritage impact assessment and statement at the earliest opportunity as part of the planning process.

11. Conclusion

- 11.1 In this assessment, it is demonstrated that the RLDP supports the principles of the Placemaking Charter by providing a sound framework for the development of high-quality sustainable places for the benefit of communities across the County Borough. Implementation of the Placemaking Charter principles, along with the National Placemaking Outcomes, will ensure development allocated within the RLDP contributes positively towards building sustainable places.