

Bridgend Local Development Plan

2006-2021



Draft Candidate Site
Assessment Procedure

October 2009

BRIDGEND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN: DRAFT CANDIDATE SITE ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE.

1. Introduction.

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires each local authority in Wales to prepare a Local Development Plan (LDP). The Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005 prescribe the form and content of the LDPs, and make provision for the procedure to be followed in their preparation.
- 1.2 The Bridgend Local Development Plan (LDP) will set out the Council's objectives for the development of land in the County Borough over the plan period to 2021, and its policies to implement them.
- 1.3 An important aspect in developing the Bridgend LDP is the identification of suitable sites for future housing, employment, retailing, transportation proposals and other main land uses such as recreation and community facilities.
- 1.4 As a part of the LDP preparation process, the Council invited landowners, developers and the public to nominate candidate sites for future development. The period for submission of sites was from the 9th November 2006 to the 31st January 2007. As a result, a significant number of potential sites (over 400) were submitted to the Council for its consideration through the LDP process.
- 1.5 The suggested sites have been compiled in a 'Candidate Sites Register', which was published in April 2007, and can be viewed on the Council's web site at:

<http://www.bridgend.gov.uk/Web1/groups/public/documents/services/017789.hcsp#TopOfPage>
- 1.6 The register allows any interested party to view the sites that have been submitted for consideration and provides information on location, size and proposed use.

2. Candidate Site Assessments.

- 2.1 To assess the sites which have been submitted, the Council has developed this site assessment procedure, which will be applied to all of the Candidate Sites contained in the Register, together with any additional sites which may emerge from ongoing evidence gathering exercise, technical studies undertaken by, or on behalf of, the Council, and those unimplemented sites allocated within the currently adopted Bridgend Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The Candidate Sites will be assessed in a 4 Stage process, as set out below.

3.0 Stage 1: Initial Site Assessment

This stage will assess the sites against 4 initial assessment questions that relate to capacity and whether it has the potential to support the Preferred Strategy.

Is site larger than 0.3 hectares?

- 3.1 As a first requirement only sites greater than or equal to 0.3 hectares will be considered as part of the assessment process. This is considered appropriate as it directly relates to capacity. In terms of residential development, it represents a site that could accommodate approximately 10 dwellings at an average density of 35 units per hectare.

Sites submitted to the Council for consideration less than 0.3 hectares, will be considered as 'small' sites and assessed in one of the following 2 ways:

- **small sites outside existing settlement boundaries**
- 3.2 Small sites which are located outside existing settlement boundaries will be included in the Settlement Boundary Review process. As an integral part of plan preparation for the Deposit LDP the Council will review all settlement boundaries within the County Borough to determine if they are still appropriate in light of the Preferred Strategy of the plan and / or represent logical minor amendments to existing boundaries.
- **small sites within existing settlements**
- 3.3 The development and or safeguarding of small sites for specific purposes within existing settlements will be determined through criteria based policies within the Deposit Plan and the Development Control process.

Does site lie within / adjacent to a Strategic Regeneration Growth Area (SRGA)?

- 3.4 Having considered various Growth Options and Spatial Strategies at the Pre-Deposit Proposals stage of the Plan, in order to achieve the Vision and Objectives of the LDP, the Council's Preferred Strategy for the LDP is the **Regeneration-Led Spatial Strategy (incorporating the Trend-Based Growth Option and the Medium Employment Growth Option)**.
- 3.5 Of strategic importance to future growth and the implementation of the Preferred Strategy will be bringing forward four **Key Strategic Regeneration Growth Areas** – which will deliver a range of mixed-use developments and facilities at: -
- **Porthcawl** – Associated with the 7 Bays Project: Porthcawl Waterfront
 - **Maesteg and the Upper Llynfi Valley** – Associated with the Maesteg Washery and former Coegnant Colliery site.
 - **The Valleys Gateway** – Associated with a range of inter related private and public opportunities from Tondu eastwards to Bryncethin with the focus on delivering a new Education and Community facility Hub Model.
 - **Bridgend** – Associated with Parc Derwen/Brackla, north of the town centre and Parc Afon Ewenni - a Gateway Redevelopment Site along the A473 / A48, south of the town centre.
- 3.6 Sites situated within or closely associated with a **Strategic Regeneration Growth Area** will automatically be taken forward to Stage 2.

Is the site a potential regeneration opportunity located within the existing urban area?

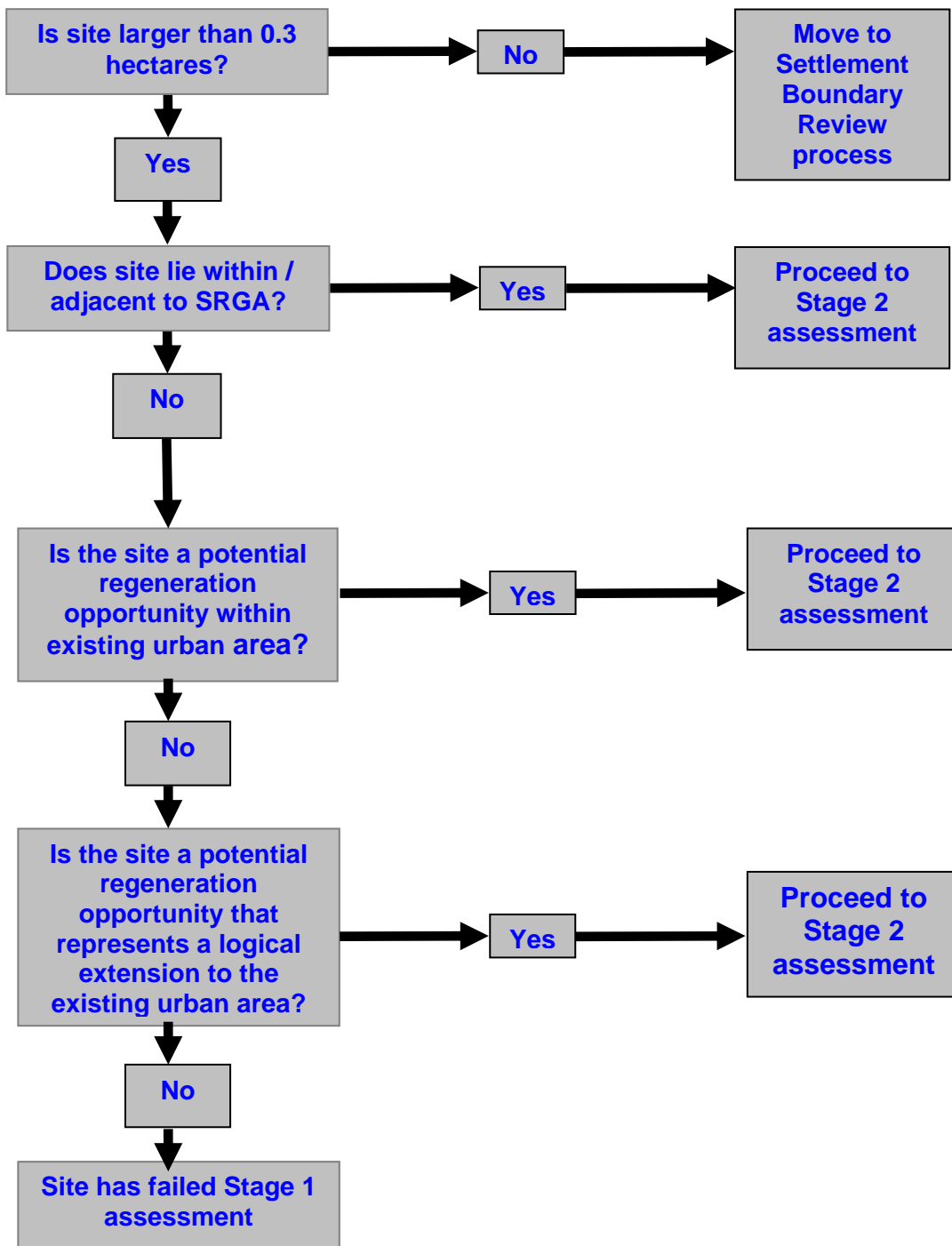
- 3.7 In addition to focussing development within and adjacent to Strategic Regeneration Growth Areas, an important additional element of delivering the Preferred Strategy is the regeneration of sites in other settlements and urban areas of the County Borough especially where there are opportunities for development that can be linked to area-based regeneration initiatives and / or they offer localised regeneration benefits.
- 3.8 The scale and type of development will be in line with the settlements capacity, in terms of infrastructure, local economy, character and taking account of constraints, balanced against the overall level of growth for the County Borough determined by the Preferred Strategy. This will ensure that development will be directed to the most sustainable and appropriate locations. Therefore sites that can potentially deliver regeneration within the identified settlements listed in Appendix 1 will be taken forward to Stage 2.

Is the site a potential regeneration opportunity that represents a logical extension to the existing urban area?

- 3.9 An assessment will be made on whether the site represents a potential regeneration opportunity relating to the existing settlement pattern. And whether its development would be in character with the existing environment forming a logical extension to the settlement. (see paragraph 3.8 and Appendix 1).
- 3.10 *In keeping with the national policy objective to locate new development close to existing settlements all those sites which were submitted in areas of open countryside, demonstrably separated from existing settlements will not go forward to Stage 2 as they would be deemed incompatible with National Policy.*
- 3.11 *In addition to the above, where a proposed site is situated adjacent to a settlement boundary but would not form a logical extension to an existing settlement, or would not reflect or compliment the existing general pattern of development in scale or function, or not form a new defensible physical boundary then it is likely that it will have an adverse impact upon the appearance and character of the area. Such potential development sites will be discounted for further consideration.*

Only those candidate sites that satisfy Stage 1 Assessment will go forward to Stage 2.

Stage 1: Assessment



4.0 Stage 2: Detailed site assessment – in terms of deliverability, suitability and sustainability.

- 4.1 At Stage 2, sites will be examined in terms of the specific issues they raise when set against criteria relating to their general location and deliverability, existing use(s), accessibility and physical character, environmental constraints and opportunities, policy context, together with their local context including infrastructure issues and neighbouring land uses.
- 4.2 In this respect Stage 2 integrates elements of sustainability assessment into the site selection process, the basis of which are the 15 sustainability objectives developed for the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and input from the SA consultants, Baker Associates. The SA (SEA) of the Deposit LDP will provide an evaluation / validation of the site selection process and comment on the overall contribution (or otherwise) of the selected allocated sites to sustainable development. Although this site validation / evaluation process will not be reported separately from the main SA / SEA; it will be undertaken in advance of the Deposit Plan in order address any concerns with regards to the 'provisional' allocations (see Stage 4).
- 4.3 Where relevant, the site appraisals will also consider legislation and national policies. Many of these factors were detailed in the original Candidate Site Questionnaire Forms, which were completed by those promoting their sites, and which were subsequently verified, where necessary, by the Council's planning officers. In addition at this stage relevant planning history will be considered.
- 4.4 This Stage involves assessing in greater detail those sites which have already passed Stage 1 of the process. Site specific issues will be examined against the criteria detailed below. This Stage of the assessment process will require additional information to be provided both internally from other Officers of the Communities Directorate: e.g. regarding a site's accessibility, or its risk of flooding or coastal inundation; and other Directorates of the Council: e.g. the Children's Directorate in respect of education resources; and could entail external consultation with statutory agencies and organisations where this is appropriate.

a) Deliverability of the Site.

- 4.5 Deliverability of the Preferred Strategy is a key element of the LDP, and the Council will need to be confident that any allocated site will have a realistic prospect of being implemented within the LDP period. In this respect, the willingness of an owner to release a site for development for a specific purpose is a key factor which needs to be considered.
- 4.6 Other factors may also impact on deliverability and implementation, for example, restrictive covenants, other land uses and users on the site which are not able to vacate within the required timescale to ensure its

redevelopment, a need to remediate the site, or any other issues relating to site-viability.

(b) The Site’s Accessibility.

- 4.7 National planning guidance highlights the importance for new developments to have access to a range of services, facilities and opportunities, which can also be accessed by existing communities. Consequently, the relative distance to existing facilities, public transport, including the level and frequency of public transport provision, will be a key determinant. For housing proposals only, the assessment will firstly examine the location of the site proposal in terms of whether it is located within, or outside a settlement; and secondly the ease of pedestrian and cyclist access to key services such as primary schools, doctor’s surgeries and local shops.
- 4.8 The Institute of Highways and Transportation Guidelines for Providing Journeys on Foot (2000) suggests that in terms of commuting, schools and recreational journeys, walking distances of up to 2000m can be considered, with the desirable and acceptable distances being 500m and 1000m. Consequently, the Council will assess the accessibility of sites against the criteria below:

	Facilities, e.g. shops, bus stop.	Commuting / school	Other
Desirable	200m	500m	400m
Acceptable	400m	1000m	800m
Preferred maximum	800m	2000m	1200m

Source: Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot (IHT 2000)

**Acceptable walking distances to facilities are defined as those where a high proportion of the trips generated by new development can be conveniently made by passenger transport, on foot or by bicycle.*

- 4.9 In the case of retailing and leisure proposals, or ‘other uses best located in centres’, site proposals will be assessed according to whether they should be located within existing town, district, local centres (i.e. the ‘sequential approach’), as advocated in National planning guidance (MIPPS 02/2005 refers), or whether there is merit in defining ‘new’ local centres or hubs where there is a lack of local facilities.

c) The Site’s Physical Constraints & Environmental Impact

- 4.10 The existence of constraints such as flood risk, contamination and vehicular access to a site will be assessed, drawing on expertise across the Communities Directorate of the Council. Sites with fewer constraints will rank more highly than those with significant development constraints.

- 4.11 In accordance with Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15 – Development and Flood Risk (July 2004), sites promoted for ‘highly vulnerable uses’ (including housing) which are located in areas of high flood risk will normally be discounted from any further consideration, unless determined by the Council to be particularly justified at such a location.
- 4.12 National planning guidance set out in Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (2002) emphasises the importance of re-using ‘brownfield’ sites, in order to minimise the take-up of ‘greenfield’ sites. ‘Brownfield’ sites, or ‘Previously Developed Land’, will therefore normally rank higher than ‘Greenfield’ sites in the assessment of all sites; however, this will not necessarily be the main determining factor in assessing whether a site is suitable for consideration for allocation in the LDP.
- 4.13 Similarly, PPW places importance on safeguarding agricultural land that is Graded 1, 2 and 3a in the national classification; also it highlights the importance of lower graded land where this has either an environmental value recognised by landscape, wildlife, historic, or archaeological designations. Accordingly, the methodology will similarly consider these aspects of national policy when assessing site specific proposals.
- 4.14 Where a site proposal falls within, lies in close proximity to, or is likely to have a significant environmental effect upon a site designated under any of the following natural environmental designations, it will normally be discounted from further consideration:
- A Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - A National Nature Reserve (NNR)
 - A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - A Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
 - A Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS)
- 4.15 Where a site proposal falls within, or lies adjacent to, Ancient Woodland, a Registered Historic Landscape, Park and Garden, Scheduled Ancient Monument, listed building or Conservation Area, the Council will consult with the appropriate organisation to determine any potential impacts. Where it is found that a site proposal is likely to lead to environmental improvements, this will rank more highly than those which will have neutral or detrimental effects.

d) Site Infrastructure Capacity for the Site’s Development.

- 4.16 New development can place additional pressures on existing infrastructure such as highways, water supply, drainage, and sewerage capacities as well as local facilities such as schools, community facilities, and recreational space. Consequently, the Council will engage with the EAW, service providers and all appropriate Council Directorates to determine whether such pressures on local infrastructure exist, and to identify where

appropriate mitigation measures could and should be taken (for example through the use of planning obligations), or where such a course would not be viable or realistic within the timescale of the Plan.

Site Decision

- 4.17 At the end of this stage of assessment, it will be decided whether the site is suitable to be considered further, or should be taken out of the assessment process.

5.0 Stage 3: Consultation with appropriate Specific Consultation bodies.

- 5.1 After the completion of stages 1 and 2 the Council will seek the views of the appropriate specific consultation bodies in respect of those sites which have been identified suitable for future development. The specific consultation bodies to be consulted are:

Welsh Assembly Government;
Countryside Council for Wales
CADW
Environment Agency Wales
Dwr Cymru
Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust

6.0 Stage 4: Potential Sites for the Deposit LDP.

- 6.1 As a result of the above assessment a provisional list of sites will be identified for inclusion in the deposit LDP. The Development Planning Team may request further information to be submitted on the potential site to support its inclusion and will consult with Baker Associates in order to validate / evaluate potential allocations.

Appendix 1: List of Settlements

Sub Area	Settlement
Bridgend	Bridgend
	Coity
	Coychurch
	Laleston Penyfai
The Llynfi Valley	Maesteg
	Caerau Nantyffyllon
	Cwmfelin Llangynwyd
Porthcawl	Porthcawl
The Garw Valley	Blaengarw Pontycymmer
	Bettws Llangeinor Pontyrhyl
The Ogmore Valley	Nantymoel Ogmore Vale
	Blackmill Evanstown Glynogwr Pantyrwel
The Valleys Gateway	Aberkenfig Bryncethin Brynmenyn Sarn Tondu
	Coytrahen
Pyle/Kenfig/Cornelly Area	Pyle North Cornelly Kenfig Hill
	Cefn Cribwr Kenfig Mawdlam South Cornelly
Pencoed	Pencoed Heol-Y-Cyw