

The Vale of Glamorgan Local Development Plan Vision Paper

Executive Summary

Part 6 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Act) requires each local planning authority in Wales to prepare a Local Development Plan (LDP) to replace the existing system of Unitary Development Plans. In line with the Council's Approved Delivery Agreement the Council intends to formally commence work on its LDP in January 2007. The LDP will set out the Council's land use strategy for the Vale of Glamorgan over the period 2011 –2026 and will ultimately supersede the Vale of Glamorgan Adopted Unitary Development Plan 1996 – 2011.

A key feature of the new development planning system is to encourage greater synergy between LDPs and community strategies by ensuring that LDPs express in land use terms the aspirations of the Community Strategy. The Council's approved Delivery Agreement, proposes that the Council will assess the appropriateness of the vision of the Community Strategy 2003-2013, as a vision for the LDP.

This paper briefs members on the suitability of the Council's Community Strategy vision for the emerging LDP, by assessing how the vision satisfies the requirements for the preparation of LDPs as contained within national planning policy and guidance. It is recommended that the vision contained within the Vale of Glamorgan Community Strategy (2003 - 2013) be adopted as the guiding vision for the Vale of Glamorgan LDP (2011-2026). The Vale of Glamorgan LDP Vision (2011-2026) therefore is proposed as follows:

"The Vale is a place that is safe, clean and attractive, where individuals and communities have opportunities to improve their health, prosperity and well-being, and where there is a strong sense of community in which local groups and individuals have the capacity and incentive to make an effective contribution to the future of the area"

1. Background

- 1.1** Part 6 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Act) places a duty on each local authority in Wales to prepare a Local Development Plan (LDP). The Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005 (the Regulations) prescribe the form and content of the LDP and make provision for the procedure to be followed in their preparation. The LDP will set out the Council's land use strategy for the Vale of Glamorgan over the period 2011 –2026 and will ultimately supersede the Vale of Glamorgan Adopted Unitary Development Plan 1996 – 2011.
- 1.2** Earlier this year, the Council prepared and consulted on the Delivery Agreement, which sets out the Council's programme for the preparation of the LDP and provides details of its Community Involvement Scheme (CIS). The Delivery Agreement was submitted to the Welsh Assembly Government in July 2006 and subsequently approved in August 2006. In terms of the LDP vision, the Delivery Agreement states that the Council will develop a clear vision of what sort of place the Vale wants to become in January 2007 in consultation with members and the key stakeholder working group. Once agreed, the vision will be used to identify strategic options and develop a preferred strategy, which will be reported to Cabinet in Summer 2007.

2. Purpose of the Paper

- 2.1** The main purpose of this paper is to consider the suitability of adopting the Council's Community Strategy vision for the emerging LDP and to make appropriate recommendations to members. In doing so, it will examine the extent to which the Community Strategy vision satisfies the requirements of national planning guidance and set out the next steps that the Council is required to undertake in order to develop the vision further through the identification of strategic options and the development of a preferred strategy.
- 2.2** In considering how the LDP should guide and manage future development, it is important that the Council has a clear vision of the type of place the Plan aspires to create. This has already been achieved with partners through the development of the Vale of Glamorgan Community Strategy (2003-2013). The Community Strategy vision for the Vale is a place:

“that is safe, clean and attractive, where individuals and communities have opportunities to improve their health, prosperity and well-being, and where there is a strong sense of community in which local groups and individuals have the capacity and incentive to make an effective contribution to the future of the area” (page 6 refers)

- 2.3** A key feature of the new LDP system is the emphasis on creating synergy between LDPs and Community Strategies. Consequently, in developing a vision for the LDP, the Council needs to consider the merits of adopting and taking forward the Community Strategy vision as the vision for the LDP up to 2026. However, it should be noted that when preparing a LDP, national planning guidance requires local planning authorities to ensure that the LDP vision is “fit for purpose”, that is, it can be delivered through land use planning. The following sections will explore this issue in more detail.

3. The Role of the LDP Vision

- 3.1** In developing its strategy for the LDP, the Council is required to adhere to the requirements of Local Development Plans Wales (2005), which stipulate that LDP strategies should include:

“ the vision, a concise statement of the Plans key aims and objectives, the meaning of achieving them (including key policies, the spatial strategy, and key targets (or indicators)...The strategy should provide a transparent guide to what will be achieved by the implementation of the plan”. (Paragraph 2.10, page 10 refers)

- 3.2** In this regard, the role of the vision within the LDP strategy is to clarify the core purpose of the Plan, providing a framework for developing policies and for measuring its development and success. The vision is therefore a crucial element in the development of the LDP strategy and objectives, since these will need to flow from a clear understanding of what sort of place the Council wishes the Vale of Glamorgan to become.

4. Policy Context: The Integration of the LDP with the Community Strategy

- 4.1** The Act places a requirement on local planning authorities to take into consideration its Community Strategy during the preparation of its LDP. This approach is also reflected within Local Development Plan Wales (2005), which states that:

“The LDP should seek to address the unique economic, environmental and social characteristics, opportunities and issues of the area. It should be based on a vision of the future which should be clear, realistic and based on the objectives and priorities of the relevant community strategy/ies” (Paragraph 2.10, page 10 refers)

- 4.2** Similarly, the Local Development Plan Manual (2006) advises that:

“The LDP vision and objectives will flow from having a clear view of what sort of place the authority wants to become...This should have been achieved within the authority and partners through the preparation of the Community Strategy...” (Paragraph 4, page 6 refers)

- 4.3** In accordance with the above policy and guidance, the Council’s approved Delivery Agreement states that the Council will assess the appropriateness of adopting the Community Strategy vision, as the vision for the LDP. Although local authorities are encouraged to adopt this approach, the Local Development Plan Manual (2006) indicates that:

“If the relevant overarching document is out of date or of limited spatial relevance, the authority will need to generate a spatial vision for the LDP and ensure that it conforms with the overall view of the future direction of the local authority prior to developing LDP objectives...This vision should be well rounded so that there should be a balance between economic, social and environmental objectives”. (Paragraph 5.5, page 48 refers)

- 4.4** It is therefore essential to ensure that the Community Strategy vision satisfies the above criteria prior to deciding whether to adopt this vision for the LDP. In order to determine this, the following criteria derived from the guidance contained within the Local Development Plan Manual (2006) has been used to assess the suitability of the Community Strategy vision:

- o The vision is up to date, and has wide spatial relevance.
- o The vision flows from having a clear view of what sort of place the authority wants to become.
- o The vision is well rounded so that there should be a balance between economic, social and environmental objectives.

- 4.5** Undertaking this assessment will also ensure that in developing the LDP vision the Council has shown regard to the Community Strategy at the earliest stages of the Plan’s preparations. This is particularly important, since this is one of the key points of “soundness” which the Planning Inspectorate will apply when assessing the LDP prior to its submission for public examination¹.

5. Assessing the Compatibility between the Community Strategy Vision and the LDP Vision

- o *The vision is up to date, and has wide spatial relevance.*

- 5.1** The Community Strategy provides a vision for the type of place the Vale of Glamorgan will be in 2013. The overlapping periods of the Community Strategy and the LDP satisfy the requirement of being relevant to the LDP beyond its intended adoption in 2011. Furthermore, any subsequent

¹ A Guide to the Examination of Local Development Plan (Planning Inspectorate Wales 2006) Page 11

review of the Community Strategy can be accommodated by the Council's ability to ensure that the LDP responds to new circumstances through annual monitoring of the LDP, thus ensuring that synergy between both documents is maintained.

- 5.2** The role of the LDP is to realise those elements of the Community Strategy that relate to or require the development and use of land, where it conforms to national and international policy and obligations. In this regard, the Community Strategy is supported by actions based on five broad themes of **Economic Regeneration, Lifelong Learning, Community Safety, Health and Wellbeing, and Environmental Improvement**. These themes can be supported through the LDP in land use terms at the strategic level either through the LDP's aims and objectives and/or through specific land allocations and policies.

- o *The vision flows from having a clear view of what sort of place the authority wants to become*

- 5.3** This has been achieved through the Community Strategy, which was prepared by the Vale of Glamorgan Partnership, whose members consist of public, private and voluntary organisations, including the Vale of Glamorgan Council itself, and through extensive consultation with the local community. For this reason, it can be argued that the overarching vision of the Community Strategy encapsulates the aspirations of the local community.

- o *The vision is well rounded so that there should be a balance between economic, social and environmental objectives.*

- 5.4** The Community Strategy has been developed out of an understanding of the key economic, social and environmental issues affecting the Vale of Glamorgan. It also recognises how economic, social and environmental factors interact with each other with both positive and negative outcomes across the Vale. How the vision seeks to address these issues is also considered within the Strategy:

“Overall, the Vale of Glamorgan is comparatively wealthy and many of its residents enjoy a high standard of living in a good quality environment. However, there are areas within the Vale, which suffer from significant economic, environmental and social difficulties such as high unemployment, sub-standard housing, low educational achievement, poor health and high levels of crime. Our vision is to target those areas for improvement while seeking to conserve and enhance the best features of the Vale so as to raise the quality of life for all who live in the area or visit it for work or recreation”.

(Paragraph 4, page 6 refers)

5.5 The balance between economic, social and environmental issues is articulated further by 5 broad cross cutting aims that seek to:

- Develop a **diversified and sustainable economy**, which will provide a wide range of jobs, increase labour market participation and raise skill levels, where employers take seriously their environmental and social responsibilities.
- Promote **lifelong learning opportunities**, which break down barriers to participation and provide opportunities for all members of the community.
- Reduce levels of **crime and disorder**, targeting the social and economic factors, which can often encourage anti-social activities.
- Provide improved and better co-ordinated opportunities for **health, social care and well-being**, tackling the disadvantages of vulnerable people and encouraging individuals to develop healthier lifestyles.
- Promote a **sustainable future** by ensuring environmental resources are used wisely, the rich bio-diversity of habitats and species is protected and enhanced and people are encouraged to value their local environment.
(Paragraph 5, page 6 refers)

5.6.1 Consequently, the vision and 5 broad aims have been developed to reflect the wider community's aspirations for the Community Strategy to holistically tackle the wide range of economic, social and environmental issues as they affect the Vale of Glamorgan, thus satisfying the need for the LDP vision to provide a vision that balances economic, social and environmental objectives.

6. Conclusion & Recommendations

6.1 The above assessment has highlighted that the Community Strategy accords with the requirements set out in Local Development Plan Manual (2006) for the LDP vision to be based on an up to date vision that has wide spatial relevance, provides a clear view of what kind of place the Vale of Glamorgan aspires to be and balances economic, social and environmental objectives.

6.2 It is therefore recommended that the vision contained within the Vale of Glamorgan Community Strategy (2003 - 2013) is adopted as the guiding vision for the Vale of Glamorgan Local Development Plan (2011-2026). The Community Strategy vision for the Vale is a place:

“that is safe, clean and attractive, where individuals and communities have opportunities to improve their health, prosperity and well-being, and where there is a strong sense of community in which local groups and individuals have the capacity and incentive to make an effective contribution to the future of the area”