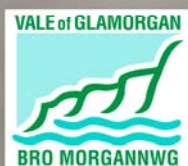




LOCAL
DEVELOPMENT
PLAN

SPATIAL OPTIONS
BACKGROUND PAPER



December 2007

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Part 6 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 contains Wales specific clauses for the framework of a new system of Local Development Plans (LDPs) which will replace Unitary Development Plans (UDPs). In accordance with its powers under the Act, the National Assembly for Wales produced The Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005, which set out in more detail the statutory procedures that the Council as Local Planning Authority have to follow in its preparation and adoption of the LDP.
- 1.2 In February 2006, the Council resolved to commence work on a new LDP for the Vale of Glamorgan, which will cover the period 2011 to 2026 (minute number C2288 refers). Once adopted, the LDP will supersede the Vale of Glamorgan Adopted UDP 1996-2011 (UDP) and set out the planning policies against which development proposals will be assessed.
- 1.3 The LDP timetable and community involvement scheme is set out in the Revised Delivery Agreement (October 2007) which can be viewed on the Council's web site, www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk . The Council is currently at the pre-deposit stage and has identified strategic options and developed a draft preferred strategy for consultation (Regulations 14 and 15 refer). The draft preferred strategy must meet the LDP vision and objectives and accord with the sustainability appraisal (SA) framework contained within the SA Scoping Report (July 2007).
- 1.4 This document is one of several background papers accompanying the LDP draft preferred strategy and provides a summary of the various spatial distribution options considered including the identification of the draft preferred strategy.

2. SPATIAL OPTIONS

Context

2.1 The Council initially generated 6 spatial options in light of the following matters:

- vision
- capacity issues
- regeneration opportunities
- existing services and facilities
- infrastructure constraints
- environmental constraints
- national guidance (in particular the Wales Spatial Plan)
- DTA at St. Athan
- settlement facilities and services
- potential requirements for housing and employment.

2.2 In addition, the following key social, economic and environmental issues previously identified at the stakeholder and officer sustainability appraisal workshops in October 2006 were also considered:

- Transport and accessibility;
- Employment related issues;
- Housing provision, especially affordable housing;
- Increasing development pressures;
- Community cohesion;
- Waste disposal and pollution and
- Threats to cultural and natural heritage.

2.3 These issues were fundamental in the preparation of the Sustainability Framework contained within the SA Scoping Report (July 2007). Detailed findings of both workshops and the Scoping Report can be found on the Council's website, www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk.

Option 2a:

Dispersal of housing and employment opportunities based on the current population of each settlement (without a sustainability test).

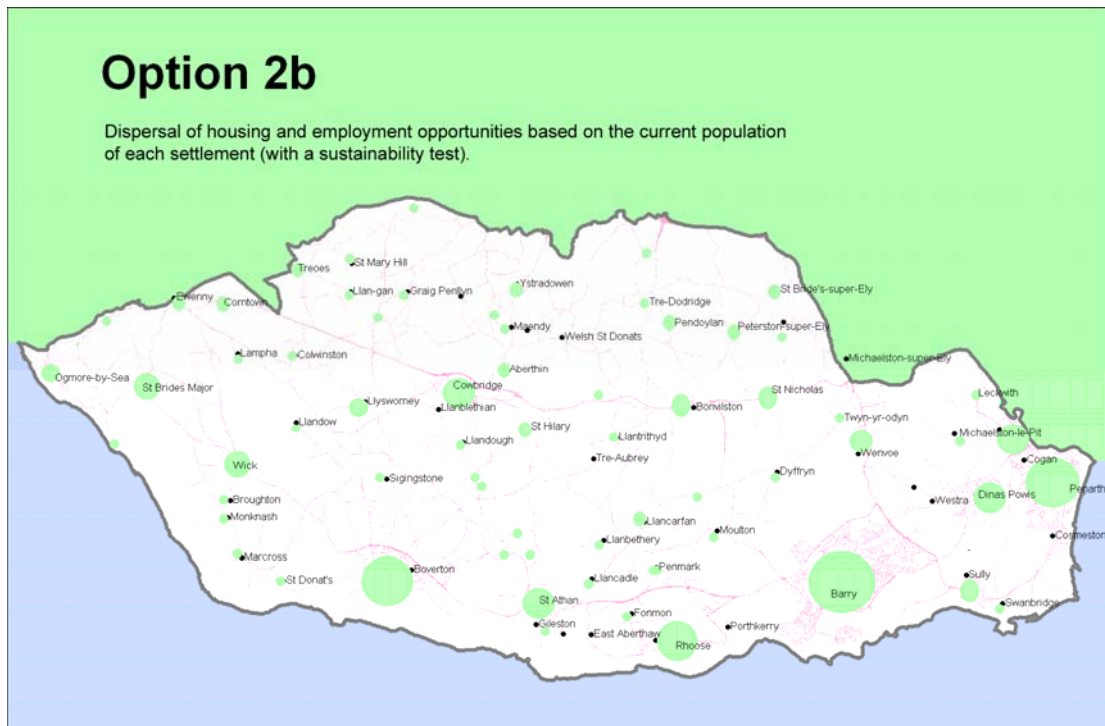
2.5 This option would see the distribution of housing and employment in all settlements within the Vale of Glamorgan, apportioned according to the existing population of each settlement. In this scenario, the level of existing services and facilities would not be considered as part of the allocation of sites. However unlike option1, this option would increase development opportunities in rural areas.



Option 2b:

Dispersal of housing and employment opportunities based on the current population of each settlement (with a sustainability test).

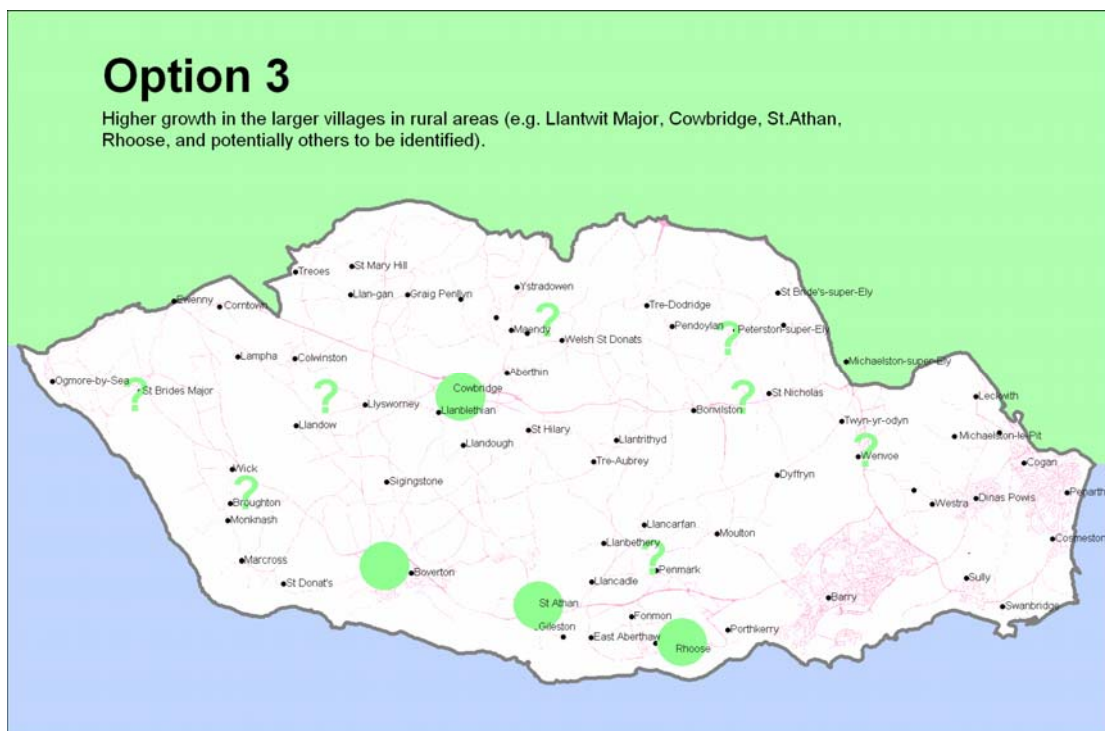
2.6 As with option 2a, the distribution of development would be relative to the existing population of each settlement. However, an assessment of existing services and facilities as well as accessibility of nearby facilities would be undertaken (the sustainability test). In this scenario, land allocated for development opportunities would only be within those settlements with good levels of existing services, facilities and infrastructure.



Option 3:

Higher growth in the larger villages in rural areas (e.g. Llantwit Major, Cowbridge, St. Athan, Rhoose and potentially others to be identified).

2.7 Unlike option 1, this option would concentrate future development within the larger rural settlements that have good levels of services, facilities and infrastructure relative to other settlements within the rural Vale.



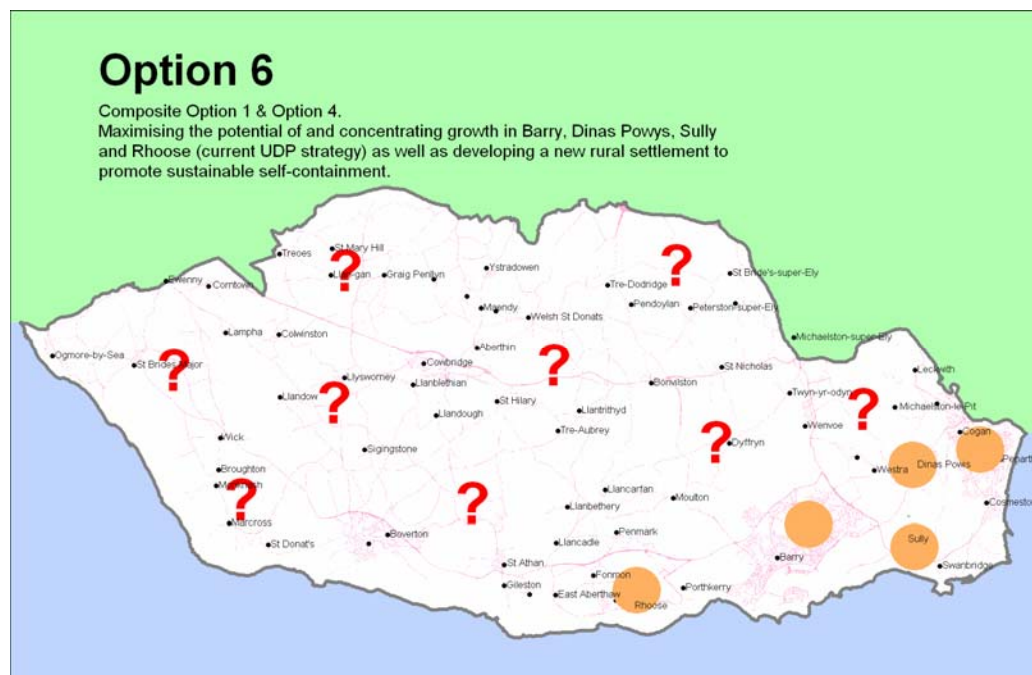
Relevant Stakeholder Options

2.10 The above 6 options were considered and discussed by relevant stakeholders at a workshop in May 2007. The workshop focussed on the strengths and weaknesses of each option and sought to identify a preferred option. The majority of stakeholders favoured option 5 recognising the numerous benefits it could bring in terms of capitalising on existing regeneration opportunities, public transport links, services and employment opportunities. At the same time, this option would accommodate growth from the DTA at St. Athan and allow some additional growth in the more sustainable rural settlements. In addition, the stakeholders recommended that the Council considered the following hybrid options:

Option 6: Option 1 in conjunction with option 4

Maximising the potential of and concentrating growth in Barry, Dinas Powys, Sully and Rhoose (current UDP strategy) as well as developing a rural new settlement to promote sustainable self –containment.

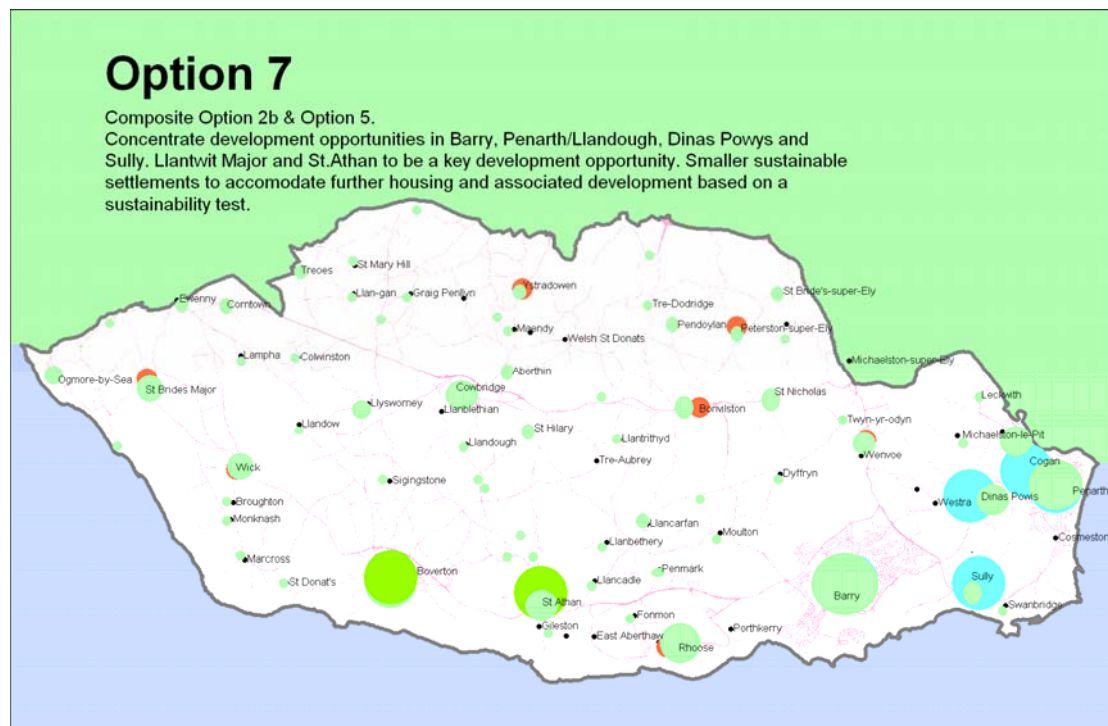
2.11 This option seeks to combine the current growth strategy identified in the UDP with a proposal to create a new settlement within the Vale.



Option 7: Option 2b in conjunction with option 5

Concentrate development opportunities in Barry, Penarth / Llandough, Dinas Powys and Sully. Llantwit Major and St. Athan to be key development opportunities. Smaller sustainable settlements to accommodate further housing and associated development based on a sustainability test.

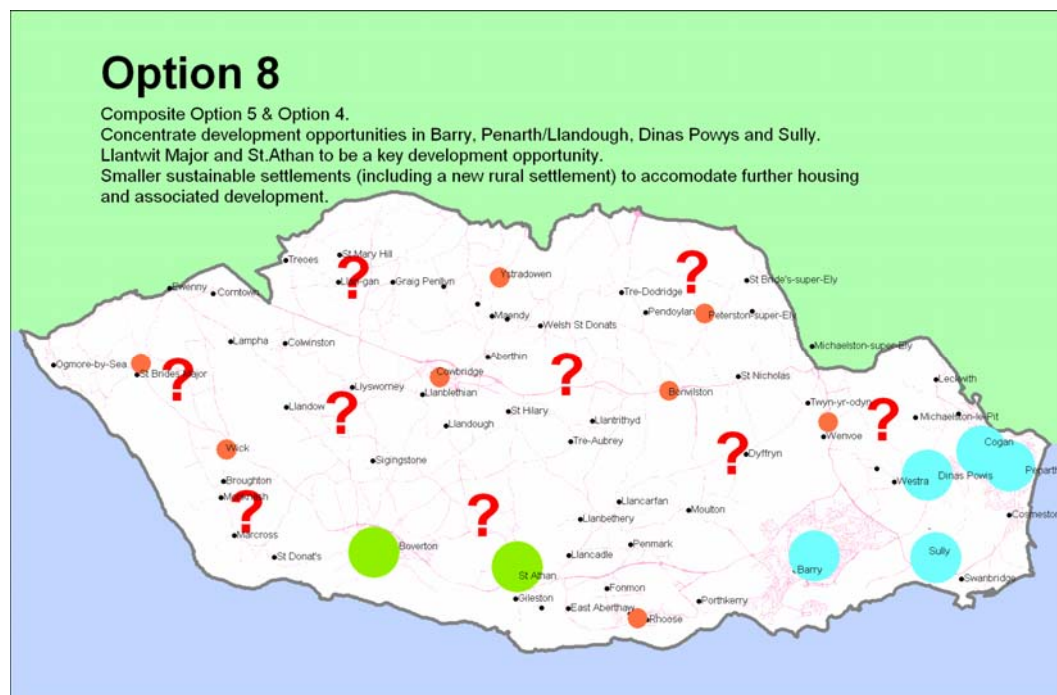
2.12 This option draws upon elements of options 1, 2b and 3, which seek to locate future development within those settlements that have existing good levels of services, facilities and transport links. However, this option also recognises the need to consider the potential development opportunities arising from the development of RAF St. Athan and identifies Llantwit Major and St. Athan as key drivers for development. In this option however, additional emphasis would be placed on the smaller sustainable settlements within the Vale to accommodate some level of development.



Option 8: Option 5 in conjunction with option 4.

Concentrate development opportunities in Barry, Penarth/ Llandough, Dinas Powys and Sully. Llantwit Major and St. Athan to be key development opportunities. Smaller sustainable settlements (including a rural new settlement) to accommodate further housing and associated development.

2.13 This option draws upon elements of options 1, 2b and 3, which seek to locate future development within those settlements that have good levels of services and facilities, and transport links. However, this option also considers the development of a new settlement within the Vale of Glamorgan to accommodate a proportion of the development that would otherwise be dispersed amongst the existing larger and more sustainable settlements. Furthermore, the option considers the potential development opportunities arising from the development of RAF St. Athan and identifies Llantwit Major and St. Athan as key drivers for development.



2.14 A consultation report containing the findings of the relevant stakeholder workshop was subsequently published and is also available for viewing on the Council's web site. The findings of the workshop were reported to an officer strategy option workshop in July 2007 and on balance, option 5 was considered to be the most appropriate spatial option. Officers felt that it was capable of meeting the needs of the wider Vale as well as maintaining the level of service provision within the main settlements. A report of the officer consultation can also be found on the Council's web site.

Sustainability Appraisal of the Options

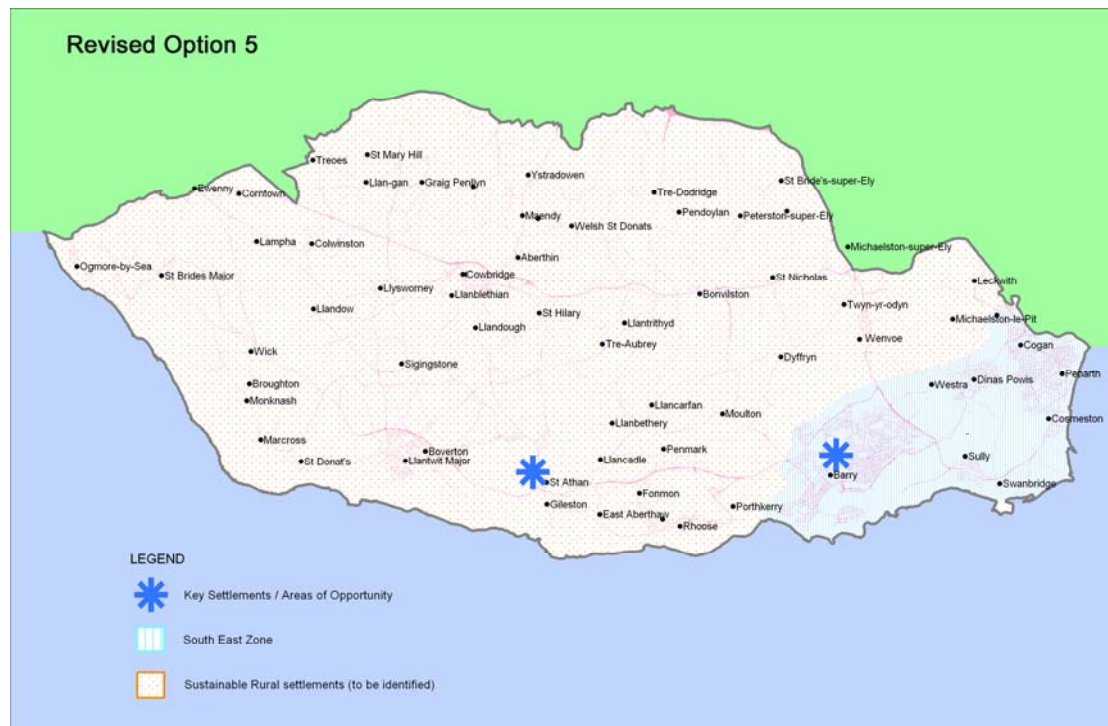
- 2.15 To ensure that the LDP promotes the principles of sustainable development, a SA incorporating the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive, is being undertaken simultaneously. To assist the Council in determining the LDP draft preferred strategy, an independent appraisal of the all of the above options has been carried out as part of the SA process. The appraisal predicts and evaluates the effects of the LDP strategy options on the SA objectives.
- 2.16 Overall, the appraisal highlights that all of the above options would have similar effects in terms of their environmental impacts. The main differences relate to the delivery of socio-economic benefits throughout the Vale of Glamorgan. Option 1 would deliver benefits in urban areas alone, while Options 3 and 4 would deliver benefits to certain rural settlements. All the other options would deliver some benefit throughout the Vale of Glamorgan. However, Options 2a and 2b would lead to growth that is highly dispersed and not focused, therefore putting a strain on existing resources.
- 2.17 It is essential that the draft preferred strategy delivers benefits where they are most needed and this includes both urban and rural settlements. According to the appraisal, the options that are likely to do so are Options 5, 7 and 8. The key strengths of these options include:
- delivery of benefits in both urban and rural areas;
 - potential for use of previously developed land, where it is available, in urban areas;
 - a balanced spread of growth contributing to tackling the causes of deprivation proportionally to settlement size;
 - provision of development in key settlements thereby reducing the need to travel for local services; and
 - maintaining and enhancing vitality and viability of key urban and rural settlements.

Refining the Options

2.18 Having considered the results of the consultations and the findings of the SA, officers refined the descriptions for options 5, 7 and 8 and modified the maps accordingly. The revised descriptions are more strategic and allow greater flexibility in the south east corner of the Vale. The identification of sustainable rural settlements elsewhere in the Vale has been derived from the sustainable settlement review referred to above and the results of that study have informed Policy SP1: Settlement Hierarchy contained within the draft preferred strategy document.

Option 5:

Concentrate development opportunities in Barry and the south east zone. The St. Athan area to be a key development opportunity. Other sustainable settlements to accommodate further housing and associated development.



3. Conclusions

- 3.1 All 9 spatial growth options have been carefully considered in the context of the SA and the 10 soundness criteria identified in LDP Wales (2005).
- 3.2 Whilst the SA plays a valuable role in the decision making process, it does not take into account wider policy issues. In this regard, the SA is a tool to aid decision making and does not arrive at the decision by itself. For instance, it is generally accepted that new settlements should comprise of at least 5000 dwellings in order to be sustainable (Reference: Eco-towns Prospectus, Department for Communities and Local Government: London, July 2007). Such a new settlement would result in an over provision of housing and employment land in the Vale and renders such an option as unrealistic and potentially irresponsible, given that national planning guidance favours the protection and enhancement of existing urban centres and settlements. Given this policy context, there is a real risk that a new settlement would detract from existing regeneration opportunities in urban areas such as Barry and result in a lost opportunity for enhanced community benefits in these areas. Any new settlement in the Vale is also likely to be at a distance from any existing settlements and therefore any positive impacts are likely to be diluted and concentrated in that new settlement.
- 3.3 The draft preferred strategy identifies option 5 as the LDP spatial growth option. This option is considered to be realistic, sustainable and compatible with other relevant plans, policies and strategies relating to the Vale and to adjoining areas. Moreover, it identifies Barry and St. Athan as key settlements reflecting their status in the WSP. The WSP classifies such areas as "...places which provide a focus for economic clustering both now and in the future. Where services are provided which meet the needs of residents, where cultural and leisure facilities provide enjoyment and an enhanced quality of life and places centred on a movement framework that provides people with a range and choice of transportation options including high quality reliable public transport...".

- 3.4 The adoption of this option would therefore ensure that Barry and St. Athan play more of a sub regional role and act as catalysts for the further regeneration of their surrounding settlements whilst allowing for some development in more sustainable rural settlements.

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