Carmarthenshire Revised Local Development Plan 2018–2033

Adoption Statement

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004 (Regulation 16)

The Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005 (as amended) (Regulation 25)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (Regulation 105)



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Contact us

If you have any questions in relation to this statement, please contact Strategic Policy and Placemaking at County Hall, Carmarthen, Carmarthenshire, SA31 1JP, by email at forward.planning@carmarthenshire.gov.uk or by telephone on 01267 228818.

You are welcome to contact us in Welsh or English.

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

Part A: Statement of Adoption

1. On 11th November 2026 Carmarthenshire County Council adopted, by resolution of full council, the Carmarthenshire Revised Local Development Plan (LDP) 2018–2033, incorporating the binding recommendations of the report of the Inspectors appointed to carry out the independent examination (Nicola Gulley MA MRTPI and Ian Stevens BA (Hons) MCD MRTPI; report dated 28th September 2026). The adopted LDP forms the Development Plan for Carmarthenshire (excluding that area within the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park) and will be the basis for decisions on land use planning in this area.

2. The Revised LDP covers the period from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2033 and, in accordance with section 12(4) of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, will remain operational until 31st March 2033. Upon its adoption, the Revised LDP replaced the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2006–2021 (adopted December 2014).

Viewing the documents

3. The adopted Revised LDP, the binding Inspectors' Report, the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) Report and its addenda (incorporating the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment), the Habitats Regulations Assessment documents and this Adoption Statement are available for inspection in Welsh and English at County Hall, at the Council's Customer Service Hwbs and online at public libraries during normal opening hours.

4. The adopted Revised LDP and its associated documents are also available to view on the council's website: www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/council-services/planning/local-development-plan-2018-2033

Legal challenge

5. Under section 113 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, any person aggrieved by the Revised LDP may apply to the High Court on the grounds that it is not within the appropriate legal powers, or that a procedural requirement was not complied with. Any such application must be made by 23rd December 2026.

Notification

6. In accordance with Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005 and Regulation 16(2) and (3) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004, a copy of this Adoption Statement has been sent to the Welsh Ministers, to the SEA consultation bodies (Natural Resources Wales and Cadw), and to those persons who requested to be notified of the adoption of the Revised LDP, stating where the documents listed above may be viewed or obtained.

Part B: Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Statement

Incorporating the Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment Statement required by Regulation 16 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004

Introduction

7. This Part fulfils the requirements of Regulation 16(3) and (4) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004, which require a statement setting out how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan; how the environmental report has been taken into account; how the opinions expressed in consultation, and the results of any transboundary consultation under regulation 14, have been taken into account; the reasons for choosing the plan as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and the measures to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementing the plan. These matters are addressed in turn below. The circumstances of the adoption of the Revised LDP are set out in Part A.

8. The environmental report requirements of the 2004 Regulations, together with the sustainability appraisal required by section 62(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, were met through an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA), which incorporates the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) together with a Welsh Language Impact Assessment, an Equality Impact Assessment, Health Impact Assessment considerations and the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This Part therefore addresses the Regulation 16 matters through the ISA's integrated scope.

Summary of the ISA process and relevant documents

9. The Revised LDP has been subject to an iterative ISA at every stage of its preparation. The principal ISA documents are:

Date	Document	LDP Stage
July 2018	SA Scoping Report	Scoping (Stage A)
December 2018	SA-SEA Initial Report	Preferred Strategy
January 2020	SA Report	1st Deposit
February 2023	ISA Report, with appendices and Site Allocation Assessment	2nd Deposit
February 2024	ISA Addendum	Pre-examination
March 2025	ISA Additional Sites Addendum	Examination – additional sites
May 2026	ISA Addendum to the Matters Arising Changes	Examination – MACs

10. For the purposes of the 2004 Regulations, the environmental report for the Revised LDP as adopted comprises the ISA Report (February 2023), read together with its addenda of February 2024, March 2025 and May 2026. The ISA Report appraised the policies and allocations of the 2nd Deposit Revised LDP and, where elements of the plan had not changed since earlier stages – notably the preferred spatial option, carried forward from the Preferred Strategy – relied upon and incorporated by reference the appraisals undertaken in the SA-SEA Initial Report (December 2018) and the SA Report (January 2020). Those documents accordingly remain part of the accessible record of the assessment, in particular of the reasonable alternatives considered.

11. All documents are accessible online[1]. A non-technical summary[2] of the main report was also published.

12. Within the Inspectors' Report, it was concluded that "the ISA process undertaken, including the consideration of reasonable alternatives, is robust, meets procedural and legal requirements and is consistent with the requirements of PPW"[3], and that the binding changes recommended in their report "do not undermine the SA and participatory processes that have been undertaken"[4].

How environmental considerations were integrated into the LDP

13. The ISA framework of 15 objectives (ISA1–ISA15), established at scoping in 2018, spans the SEA Directive topics[5] together with the Welsh language, health and well-being, education, economy and social fabric[6]. Every element of the plan – vision, strategic objectives, growth and spatial options, strategic and specific policies, and candidate and allocated sites – was appraised against this framework, and site promoters were directed to it through the ISA Guide for Promoters of Sites for Development[7].

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[1]All ISA documents are available at: https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/council-services/planning/local-development-plan-2018-2033/integrated-sustainability-appraisal-and-habitats-regulations-assessment/

[2]https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/media/beibdc0x/isa-non-technical-summary-feburary-2024.pdf

[3]Inspectors' Report, paragraph 3.5

[4]Inspectors' Report, non-technical summary, page 3. Where the Inspectors' binding recommendations amend or go beyond the Matters Arising Changes appraised in the ISA Addendum (May 2026), the council reviewed them against the ISA framework prior to adoption. Given their scale and nature, they were not considered likely to give rise to any significant effects beyond those already identified and assessed, and the conclusions of the ISA therefore remain valid.

[5]biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climate factors, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape

[6]See table 2 of the ISA Report (February 2023) for full summary, page 16.

[7]Available at: https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/media/1231889/isa-guide-for-promoters-of-sites-for-development.pdf (published February 2023)

14. Integration is evident in the evolution of the plan's policies. Examples include: the strengthening of Welsh language considerations (Policies SP8/WL1); the incorporation of energy-efficient design, sustainable materials and waste recycling requirements into placemaking policy (SP12); the reflection of the Council's 2019 climate emergency declaration and the role of green infrastructure as carbon sinks (SP15); and the restructuring of the plan's water quality framework around Policy CCH4 to secure nutrient neutrality in respect of nutrient-sensitive riverine and marine Special Areas of Conservation[8].

15. Environmental considerations continued to shape the plan through examination: the Matters Arising Changes strengthened flood-resilient placemaking (SP12), peatland protection (NE1), the safeguarding of best and most versatile agricultural land and high-carbon soils (CCH2), and introduced new policies on community facilities (PSD7), housing density with flexibility for ecological provision (PSD14) and coastal management (NE8), each appraised through the ISA[9].

How the ISA reports were considered

16. The ISA was undertaken iteratively, with each appraisal informing the next version of the plan. At Preferred Strategy stage the appraisal of growth and spatial options informed the selection of the strategy. Over 100 changes were suggested through the SA process at 1st Deposit stage[10]. The February 2023 ISA Report informed the ultimate policy set of the 2nd Deposit plan following its re-appraisal in the light of the phosphorus compliance issue. The February 2024 Addendum responded to representations and updated evidence (including Census 2021). The March 2025 Additional Sites Addendum informed the Inspectors' consideration of additional sites, and the May 2026 MAC Addendum tested all Matters Arising Changes, concluding that the observations of previous ISA work remain consistent.

17. Throughout, the mitigation hierarchy – avoid, minimise, offset, in sequential order – was applied, with mitigation preferentially embedded in plan policy rather than deferred[11].

[8]Policy numbering presented does not accord with that originally appraised as contained within the respective SA/ISA Reports as it has been subsequently amended by the 2nd Deposit LDP and/or Matters Arising Changes agreed within the Inspectors' Report.

[9]Through the ISA Addendum to the Matters Arising Changes (May 2026)

[10]Made through 'SA Comments and Recommendations' within relevant appendices

[11]As discussed in Paragraph 2.8.1 of the ISA Report

How consultation opinions were considered

18. All appraisals and assessments comprising the ISA suite[12] were subject to consultation with the statutory SEA consultation bodies in Wales, namely Natural Resources Wales and Cadw, and were published for public consultation at the relevant stages of the assessment process. This was undertaken in alignment with the plan's Delivery Agreement[13] as agreed with the Welsh Government.

19. Consultation responses influenced the ISA and the plan at every stage: the 2018 scoping consultation refined the ISA framework and baseline; responses to the Preferred Strategy consultation contributed to the development of the hybrid spatial option; the deposit consultations of 2020 and 2023 generated representations addressed through the ISA Report and its addenda; and the Matters Arising Changes consultation (11 May – 26 June 2026) received representations from 46 representors on 50 MACs, including one representation on the ISA Addendum and one on the HRA Addendum. All duly made representations were reported with council responses in the MAC Consultation Report (July 2026) and were considered by the Inspectors in reaching their final binding recommendations.

20. Cross-boundary effects were considered in consultation with the five neighbouring authorities (Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot) and the Bannau Brycheiniog and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authorities.

21. The Revised LDP was not considered likely to have significant effects on the environment of any other Member State at any stage of the ISA. No transboundary consultation under regulation 14 of the 2004 Regulations was therefore required or undertaken, and there were accordingly no results of any such consultation to be considered.

[12] All documents listed in Table 1.
[13] https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/media/yqdd0gu0/revised-da-2023-final.pdf

Reasons for choosing the plan as adopted, in the light of the reasonable alternatives

22. *Growth options.* Eight demographic and employment-led growth scenarios, ranging from 224 to 1,313 dwellings per annum (dpa), were appraised at Preferred Strategy stage. Option 5 (long-term migration, 659 dpa) was initially assessed as achieving the most sustainable balance. At Deposit stage the preferred level was revised to the PG 10-Year projection (589 dpa), reducing tensions between socio-economic benefits and environmental objectives, and three updated scenarios were re-tested for the 2nd Deposit. Following examination, the housing land supply was increased from 9,704 to 9,814 dwellings to provide flexibility, without change to the underlying strategy.

23. *Spatial options.* Six spatial distribution options were appraised (sustainable distribution; infrastructure and transport network; dispersal; community-led; Swansea Bay City Region influence; market-led). A hybrid option combining the positive elements of options 1, 2, 4 and 5 was selected, distributing growth across the settlement hierarchy while recognising infrastructure capacity, community sustainability and City Region investment.

24. *Site alternatives.* All candidate sites were assessed through the Site Assessment Methodology, of which the ISA is an integral component. The Site Allocation Assessment – Reasonable Alternatives (February 2023) comprehensively records the ISA appraisal of the sites that performed suitably but were not allocated, and the reasons for the selections made. At the Inspectors' request, 30 additional sites across six clusters[14] were appraised in March 2025; following hearings in September 2025 the Inspectors concluded that the additional sites proposed should be included in the plan through the Matters Arising Changes.

[14]Primarily in clusters 1, 2 and 3, in accordance with the hybrid spatial strategy.

Measures for monitoring the significant effects of the Revised LDP

25. Monitoring will be undertaken through the plan's monitoring framework alongside that proposed in the ISA Report[15], reported in the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), with indicators aligned to the ISA objectives and provision for adaptive management where unanticipated adverse effects arise. The plan's framework as adopted incorporates the amendments made through the Matters Arising Changes (MACs 093–118), including new indicators for the delivery of biodiversity enhancements (MAC 110), the publication of the marine nutrient neutrality Developer-Led Guidance/Toolkit and Strategic Guidance and Action Plan within six months of adoption (MAC 112), and dwellings delivered within the catchments of nutrient-impacted SACs (MAC 116); the housing trajectory reflects the lead-in times necessary for nutrient neutrality compliance (MAC 122).

26. Particular monitoring attention will be given to the Welsh language, reflecting the decline recorded between the 2011 and 2021 Censuses, and to water quality in the nutrient-sensitive riverine and marine SAC catchments.

[15]ISA Report (February 2023) Table 26, ISA Monitoring Framework as set out within Chapter 8.

Part C: Habitats Regulations Assessment Statement

Introduction

27. This Part records the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Carmarthenshire Revised Local Development Plan 2018–2033, undertaken in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), and its conclusions at the point of adoption. The circumstances of the adoption of the Revised LDP are set out in Part A.

28. Regulation 105 of the Habitats Regulations requires that, before a land use plan is given effect, the plan-making authority must assess the implications of the plan for European sites (the National Site Network) in view of their conservation objectives, and may give effect to the plan only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of any such site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. While there is no statutory requirement to publish an HRA adoption statement, the council does so to provide a clear record of the assessment and its conclusions.

Summary of the HRA process and relevant documents

29. The HRA was undertaken iteratively alongside plan preparation. The assessment comprises:

Document	Date	Scope
HRA Screening Report (Preferred Strategy)	December 2018	Screening of the Preferred Strategy: identification of network sites and effect pathways
HRA Report (1st Deposit)	January 2020	Screening and Appropriate Assessment of the Deposit plan
HRA Addendum (2nd Deposit)	February 2023	Re-assessment following NRW's 2021 review of phosphorus targets for riverine SACs
HRA 2nd Addendum	February 2024	Riverine SAC integrity; clarifications sought by NRW
HRA Additional Sites Addendum	March 2025	Screening and Appropriate Assessment of additional sites identified through the examination
HRA Addendum to the Matters Arising Changes	May 2026	Assessment of the MACs, including the marine SAC nutrient framework

European sites and effect pathways

30. A total of 29 designations were identified either within Carmarthenshire or within a 15 km buffer of the county. These comprise 25 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), three Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and one Ramsar site, as set out below.

Within Carmarthenshire	Designation	Within 15 km of Carmarthenshire	Designation
River Tywi	SAC	Cardigan Bay	SAC
Caeau Mynydd Mawr	SAC	North Pembrokeshire Woodlands	SAC
Cernydd Carmel	SAC	Yerbeston Tops	SAC
Carmarthen Bay Dunes	SAC	Rhos Llawr-cwrt	SAC
River Teifi	SAC	Pembrokeshire Bat Sites and Bosherston Lakes[16]	SAC
Cleddau Rivers	SAC	Gower Ash Woods	SAC
Carmarthen Bay and Estuary	SAC	Pembrokeshire Marine	SAC
Bristol Channel Approaches	SAC	Gower Commons	SAC
Cwm Doethie–Mynydd Mallaen	SAC	River Wye	SAC
Carmarthen Bay	SPA	Gweunydd Blaencleddau	SAC
Elenydd–Mallaen	SPA	Preseli	SAC
Burry Inlet	SPA	Mynydd Epynt	SAC
Burry Inlet	Ramsar	River Usk	SAC
		West Wales Marine	SAC
		Elenydd	SAC
		Coedydd Nedd a Mellte	SAC
		Crymlyn Bog / Cors Crymlyn	SAC

31. The effect pathways assessed included the aquatic, marine and coastal environment; nutrient enrichment (phosphorus in riverine SACs and dissolved inorganic nitrogen in marine SACs); wastewater treatment capacity; water abstraction; mobile species (including otter, marsh fritillary and bats); recreational pressure; air pollution; and disturbance, noise and light.

32. Screening concluded that the LDP had the potential for likely significant effects on several European sites through identified effect pathways and therefore an Appropriate Assessment was undertaken.

[16]Included in the assessment due to evidence that Greater horseshoe bats and Lesser horseshoe bats associated with the SAC utilise roosts across the wider West Wales region, including Carmarthenshire, despite the site being located 23 km from the county boundary.

Appropriate Assessment: findings by stage

33. The Appropriate Assessment of the Deposit plan (January 2020) identified wastewater treatment capacity as the principal issue, with six treatment works where growth could exceed permitted capacity, alongside potential disturbance effects on the Pembrey Peninsula. Recreational effects of plan-led growth and water abstraction were screened out.

34. Following NRW's January 2021 review of phosphorus targets, under which 61% of Welsh riverine SAC waterbodies failed their revised targets[17], the plan was re-assessed. The February 2023 Addendum re-screened 25 housing allocations and one employment site, and the plan's water quality framework was restructured around Policy CCH4, requiring development to demonstrate no adverse effect on the integrity of nutrient-sensitive SACs. The February 2024 Addendum addressed clarifications sought by NRW on riverine SAC integrity, supported by a Statement of Common Ground[18].

35. The March 2025 Additional Sites Addendum assessed the additional sites identified through the examination; all lie outside the phosphorus-sensitive SAC catchments, and the assessment concluded no adverse effect on integrity, relying on the mitigation embedded in the plan.

36. The May 2026 Addendum assessed the Matters Arising Changes (as latterly endorsed by the Inspectors' Report[19]), incorporating NRW's June 2025 condition assessments for Welsh European marine sites, which identified unfavourable condition for nutrient-sensitive features. The assessment quantified the wastewater implications of allocations and commitments within the marine SAC catchments (in particular the Burry Inlet Inner catchment of the Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries SAC) and assessed the extension of the plan's nutrient framework from phosphorus in riverine SACs to all nutrients, including nitrogen in marine SACs (MACs 036, 037 and 080). The Appropriate Assessment concluded that, subject to the Matters Arising Changes (including those to Policies CCH4 and INF4, the housing trajectory and the monitoring framework), the Revised LDP will have no adverse effect on the integrity of any National Site Network site.

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[17]Hatton-Ellis TW, Jones TG. 2021. Compliance Assessment of Welsh River SACs against Phosphorus Targets. NRW Evidence Report No: 489, 96pp, Natural Resources Wales, Bangor.

[18]Supporting Sustainable Development within Carmarthenshire by Safeguarding Phosphorus Sensitive Riverine Special Areas of Conservation (Spring 2024). Statement of Common Ground.

[19]Where the Inspectors' binding recommendations amend or go beyond the Matters Arising Changes assessed in the HRA Addendum to the Matters Arising Changes (May 2026), the council screened them prior to adoption and concluded that they do not alter the conclusion of the Appropriate Assessment: the Revised LDP will not adversely affect the integrity of any National Site Network site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

Mitigation

37. Mitigation is embedded in the adopted plan, principally through: Policy CCH4, which permits development only where no adverse effect on the integrity of nutrient-sensitive protected sites can be demonstrated, with nutrient neutrality required where appropriate; Policy INF5, applying the same requirement to development served by private wastewater treatment; Policy INF4 (surface water removal, including the Llanelli Wastewater Treatment Works catchment); Policy PSD14, providing density flexibility to accommodate ecological provision; and the plan's natural environment policies (SP14, NE1, NE2, NE8).

38. Delivery is supported by: the Nutrient Management Boards, whose remit is being expanded to the marine SAC catchments; the Welsh Government's All Wales Nutrient Budget Calculator; the Marine and Estuarine DIN Mitigation Handbook (March 2026), providing developer mitigation options secured by planning condition or obligation and additional to restoration measures under Article 6(2); the Developer-Led Guidance/Toolkit and Strategic Guidance and Action Plan for marine nutrient neutrality, to be published within six months of adoption (monitoring indicator MAC 112); a housing trajectory reflecting nutrient neutrality lead-in times (MAC 122); Grampian conditions; and project-level HRA of individual proposals.

The LDP Examination

39. The Inspectors examined the HRA and concluded that "the findings of the HRA as amended clearly show that, subject to appropriate mitigation, no significant effects upon the integrity of the National Site Network Sites 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 RLDP" (Inspectors' Report, paragraph 3.11). They further concluded that the policy framework provides the necessary safeguards to protect the integrity of the National Site Network while enabling growth to be delivered in an appropriate and timely manner (paragraphs 2.39–2.41).

Consultation

40. Each HRA document identified in the table above was subject to public consultation.

41. As the Statutory Nature Conservation Body, Natural Resources Wales was engaged throughout: at scoping (2018); on the Deposit HRA (2020); through its 2021 phosphorus targets review and subsequent advice, which shaped the 2nd Deposit plan; through consultation responses and a Statement of Common Ground; through its June 2025 marine condition assessments and conservation advice; and at the Matters Arising Changes consultation (11 May – 26 June 2026). NRW's representation of 26 June 2026 made no comments on the HRA Addendum, did not seek to reopen matters previously examined, and confirmed support for the plan's approach under Policy CCH4, while proposing clarificatory amendments to supporting text which have been incorporated in the adopted plan.

Conclusion

42. Having assessed the implications of the Revised LDP for the National Site Network in view of the conservation objectives of the sites concerned, and taking account of the mitigation embedded in the plan, the Council, as competent authority, has ascertained that the Carmarthenshire Revised Local Development Plan 2018–2033, as adopted, will not adversely affect the integrity of any National Site Network site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.