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**Adroddiad i Gyngor Sir  
Gâr**

**Report to Carmarthenshire  
County Council**

**gan Rebecca Phillips BA (Hons) MSc  
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**Arolygydd a benodir gan Weinidogion Cymru**

**Dyddiad: 16/10/2014**

**by Rebecca Phillips BA (Hons) MSc  
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**an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers**

**Date: 16/10/2014**

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PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004

SECTION 64

**REPORT ON THE EXAMINATION INTO THE  
CARMARTHENSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
2006 - 2021**

Plan submitted for examination on 16 September 2013

Examination Hearings held between 4 February and 8 May 2014

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## Summary

This report concludes that, subject to the recommended changes set out in Appendices A - D the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021 (LDP) provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the County up to 2021. The Council has sufficient evidence to support the strategy and has shown that it has a realistic prospect of being delivered. A number of changes are needed to meet legal and statutory requirements. The main changes are summarised below:

- Amended development limit boundaries in Tier 4 settlements to exclude White Land, reduce the potential for undermining the strategy and better reflect existing and established uses;
- Revised housing land supply figure to reflect consideration of WG 2011-based population and household projections;
- Combining the contribution from small sites and windfalls into one amended allowance figure and redefining what is meant by a windfall site;
- Deletion of Policy GP5 ‘Phasing’;
- Revised affordable housing contribution percentage targets and thresholds and consequential amendment to overall affordable housing provision target;
- Changes to reduce and/or delete employment allocations and employment element on mixed-use sites to reflect a more realistic prospect for delivery and consequential revision to employment land supply figure;
- Inclusion of more up-to-date information on likely timescales for delivery of key transport infrastructure in the Plan;
- Insertion of a new policy on Caeau Mynydd Mawr SAC Area and inclusion of the area on the Proposals Map;
- Changes to the requirements of Policy SP18 ‘The Welsh Language’ to reflect updated national planning policy;
- Removal of the requirement for wind turbines to be located at least 1500 m from the nearest residential dwelling in Policy RE1 ‘Large Scale Wind Power’ and Policy RE2 ‘Local Community and Small Wind Farms’;
- New policy for major tourism proposals in the open countryside for consideration of new proposals and extensions to existing large tourism developments;
- Changes to the Minerals policies and insertion of new minerals and unstable land policies to add clarity and reflect national minerals planning policy;
- Changes to the Waste chapter to reflect updated national planning policy;
- Changes to policy wording to reflect national planning policy more closely; and
- Changes to the Monitoring Framework developing the targets and indicators in more detail to improve monitoring.

In conclusion, with these recommended changes, the Plan satisfies the requirements of section 64(5) of the 2004 Act and meets the tests of soundness in LDP Wales.

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Under the terms of Section 64(5) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the purpose of the independent examination of a Local Development Plan is to determine:
  - (a) whether it satisfies the requirements of sections 62 and 63 of the Act and of regulations under section 77 and
  - (b) whether it is sound.
- 1.2 This report contains the assessment of the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021 (“the Plan”) in terms of the above matters, along with recommendations and the reasons for them, as required by section 64(7) of the Act. In addition to the requirements of the Act and the Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005, the Plan has been considered against the soundness tests set out in paragraph 4.35 of *Local Development Plans (LDP) Wales, 2005*. The starting point for the examination is that the local planning authority has submitted what it considers to be a sound plan, together with the evidence base that supports its position.
- 1.3 Since the purpose of the examination is to determine whether the Plan is sound I recommend changes in this binding report only where there is a clear need to amend the Plan in the light of the legal requirements and/or the tests of soundness. These binding changes are set out in the appendices to the report, where they are highlighted. They are also identified in the report by bold type. I am satisfied that these changes are in line with the substance of the overall Plan and its policies, and do not undermine the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and participatory processes that have been undertaken.
- 1.4 All duly made representations and the matters raised at the examination Hearings have been considered. However, given the focus of the examination on soundness, the report does not refer specifically to the individual representations made in each case. Matters raised by individual representations are referred to only where it is considered that they raise substantive issues concerning the Plan’s soundness. Plan changes sought by any representor are the subject of a recommended change only where it has been found, on the basis of all of the evidence, that such a change is required to ensure the Plan’s soundness.

### *Post-Deposit Changes*

- 1.5 Prior to submission of the LDP for examination the Council considered the representations received and decided to make a number of Focussed Changes (FCs) to the deposit Plan. These changes were duly advertised and the responses taken into account. At the Pre-Hearing

Meeting the Council confirmed that the Plan it wishes to be examined is the deposit LDP as modified by the Focussed Changes schedule (July 2013)<sup>1</sup>. Since the changes within this schedule have been the subject of consultation and the SA revisited where necessary<sup>2</sup>, they are accepted as part of the submitted LDP. The deposit Plan as modified by the FCs has therefore formed the starting point for the examination of the Plan’s soundness. This composite document is referred to hereinafter as the LDP or Plan.

### *Recommended Changes*

- 1.6 In addition to those changes referred to above, the Council has submitted a series of schedules of proposed changes during the course of the examination. Towards the end of the examination the Council submitted a Matters Arising Schedule of Changes<sup>3</sup> which identifies those further proposed changes which the Council wishes me to consider. The changes are suggested in response to matters considered during the examination and discussed at the Hearings. These changes have been consulted upon between June and July 2014 and I have considered the responses in preparing the report. The need for revised SA has been assessed and carried out as necessary.
- 1.7 This list has formed the basis of the Matters Arising Changes (MACs) set out in Appendices A, B and C of this report. The MACs highlighted with bold type in the Appendices are changes or modifications that are required to ensure that the Plan is sound and I recommend these changes accordingly. These MACs are addressed in this report and are also shown in bold type.
- 1.8 The other MACs in Appendix A (MAC84, MAC85 and MAC88) are not required to make the Plan sound, though they would improve the Plan’s clarity, precision and presentation. However, as they are not essential to the Plan’s soundness they are outside my remit. Ultimately it is a matter for the Council to decide whether it is able to incorporate these other changes into its Plan at this stage. The changes are shown in non-bold and shaded grey in Appendix A.
- 1.9 Appendix D sets out the other changes (Inspector Changes) IC01-IC04 that I consider are necessary for the Plan to meet the tests of soundness. None of the changes undermine the SA, HRA or the overall strategy or policy thrust within the Plan. For the avoidance of doubt, the Council is authorised to make any necessary minor editorial

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<sup>1</sup> Schedule of FCs Written Statement, Inset Maps & Minor Editorial Amendments (July 2013) and Addendum to the Written Statement (August 2013)

<sup>2</sup> As advised by Examining Local Development Plans Procedure Guidance (The Planning Inspectorate Wales)

<sup>3</sup> Schedule of Matters Arising Changes - Hearing Documents H26c (Written Statement), H26d (Site Specific MACs) & H26e (Addendum)

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changes to the Plan arising from the inclusion of the changes recommended by this report.

1.10 Edition 6 of Planning Policy Wales, as updated February 2014 (PPW), was published during the examination together with updated versions of a number of Technical Advice Notes (TANs)<sup>4</sup>. The changes in national policy were discussed at the Hearings and are referred to under the relevant sections of the report below. Consequently, some changes to the Plan have been proposed by the Council (**MAC164**). Edition 7 of PPW was published in July 2014. However, subject to the recommended changes, I am satisfied that the LDP accords with national policy. These changes are included in the MAC Schedule (Appendix A).

## 2 Procedural Tests

- 2.1 The LDP has been prepared in accordance with the Delivery Agreement (as revised by agreement with the Welsh Government<sup>5</sup>) and the Community Involvement Scheme as demonstrated in the Consultation Report.
- 2.2 Representations were made regarding a clarification note (CSD 8) issued by the Council part way through the public consultation on the deposit Plan. The note sought to replace the word “any” with the word “all” in paragraph 5.5.4 of the Plan which would then read “The presence of a key service or facility (namely: Post Office, Local Shop, Primary School and Community/Public Hall) within a settlement or group of settlements is a significant consideration in identifying the appropriateness of a given settlement to accommodate market housing allocations... In this regard, the absence of **all** of the above services and facilities would have the consequential result of the settlement not being considered appropriate to receive a market housing allocation...”
- 2.3 Concerns were raised that residents may not have responded on the basis that key services or facilities were not available in their area and could have assumed from the original wording that their communities would not receive a market housing allocation. The Council responded that the paragraph was not clear in its meaning and that CSD 8 sought to address this. The change did not alter the settlement framework or the allocation of sites for housing. Policy SP3 ‘Sustainable Distribution – Settlement Framework’ identifies the settlements in which the Plan makes provision for development and Appendix 3 presents a schedule of sites within those settlements which are allocated for housing and are defined on the Proposals Map. The deposit Plan was unequivocal in this.

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<sup>4</sup> TAN 20 ‘Planning & the Welsh Language’, TAN 21 ‘Waste’ and TAN 23 ‘Economic Development’

<sup>5</sup> Revised and agreed with Welsh Government in August 2013

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- 2.4 CSD 8 was sent to statutory consultees and Councillors, placed on the website and hard copies were made available at offices, customer service centres and libraries several weeks before the end of the consultation period, which was extended to 8 weeks rather than the statutory 6 week period. The change was also included as a proposed Focussed Change in the schedule of minor editorial amendments (ME15). These changes were advertised for longer than the statutory 6 weeks. The Plan and supporting evidence set out clearly which settlements are deemed appropriate to receive housing allocations and the change does not alter the Plan strategy. It is clear that the Plan should be read as a whole. Furthermore, representors had sufficient opportunity to comment on the proposed change to the paragraph wording.
- 2.5 All proposed changes made to the deposit Plan, as outlined in the above Introduction, have been advertised and consulted on. Accordingly, I am satisfied that the Plan complies with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005 including requirements in relation to consultation, advertisement and the publication and availability of prescribed documents.
- 2.6 The Plan has been subject to SA including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)<sup>6</sup>. FCs<sup>7</sup> and further changes<sup>8</sup> put forward by the Council as part of the examination process have likewise been tested where necessary for any impacts they have upon the SA and SEA.
- 2.7 In accordance with the Habitats Directive<sup>9</sup> a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Plan has been undertaken<sup>10</sup>. The HRA Screening Report concluded that a number of key European Sites may be affected by the LDP and the HRA process should be continued. The key European Sites highlighted in the Screening Report were subject to detailed assessments including an assessment of Growth Areas GA1 (Carmarthen), GA2 Llanelli (including T2/1 Burry Port) and GA3 Ammanford/Cross Hands. The detailed assessment of GA1 concluded that there was no likely significant effect on the European site network. With regards to GA2 and T2/1, it was concluded that any potential likely significant effects on water quality would be appropriately mitigated at a strategic level through the LDP policies (see Section 8 below).

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<sup>6</sup> Final Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report (August 2013) (CSD16)

<sup>7</sup> Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report Addendum 1: SA of Focussed Changes (July 2013) (CSD18)

<sup>8</sup> LDP Matters Arising Changes Schedule of Implications for SA and HRA (June 2014)

<sup>9</sup> European Union Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)

<sup>10</sup> Habitats Regulations Assessment Volumes 1-3 (August 2013) (CSD19), LDP Deposit Focussed Changes Schedule of Implications for HRA (July 2013) (CSD21) and LDP MAC Schedule of Implications for SA and HRA (June 2014)

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- 2.8 The detailed assessment of GA3 concluded that there would be no significant effects on the European site network as a result of the mitigation strategy which is incorporated into the LDP to mitigate the loss of habitat used by the Caeau Mynydd Mawr Special Area of Conservation (SAC) marsh fritillary butterfly meta population (see Section 10).
- 2.9 I am thus satisfied that the HRA undertaken shows that no significant effects upon the integrity of the European sites<sup>11</sup> within the Plan area or in adjacent areas are likely to occur (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) as a result of implementing the Plan.
- 2.10 Accordingly, procedural tests P1 and P2 have been satisfied and the relevant legal requirements complied with.

### **3 The Overall Plan Strategy**

#### *The Development Strategy*

- 3.1 The LDP vision conveys locally distinctive aspirations for Carmarthenshire to 2021. It sets out spatial characteristics sought in different areas of the County. The role of the growth areas, local communities, rural areas and open countryside are all expressed. The vision provides a strategic focus for the LDP’s objectives. The LDP strategy determines how the vision and strategic objectives will be delivered and how the changes within Carmarthenshire over the Plan period will be managed and planned for.
- 3.2 Several spatial options were explored before the Plan’s ‘sustainable distribution strategy’ emerged as the preferred option. The sustainable distribution strategy seeks to develop a settlement hierarchy and framework that allows for a proportional distribution of development and investment based on sustainability principles. It aims to encourage the distribution of employment, housing and development to identified settlements and village groups or clusters. By doing so it is anticipated that this will allow for a range of growth opportunities across the County whilst protecting the natural environment and limiting the need to travel.

#### *The Settlement Hierarchy*

- 3.3 The Wales Spatial Plan (WSP) provides the local and regional settlement context. Carmarthenshire falls within 3 spatial plan areas: – Central Wales, Pembrokeshire – The Haven and Swansea Bay – Waterfront and Western Valleys. This reflects the diversity

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<sup>11</sup>As defined in PPW paragraph 2.4.6

of the County, described as a County of contrast, with its urban centres, market towns, coastal areas, rural hamlets and former industrial areas<sup>12</sup>. Carmarthenshire also forms part of the Swansea Bay City Region which also encompasses Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea. It seeks to bring together business, local government and other partners to create economic prosperity in the region. Reference in the Plan to the City Region and recognition of the Plan’s role in the emerging strategic context would ensure that the Plan is relevant and up-to-date (**MAC3**).

- 3.4 The LDP identifies a hierarchy of settlements which is broadly reflective of the WSP. The key diagram in the Appendix of the Plan (as amended by **MAC165**) would provide further clarity and help to illustrate how the hierarchy reflects the scale, role and contribution of each settlement in terms of its community function. It identifies 4 tiers consisting of 3 Growth Areas (Llanelli, Carmarthen and Ammanford/Cross Hands), 6 Service Centres, 11 Local Service Centres and 42 Sustainable Communities which comprise some 138 villages.
- 3.5 The urban centres of the County include Llanelli, Carmarthen and Ammanford/Cross Hands which are the main focus for employment and services. The position of the Growth Areas in the hierarchy is thus consistent with their function as key regional and local centres and reflects their ability to support a concentration of growth. They represent large and established urban settlements well served by sustainable transport and serving areas extending beyond their local catchments. The Growth Areas also include a number of surrounding settlements. For example, the Carmarthen Growth Area includes Abergwili and Johnstown, Llanelli includes Llangennech and the Ammanford/Cross Hands Growth Area includes Tumble, Penygroes, Capel Hendre and Gorslas amongst others. The amalgamation of settlements is said to represent their proximity to one another and often contiguous urban form<sup>13</sup>.
- 3.6 The Service Centres are located on sustainable transport corridors, offering a broad range of services and facilities providing for the needs of the settlement and a wider local catchment. They include settlements of various scales which perform an important functional role within the hierarchy. Whilst settlements such as Llandovery and Newcastle Emlyn may be smaller in scale than others within this tier, it is this role which is said to support their categorisation. The Service Centres play a significant role within the surrounding communities in relation to retail and service provision, local employment opportunities and community facilities.

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<sup>12</sup> Topic Paper 1 – Issues, Vision and Objectives (June 2011) (CSD75)

<sup>13</sup> Topic Paper 3 – Strategic Spatial Options and Settlement Hierarchy (CSD77)

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- 3.7 The Local Service Centres are located on or near to sustainable transport corridors and have some facilities and services that have a local community focus, in some instances providing for local shopping needs. They include a range of settlements with varying characteristics, the former industrial settlements centred on the Gwendraeth and Amman Valleys contrasting with the rural settlements which reflects the urban and rural nature of the County. Whilst all offer retail and community facilities, they differ in respect of their provision of employment. Some settlements, such as Laugharne, rely more upon tourism as a contributor to the economy. Similarly, some settlements such as Kidwelly through its WSP categorisation and links to Llanelli offer notable opportunities for growth, compared to others, such as Llangadog which is recognised in the WSP but is less well placed in terms of scale to accommodate extensive levels of development.
- 3.8 The Sustainable Communities include smaller settlements that have been grouped together to form a single Sustainable Community. Key facilities or services such as the presence of a Post Office, local shop, primary school or community hall have been used to identify such settlements. All 4 facilities do not always feature in a settlement or Sustainable Community. In some instances they may be spread across the area. There may also be additional services such as a doctor’s surgery or public house. The majority of Sustainable Communities play a supporting role to their communities. However, a small number of them support key centres or settlements within the hierarchy. The Plan recognises the role and function of such settlements and where relevant, their relationship to other centres.
- 3.9 During the examination, the Council provided additional information regarding the spatial strategy’s consistency with the WSP, particularly regarding differences in the categorisation of some settlements within the hierarchy<sup>14</sup>. In doing so it has shown that factors such as the role, function, character and capacity for growth of each settlement has been taken into account in their classification within the hierarchy. Other considerations include whether a settlement contributes to the local or wider area, its employment and tourism potential as well as its proximity and links to key centres. Proposed changes to Appendix 1 of the LDP would clarify the role and function of settlements (**MAC160**).

#### *The Distribution of Development Growth*

- 3.10 The spatial focus of the Plan’s strategy reflects the existing distribution of housing and employment provision within the established urban centres of Llanelli, Carmarthen and

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<sup>14</sup> Clarification Paper on Spatial Framework/Settlement Hierarchy: Appendix 1 & 2 (H1i & H1j)

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Ammanford/Cross Hands and associated Growth Area settlements. This is commensurate with their scale, role and function in terms of the provision of key facilities and services for the immediate and wider surrounding area as well as their location and accessibility.

- 3.11 The strategy seeks to consolidate the existing spatial settlement pattern thereby promoting accessibility to facilities and services, reducing the need to travel and increasing social inclusion. It aims to direct development growth according to each settlement’s capacity and suitability to accommodate it. In doing so it will provide opportunities to maintain and enhance facilities and services, strengthen the network of centres across the County and help build economically viable and sustainable communities.
- 3.12 The distribution of employment land and housing growth (comprising sites allocated for housing, commitments and completions) is proposed to be apportioned across the settlement hierarchy as follows:

	<b>Housing Growth</b>	<b>Employment Land</b>
Growth Areas	62.2%	86%
Service Centres	10.2%	10%
Local Service Centres	12.5%	1%
Sustainable Communities	15%	3%

- 3.13 This proposed distribution has been influenced by a number of factors. Not least, the County is diverse in character and the size of some of the settlements does not always reflect their role and function. As such, there are variances between settlements whose role may be comparable but which differ in terms of their scale and ability to accommodate growth. Such instances result in settlements, which in a rural context perform a high level role, being classified higher in the hierarchy than an equally sized or larger settlement from an urban/post-industrialised context<sup>15</sup>.
- 3.14 Growth Areas have been identified according to their role and function as principal centres with a high level of facilities and services, accessibility, existing employment provision across a number of sectors and their ability to support a concentration of growth. The level of growth allocated thus reflects their central role in delivering the Plan strategy. The Service Centres include settlements of various scales which play a significant functional role in relation to their surrounding communities by providing notable retail and service provision, local employment opportunities and community facilities.

<sup>15</sup> Clarification Paper on Spatial Framework/Settlement Hierarchy: Appendix 1 (H1i)

- 3.15 Settlements within this tier are anticipated to deliver approximately 10% of the housing and employment growth. It is acknowledged that this would appear a low percentage. However, this equates to an average level of housing land per settlement of 226 units which is commensurate with their position within the second tier of the hierarchy, as shown below. The average allocation of dwellings within each settlement tier is broken down as follows<sup>16</sup>:
- Growth Areas – 2749 units
  - Service Centres – 226 units
  - Local Service Centres – 151 units
  - Sustainable Communities – 19 units
- 3.16 Furthermore, the distribution of development seeks to provide a level of growth that is proportionate and appropriate to the scale and character of each settlement. It reflects the significance of a settlement’s role and function rather than an exclusive consideration of size. Other factors have been taken into account including environmental constraints, most notably flood risk, which has limited the potential to allocate additional growth in some Service Centre settlements.
- 3.17 In terms of proposed housing allocations, a higher proportion of development than one might expect has been cascaded down to the next two settlement tiers. However, this is generally consistent with the prevailing dispersed settlement pattern in these lower tiers and accords with national planning policy<sup>17</sup> which requires a sequential approach to the location of development in areas at high risk of flooding. The objective is to move away from flood defence and the mitigation of the consequences of new development in areas of flood hazard towards a more positive avoidance of development in those areas.
- 3.18 The Local Service Centres comprise some 11 settlements (or linked settlements) within which 12.5% of housing growth is allocated. Whilst they do not offer the same significance in role and function terms as that of the Service Centres, they can complement the Growth Areas and support their local communities. The proposed level of growth is reflective of their quantity and position within the hierarchy and allows for development in those centres that have the potential to accommodate it. The Plan thus recognises the need for an appropriate level of growth to maintain communities and to enhance their level of sustainability in line with WSP objectives.

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<sup>16</sup>Clarification Paper on Spatial Framework/Settlement Hierarchy: Appendix 1 (H1i )

<sup>17</sup> PPW paragraph 13.2.3 and PPW Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15: Development and Flood Risk

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- 3.19 The Sustainable Communities comprise numerous individual and linked settlements, diverse in character and function. Whilst it is proposed that they would receive 15% of the allocated housing provision, it should be noted that there is an allocation for 480 units in Ffos Las (SC40/h3) as part of the regeneration initiative associated with the racecourse. This has increased the percentage growth figure in this settlement tier by approximately 3.5%. Their principal role in the Plan is to support their respective communities, and in some cases, key Service Centres. Some are categorised as stand alone settlements whilst others are characterised as being interdependent with other settlements for certain services and facilities. The level of growth proposed has thus been considered within the context of their relationship to other settlements within the hierarchy.
- 3.20 A number of Sustainable Communities in the Plan have been identified as not being suitable to receive a market housing allocation given the absence of key services or facilities in these settlements. Changes are proposed to Policy H2 ‘Housing within Development Limits’ and the supporting text (**MAC69** and **MAC83**) to prevent market housing development for 5 or more dwellings in such settlements unless they contribute to the provision of affordable housing.
- 3.21 In considering the role and function of settlements, the Council proposes changes to the supporting text of Policy AH2 ‘Affordable Housing – Exceptions Sites’ (**MAC26** and **MAC91**) to remove Henllan Amgoed (SC5) from the list of Sustainable Communities which are expected to have their future housing provision provided through affordable housing exceptions proposals only. These changes would support the Plan’s strategy in seeking to direct development towards more sustainable locations.

#### *Settlement and Site Assessment Methodology*

- 3.22 As outlined above, a number of factors were taken into consideration in developing the settlement hierarchy including the characteristics of settlements, their size, population, location, accessibility and the availability of services and facilities. The capacity of settlements to accommodate growth was considered together with an assessment of the likely impact of development in terms of environmental qualities and visual impact on landscape.
- 3.23 Some representors have questioned the scoring system and consider the assessment and subsequent categorisation of settlements to be flawed. However, the scoring system was not used to determine the future development of an area in isolation. Other factors were taken into account such as the sustainability of the settlement to support development in terms of its location, proximity to other centres and

accessibility. The size and population of a settlement together with its form, function and constraints were also considered. I am satisfied that the evidence shows that a logical assessment based on the availability of local services and public transport provision was carried out, together with an assessment of the capacity of settlements to absorb more growth and the need to sustain local communities. This has influenced the proposed scale and distribution of development.

### *Housing Development Limits, White Land and Green Wedges*

- 3.24 The Plan seeks to ensure that the scale of growth in settlements reflects its position within the settlement hierarchy and that it does not harm an area’s character, for example, through encroachment into surrounding countryside, ribbon development that would harm the form of a settlement and coalescence between settlements. Consideration was given to the use of criteria based policies rather than development boundaries in tier 4 settlements (Sustainable Communities) in line with national planning guidance<sup>18</sup>.
- 3.25 It is acknowledged in the evidence that such policies would require consistency in interpretation, decision making and application. Compliance with the LDP’s strategic objectives requires that the distinction between the settlement, its built form and the countryside is readily understood and consistently defined<sup>19</sup>. TAN 6 does not define ‘smaller settlements’ and Sustainable Communities are diverse in scale and character reflecting the former industrialised urban and agricultural or rural areas of the County. Moreover, Sustainable Communities include clusters of smaller settlements to help to focus growth which contributes to and helps to sustain rural services in line with TAN 6<sup>20</sup>. Development limits would help direct small scale growth to where it would be most appropriately accommodated.
- 3.26 In response to discussions during the examination, the Council produced a clarification paper<sup>21</sup> which considered the definition and role of White Land in the Plan and the extent of White Land identified within development boundaries. The paper identified where such sites could accommodate a market housing allocation of 5 or more units, assessed the potential impact of the development of White Land, particularly in Sustainable Communities, and considered the resultant effect on the Plan’s strategy.

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<sup>18</sup> PPW TAN 6: ‘Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities’ paragraph 2.2.4

<sup>19</sup> Topic Paper 9 – Development Limits (Revised June 2013) (CSD83)

<sup>20</sup> PPW TAN 6 paragraph 2.2.3

<sup>21</sup> Clarification Paper – White Land (Hearing Document H1k)

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- 3.27 This paper, together with the subsequent clarification paper on Small Sites and Development Limits<sup>22</sup> identified sites with a realistic prospect of being brought forward for development for 5 or more dwellings through an assessment of size, constraints and other factors which would affect the sites’ potential to accommodate development. Consequently, the Council has proposed changes to the Plan to amend the development limits in a number of settlements to exclude the White Land.
- 3.28 In assessing the extent and potential impact of development of White Land, the Council also reviewed the development limits, focusing in particular on defined and established boundaries, the existence of small groups of buildings and the relative scale of the grouping, and their functional relationship and integration with the settlement form. Some changes are proposed to the development limits following this assessment. In some cases it is proposed to draw the development limits more tightly to prevent sporadic forms of development and/or incoherent settlement patterns. Changes are also proposed to reflect existing and established uses such as recreation/open space and existing employment. These proposed MACs are listed at the end of this section of the report (**MACM/GA1/a – MACM/SC42/a** inclusive).
- 3.29 A consequential change is also proposed to remove the definition of White Land in the Plan (**MAC70** and **MAC158**). Taken together, these changes would remove the potential for unallocated sites (which could accommodate 5 or more dwellings) to be developed. The development of such sites could have implications for achieving the Plan’s objectives in terms of sustainable development and for delivering the spatial strategy. The proposed changes would thus reduce the potential for development that would undermine delivery of the Plan’s strategy and improve its clarity and certainty.
- 3.30 The LDP does not seek to maintain the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Green Wedge designations, or include new designations. I am satisfied that an assessment has been undertaken to identify whether their contribution to urban form and the location of new development is still relevant, in accordance with national planning policy guidance<sup>23</sup>. It is considered that the policies of the Plan together with the use of development limits provide the necessary protection to prevent inappropriate development encroaching into open countryside, the coalescence of larger towns with other settlements and urban sprawl.
- 3.31 The evidence shows that a logical and considered approach has been taken to the allocation of residential sites and to the identification of

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<sup>22</sup> Clarification Paper – Small Sites and Development Limits (H1L and H1m)

<sup>23</sup> PPW paragraphs 4.8.1 and 4.8.11

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development limits as a means of defining all but the smaller settlements. Several factors have been taken into account including the character and ability of settlements to accommodate new housing development, community facilities, transport accessibility and the need to sustain local communities. Subject to the proposed changes, the approach taken is founded upon a robust basis and the Plan is sound in this respect.

#### *Relevant Plans, Policies and Strategies in Adjoining Areas*

3.32 In preparing the Plan, the Council has worked with its neighbouring authorities on an individual basis and through regional frameworks to consider cross boundary and wider contextual issues. Changes to the Policy Context section of the Plan as proposed by **MAC2, MAC4 and MAC6 -MAC10** would reflect the most up-to-date position in respect of neighbouring authorities’ progress in LDP preparation, the emerging City Region and its relevance in terms of regional collaboration.

#### *Conclusion*

3.33 The development strategy and proposed distribution and location of growth is based on an appropriate assessment of the ability of settlements to accommodate development, the availability of local facilities and services and a sound understanding of the role and functional links between settlements in the County and the wider area. The preparation of the Plan has had regard to the provisions of the WSP, most notably in determining the spatial hierarchy and the resultant distribution of growth. It has also had regard to other relevant plans and strategies relating to the area and to adjoining areas. Subject to the changes proposed, the Plan’s strategy is sound and satisfies the consistency, coherence and effectiveness tests of soundness.

3.34 Proposed changes to the Introduction, the Key Issues and Drivers the Vision and Strategic Objectives and The Strategy and Strategic Policies sections (**MAC1, MAC11- MAC13, MAC15-MAC17 and MAC25**) would ensure that the Plan is relevant and up-to-date and would improve its clarity, precision and consistency of interpretation.

#### **Recommendation**

3.35 That in order to make the Plan sound the following changes are required:

**MAC1, MAC2, MAC3, MAC4, MAC6, MAC7, MAC8, MAC9, MAC10, MAC11, MAC12, MAC13, MAC15, MAC16, MAC17, MAC25, MAC 26, MAC69, MAC70, MAC83, MAC91, MAC158, MAC160,**

**MAC164, MAC165, MACM/GA1/a, MACM/GA2/a, MACM/GA3/a,b, MACM/T2/2/a, MACM/T2/2/b, MACM/T2/3/a, MACM/T3/3/a,b, MACM/T3/4/a,b, MACM/T3/5/a, MACM/T3/5/b, MACM/T3/6/a, MACM/T3/6/b, MACM/T3/8/a,b, MACM/T3/8/c,d,e,f, MACM/T3/9/a,b,c, MACM/T3/10/a,b, MACM/T3/11/a, MACM/SC1/a,b,c, MACM/SC1/d,e, MACM/SC2/a, MACM/SC3/a, MACM/SC3/b, MACM/SC4/a, MACM/SC4/b,c, MACM/SC5/a, MACM/SC6/a, MACM/SC7/a,b,c, MACM/SC8/a, MACM/SC9/a, MACM/SC10/a, MACM/SC10/b, MACM/SC11/a, MACM/SC12/a, MACM/SC13/a,b,c, MACM/SC15/a, MACM/SC15/b, MACM/SC17/a, MACM/SC17/b, MACM/SC17,c, MACM/SC17/d,e, MACM/SC18/a,b, MACM/SC18/c, MACM/SC18,d,e, MACM/SC19/a, MACM/SC19/b, MACM/SC19/c,d,e, MACM/SC20/a, MACM/SC20/b,c,d,e, MACM/SC20/f,g, MACM/SC22/a, MACM/SC24/a, MACM/SC24/b,c, MACM/SC24/d, MACM/SC25/a, MACM/SC25/b, MACM/SC25/c, MACM/SC26/a,b, MACM/SC26/c, MACM/SC29/a,b, MACM/SC30/a, MACM/SC30/b, MACM/SC30/c, MACM/SC33/a, MACM/SC34/a,b, MACM/SC34/c, MACM/SC34/d,e, MACM/SC34/f,g, MACM/SC34/h,i, MACM/SC34/j, k, MACM/SC34/l, MACM/SC35/a,b, MACM/SC35/c,d,e, MACM/SC36/a, MACM/SC37/a, MACM/SC38/a, MACM/SC39/a, MACM/SC39/b, MACM/SC40/a,b,c, MACM/SC40/d and MACM/SC42/a.**

## **4 Housing Provision**

### *The Level of Housing Growth*

- 4.1 The submitted Plan identified a housing requirement of 15,197 dwellings between 2006 and 2021. The Council has taken the WG’s 2006-based household projections as the starting point for assessing housing requirements, in accordance with national planning policy<sup>24</sup> and has reviewed the figure in light of subsequent population and household projections. The 2006-based household projections anticipated a 36% increase to 2031 which translated to a requirement of 17,900 dwellings during the Plan period and positioned Carmarthenshire second only to Cardiff in terms of the projected increase in household numbers. This trend broadly continued with the 2008-based projections indicating a 33% increase by 2033.
- 4.2 The Council commissioned consultants Edge Analytics to assess the WG population and household projections for the County and the forecast growth during the Plan period. The study identified that

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<sup>24</sup> PPW paragraph 9.2.2

changes in migration trends could significantly influence the outcome of the projections, particularly over a long period and in areas such as Carmarthenshire where population growth is largely migration-led. Five alternative scenarios and population projections were translated into household requirements. An analysis of the local drivers of demographic change and alternative population and household projections for Carmarthenshire’s 6 Community Areas was also undertaken. This linked to the Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA)<sup>25</sup> and provided a means of testing the validity of projections against local character and the likely impact of demographic change upon the County<sup>26</sup>.

- 4.3 The WG 2006-based and 2008-based population projections suggested relatively high population growth over the 2006-2026 period when compared to the 5 alternative migration-led trend scenarios tested by Edge Analytics. Based on the most recent demographic evidence at the time<sup>27</sup> and taking into consideration the short-term economic view, a housing requirement of some 15,197 units (1,013 per annum) was identified for the Plan period. Edge Analytics then conducted further analysis and tested a number of growth scenarios to include new demographic evidence emerging from the 2011 Census data, revised mid-year population estimates for 2002 – 2010 and 2011-based population projections from the WG<sup>28</sup>.
- 4.4 The results showed that Carmarthenshire’s migration profile had changed significantly over the last 10 years with relatively high net in-migration to 2007/8, countered by a significantly lower net inflow thereafter. This change impacted upon growth projections with a range of outcomes provided by the migration-led 10 year and migration-led 5 year scenario alternatives. The housing requirement was retained in the Plan and I consider this as being a sound basis on which to develop the LDP given that the migration assumptions associated with this growth scenario were high compared to evidence from the last 5 years, but below the 10 year average that straddles the economic recession<sup>29</sup>.
- 4.5 The WG 2011-based household projections were published during the examination. The projections identified a significant reduction in the forecast numbers of dwellings required within Carmarthenshire during the remainder of the Plan period 2011-2021. They differ significantly from those considered in the 2006-based, 2008-based and from the

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<sup>25</sup> Local Housing Market Assessment 2009 Annual Review (CSD133)

<sup>26</sup> Revised Topic Paper 2 – Population and Housing (June 2011) (CSD76)

<sup>27</sup> Population & Household Projections: Community Network Areas – Edge Analytics Ltd (August 2010) (CSD121)

<sup>28</sup> Carmarthenshire Demographic Forecasts 2011-2026: Edge Analytics (January 2014) (ID5)

<sup>29</sup> Carmarthenshire Demographic Forecasts 2011-2026: Edge Analytics (January 2014) (ID5)

Council’s own projections which were utilised to derive the LDP housing requirement.

4.6 The WG 2011-based data also includes variant household projections based on the higher, lower and 10-year average migration levels. In interpreting the projections, the Council considered the principal projections and also analysed the 10-year average migration levels. Two alternative approaches were assessed. The first approach utilised the LDP projection from 2006 to 2011 and the 2011-based household projections for the remainder of the Plan period. The second approach extrapolated the projected requirement from the 2011-based household projections and applied it across the Plan period<sup>30</sup>. The 10-year average migration levels were also analysed.

4.7 The results are shown as follows:-

	<b>Principal Projection</b>	<b>10 yr migration variant</b>
LDP projection 2006-2011	4,928	4,928
2011-based projection	5,500	6,986
Total projected requirement (excluding conversion rate)	10,428	11,914

	<b>Principal Projection</b>	<b>10 yr migration variant</b>
2011-based projection (extrapolated over 2006-11)	8,250	10,470

4.8 Both approaches indicate a much lower requirement than that of the previous WG 2006-based and 2008-based projections and that of the LDP. In considering their appropriateness, the Council has recognised that for much of the period factored into the projections there has been slow economic growth which has seen development coming forward at a significantly slower rate than anticipated. It seeks to be in a position to respond to rapidly changing economic, social and environmental circumstances, particularly to improvements in the economy and housing market. In this regard, the Council maintains that any reduction in the housing allocations would remove the ability to respond to future requirements.

4.9 The LDP seeks to provide a balance between housing provision and employment. Significantly reducing the housing allocations could result in a failure to deliver economic objectives which would impact negatively on the implementation of the Plan’s strategy. It could also have implications for the strategic objectives of the emerging Swansea Bay City Region which seeks investment and growth for the

<sup>30</sup> Clarification Paper – Housing Provision (H2p)

area. The Council has also considered the need for affordable housing identified by the LHMA, in line with PPW<sup>31</sup>. The need for 732 affordable homes to be delivered per annum over a 5 year period has been identified. A significant reduction in housing provision would have a considerable impact on the ability to provide for affordable housing through the LDP.

- 4.10 It should be noted that in identifying the overall LDP housing requirement, the Council applied a household-to-dwelling conversion rate of 1:1. During the examination, it was agreed that an appropriate conversion rate should be identified as part of evaluating the housing requirement. Having considered the 3 potential rates – a 5% vacancy rate as evidenced in the 2001 Census, a 6.3% vacancy rate as evidenced in the 2011 Census and a 2.5% vacancy rate evidenced through the use of Council Tax records, the Council is of the view that the Council Tax records would provide the most accurate and up-to-date data.
- 4.11 These records constitute an ongoing collection of data on vacancy rather than a single snapshot at a point in time and I agree that a 2.5% vacancy rate is a reasonable basis upon which to base the household-to-dwellings conversion rate for the Plan period. This equates to a conversion rate of 1.025 which, when applied to the identified housing requirement, would equate to the need for an additional 380 units. The Council estimates that 294 units would be brought back into the housing stock between 2009 and 2013 through its empty property initiatives. Whilst it is not proposed to incorporate these units into the assessment, they do suggest that provision in the Plan will be supplemented through such initiatives.
- 4.12 Taking the above considerations into account and in light of the reduction in the forecasted number of dwellings required during the Plan period, the Council does not seek to amend the LDP housing requirement. The Council has taken a balanced view taking into account the reduced growth estimates indicated in the WG 2011-based population and household projections as well as other factors such as the provision of affordable housing, the ability to respond to improvements in the economy and housing market and the need to support the Plan objectives and strategy.
- 4.13 The Minister’s Clarification<sup>32</sup> letter confirms that the WG 2011-based household projections should form a starting point for assessing housing requirements but that local planning authorities should consider the appropriateness of the projections based on all sources of local evidence. It emphasises that in planning for the future, it is not prudent for a Plan to replicate a period of exceptionally poor

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<sup>31</sup> PPW paragraph 9.2.2

<sup>32</sup> Clarification Letter CL-01-14

economic performance. It is thus essential that LDP policies and allocations are informed by evidence and are mutually supportive of the Plan’s strategy so that, for example, if a Plan has regeneration or economic aspirations there must be consideration of the associated levels of housing to accommodate this.

- 4.14 The LDP provision for housing is supported by a robust evidence base and it is considered that the Plan’s proposed level of housing growth is soundly based. Proposed changes to the Plan to reflect consideration of the latest WG 2011-based population and household projections (**MAC14** and **MAC18 – MAC22**) are recommended to reflect the most up-to-date position and for clarity and consistency.

#### *Housing Supply*

- 4.15 As outlined above, the Council undertook a review of the level of White Land in the Plan and re-assessed the likely contribution that small sites and windfall sites would make to the housing land supply. Consequently, changes are proposed which would reduce the small site and windfall allowance by approximately 554 units (see below). The overall land supply figure set out in Policy SP5 ‘Housing’ would be amended accordingly.
- 4.16 Further to a reassessment of the level of employment land in the Plan and a review of the development limits in response to discussions during the Hearings, the Council proposes changes to land allocated for employment use on site GA2/MU5. It is proposed to replace the employment element of the allocation with residential use (**MACM/GA2/c**) which would increase the housing supply by 80 units. The proposed amendment to the development limits in Ammanford (**MACM/GA3/b**) would include an area of land that has planning permission for 6 dwellings. In addition, the removal of housing allocation SC4/h5 in Efailwen (**MACM/SC4/a**) would remove 8 dwellings. The revised housing supply would be 15,778. These changes are set out in the Council’s Clarification Paper Addendum<sup>33</sup>.
- 4.17 The LDP housing projections are based on the period 2006 – 2021. The Council has used a base date of 1 April 2007 for identifying housing allocations given the lack of evidence on completions during the first year of the Plan period. The 2007 Joint Housing Land Availability Study (JHLAS) identified the housing land supply between 2005 and 2007 and the contribution from 2006 – 2007 was not identified. Consequently, for the 15 years of housing requirement within the Plan period, 14 years of housing supply is identified to cater for the overall need through Policy H1 ‘Housing Allocations.’

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<sup>33</sup> See also Clarification Paper – Housing Provision Addendum (H2r)

- 4.18 The residual gap for the first year of the Plan is recognised. However, in the absence of any quantifiable evidence it would be difficult to estimate a figure and I do not consider that this would have any significant implications for delivery of the Plan strategy or its soundness. Taking the above into consideration it is proposed to amend Policy SP5 and the supporting text to reflect the amended housing land provision to 15,778 dwellings (**MAC28 - MAC32, MAC79, and MAC163**). However, **MAC28** and **MAC79** will require a minor consequential change to the amended housing supply figure of 15,778.
- 4.19 Following the Hearings, **MAC31** and **MAC32** have subsequently been amended to rectify a minor mathematical error and provide further clarification regarding proposed changes to the housing land supply figure. For the avoidance of doubt, I recommend **MAC31** and **MAC32** as amended and set out in Addendum 1<sup>34</sup> of Appendix A of my report. The Council also proposes to provide a breakdown of the H1 - Housing Allocations in the LDP Appendix which identifies completions, commitments and allocations (**MAC 80** and **MAC81**). Taken together, these changes would offer additional clarification and would provide an accurate basis upon which to plan to meet the identified requirement.

#### *Contribution from Small Sites*

- 4.20 In recognising the role of windfall and small sites in contributing to meeting the identified LDP housing land requirement, the submitted Plan set a windfall allowance of 1,530 dwellings (from sites able to accommodate 5 or more dwellings). It identified an additional allowance of 1,450 dwellings from small sites (sites able to accommodate between 1 – 4 dwellings). This allowance included an additional 5% flexibility (Focussed Change FCT20). During the examination, the Council accepted that no flexibility should be applied to an individual element of the housing land supply figure but instead an overall flexibility allowance should be included. Consequently, it was agreed to remove the 5% flexibility from the small site allowance.
- 4.21 In identifying a small site allowance, the Council broadly assessed the likely contribution from small sites across the settlement hierarchy<sup>35</sup>. However, in reviewing the extent of White Land and the development limits in the lower tiers of the settlement hierarchy, the contribution of small sites to the housing land supply has also been re-assessed. Consequently, the overall allowance has been reduced to 1,111

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<sup>34</sup> Addendum to Schedule of MACs Written Statement (MAC31 and MAC32)

<sup>35</sup> Topic Paper 12 – Windfall and Small Sites (June 2013)

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dwellings, representing a reduction of some 274 units from tiers 3 and 4 of the settlement hierarchy<sup>36</sup>.

- 4.22 Small site completions have not previously been monitored by the Council, though sites granted planning permission were considered as an indicator of the potential contribution from small sites. The Affordable Housing Viability Study (AHVS) records that 766 dwellings were granted planning permission on small sites between April 2008 and December 2010. This represents approximately 38%, a notable proportion, of all units granted planning permission during this time. It is also worthy of note that contributions from such sites are reflected in the 2013 JHLAS<sup>37</sup> and, based on the UDP average provision of 1162 units over the Plan period, assumed to contribute 77 units per annum. This would represent a significant number of dwellings being completed on small sites during the Plan period.

#### *Contribution from Windfalls*

- 4.23 The deposit LDP anticipated a windfall contribution of 1,530 units (102 units per annum). This was based on an average between the UDP rate of 35 units per annum and the delivery rate of 452 units between 1 July 2005 and 30 April 2008 (equating to approximately 169 per annum). This steep increase from the UDP allowance reflected the economic upturn and the implementation of regeneration proposals. The Council sought to set a realistic figure based on past trends whilst taking into account the consequences of a prolonged economic downturn and allowing sufficient scope in the event of an economic recovery<sup>38</sup>.
- 4.24 In response to matters arising during the examination, the Council produced a paper to clarify the past contribution from windfall sites and UDP allocations and to explain how these figures were used to inform the required housing supply<sup>39</sup>. In the early years of the Plan period between 2007 and 2013, 505 dwellings were completed via windfall sites. However, the majority of these completed windfalls (492 units) have been included in the Plan under Policy H1 (which includes completed units, commitments and housing allocations). If these are excluded then in effect, only 76 units were completed on windfall sites during 2007 and 2013. However, I agree that such a low number cannot be used as a logical indicator for any revised windfall allowance for the remaining period of the Plan.
- 4.25 For the remaining 8 years of the Plan (2013 to 2021) the Council has taken the average number of windfalls completed in the early years

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<sup>36</sup> Clarification Paper – Housing Provision (H2p)

<sup>37</sup> Joint Housing Land Availability Study 2013 (April 2014)

<sup>38</sup> Carmarthenshire Deposit Local Development Plan paragraph 5.9.40

<sup>39</sup> Hearing Session 2 Housing Provision Agreed Actions (H2m) and Clarification Paper – Housing Provision (H2p)

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(84 per annum) as a realistic indicator of windfall sites likely to emerge. This would equate to 672 dwellings. An additional 408 dwellings are estimated to come forward during the rest of the Plan period from a number of sites that either have an extant planning permission or are the subject of a planning application and are pending a decision. This figure would represent a 60% delivery rate on a possible 681 dwellings which is in line with past trends. In addition, as outlined above, 76 units were completed between 2007 and 2013. The windfall completion for the period 2006 – 2007 has also been calculated as 159. The total windfall allowance of 1,315 is thus:

2006 – 2007	159 dwellings
2007 – 2013	76 dwellings
2013 – 2021	1,080 dwellings
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,315 dwellings</b>

- 4.26 The Council proposes to combine the contribution from small sites and windfalls into one allowance (**MAC31**). This combined contribution would equate to 2,426 units and represent around 15% of the overall housing supply. The 2013 JHLAS and AHVS both indicate that small sites provide a notable proportion of housing supply in Carmarthenshire and this is reflective of the nature and diversity of its settlements. Between 2007 and 2013, windfall sites (5 dwellings or more) have contributed between 13.5% and 31.9% of the overall housing completions during the respective years. As such, I am satisfied that the anticipated delivery rate from windfall sites is realistic.
- 4.27 The definition of a windfall site is proposed to be amended (**MAC159**) to “a site not specifically allocated for development which becomes available for development during the lifetime of a Plan”. This would better reflect that the potential contribution from such sites may emerge from a range of sources including small sites.

#### *Five-year Supply of Land for Housing*

- 4.28 PPW is clear that Local Planning Authorities must ensure that sufficient land is genuinely available or will become available to provide a 5-year supply of land for housing<sup>40</sup>. The 2013 JHLAS provides the most up-to-date evidence in respect of the housing land supply and it is shown that Carmarthenshire has a 5.3 years housing land supply. Current indications are that there would be at least a 5-year supply of housing land upon adoption of the Plan, particularly given that the LDP includes new housing allocations.

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<sup>40</sup> PPW paragraph 9.2.3

## *Sites Allocated for Housing*

### Strategic Sites in the Growth Areas

- 4.29 The strategic sites in Policy SP4 ‘Strategic Sites’ have been identified as important to meet the regeneration proposals of the Council and the strategic objectives of the Plan. Information on development potential, constraints and how these sites can be brought forward has been updated and included in Appendix 3 of the Plan (**MAC161**). It is also proposed to prepare Development Briefs in the form of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). The list of proposed and adopted SPG would also be amended (**MAC162**).
- 4.30 It is not the purpose of a local development plan examination to consider detailed matters that are capable of being resolved through good design or the provision of infrastructure that can be provided without threatening viability and delivery. Consideration of site-specific matters in the following paragraphs is therefore limited to those issues which relate to delivery or raise other significant issues of soundness. Matters related to potential development constraints, including flooding, sewerage and infrastructure are dealt with in more detail in Section 8 of the report.
- 4.31 Strategic site GA1/MU1 West Carmarthen is identified as a mixed use site comprising some 1,100 dwellings, education, amenity/recreation and employment uses, community facilities and a local centre. A number of planning applications have come forward for residential development on this site in recent years. There is a need to agree funding mechanisms to complete the central spine road in order to enable the comprehensive development of the site. The Council is actively pursuing a number of options to facilitate delivery of the necessary infrastructure.
- 4.32 Whilst the majority of units proposed are categorised as Category 3i in the 2013 JHLAS – i.e. sites or phases which are unlikely to be developed within 5 years by virtue of major physical constraints, none of them are categorised as Category 3ii whereby development is considered unlikely to occur in the foreseeable future. Furthermore, it is anticipated that a notable number of units (224) would be delivered by 2018. Current indications are that the site could be developed during the Plan period.
- 4.33 The South Llanelli Strategic Zone comprises a number of sites along the waterfront. The sites offer an opportunity to regenerate previously developed land emerging from the area’s industrial past for a variety of mixed-use developments. The Cross Hands Strategic Zone comprises 3 sites proposed for a range of mixed-uses including residential. The sites consist of previously developed and greenfield

land and represent an opportunity to realise key economic and regeneration objectives in a sustainable location.

#### Other Sites in the Growth Areas

- 4.34 The housing allocation on land at Maes Ar Ddafen Road (GA2/H35) has outline planning permission, subject to the signing of a Section 106 (S106) Agreement. Further to revision of the TAN 15 Development Advice Maps (DAMs) in March 2013, the site is not impacted upon by a C1 designation and the developer is working with Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) to identify the surface water betterment for the development. There is little to suggest that the site cannot be delivered during the Plan period.
- 4.35 Residential allocations at Genwen Road (GA2/H45) and Llys Pendderi (GA2/H46) comprise two parcels of land divided by Genwen Road. The Council confirms that there are pending planning applications anticipated on these sites which are subject to the agreement of heads of terms of S106 Agreements. Current discussions with statutory consultees are also taking place. It is anticipated that the applications would go to the Council’s Planning Committee for determination over the coming months. Current indications are that these sites could come forward for development.
- 4.36 There is little evidence that the housing allocation on land adjacent to Parc Brynmawr (GA2/H24) would not be delivered. There are no significant identified constraints to development, the site is owned by the Council and is located near to facilities in Felinfoel and Furnace.
- 4.37 Representations were made suggesting that residential allocations in Ammanford (namely GA3/h4, GA3/h8, GA3/h10 and GA3/h9) were unlikely to come forward during the Plan period. Whilst I acknowledge that some of the sites have been allocated for some time, there are extant planning permissions for residential development on some of these sites and planning permission for a dwelling on part of site GA3/h8 has been implemented. There is little evidence to suggest that there are any insurmountable obstacles to the development of these sites.
- 4.38 In respect of other housing allocations in the Ammanford/Cross Hands Growth Area, GA3/h22 has been granted planning permission, subject to the signing of a S106 Agreement and allocations GA3/h24 and GA3/h21 have been completed. A full planning application on allocation GA3/h53 was being considered by the Council at the time of writing. Full planning permission has been granted for housing on part of allocated site GA3/h44.

## Service Centres

- 4.39 A number of sites in Burry Port were identified as allocations in the deposit LDP, in recognition of the Council’s regeneration aspirations for the Waterfront and wider Llanelli Coast area. Four of the sites allocated for residential development lie partly within Zone C2 floodplain, as identified by the TAN 15 DAMs. The allocations were made on the basis of the Council’s Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment (SFCA) – Level 2<sup>41</sup>. However, in response to representations and consideration of the TAN 15 DAMs (as revised in March 2013) a number of Focussed Changes to the Plan were proposed by the Council, including deletion of these sites as allocations (FCM/T2/1/a, FCM/T2/1/b, FCM/T2/1/d and FCM/T2/1/e).
- 4.40 In removing these sites as allocations, the Council has adopted a precautionary approach in line with national planning policy which seeks to direct new development away from those areas which are at a high risk of flooding<sup>42</sup>. Moreover, TAN 15 says that sites in Zone C2 should not be allocated for highly vulnerable development<sup>43</sup>, which includes housing.
- 4.41 I acknowledge that the area has benefitted from a significant level of investment and that the potential for further regeneration and public and private investment could be realised through the development of these sites. I have considered also the updated Flood Maps for Burry Port that were produced by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) during the examination. These maps were updated on the basis of site-specific modelling and indicate that a number of sites previously allocated at Burry Port and subsequently removed, may face minimal risk from flooding.
- 4.42 However, TAN 15 says that the DAMs are based on the best available information considered sufficient to determine when flood risk issues need to be taken into account in planning future development and that they are robust for triggering the application of the tests (for both forward planning and decision making) at the present time<sup>44</sup>. Whilst it is noted that WG may produce updated versions of the DAMs if informed by NRW of significant change<sup>45</sup>, I have little firm evidence of the intention to do so or of the likely timescales involved. Until future maps are produced to supersede the current DAMs, the allocation of sites in Zone C2 for highly vulnerable development would conflict with TAN 15 and soundness test C2.

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<sup>41</sup> SFCA - Level 2: Sites at Burry Port and Llanelli (May 2011) CSD114

<sup>42</sup> PPW TAN 15: ‘Development and Flood Risk’ section 3

<sup>43</sup> PPW TAN 15: ‘Development and Flood Risk’ paragraph 10.8

<sup>44</sup> PPW TAN 15: ‘Development and Flood Risk’ paragraphs 4.1 and 4.3

<sup>45</sup> PPW TAN 15: ‘Development and Flood Risk’ paragraph 4.3

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- 4.43 A planning application has been submitted to the Council for residential development on the housing allocation at Cwrt Farm, Pembrey (T2/1/h2). DCWW says that there are no issues in supplying water to the site and a hydraulic modelling assessment has been undertaken to assess the capability of local infrastructure to accommodate foul flows from the site. DCWW is working with the developers to facilitate development of the site. Detailed matters such as design and access, the effect on the setting of a listed building and contributions towards education provision would be considered by the Council as part of the planning application. Current indications are that the site could be developed.
- 4.44 The housing allocation on land north of Dan-y-Crug, Llandovery (T2/3/h1) was reduced in size with a proposed focussed change to remove part of the site which lies in a C2 flood risk area. Planning permission has been granted for the development of this site (subject to the signing of a S106 Agreement) and I see no reason why development will not come forward during the Plan period.
- 4.45 The allocation of the Ysgol Pantycelyn site (FCM/T2/3/c) for mixed-use including community and residential uses was proposed as a Focussed Change to the Plan following the withdrawal of housing site FCM/T2/3/b by the landowner and the emergence of the school closure. I have considered the representations seeking the continued education-related use of the site though there is little firm evidence that such a use would be viable and is likely to proceed. The site is owned by the Council and has the potential to provide housing for Llandovery over the Plan period. There is little evidence that there are insurmountable constraints to development of the site and current indications are that it can be delivered for a mix of uses.
- 4.46 A number of residential allocations in St Clears Service Centre including T2/5/h1, T2/5/h2, T2/5/h3, T2/5/h4, T2/5/h7 and T2/5/h8 have been granted planning permission. There is little to suggest that these sites cannot be delivered during the Plan period.

#### Local Service Centres

- 4.47 The planning permission for residential development on the allocated site on land adjacent to Laugharne School (T3/1/h2) has lapsed. However, there are no insurmountable obstacles to development and I see no reason why the site would not come forward during the Plan period.

#### Sustainable Communities

- 4.48 The housing allocation adjacent to Pleasant View in Capel Iwan (SC7/h1) is identified as being capable of accommodating 7 units whilst the allocation at Maes-y-Bryn (SC7/h2) would accommodate

13 units. Capel Iwan is identified as a stand alone settlement within a Sustainable Community. When the settlements were assessed, Capel Iwan contained 3 of the identified facilities. However, subsequently the primary school and Post Office have closed though the Community Hall remains. Whilst there are some objections to the classification of Capel Iwan as a Sustainable Community, other representors have expressed a strong desire for growth and the capacity to support the future of the community.

- 4.49 The allocations would provide small scale development to enable a level of growth designed to support community vitality. This is consistent with PPW TAN 6: ‘Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities’ which recognises that the planning system has a key role to play in supporting the delivery of sustainable rural communities. There are no insurmountable obstacles to development of these sites and more detailed consideration of achieving adequate visibility for an access to SC7/h2 would be more appropriately considered at the planning application stage.
- 4.50 Two sites are allocated for housing in Porthyrhyd. Land to the rear of Ysgoldy, Bethlehem (SC33/h3) is allocated for 27 units and 8 units have been completed on land adjacent to Derwen Deg (SC33/h4). Further to representations and discussions at the Hearing regarding SC33/h3, it was agreed that the Council’s planning team would consult with DCWW, NRW and the hydrology and building regulations departments of the Council to assess the deliverability of the allocation in light of flooding/drainage/surface water run off concerns raised<sup>46</sup>.
- 4.51 In respect of the public sewerage network, DCWW responded that there were no reported incidents of internal or external flooding to properties or surcharging of sewers adjacent to the site. Historic blockages of the sewerage system in the immediate area have been resolved and DCWW would require surface water flows from new development to be disposed of separately. The need for separate surface water drainage (such as soak-aways) is also reflected in the response from the Council’s building regulations department. The surface water analysis of allocated sites undertaken as part of the SFCA<sup>47</sup> indicates that there would be limited impact from development of this site.
- 4.52 Furthermore, to alleviate previous concerns regarding part of the original allocation being within Zone C2 of the TAN 15 DAMs, part of the site has already been removed from the Plan. Current indications are that there are no insurmountable obstacles to development of the site and that it can come forward during the Plan period.

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<sup>46</sup> Hearing Session 19 – Agreed Actions (H19e)

<sup>47</sup> Strategic Flooding Consequences Assessment – Annex 2 Surface Water & Localised Flooding: June 2013 (CSD113)

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4.53 Concerns were expressed regarding the housing allocation on land to the rear of 16 Garreg Llwyd, Llanedi (SC36/H1) given its former use as a landfill site. However, the developer would need to undertake the necessary site investigations and other legislative provisions would need to be satisfied before proceeding on site. There is no substantive evidence to suggest that the site is unsuitable for development. The principle of allocating the site for development is thus sound and I see no reason not to include it in the Plan.

#### *Phasing and Housing Trajectory*

4.54 The LDP says that the release of sites may be phased in order to meet and manage the supply of housing and the rate of development within Carmarthenshire over the Plan period. Policy GP5 ‘Phasing’ relates to strategic mixed-use and residential sites. PPW says that proposals for phasing should be flexible to allow for choice and to ensure housing markets are effective. Phasing policies in the plan should only give a broad indication of the timescales for the release of the main development areas or identified sites, rather than an arbitrary numerical limit on permissions. Evidence that market demand would exhaust total planned provision in the early years of the LDP may indicate a need for some overall phasing of development<sup>48</sup>.

4.55 However, only 7 years remain of the Plan period. The housing trajectory schedule shows that the first two phasing periods (2006-2011 and 2011-2012) and part of the third phase (2012-2013 and 2013-2014) are now passed<sup>49</sup>. The Council does not wish to delay sites that are not constrained or do not rely on key infrastructure integral to their delivery. It seeks to maintain a 5-year housing land supply and deliver the required level of housing over the Plan period.

4.56 It is recognised in the Plan that some developments need to be phased or the timing of works controlled to take account of necessary infrastructure improvements or requirements. The Plan includes information on development potential and constraints as well as making provision for a case by case assessment to enable individual developments to be brought forward. Proposed changes to Policy SP18 ‘The Welsh Language’ would require certain residential developments to be phased (see Section 12 of the report). As such, it is proposed to delete Policy GP5 ‘Phasing’ (**MAC75**).

#### *Flexibility*

4.57 The Plan, as proposed to be modified by the MACs, includes a flexibility allowance of 3.8% which provides a degree of contingency

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<sup>48</sup> PPW paragraph 2.5.1 and 2.5.6

<sup>49</sup> Topic Paper 14 – Phasing and Housing Trajectory (July 2013) (CSD88)

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in meeting the identified requirement. This is less than the 10% usually considered to be necessary to provide the required level of flexibility, though more or less may be acceptable depending on the circumstances of each case. The deposit Plan (incorporating Focussed Changes) identified a potential land supply to provide 7% flexibility. However, it was acknowledged during the examination that this figure was neither planned for nor justified.

- 4.58 Subsequently, the WG 2011-based population and household projections have been published and would suggest that a reduction in the housing levels in the Plan would be required. However, the Council has considered these projections and sought to take a balanced view to support the Plan’s strategy and objectives. Other factors have been taken into account, including the low delivery rate during the initial years of the Plan which would suggest that the residual supply would provide additional flexibility during the remaining years of the Plan period. In this respect, the Plan seeks to respond positively to changing circumstances and to be in a position to accommodate future economic and housing growth.
- 4.59 A significant proportion of the housing allocations are already committed<sup>50</sup> and the Council has shown that the allocations can be delivered. Representations made by the Home Builders Federation indicate that, provided the housing sites allocated are viable and deliverable and the Council has a clear focus on delivering housing, its members are confident that the planned number of homes could be delivered. Furthermore, whilst acknowledging that the target is challenging, the area has an attractive market and has interest from all the major developers in Wales. As such, there are no indications that there would be any issues in respect of the capacity of the industry to deliver<sup>51</sup>.
- 4.60 A re-assessment and subsequent decrease in the small site and windfall allowance reduces a reliance on this uncertain source of supply and there is greater confidence that the windfall provision in the Plan could be achieved. Sufficient land would be allocated and other policy provisions would ensure that 15,197 dwellings would be delivered within the Plan period, including a 5 year housing land supply and some flexibility to deal with unforeseen circumstances and to deal with the failure of sites listed in the LDP to come forward. The remaining Plan period is relatively short. Policy GP5 has been removed which means that the allocated sites can come forward over the remainder of the Plan period to meet demand. However, regular monitoring would enable the Council to react quickly if windfalls were not coming forward at the anticipated rate or sites were not

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<sup>50</sup> Housing Land Allocations – Breakdown of Housing Supply 13 November 2013 (ID1c)

<sup>51</sup> The Home Builders Federation statement for Hearing Session 2 ‘Housing Provision’ – Matters & Issues (H2e)

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delivering dwellings as anticipated. I am thus satisfied that the adopted LDP would be sufficiently flexible.

#### *Alternative sites*

- 4.61 A number of representors propose alternative sites to those allocated in the Plan, most notably for housing development. Some may consider that the allocations in the Plan do not present the best solution but I am limited by statute and can only recommend a change to make the Plan sound. I cannot seek to make a sound plan better. The Council considers that it has produced a strategy, policies and allocations that are sound. The Plan makes satisfactory provision for the delivery of housing in a manner consistent with the development strategy. The Plan is thus sound in respect of its general housing provisions without inclusion of further sites.
- 4.62 Representations were made suggesting that some sites allocated for housing, particularly those sites that were allocated in the UDP, would be unlikely to come forward in the LDP period. Each allocated site has been considered and visited and many were discussed in some detail during the 13 site-specific Hearings.
- 4.63 The Council’s site assessment methodology represents a robust means of assessing the appropriateness of sites for inclusion in the LDP. The Council also contacted relevant landowners to establish their commitment to the allocation of their sites. Current indications are that the sites would come forward for development during the Plan period. Subject to the proposed changes referred to in this report, the Plan is thus sound in respect of its general housing provisions. Consequently there is no need for me to consider further the alternative sites suggested by representors.

#### **Recommendation**

- 4.64 That in order to make the Plan sound the following changes are required:

**MAC14, MAC18, MAC19, MAC20, MAC21, MAC22, MAC28, MAC29, MAC30, MAC31** (Addendum 1 of Appendix A), **MAC32** (Addendum 1 of Appendix A), **MAC75, MAC79, MAC80, MAC81, MAC159, MAC161, MAC162** and **MAC163**.

## **5 Affordable Housing Provision**

### *Affordable Housing Need*

- 5.1 The provision of an appropriate mix of housing features in the Vision for the LDP. It is one of the Plan’s strategic objectives and a key issue identified in contributing to the development of sustainable and

balanced communities. In assessing the need for affordable dwellings, the Carmarthenshire Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) 2009 Review<sup>52</sup> identifies a shortfall of 743 dwellings per annum (the equivalent of 3,715 homes) over the following 5 years for those in need of affordable housing within the County. If this requirement was extended over the entire Plan period, it would equate to approximately 73% of the total Plan requirement for 15,197 homes. The Plan acknowledges that the planning system alone would not provide for this shortfall. However, the importance of the LDP’s role in providing affordable housing is recognised.

### *Provision of Affordable Housing*

- 5.2 The submitted Plan set a target to deliver at least 2,915 affordable dwellings over the Plan period. This figure was based on an estimate of the likely number of affordable homes that would be provided on the LDP housing allocations, Housing Association schemes on site and the average build per year, as well as homes that may come forward via affordable housing exception sites and affordable houses that have already been delivered from 2007 to 2011.
- 5.3 The Development Appraisal Toolkit (DAT) was used to evaluate Residual Values (RVs) for comparison with Existing Use Values (EUV) of land as a basis for determining the viability of the affordable housing contribution targets to be included in Policy AH1 ‘Affordable Housing’. The Plan sought an affordable housing contribution of 30% in the higher viable sub-market areas and 20% in the lower viable sub-market areas which was informed by the Affordable Housing Viability Study (AHVS) undertaken in 2011<sup>53</sup>. Affordable housing would be required on-site for proposals for 10 or more dwellings within the Growth Areas and on proposals for 5 or more dwellings within the Service Centres, Local Service Centres and Sustainable Communities.
- 5.4 However, the AHVS makes clear that it would be a significant challenge to deliver sites with affordable housing in the lower value sub-markets. Also, small sites do not necessarily present viability challenges compared to larger sites and there is no significant evidence against having very low thresholds in the Plan. National planning policy guidance<sup>54</sup> says that the authority-wide affordable housing target should take account of the anticipated levels of finance available, including public subsidy, and the level of developer contribution that can realistically be sought.

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<sup>52</sup> Local Housing Market Assessment 2009 Annual Review: DTZ (June 2010)

<sup>53</sup> Carmarthenshire County Council Viability Study: Final Report (March 2011) Dr Andrew Golland

<sup>54</sup> PPW TAN 2: ‘Planning and Affordable Housing’ paragraph 9.1

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- 5.5 The evidence in the AHVS Update Report 2013<sup>55</sup> does not support a 20% affordable housing contribution in the Ammanford and Cross Hands sub-market. For example, on a site built at a density of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph), anything above 15% would not be viable and residual values would be negative with a contribution above 10%. The AVHS also reiterated that there would be no significant viability constraint if the threshold was reduced to one dwelling.
- 5.6 Further to discussions at the Hearings, the Council undertook further work to consider the proposed affordable housing contribution targets in the weaker sub-market areas, to ensure that either there is robust evidence to demonstrate that the targets would be viable or to reduce them to a viable level. The Council also agreed to reconsider or clearly justify the proposed site-based thresholds.
- 5.7 The updated development appraisal work<sup>56</sup> re-assessed residual value calculations in the 4 lowest value sub-market areas on sites built at densities of 30 dph and 40 dph. This shows a range of residual values which are all positive and show a modest increase over previous analyses. However, residual values are still low in the Ammanford and Cross Hands sub-market area above a target of 20% affordable housing. The initial viability assessments are recognised as being more general in scope with respect to prices and are largely driven by second hand sales. The latest work considered a number of new build schemes, unit sales and sizes.
- 5.8 Whilst difficult to define, a landowner return of between £250,000 and £300,000 per ha is generally considered reasonable - providing an approximate 25 to 30 fold uplift from EUV - though this would vary depending upon location. At a benchmark of £300,000 per ha, and assuming that 30 dph density would be representative of development, targets of 30% affordable housing are shown to be viable in all sub-market areas with the exception of Llanelli and the Ammanford and Cross Hands sub-market areas. In Llanelli a 20% target would be viable and this is consistent with local evidence which suggests that this is being achieved by the Council in affordable housing negotiations. A target of 15% would be viable in the Ammanford and Cross Hands sub-market areas.
- 5.9 The AHVS includes sensitivity testing and has assumed £5,000 per unit for non- housing contributions under S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions. However, the sensitivity testing did not include the potential impact of additional costs associated with the provision of fire sprinklers which are anticipated to come into force in January 2016. Whilst these costs were unknown at the time of the

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<sup>55</sup> Carmarthenshire County Council AHVS Update Report (May 2013) Dr Andrew Golland

<sup>56</sup> Carmarthenshire Viability Assessment: Response to Inspector’s Questions: Dr Andrew Golland (April 2014)

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examination, the WG confirmed that an anticipated cost of £3,075 per unit has been used in recent CIL examinations in Caerphilly and Merthyr Tydfil and is a reliable estimate.<sup>57</sup>

- 5.10 The updated appraisal work<sup>58</sup> shows that if the estimated sprinkler costs were applied on a 30 dph scheme, residual value would be reduced by approximately £150,000 per ha. If £300,000 per ha is taken as a robust land owner return, theoretically there would be a potential impact on viability in the Ammanford and Cross-Hands sub-market area. The updated work also reviewed the notional £5,000 per unit for non-housing S106 or CIL contributions. A comparison with other recent LDP and CIL examinations, suggests that this could be too high with a figure of between £2,000 and £3,000 per unit found to be more appropriate. However, it is acknowledged that S106 costs are likely to be higher for the large sites. This would be the case for the Carmarthen West site, taking into account the costs of the link road, and as such a 20% affordable housing target would be sought here.
- 5.11 Further viability testing has been undertaken for the Carmarthen West site and the Caeau Mynydd Mawr (CMM) Special Area of Conservation (SAC) to assess the likely impact of the affordable housing targets together with other anticipated S106 contributions. The testing indicates that the proposed affordable housing targets would be viable. However, the CMM SAC is within the Ammanford and Cross Hands sub-market area and a 20% affordable housing target would not yield a £300,000 land owner return. The appraisal further emphasises that viability would be more challenging in the lower value areas. Based on this evidence, the Council proposes to reduce the affordable housing target in the Ammanford and Cross Hands sub-market area to 10% (**MAC33** and **MAC89**).
- 5.12 In considering the proposed site-based thresholds, the updated appraisal work reviewed a number of planning applications and ran an analysis of residual values for sites of less than 5 dwellings. It was found that there would be a good case for adopting a threshold of one unit, up to 20% in Llanelli and 10% in the Ammanford and Cross Hands sub-market. Whilst it was noted that certain types of development related to demolition and conversion would be more expensive, Policy AH1 would be sufficiently flexible to negotiate on a case by case basis and such site-specific considerations could be taken into account.
- 5.13 Sites of between 5 and 10 units were also tested and the analysis found that site economics would not differ significantly between 5-9 units and over 10 units. In light of this evidence, the Council propose

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<sup>57</sup> Examination Document ID7

<sup>58</sup> Carmarthenshire Viability Assessment: Response to Inspector’s Questions: Dr Andrew Golland (April 2014)

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to reduce the affordable housing thresholds. An affordable housing contribution would be sought on all housing allocations and windfall sites. For proposals of 5 or more dwellings, the affordable housing would be required to be provided on site and for proposals below this threshold, a commuted sum would be sought (**MAC89**).

- 5.14 Construction costs used in the viability analysis were calculated from the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS). Some representors have referred to additional costs that may affect the viability of affordable housing provision such as remediation of brownfield or contaminated sites, the need for raft foundations and costs associated with demolition or asbestos removal. However, these would be regarded as abnormal costs which would need to be taken into account at an appropriate stage and factored into the viability assessment. They would be subject to variation from site to site and thus best taken into account in negotiation on specific development proposals with the policy target percentages as a starting point.
- 5.15 Whether the anticipated uplift in RV over EUV would offer sufficient incentive to landowners to release land at a price developers are willing to pay was debated during the examination. For a scheme to be viable there must be a reasonable developer and landowner return. Scheme viability and the level of this ‘return’ are both relative to individual circumstances. The viability assessment emphasises that the factors influencing the housing market could change, such as build costs, the availability of finance or financial support for affordable housing. Modest house price increases could off-set the anticipated cost of sprinklers and additional S106 contributions.<sup>59</sup>
- 5.16 With the exception of the 20% target in the Ammanford and Cross Hands sub-market, the range of affordable housing contributions tested represent realistic targets, accepting that in many cases site-specific negotiations would be necessary. The Council prepared a draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on delivery of Policy AH1 of the LDP. This was consulted on in parallel with the LDP in accordance with planning policy guidance<sup>60</sup>. SPG is not subject to examination, though it was discussed at the Hearings. It is anticipated that once it has complied with the accepted procedures for SPG, it would provide additional information and clarity to assist delivery of Policy AH1. It is anticipated that it will be produced and adopted at the time of the adoption of the LDP and this is included in the Monitoring Framework (**MAC162**).
- 5.17 In light of the proposed changes outlined above, the Council has calculated the potential number of affordable dwellings to be provided

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<sup>59</sup> Carmarthenshire Viability Assessment: Response to Inspector’s Questions: Dr Andrew Golland (April 2014)

<sup>60</sup> LDP Manual paragraph 7.3.5

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from the housing allocations and affordable housing exception sites. Where sites have a valid planning permission or have been completed, the contribution has been factored into the overall number. As a consequence it is proposed to amend Policy SP6 ‘Affordable Housing’ so that provision for at least 2,121 affordable homes would be delivered through the LDP (**MAC37**).

- 5.18 Other proposed changes include subsequent changes to the supporting text of Policy SP6 (**MAC34 – MAC37** and **MAC90**) and identifying in Appendix 5 – Policy H1 ‘Housing Allocations’ the target percentage of affordable homes being sought on allocations (**MAC81**). Inspector changes to Appendix 5 are recommended to ensure that it accurately reflects the provisions of Policy AH1 (as amended by **MAC89**). The strategic site allocated in West Carmarthen (GA1/MU1) and sites allocated in Newcastle Emlyn (those listed in the table under T2/4) should be shaded green to reflect the 20% affordable housing contribution target in line with **MAC89**. These changes are set out in Appendix D (**IC01**) and Appendix A incorporates these changes.
- 5.19 It is proposed to include a spatial representation of the affordable housing targets in Carmarthenshire on the Proposals Map (**MACM/PM2**). These changes would provide the necessary clarity for users of the Plan to identify the relevant targets.
- 5.20 Whilst the number of affordable dwellings anticipated to be delivered via the LDP has been reduced, this target is more realistic and achievable. The Council has considered during the examination ways in which the Plan might realistically increase affordable housing delivery, given the shortfall in the number of affordable housing units expected to be delivered compared to the level of need identified. The Council recognises that opportunities to provide affordable housing need to be maximised. However, the viability of developing potential sites and the anticipated future level of financial assistance in building new affordable homes have also been taken into account.
- 5.21 Subject to the proposed changes, the affordable housing targets are supported by robust and coherent justification. The targets are indicative and the level of affordable housing to be provided in each case will depend on detailed site-specific evaluation. Moreover, the monitoring provisions would provide additional flexibility to enable the Plan to respond to any significant changes to local market conditions.

### *Flexibility*

- 5.22 Policy AH2 ‘Affordable Housing – Exceptions Sites’ allows for 100% affordable housing on sites immediately adjacent to the Development Limits of defined settlements. The Plan recognises that the delivery

of exception sites could provide additional housing and a total of 30 dwellings are anticipated to be provided via Policy AH2.<sup>61</sup> Policy AH1 as amended by **MAC89** provides for a commuted sum payment where it can be demonstrated that on-site provision would be unviable and includes the flexibility to negotiate on a site-by-site basis.

- 5.23 Monitoring would ensure that there is an even distribution of such housing within the settlements which accords with the strategy. These changes would improve the Plan’s coherence and effectiveness, and overall the strategy is considered sufficiently flexible to deal with future changes.

### *Conclusions*

- 5.24 Subject to those changes proposed by the Council as set out above, I find the Plan’s approach to affordable housing sound.

### **Recommendation**

- 5.25 That in order to make the Plan sound the following changes are required:

**MAC33, MAC34, MAC35, MAC36, MAC37, MAC89, MAC90 and MACM/PM2.**

**Inspector Change  
IC01.**

## **6 Gypsy and Traveller Sites**

### *Level of Need for Permanent Sites*

- 6.1 The requirement for Gypsy and Traveller permanent and transit sites was the subject of an ongoing assessment through a number of sources including a survey of the Gypsy Travellers community’s views to quantify their accommodation needs in terms of residential and transit sites, the WG’s Bi-Annual Caravan Count, the Council’s housing waiting lists and its Gypsy and Traveller Community Strategy. There is one Council-owned site at Penybryn, Llanelli which has 15 pitches occupied by Irish Travellers. There are also 4 licensed private caravan sites in the County which are permanently occupied by Gypsies and Travellers.
- 6.2 The surveys indicated that the level of local authority pitches was sufficient at the Penybryn site and that there was no additional need

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<sup>61</sup> Hearing Session 3 – Affordable Housing Agreed Actions (H3j)

within the County.<sup>62</sup> Since the first edition of the Gypsy and Traveller Topic Paper 11 was published in 2011, there have been cultural clashes at the Penybryn site resulting in the Welsh Romani Gypsies being displaced from the site whilst a re-configuration of the site reduced the number of pitches to the current 15. Also, the evidence from the Council’s Gypsy and Traveller Community Strategy indicated that a need for up to 25 new local authority pitches would be required (although part of this need is met through the existing provision at the Penybryn site).

- 6.3 In order to record the level of need accurately, the Council’s Housing department created a new code on the housing waiting list. It became apparent that the Welsh Gypsies were looking for a new site following their displacement from Penybryn but were not putting their names on the waiting list fearing that they would be offered a place at Penybryn. In November 2012, 11 applications were submitted. Accordingly, a need for a site of between 12 and 15 pitches during the Plan period is anticipated, which would allow for future expansion.

#### *Level of Need for Transit Sites*

- 6.4 The Bi-Annual Caravan Count provides an indication of encampments on those sites considered by the Council to be authorised or unauthorised and is the most up-to-date assessment of the location of caravans in the area. The Council considers that the counting of an unauthorised site within one study and in isolation of other relevant considerations does not provide sufficient evidence as to the future need for a transit site. The use of unauthorised sites could be due to a number of factors merely reflecting the number of caravans passing through the area at a given time. Additional evidence from the Council’s Housing department shows that there is no distinct pattern for unauthorised encampments.<sup>63</sup>
- 6.5 In the absence of any firm evidence to indicate that there is a need for a transit site during the Plan period, a site has not been identified. However, the Monitoring Framework (**MAC157**) has been revised to ensure that there would be a proactive approach to identifying suitable sites if such a need is confirmed. Proposed changes to the supporting text of Policy H7 ‘Gypsy and Traveller Sites’ (**MAC87**) would clarify that such a site would be identified if necessary.

#### *Provision for a Permanent Site*

- 6.6 The Council undertook a call for sites as part of the LDP process. Given that the requirement was identified in the Llanelli area and in view of the local links that the Gypsies and Travellers have to schools

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<sup>62</sup> Topic Paper 11 - Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Needs (revised June 2013)

<sup>63</sup> Hearing Session 4 – Gypsies & Travellers Agreed Actions (H4f)

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and Doctors’ surgeries, a 5-mile radius of this area formed part of the site assessment methodology. Three candidate sites were submitted and assessed. However, none of the sites were considered appropriate for inclusion within the LDP for various reasons including issues regarding highway safety, nature conservation, conflict with existing uses and flood risk.

- 6.7 The Council has been working proactively with its Housing department, re-visiting a number of Council-owned sites to identify a permanent site in the Llanelli area. From a candidate short-list of 7, two sites were identified as the most appropriate candidates for consideration as a permanent site, one of which has been identified for potential use on a temporary basis. Following the Hearings, these short listed sites have been put forward for consideration by the Council’s Executive Board<sup>64</sup>. The Board resolved to defer consideration of the sites pending further information and consultation with all local members in the Llanelli area. The Board will consider the sites again in the autumn.
- 6.8 Whilst a site has not been allocated, I am satisfied that adequate explanation has been provided as well as information in the LDP regarding the criteria to be used to ensure that the necessary provision is made. Furthermore, the submitted scoring matrix<sup>65</sup> would provide an appropriate basis for a suitable site to be identified and provided during the remaining Plan period. The Council is well aware of its duty under the Housing (Wales) Bill 2013<sup>66</sup> to provide a permanent Gypsy and Traveller site where there is evidence of a general need within its area. The revised Monitoring Framework would ensure that a suitable site is identified by 2016 and provided by 2017; failing this the Plan would need to be partially reviewed.
- 6.9 Meanwhile, Policy H7 provides criteria for allowing suitable sites to come forward. Proposed changes to remove criterion (b) of the policy (**MAC86**) would ensure that the policy accords with Circular 30/2007 ‘Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites’ which says that criteria based policies will be required in the LDP whether or not there is any current need identified in the area in order to meet future or unexpected demand. Subject to these changes, Policy H7 and its supporting text provide a sufficiently sound basis for meeting the needs for Gypsy and Traveller sites in line with national policy.

## **Recommendation**

- 6.10 That in order to make the Plan sound the following changes are required:

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<sup>64</sup> Carmarthenshire County Council Executive Board meeting 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014

<sup>65</sup> Hearing Session 4 – Gypsies & Travellers Agreed Actions (H4f)

<sup>66</sup> Now the Housing Wales Act which received Royal Assent on 17 September 2014

**MAC86, MAC87 and MAC157.**

**7 The Economy and Employment**

*Level of Employment Land Provision*

- 7.1 The LDP seeks to facilitate employment growth by ensuring that there is adequate provision of land at a broad range of locations to meet the identified need so that existing and potential businesses are not inhibited by a lack of development opportunity. It seeks to focus on facilitating growth within the three Growth Areas but to allow for a degree of flexibility in the amount of land available across the hierarchy to facilitate a varied economy which reflects the diversity of the County. The Plan also recognises the importance of the agricultural sector to the economy<sup>67</sup>.
- 7.2 The Employment Land Study (ELS)<sup>68</sup> identified a need to improve the employment sector base through diversity and location. Its forecast jobs creation provides a rationale for 34.1 ha of employment land to be delivered to 2031. However, the ELS says that this is a minimum requirement and in developing the employment land portfolio, has recommended a target of between 237.7 ha and 242.7 ha to provide choice and flexibility between settlements and site types. The Plan provides for 174 ha of employment land to include approximately 14 ha required for the waste sector (see Section 15 of the report).
- 7.3 An updated TAN 23: ‘Economic Development’ was published and subsequently discussed during the examination. It says that land provision targets may be higher than anticipated demand to allow for flexibility, competition and choice and to ensure that no opportunities are missed. However, persistent oversupply of employment land may cause harm so that allocated employment sites remain vacant for long periods and frustrate development for other land uses.
- 7.4 TAN 23 advises that planning authorities should assess the likelihood of these adverse effects and balance them against the economic benefits of identifying employment land. However, it is recognised that some areas have large historical allocations which are in sustainable locations and supported by infrastructure but not in demand for other uses. There may be a reasonable chance of such cases generating major economic benefits e.g. attracting large-scale inward investment projects.<sup>69</sup> It also advises that the level of growth should not differ markedly from that expected for the wider region.

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<sup>67</sup> Employment Land Update – Topic Paper (June 2013)

<sup>68</sup> Employment Land Study Final Report (May 2010) (CSD117)

<sup>69</sup> PPW TAN 23: ‘Economic Development’ February 2014 paragraphs 4.5.2 and 4.5.4

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- 7.5 The Swansea Bay City Region Economic Regeneration Strategy sets out 5 strategic aims, including creating distinctive places and competitive infrastructures. Whilst it does not currently identify specific projects, it sets out the framework intended to provide clarity, consistency and focus in terms of collective action by its partners over the next 2 decades.<sup>70</sup> Its aims include the continued development of strategic employment sites and the co-ordinated release of additional development land to accommodate new employers and to provide grow-on space for existing firms.
- 7.6 Following discussions at the Hearing, the Council conducted a further review of employment land which assessed whether the allocated sites would be in line with market requirements, particularly in terms of relevant economic strategies which seek to encourage business start-ups, foster growth and target investment from hi-tech, hi-growth sectors and European/UK office headquarters. The review also sought to ensure that appropriate provision would be made for current and future demand, including expanding businesses. It provided additional evidence on the link between allocations and funding, particularly where sites are serviced and/or served by infrastructure, the correlation between deprived areas and allocations and opportunities to re-skill employees and the alignment between employment land and housing provision<sup>71</sup>.
- 7.7 In conducting the review, key considerations included the developable area of allocated sites in employment terms and its potential for delivery within the Plan period. As a result the Council proposes a number of changes to the employment allocations including deleting or reducing the size of employment allocations given the lack of certainty regarding the deliverability of the site during the Plan period (**MACM/GA2/b, MACM/GA2/d, MACM/GA3/c, MACM/GA3/d, MACM/T3/3/c, MACM/T3/9/d** and **MACM/T3/9/e**).
- 7.8 The Council also reviewed the sites allocated for mixed-use to assess the appropriateness of the level and proportion of employment and housing development proposed. Changes are proposed to delete the employment land contribution from site GA2/MU5 Dafen East Opportunity Area (**MACM/GA2/c** and **MAC99**) and to identify the site solely for residential use. This change would ensure that the site is deliverable within the Plan period and ensure that the proposed use is not vulnerable to proposals for alternative use. It is also proposed to reduce the employment element of mixed-use site GA1/MU2 Pibwrylwyd to 15.5 ha which, following review, is considered to be a more accurate reflection of the likely employment provision to be

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<sup>70</sup> Swansea Bay City Region Economic Regeneration Strategy 2014-2030

<sup>71</sup> Hearing Session 5 – Economy & Employment Agreed Actions (H5f) and Clarification Paper – Need & Demand for Employment Space (H5g)

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delivered on this site (**MAC43**). Proposed changes to Appendix 2 (**MAC161**) would provide further clarity in relation to the anticipated level of employment land to be provided on mixed-use sites.

- 7.9 This has resulted in a change to the level of employment land proposed to be allocated in the Plan. Changes to Policy SP7 ‘Employment- Land Allocations’ would revise the employment land allocation figure to 111.13 ha, provide a breakdown of allocated employment land within each settlement tier as well as completion levels and commitments (**MAC41**). Changes to the supporting text and Employment chapter of the Plan (**MAC38 – MAC40, MAC42 – MAC43** and **MAC92**) would provide further clarification regarding the identified employment land requirement and more up-to-date information regarding vacancy levels.
- 7.10 These changes would ensure that the plan is based on up-to-date and locally specific evidence which demonstrates the suitability of the employment land supply in relation to the locational and development requirements of business in line with PPW<sup>72</sup>.

#### *The Effect of Focussed Changes on Employment Allocations*

- 7.11 Each of the Plan’s allocations was revisited in the light of the revised TAN 15 DAMS (March 2013). A series of changes to some allocations affected by flooding were proposed as Focussed Changes. The former Butter Factory, St Clears (T2/5/MU1) is allocated for mixed-use and planning permission has been granted. The exclusion of the flood impacted area (Zone C2) is set out in Focussed Change FCM/T2/5/a and corresponds to that proposed for open space. It is not anticipated that this would affect its viability and delivery.
- 7.12 The former Dairy Crest site, Whitland (T2/6/b) is partly affected by flood risk (Zone C2). A large proportion of the site identified for mixed-use development is an area of existing employment use. The Focussed Change FCM/T2/6/e sought to provide greater clarity in terms of the area subject to employment use as an existing employment site whilst the area impacted by flood risk has been omitted (FCM/T2/6/g). Much of the remainder of the site has been reclassified as proposed employment which ensures that it is available for a beneficial after-use whilst excluding that part of the site in conflict with TAN 15<sup>73</sup>.
- 7.13 Several sites which form part of the Llanelli Waterside Joint Venture in Burry Port are not proposed to be allocated by the Council following Focussed Changes omitting those sites within areas of flood

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<sup>72</sup> PPW paragraph 7.2.1

<sup>73</sup> Hearing Session 6 – Barriers to Development (Flooding & Environmental Designations) Examination Statement Carmarthenshire County Council ( H6c)

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risk (Zone C2). The potentially important role that these sites play in the regeneration aspirations for this and the wider Llanelli coast area is recognised. However, unless or until such time that the TAN 15 DAMs are amended the inclusion of the sites within the Plan would not accord with the precautionary approach which seeks to direct new development away from those areas which are at a high risk of flooding. These changes were thus necessary to ensure that the LDP reflects the provisions of national planning policy and soundness test C2.

### *Alignment with the Spatial Strategy*

- 7.14 The ELS found that a large proportion of employment growth would be required within the 3 Growth Areas. A range of employment sites are thus proposed to be allocated to provide larger scale employment in the most sustainable locations with large population catchments. Opportunities would also be provided for job creation across the settlement hierarchy. This is consistent with the aims of the Plan’s spatial strategy. TAN 23 says that the level of employment growth envisaged must be realistic and consistent with the other aspirations of the Plan including population and housing projections.
- 7.15 It is recognised in the evidence that the relationship between household numbers and jobs will depend on workers per household and the range of jobs per household which is likely to vary across areas. The Plan makes provision for employment opportunities to be located at the most accessible and populated locations but many of Carmarthenshire’s settlements are dispersed, which makes cross commuting more likely<sup>74</sup>. The Plan provides for an increase in population and employment growth by providing for a housing requirement of 15,197 new dwellings and 111.13 ha of employment land. There is also a general geographical correlation between the distribution of employment and housing growth<sup>75</sup>, though proportionally there are more residential than employment allocations distributed in the lower tiers of the settlement hierarchy. However, this may be balanced through additional employment development through rural and agricultural enterprises and farm diversification.

### *Safeguarding Employment Sites and Premises*

- 7.16 Policy EMP1 ‘Employment – Safeguarding of Employment Sites’ seeks to prevent the loss of existing employment sites through alternative uses. Proposed changes to the policy wording (**MAC94**) would improve the Plan’s clarity and consistency of interpretation.

### *Support for Existing Business and New Employment Proposals*

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<sup>74</sup> Hearing Session 1 – Plan Preparation, Objectives & Strategy Agreed Actions (H1h)

<sup>75</sup> Hearing Session 5 – Employment Examination Statement Carmarthenshire County Council (H5d)

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- 7.17 Policy EMP2 ‘New Employment Proposals’ seeks to support development proposals subject to certain criteria. Changes to criterion c) to remove reference to “bad neighbour industry” and replace it with “the development proposals are of an appropriate scale and form compatible with its location and with neighbouring uses” (**MAC95**) would add clarity. Similarly, proposed changes to Policy EMP4 ‘Employment – Extensions and Intensification’ (**MAC97**) would improve its clarity and precision.

#### *Agricultural Diversification and Rural Enterprises*

- 7.18 Proposed changes to remove Policy EMP3 ‘New Employment Proposals – Rural Enterprises’ (**MAC96**) and to add a cross-reference to PPW and TAN 6: ‘Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities’ to the introductory text of the Economy and Employment section of the Plan (**MAC93**) would improve clarity and reflect national planning policy guidance more accurately. Proposed changes to Policy EMP5 ‘Farm Diversification’ criterion c) (**MAC98**) would make the policy much clearer as well as ensuring that it is consistent with national planning policy<sup>76</sup>.

#### *Retail*

- 7.19 PPW sets out the WG’s objectives for retailing and town centres including promoting established town, district, local and village centres as the most appropriate locations for retailing and enhancing the vitality, attractiveness and viability of these centres. Development Plans should develop a clear strategy and contain policies which seek to achieve vital, attractive and viable centres, establish the existing hierarchy of centres and be clear about their role<sup>77</sup>.
- 7.20 The Carmarthenshire Retail Study<sup>78</sup> was commissioned by the Council to assess future needs for additional retail facilities up to 2021, the role, function and network of existing centres, the capacity of each town to accommodate growth and the potential for redistributing retail expenditure across the County to promote self-containment. The study has been used to inform the Plan’s retail hierarchy. In defining this hierarchy consideration has been given to the role and function of the larger towns and small villages. The Plan seeks to focus town centre based retail activity in the Growth Areas, which are defined as Principal Centres, in line with the spatial strategy.
- 7.21 Changes are proposed to Policy RT1 ‘Retail Hierarchy’ to remove the out-of-centre retail parks from the hierarchy. It is also proposed to

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<sup>76</sup> PPW TAN 6 ‘Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities’ paragraph 3.7.1

<sup>77</sup> PPW paragraphs 10.1.1 and 10.2.1

<sup>78</sup> Carmarthenshire Retail Study 2009: Final Report by NLP (February 2010)

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include an explanation of the role of the retail parks within the policy wording as well as reference to the sequential approach to site selection (**MAC101** and **MAC102**). These changes would improve the coherence and legibility of Policy RT1 and ensure that the Plan is consistent with national planning policy.

- 7.22 The Retail Study examined two options for the future provision of convenience floorspace. The options were either to seek to maintain existing market shares or to promote greater retention of convenience trade in smaller settlements where retention is currently low through the development of additional convenience floorspace. In relation to comparison goods, the study found that Carmarthen and Llanelli are likely to remain the main locations for comparison shopping, but growth in expenditure will see the need for additional comparison floorspace in all areas to 2016 and beyond.
- 7.23 Sites for retail use are not allocated in the Plan. However, the study notes that the floorspace projections should not be considered to be limits or targets, particularly when translated into LDP allocations or used to guide development management decisions. The Plan policies and national policy would allow for consideration of retail development to meet future demand, including outside the defined centres. This would be subject to evidence as to the quantitative or qualitative need including any negative effects on existing centres and the application of the sequential test.
- 7.24 The retail policies aim to direct retail development to the most appropriate locations in line with the retail hierarchy. Moreover, the existing stock of retail premises need to be considered in accommodating projected growth. In particular, there is scope for vacant units in existing town centres to be re-utilised, particularly in Llanelli town centre<sup>79</sup>.
- 7.25 As a response to discussions arising at the Hearing, the Council has provided additional evidence regarding the provision of convenience and comparison floorspace since the Retail Study base date of 2009<sup>80</sup>. A significant amount of convenience floorspace has been developed and permitted across the County since that time, including extant permissions for supermarkets within Zones 4 (Burry Port and Kidwelly), 5 (Cross Hands) and 8 (Newcastle Emlyn) where the study identified that convenience retention rates were low. There are also pending applications for a considerable level of additional convenience floorspace in Zones 3 (Ammanford) and 8.
- 7.26 For comparison goods, a considerable amount of floorspace has been developed and permitted in Zones 1 (Carmarthen), 2 (Llanelli area),

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<sup>79</sup> Hearing Session 9 – Waste, Tourism and Retail Examination Statement Carmarthenshire County Council ( H9d)

<sup>80</sup> Hearing Session 9 - Waste, Tourism and Retail Agreed Actions (H9f)

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3 and 5 since the study was undertaken. Furthermore, the projected levels of growth in convenience and comparison goods expenditure is based on projected population growth derived from the WG’s 2006-based population projections for Carmarthenshire<sup>81</sup> which are significantly higher than the WG 2011-based population projections and the Council’s own forecast. Under the circumstances, it is considered that the Plan is sufficiently flexible to respond to current and future retail development requirements and to ensure that it does not harm existing town centres.

- 7.27 The Retail Study recommends that if an out-of-centre proposal exceeds the floorspace projections then the need for the proposal and impact will need to be carefully considered. Policy RT9 ‘Regional Centres (Retail Parks)’ requires proposals for new retail and leisure facilities to submit an impact assessment demonstrating that the proposal would not cause harm to established centres. The proposed explanation of what would be required for this assessment in the supporting text (**MAC104**) would improve the Plan’s clarity and ensure that it is consistent with national planning policy.
- 7.28 Proposed changes to the supporting text to Policy RT3 ‘Principal Centres (Growth Areas): Secondary Retail Frontage’ (**MAC103**) would improve the Plan’s clarity and consistency of interpretation.

### **Recommendation**

- 7.29 That in order to make the Plan sound the following changes are required:

**MAC38, MAC39, MAC40, MAC41, MAC42, MAC43, MAC92, MAC93, MAC94, MAC95, MAC96, MAC97, MAC98, MAC99, MAC101, MAC102, MAC103, MAC104, MAC161, MACM/GA2/c, MACM/GA2/b, MACM/GA2/d, MACM/GA3/c, MACM/GA3/d, MACM/T3/3/c, MACM/T3/9/d and MACM/T3/9/e.**

## **8 Constraints, Infrastructure and Planning Obligations**

### *Flooding, Water, Drainage and Sewerage*

- 8.1 Each of the sites allocated in the Plan were reviewed by the Council in light of the revised TAN 15 DAMs (March 2013). Proposed amendments to allocations in cases where sites were impacted by C1, and notably C2 Zones, were included in the Focussed Changes. In reviewing the allocated sites, the Council has adopted a precautionary approach and has complied with the requirements of national planning policy.

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<sup>81</sup> Carmarthenshire Retail Study 2009: Final Report by NLP (February 2010) Table 1D: Population Projections (Baseline Figures)

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- 8.2 The supply of water to each of the allocations was reviewed with Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) who has confirmed that the additional growth identified in the LDP would not impact on water resources<sup>82</sup>. The provision of water to the allocations would be managed subject to the upgrading to off-site water mains and the phasing of development, where necessary. The treatment and disposal of foul drainage was also reviewed at a strategic level for all allocations. The evidence indicates that the treatment and disposal of foul flows could be managed but consideration would need to be given to improvements and upgrades to existing sewerage systems and waste water treatment works<sup>83</sup>.
- 8.3 The current rolling 5 year Asset Management Plan (AMP) 5 runs from April 2010 to March 2015. There are planned improvements and upgrades to infrastructure in Carmarthenshire that would be delivered within this AMP 5 period. Funding for the AMP 6 programme is not anticipated to be confirmed until December 2014. However, where necessary, a phased release of sites could be delivered post 2015 or appropriate developer contributions could be sought to facilitate bringing forward any necessary improvements to accommodate development<sup>84</sup>. DCWW confirmed during the examination that the existing and planned infrastructure would have sufficient capacity to service the level of growth anticipated to 2021.
- 8.4 The Council acknowledges that there are water quality issues known to exist at certain stretches of watercourses within the vicinity of some allocations. These are known to be failing to meet the Water Framework Directive (WFD) standards for nutrient loading<sup>85</sup>. The Plan says that the issues centre upon deficiencies in the sewerage infrastructure and the resulting storm spills and nutrients that may discharge into the Special Areas for Conservation (SAC) and their component sites which form part of the Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries European Marine Site (CBEEMS).
- 8.5 The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Council and other parties seeks to protect and facilitate improvements to the water quality of the CBEEMS. This provides a mechanism to collaboratively address these issues which would also result in improvements to the environmental quality of the waters in Carmarthen Bay and the Burry Inlet. The MOU is currently in its third edition and it was confirmed at the Hearings that a draft fourth edition is being presented to signatories for review.

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<sup>82</sup> Background Paper – Infrastructure (July 2013)

<sup>83</sup> Background Paper – Infrastructure (July 2013)

<sup>84</sup> Hearing Session 7 – Infrastructure, Planning Obligations, Transportation & Accessibility Examination Statement DCWW (H7d)

<sup>85</sup> Background Paper – Infrastructure (July 2013)

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- 8.6 There are capacity issues with existing combined sewers in the Llanelli Growth Area. DCWW are seeking to reduce Combined Sewer Overflow spills in the area by reducing the amount of storm flow discharge into the existing network. Consideration would also need to be given to the need to improve and upgrade certain treatment works or for package treatment plants where no DCWW assets exist. A large number of surface water reduction schemes have been identified to be implemented with future development (e.g. Rainscape Llanelli)<sup>86</sup>. In addition, the capacity of the surface water sewer in Llanelli has been assessed, together with an investigation of the potential of the sewer and adjacent sites as a ‘donor site’<sup>87</sup>. DCWW is designing a major new surface water collector drain in Llanelli which is due for completion within the current AMP 5.
- 8.7 The HRA has considered the potential effects of the Plan on the European site network and found there to be no likely significant effects on the CBEEMS alone or in-combination with other known plans or projects. The Plan makes provision for appropriate considerations and measures to address water quality issues. In addition, there are a number of multi-agency commitments via the partners and signatories to the MOU to ensure that water quality issues are addressed. These include improvements in the Waste Water Treatment Works capacity, treatment levels and discharge quality through programmes in the River Basin Management Plan (under the requirements of the WFD) and through funding allocations and priorities secured through the AMP process.
- 8.8 Development could be brought forward and through the provisions of the Plan, could contribute incrementally towards betterment in terms of reducing the amount of surface water entering the combined system. Improved infrastructure could also be delivered through the DCWW AMP and via appropriate developer contributions where necessary. Furthermore, multi-agency initiatives and infrastructure improvements within the area would enable the level of development planned to proceed.

### *Infrastructure*

- 8.9 In order to ensure that there is sufficient clarity in respect of the delivery of necessary infrastructure to facilitate the level of planned growth, the Council proposes changes to the supporting text to Policy SP17 ‘Infrastructure’ (**MAC67**). Such changes would refer to relevant infrastructure background papers and evidence that would inform the LDP and confirm that there are no known insurmountable constraints to delivery of the Plan’s objectives.

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<sup>86</sup> Rainscape Llanelli (CSD92)

<sup>87</sup> Llanelli Town Centre: Investigation into Surface Water Sewer Capacity (November 2011) (CSD94)

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### *Planning Obligations*

- 8.10 Policy GP3 ‘Planning Obligations’ requires development to provide contributions to fund necessary improvements to infrastructure, community facilities and other services to meet requirement arising from new development. Proposed changes to the Policy and supporting text would clarify that planning obligations will be sought on a case-by-case basis (**MAC71**). Whilst circumstances may arise to justify developer contributions for social or physical infrastructure, these need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis having regard to quantifiable evidence.
- 8.11 Other changes to the Policy would make clear that contributions would be sought where proposals directly result in additional requirements from new development (**MAC71** and **MAC72**). These changes would bring the Plan in line with the provisions of WG Circular 13/97 ‘Planning Obligations’ and the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended). The proposed changes to GP3 would also reflect the possibility of a CIL charging schedule being introduced during the lifetime of the Plan.
- 8.12 Additional clarification would be provided by SPG on the Caeau Mynydd Mawr Special Area of Conservation (SAC), proposed to be referred to in the supporting text (**MAC73**). The supporting text would clarify that contributions from proposals in the Caeau Mynydd Mawr SAC would be prioritised in line with the provisions of other policies in the Plan (see Section 10). It is also proposed to incorporate a list of obligations that may be sought (**MAC74**). Whilst the Plan says that this would not be an exhaustive list or necessarily represent an order of priority, it includes a list of strategic objectives that would be supported via Policy GP3 and in this way provides a direct link to the Plan’s strategy.

### **Recommendation**

- 8.13 That in order to make the Plan sound the following changes are required:

**MAC67, MAC71, MAC72, MAC73 and MAC74.**

## **9 Transport and Accessibility**

### *Transport*

- 9.1 The Plan recognises that an integrated and sustainable transport system is fundamental to the delivery of the strategy. Accessibility was a key consideration in the formulation of the spatial strategy and in the identification of those areas suitable for growth. The diverse nature of the County and the variable quality and range of highway

infrastructure and public transport provision between the urban and rural areas has also been considered.

- 9.2 TAN 18: ‘Transport’ refers to the link between land use planning and transport and the need to devise integrated strategies and policies at the national, regional and local level. It reinforces the need to ensure that development plans are consistent with these and other relevant strategies<sup>88</sup>. The Plan seeks to develop an integrated transport strategy with Policy SP9 ‘Transportation’ setting out the principles for delivery of an efficient, effective, safe and sustainable integrated transport system. It also integrates the objectives of the Regional Transport Plan (RTP), Welsh Government and local improvements.
- 9.3 Carmarthenshire formed part of the South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortia (SWWITCH) which, until 2011 was responsible for the preparation of the RTP. The Carmarthenshire Priorities for Transport 2009 – 2014 identified a number of key transport projects highlighted within the RTP. However, regional transport arrangements have subsequently changed and SWWITCH is no longer in place. The Swansea Bay City Region partnership will address strategic transport issues and the WG has recently issued guidance to local authorities regarding the preparation of Local Transport Plans which will replace RTPs. The 4 City Region authorities in Wales submitted bids for funding to deliver transport schemes in 2014/15 and a number of schemes in Carmarthenshire will receive funding and be progressed as a result.
- 9.4 It was confirmed during the examination that delivery of the Plan’s strategic sites would not require regional-level transport infrastructure. The strategic elements of the LDP are thus not dependent on the decisions of the Swansea Bay City Region Board. The Carmarthen West Link Road was not seen as a regional priority by the Board and the Council is pursuing alternative funding arrangements, as outlined above. However, in terms of scheme priorities, the Board has endorsed the previous list of prioritised schemes from the RTP and this has formed the basis of the bids for transport funding.
- 9.5 The LDP identifies 2 specific transport schemes on the Proposals Map, the Cross Hands Economic Link Road and the Carmarthen West Link Road. Proposed changes to the supporting text of Policy SP9 would provide more up-to-date information on the likely timescale for delivery of these schemes (**MAC44**). In the absence of clear indications of delivery and defined alignment, further proposed changes would clarify that the LDP is not seeking to safeguard or identify these routes and they are not part of a policy or proposal in

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<sup>88</sup> PPW TAN 18 paragraph 2.5

the Plan. Rather, they are included on the Proposals Map to provide a strategic context (**MAC45** and **MAC46**).

- 9.6 It is proposed to include an explanation of the emergence of the Swansea Bay City Region, the preparation of the forthcoming Local Transport Plans and consequential changes to the Plan (**MAC23**, **MAC24** and **MAC47**). This would provide additional clarity. Deletion of reference to Phase 2 of the A477 St Clears to Red Roses improvement scheme from Policy SP9 and the supporting text would improve the Plan’s coherence, given that the scheme has been completed (**MAC48** and **MAC50**). It is proposed to delete the word “emerging” in relation to the designated Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Llandeilo. This would better reflect the current position (**MAC49**).
- 9.7 In order to comply with the provisions of TAN 18<sup>89</sup> more closely, the Council propose to include reference to the requirement for details to be submitted to the WG and Network Rail for approval where development is likely to lead to a material increase in the volume of traffic using a level crossing over a railway, in the supporting text to Policy TR2 ‘Location of Development – Transport Considerations’ (**MAC105**).

### **Recommendation**

- 9.8 That in order to make the Plan sound the following changes are required:

**MAC23, MAC24, MAC44, MAC45, MAC46, MAC47, MAC48, MAC49, MAC50** and **MAC105**.

## **10 The Natural Environment and Environmental Protection**

### *Natural Environment*

- 10.1 The Plan acknowledges that the quality of the landscapes and natural environment contributes significantly to the County’s identity, character and distinctiveness. Carmarthenshire has a number of designated sites for nature conservation and biodiversity importance. The protection and enhancement of these attributes are an important strategic objective.
- 10.2 The Council proposes changes to the supporting text to Policy SP14 ‘Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment’ to refer to all Unitary Authorities as having a duty to have regard to the purposes for which National Parks are designated. This would improve clarity and ensure that the Plan accurately reflects the

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<sup>89</sup> PPW TAN 18 Annex E, paragraph E.4

requirements of section 62(2) of the Environment Act 1995  
(**MAC61**).

- 10.3 Policy EP2 ‘Pollution’ requires that new development proposals should seek to minimise the impacts of pollution. Proposed changes to the Policy wording and supporting text would ensure that the Policy is consistent with PPW<sup>90</sup> (**MAC128**). Further proposed changes to the supporting text would include a cross-reference to the provisions of Policy EP1 ‘Water Quality and Resources’ which relates more specifically to water quality considerations (**MAC129**). Changes are also proposed to reflect that Llandeilo is now identified as an AQMA (**MAC130**) and to include references to the Air Quality guidance and reports referred to in the evidence to provide additional clarity (**MAC131**).
- 10.4 Proposed changes to the supporting text of Policy EP5 ‘Coastal Development’ would provide additional clarification that the provisions of the Policy would apply to those proposals that come forward during the Plan period on unallocated sites. A cross-reference to Policy GP2 would reinforce that EP5 would not apply to proposals for development within the development limits of a defined settlement (**MAC133**). These changes would more closely align with PPW<sup>91</sup> and improve the Plan’s clarity and consistency of interpretation.

#### *Regional and Local Designations*

- 10.5 Policy EQ3 ‘Regional and Local Designations’ refers to regional and local designations including Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). However, there are no designated SINCs in Carmarthenshire. Whilst the Council may designate such sites in future, to include reference to them in Policy EQ3 would conflict with PPW which says that non-statutory designations such as SINCs should be soundly based on a formal scientific assessment of the nature conservation, landscape or geological value of the site<sup>92</sup>.
- 10.6 Furthermore, LDP Wales says that policies and proposals should be founded on a thorough understanding of the area’s needs, opportunities and constraints. This requires authorities to prepare, maintain or have access to an up-to-date information base on the environmental characteristics of their area to enable to prepare a sound Plan<sup>93</sup>.

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<sup>90</sup>(PPW paragraphs 13.10.2, 13.10.4 and 3.11.2

<sup>91</sup> PPW paragraphs 5.7.2 and 5.8.3

<sup>92</sup> PPW paragraph 5.3.11

<sup>93</sup> LDP Wales paragraph 4.3

- 10.7 Proposed changes to remove reference to SINCs in Policies EQ3 and SP14 (**MAC62** and **MAC108**) would ensure that the Plan is consistent with national planning policy and satisfies soundness test CE2. Further proposed changes to delete reference to “nature conservation qualities” from the introductory text in respect of environmental qualities, would further improve clarity (**MAC107**).

*Caeau Mynydd Mawr Special Area of Conservation (SAC)*

- 10.8 The Caeau Mynydd Mawr SAC supports rhos pasture and the Marsh Fritillary Butterfly (MFB). The MFB relies on both suitable breeding and feeding habitats and connectivity between them. The Council prepared and consulted upon a draft Caeau Mynydd Mawr SAC SPG. This seeks to provide a strategic framework to ensure that any development within the SPG area would see appropriate land within the same area being managed as supporting habitat for the MFB. The objective is to mitigate the potential loss of supporting habitat and connectivity and ensure that the conservation aims of the SAC would be met. The SPG clarifies how the on-going and future management of habitat used by the MFB meta population would be secured with the use of developer contributions through planning obligations.
- 10.9 The LDP HRA detailed assessment of the Ammanford/Cross Hands Growth Area (GA3) recommended that a mitigation strategy was required to mitigate the loss of habitat used by the Caeau Mynydd Mawr SAC MFB and with these measures in place, there would be no significant effects on the European site network as a result of the LDP proposals in GA3. However, it is noted that this strategic plan level HRA does not obviate the need for further HRA at application level<sup>94</sup>. In order to ensure that the Plan makes sufficiently clear that allocations in this area are subject to SAC considerations and mitigation requirements, the Council proposes to include a new policy in the Plan.
- 10.10 Policy EQ7 ‘Development within the Caeau Mynydd Mawr SPG Area’ is proposed by **MAC110**. The policy would make clear that the requirement for any necessary and appropriate contributions would be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The supporting text would refer to the SPG and to developer contributions being sought where appropriate. These changes would bring the Plan in line with the provisions of WG Circular 13/97 ‘Planning Obligations’ and the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended). The Council is considering the appropriateness of introducing a CIL charging schedule during the lifetime of the Plan. The applicability of applying CIL to the Caeau Mynydd Mawr SAC has also been considered. I see no reason why, in

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<sup>94</sup> LDP Habitats Regulations Assessment Volume 1: Main Text (August 2013) (CSD19)

principle, necessary and relevant contributions could not be sought via an appropriate charging schedule in future.

- 10.11 The supporting text to Policy SP14 would also be amended to include reference to Policy EQ7 and a more up-to-date position provided in respect of the SPG (**MAC60** and **MAC100**). In addition the supporting text to Policy SP4 ‘Strategic Sites’ would be amended to include reference to Policy EQ7 and the SPG (**MAC27**) whilst the supporting text to Policy EQ4 ‘Biodiversity’ would remove reference to Policy GP5 and any ambiguity in respect of the Caeau Mynydd Mawr SAC SPG (**MAC109**). Furthermore, the SPG area referred to in Policy EQ7 would be included on the Proposals Map (**MACM/PM1**).

#### *Water Resources*

- 10.12 Policy EP1 ‘Water and Environmental Capacity’ seeks to prevent development that would lead to a deterioration of water quality, to safeguard watercourses and to promote the efficient use of water resources. The Policy requires an assessment of environmental capacity and demonstration that this capacity exists before permitting development. To ensure that the requirements of the policy are sufficiently clear to enable compliance and to allow determination of proposals, the Council propose changes to the policy wording. These include changing the title of the Policy to EP1 ‘Water Quality and Resources’, deletion of the requirement for applicants to demonstrate that environmental capacity exists and wording the policy more positively (**MAC122**).
- 10.13 Proposed changes to the supporting text would clarify that the impact of the Plan’s allocations and commitments has already been considered and deliverability established (**MAC125**). Further proposed changes would explain that the Council would consult DCWW and NRW as appropriate (**MAC126**) and delete reference to Policy GP5 ‘Phasing’ (**MAC123, MAC124** and **MAC127**). A cross-reference to provisions elsewhere in the Plan with regard to European or International sites (**MAC121**) would provide additional clarity.
- 10.14 TAN 15 requires Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) to be incorporated in new development proposals where an investigation has shown that they would be effective, unless there are justifiable reasons for not doing so<sup>95</sup>. Proposed changes to the supporting text of Policy EP3 ‘Sustainable Drainage’ (**MAC132**) would ensure that the provisions of the Policy are consistent with that of national planning policy guidance. Further changes to this paragraph to make clear that SUDS Approval Boards are not yet in place, and an explanation of the interim arrangements, would provide additional clarity.

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<sup>95</sup> PPW TAN 15 paragraph 8.5

## Recommendation

10.15 That in order to make the Plan sound the following changes are required:

**MAC27, MAC60, MAC61, MAC62, MAC100, MAC107, MAC108, MAC109, MAC110, MAC121, MAC122, MAC123, MAC124, MAC125, MAC126, MAC127, MAC128, MAC129, MAC130, MAC131, MAC132, MAC133 and MACM/PM1.**

## 11 The Built Environment

### *Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and the Historic Environment*

11.1 Proposed changes to Policy EQ1 ‘Protection of Buildings, Landscapes and Features of Historic Importance’ and Policy SP13 ‘Protection and Enhancement of the Built and Historic Environment’ (**MAC59** and **MAC106**) would ensure that the policy wording is consistent with PPW and the statutory test<sup>96</sup>.

### *Advertisements and Signs*

11.2 Section 38(6) of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 does not apply to advertisement applications, so whilst the LDP will still be a material consideration, it does not carry the same weight as for other types of application. The statutory provisions<sup>97</sup> only allow local planning authorities to control the display of advertisements in the interests of public safety and amenity.

11.3 TAN 20: ‘Planning and the Welsh Language’ says that policies in LDPs relating to signage and advertising subject to planning control, may promote the provision of bilingual signs<sup>98</sup>. Accordingly, the Council propose to include provision for advertisements to safeguard and to positively enhance the Welsh language in Policy GP6 ‘Advertisements’ (**MAC76**). Changes to the supporting text would provide additional clarification that the Council would support and promote the use of Welsh and English bilingual signage and information, in line with Policy SP18 ‘The Welsh Language’ (**MAC77**).

## Recommendation

11.4 That in order to make the Plan sound the following changes are required:

**MAC59, MAC76, MAC77 and MAC106.**

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<sup>96</sup> Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

<sup>97</sup> Town & Country Planning Act (as amended) and Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992

<sup>98</sup> PPW TAN 20 paragraph 5.1.1

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## 12 The Welsh Language

### *Welsh Language*

- 12.1 The LDP emphasises the important role that the Welsh language plays in the social, cultural and economic life of Carmarthenshire’s residents and visitors. However, it also recognises that the percentage of Welsh speakers in the County has declined. Policy SP18 seeks to reflect the Plan’s commitments to the Welsh language and its role in those communities where the language makes an important contribution to their cultural, social and economic life<sup>99</sup>. The Policy permits proposals within a linguistic sensitive area where they would not cause demonstrable harm to the character and language balance by virtue of its size, scale or location, or where mitigation measures can overcome those issues.
- 12.2 Linguistic sensitive areas have not been defined in the Plan. The SPG provides guidance on whether a Linguistic Statement or Linguistic Impact Assessment would be required to accompany planning applications – dependent upon the proposal type, scale and location. An updated TAN 20 was published during the examination and subsequently discussed at the Hearings. The TAN advises that the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) should assess evidence of the impacts of the spatial strategy, policies and allocations on the Welsh Language<sup>100</sup>. The implications of the development plan strategy, policies and allocations on the Welsh Language will have been assessed and all LDPs include an allowance for non-allocated sites (windfall sites). As such, planning applications on non-allocated sites should not be subject to a further Welsh language impact assessment<sup>101</sup>.
- 12.3 The SA assessed the LDP strategy including the scale and distribution of growth. The assessment found that the Plan’s strategy and settlement hierarchy focuses growth across the County in a sustainable manner. Furthermore, the strategy allocates an appropriate level of growth for the different sized settlements taking into consideration a number of issues including their linguistic sustainability and encouraging community interactions in an environment where the language can be sustained<sup>102</sup>.
- 12.4 In light of the publication of the updated TAN and further to discussions at the examination, the Council proposes changes to Policy SP18 and the draft SPG. The policy and supporting text would be amended to remove reference to the requirement for Linguistic

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<sup>99</sup> LDP paragraph 5.9.142

<sup>100</sup> PPW TAN 20 paragraph 3.2.1

<sup>101</sup> PPW TAN 20 paragraph 4.2

<sup>102</sup> Topic Paper 13 - The Welsh Language (June 2013)

Statements or Impact Assessments. The amended policy would require residential developments for 5 or more dwellings in Sustainable Communities and 10 or more in Growth Areas, Service Centres and Local Service Centres to be subject to a requirement for phasing where they would be located on sites within communities where 60% or more of the population are able to speak Welsh (**MAC68**).

- 12.5 Additional information submitted by the Council to the examination showed that between 1991 and 2001, Carmarthenshire witnessed a decline in the number of community wards where 70% or more of the population speak Welsh. This declined from 13 communities to 4. The 2011 Census data indicated a further decline whereby none of the communities in Carmarthenshire have retained a density of 70% of Welsh speakers. Published WG guidance indicates that 70% is the applicable density to apply<sup>103</sup>. However, this was published prior to release of the most recent Census data. The Council says that the communities which have retained a Welsh speaking population of 60% reflect those where 70% previously spoke Welsh (with the addition of the Pencarreg Community Ward)<sup>104</sup>.
- 12.6 I agree with the Council that the publication of the 2011 Census data warrants reconsideration of the density threshold and that the communities where 60% of the population speak Welsh should have linguistic protection. In these circumstances it is appropriate to require specific mitigation through the phasing of sites, where necessary, in order to ensure that development within these areas do not have a negative impact on the Welsh language. Policy SP18 and the supporting text, as proposed by **MAC68**, would provide appropriate mitigation measures through the requirement for the phasing of development in appropriate circumstances.
- 12.7 Proposed changes to the supporting text of Policy H1 would reinforce that the Plan does not seek to be prescriptive and that a phasing requirement would be considered only where necessary and on a case-by-case basis (**MAC82**). In addition, the defined Linguistic Sensitive Areas will be identified on the Proposals Map (**MACM/PM3**).
- 12.8 I am satisfied that an assessment of the potential impact of the LDP on the Welsh Language has been undertaken. Subject to the changes outlined above, and based on the evidence, the approach proposed would accord with national planning policy and is considered to be soundly based.

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<sup>103</sup> Welsh Language Strategy 2012 - 2017 ‘A Living Language: A Language for Living’ (Welsh Government)

<sup>104</sup> Hearing Session 11 – Welsh Language, Community Facilities, Recreation & Leisure Agreed Actions (H11f)

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## Recommendation

12.9 That in order to make the Plan sound the following changes are required:

**MAC68, MAC82 and MACM/PM3.**

## 13 Renewable Energy

### *Wind Farms*

- 13.1 Policy SP11 ‘Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency’ seeks to support development proposals which incorporate energy efficiency measures and renewable energy production technologies where they would not cause harm to residential amenity and will be acceptable within the landscape. The Plan refers to TAN 8: ‘Planning for Renewable Energy’ which identifies Strategic Search Areas (SSAs) where large scale (over 25MW) onshore wind developments should be concentrated. SSA G ‘Brechfa Forest’ is located in Carmarthenshire whilst part of SSA E ‘Pontardawe’ straddles the County boundary to the east.
- 13.2 PPW says that the SSA boundaries have been drawn to allow for some local refinement. However, in defining such locations or criteria it will be important to ensure they do not differ significantly, without local evidence, from the indicative boundaries of the SSAs<sup>105</sup>. Also, in planning for all forms of renewable energy development, local planning authorities should use up-to-date and appropriate evidence and undertake an assessment of the potential of all renewable energy resources and opportunities within their area<sup>106</sup>.
- 13.3 Policy SP11 says that large scale wind farms will only be permitted within refined SSAs. However, the Plan says that further refinement of SSA E is not required for the part that falls within the County. The refinement exercise undertaken for SSA G in 2006 was based on the indicative capacity targets for onshore wind in SSAs in TAN 8. The Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development’s letter<sup>107</sup> refers to maximum capacity targets within the SSAs. It confirms that they have subsequently increased. No firm evidence was submitted with the Plan that the refined SSAs referred to would be capable of accommodating the capacity targets in the Minister’s letter.
- 13.4 The Council submitted additional information during the examination which indicated that the total installed capacity of the planning permissions granted in SSA G would meet the maximum capacity

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<sup>105</sup> PPW paragraph 12.9.4

<sup>106</sup> PPW paragraph 12.9.1 and 12.9.2

<sup>107</sup> A letter from the Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development, dated July 2011

target referred to in the Minister’s letter. The letter also refers to the SSAs as having a finite environmental capacity and to ensuring that wind farm development within them is proportionate and balanced with other development needs in these areas. Further to discussions at the Hearings, the Council acknowledged that the refinement study focussed primarily on landscape and visual impacts within the SSA and that other factors should be taken into account in site selection<sup>108</sup>.

- 13.5 A number of changes are thus proposed to Policy SP11. Reference to the refined SSAs would be deleted and the words “each proposal will be assessed on a case-by-case basis” would be inserted. The reference to development being supported where the technology can operate effectively is considered to be superfluous and would also be deleted (**MAC54**). These changes would ensure that the Policy accords with national planning policy. Furthermore, if the permitted schemes referred to by the Council are not implemented, Policy SP11, as amended, would be capable of facilitating delivery of the relevant capacity targets referred to in the Minister’s letter.
- 13.6 It is proposed to remove reference to the indicative capacity targets in the supporting text to Policies SP11 and RE1 ‘Large Scale Wind Power’ (**MAC53** and **MAC112**). As currently worded, it suggests that a review of the targets has been undertaken which is misleading. The supporting text already includes cross-references to TAN 8 and thus additional reference would be unnecessary. Adding a reference to SPG which would be produced to support the policies relating to renewable energy would provide additional clarification (**MAC53** and **MAC114**).
- 13.7 Further changes would provide a more up-to-date position in respect of that part of the SSA E which is within Carmarthenshire. This area is known as Mynydd y Betws and has been an operational wind farm since 2013 (**MAC115**). It is also proposed to amend the paragraph which provides an update in respect of the number of wind farms present in the County and the estimated output (MW) generated by these turbines (**MAC117**).
- 13.8 Policy RE1 says that wind farms of 25 MW and over would be permitted subject to certain criteria being met in full. These include that the development would not have an unacceptable impact on visual amenity or landscape character. Proposed changes to remove the requirement that each criteria must be met in full (**MAC111**) and to include reference in the supporting text that the principle of large scale wind turbine development and associated landscape change is accepted in SSAs (**MAC112**) would be necessary to accord with

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<sup>108</sup> Hearing Session 10: Mineral Resources, Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Examination Statement (H10f)

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national planning policy<sup>109</sup>. It is also proposed to remove the requirement for proposals for small wind farms and individual turbines to meet all the criteria set out in Policy RE2 ‘Local, Community and Small Wind Farms’ in full (**MAC118**). This would ensure that the policy is sufficiently flexible and accords with TAN 8 which seeks to encourage smaller community based schemes<sup>110</sup>.

- 13.9 Policies RE1 and RE2 include criteria requiring that there would be no loss of public accessibility and that existing bridleways and footpaths would be safeguarded from development. During the Hearings the Council acknowledged that there would be instances whereby temporary re-routing of public rights of way during construction may be necessary. Consequently, proposed changes to these policies and the supporting text would clarify that there should be no permanent loss to the length and quality of bridleways, footways, mountain bike trails and other public rights of way (**MAC111, MAC113** and **MAC118**). Furthermore, the Plan would refer to the need for temporary re-routing of public rights of way during construction being required as appropriate (**MAC113** and **MAC120**).
- 13.10 It is proposed to remove the requirement for proposals to consider the cumulative impact of valid but undetermined planning applications for wind turbines from Policy RE2 (**MAC118**). A Focussed Change (FCT82) has removed this requirement from Policy RE1. The change would ensure that the requirements of Policy RE2 are consistent with Policy RE1, that there are clear mechanisms for implementation and that the policy is reasonably flexible to deal with changing circumstances (soundness tests CE3 and CE4).
- 13.11 TAN 8 refers to the potential for cumulative landscape and visual effects as a matter to be included in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) under the terms of the EIA regulations 1999. A cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) would normally form part of an Environmental Statement<sup>111</sup>. Published Guidelines for LVIA also refer to the assessment of cumulative effects required both by the EIA and SEA Directives<sup>112</sup>. It is not necessary for the policies to duplicate these legislative provisions. Moreover, EIA would not be required for all wind turbine proposals.
- 13.12 The supporting text to Policies RE1 and RE2 refer to the requirement for a bird migration and flight pattern assessment, though this is not a requirement of the policies. Such an assessment would normally be required for relevant proposals as part of EIA or in consultation

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<sup>109</sup> PPW TAN 8 Annex D paragraph 8.4

<sup>110</sup> PPW TAN 8 paragraph 2.12

<sup>111</sup> PPW TAN 8 Annex D paragraph 6.1 and 6.2

<sup>112</sup> Guidelines for LVIA: Third Edition. Landscape Institute & Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment

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with NRW or the RSPB as advised in TAN 8<sup>113</sup> on a case-by-case basis. It is thus proposed to remove reference to this requirement from the Plan (**MAC116** and **MAC119**).

- 13.13 Policies RE1 and RE2 says that proposals for wind farms or individual turbines would be permitted provided that they are located a minimum distance of 1500 metres (m) away from the nearest residential property. TAN 8 says that 500 m is considered a typical separation distance between a wind turbine and residential property to avoid unacceptable noise impacts, however, when applied in a rigid manner it can lead to conservative results and so some flexibility is advised<sup>114</sup>.
- 13.14 As outlined above, PPW says that local planning authorities should use up-to-date and appropriate evidence and undertake an assessment of the potential of all renewable energy resources and opportunities within their area. This is reflected in LDP Wales which cites the requirements of Section 61 of the 2004 Act and says that an authority’s policies and proposals should be founded on a thorough understanding of the area’s needs, opportunities and constraints<sup>115</sup>. There is no substantive evidence to support the need for a separation distance of 1500 m between wind turbines and dwellings or on the effect that this would have on meeting the indicative capacity targets in the SSAs in the area, as referred to in the Minister’s letter.
- 13.15 TAN 8 says that well designed wind farms should be located so that increases in ambient noise levels around noise-sensitive developments are kept to acceptable levels with relation to existing background noise. This will normally be achieved through good design of the turbines and through allowing sufficient distance between the turbines and any existing noise-sensitive development<sup>116</sup>. It also refers to the report ETSU-R-97: ‘*The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms*’ which describes a framework for the measurement of wind farm noise.
- 13.16 In terms of noise and other potential effects on the occupiers of dwellings, each proposal would need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis taking into account factors such as existing background noise, topography, size and design of individual turbines. There is insufficient justification to include policies that would require turbines to be located a minimum distance of 1500 m from the nearest residential property. Furthermore, such a requirement would conflict with TAN 8 which seeks to encourage smaller community based schemes. For these reasons, it is recommended that the requirement

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<sup>113</sup> PPW TAN 8 Annex C paragraph 2.23

<sup>114</sup> PPW TAN 8 Annex D paragraph 3.4

<sup>115</sup> Local Development Plans Wales: Policy on Preparation of LDPs paragraph 4.3

<sup>116</sup> PPW TAN 8 paragraph 2.14

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is deleted from Policies RE1 (**IC02**) and RE2 (**IC03**) as set out in Appendix D in order to satisfy soundness tests C1, C2, CE2 and CE4.

## **Recommendation**

13.17 That in order to make the Plan sound the following changes are required:

**MAC53, MAC54, MAC111, MAC112, MAC113, MAC114, MAC115, MAC116, MAC117, MAC118, MAC119 and MAC120.**

**Inspector Changes  
IC02 and IC03.**

## **14 Tourism, Recreation and Leisure**

### *Tourism Related Development*

14.1 The importance of tourism to the Carmarthenshire economy – including nationally recognised attractions such as the National Botanic Gardens and the Ffos Las Racecourse - is recognised in the Plan. Recognition that tourism has the potential to broaden the County’s economy and create and support local jobs and the potential of further strategic growth by virtue of the area’s characteristics and coastal location is also reflected<sup>117</sup>. The Plan seeks to contribute towards improving the standard and diversity of tourism-related development and acknowledges that the challenges for tourism include facilitating diversity, improving the quality and variety of accommodation and enhancing the area’s “all year round” destination offer.

14.2 The Council’s Tourism Vision for Carmarthenshire 2005-2015<sup>118</sup> highlights the potential social and economic benefits of tourism-related development and confirms the importance of conserving and enhancing the environment. This is reinforced in the Plan which says that tourism-related proposals would be expected to be compatible with, and take account of their location and the surrounding environment. The Plan seeks to ensure that new tourism-related development would be located in sustainable and accessible locations and as such, they would be considered in light of the settlement hierarchy. However, the Plan acknowledges that given the rural nature of the County there will inevitably be proposals that are not in direct accordance with the hierarchy in that they require a countryside setting. Such considerations require policies that are reflective of local evidence.

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<sup>117</sup> South West Wales Tourism Partnership: A Tourism Strategy for South West Wales 2004-2008. (CSD144)

<sup>118</sup> A Tourism Vision for Carmarthenshire 2005-2015. (CSD150)

- 14.3 Policy TSM3 ‘Tourism Development in the Open Countryside’ relates to proposals outside the Development Limits of a settlement. Policy SP15 ‘Tourism and the Visitor Economy’ supports proposals where they are in accordance with the settlement framework subject to certain criteria including that they accord with the locational hierarchy. In order to improve the clarity of Policy SP15 and ensure consistency of interpretation, the Council propose changes to the policy wording and supporting text (**MAC63** to **MAC66**). These changes would explain how the locational strategy would apply to tourism proposals and also ensure that there would be no tensions between Policy SP15 and Policy TSM3.
- 14.4 The proposed changes to the supporting text (**MAC66**) would provide additional clarification that proposals for static caravans and chalet sites should have regard to Policy TSM1 ‘Static Caravan and Chalet Sites’ and that proposals for touring caravan and tent sites should have regard to Policy TSM2 ‘Touring Caravan and Tent Sites’. A number of changes are proposed (**MAC138** to **MAC143**) which would improve the clarity and consistency of interpretation of Policies TSM1 and TSM2. They would also ensure that there were no tensions with Policy SP15 which requires tourism development to be in accordance with the locational hierarchy.
- 14.5 Further changes are proposed to insert a new policy related to major tourism proposals in the open countryside. Policy TSM5 ‘Major Tourism Proposals in the Open Countryside’ (**MAC146**) would provide the policy framework for considering large scale facilities/attractions in the open countryside including extensions to existing facilities. The supporting text would make clear that whilst the emphasis of the LDP is to deliver development in accordance with the locational hierarchy in SP15, flexibility is required to allow for consideration of large scale proposals in the open countryside that will accrue demonstrable economic and wider benefits without resulting in unacceptable harm.
- 14.6 Subsequently, proposed changes to Policy TSM3 and the supporting text (**MAC144** and **MAC145**) would make clear that the policy would relate to small scale tourism development in the open countryside. Consequential amendments to the tourism section of the Plan would provide additional clarity (**MAC136** and **MAC137**). The changes outlined above are necessary to satisfy soundness tests CE3 and CE4.

#### *Open Space*

- 14.7 The Plan acknowledges the potential benefits to health and wellbeing provided by open space as well as the opportunities for social interaction and community activities. Its policies seek to protect and enhance existing open space and to make provision for new open space. Policy REC2 ‘Open Space Provision and New Developments’ requires all new residential developments of 5 or more units to

provide on- site open space in accordance with the Council’s adopted standards of 2.4 ha per 1000 population. If these standards cannot be met on site or there is sufficient existing provision, then off-site financial contributions would be sought where appropriate.

- 14.8 TAN 16: ‘Sport, Recreation and Open Space’ refers to the Fields in Trust (FIT) ‘Benchmark Standards’ for outdoor sport and play to replace the “Six Acre Standard.” The new ‘Benchmark Standards’ recommend that, overall there should be 1.2 ha of land for playing pitches per 1000 population, with variations between recommendations for urban and rural areas. It also recommends that there should be 1.6 ha of land for all outdoor sports per 1000 population, also with urban and rural differences<sup>119</sup>.
- 14.9 Whilst the Plan’s requirement for 2.4 ha per 1000 population would fall short of the total 2.8 ha recommended in the TAN 16 guidelines, PPW does not prescribe particular standards of provision. Instead, the TAN says that these should be based on the results of the Open Space Assessment process<sup>120</sup>. The Council’s Greenspace Assessment provided an audit of public open space based on the previous “Six Acre Standard” (2.4 ha)<sup>121</sup>. This comprehensive and locally distinctive evidence has informed the Plan’s policies through auditing current provision, identifying areas of deficit and considering accessibility, site conditions and greenspace type. Furthermore, the County’s urban and rural characteristics are acknowledged, with the urban areas to the south east more densely populated than those in the north and west<sup>122</sup>.
- 14.10 Proposed changes to the supporting text of Policy REC2 would acknowledge the difference between the policy requirement and the guidelines in TAN 16. However, it would include an explanation that the policy requirements have been informed by national standards and guidance as well as local evidence. It would also confirm that an assessment would be undertaken to ascertain whether the 2.8 ha standard would be achievable, subject to viability considerations (**MAC135**).

## Recommendation

- 14.11 That in order to make the Plan sound the following changes are required:

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<sup>119</sup> PPW TAN 16 paragraph 2.9 and 2.10

<sup>120</sup> PPW TAN 16 paragraph 2.7

<sup>121</sup> Greenspace Assessment Summary (CSD122)

<sup>122</sup> Hearing Session 11 Carmarthenshire County Council Examination Statement (H11c)

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**MAC63, MAC64, MAC65, MAC66, MAC135, MAC136, MAC137, MAC138, MAC139, MAC140, MAC141, MAC142, MAC143, MAC144 MAC145 and MAC146.**

## **15 Minerals and Waste Management**

### *Minerals*

- 15.1 Minerals Planning Policy Wales (MPPW) says that minerals planning authorities should ensure that appropriate contributions are made in development plans to meet local, regional and national needs for minerals. Strategic Policy SP10 ‘Mineral Resources’ includes several main objectives and elements of minerals planning. It includes two sets of criteria – one related to safeguarding mineral resources and another regarding environmental and other potential impacts associated with minerals operations. The latter would duplicate the provisions of other more detailed minerals policies in the Plan. Moreover, there is a distinction between mineral resources and reserves in national planning policy<sup>123</sup> which is identified in Topic Paper 7<sup>124</sup> but is not made sufficiently clear in the Policy.
- 15.2 Further to discussions at the Hearings, the Council proposes a number of changes to Policy SP10 (**MAC52**). The title of the policy would change to SP10 ‘Sustainable Mineral Development’ and a clearer distinction would be made between the need to maintain an adequate landbank of permitted aggregate reserves and the need to safeguard resources of hard rock, sand and gravel and coal in line with MPPW. The term ‘landbank’ would also be defined in respect of its meaning in the policy.
- 15.3 Minerals Technical Advice Note (MTAN) 1: Aggregates requires the Regional Aggregates Working Parties (North Wales and South Wales) to prepare a 5 year Regional Technical Statement (RTS) for their region to ensure that an adequate supply of primary aggregates can be maintained (**MAC5**). The RTS should be reviewed every 5 years<sup>125</sup>. The RTS for South Wales was produced in 2008 and thus required to be reviewed in 2013. However, the Council confirmed that the RTS First Review was anticipated to be endorsed by the WG soon. Furthermore, additional information was provided in respect of the existing primary aggregate and sand and gravel landbank<sup>126</sup>.
- 15.4 The current position in respect of crushed rock indicates that reserves exceed the RTS apportionment figure for 2011 to 2036 and that there is no requirement for an allocation in the LDP. The position for sand

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<sup>123</sup> MPPW paragraph 9

<sup>124</sup> Topic Paper 7 – Minerals (Revised June 2013) paragraph 6.2.5

<sup>125</sup> MTAN 1 paragraph 50

<sup>126</sup> Hearing Session 10: Mineral Resources, Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Agreed Actions (H10k)

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and gravel reserves set out in the RTS indicates that there is a shortfall of 2.94 million tonnes in respect of the total apportionment for Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Pembroke Coast National Park and Carmarthenshire for the same period. However, information on the current position submitted by the Council, and based on progress made since December 2010, shows that the RTS requirement to 2033 has been exceeded.

- 15.5 The Council recognises that there is a reliance on marine dredged resources. The apportionments and allocations for the 4 local planning authorities are combined in the RTS to encourage co-operation in finding a longer term solution to reduce future production in the National Park. Other potential sources of sand and gravel exist in the area but the local planning authorities have no information on the quantity and quality of the resource or its commercial viability. At this stage the Council is limited to identifying potential areas of search and seeking to work with the industry to find the best locations for any future land based operations whilst the collaborative work continues<sup>127</sup>.
- 15.6 Proposed changes to the explanatory text in relation to minerals would provide an up-to-date position in respect of the RTS and the available reserves in the County and neighbouring authorities (**MAC146a**, and **MAC51**). In addition, it is proposed to amend Policy MPP3 ‘Mineral Safeguarding’ to ensure that proposals can come forward, as necessary, within areas of search which are coterminous with the safeguarding areas identified on the Proposals Map. These changes would provide clearer criteria and ensure that sufficient detail is included in the policy itself rather than just in the supporting text (**MAC149**). They would add clarity to the Plan and be in line with good practice guidance promoted by the British Geological Survey (BGS)<sup>128</sup>. Furthermore, proposed changes to the Monitoring Framework would ensure that appropriate targets are included to guarantee that sufficient landbanks of hard rock and sand and gravel are maintained (**MAC157**).
- 15.7 Areas where mineral resources are safeguarded (areas of search) are shown on the Proposals Map which distinguishes between sand and gravel, limestone and sandstone. The Aggregates Safeguarding Map was published alongside the Mineral Resources Map for Wales produced by the BGS in 2010. The WG<sup>129</sup> says that this map provides a key evidence base for LDP preparation and an opportunity to secure a consistent, strategic and longer term approach to resource protection. Accordingly, the Council will update the Proposals Map to ensure that the safeguarding areas are consistent with the BGS

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<sup>127</sup> Hearing Session 10: Mineral Resources, Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Agreed Actions (H10k)

<sup>128</sup> BGS ‘Mineral Safeguarding in England: Good Practice Advice’ 2011

<sup>129</sup> WG letter to Chief Planning Officers dated 14 November 2012

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Aggregates Safeguarding Map for Wales (**MACM/PM4**). Policy MPP3 (as amended by **MAC149**) and additional explanatory text (**MAC147**) would also confirm this.

- 15.8 MPPW establishes the principle of Buffer Zones around permitted and allocated mineral extraction sites<sup>130</sup>. In order to provide additional clarity, it is proposed to amend the Plan so that it contains two separate policies – one to identify a buffer zone around sites with extant planning permission for mineral working and another to identify areas where coal extraction would not be acceptable in terms of the potential effect on residential amenity.
- 15.9 Consequently Policy MPP2 ‘Mineral Buffer Zones’ would make provision for Buffer Zones around sites with extant permission for mineral working and proposed changes to the supporting text (**MAC148**) would set out the distances in line with MTAN 1:Aggregates<sup>131</sup> and MTAN 2:Coal<sup>132</sup>. A new policy and supporting text is proposed to be inserted in the Plan. Policy MPP4 ‘Coal Extraction Operations’ would establish that coal extraction operations would not generally be acceptable within 500 metres of the development limits of identified settlements in the LDP (**MAC150**). This would accord with MTAN 2<sup>133</sup>.
- 15.10 Policy MPP4 ‘Aggregate Alternatives’ will subsequently become Policy MPP5 for ease of reference, to ensure the correct order of policies in the Plan and to aid clarity (**MAC151**). There would be other consequential changes to the numbering of policies. Further changes are proposed to remove superfluous cross-referencing to other plan policies and to the supporting text. It is proposed to remove reference to “bad neighbour operations” in line with changes proposed to the Economy and Employment chapter.

#### *Inactive Mineral Sites*

- 15.11 MPPW says that inactive sites with planning permission for future working which are considered unlikely to be reactivated for the foreseeable future should be identified in the development plan and be the subject of a suitable strategy and associated policies to explain future proposals for the land<sup>134</sup>. The Plan makes clear that dormant and inactive sites will be kept under review and that the Council will investigate whether future Prohibition Orders will be necessary. MTAN 1 requires all mineral planning authorities to review the likelihood of future extraction from long inactive hard rock reserves

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<sup>130</sup> MPPW paragraph 40

<sup>131</sup> MTAN 1 paragraph 71

<sup>132</sup> MTAN 2 paragraph 32

<sup>133</sup> MTAN 2 paragraph 49

<sup>134</sup> MPPW paragraph 19

that have not worked for 10 years or more and submit their findings to the WG annually. The assessment should include two lists, one where extraction is likely to begin again and one where it is not<sup>135</sup>.

- 15.12 The Council submitted a list to WG in January 2014<sup>136</sup> including hard rock quarries where extraction is considered likely to begin in the future. It is intended that Prohibition Orders would be considered for appropriate sites where the indications are that they would not be worked in the future. Furthermore, proposed changes to the Monitoring Framework would include a target to serve prohibition orders within 12 months on those sites deemed not likely to be re-worked again (**MAC157**).

### *Unstable Land*

- 15.13 There has been extensive past coal mining activity in and around the Key Growth areas of Llanelli and Cross Hands/Ammanford. The Plan acknowledges that a significant part of Carmarthenshire has been subject to past coal mining activity and this has left a legacy which includes mine entries and shallow mine workings. The Plan also refers to guidance within PPW on land instability<sup>137</sup>. However, representations from the Coal Authority suggest that limiting these references to the minerals chapter may suggest to Plan users that this is a specialist issue rather than a key consideration for development in some areas. PPW says that Plans may indicate that the local planning authority will need to be satisfied that a site is stable or that actual or potential instability can reasonably be overcome.
- 15.14 Following discussion at the Hearings, the Council proposes a new policy within the Environmental Protection chapter of the Plan. Policy EP7 ‘Unstable Land’ (**MAC134**) would require development proposals where land instability is known, to be accompanied by a scoping report to ascertain the nature of the instability. The supporting text sets out the likely causes of land instability including underground cavities due to mining or civil engineering works. However, the policy and supporting text only refer to slope instability. Inspector changes are thus recommended to remove the words ‘slope’ from the policy and supporting text (**IC04**) to accord with national planning policy, to aid clarity and to improve consistency of interpretation.

### *Waste*

- 15.15 The Plan makes reference to the rapid transition that waste management and waste planning is undergoing. New legislation

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<sup>135</sup> MTAN 1 paragraph 31

<sup>136</sup> Hearing Session 10: Mineral Resources, Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Agreed Actions Appendix 1 (H10k)

<sup>137</sup> PPW paragraph 13.5.1 and 13.8.1 – 13.8.4

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introduced by the European Union sets targets for waste minimisation and recycling which will require new methods of managing waste. Updates to TAN 21: ‘Waste’ and PPW were published during the examination. Additional information submitted by the Council during the examination shows that the LDP accords with the latest national planning policy and guidance<sup>138</sup>.

- 15.16 PPW says that development plans should demonstrate how national waste policy, in particular the Collections, Infrastructure and Markets (CIM) Sector Plan, have been taken into account - along with any updated position adopted in the waste planning monitoring reports<sup>139</sup>. The CIMS Sector Plan identifies the worst case/best case scenarios for each of the 3 Regions in Wales. The worst case for the South West Region is that landfill void space runs out in 2021-22 whilst the best case is that it lasts indefinitely if all the recycling targets are met. The current landfill capacity at Nantycaws landfill site in the County is approximately 9 years. This has remained the same for a number of years as the reduction in landfill tonnage year on year results in the capacity remaining static.
- 15.17 TAN 21 promotes regional collaboration and data monitoring reports and sets triggers for regional groupings of planning authorities to identify where landfill capacity falls below a 7 and 5 year void<sup>140</sup>. Whilst the joint working arrangements to undertake annual monitoring on a regional basis has not yet been established, sufficient capacity currently exists and the Council has not hit any of these targets. Proposed changes to the explanatory text in the Waste Management chapter of the Plan would ensure that the Plan makes reference to, and accords with, the latest planning policy and guidance (**MAC55- MAC58** and **MAC152 - MAC154**).
- 15.18 TAN 21 also promotes the suitability of general employment sites for waste management given the advances in technology, and says that whilst Employment Land Supply Surveys will not be expected to quantify the amount of separate future provision likely to be needed for waste facilities, LDPs should indicate where suitable and appropriate sites exist<sup>141</sup>. Policy SP7 ‘Employment – Land Allocations’ identifies sites with potential to accommodate in-building facilities. The sites identified could provide 31 ha and additional capacity is also potentially available at the Nantycaws Waste Management Site. Furthermore, Policy SP12 ‘Waste Management’ would allow for suitable in-building facilities to be permitted on B2 employment sites.

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<sup>138</sup> Hearing Session 9: Waste, Tourism and Retail Agreed Actions (H9e)

<sup>139</sup> PPW paragraph 12.6.1

<sup>140</sup> TAN 21 paragraph 3.13

<sup>141</sup> TAN 21 paragraph 3.21

- 15.19 Policy WPP1 ‘Nantycaws Waste Management Facility’ would safeguard the site for a variety of waste management purposes, in line with the Council’s vision for the site as a regional ‘Waste Hub’. The WG’s Waste Infrastructure Procurement identifies regional hubs for local authorities to work collaboratively and to provide infrastructure to deal with food and residual waste. Whilst the South West Wales Residual Waste Treatment Programme is at an early stage in its development, the Council is promoting the Nantycaws site as a Waste Hub. It is intended that a Development Brief SPG will be prepared for the site to build on the Waste Hub concept once the requirements of the South West Wales Food Waste and Residual Waste Treatment Programmes become clearer.
- 15.20 Proposed changes to the supporting text to Policy WPP2 ‘Waste Management Facilities Outside Development Limits’ would aid clarity by confirming that whilst B2 employment sites are generally the most favoured locations for ‘in-building’ waste facilities, the policy would apply for proposals outside development limits. Further changes would remove reference to “instances where appropriate sites can be found some distance from settlements” which would remove any ambiguity and potential tensions with the principle of nearest appropriate installation (**MAC156**). Changes to the policy wording would clarify that such proposals would be required to set out how potential visual impact would be minimised through good design (**MAC155**). This would help inform decisions on such proposals.

### *Conclusion*

- 15.21 The Minerals and Waste sections of the Plan have been prepared with due regard to other relevant plans and policies. Subject to the proposed changes outlined above, the Plan policies would be soundly based and provide an appropriate framework for considering waste management and minerals development proposals.

### **Recommendation**

- 15.22 That in order to make the Plan sound the following changes are required:

**MAC5, MAC51, MAC52, MAC55, MAC56, MAC57, MAC58, MAC134, MAC146a, MAC147, MAC148, MAC149, MAC150, MAC151, MAC152, MAC153, MAC154, MAC155, MAC156 and MACM/PM4.**

**Inspector Change  
IC04.**

## 16 Other Development Policy Matters

### *Housing Policies*

16.1 It is proposed to amend Policy GP7 ‘Extensions’ to refer to “residential dwellings/use class C3”. This would improve clarity and consistency of interpretation (**MAC78**). Proposed changes to Policy H3 ‘Conversion or Subdivision of Existing Dwellings’ would improve its clarity by removing criteria which relates to matters covered through the building regulations process and are adequately covered through other policies, notably GP1 ‘Sustainability and High Quality Design’ (MAC84). Similarly, it is proposed to remove criteria in Policy H5 ‘Adaption and Re-use of Rural Buildings for Residential Use’ (MAC85) which unnecessarily duplicate the provisions of Policy GP1.

### *Home Working*

16.2 The Plan acknowledges that small businesses operating from home play a part in developing and supporting a diverse economy. The proposed new Policy H10 ‘Home Working’ (MAC88) would reflect the provisions of PPW in this regard<sup>142</sup>.

### **Recommendation**

16.3 That in order to make the Plan sound the following changes are required:

#### **MAC78.**

## 17 Monitoring and Implementation

17.1 The submitted Plan includes a separate Monitoring Framework that sets out the key indicators and targets that will be used to monitor delivery of LDP policies and proposals. During the examination process the Council has developed in greater detail the targets and indicators for monitoring each of the strategic policies in the Plan. It proposes changes (**MAC157**) which have been referred to throughout the report as well as changes to the targets and triggers ensuring that they are measureable and clear. This would enable progress of the Plan to be monitored more accurately and to assess whether it is being delivered in accordance with the Plan strategy. It would enable strategies or policies to be revised where necessary.

17.2 I have considered representations that a trigger of 20% for delivery of housing may be too high given the short time span that remains of the Plan. Also that additional triggers and indicators could be

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<sup>142</sup> PPW paragraph 7.3.1

included to assess delivery of the Plan’s strategy. However, a significant proportion of housing allocations are already committed, sufficient land would be allocated to ensure a 5 year housing land supply and the situation would be closely monitored.

- 17.3 I am thus satisfied that with the changes proposed, the Plan provides a robust mechanism for monitoring delivery and implementation and for establishing when the Plan or individual policies may need to be reviewed. It is also sufficiently flexible to deal with changing circumstances. In conclusion, these changes are thus recommended to ensure that the Plan satisfies the coherence and effectiveness soundness tests.

### **Recommendation**

- 17.4 That in order to make the Plan sound the following changes are required:

**MAC157.**

## **18 Overall Conclusions**

- 18.1 I conclude that, with the binding recommended changes identified in this report and set out in Appendix A, B, C, and D, the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2006 - 2021 satisfies the requirements of section 64(5) of the 2004 Act and meets the procedural, consistency and coherence and effectiveness tests of soundness in LDP Wales.

*R Phillips*

INSPECTOR

**Appendix A, Appendix B and Appendix C:  
The Authority’s proposed changes recommended by the Inspector**

**Appendix D:  
Changes recommended by the Inspector**