



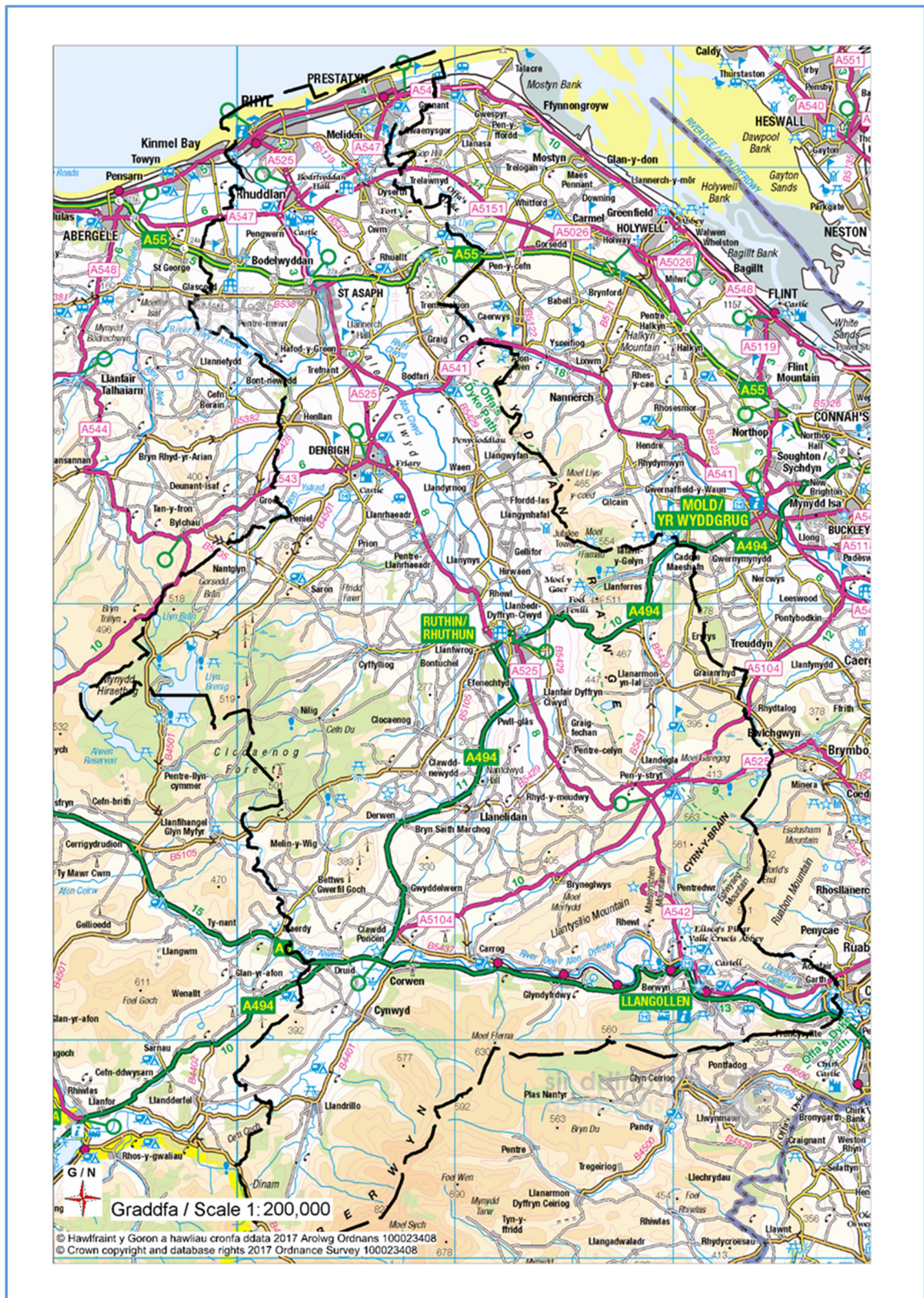
Denbighshire Local Development Plan

2006-2021

Information Paper: Achieving Sustainable Accessibility

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Map 1: The County of Denbighshire in North Wales



1. Background

1.1 Purpose of the report

1.1.1 Denbighshire County Council (DCC) produced 'Information Papers' (IP) in support of the emerging five Denbighshire Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021 (LDP) themes in August 2011. The purpose of these documents was to summarise baseline data, evidence and pertinent information regarding the development of the Deposit Local Development Plan. The LDP was subsequently adopted in 2013, containing the following themes:

- Respecting Distinctiveness (RD)
- Building Sustainable Communities (BSC)
- Promoting a Sustainable Economy (PSE)
- Valuing Our Environment, (VOE) and
- Achieving Sustainable Accessibility (ASA)

The themes' abbreviation is reflected in the name of local policies to indicate common topics and ease of reference.

1.1.2 DCC is under the obligation to review its adopted land use plan at intervals not longer than four years from adoption in line with Section 69 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This includes the review of LDP Objectives, LDP Themes, and local policies on the basis of significant contextual change, significant concerns from the findings of the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), and other legal responsibilities that have an effect on the performance of the LDP.

1.1.3 The Council has just started the process of reviewing the LDP. At this stage there are no draft revised LDP Objectives, LDP Themes, or local policies. The majority of text is concerned with legislation, strategies and programmes, statistical analyses, and policy performance as identified in the AMR, together with potential impact on adopted LDP policies. The Council's intention is these Information Papers will be 'living documents'; i.e. they are updated with evidence and information as the replacement LDP progresses through the individual stages of Plan production.

1.2 Introduction to the theme 'Achieving Sustainable Accessibility'

1.2.1 This theme is concerned with the development of an efficient and sustainable transport infrastructure for Denbighshire. It is linked to LDP objectives no. 5 and no. 6. (listed under 'Transport') that address key issues facing the County like access to public transport networks is relatively poor away from the coast and the A55 corridor.

- 1.2.2 The theme ‘Achieving Sustainable Accessibility’ is comprised of a range of different topic areas, including:
- the provision of new transport infrastructure including the road, rail and bus networks and also walking and cycling routes,
 - improvements to public transport and interchanges including bus and rail networks,
 - extensions and improvements to the local/ regional walking and cycling network offering easily accessible and sustainable means of transport and
 - the provision of parking spaces for cars and bicycles

2. Policy Context

2.1 Well-being of Future Generations Act

2.1.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 came into force on the 1st of April 2016. It requires public bodies such as Denbighshire County Council to consider not only the present needs of local communities but also how their decisions affect people in the future. The Council is principally challenged to work towards all seven well-being goals contained in the Act: (1) A globally responsible Wales; (2) A prosperous Wales; (3) A resilient Wales; (4) A healthier Wales; (5) A more equal Wales; (6) A Wales of cohesive communities; and (7) A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

Reinforced by the provisions of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Council has a statutory duty to implement the principles of sustainable development in every decision-making process. This is achieved by adhering to locally set ‘well-being objectives’ to meet the seven nationally defined well-being goals.

2.1.2 There are seven Well-being Goals:



- 2.1.3 Denbighshire County Council has developed the 'Well-being Impact Assessment' toolkit to comply with the provision of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Planning (Wales) Act 2015. It is designed to assist the decision-maker in evaluating a specific proposal in light of the well-being goals. Accordingly, all elements contained in the replacement LDP will be subject to a well-being impact assessment and, if required, subject to amendments in line with recommendations derived from the assessment.
- 2.1.4 There are a vast number of national policies and frameworks, regional plans, and local strategies that did not only informed the production of the LDP but also have an impact on the delivery of individual development proposals. The purpose of this section is to review the document baseline, i.e. identify changes to existing documents, assess the effects of new or emerging documents, and highlight potential discrepancies with adopted local policies. This will be a crucial step before discussing local policy revision in light of changing local circumstances.
- 2.1.5 Local Development Plans in Wales are expected to integrate with other legislation, strategies, plans etc. without unnecessarily repeating national planning policy. National policy is laid out in Planning Policy Wales, which is supplemented by a number of Technical Advice Notes.

2.2 National Planning Policies

- 2.2.1 National planning policy is set out in Planning Policy Wales (PPW), incorporating the previously published Minerals Planning Policy Wales in Chapter 14, and is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notes and Minerals Technical Advice Notes. Welsh Government frequently publishes so-called 'Policy Clarification Letters' that provide advice and guidance on specific topics.
- 2.2.2 Besides providing a framework for decision-making at the local level, national policy may directly be applicable to planning proposals that are determined by Welsh Ministers, by Planning Inspectors in planning appeals, or in the absence of any pertinent local policy.
- 2.2.3 Planning Policy Wales is the most significant source of information when drafting local policies. The Local Development Plan Manual sets out the requirement that LDP's should not repeat national policy but local planning authorities may wish to supplement them where local circumstances require a specific local policy interpretation. Table 1 identifies those national policies that were considered to be of relevance at the point of producing the LDP theme 'Achieving Sustainable Accessibility' and associated local policies. It further serves as a baseline to identify any potential changes in national policy and the potential effects on the adopted local policy.

Table 1: Links between national policy and the LDP theme “Achieving Sustainable Accessibility”

National Planning Policy (with reference to PPW Edition 9)	Where addressed in the LDP?	Any changes required to comply with National Policy	Comments
Reducing the need to travel	Policy BSC 9 - Local Connections Affordable Housing within small groups or clusters Policy PSE 5 - Rural Economy Policy ASA 1 – New transport infrastructure	Suggestion to change policy to include this issue. Could be linked to Active Travel and locating development near to good access to walking/cycling/ public transport	There is a need to reduce the need to travel in rural locations
Encouragement of multi-purpose trips	Not currently addressed	Suggestion to change policy to include this issue. Could be linked to new Active Travel Policy and locating development near other related uses	
Accessibility for all	LDP policy ASA 3 – Parking standards This national policy is addressed within the theme ‘Respecting Distinctiveness’ – LDP policy RD 3 (‘Extensions, Alterations and Replacement of Existing Dwellings’), and the theme ‘Promoting A Sustainable Economy’ LDP policies regarding retail development	No changes required	

Supporting travel in rural areas	Not currently addressed	Suggestion to change policy to include this issue. Could be linked to new Active Travel Policy and making improvements to walking/cycling/public transport routes from rural to larger urban areas	There is a need to support travel in rural communities ensuring accessibility for all
Improving accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport	LDP policy ASA 1 – New Transport Infrastructure, LDP policy ASA 2 – Provision of sustainable transport facilities	New National Policy on Active Travel. This national policy is addressed within the theme ‘Promoting A Sustainable Economy’ – LDP policies regarding tourism economy	Link to new policy on Active Travel.
Promoting active travel walking and cycling	LDP policy ASA 1 – New Transport Infrastructure, LDP policy ASA 2 – Provision of sustainable transport facilities	New National Policy on Active Travel. This national policy is addressed within the theme ‘Promoting A Sustainable Economy’ – LDP policies regarding tourism economy	Linking to new policy on Active Travel.
Supporting public transport	LDP policy ASA 1 – New Transport Infrastructure, LDP policy ASA 2 – Provision of sustainable transport facilities	No change required. This national policy is addressed within various themes such as ‘Building Sustainable Communities’ and ‘Promoting A Sustainable Economy’	
Managing traffic and parking	LDP policy ASA 3 – Parking Standards	No change required	Details regarding Parking Standards are set out in a Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

Shift of freight and passengers to non-road modes and Promoting sustainable options for freight and commerce	LDP policy ASA 1 – New Transport Infrastructure, LDP policy ASA 2 – Provision of sustainable transport facilities, LDP policy ASA 3 – Parking Standards	No change required	General approach is indirectly set out within the theme 'Achieving Sustainable Accessibility'
Airport	topic not relevant	n/a	
Minimise the adverse effects of new transport infrastructure and improvements. Supporting necessary infrastructure improvements and ensuring transport infrastructure does not contribute to land take, urban sprawl or neighbourhood severance	LDP policy ASA 1 – New Transport Infrastructure	No change required	Individual development proposals will be assessed when seeking planning permission
Transport assessment and travel plans	LDP policy ASA 1 – New Transport Infrastructure	No change required	Transport assessment and travel plans will be assessed in conjunction with the North Wales Joint Local Transport Plan
Access to a primary road	LDP policy ASA 3 – Parking Standards	No change required	Details regarding Parking Standards and access to

			primary roads are set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) Parking Requirements in New Developments
TAN 18 - Maximum Parking Standards	LDP policy ASA 3 – Parking Standards	No change required	Details regarding Parking Standards and access to primary roads are set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) Parking Requirements in New Developments
TAN 18 - Mobility and Access for Disabled People	LDP policy ASA 1 – New Transport Infrastructure, LDP policy ASA 3 – Parking Standards	Suggested change to link to new Active Travel Policy and access on walking and cycling routes	Details regarding Parking Standards and access to primary roads are set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) Parking Requirements in New Developments

2.2.4 National planning policies and WG objectives that are indirectly linked with the provision of a sustainable transport network, e.g. to encourage the provision of safe cycle routes and footpaths in Planning Policy Wales section ‘Tourism, Sport and Recreation’, will be considered when determining planning applications in conjunction with the LDP.

2.3 The Wales Spatial Plan

- 2.3.1 Originally published by the then Welsh Assembly Government (WG) in November 2004 and subsequently updated in July 2008, the document aimed to implement WG's overall policy priorities as set out in One Wales: A Progressive Agenda for Wales. The focus was on linking up national, regional, and local activities; providing a national framework for planning. Its objective was to place a strong emphasis on the implementation of the 'sustainable development' principle in all public sector decision-making.
- 2.3.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (section 62) places a duty on Welsh local planning authorities to have regard to the Wales Spatial Plan (WSP) when preparing their respective local development plan. That means that the WSP has served multiple purposes in the Denbighshire plan-making process: (1) it produced evidence; (2) it shaped local policies; (3) it ensured better engagement and governance between bodies; (4) it informed Plans; and hence (5) it aligned prospective investments in the area.
- 2.3.3 The Wales Spatial Plan demarks Wales into six sub-regions; with outlining their cross-border relationships. Individual parts of the County of Denbighshire have accordingly been assigned to the North East Wales region and Central Wales region. It was however recognised that there are also strong relations with the North West (Wales) region. All six sub-regions, i.e. spatial plan areas, are profiled by key settlements, inner-regional population distribution, socio-economic hubs, places of economic activities, etc.
- 2.3.4 To align the Denbighshire Local Development Plan with the Wales Spatial Plan, the Council took the decision to structure its land use plan in accordance with the five WSP themes:
- Building Sustainable Communities;
 - Promoting a Sustainable Economy;
 - Valuing our Environment;
 - Achieving Sustainable Accessibility; and
 - Respecting Distinctiveness
- 2.3.5 The Welsh planning system is currently in a phase of transition. There has been not only new primary legislation in Planning but also in the closely-related fields of built heritage and environmental protection. This led (and is likely to continue) to the introduction of subordinate regulations, national policy and guidance notes. A major change for strategic planning will be the introduction of a National Development Framework for Wales, which is going to replace the Wales Spatial Plan in about two years. Denbighshire will therefore need to have regard to the soon to be replaced Wales Spatial Plan whilst working towards compliance with the emerging National Development Framework when producing the replacement LDP for the County

2.3.6 The Wales Spatial Plan's chapter 'Achieving Sustainable Accessibility' starts with the vision that guides future developments in Wales:

'We will develop access in ways that encourage economic activity, widen employment opportunities, ensure quality services and balance the social, environmental and economic benefits that travel can have.'

Wales Spatial Plan (2008), p. 32

2.3.7 Modern transport infrastructure offers people the possibility of accessing a wider range of services and employment opportunities, but might also cause negative impacts on the natural and built environment. The following measures should be considered in every LDP in order to avoid negative impacts on the built and natural environment:

- employment and housing development around a strong integrated transport system. Policy BSC 5- Key Strategic Site- Bodelwyddan aims to incorporate a new highway network and make other offsite improvements including walking and cycling facilities and public transport links.
- maximising the use of existing developed land (brownfield priority) and promote walking and cycling for every day trips. Policy BSC 2- Brownfield development priority supports this issue and has 3 sites allocated which contribute to sustainable town regeneration and economic growth.
- future developments are placed with regard to the need for trips to local, regional and national service centres.

Appendix 1 provides a breakdown of National Policy priorities, the LDP vision, objectives and the derived policy.

2.4 National Development Framework for Wales

2.4.1 Derived from the provisions of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the National Development Framework for Wales (NDFfW) will provide direction for Strategic and Local Development Plans and support the determination of Developments of National Significance. Whilst the WSP was concerned with the 'sustainable development' principle, the NDFfW is going further in implementing the provisions of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

2.4.2 The National Development Framework for Wales preparation process has just started with a call from Welsh Government for evidence and potential projects that could be considered for inclusion. Welsh Government are planning to undertake consultation on the Issues, Options & Preferred Options for the National Development Framework in April 2018, with consultation on a draft Framework in July 2019, consideration by Welsh Government in April 2020 and publication of the final document anticipated in September 2020.

2.4.3 It is difficult to outline any effects of the emerging NDFfW on the revised LDP with very limited information available to the local planning authority at present.

2.5 The Wales Transport Strategy (2008)

2.5.1 The Wales Transport Strategy (WTS) has a key role to play in delivering the Welsh Government’s Strategic Agenda, and seeks to provide a stable, long-term framework for the development of all modes of transport as well as implications for other policy areas. This strategy links the Wales Spatial Plan, Welsh Government’s wider strategies and the development of plans at the local level.

Table 2: sets out how the Wales Transport Strategy links to other strategies developed for other policy areas.

Policy Area	Wales Transport Strategy seeks to
Culture and tourism	Ensure transport links contribute to Welsh culture and identity, help to build strong communities and maximise accessibility to sports, cultural and recreational facilities.
Economy	Create high-quality networks across Wales, improve business productivity and tackle the problem of poor access as a barrier to economic activity. Improve access to employment and the movement of goods and services.
Education, training and skills	Improve access to education and training with good transport opportunities.
Environment	Maximise the positive contribution transport makes to the environment and minimise the negative impact. In particular, ensure that transport plays its part in tackling climate change.
Health	Help promote healthy lifestyles such as more walking and cycling for short journeys. Reduce air pollution from traffic. Improve access for all to health services and facilities.
Planning	Maximise the consideration of access during the planning of new services and facilities. Influence and

	alter travel patterns, promote sustainable travel and contribute to environmental improvements.
Social justice	Maximise the contribution transport can make to promoting social inclusion, including access to services and helping to develop stronger and safer communities.

Source: The Wales Transport Strategy (2008), p. 2

2.5.2 One of the key priorities of the Wales Transport Strategy is to tackle poverty by maximising the contribution that effective and affordable transport services can make to tackling poverty and target investment to support improvements in accessibility for the most disadvantaged communities. Parts of Rhyl and Denbigh are highly ranked as some of the most deprived areas in Wales by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD, 2014).

2.5.3 A sub indicator of this Index is access to services. This now includes average travel times using private transport which has been incorporated alongside public transport. Rhyl West is one of the most deprived areas in Wales. Since WIMD 2011, its relative deprivation has increased substantially in the access to services domain which is a cause for concern. The WIMD also found that high deprivation was widespread across rural areas of Wales. Therefore, affordable transport services are important to help provide the opportunities for the residents of these areas to travel further afield for employment opportunities.

2.6 The North Wales Joint Local Transport Plan (Taith 2015)

2.6.1 The Local Transport Plan was jointly prepared by the North Wales Local Authorities in response to the Welsh Government requirement for LTPs to be submitted by the end of January 2015. The plan preparation was overseen by Taith as a Joint Committee of the local authorities for transport. The Plan covers a detailed programme from 2015-2020 and a framework for schemes until 2030. It sets out a range of interventions and schemes for all modes of travel, some applying across all authorities and some locally based. Schemes respond to the issues for transport in the region and complement those being developed at the national level and across borders.

2.6.2 The plan aims to address the following key issues for North Wales:

- The ability of the strategic road and rail corridors to provide the necessary good connectivity, for people and freight, within North Wales, to the ports and to the rest of the UK to support the economy and jobs, including tourism;
- The lack of resilience of the road and rail networks to planned and unplanned events including extreme weather;

- The need for good access to and between the three Enterprise Zones in North Wales;
- The lack of viable and affordable alternatives to the car to access key employment sites and other services; and
- The need for good road links to / from the trunk road network into the rural areas to help retain the viability of local businesses and support the Welsh language and culture.

2.6.3 Vision for Transport in North Wales:

‘The North Wales Local Authorities aim to remove barriers to economic growth, prosperity and well-being by delivering safe, sustainable, affordable and effective transport networks’.

2.6.4 The following priorities are set for future development proposals in Denbighshire:

- Improved links to employment: Coastal Denbighshire access to employment, for example to St. Asaph Business Park and Tir Llwyd Industrial Estate, Kinmel Bay
- Pedestrian safety improvements in Rhyl
- A525 Accessibility Improvements: Rhyl to Denbigh transport corridor
- Encouraging Sustainable Travel: Cheshire Border via Kelsterton College, Flint and Denbighshire Border walking and cycling facility
- Rhyl Town Centre Accessibility improvements: Improving traffic management in the town centre
- Improving walking and cycling routes for school pupils in East Rhyl
- Sustainable transport: Active Travel route between Ruthin and St. Asaph

2.7 Growth Vision and Strategy for the Economy of North Wales

2.7.1 The vision sets out a clear ambition for North Wales for infrastructure development, skills and employment, and business growth. The strategy aspires to increasing the value of the regional economy from £12.8 billion to £20 billion by 2035 with the creation of 120,000 new employment opportunities.

2.7.2 At the heart of the vision is the desire to improve the productivity, competitiveness and growth across North Wales. It aims to focus on improving infrastructure across the region, especially transport and digital, to facilitate and enable economic investment and to unlock the economic potential of North Wales. There is a need to improve access to employment sites and to address traffic congestion problems, especially in the cross border area.

- 2.7.3 A main focus set out in the Infrastructure Plan is the Route Improvement Project (£210m) along the A55/A494, improving the main access from North Wales to the North West of England. Other improvement projects include the A483/ A5 route between North Wales to the Midlands and South. Further focuses are around the A55 capacity such as congestion issues at key pinch points and resilience improvements. Localised access to employment opportunities are also considered in the plan.
- 2.7.4 There is also a need to invest in the electrification of the North Wales Railway Network and to make improvements in the speed, frequency and quality of rail services and the rolling stock. The Growth Track 360 Prospectus will outline the ambition for rail service improvements and connectivity with HS2 at Crewe hub.

2.8 The Wales Trunk Road Programme/ Rail Forward Programme (Nov 2009)

- 2.8.1 Both programmes do not propose any major projects within the County of Denbighshire over their plan period.

2.9 Denbighshire's Corporate Plan 2017- 2021: A Council, Close to the Community

- 2.9.1 The Corporate Plan sets out the overarching priorities for the term of the Council. Its priorities are supported, implemented and delivered through a number of strategies of which the Local Development Plan is a key instrument. The following corporate priorities are of relevance to the LDP theme 'Promoting a Sustainable Economy':
- Developing the local economy;
 - Ensuring access to good quality housing; and
 - Modernising the council to deliver efficiencies and improve services for our customers.
- 2.9.2 The Council will produce a new Corporate Plan for 2017 – 2022. Corporate priorities may be subject to change depending on political programmes, ambitions and the Council's political composition. It is however not expected that the principles will significantly change depending on details. After the new Corporate Plan has been adopted by the Council further work can be undertaken to look at local policy compliance and the likelihood of changes to LDP Objectives and local policies

2.10 Denbighshire's Economic and Community Ambition Strategy 2013-2023

2.10.1 North Denbighshire is served by the arterial transport corridors of the North Wales rail line and the A55 trunk road. Transport links within the remainder of the county are less strong and there are weaknesses in the arterial routes themselves that also need to be addressed. Connectivity across the county as a whole could be improved. High levels of both inward and outward commuting are key features of Denbighshire's local economy.

2.10.2 The majority of the population lives in the urban north of the county. Transport and accessibility can present issues for residents and businesses in some of the more rural areas of Denbighshire, and connectivity across the county remains a concern. A main outcome of the Strategy is to have effective transport connections that enable people to access jobs, and businesses to access markets/customers.

2.10.3 The Strategy highlights key issues and challenges:

- Transport infrastructure network has significant weaknesses, particularly for North-South road connections. Mainline rail services are restricted to the coastal North and are limited in frequency. The A55 trunk road provides good East-West connections but also risks by-passing Denbighshire's towns and communities. Congestion is an increasing problem. Significant investment in the strategic road network in and around Denbighshire does not currently appear as a priority in regional or national investment plans.
- Public transport services are limited in more rural areas and fragmented across the county as a whole. Public transport does not currently represent a realistic choice for many residents as a means of travel to and for work. Journey times, particularly to destinations outside the County, can be long with only very limited direct services available to key employment locations.
- Transport costs are increasingly expensive. Bus and rail fares are expected to rise faster than general inflation and fuel costs will continue to be affected by the volatile petroleum market. Changes to the subsidies available to bus operators risk both prices and coverage of bus services. Anecdotally, difficulty with travel arrangements is limiting the ability of businesses to recruit and residents to find suitable employment. Travel for work is also impacted adversely.

2.10.4 The Strategy proposes that a main focus should be working through TAITH (currently disbanded) identify the elements of the local transport infrastructure and network that risk limiting local economic development and ensure these are reflected in a revised Regional Transport Plan (now Joint Local Transport Plan) and other investment plans as appropriate. Improve integration of local public transport services and information to make them a more easily accessible, realistic option for travel to work.

2.11 Active Travel (Wales) Act (2013)

2.11.1 Welsh Government want to make walking and cycling and their associated health benefits the most attractive ways to get about.

2.11.2 Making walking and cycling safer and more practical encourages healthier lifestyles, reduces carbon emissions and improves our environment.

2.11.3 The Act sets out requirements for Local Authorities in Wales to:

- identify and map the network of routes within their areas that are safe and appropriate for walking and cycling;
- identify and map the enhancements that would be required to create a fully integrated network for walking and cycling and develop a prioritised list of schemes to deliver the network;
- deliver an enhanced network subject to budget availability and following due process;
- consider the potential for enhancing walking and cycling provision in the development of new road schemes;
- enhance walking and cycling provision in new road schemes unless it would be unreasonable to do so and have regard to the needs of walkers and cyclists in exercising a range of highway authority functions; and
- do this in a manner that will promote active travel journeys.

2.11.4 In accordance with the Active Travel (Wales) Act, Denbighshire has identified the following settlements which will feature in the first 3 points above, including; Denbigh, Rhyl, Prestatyn, Llangollen, St. Asaph, Ruthin, and Dyserth to Meliden.

2.12 A Walking and Cycling Action Plan for Wales (2009 – 2013)

2.12.1 A key aim of the Plan is to help secure a change in behaviour - so that more people, young and old, walk and cycle more often. This is the first main theme of the Action Plan and achieving this is dependent on enabling people to travel more sustainably through the provision of safe and appropriate walking and cycling infrastructure. Walking and cycling also make a contribution towards climate change targets and raising levels of physical activity.

2.12.2 A second theme is Sustainable Travel being encouraged through better Walking and Cycling Infrastructure- to create safe, attractive and convenient infrastructure for pedestrian and cycle travel. This demonstrates the importance of sustainable travel and the supports the suggestion that a new policy on Active Travel in the LDP Revision is required.

2.13 Adjacent Local Planning Authorities

2.13.1 Whilst the Local Development Plan is concerned with Denbighshire, the policies and actions in adjacent local authorities have the potential to impact on the County. It is therefore essential that these are considered during the development of the LDP. Denbighshire borders with six local planning authorities: Conwy, Snowdonia National Park, Flintshire, Wrexham, Gwynedd and Powys.

2.13.2 Conwy –LDP 2007-2022

2.13.3 Similar to Denbighshire, Conwy is in the process of starting to review its Local Development Plan that was adopted in October 2013. Conwy CBC focuses on future development in highly accessible locations, predominantly along the A55 and railway network within and on the edge to the Urban Development Strategy Area within the Coastal belt. Conwy CBC aims to safeguard land to promote accessible communities and encourage sustainable modes of travel such as public transport. Walking and Cycling will be promoted and the design and construction of this infrastructure will be improved to make walking and cycling more attractive, direct and safe.

2.13.4 The Conwy LDP seeks to make significant improvements to sustainable transport to improve walking and cycling options and their safety and to improve links to other sustainable modes of transport in the Plan Area and, in particular, to the Urban Development Strategy Area. To achieve this, the Council has worked with partners to secure developer contributions and seeks funding for improvements to cycling and walking, where required, to expand the Sustrans National Cycle Route 5 through the construction of a new cycle/pedestrian bridge connection at Foryd Harbour. This, now completed has provided a more complete network linking Conwy with Denbighshire.

2.13.5 Snowdonia National Park- LDP (July 2011-2022)

Snowdonia National Park Authority is currently in the process of reviewing the Eryri Local Development Plan. Public transport routes and services will be updated as part of the LDP revision.

2.13.6 Flintshire –Emerging LDP

Flintshire County Council recently consulted on issues and options for the Local Development Plan and is progressing towards the Preferred Strategy Stage. The Flintshire Unitary Development Plan was adopted on the 28th of September 2011. The Unitary Development Plan proposes improvements along the A55 transport corridor and towards the North West of England. It also mentions extensions to the National Cycle Network towards Holyhead that will cross the County of Denbighshire.

2.13.7 Wrexham – Deposit LDP 2 (2013-2018)

Wrexham’s LDP 1 was withdrawn in 2012 and the LDP 2 is currently in the deposit stage. It aims to have a deposit plan in place by the end of 2017. It recommends the existing joint policy and Supplementary Planning Guidance on the 11 mile Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site is carried forward in its current form for the Deposit Plan.

2.13.8 Gwynedd and Anglesey- Joint Local Development Plan

Both Councils anticipate adopting the Plan in July 2017. The Plan strategy broadly expects the anticipated transformational economic change arising from the unique scale of major infrastructure projects on the Isle of Anglesey and the Island’s Enterprise Zone status will be the biggest driver of spatial and social change over the Plan (2011 - 2026). As in Denbighshire, there are sections of former railways within Gwynedd that are suitable to be protected for use as sustainable travel routes, including walking and cycling. The extension to the A55 (trunk) road scheme for greater efficiency to and from the Holyhead Port and railway network will not have an impact on developments in Denbighshire.

2.12.9 Powys – Emerging LDP (2011-2026)

Powys’ Local Development Plan was subject to examination by an independent Planning Inspector in Spring 2017. Proposals contained in the emerging local plan are unlikely to have an impact on Denbighshire because of the topography and landscape designations along the Counties’ boundary, for example Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and two European protected sites for nature conservation.

3. Baseline Review

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Whilst the previous section focussed on policy and strategic documents, the purpose of the following paragraphs is to analyse any changes that have taken place in the County since the Denbighshire Local Development Plan was adopted in June 2013. Both sections will provide crucial evidence for the forthcoming stages of Plan production, when the Council is going to discuss proposed changes in greater detail.

3.1.2 The baseline information has been split into separate topics including, local transport infrastructure, future key developments, the natural environment and the tourism economy for ease of reference.

3.2 Local Transport Infrastructure

3.2.1 Local transport networks, i.e. structure and modal split, are often influenced and shaped by the population distribution in an area, trade relations between business enterprises and geomorphologic conditions.

3.2.2 There are approximately 94,691 people living in Denbighshire (Census population estimates 2015), the area of which is 844 km². The population distribution differs significantly within the county with an urbanised coastal strip around the coastal hubs of Prestatyn (16,783 inhabitants) and Rhyl (25,149 inhabitants), and a predominantly inland rural area with a number of locally important market towns and villages south of the A55 transport corridor.

3.2.3 The dichotomy between the urbanised coastal strip and mainly rural hinterland is also reflected in the public transport network of the County. The seaside towns of Prestatyn and Rhyl have well-established rail links via the North Wales Coast main railway line with services to Holyhead (and the ferry port to Dublin), Llandudno and Shotton in North Wales, services to Cardiff in South Wales, and services to London and Manchester (and the air ports) in England. In Denbighshire's rural area, public transport dominated by bus is focussed mainly on serving market towns in the Vale of Clwyd.

3.2.4 Three main roads cross the county which are part of the national trunk road network. The A55 forms an important transport route for all towns located alongside the coast in North Wales. Moreover, it is also part of the Euro Route E22 that links Scandinavia with Great Britain and Ireland. Like the A55 in the north, the A5 is a nationally important transport route for the market towns in the south of Denbighshire. It links London with Holyhead on the island Isle of Anglesey. Finally, the A494 runs from the Chester area in the east through the market towns of Ruthin and Corwen to Dolgellau in the south.

- 3.2.5 Strongly connected with the local tourism industry is the Llangollen Canal, which is part of the Shropshire Union Canal network and runs to the designated Pontcysyllte Aquaduct World Heritage Site in Wrexham County Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council. The canal in itself is not used for the transport of goods anymore, but very popular for leisure activities such as canoeing and boating.
- 3.2.6 St Asaph Business Park is the County's premier business park with a focus for firms that operate in the optoelectronic sector, and located close to the A55 in the north of the Country. In line with the large concentration of population in the north, the largest shopping centres are Rhyl and Prestatyn, with increased car-based shopping trips at the weekend and in peak season.

3.3 Future Key Developments

- 3.3.1 The Wales Spatial Plan, North East Wales Area, identifies a hub between the seaside towns and villages in the north of the County, and St Asaph, which provides a focus for future employment, housing, retail and provides continued support and opportunity for growth and regeneration for a wider area.
- 3.3.2 Denbighshire's Key Strategic Site is located in Bodelwyddan close to the nationally important A55 and North Wales Coast railway corridor. The site adjoins the settlement of Bodelwyddan to the west, and is close to the St Asaph Business Park in the southeast. This strategic mixed use site is likely to have a number of benefits such as reduced reliance on the private car, using existing transport patterns and improvements to the existing road and public transport network.
- 3.3.3 Housing developments and principal employment sites are allocated within the development boundaries of existing settlements with the objective of integrating these into local communities and to make use of existing transport networks.

3.4 The Natural Environment

- 3.4.1 The County has a high quality natural environment with conservation areas and protected wildlife species and habitats. Many of these have national or international recognition and protected status, such as the Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Area of Outstanding Beauty (AOB). There are also several Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) covering parts of Denbighshire. Particularly, the area around the Llangollen Canal in the south east is designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

- 3.4.2 In conjunction with the topography of the County, the variety of environmentally protected areas sets further constraints to future transport infrastructure planning. Since new roads are not proposed within the Local Development Plan, the County aims to establish an efficient and sustainable transport system by road improvements, strengthening public transport and allocating developments close to existing settlements.
- 3.4.3 Denbighshire Local Development Plan also contributes to the minimisation of negative effects on its natural surroundings by reducing the necessity for individual car-based trips that cause air pollution and green house gas emissions contributing to global warming and climate change. This is in accordance with the Active Travel (Wales) Act (2013).

3.5 The Tourism Economy

- 3.5.1 Denbighshire has a diverse tourism economy - from the coastal resorts of Rhyl and Prestatyn, a wealth of attractive market towns set within a high quality environment, and a growing reputation in the outdoor activity sector. The Denbighshire Tourism Growth Plan (2015) realises the opportunities in walking and cycling activities to enhance the economy.
- 3.5.2 The tourism economy encompasses a variety of elements that contribute to making a successful visitor destination such as the infrastructure that helps to reinforce and shape the sense of place and make it an easy place to visit, the signs, the transport, parking and public orientation etc.
- 3.5.3 An important infrastructure project in relation to the tourism economy is the extension of the 'Llangollen Railway' from Carrog to Corwen. It makes use of a dismantled railway line, and strengthens Llangollen's position as one of the most attractive places to visit in North Wales.
- 3.5.4 Like the extension of the Llangollen Railway, disused and dismantled railway lines are excellent infrastructure elements that can be re-used in a modern, environmental friendly uses such as walking or cycling paths. They can enable community regeneration and also positively contribute to climate change.
- 3.5.5 The area around Loggerheads Country Park is intensively used by cyclists and walkers. The nationally well-known 'Offa's Dyke Path' runs along the Clwyd Mountains and attracts many visitors throughout the year. Therefore, development proposals which aim at improving or extending the local, regional or national network of walking and cycling paths are welcomed by the County Council. Integrating landscape protection and outdoor infrastructure is an important challenge for land use planning.

3.6 New Transport Infrastructure (LDP Policy ASA 1)

- 3.6.1 The Pre-Deposit Local Development Plan identified a problem regarding access to transport away from the coast and A55 corridor. Both public and private transport networks are described as relatively poor. LDP policy ASA 1 allows for new transport proposals or improvements to existing infrastructure, which may be required, to alleviate existing highway problems or to facilitate major developments. This policy is not restricted to consideration of roads or road improvements only. It also covers sustainable forms of (public) transport.
- 3.6.2 In light of the three major challenges spatial planning is faced with: climate change, economic globalisation and demographic changes, the overarching objective of all future transport development will be improving the accessibility for Denbighshire’s inhabitants to information and public services such as health care centres, schools and community facilities.
- 3.6.3 Denbighshire County Council was a member of The Taith Transport Consortium and was involved in the development of the North Wales Regional Transport Plan at various stages. The consortia disbanded in 2014 and responsibility has been passed over to the Local Authorities and The North Wales Joint Local Plan has been developed. Therefore, development proposals of a significant scale, e.g. road schemes, will be considered in light of their inclusion in the North Wales Joint Local Transport Plan.
- 3.6.4 Denbighshire’s tourism economy will be supported in providing safe, accessible routes for walking, cycling and horse riding. Several routes are planned across the County, which incorporate the National Cycle Network (NCN). Safeguarding land and dismantled railway lines assist in the joining up of the NCN as well as ensuring links to destinations and routes of local or national importance.
- 3.6.5 The table below outlines the transport infrastructure completions over the plan period between 2013 and 2017. These include improvements and creation of new Active Travel Routes (ATRs) completion of the railway extension in Llangollen and new walking paths between developments.

Table 1: Transport Infrastructure completions over the last 4 years of the LDP.

Year	Completions
2013/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Llangollen Canal Towpath Works• Pedestrian and Cycle bridge links to route NCN Route 5 at Foryd Harbour, Rhyl• Route between Chirk and Llangollen• Rhewl to Ruthin ATR (Active Travel Route)• Station Walk Ruthin- New ATR• John’s Drive Bodelwyddan- New ATR

2014/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Kinmel Street Car Park, Ruthin- New ATR • Unnamed access road, to rear of Frederick Street, Rhyl- New ATR • Ffordd Las, Rhyl- New ATR • Warren Road/Westbourne Ave, Rhyl- New ATR
2015/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cefndy Road, Rhyl- New ATR • Westbourne Avenue/Wellington Road, Rhyl- New ATR • Extension of Llangollen Railway to Corwen
2016/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denbigh to Henllan- New section of ATR • Tesco, Ruthin- New ATR to rear of store • Ysgol Brynhyfryd, Ruthin- New ATR to front and rear of school

4. Previous Annual Monitoring Reports

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Denbighshire County Council Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021 (LDP) was adopted on 4th June 2013. It provides a clear vision on how new development can address the challenges faced by the County and where, when and how much new development can take place up to 2021.

4.1.2 Under the obligations of section 76 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended, and section 37 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005, the Council is duty bound to produce an annual monitoring report for submission to Welsh Government (WG) by 31st October each year and ensure it is publicised on its website.

4.1.3 This section draws together the findings of local policy performance on the basis of LDP annual monitoring reports that have already been submitted to Welsh Government in previous years.

4.2 Local Policy Performance

4.2.1 Local policy performance is annually monitored by means of the LDP Monitoring Framework (AMR). During the period **XX – XX**, the Council did not have to start any enforcement proceedings due to breach of planning condition relating to highways matters. The local planning authority consulted the Highways department on about 240 planning applications throughout the same period of time.

4.2.2 Local policies BSC 2 and ASA 2 provide the local planning authority with the opportunity to negotiate commuted sums should new development results in the need to bring forward improvements to transport infrastructure. Whilst no commuted sums were collected in the monitoring period 2015-2016, the Council successfully negotiated a commuted sum of £25,000 towards improvements to cycle and pedestrian linkages in the Rhyl area previously.

4.2.3 There has been no report in breach of planning conditions regarding the provision of maximum parking spaces in new developments. See the SPG on Parking Standards in New Developments for more on compliance.

4.3 Provision of sustainable transport facilities (LDP Policy ASA 2)

4.3.1 This policy is closely related to LDP Policy BSC 3 'Securing infrastructure in new developments' and expects developers to contribute to improvements for sustainable forms of transport. It is an important element in ensuring that developments likely to generate an increase in trips contribute to reducing carbon emissions, whilst improving accessibility for those unable to (or who choose not to depend on the) use a car.

4.3.2 It contributes to LDP objective no. 5 which emphasises a reduction in the need to travel and the promotion of sustainable transport in order to access places such as employment sites, retail areas and public service facilities.

4.4.3 In conjunction with the objectives set out in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) report, extensions to the local and regional walking and cycling networks support the development of the County, as it:

- promotes community health and well-being,
- enhances existing and promotes the development of high quality recreation leisure and provide opportunities for people to experience and respect the value of the natural environment,
- improves accessibility to education, employment, health, homes and community services for all sectors of the community through modes of transport other than car, and
- makes the best use of previously developed land, with regard to dismantled railway lines, and existing buildings in locations served by sustainable transport modes.

4.5.4 The SPG- Planning Obligations specifies the thresholds for contributions required for developments with regards to traffic, transport and highways initiatives following a Transport Assessment. However, the levels of contributions will be calculated on a site by site basis.

4.4 Parking Standards (LDP Policy ASA 3)

- 4.4.1 LDP policy ASA 3 aims to ensure sufficient parking spaces for any new development or changes of use of a site, including parking spaces for mobility impaired people. Where access to any form of sustainable transport is available, site owners and occupiers are encouraged to make use of it. These facilities are taken into account when determining the maximum standard for parking spaces.
- 4.4.2 Further information on parking standards, transport schemes and accessibility statements for individual premises can be found in Supplementary Planning Guidance Parking Standards in New Developments.

5. Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Appraisal

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The Local Development Plan is a statutory land use plan that has to be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and a Habitats Regulations Appraisal. The Council incorporated both assessments into a single document, i.e. 'The Sustainability Appraisal Report', when producing its first LDP in 2009. This report detailed the social, economic and environmental objectives by which development proposals were assessed and what opportunities for improving plan performance were identified at that point in time.
- 5.1.2 Whilst the overall sustainability of the Denbighshire LDP is regularly monitored as part of the LDP, this section looks at the greater framework of SA/SEA screening to identify any changes in the criteria that were used to assess individual LDP elements in the first place.
- 5.1.3 Whilst not applicable in 2013, the revised LDP is going to comply with the requirements provided by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This may have an effect on how future SA/SEA assessments are conducted in support of the Plan. Further information will be made available as the revised Plan progresses towards adoption.

5.2 Sustainability Appraisal (Scoping Report)

- 5.2.1 The Sustainability Appraisal incorporates the Strategic Environmental Assessment in Wales. Its purpose is to appraise the impacts of emerging plans against a number of thematic objectives, responsible for the environmental, economic and social effects of development. Annex 1 of the SEA Directive classifies areas which sustainability appraisals should pay regard to in order to meet the requirements of the Directive.

5.2.2 The scoping report has been drafted to meet the stages outlined in the ODPM guidance. Each of the Strategic Environmental Assessment topic areas will be addressed in a separate section, which introduces the legislative framework and the local context related to that topic. Any notable sustainability issues that arise in each section will be noted, and indicators will be defined which will assist in testing proposals in the Local Development Plan to understand likely impacts.

5.2.2 Following the receipt of consultee comments, Denbighshire will continue with the preparation of the replacement LDP. The SA / SEA will assess the revision options and make recommendations about how the sustainability performance of the plan could be enhanced. The output from the process will be an initial Sustainability Appraisal Report that will be consulted upon alongside the draft replacement plan at Pre-Deposit LDP stage.

5.3 **Habitat Regulations Assessment (Update July 2017)**

5.3.1 The purpose of the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening exercise was to re-visit previously conducted HRAs with regard to the Denbighshire Local Development Plan 2006 -2021 (LDP); identify changes to individual European sites; and look at the effectiveness of previously suggested avoidance, cancellation or mitigation measures. It was not aimed at compliance with HRA methodology and legislative requirements but at setting the framework for future work.

5.3.2 None of the local policies and planning proposals contained in the LDP have caused significant effects on any European site since Plan adoption. Proposed measures to offset their occurrence are (where necessary) operational and effective. Nevertheless, further investigations must be carried out in opportunities to improve the air quality in the south of the County; especially the reduction of nitrogen depositions.

5.3.3 It was concluded that upcoming HRAs will additionally have to have regard to the proposed extension of the 'Bae Lerpwl / Liverpool Bay' SPA and new information on 'Coedwigoedd Dyffryn Alun / Alyn Valley Woods' SAC. These changes may have an effect on local policy and the potential forms of land use.

6. References

Denbighshire County Council: Denbighshire's Corporate Plan (2017- 2021)

Denbighshire County Council: Denbighshire's Economic and Community Ambition Strategy (2013-2023)

North Wales Economic Ambition Board (2016) A Growth vision for the economy of North Wales

Taith (2015) North Wales Joint Local Transport Plan

Welsh Government (2009) A Walking and Cycling Action Plan for Wales (2009-2013)

Welsh Government (2013): Active Travel (Wales) Act

Welsh Government (2013): National Development Framework

Welsh Government (2008): One Wales: Connecting the nation – The Wales Transport Strategy

Welsh Government (2008): People, Places, Futures - The Wales Spatial Plan 2008 Update

Welsh Government (2016): Planning Policy Wales, Edition 9

Welsh Government (2008) Technical Advice Note 18: Transport

Welsh Government (2014) Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

Appendix 1 Links from Wales Spatial Plan and National Policy to Denbighshire LDP – Achieving Sustainable Accessibility

WSP Priority	National Policy	LDP Vision	LDP Objective	LDP Policy
Equality of opportunities to access jobs and public services	Accessibility for all - PPW 4.11.11/ TAN 18	Denbighshire will have a vibrant urban coast, with thriving market towns and rural areas. The housing and employment needs of the County will be met and the high quality environment protected.	LDP Objective No. 5	LDP Policy ASA 1 - New transport infrastructure
	Ensuring access for all - PPW 3.3/ TAN 18		LDP Objective No. 6	LDP Policy ASA 2 - Provision of sustainable transport
	Maintenance and accessibility of areas and facilities -		LDP Objective No. 12	LDP Policy ASA 3 - Parking standards
	PPW 11.1.8			LDP Policy BSC 12 - Community facilities
Transport implications of proposals should be fully assessed	Sustainable settlement strategy: locating new development –	New development sites will demonstrate high levels of sustainable development and seek to achieve low, or even zero, carbon status.	LDP Objective No 5	LDP Policy ASA 1 - New transport infrastructure
	PPW 4.7			LDP Policy RD 1 - Sustainable and good standard design,
	Car parks to meet strategic aims - PPW 8.4.5			
Responding to and mitigating the effects of climate change	Sustainable settlement strategy: locating new development-	Denbighshire will be making a significant contribution to managing climate change through the promotion of renewable energy technologies and innovative design, the requirement for high levels of sustainable...	LDP Objective No. 8	LDP Policy ASA 1 - New transport infrastructure
	PPW 4.7		LDP Objective No. 16	LDP Policy ASA 2 - Provision of sustainable transport facilities
	Renewable and Low Carbon Energy PPW 12.8			LDP Policy VOE 2 - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Area of Outstanding Beauty
	Housing in locations accessible to walking, cycling and public transport			

	PPW 9.1.2 Minimising the need to travel and increasing accessibility by modes other than the private car - PPW 4.7.4 Supporting Public Transport PPW 8.3 Promoting Active Travel- PPW 8.2			
Responding to and mitigating the effects of climate change <i>(continues)</i>	Minimise the adverse impacts of new transport infrastructure - PPW 8.5.7 Mitigation of environmental impacts - TAN 18	...construction and development.		
Improved access to information and services through electronic means	Telecommunication Systems - TAN 19	N/A	LDP Objective No. 12	LPD Policy BSC 12 - Community facilities