

Strategic Planning Group

Report to	Strategic Planning Group
Date of Meeting	23 February 2023
Lead Member	Councillor Win Mullen-James – Lead Member for Local Development and Planning
Report Author	Lara Griffiths, Principal Planning Officer
Report	Replacement LDP Draft Preferred Strategy Report of Consultation

1. What is the report about

- 1.1 The report sets out the role of draft Preferred Strategy, what it contains, the consultation undertaken and the key points arising from the consultation. The attached Preferred Strategy Consultation Report provides detail on the consultation carried out, the responses to the consultation and recommended amendments to the Preferred Strategy.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1 To provide a report on the Preferred Strategy consultation and proposed changes for discussion and recommendation to Cabinet and Council.

3. What are the recommendations?

- a) That members of the Strategic Planning Group recommend the Preferred Strategy as amended by this report to Cabinet and Council for final approval.
- b) That members of the Strategic Planning Group recommend that the approved Preferred Strategy as amended by this report form the basis for developing the Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan for consultation.

4. Report Details

- 4.1 The draft Preferred Strategy was approved by Council for consultation on 14th May 2019 and consultation on draft Preferred Strategy and Candidate Sites Register took place between 8 July 2019 and 30 August 2019. The deadline was extended for City, Town and Community Councils to allow those who didn't meet prior to the close of the consultation to comment.
- 4.2 Over 2,850 responses were received in relation to the consultation on the Candidate Site Register and the draft Preferred Strategy for the LDP, of these 858 related to the Preferred Strategy. Responses have been received from statutory consultees, governmental organisations, non-governmental organisations, city, town and community councils, businesses, landowners, and members of the public. In addition, there have been updates and changes to the evidence base which have led to recommended changes which will be reflected in the Deposit LDP. Where there have been changes in national policy or the evidence base that have resulted in changes to the Preferred Strategy these are also highlighted in the report.
- 4.3 The Preferred Strategy Consultation Report which can be found at Appendix 1 sets out the details of the consultation undertaken; the responses received, and the recommended amendments to the replacement LDP Preferred Strategy. All of the proposed amendments have been assessed via the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment and the results have shaped the final proposed amendments.

5. Key changes proposed

- 5.1 A number of key changes are proposed to the Preferred Strategy to reflect comments received following consultation, together with updated background evidence. If approved by Members, the amended Preferred Strategy will form the basis for the development of the next stage, the Deposit Replacement LDP.

LDP Vision & Objectives

- 5.2 To reflect comments received and the Council's declaration of a Climate Change and Ecological Emergency and adopted Climate and Ecological Change Strategy, issues relating to climate change will be given greater prominence in the LDP.

LDP Vision

Recommendation – that the LDP Vision be amended to include climate change with reference to responsibly using finite resources in the Deposit Plan.

LDP Objectives

Recommendation – that LDP Objective 8 be amended to include reference to mitigation, reducing carbon emissions; renewable energy and Active Travel in the Deposit Plan.

Level of Growth

- 5.3 The level of growth proposed in the Preferred Strategy was largely supported by consultation responses received. The number of new homes proposed exceeds the most recent WG household projections and allows for 15% contingency. It is considered that this level of growth will meet the County's needs and is deliverable.
- 5.4 There were few comments made directly on the employment land growth figures as part of the consultation. The draft Preferred Strategy set out an overall level of growth comprising 68 ha of employment land to accommodate a forecasted land requirement of 47.6 ha. This was based on the best available evidence at the time. The economy has fundamentally changed since 2019. Besides the effects of altered trading arrangements with the European Union, the Covid-19 pandemic has affected demand, the production process and locational factors for manufacturing and office accommodation.
- 5.5 In 2021, the Council carried out an update to the previous employment land study to identify any likely variations in forecasted demand. While the 2019 study forecasted an annual need for 2.38ha for the period 2018 to 2033, the updated 2021 study projected an annual need of 1.92ha. This would give a total 15 year requirement of 28.8ha. The Study also proposes that a 5 year 'buffer' should be included in the requirement, using the average annual delivery rate since 2018 of 0.4ha this would

equate to 2.0ha, giving a total forecasted land requirement of 31ha. It is therefore proposed to amend the Preferred Strategy to reflect this.

- 5.6 It is proposed to 'over' provide to meet forecast land requirements to allow for slippage and provision of a variety of sites across the County by allocating 41ha of land for employment development. In addition the LDP will have to identify existing employment sites and include policies seeking to protect them for employment use. It is important to note that demand and current land take for B Class uses in Denbighshire is limited. The main employment sectors in the County are in government services and hospitality. The LDP will contain detailed policies to support the growth of these key sectors which do not require B use land to prosper.

The proposed changes to the Preferred Strategy are summarised below:

Recommendation –The Preferred Strategy will make provision for a level of growth comprising 41 ha of employment land to accommodate a forecasted land requirement of 31 ha. This will be supported by land for 3,775 new homes to meet a housing requirement of 3,275 dwellings.

Spatial Strategy

- 5.7 A key change proposed to the draft Spatial Strategy for the replacement LDP is the removal of the Bodelwyddan Strategic Site. In light of the decision of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board to remove the site from the Growth Deal programme, it is considered very unlikely that the strategic site can now be delivered. Significant up-front infrastructure requirements mean that without growth deal funding delivery would not be viable. It is proposed to amend the Spatial Strategy to remove Bodelwyddan and refer to climate change and environmental capacity.

Recommendation - Having regard to Placemaking and the principles of sustainable development, which include consideration of available infrastructure, the Spatial Strategy will focus development in the top three tiers of the settlement hierarchy (main centres; local centres, and villages) with limited growth in un-serviced settlements that focusses on meeting local needs. Development shall be resilient to the effects of climate change and be delivered within the means of the natural environment.

Key policies

- 5.8 Consultation responses suggested additional policies covering topics such as carbon neutrality and action on climate change and Active Travel. To reflect comments received and the intention of ensuring greater emphasis on issues relating to climate change in the LDP, it is proposed to include additional policies in the Deposit LDP. Comments received also stressed the need to consider retail opportunities in rural areas as well as town centres and policies will reflect this. The key policy relating to Bodelwyddan Strategic Site will also be removed. Evidence has demonstrated that affordable housing delivery since the start of the LDP plan period merits raising the target to ensure that it remains ambitious and better meets affordable housing need.

Recommendations –

That additional key policies relating to climate change; reducing carbon emissions and renewable energy be included in the Deposit LDP.

Additional policies relating to retailing in smaller settlements to be included in the Deposit LDP.

Delete key policy ‘Bodelwyddan Strategic Site’ and remove other references to the site in the Preferred Strategy.

Increase the target for affordable housing, informed by evidence of delivery and the results of the latest Local Housing Market Assessment.

6. Reporting back on the Preferred Strategy – timeline

- 6.1 Amendments to the Preferred Strategy will require the approval of Cabinet and Council before being progressed to form the basis of the Deposit LDP.
- 6.2 Comments made on the draft Preferred Strategy are not reported to the Planning Inspector at Examination stage and any on-going objections in will need to be made again at the Deposit stage. This is a requirement of the national process and not a matter of local discretion.

6.3 The proposed reporting timetable is set out below:

Strategic Planning Group	23 rd February 2023
Cabinet Briefing	6 th March 2023
Cabinet	28 th March 2023
Council	9 th May 2023