

17. Regeneration

17.1 PARAGRAPH 15.2.7 Internal Co-ordination

Objection

DO/51192/1462 Llynfi Valley Forum

Issue

17.1.1 This is whether or not the regeneration agenda needs to be tightened up and policies put in place for community boards and forums to take the lead.

Conclusions

17.1.2 I agree with the Council that the objector appears to be concerned with the regeneration process and is asking the LPA to be quite specific about administrative arrangements. I further agree that it would be inappropriate for the UDP to create community boards. I consider that paras 15.2.5 to 15.2.9 of the UDP identify four key components for a successful regeneration strategy. The objector focuses on para 15.2.7, which is good internal co-ordination within the County Borough Council. In my view, para 15.2.9 lays down some sensible principles for community involvement in the context of the regeneration strategy without being too prescriptive. I see no reason to change this part of the UDP.

Recommendation

17.1.3 I recommend that no modification be made.

17.2 POLICY REG1 Regeneration Schemes

Objections

DO/51227/1815 Harmer Partnership
PCO/51209/2234 Countryside Council for Wales

Issues

17.2.1 These are:

- Whether or not the policy should make allowance for regeneration in rural as well as urban areas;
- Whether or not para 15.11.3 should identify criteria against which proposals for regeneration, especially in rural areas, should be assessed.

Conclusions

17.2.2 On the first issue, the Council has proposed amendments to both Policy REG1 and para 15.11.3 in the PIMS. I accept that regeneration projects might arise in rural areas at a future date within the period of the Plan, and consider that the proposed amendments in the PIMS overcome this objection satisfactorily.

17.2.3 On the second issue, CCW brings a counter-objection to the proposed amendments to para 15.11.3. It expresses concern that proposals for regeneration in rural areas could raise biodiversity and landscape issues. I agree with the Council that the criteria in REG1, backed by the definition of 'previously developed land' in PPWales, would provide protection to landscape or nature conservation resources. In addition, policies in Chapter 3 of the UDP would be used in the assessment of any development proposal. I conclude that it would be repetitive and unnecessary to add criteria against which regeneration proposals would be assessed in this part of the UDP.

Recommendation

17.2.4 I recommend that Policy REG1 and para 15.11.3 be modified as shown in the PIMS.

17.3 POLICY REG3.2 Key Regeneration Sites Land Between the Harbour & Trecco Bay, Porthcawl

Objections

DO/51223/1745	Coney Beach Leisure
DO/51149/1335	Distinctive Antique Furnishings Ltd
DO/50867/908	Mrs A Lake
DO/50783/1299	Porthcawl Town Council
DO/50870/912	Mr & Mrs R & J Thomas
DO/50961/1048	Mr K Whyte

Issues

17.3.1 These are:

- Whether or not the policy gives sufficient recognition to the value to the local economy of existing tourist attractions within the proposed regeneration site;
- Whether or not Griffin Park should be included in the regeneration site;
- Whether or not the regeneration site should include provision for general needs housing and new tourist accommodation.

Conclusions

17.3.2 On the first issue, Coney Beach Leisure made its objection in July 2001 when, as described in the deposit UDP, there was a joint agreement between the Council and the WDA to redevelop the Porthcawl regeneration site. However, that agreement was terminated in December 2001 and the masterplan for the regeneration site, referred to in para 15.11.10 of

the UDP, is no longer valid. Macob Projects Ltd are currently pursuing the regeneration of the Porthcawl site, and a 'Concept Plan' has been prepared by Wyn Thomas Gordon Lewis.

17.3.3 In the light of changing circumstances, the nature of the objection by Coney Beach Leisure has shifted in emphasis. Wyn Thomas Gordon Lewis on behalf of the objector indicate that their concept plan differs from the preceding masterplan for the area in that it does not foresee the relocation of Coney Beach Amusement Park. In effect, the new concept plan envisages substantial enhancement of the amusement park with new car parking. Clearly, this would give ample recognition to the value to the local economy of existing tourist attractions.

17.3.4 However, for Coney Beach Leisure, it is argued that the focus of the objection is to emphasise the importance of tourism to the success of the regeneration strategy. I consider that the regeneration strategy must build on the past success of Porthcawl as a holiday resort and that the UDP should make this clear. The objector also points out that the text accompanying Policy REG3 requires updating to reflect changes over the last 2 years. Macob Projects Ltd on behalf of Coney Beach Leisure Ltd and the Council have put forward an agreed statement of changes to Policy REG3(2) and para 15.11.10 to overcome the objection and delete references to the WDA and the masterplan. I consider that the amended policy and text fairly describe the current circumstances and the objectives for the regeneration strategy.

17.3.5 Turning to the second issue, Mrs Lake and others object to the inclusion of Griffin Park in the Porthcawl regeneration site. They argue that it is a valuable community resource offering outdoor municipal sporting facilities. Bowling greens, tennis courts, a putting green and children's play area are available, with a pavilion and toilets, all set within a formally landscaped setting. The facility benefits local people and visitors, being centrally located in the town. The objectors contend that loss of the facility which already balances the needs of tourism, the host community and the environment would be contrary to the aims and objectives of the UDP for tourism and leisure.

17.3.6 The objectors contend that Griffin Park is included in the regeneration site because the WDA sought to build a road through the southern part of the Park. The Council advises that there are currently no agreements in place for the implementation of a regeneration strategy and no 'master plans' for the area. As the joint venture agreement with the WDA has ended, I accept that there is no relevant master plan showing a highway through Griffin Park. However, the Council has not removed Griffin Park from the area shown as subject to redevelopment under Policy REG3 on the Proposals Map. The park remains therefore as available for redevelopment along with neighbouring land.

17.3.7 At the Inquiry, the Council argued that Griffin Park had to be included in the wider regeneration site because it was a 'pinch point' close to the centre of the site. Though the WDA envisaged that land from Griffin Park would be needed for new highway construction, another previous strategy for the site illustrated how the site could be developed comprehensively without a new road through the Park. That scheme is shown in the Porthcawl Resort Regeneration Strategy – Traffic and Development Appraisal by W S Atkins and DTZ Debenham Thorpe 1994 (CD124). More significantly, on site, I saw that there is ample space south of Griffin Park for Eastern Promenade or a new road to be extended eastward, if this were desired. In my opinion, the amusement park which extends to the sea front, rather than Griffin Park, occupies the 'pinch point'. All this leads me to the view that the successful regeneration of this substantial site in Porthcawl is not dependent upon the small parcel of land occupied by Griffin Park.

17.3.8 At my site visits, I saw that the park is well used by people of all age groups. It provides an attractive area of green space within the urban area, and its character reflects the style of the 1930s when it was built. Unlike the neighbouring land, it does not need regenerating. I consider that it would be very difficult to provide equivalent sporting and recreational facilities, and retain the quality and atmosphere of the existing open space, on a replacement site. I see no reason to set aside the advice in PPWales, para 11.1.10, that *'formal and open spaces, including parks, should be protected from development particularly in urban areas....'*

17.3.9 Mrs Lake draws attention to the uncertainty surrounding the future of Griffin Park, and the harmful effect which she perceives this to have on the upkeep of existing facilities. She argues that there have been regeneration schemes for Porthcawl since 1983 but no real development has taken place. The Council traces the regeneration strategy back to 1993 and argues that, if the UDP were not providing sufficient certainty to developers and the public, the NAW would have objected to this policy. Whatever the position of the NAW, I consider that the quality of the park could easily decline if it remained in the regeneration area and was not itself redeveloped in the short term. This would be detrimental to the amenities of the local community and the local environment. My conclusion is that Griffin Park should be taken out of the Porthcawl regeneration site.

17.3.10 On the third issue, the Town Council objects to the provision of 300 dwellings within the regeneration site in addition to tourism accommodation. It is critical of the late, agreed statement issued by the Council and Macob Projects Ltd on behalf of Coney Beach Leisure Ltd, and predicts that it could lead to high density development and the provision of an unlimited number of dwellings under Policy TM7. The Town Council suggests that the area between the Harbour and Rych Point could be allocated for a training and conference centre, and the Sandy Bay, Cosy Bay and Salt Lake area developed as a 'flag ship' tourist attraction with housing 'as a third tier'.

17.3.11 In my Chapter 5, I conclude that the allocation of 300 dwellings for general purposes under Policy H1(58) is appropriate and necessary to meet the housing land requirement of the County Borough. I have looked closely at the agreed statement by Macob Projects Ltd on behalf of Coney Beach Leisure Ltd and the Council, and I see no evidence that this will lead to undesirable development of the regeneration site. The Town Council favours new tourism development, and there is a shortage of high quality accommodation in the County Borough (CD101 confirms), although the Council is unable at this stage to quantify how much new accommodation should be provided in Porthcawl. The agreed statement makes clear that detailed planning, design and density will be the subject of a development brief and public consultation. In my view, this process should ensure that the regeneration scheme provides a level of development which will involve the local community, stimulate the local economy and achieve a high quality of design, without harming the existing environment in Porthcawl. I consider that it would be inappropriate for the UDP to specify features such as a training and conference centre ahead of the development brief. I conclude that the regeneration site should include provision for both general needs housing and tourist accommodation.

Recommendation

17.3.12 I recommend that Policy REG3 be revised so that the first sentence reads:

'The comprehensive redevelopment of the following sites is proposed as part of the regeneration of their respective areas....'

17.3.13 I recommend that para 15.11.10 be modified as shown in the agreed statement between Bridgend County Borough Council and Macob Projects Ltd on behalf of Coney Beach Leisure Ltd.

17.3.14 I recommend that the boundary of site REG3(2) as shown on the Proposals Map be modified so that Griffin Park is excluded from this key regeneration site.

17.4 POLICY REG3.3 Key Regeneration Sites Land West of Maesteg Road, Tondu

Objections

DO/50880/941
DO/50017/22

Bridgend Biodiversity Partnership
Rhys-Davies Services Ltd

Issue

17.4.1 These are:

- Whether or not the land should be allocated for development, bearing in mind its nature conservation interest;
- Whether or not the policy should be redrafted to allow for the redevelopment of this site in a phased rather than a comprehensive manner.

Conclusions

17.4.2 On the first issue, Bridgend Biodiversity Partnership argues that the southern end of the field system is rich in orchids and is a habitat for the scarce blue-tailed damselfly. The allocation covers a strip of land belonging to the Glamorgan Wildlife Trust which is part of the Parc Slip Nature Park.

17.4.3 The Council argues that the regeneration of the whole site for the beneficial after-uses of employment, housing, waste transfer and recreation are in the public interest. The site was identified in the Ogwr Borough Local Plan for many of these uses, so that the principle of development is not new. I agree with the Council that the site has great potential for much needed regeneration in this part of the County Borough. I consider that policies in Chapter 3, Environment, should ensure that the benefits associated with any development proposals would be weighed against any harm to nature conservation.

17.4.4 The Council is agreeable to the exclusion of the narrow strip of land which is part of the Parc Slip Nature Park from the regeneration site. I consider that this would partially meet the objection and would be desirable. The Council informs me that outline planning permission was granted in 1997 for a comprehensive scheme on this site and an environmental assessment was carried out. This indicated that a strategic landscape framework and the maintenance of existing wildlife corridors would protect the most valuable habitats. In my view, given the large size of the regeneration site, this approach could be repeated to provide some protection to biodiversity.

17.4.5 The Council argues that Policy EV22 of the deposit UDP should provide protection for the barn owl, blue-tailed damselfly and any other protected species. I recommend in Chapter 3, that the policy should be deleted but I consider that the protection of such species, including those identified at Tondu, will be afforded under other legislation. In conclusion, I shall recommend a small change to the boundaries of the site allocated under Policy REG3(3), but see no reason for further modifications on the basis of this objection.

17.4.6 On the second issue, Rhys-Davies Services Ltd argues that the insistence on a comprehensive development scheme with an overall development brief will prejudice the development of the site. Parts of the site could be developed without major infrastructure investment, and without improvements to the highway. The viability of the proposed waste transfer station is questioned as discussions with site owners have not taken place. It is suggested that a phased development, taking into account ownership constraints, should be the preferred option.

17.4.7 I am informed that an outline planning application was submitted in 1997 for the comprehensive development of the regeneration area, including decontamination and reprofiling of much of the southern part of the site. The Council argues that realignment of the A4063, Maesteg Road, is necessary for access to the south-eastern sector of the site (my Transportation chapter section 8...). It also indicates that a S106 planning obligation was agreed, to reserve the line of Maesteg Road, when planning permission was granted for housing development on a portion of the regeneration area. These factors indicate to me that the concept of comprehensive redevelopment in this locality is not a new one, and that the need for investment in site preparation and new infrastructure has already been accepted by some developers.

17.4.8 PPWales encourages mixed use developments in town centres and other appropriate places. They are promoted on sustainability grounds, for reducing the need to travel (para 2.5.5), and in the context of designating land for employment needs (para 7.2.6). I agree with the Council that both the housing allocation and the employment allocation at Tondu Road are important elements in their respective land banks. The Wyn Thomas Gordon Lewis Study of industrial sites in the County Borough concluded that development of the Tondu site would be socially beneficial. The consultants commented that cross-subsidy with housing development would improve the financial viability of the employment site.

17.4.9 I consider that the proposed waste transfer station would offer a sustainable facility for the handling and disposal of waste, and would benefit from a position on the Tondu site, being central to the County Borough and close to the railway. The Council has referred to the possible use of compulsory purchase powers to acquire the site if negotiations over its acquisition fail. The existence of ownership constraints should not, in my view, rule the site out of consideration for waste transfer purposes. The regeneration site is well located in relation to centres of population, the railway and bus services, and I consider that its promotion for mixed use development is appropriate.

17.4.10 In view of the complexity of the Tondu Road regeneration site with its Scheduled Ancient Monument, possible contamination and highway problems, I consider that a development brief would be helpful to integrate the various elements. The objector argues that parts of the site with fewer constraints should be brought forward early in the Plan period, and I see nothing in the UDP to prevent the incorporation of a phasing programme in the development brief. As I have already indicated, planning obligations should be achieved through negotiations between landowners and the Council, and in accordance with WO C13/97. However, I conclude that no further modifications to the UDP should be made on the basis of this objection.

Recommendation

17.4.11 I recommend that the Proposals Map should be modified to delete from the REG3(3) regeneration site a strip of land in the south-west of the site which forms part of Parc Slip Nature Park.

