

Discussion Papers



June 2008



1 CARMARTHENSIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.2 Carmarthenshire County Council is committed to the preparation of a Local Development Plan (which will supersede the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006) in accordance with a Delivery Agreement (DA) approved by the Welsh Assembly Government. Both the UDP and DA can be viewed on the Council's website and are available for inspection at Customer Service Centres and libraries throughout the County.
- 1.1.3 Development Plans set out a Local Planning Authority's proposals and policies for future development and use of land within its administrative area. Once a Development Plan has been adopted, decisions on planning permissions will be primarily based on its content. A Development Plan therefore provides a measure of certainty about what kind of development will and will not be permitted during the plan period. It determines the level of provision and location of new housing and employment opportunities and sets the framework for considering all proposals that relate to the development and use of land and buildings during the plan period.
- 1.1.4 In producing the LDP due regard must be had to national policies and guidance including Planning Policy Wales and Minerals Planning Policy Wales, as elaborated through Technical Advice Notes (TANs), Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statements and relevant primary legislation in guiding and informing the content of the plan.
- 1.1.5 In contextual terms the LDP represents one of the **four key strategies** which are required to be prepared by the Authority. The other three key strategies are the Community Strategy, the Children and Young Peoples Strategy and the Health, Social Care and Well-being Strategy.
- 1.1.6 In terms of the Wales Spatial Plan Carmarthenshire is situated within three areas namely Pembrokeshire - The Haven, Swansea Bay - Waterfront and the Western Valleys and Central Wales. The Council in preparing the LDP is required to have regard to the content of the Wales Spatial Plan and as such will continue to monitor its content in light of the current update of the document.
- 1.1.7 The aim of the new LDPs is to make the Development Plan System more relevant, inclusive and engaging to local communities. It also serves to encourage a collaborative approach to plan preparation involving the voluntary, public and private sectors, which should result in a Plan based on consensus.
- 1.1.8 The LDP will take a positive role in identifying appropriate sites for investment and development balanced against needs and considerations for the protection and enhancement of the natural and built environment and the linguistic and cultural nature of the community. It will look to ensure that growth and change in Carmarthenshire accommodates new developments of the highest standards to provide for the requirements of its communities whilst seeking to retain and incorporate the rich qualities of its varied environments; the unique townscapes of the many historic market towns; the scenic and recreational value of its coastlines, and the rolling landscapes of the rural heartlands. In so doing, the LDP will also present policies to reflect the culture and heritage of the County.
- 1.1.9 The attached Discussion Papers seek to set the context for the preparation of the LDP through individual topic areas, developing on, and identifying some of the potential issues, options and objectives for the area. They represent an important first step in the development of a robust evidence base and of a preferred strategy.

- 1.1.10 These papers are not exhaustive in content and are intended to illustrate the scope of the Plan and facilitate a response.
- 1.1.11 These papers will seek to inform members of the Authority, officers, the Key Stakeholder Forum and relevant Consultees on some of the key strategic land use policy issues within the County.
- 1.1.12 In seeking views, this represents a first and important opportunity to guide the direction that the LDP will take.
- 1.1.13 It is important to note that these papers do not relate to the allocation of land or specific sites. The consultation period in respect of the Candidate Sites is scheduled to commence approximately late June 2008 (Please see the Delivery Agreement). It should be noted however that the discussion papers and responses thereto will influence the emerging strategy and the respective policies governing the release of land.

1.2 **How To Have Your Say**

- 1.2.1 Your views on the content of the attached papers are welcomed and should be forwarded in writing to Forward Planning Manager, Planning Services, 40 Spilman Street, Carmarthen, Carmarthenshire, SA31 1LQ. A form is enclosed to assist you in submitting any comments. In light of the program and timetable for the preparation of the Plan comments should be received by the 2008. To make your views known you can either:
- Complete the attached form and return it to the address shown.
 - Download the form online at www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk.
 - Via Email to forwardplanning@carmarthenshire.gov.uk.
 - Contribute through the Stakeholder Forum (applicable to Stakeholder Forum Members).

2 VISION

2.1 Background

2.1.1 The development of a Vision at an early stage of plan preparation is central in providing the direction necessary to properly inform not only the formulation of a preferred strategy, but the wider plan making process itself. In developing a vision for the LDP, consideration should be given to what is required from it, and the role it plays in respect of the plan itself.

2.1.2 In this regard **Local Development Plans Wales – Policy on Preparation of LDPs** (December 2005) states that *“the LDP should seek to address the unique economic, environmental and social characteristics, opportunities and issues of the area. It should be based on a vision of the future which should be clear, realistic and based on the objectives and priorities of the relevant community strategy”*.

2.2.3 This reflects the importance of a corporate synergy as part of the LDP process and the need to consider the relationship between the LDP and the Community Strategy. The **Local Development Plan Manual** (June 2006) also states that *“The LDP vision and its objectives will flow from having a clear view of what sort of place the authority wants to become. Authority members have an important leadership role in defining the vision. This should have already been achieved within the authority and with partners through the preparation of the Community Strategy”*.

2.2 Context

2.2.1 **Together, Planning Together, Doing Together 2004/2020** sets out a vision for the future of the county and is expressed in the foreword by the Community Planning Forum. It states that:

2.2.2 ***“We must have the vision to attract greater opportunities to Carmarthenshire whilst making sure our actions are sustainable. We must make the most of our unique environment by conserving, enhancing and promoting the quality of life in Carmarthenshire. As well as rights, we have responsibilities to: nurture, support and develop our children and young people to equip them for their futures; to look after our citizens who are in need. By working in partnership we want to make Carmarthenshire a key player not only in Wales, but throughout the UK, and internationally.”***

2.2.3 The appropriateness of this as a vision statement for the LDP will be considered against the following criteria in the LDP Manual, namely:

- a) **Is it up to date.**
- b) **It is of spatial relevance.**
- c) **It contains a balance between economic, social and environmental objectives.**
- d) **It flows from having a clear view of what sort of place the authority wants to become.**

2.3 Issues

2.3.1 The Vision Statement from the Community Strategy as highlighted accords with the provisions of LDP Wales and the LDP Manual in providing a vision is not out of date, is not of limited spatial relevance, that it is well rounded in terms of a balance between economic, social and environmental objectives and flows from having a clear view of what sort of place the authority wants to become.

2.3.2 However there maybe scope for further consideration of its content and focus, and notably its potential for further development particularly given its application in a land use context,

There is a need to ensure it contains an appropriate spatial dimension and that it is future orientated with current Vision representing a basis for dialogue and debate.

3 SPATIAL STRATEGY

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This paper seeks to examine the issues relating to the formulation of a spatial strategy for the plan area. It seeks to set out the context and background and inform the preparation of the Local Development Plan (LDP) for Carmarthenshire. It represents an important first step in the generation of options leading to the preparation of a preferred strategy.
- 3.1.2 Due regard will be had to national and regional planning policy and guidance in the formulation of outcomes in respect of any emerging issues, options and objectives. In formulating the LDP regard will also be had to the background documents impacting upon the spatial distribution of development throughout the plan area, and the scale of development which should be applied to the identified settlements.

3.2 Context

3.2.1 National/ Regional Context

3.2.2 **Planning Policy Wales (March 2002)** (PPW) makes reference to the need to have regard to the Wales Spatial Plan and notably to promote sustainable patterns of development which reflect the locations' accessibility by a range of travel options. The need to maintain and improve vitality and viability of service centres sits alongside the need to address links between the town and country, whilst generally seeking to locate developments in a manner which is likely to minimise the need to travel, and to locate major trip generators in areas which are well served by public access. Likewise development should be well serviced through existing infrastructure. Where development is proposed in rural areas it should be located in or adjacent to established settlements which by virtue of infrastructure and access are best placed to accommodate such proposals. New developments in the countryside would not be considered outside defined settlements and would require strict control¹.

3.2.3 In producing its LDP the authority should devise a settlement strategy which establishes housing policies in line with their local housing strategy and a spatial pattern of development balancing social, economic and environmental needs. This strategy must be informed by a SA and must be fully justified².

3.2.4 Carmarthenshire is situated within three of areas contained within the **Wales Spatial Plan - People Places Futures** namely Pembrokeshire - The Haven, Swansea Bay - Waterfront and the Western Valleys and Central Wales, with Carmarthen playing a key role in all three. The Council in preparing the LDP is required to have regard to the content of the Wales Spatial Plan and will continue to monitor its content in light of the emerging 2008 update of the document.

3.2.5 Through the update each spatial plan area has developed a hierarchical approach to the identification of settlements based upon their roles, functions and their sustainability benefits, whilst recognising the different contribution of the settlement in service terms within their area of influence. It also seeks to build upon the existing policy frameworks within the respective areas and is largely reflective of the existing development plan and its sustainable principles. The respective Spatial Plan areas as contained within the consultation update classify the settlements as follows:

¹ *Planning Policy Wales: para 2.5*

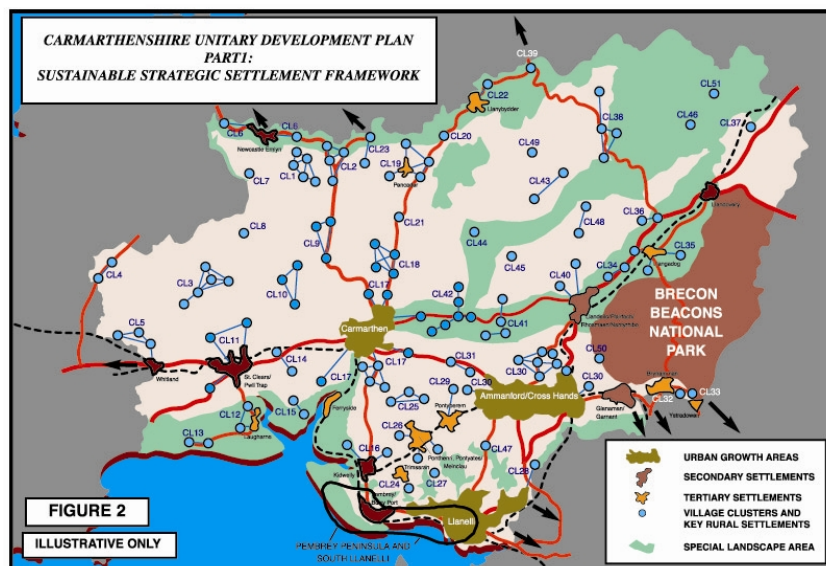
² *Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement 01/2006 - Housing (June 2006)- Para 9.2.5*

- 3.2.6 Pembrokeshire – The Haven – Carmarthen is identified as Tier 1 settlements, occupying a regional position and being the focus for major investment. Whitland and St Clears are identified as Tier 2 settlements with a local service centre role. Tier 3 includes Newcastle Emlyn as a local centre and Pendine/Laugharne as part of the ‘coastal tourism belt’.
- 3.2.7 Swansea Bay – Waterfront and the Western Valleys - Nine other hubs including Carmarthen, Ammanford/Cross Hands and Llanelli supplement Swansea as the City. Other smaller settlements were identified as supporting communities including Burry Port/Pembrey, Kidwelly/Trimsaran, Llandeilo and the Upper Amman Valley.
- 3.2.8 Central Wales – Carmarthen is identified as a Primary Key Settlement, with the Teifi Valley and its key settlements including Newcastle Emlyn, Llanybydder constituting a primary settlement cluster. The Towy Valley is also identified as a primary settlement cluster with Llandeilo, Llangadog and Llandovery identified as key settlements.

3.2.9 **Local Context**

3.2.10 The adopted **Carmarthenshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP)** sets out a hierarchical settlement strategy within its Sustainable Strategic Settlement Framework (SSSF) for the plan area. It formulated an approach which remains reflective of guidance centred on a sustainable model wherein settlements were categorised by virtue of their accessibility and the services offered. This approach sought to embrace sustainable principles whilst also reflecting the interest of rural communities with development directed on a proportional basis through the following settlement structure:

- **Urban Growth Areas - Llanelli, Carmarthen and Ammanford/Cross Hands (including surrounding settlements)** are large and established urban areas and are well served by sustainable transport routes and a significant range of facilities and services.
- **Secondary Settlements** normally situated on sustainable transport corridors and/or have a range of facilities and services, providing for the needs of the surrounding area and rural hinterland.
- **Tertiary Settlements** possess facilities and services that have a community focus, often comprising of a basic level of healthcare provision together with localised shopping facilities and other services.
- **Village Clusters** where there are recognised levels of interdependence between smaller settlements, they are grouped together to form a single “cluster”. Such grouping enables development to be allocated within the context of the whole “cluster”, rather than on an individual village basis.



3.3 Key Objectives

3.3.1 The following emerging objectives/priority areas may influence the selection of a spatial strategy and the resultant distribution of development within the plan area:

3.3.2 **Sustainable Locations** - Developing a settlement framework which seeks to direct the majority of development towards sustainable locations in the County's urban areas with a view to: -

- Maximising and promoting the efficient use of land.
- Reducing pressure on greenfield locations.

3.3.3 **Climate Change** - Addressing the challenges presented by Climate change and the role of the land use system.

- Promote and encourage responses to changes in the climate.
- Improve on the environmental performance of developments.
- Contribute to the development of community stewardship and environmental citizenship, through corporate compatibility encouraging the move towards sustainable communities.

3.3.3 **Reduced Trip Generation** – Locate development in areas which will not result in the generation of new or longer car journeys.

- Accessible by a range of transport methods including public transport, foot and by cycle.
- Promote social inclusion.

3.4 Issues

3.4.1 **Sustainability** - Key to the development of the spatial strategy is the emphasis placed upon sustainability through planning policy and guidance. These requirements significantly influence the direction taken and choices made. Notably given the commitment to promote sustainable patterns of development and to address and combat the implications of climate change.

3.4.2 The LDP should endeavour to formulate a land use strategy which appropriately reflects, and is consistent with the principles of sustainable development, incorporating the four broad objectives of:

- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- effective protection of the environment;
- prudent use of natural resources; and
- the maintenance of high levels of economic growth and employment³.

3.4.3 Sustainable development is commonly defined as, *“development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”*. The environmental issues which face society and the challenges presented through climate change place inevitable requirements on the land use planning system to fulfil its role in the delivery of sustainable development. Integrating and balancing the above objectives and the provision of homes, infrastructure, investment and employment in a manner consistent with sustainable principles represents a central challenge in preparing the LDP.

3.4.4 **Climate Change** – The agenda in respect of climate change raises a number of issues which impact upon the LDP including its reinforcement of the sustainability principles which underpin much of current thinking and guidance. The WAG is committed to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and to respond in an effective manner to the change already underway. The links between climate change and the sustainable agenda and products of environmental interaction and changes in climate, such as flood risk and coastal erosion are

³ *Planning Policy Wales: para 2.1.4*

largely established and the LDP will need to address such factors, with the spatial strategy key in their expression.

3.4.5 **Developing the Spatial Strategy** - The requirement for the LDP to have regard to the content of the Wales Spatial Plan is an important consideration in the formulation of any strategy and its hierarchy. Reference to its provisions will however be made in the light of the need to establish the level of facilities and services available, and to consider the role of any respective settlements in determining their position within a hierarchical structure.

3.4.6 In addition the role of the Unitary Development Plan and its SSSF is an important factor in the formulation of a strategy particularly give that it was largely developed from the same sustainability principles and objectives which govern the preparation of the LDP.

3.5 **Options**

3.5.1 **Settlement Hierarchy – Spatial Options**

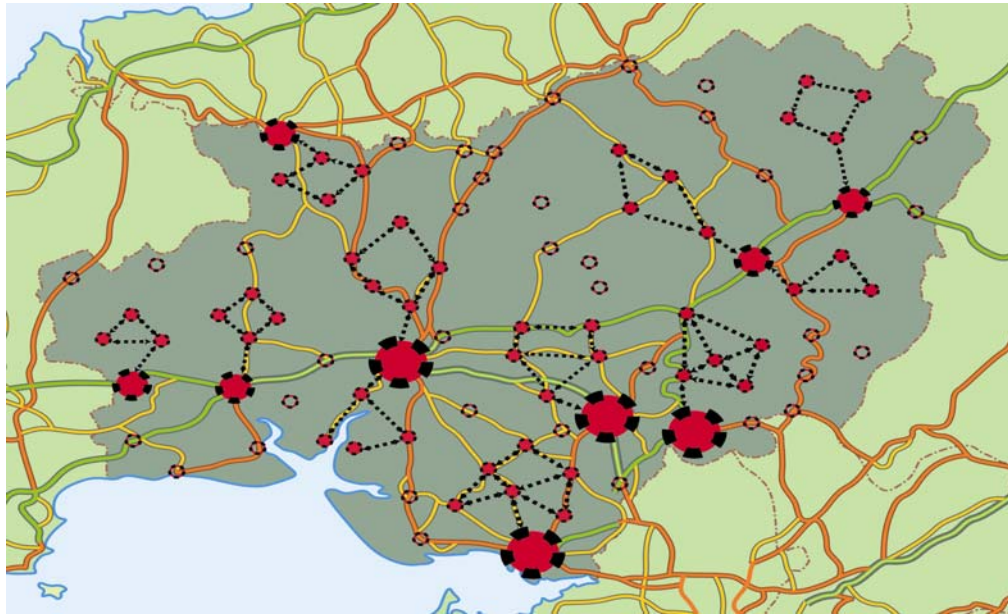
3.5.2 The following emerging options and the selection of the preferred strategy, represents a fundamental decision that has to be made and developed through the plan making process. The make-up of any given hierarchy will be determined in accordance with the respective offer of the settlement or settlements. The following options are suggested.

3.5.3 **Option 1**

3.5.4 This reflects a tier based classification centred on the principles and objectives of sustainable development, whilst taking into account the needs of the rural areas. It has regard to the above context and the requirements in respect of the Wales Spatial Plan and reflects a number of the principles of the UDP. The settlements identified within the UDP could be translated into the hierarchy with their classification based upon a review of their current level of facilities and service offer.

3.5.5 This strategic option would seek to encourage the dispersal of employment, housing and all other development to identified settlements and village clusters subject to their spatial hierarchical classification. The promotion of development in this manner would allow adequate opportunities for economic growth and social progress whilst at the same time would assist in protecting the natural environment from incremental degradation.

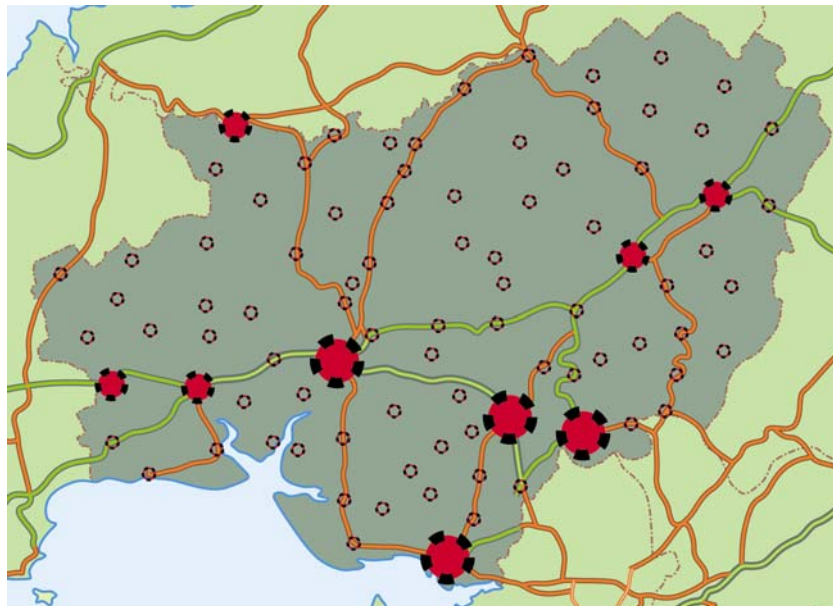
3.5.6 In order to avoid further growth in trip generation by private transport this strategy would reflect the availability of public transport and would concentrate development in selected settlements which are accessible to a range of services and facilities. The suitability of the selected settlements will also depend on their environmental capacity. This option embraces the concept of sustainable development and planning policy/guidance, whilst recognising the diversity of the county, its communities and its largely rural back drop.



3.5.7 Option 2

3.5.8 This seeks to encourage the concentration of employment, housing and all other development within the main urban centres of the County.

3.5.9 This strategy has considerable benefit from an infrastructure and transportation perspective. By concentrating development in the urban areas, where the largest proportion of population resides and where adequate services and infrastructure exist, this represents a highly sustainable approach. This would allow development to be focused in a way which would place the emphasis on urban areas and reduce development in rural areas. The resultant concentration of development would constrain development in rural areas. This option embraces the principle of sustainable development.

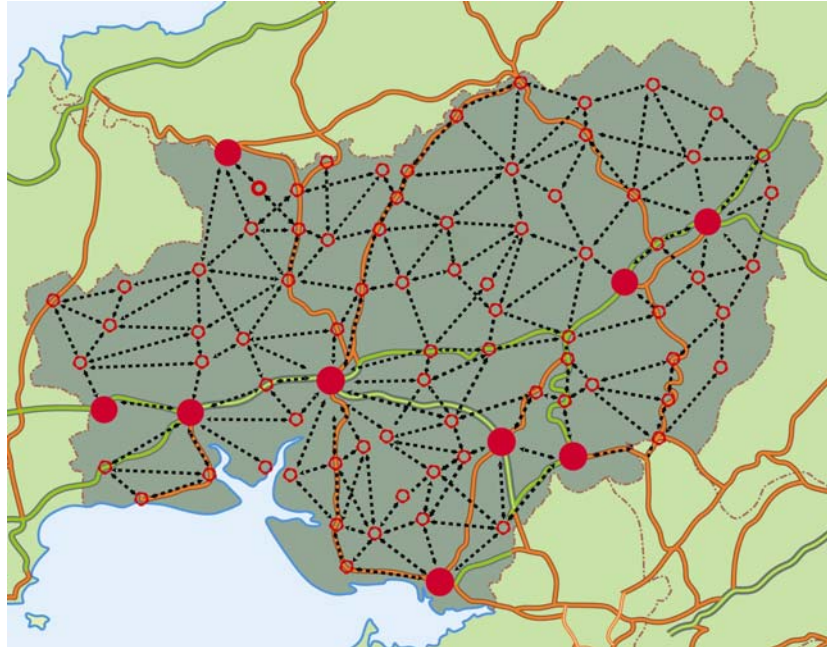


3.5.10 Option 3

3.5.11 This strategy would disperse employment, housing and all other development throughout the County on a broad basis, with every defined settlement allocated a share of future development. Allowing development to be dispersed in such a way would however result in

increased trip generation with every new dwelling, employment activity etc giving rise to additional journeys with resultant environmental impacts.

- 3.5.12 The smaller communities within the County may by virtue of infrastructure constraints and their respective environmental capacity be unable to absorb additional growth. It would also present difficulties both logistically and financially for the public transport system to serve all the communities thus placing a considerable reliance on private transport. This option **does not** embrace or accord with the principles of sustainable development.



3.5.13 Hierarchical Classification

- 3.5.14 It is proposed to classify the settlements' relative standing utilising the classification suggested below. This is intended to assist in developing a settlement framework which reflects the broader sustainable objectives but also provides for the diverse characteristics and requirements of the plan area and its towns and villages. This paper will seek to continually expand upon and provide further detail on the hierarchy and will be developed to include additional data such as infrastructural constraints as part of a refreshment process.

- 3.5.15 A Settlement Matrix within Appendix B will be developed as a means of identifying the level of facilities and services available and catalogues the respective settlements accessibility and infrastructure capacity. This will inform the emerging strategy by providing the source information for the Settlement Hierarchy set out in table 1 below.

- 3.5.16 In developing the classification regard will be had to the respective population of settlements, however it is acknowledged that they often serve a wider hinterland beyond their own boundaries. Inevitably this is difficult to quantify with the relationship of people and settlements much more flexible with a variety of centres providing different services and facilities. Whilst this creates difficulties in defining a given hinterland, or indeed measuring the particular population served, the settlements influence can be interpreted through its geographical positioning, the nature and level of services offered and their respective historical relationship.

3.5.17 Methodology

- 3.5.18 In assessing the settlements, their respective offer, and their sustainable characteristics the information for inclusion within the matrix (Appendix B) has provisionally been categorised into the following key headings from which their hierarchical classification will emerge.
- Retail
 - Accessibility
 - Transport
 - Public Services and Facilities (Including Health, Education)
 - Community Facilities
- 3.5.19 Information accumulated in terms of infrastructural capacity and constraints will be valuable in establishing the ability of the settlement to accommodate growth and act as an indicator of the potential timescale in respect of developability within the plan period. This information will be sourced through partnership working with service providers. Other sources of information will also contribute to the assessment of a settlements ability to accommodate growth such as the Biodiversity Study (currently being developed) and the TAN15 flood risk areas.
- 3.5.20 **Retail** - The respective position of each settlement in retail terms will emerge from its relative offer taking into account the number and variety of stores. The definitions of the types of shopping centres used within this paper, broadly accords with those contained within the Technical Advice Note 4: Retailing and Town Centres.
- 3.5.21 'Town Centres' will include centres which provide for the higher order and range of facilities and services fulfilling a function as a focus both for the community and for public transport. 'Local Centres' are those which consist of a small group usually comprising of a general store, sub-post office, newsagent and potentially other small shops of a local nature such as pharmacy etc. The presence of Retail Parks at out of town locations typically including a range of comparison goods will be factors. The local presence of individual or a small number of retail units, such as general store and post office will be considerations within smaller settlements.
- 3.5.22 **Accessibility** – The accessibility of settlements, their services, facilities and employment infrastructure are important considerations with the availability of a choice of transport modes an important factor. There is the need to reflect the over arching sustainable objectives through reducing the need to travel and a recognition of the implications of climate change, however this must also be considered against a largely rural backdrop throughout much of the County and the reliance of the motor car
- 3.5.23 The accessibility of a settlement can be measured through the availability and frequency of public transport. The availability of a multiple public transport provision through bus and rail provides for an enhanced level of service.
- 3.5.24
1. Strategic – A minimum of hourly services, six days a week (Level of service suitable for travel to and from work, schools, shopping etc).
 2. Regular – Daily service six days a week with at least 4 journeys in each direction.
 3. Daily – Other daily services with 3 journeys or less in each direction.
 4. Intermittent or limited – Restricted service (certain days only).
 5. No service.
- 3.5.25 **Transport** – As above there is a need to balance the overarching principles of sustainable development with the necessity of ensuring the areas economic viability are maintained and enhanced and to recognise the needs of the rural areas within the County. The settlements relationship to the county's key transport infrastructure is an important consideration in identifying its role and status.
- 3.5.26
1. Strategic Network – Strategic Highway Network within the Local Transport Plan (LTP) including railway line.

2. Strategic Highway Network – As identified with LTP, but where there is no access to a railway line.
3. Highways Network – B Roads (excluding those identified within the above).
4. Sub-Network – C Roads.

3.5.27 **Public Services and Facilities** – In order to promote a sustainable community the facilities provided by settlements should be of a range which meets the requirements of the community or the area it serves. Consequently the range and choice available in these areas are contributory factors to its position within a sustainable settlement hierarchy. Such facilities include medical from the availability of a hospital through to a doctor’s surgery and dental practice, whilst education represents an important measure of the settlements status be they through the availability of further education, secondary or indeed primary educational facilities. An additional gauge is the location of emergency services.

- 3.5.28
1. Full Provision – Includes the range of facilities identified, including full education and medical provision.
 2. Community Provision – Includes secondary education and local medical care such as doctor’s surgery.
 3. Local Provision – Could include primary education facilities and local medical services.
 4. Limited Provision – Could include one of the above.
 5. No provision.

3.5.29 **Community Facilities** – The availability of community facilities such as library, a place of worship and a sports/recreation area are often pivotal to the functioning and well being of a settlement and undoubtedly contribute to the generation of a sense of community spirit. The recognition of this contribution in sustainable terms should not be over-looked with their availability often benefiting neighbouring communities. Whilst the larger settlements will often display very many, if not all the facilities used here, as a measure the value of a single facility to an individual settlement should not readily be under played however the inclusivity of facilities to the whole community must be a consideration.

- 3.5.30
1. Strategic provision – Enjoys access to extensive ranges of facilities including leisure centre, library, community hall(s) etc.
 2. Community provision - Enjoys access to a high level of facilities including library, community hall, place of worship and sports or recreation provision.
 3. Local provision – Is served by up to 3 facilities identified.
 4. Limited provision – Is served by few facilities generally up to two and would typically include a place of worship and community hall.
 5. No provision.

3.5.31 Table 1 will be populated through the information gathering process associated with the settlement matrix (Appendix B) and the categories and processes identified above.

Table 1 Settlement Hierarchy – (Under Development**)**

Settlement	Population ¹	Categorisation				
		Retail	Accessibility	Transport	Public Services and Facilities	Community Facilities

4 HOUSING

4.1 Context

4.1.1 National/Regional Context

The Welsh Assembly Governments (WAG) within the **Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement 01/2006 – Housing (June 2006)** (MIPPS) and better Homes for People in Wales (2001) set out its vision for housing states that everyone in Wales should have the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and in homes that are in good condition, in safe neighbourhoods and sustainable communities, and provide for a greater choice, recognising the needs for all.

4.1.2 Guidance on the preparation of the Joint Housing Land Availability Studies (JHLAS) is contained within **Technical Advice Note 1 (June 2006)** the purpose of which is to monitor housing provision, detail the residential land availability and identify any need for action should there be insufficient supply.

4.1.3 **Technical Advice Note 2: Planning and Affordable Housing (June 2006)** provides guidance on the role of the planning system in delivering affordable housing, advising local authorities on how to determine affordability. It places a requirement on local authorities to include an affordable housing target based on the identified housing need set out within the Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) as well the policy approaches to indicate how the target will be achieved together with the need to monitor the provision of affordable housing. The above policy context is drawn together in the **Affordable Housing Toolkit – Welsh Assembly Government (June 2006)** which details the mechanisms and powers available for the delivery of affordable housing.

4.1.4 Regard will be had to the **Wales Spatial Plan - People, Places, Futures** and its content both nationally and via the spatial plan areas and their frameworks and the consultation updates emphasis on affordability and sustainability.

4.1.5 Local Context

4.1.6 The main objective of the adopted **Carmarthenshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP)** in respect of housing provision is to ensure that “an adequate supply of land will be readily available for all appropriate housing developments and that there will be a range and choice of housing available to meet the needs of the present and future population of the plan area”.

4.1.7 The UDP identifies a requirement for sufficient land to be allocated to accommodate approximately 11,300 homes over the plan period. An additional 861 units was then further allocated on sites of 5 or more to provide an appropriate degree of flexibility in the plans housing provision. This provided a final resultant supply of 12,161 dwellings for the plan period.

4.1.8 Local authorities must combine in partnership with local stakeholders to produce the LHMA⁴. In accordance with the requirements contained within the MIPPS the authority must have an understanding of the housing market to inform and develop a sound and robust LDP. The LHMA represents an important part of the evidence base for not only the LDP through aiding an understanding a range of housing issues within the plan area but also informs the Council’s Housing Strategy. The **Local Housing Market Assessment - 2007** (Carmarthenshire County Council) represents an annual review and is currently being finalised, the outcome of which will be monitored accordingly.

⁴ Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement 01/2006 – Housing (June 2006): para 9.1.4.

- 4.1.9 The **Joint Housing Land Availability Study – 30th June 2005 (November 2007)** as at the 30th June 2005 identified Carmarthenshire as having a 5 year supply of land sufficient for 2759 dwellings, 86% of which were expected to be provided on larger sites (5+ sites) with the remaining contribution (14%) through sites of up to five dwellings. Of the larger sites 2246 units are through the private sector. It identifies 459 units as being under construction on larger sites (90% private sector). It reveals that 1265 units were completed in the study period (98% private sector). The small site contribution to total completions is at an estimated average annual rate of 77 units.
- 4.1.10 The 2007 JHLAS will be undertaken in accordance with the revised Technical Advice Note 1 and the policy requirements set out within MIPPS 01/2006 and will be prepared on an annual basis.
- 4.1.11 The JHLAS indicates the total number completions on plus 5 sites, with the following table setting out the average over the last 9 years. Although the local authority does not rely explicitly on past trends in house completion data to determine future housing land requirements, for the purpose of clarity, the average rates are produced below. Such figures must be treated with caution due to recognised anomalies in their collection and collation. Furthermore the old adage that “the past may not necessarily reflect the future” is relevant when considering past trends and potentially projecting them into the future. This is particularly applicable given that the majority of house building is conducted by the private sector which is itself subject to the vagaries of the market and the variations in figures which are likely to result.

Joint Housing Land Availability Study – Completion Figures for July 1996 – June 2005 (9 years)		
Plan Area	Completions 7/96 – 6/05	9 Year Annual Average
Carmarthenshire County	4256	472.8

4.2 Objectives

- 4.2.1 Emerging objectives/priority areas in respect of housing in the LDP includes the development a plan which reflects and responds to the housing needs of the County in a manner consistent with the principles of sustainable development providing an adequate supply of land for a range and choice of housing types be they market or affordable housing.

4.3 Issues

- 4.3.1 **Population and Households Projections** – The general trend in the population of Carmarthenshire indicates that the population in the ten year period from 1991 to 2001 grew by approximately the same amount as the five year period between 2001 and 2006 i.e. increases of 4,000 and 4,300 respectively. The UDP sought to introduce an interventionist approach aimed at stemming out migration and thus departed from the then trend based Assembly projections to forecast further increased levels of population growth. In doing so it estimated an approximate growth of 24,000 by 2016. By way of comparison the projected estimate for 2006 as contained within the UDP was for 176,318 which compares with the 178,000 at mid 2006 (Source: ONS).
- 4.3.2 The Assembly Government are in the process of producing projections for Unitary Authorities in Wales based on a "bottom up" approach which it is understood will be available shortly. The Authority will produce estimates for the County based upon up to date and robust data to inform the future direction through the LDP. These emerging projections will examine the propensity for continued population growth with any variations from WAG projections being subject to a robust justification and methodology.
- 4.3.3 Changes in household structures and notably the decline in size can be attributed to a number of demographic and social factors including increases in the elderly population,

smaller family sizes etc. The LDP will need to consider such changes with a potential for greater focus on more 1 and 2 bedroom units in communities where such need is identified.

- 4.3.4 A continued reduction in vacant accommodation would see properties being back into beneficial use meeting some of the future demand. Approximately 3.8% of all homes within the County were empty in June 2006 (Source LHMA 2007).
- 4.3.5 Reference should be made to the demographic background paper which will shortly be available on the Councils website.
- 4.3.6 **Distribution of Residential Supply** – The spatial strategy as contained within the UDP sought to distribute residential land supply throughout identified settlements within County based upon a hierarchical settlement framework. Within the LDP the distribution of any residential land supply will once again be set within the context of a spatial strategy which will emerge through the issues process and the development of a preferred strategy. Consequently residential allocations will be directed to the settlements in a manner consistent with the emerging spatial strategy (see relevant section of this paper).
- 4.3.7 **Site Selection** – The initial evaluation of the suitability of sites for 5 or more units will potentially include a planning assessment proforma based around broad planning issues and considerations including the following:
- Relationship to identified settlements;
 - Location and accessibility;
 - Type of Site – Greenfield or Previously Developed Land;
 - Environmental Constraints;
 - Physical and Infrastructural Constraints;
 - Deliverability.
- 4.3.8 The candidate site process will set out the criteria for the selection of those sites which may contribute to the aims and objectives of the LDP and the emerging preferred strategy.
- 4.3.9 **Housing Densities** - The LDP will need to reflect a number of considerations in determining the densities appropriate for a given site, these include market trends, developer obligations including affordable provision, an areas character and any constraints present. In light of recent increases in density, over and above the indicative figures contained within the UDP, an average density per hectare which is more reflective of the market and provides encouragement for sustainability located development maybe required. In this regard 30 dwellings per hectare, as utilised in planning policies set out in England, may represent an appropriate figure in urban areas, with the recognition that an area's character and site considerations may where appropriate require the application of lower or in appropriate circumstances higher densities.
- 4.3.10 **Affordable Housing** - Affordable Housing as defined by Welsh Assembly Government as: *“housing where there are mechanisms in place to ensure that it is accessible to those who cannot afford market housing, both on first occupation and for subsequent occupants.”⁵*
- 4.3.11 To be considered under the definition affordable, all such housing provided through the planning system **must** be available to the community in **perpetuity** and not just the initial occupier. Affordable housing includes:
- Social Rented housing – provided by local authorities and RSL;
 - Intermediate housing – where price or rents are above those of social rent but below market housing prices or rents.

⁵ *Technical Advice Note 2: Planning and Affordable Housing (June 2006): para 5.1*

- 4.3.12 The LHMA (2007) in analysing future needs sets out an overall requirement for over 1000 additional units of affordable units per year. This represents a significant increase on the 2006 study which estimated 666. This figure should not be considered in isolation given that, for instance a slowing of the market may result in prices becoming more affordable and movement from the letting stock into market accommodation may occur. There is also the need to consider adopting a pragmatic approach taking into account the view that land use process alone cannot address this issue and that the problem is in itself a national one.
- 4.3.13 The 2007 LHMA also highlights a continuing problem with affordability of homes for sale, with 61% of households earning less than the required income. This is based on entry to the market in the bottom 25% with the average of this lower quartile being £100,000. The affordability gap is the difference between what an average household can afford and average house prices. The assessment of affordability within the LHMA shows that purchasing an entry level property would require a net annual income of £26,280.

Table 1: Lower Quartile Average House Prices

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Price	38,000	52,000	73,000	88,250	90,000	100,000

Source: LHMA 2007 (DCLG 2007)

- 4.3.14 Average house prices within the County have shown stark rises since 2000 with the average house price for the month of February 2008 standing at £141,671. Detached properties stand at £213,888 and at the lower end of the spectrum maisonette/flats at £77,181 (Source: Land Registry Data).
- 4.3.15 **Affordable Housing Target** - Guidance requires that the LDP include an authority wide target for affordable housing based upon the identified housing need set out within the LHMA and identify the expected contributions of the prescribed policy approaches in reaching this target. This target should be expressed as a number of homes and must relate to those to be provided through the planning system. The amount of housing to be delivered through each policy approach will also need to be identified by them via site thresholds, site specific targets and/or rural exceptions sites. However as stated above the land use planning system is not the only factor influencing this measured need and a balanced view will be required to identify an appropriate target utilising the LHMA and setting it within the context of the spatial strategy and other policy considerations and constraints for inclusion in the LDP.
- 4.3.16 Guidance provides for the identification of sites for 100% affordable housing based on criteria which reflects local circumstances and within the context of developing sustainable communities. The identification of sites for 100% affordable housing should be considered in light of constraints such as land ownership with the potential hope value for market housing which maybe attached to a prospective site. Appropriate regard should be had to the deliverability of such allocations. Public sector ownership may contribute as a resource and play an important role in the delivery of sites, be they for 100% or lower proportion schemes.
- 4.3.17 **Rural Housing** - In providing appropriate levels of residential provision, the LDP will set out how planning at the local level will contribute to meeting identified rural housing needs. Sufficient land either within or adjacent to the rural settlements should be allocated to provide for these requirements in a manner which contributes to the achievement of sustainable communities⁶. The provision of affordable housing in rural areas should also be supported by the inclusion within the LDP of a rural **exception** site policy⁷, with a definition of 'Local' included. The LDP will need to clearly express that such sites are exceptions and must be fully justified and meet these local needs in perpetuity. The LDP will set out the need for affordable housing in rural areas⁸.

⁶ *Technical Advice Note 2 : Planning and Affordable Housing (June 2006): para 10.12*

⁷ *Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement 01/2006 – Housing (June 2006): para 9.2.22*

⁸ *Technical Advice Note 2: Planning and Affordable Housing (June 2006): para 10.16*

4.3.18 **Welsh language** - The scale of any land release will be considered in the context of the Welsh language and culture. Whilst this matter is considered in greater detail as part of the paper into the Welsh Language it is important to note the potential impact of the building rate particularly in rural areas. The potential role of phasing as a means of controlling the rate of development is an important consideration in the preparation of the LDP notably where the rate may result in accelerated in-migration and harm to the language.

4.3.19 **Gypsies and Travellers** - The Local Housing Market Assessment Guide (Welsh Assembly Government) – March 2006 (Appendix F, P.156) provides the following draft definition of 'gypsies and travellers' for the purposes of an accommodation assessment process.

“Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependents’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism and/or caravan dwelling.”

4.3.20 The definition is suitably broad to allow an understanding of the accommodation needs of this community encompassing both ethnic Gypsies and Travellers and 'New Travellers'. In assessing need it should be noted that accommodation needs can also be addressed through 'bricks and mortar' housing and not just through the provision of authorised caravan sites.

5 EMPLOYMENT AND THE ECONOMY

5.1 Background

5.1.2 The pace of change in the global economy is intensifying with the increased mobility of industry and business, of investment and of people in borderless labour markets. Rapid technological change and newly industrialised economies will increase competition in the global economy against a backdrop of critical challenges presented by climate change and increasing pressure on natural resources. In responding to these challenges, the planning system is central to ensuring continued economic growth, providing jobs and investment in an environmentally sustainable way. Economic growth generates wealth and raises living standards and is driven by an increase in employment and productivity which in turn is determined by higher levels of investment, innovation, competition, skills and enterprise. Planning policy influences these drivers of productivity and facilitates economic growth and investment by providing certainty of land use, improvements in infrastructure and the enabling of wider economic objectives relating to housing, education, recreation, retail and other factors which contribute to quality of life. It aims to achieve a proper balance between economic opportunities and environmental and social issues to ensure development is sustainable in the present and for the future.

5.2 The National Perspective

5.2.1 The Welsh Assembly Government's vision is of a vibrant Welsh economy delivering strong and sustainable growth within a broader economic base that provides job opportunities for all and where greater use of modern technology seeks to redress difficulties of access and peripherality. In pursuit of the vision, the priorities are to both increase employment opportunities and raise the quality of jobs whilst reducing economic inactivity. Key actions are set out in a broad agenda to include supporting job creation, encouraging investment, developing the skills base, improving marketing together with direct investment in transport and other economic infrastructure.

5.2.2 With regard to the planning system, Planning Policy Wales requires the formulation and implementation of land use policies for industrial and other wealth-creating and employment-generating development thereby setting the broad remit of the LDP in this respect.

5.3 The Local Context

5.3.1 Historically, the economy of Carmarthenshire has been largely dependent on a narrow base of traditional employment sectors including coal extraction, metal processing, agriculture and areas of manufacturing that have in recent times been in continuing decline.

5.3.2 Although there has been some move away from traditional industry towards a modern economy and increased economic prosperity in common with other parts of Wales, the new sectors such as knowledge based, creative industries and high value manufacturing have not been well represented in the county. A key objective is to redress this imbalance by continuing to build Carmarthenshire's future employment base on innovation and change to encourage the expansion of those existing and new employment sectors with good growth prospects and to assist vulnerable sectors to adapt.

5.3.3 "Carmarthenshire ConneXions – A Strategy for Prosperity" has the aim of making Carmarthenshire "a prosperous place for all" by creating an area of high innovation and opportunity, combining a vibrant economy and a superb quality of life. Steps towards the achievement of this vision embrace a broad spectrum of positive actions and interventions.

5.4 Local Development Plan

5.4.1 The Local Development Plan sets out to support and facilitate the Strategy by ensuring that sufficient land suitable for development for employment purposes is designated to meet both identified and as yet unidentified needs. Allocated sites should be capable of being well served by infrastructure, should be highly accessible with good transport links and be appropriately located in accordance with sustainability principles. In the case of the latter, the identification of appropriate sites should clearly reflect the Spatial Strategy of the LDP insofar as it determines and defines a settlement framework or hierarchy to direct the distribution of employment opportunities throughout the county. The LDP should recognise the fact that some employment activities, including mineral extraction, are location specific and should present relevant policies to guide investment and development.

5.4.2 The LDP should also recognise that for numerous reasons, not all enterprises and employment undertakings operate from designated industrial sites and premises on estates or business parks. Existing businesses may have occupied sites in areas of mixed use in towns and villages since their initial establishment whilst new businesses, the prospective employers of the future, might seek to set up in rural villages in small local premises including home-based enterprises. LDP policies should ensure that such operations can continue without detracting from local amenity or that of neighbouring residential properties and that as far as is possible, alternative site opportunities are available within the general area for the relocation of businesses that outgrow their current premises.

5.4.3 In brief, the provisional objectives of the LDP in relation to Employment and the Economy may be summarised as

- the provision of a sufficient supply of employment land to meet anticipated requirements during the LDP period.
- the allocation of suitable sites in appropriate locations to meet land requirements in accordance with an overall Spatial Strategy for the LDP to be determined.
- the identification and selection of appropriate sites should be in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.
- the formulation of policies clearly outlining the criteria for the consideration in principle of other proposals for the development of employment and business activities.

5.4.4 In all respects, planning policies should be efficient, effective and simple. They should be capable of straightforward interpretation so as to provide greater certainty and clarity for business development.

5.5 Land Supply

5.5.1 With regard to the supply of sufficient land in the LDP, a study has recently been commenced to undertake an assessment of Carmarthenshire's economy to inform of the scale, location and type of employment land and premises that are required to facilitate and accommodate growth and development. The study will take account of those employment sectors which are strong and growing and those that are contracting together with other trends and characteristics that influence need. It will also review the current stock of employment land and premises and identify shortfalls in specific areas to meet particular business needs.

5.5.2 The outcome of the study will provide an indication of total land requirements to be provided for on appropriate sites. The general locations for the allocation of sites will be determined by the Spatial Strategy underpinning the LDP and which has yet to be formulated but it is reasonable to assume that employment opportunities will be distributed amongst established settlements on a scale broadly consistent with their relative size and importance. Other factors may influence the pattern of business development including environmental

considerations, the presence of existing business clusters and issues of connectivity with the latter being particularly pertinent to the selection of strategic sites at transport nodes. Evidently, extensions to established employment sites where feasible will feature significantly in contributing to land supply.

5.6 Employment Sites

5.6.1 The identification and selection of employment sites and premises will depend on qualifying criteria many of which will be derived from the principles of sustainable development. Preference may be afforded to sites which:-

- are located in or adjoining towns and villages minimising travel requirements and reducing the consumption of resources and production of emissions
- are on public transport corridors
- involve the reutilisation of disused land or buildings including 'brownfield' sites
- are located where infrastructure requirements can be readily met
- can be developed without unacceptable environmental impacts
- facilitate the co-location of businesses which can benefit from mutual operating advantages
- promote the establishment of sustainable local economies and communities
- do not detract from residential or general amenity

5.6.2 Selection criteria should be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the desired shift towards a more diversified manufacturing base including the high technology, creative and knowledge sectors together with policies for rural diversification and 'clean and green' enterprises directed at the regeneration of the countryside economy. Whilst other activities such as retailing, leisure and tourism contribute to the generation of employment, this section of the LDP is more concerned with sites for industry (light and general), offices, storage and distribution, high technology (research, business and science parks) and with agricultural diversification opportunities and it is acknowledged that different sectors or activities may be more appropriate to particular locations.

5.7 Employment Policies

5.7.1 The allocation of employment sites should be augmented and supported by a raft of policies to facilitate and enable the growth of business and employment and the attraction of inward investment opportunities. The LDP should endeavour to provide clear guidance for all enterprises in all situations whether they be, for example, innovative knowledge based businesses seeking to operate from converted properties or producers of traditional products in rural diversification schemes. Policies should address areas such as:-

- businesses operating from residential properties and the increasing trend towards 'homeworking'.
- farm and agricultural diversification
- the retention of employment land and its protection from competing uses such as retail or residential developments
- contingency sites for inward investment opportunities or expanding local businesses and which are not allocated in the LDP but the identification of which will be subject to criteria (including single user sites)
- extensions to existing employment premises and sites
- expanding businesses and the impact on neighbouring properties and the local environment
- rural employment undertakings situated outside towns and villages
- the conversion and change of use of buildings to employment use
- developments for other uses, particularly residential, in proximity to established employment sites and premises
- the requirements for buffer areas between industrial sites and other uses

- issues relating to the design of new business and industrial premises and the layout of estates.
- ancillary developments related to existing businesses
- ensuring an appropriate reserve of employment land
- the reutilisation of employment land and buildings and of 'brownfield' sites
- hazardous installations and potentially polluting industries
- the opportunity for mixed use developments where employment and housing can co-exist in 'live-work' schemes.

5.7.2 These policy areas are not exhaustive and it is expected that further issues will emerge through consultation and the building of the Evidence Base.

5.8 Conclusion

5.8.1 The achievement of increased employment and productivity levels to stimulate economic growth and attain the vision of an inclusive, diverse and dynamic economy for Carmarthenshire will continue to be supported by a broad range of measures and actions by the County council and its partner agencies and organisations. The LDP will contribute through positive planning policies and clear, transparent processes to increase certainty and confidence in their decision making by local businesses and prospective inward investors. Most importantly, by providing an holistic framework, it will create the right conditions for businesses to establish, grow and prosper in a sustainable manner with proper regard for environmental considerations and for local communities.

6 RETAIL AND TOWN CENTRES

6.1 Background and Objectives

6.1.1 Planning objectives in respect of shopping provision and town-centres generally may be summarised as:-

1. The availability of outlets providing essential goods and services which are readily accessible to residents preferably by a choice of means of transport.
2. The opportunity to access a wide range of other, non-essential goods and services within reasonable distances.

6.1.2 Such broad objectives recognise the general pattern of provision in a traditional hierarchy of centres ranging from the small village shop, post office and public house serving essential local needs to the larger centres providing a greater choice over a wider product range. The larger centres are the location for related activities in the leisure and entertainment sphere including cinemas, restaurants etc. and for commercial office uses including solicitors, accountants, estate agents etc.

6.1.3 In general, local provision represents goods and services required on a day-to-day basis (convenience items) and for which residents may make short journeys frequently, whilst the larger centres not only provide such facilities but also more specialised items (comparison goods) sought less frequently and for which shoppers are prepared to travel further. Traditionally, therefore, shopping provision has evolved in a hierarchy of centres with overlapping catchments reflecting their size and importance.

6.1.4 It is this pattern of retail provision which characterises Carmarthenshire with the larger centres of Carmarthen, Llanelli and Ammanford serving extensive catchment areas with a broad and specialised range of goods and items, the market towns of, for example, Newcastle Emlyn, Llandeilo and St Clears with smaller catchments meeting local needs with some specialised provision and finally the larger villages providing essential items required on a frequent basis. More recently, there has been the growth of out-of-centre shopping in the larger towns with large retail warehouses generally offering bulky goods and with appropriate parking provision, in most cases grouped together in retail parks.

6.1.5 Alongside this pattern of shopping provision, there are outlets associated with petrol stations and farm shops together with the increasing significance of Internet shopping.

6.2 The National Perspective

6.2.1 Welsh Assembly Government objectives for retailing and town centres are to

- a) secure accessible, efficient, competitive and innovative retail provision for all the communities of Wales, in both urban and rural areas;
- b) promote established town, district, local and village centres as the most appropriate locations for retailing, leisure and for other functions complementary to it;
- c) enhance the vitality, attractiveness and viability of town, district, local and village centres; and to
- d) promote access to these centres by public transport, walking and cycling.

6.3 The Local Context

6.3.1 The objectives presented by WAG were taken full account of in the formulation of a retail strategy in the UDP and in the development of its policies and proposals.

6.3.2 The retail strategy of the UDP reflects the social, economic and environmental principles of sustainable development which underpins the plan. The strategy seeks to –

- a) Protect and enhance the roles of the principal centres of Carmarthen, Llanelli and Ammanford/Crosshands in serving wide catchment areas for comparison shopping (clothing, footwear, electrical etc.) and specialised items to ensure their continued attractiveness as shopping destinations and maintain their competitiveness and market share in relation to other centres including Swansea and Cardiff.
- b) In other, smaller centres, ensure that local communities have reasonable access to a satisfactory range of high street facilities and services particularly convenience goods (food and other essential day-to-day requirements).
- c) In the larger villages, maintain the viability of the village shop and other local facilities.

6.4 UDP Retail Strategy

6.4.1 A key feature of the UDP strategy is to ensure the location of available convenience floorspace in smaller stores in selected secondary centres close to the localised sources of growth in consumer expenditure. The intention is for modern food outlets to be more accessible to a greater proportion of the County's population particularly in the rural communities. It is in accord with a sustainable Spatial Strategy which seeks to provide the circumstances for communities to become more autonomous and self-supporting in the provision of facilities thereby enhancing social inclusion and reducing the need to travel with its attendant environmental benefits. The provision of modern food outlets of an appropriate scale in secondary centres will have no greater impact on local village shops than at present since residents currently travel for their main food shopping to the larger centres, or in some instances to stores outside the county. Furthermore, this would not be detrimental to the attractiveness and competitiveness of the larger towns as important retail centres since it is considered that the food sector is only part of their role as shopping destinations. Such an approach also leaves the option of improvements in convenience businesses in these towns to serve their own localised catchments.

6.4.2 In delivering the retail strategy, it cannot be viewed in isolation and divorced from other policies in the UDP. The attractiveness of town centres is not solely dependent on the retail facilities on offer but includes other factors such as the quality of the environment, public transport, pedestrianisation and car parking. More fundamentally, the distribution of housing and population growth to consolidate local sustainable communities and economics can ensure the continued viability of village shops and facilities enhancing social inclusion and reducing the need to travel. The latter objective is also met in the market towns by the aforementioned strategy of restricting the concentration of convenience provision in the large centres which would otherwise draw in expenditure from the rural areas and deprive them of the opportunity for the provision of appropriately sized food-stores. It should be emphasised that such a strategy for distributing floorspace to selected secondary centres would apply only to convenience businesses and that in compliance with the sustainable settlement framework, the larger towns would remain the main focus for investment and development in the comparison sector. However, comparison provision of an appropriate scale in suitable locations would continue to be a feature of the secondary centres and smaller settlements.

6.5 Retail Parks

6.5.1 Town Centres are not always capable of accommodating particular types of retailing such as bulky goods owing to the requirements for large sites and buildings and the implications for traffic generation and parking. As a consequence, such outlets have been permitted in out of centre locations in accordance with national guidance, either in the form of individual units or collectively on retail parks.

6.5.2 The definition of bulky goods is becoming progressively blurred with retailers in clothing, footwear, sportswear etc., increasingly operating from large retail warehouses. Such outlets compete more directly with high street shops than those trading in established bulky items and may therefore have a greater adverse effect on the viability and vitality of town centres.

In view of the increasing pressures for such outlets, UDP policies address the issues of designating retail parks with the status of district centres, and define the criteria to be applied to prospective developments. The identification of retail parks and their designation as district centres promote the co-location of appropriate retail facilities and reduce the proliferation of separate retail destinations within the County. Such a strategy is more sustainable in transport terms, and will allow retail businesses to benefit from the collective attraction of co-location.

6.6 Town Centres

- 6.6.1 Although retailing should continue as the principal activity in town centres, it is only one of the factors which contribute to their well-being. It is evident that retail policies cannot be divorced from the broader functions of the larger towns as centres for other services and facilities, including food and drink establishments (cafes, restaurants, public houses, etc.), and commercial leisure developments. A diversity of uses in town centres assists in promoting their continued viability and, particularly with regard to leisure uses, contributes to the vitality of a successful evening economy. Diverse uses are especially relevant as town centres become the focus for what is termed the “leisure shopping” experience or “family shopping” activity.
- 6.6.2 Similarly, other factors are increasingly contributing to the attractiveness of town centres and the choice of shopping destinations and therefore their competitiveness. Environmental quality, public transport, pedestrianisation and car-parking combine with the range and choice of shopping facilities to determine a centre’s attractiveness. Environmental quality should not merely relate to the maintenance of the physical fabric but should embrace culture and heritage to create a sense of place which assists in maximising tourism and visitor potential.
- 6.6.3 The recognition that successful town centres depend on a host of interrelated activities, facilities and services to maintain and enhance their attractiveness and competitiveness requires an holistic approach to their continued planning and development. This can be achieved through the preparation of town centre strategies which will be produced as supplementary planning guidance to the main provisions of the development plan.

6.7 Diversity of Uses

- 6.7.1 Whilst the diversity of town centres contributes to their attraction, it is important to ensure that their overall retail character is retained. Over-concentration of non-retail uses within town centres can fragment the continuity of retail frontages, and lead to an erosion and dilution of retail character reducing the attractiveness of certain streets for shopping purposes. UDP policies therefore seek to strike a balance between protecting the overall retail character of town centres and providing a diversity of uses. In so doing, it is recognised that the character and identity of town centres are accentuated by the presence of independent traders operating from the more peripheral streets and in locations which are most susceptible to competition. Diversification enables other beneficial, economic uses to complement the retailing presence and to maintain the physical fabric and appearance of streets and buildings which may otherwise be susceptible to decline.
- 6.7.2 Town centre policies in the larger towns seek to achieve diversity whilst maintaining an appropriate balance of uses, through the definition of Retail Cores, Other Retail Frontages, Commercial Frontages and otherwise Undefined Areas. In the Retail Cores which represent the primary shopping areas, the policies aim to retain their shopping predominance although changes of existing non-shop premises to other uses appropriate to town centres will not be resisted, subject to the overall retail character being maintained. In the areas defined as Other Retail Frontages, the introduction of non-shopping uses is permissible subject to limits on the number of consecutive properties involved. There may be exceptions to these limits where the frontage of a particular unit is extensive. This policy also applies to the defined

town centres in the Secondary Settlements. Commercial Frontages allow for a mix of uses appropriate to town centres with no restriction as to the numbers of non-shop units whilst in the Undefined Areas, town centre uses which do not require display windows or prominent advertisements are considered appropriate.

6.8 Policy Areas & Issues

6.8.1 The objectives and policies presented in national guidance have not changed since the preparation of the Unitary Development Plan and therefore remain relevant to the Local Development Plan.

6.8.2 Developments which have received approval or been completed since the preparation of the UDP have been broadly compliant with its strategy and have been in accordance with the Retail Study undertaken to inform the UDP. However, the latter requires updating particularly in quantitative terms to reflect recent developments and to revise floor-space projections. The underlying assumptions based on shopper behaviour and shopping patterns will be revisited. It is important to note that the provision of shopping facilities, commercial leisure, and other such town centre uses are a private sector activity and the role of the planning system is to create the conditions and opportunities for appropriate development or investment in acceptable locations. In the larger centres this may be facilitated by the identification of particular sites for development/redevelopment and the confidence derived from such action by developers/investors. In the villages and smaller centres the provision or continued viability of local shops and services takes support from policies to direct housing opportunities to such locations.

6.8.3 In addition to the foregoing and in the light of a review of the Retail Study that informed the UDP, the LDP should address the following issues:-

- the growth in retail expenditure during the LDP term and the additional floorspace requirements in both the convenience and comparison sectors
- the formulation of a retail strategy closely aligned to the LDP's overarching Spatial Strategy to consider the distribution of additional floorspace in new shopping opportunities throughout the county in accordance with sustainable development principles
- a 'health check' of town centres to include an assessment of vacancy rates, retailer representation, diversity of uses etc. to inform a review of town centre policies as presented in the UDP and to consider any necessary revisions
- criteria policies for the assessment of convenience stores, large-scale foodstores and major non-food retail proposals
- site specific development opportunities that could be identified for additional retail provision
- local shops in the outskirts of larger towns and in the smaller towns and villages
- the potential for developments in other related sectors such as commercial leisure and food and drink establishments that could strengthen the diversity of centres
- the beneficial economic use of upper floors in town centres
- policies for farm shops in connection with diversification schemes and for craft retailing on farms or in rural areas generally
- shopping provision in association with petrol filling stations
- design matters in respect of shop fronts and the avoidance of the 'clone' town syndrome to retain and create unique environments with a sense of place
- take-away food outlets including 'drive thru's'

6.8.4 These policy issues are not exhaustive and it is expected that further issues will emerge through consultation and the development of the Evidence base.

6.9 **Conclusion**

- 6.9.1 The LDP retail strategy and supporting policies should seek to ensure the provision of appropriate facilities in accessible locations throughout the county in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. In so doing, the LDP should also support and promote the larger retail centres as attractive shopping destinations and retain their competitiveness in relation to other centres outside the county.

7. TRANSPORT

7.1 Context

7.1.2 National/Regional Context

7.1.3 **Planning Policy Wales (March 2002)** (PPW) and **Technical Advice Note 18: Transport** (March 2007) (TAN18) sets out the national policy context in respect of transport within Wales. PPW seeks to secure accessibility in a manner which supports sustainable development through an integrated transport system. A key component of which is integration between transport measures and land use planning, with the alignment of the contributory strategies and documents, including the Regional Transport Plan (RTP) and the LDP important to the delivery of strategic and local objectives.

7.1.4 The Transport (Wales) Act 2006 makes provision for the preparation of a RTP as replacements for the existing Local Transport Plans (LTP). With the South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium (SWWITCH) founded as the regional consortia for this area. The key themes and priorities for the area are contained within the **Outline Regional Transport Plan** (January 2007) which intern emphasises the relationship and interaction between the RTP and the emerging LDP. The emphasis placed upon achieving sustainable accessibility, developing internal and external linkages and maximising economic benefit and promoting connectivity within the **Wales Spatial Plan** (WSP) update are important themes, with the co-ordinated approach between the WSP, RTP and the LDP important in the delivery of the desired transport strategy.

7.2 Local Context

7.2.1 The adopted **Unitary Development Plan** (UDP) for Carmarthenshire incorporates a policy framework which reflects the above policy context. It recognises the contribution of land use planning in delivering an integrated transport system by influencing the location of development and reducing the number of journeys by private car, and also by encouraging a move towards more sustainable forms of transport such as public transport, cycling and walking.

7.2.2 The **Carmarthenshire's Local Transport Plan 2001 – 2006** contains a number of overarching objectives including: the promotion of integration of all forms of transport and land use planning, for a more efficient transport system; promotion of accessibility to everyday facilities; and, support sustainable economic growth in appropriate locations.

7.3 Local Background

7.3.1 **Highway Infrastructure** – The highway network within the plan area includes the A48 trunk road leading to the M4 and its connections through south east Wales and beyond. The A40/A477/A48 trunk roads with their connections west provide links to the Irish ferry ports, which through the M4 forms part of the Trans European Network. The A40/A483 trunk roads offer links through the county to mid and north Wales and to the midlands and north of England. The County is also served by a number of A road as well as numerous B classified roads each representing important components of the highway network.

7.3.2 **Rail Links** – The County is served by the West Wales railway line and the Heart of Wales line. The West Wales line has branches from Pembrokeshire which converge at Whitland and extend via Carmarthen and Llanelli to Swansea where they connect to the wider rail network. The Heart of Wales line extends from Swansea to Shrewsbury and includes stops at Llanelli, Ammanford, Llandeilo, and Llandovery.

7.3.3 **Public Transport** – The area is generally well served by public transport though the bus network albeit with the level and frequency of service subject to variation dependent upon location and destination. In addition a number of services operate on a "Hail-&-Ride" basis in rural areas. The development of a spatial strategy (see the Spatial Strategy aspect of this paper) will consider the respective accessibility of settlements. There are also a number of services provided via the passenger rail service which provides an invaluable resource.

7.3.4 **Cycle Network** - The cycle network within Carmarthenshire is well served with access to National Routes 4 and 47. National Route 4 runs from London to St David's on the west coast of Wales, whilst National Route 47 starts at Newport passing through Carmarthen before finishing at Fishguard.

7.4 Objectives

Emerging objectives/priority areas in respect of transport for the LDP include:

- To participate in, and develop a sustainable integrated transportation framework, with accessibility to, and encouragement of, the use of sustainable modes of transport.
- Contribute to the creation of more sustainable patterns of development, reducing and minimising the harmful affects of transport;
- Promote improvements to the highway, public transport, footpath and cycle networks to facilitate not only economic diversity but to encourage social inclusion and the range and choice of transport options available to communities.

7.5 Issues

7.5.1 **Strategic Integration** - The need to work closely with our strategic partners and have regard to related strategies is paramount to achieving accessibility to jobs and services, and in achieving a sustainable and accessible transport system.

7.5.2 **Improving Accessibility** - Whilst the percentage of households with access to a motor vehicle has risen consistently to 80.7% in 2003 (Source: WAG Statistics), those with lack of access are denied the potential mobility afforded to car owners. A key aspect of the LDP and any integrated planning and transport system should be to ensure that this disparity does not compound the effects of social exclusion. In this regard the accessibility of different forms of transport are essential in ensuring that social exclusion is minimised and where possible avoided. It should also be recognised that as car ownership increases the potential negative impacts such as pedestrian versus car conflict, pollution and car parking requirements will become an increasingly prominent issue.

7.5.3 **Settlement Pattern and Site Selection** - The proximity of, and access to transport nodes and corridors will be important considerations in the development of a settlement hierarchy for the LDP (see relevant paper), in addition the availability of the public transport infrastructure will emerge as valuable consideration in the site selection process. Through controlling the location of new development, land use planning may influence and potentially reduce the need for the use of the private car and facilitate opportunities for the use of other modes of transport including public transport, walking and cycling.

7.5.4 **Cycling and Walking** - Cycling and walking can play a significant contributory role in reducing dependency on the private car, with routes often tagged as being recreational, such as footpaths and cycle ways, representing a valuable resource. The development of safe cycle and pedestrian routes could also provide alternatives to the car. There is a need for new developments to be located where there is good access for walkers and cyclists and for such routes to be improved. Consideration of the needs of walkers, horse riders and cyclists should be reflected in all planning decisions and negotiations⁹.

⁹ *Walking and Cycling Strategy for Wales, Welsh Assembly Government (December 2003): Section 2.6*

7.5.5 The promotion, improvement and maintenance of the County's cycle, footpath and bridleway network are important factors in the promotion of alternative transport modes. The further creation of facilities and safe cycle and walking networks would offer benefits from a recreational and alternative travel perspective.

8 The Historic And Natural Environment

8.1 Context

8.1.2 National/Regional Context

8.1.3 **Historic Environment** - The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) objectives in respect of the protection of the historic environment – encompassing archaeology and ancient monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas and historic parks, gardens and landscapes are set out in **Planning Policy Wales (PPW)**. Regard should be had to WAG's objectives in the formulation of its planning policies¹⁰, be they:

- the preservation and enhancement of the historic environment;
- the protection of archaeological remains;
- safeguarding the character of historic building; or the
- enhancement and protection of conservation areas.

8.1.4 **Natural Environment** - WAG objectives in respect of the conservation and improvement of the natural environment/heritage are to:

- promote the conservation of landscape and biodiversity, in particular the conservation of native wildlife and habitats;
- safeguard protected species;
- ensure that statutorily protected sites are properly protected and managed; and to
- ensure that action in Wales contributes to meeting its international responsibilities and obligations.

8.1.5 The above guidance is supplemented and elaborated upon through the publication of Technical Advice Notes and Ministerial Policy Statements. Regard will also to be had to the requirements of relevant EC Directives and the current and emerging legislative framework in respect of the natural and built environment and the content of the Wales Spatial Plan.

8.1.6 Local Context

8.1.7 The adopted **Carmarthenshire Unitary Development Plan (2006)** incorporates a policy framework which reflects current guidance and legislation in providing for the protection and enhancement of those natural and man made elements within the county, acknowledging how they interact and contribute to the landscape and biodiversity quality of the plan area.

8.1.8 The **Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)** for Carmarthenshire sets out the species and habitats considered to be of national, regional and local importance. In accordance with national guidance, the LBAP aims to conserve and enhance biodiversity in Carmarthenshire through local partnerships, taking account of both national and local priorities.

8.1.9 Local Background

8.1.10 The County is home to outstanding landscapes that include upland areas, river valleys and coastal belts with nationally renowned beaches, ecological and environmental assets and a rich and varied historic built and post-industrial heritage. This has resulted in an area with numerous designations of International and National importance for nature conservation which include:

7 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	2 Special Protection Areas (SPA)
1 RAMSAR site	4 National Nature Reserves (1 Pending)
103 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	

¹⁰ *Planning Policy Wales (2002): para 6.1.1*

8.1.11 The special and often diverse character of the plan area, with its unspoilt countryside, industrial heritage and wealth of historic towns and villages is reflective of the history and cultural diversity of the County. The 27 designated Conservation Areas and a wealth of listed buildings and structures are testimony to the historic qualities of the County's built environment.

8.1.12 Dyfed Archaeological Trust holds the records of all identified archaeological remains, however less than approximately 5% are statutorily protected as Scheduled Ancient Monuments with numerous undesignated nationally important sites as well as a number of sites of regional and local importance.

8.2 Objectives

8.2.1 The emerging objectives/priority areas in respect of the environment for the LDP include:

- Protecting and enhancing the historic environment, its features, buildings, remains and character.
- Protecting and enhancing the natural environment, landscape and biodiversity interests.
- Safeguarding statutorily designated sites, habitats and species.
- Promoting a sustainable use of resources and encourage an integrated approach to nature conservation and biodiversity.
- Improving on the environmental performance and contribution of new developments.
- Developing a coordinated approach to coastal issues and site selection.

8.3 Issues

8.3.1 **Reconciling Conflict** - Creating and supporting a dynamic economy and communities whilst recognising and protecting the area's natural landscape and historic heritage is an important challenge in the preparation of the LDP. The need to sustain communities, their economies and to provide for future growth, are pressures which should be reconciled in a manner that conserves and enhances the distinctiveness of the county's natural and built environment.

8.3.2 The protection of the countryside for its own sake is a key principle in the preparation of the LDP. There is a need to focus development in an appropriate manner consistent with the sustainable principles which respects the local diversity and qualities of the area. Reference should be made to the spatial strategy aspect of this paper.

8.3.3 **Distinctiveness** – The qualities displayed within the county, be they the highly valued landscapes or historic remains, represent important elements which contribute to the distinctiveness of the area. The need to respect, enhance and protect this heritage represents an important issue which any strategy for the LDP will be required to reflect and respect. Ensuring the high landscape, biodiversity, natural, historic and built conservation qualities within the plan area are not only maintained but also protected and enhanced is an important aspect of plan preparation.

8.3.4 **Biodiversity** – The LBAP represents an important resource in safeguarding the areas diversity of habitats and species, and highlights the high representation within the plan area of priority habitats and species recognised within the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. The potential for the incorporation of a policy framework to provide for the interaction of biodiversity and development proposals, both within the broader area but also on a site-specific basis, could be explored. This would encourage the integration of biodiversity into development (incl. habitat creation) and could facilitate habitat creation as part of any development proposals.

8.3.5 **Sustainable Design** - The incorporation of concepts such as green roofs, with benefits in terms of biodiversity, water run off management and energy efficiency gains are options for

inclusion as part of any policy framework, as indeed could the greening of buildings and utilisation of renewable energy sources. The integration of green corridors or “stepping stones” can contribute to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity¹¹.

8.3.6 Landscape Protection – The protection the County’s high quality landscapes have long been viewed as important considerations, with previous development plans identifying Special Landscape Areas (SLA). However, the information available to the Council in respect of its landscape has been augmented through participation in the Landmap process. As a mapping tool Landmap allows the identification a range of character areas which includes aspects relating to landscape quality, and represents a consistent and quality assured assessment tool. The designation of SLAs allows for the protection and enhancement of the areas character, appearance and landscape quality. The use of Landmap data would ensure that any future designation is soundly based on an appraisal of the five aspects identified within LANDMAP:

- geological landscape,
- historic Landscape,
- biodiversity,
- culture landscape, and
- visual and sensory landscape.

¹¹ WLGA – “*Shaping the way we Work, Live and play*”

9 TOURISM

9.1 National Context

9.1.1 National Policy Guidance for Tourism is provided by the Welsh Assembly Government in the form of *Planning Policy Wales*, supplemented by *Technical Advice Note (TAN) 13 Tourism* (Draft Revised, 2006). Further strategic guidance has been produced by the Wales Tourist Board (WTB) and is contained within *Achieving Our Potential: A Tourism Strategy for Wales*.

9.2 Regional Context

9.2.1 There are four regional tourism strategies in Wales, prepared within the framework of the Wales Spatial Plan. Carmarthenshire is located within the region covered by the Tourism Strategy for South West Wales. Entitled 'Open All Year' the Strategy was drawn up by the South West Wales Tourism Partnership (SWWTP), of which Carmarthenshire County Council is a partner.

9.3 Local Context

9.3.1 The planning policies relating to tourism development in the County are set out in the Carmarthenshire Unitary Development Plan (2006), whilst the Authority's strategic goals in respect of tourism are set out in 'The Tourism Vision for Carmarthenshire 2005-2015'

9.4 Key Objectives

9.4.1 The local development plan process has direct relevance to tourism. The aim of Carmarthenshire County Council in respect of its tourism policies and proposals is to:

- ensure the provision of tourism facilities at appropriate locations – in accordance with the sustainable spatial strategy for the County, thereby assisting in stimulating and diversifying the local economy and generating new employment opportunities;
- improvement/enhancement of existing facilities where necessary;
- minimise any potential conflicts with other land-uses;
- pay due regard to national, regional and local strategies in respect of tourism (see "Links with other strategies ...", below)

9.5 Issues

9.5.1 The Carmarthenshire Unitary Development Plan, which was adopted in July 2006, is largely up to date in terms of its planning policies and therefore, in conjunction with current national guidance, provides a useful starting point from which to begin the discussion of issues in respect of the LDP.

9.5.2 Ensure that sufficient land is allocated for tourism

9.5.3 TAN 13 stresses that during preparation of its LDP, local planning authorities should appraise the current scale, nature and location of tourist developments in their county and determine the extent to which these reflect the existing and anticipated future levels of demand.

9.5.4 In carrying out this exercise the Local Planning Authority will liaise with the Tourism Division of the Council to discuss the issues, and to ascertain the availability of required data.

- 9.5.5 In the event that the appraisal points to a possible mismatch between the supply of and demand for facilities then the LDP should make adequate provision for additional land which could be released for future tourism related development. The issue of whether additional allocations need to be identified or whether criteria-based policies should be used to provide a framework needs to be considered.
- 9.5.6 **Protection and enhancement of existing tourist facilities**
- 9.5.7 TAN 13 states that as part of the LDP process the LPA should identify those facilities which should be retained and protected from proposals for redevelopment for other purposes. The importance of safeguarding existing tourist facilities and ensuring future enhancement should be set out in LDP policies.
- 9.5.8 The Local Planning Authority will consult with the relevant Divisions within the Council, such as Tourism, and Economic Development to discuss the issues.
- 9.5.9 **Minimise conflicts with other land uses**
- 9.5.10 Any tourism related development that would result in significant adverse impacts upon the environment or the amenity and character of an area should not be granted planning permission. The Carmarthenshire UDP contains policies which incorporate specific criteria that tourist development proposals would need to satisfy to ensure that no harm would result to the environment. This could form the basis of discussion in respect of this issue.
- 9.5.11 **Environmental enhancement**
- 9.5.12 The Welsh Assembly Government encourages the development of tourist facilities on previously developed land as a means by which the natural heritage might be protected and enhanced and underused land might be brought back into beneficial use. The Carmarthenshire UDP Policy GDC34 relates to previously developed land. Although this policy does not specifically relate to tourism proposals, its contents could nevertheless form part of the discussion on this topic.
- 9.5.13 **Economic development and diversification**
- 9.5.14 The Welsh Assembly Government recognises the important contribution that tourism can make to the local economy. In urban areas, this might be achieved through mixed-use development, whilst in rural areas it may include the diversification of farms for tourism development. These issues can be investigated during LDP preparation.
- 9.5.15 **Tourism and the Welsh Language**
- 9.5.16 Tourism can be economically beneficial to communities in Wales, but the identity of these local communities should be safeguarded in the promotion of tourism. Communities should have the opportunity to gain maximum benefit from tourism, and tourism itself should be utilised as a means by which awareness and appreciation of the Welsh language and culture can be promoted. This topic should be read in conjunction with the discussion paper on the Welsh Language and Culture.
- 9.5.17 **Sustainable transport modes**
- 9.5.18 National planning guidance stresses that careful regard should be given by local planning authorities to the need to provide for tourism in locations which can be accessed by public transport, cycling and walking.
- 9.5.19 The Carmarthenshire UDP contains a similar requirement in respect of its general policy on proposals for tourism developments (TRS1). This policy employs a sequential approach by

setting out appraisal criteria that reflect the character of the area and appropriateness in terms of size, scale and impact of the proposal. A similar approach could form the basis of discussion for this topic during LDP preparation.

9.5.20 Links with other strategies and issues papers

- 9.5.21 In preparing the LDP, due regard must be made to related strategies at the national, regional and local level. 'Achieving our Potential' the Wales Tourist Board's Tourism Strategy for Wales places a great deal of emphasis upon the development of a coordinated approach within the tourist industry through the development of working partnerships.
- 9.5.22 Carmarthenshire County Council is a key partner in the South West Wales Tourism Partnership (SWWTP) which has produced the SWW Regional Tourism Strategy, 'Open All Year'. Partnership working is seen as central to successful implementation of the Strategy's objectives.
- 9.5.23 At the local level, Carmarthenshire's own tourism agenda is set out in 'The Tourism Vision for Carmarthenshire 2005-2015'. One of its primary aims is to make the County a stronghold for Welsh culture. It is important that the LDP and the Tourism Vision share the same focus. One of Carmarthenshire's strengths in terms of tourism is its rich historical and cultural heritage – from its castles and archaeological sites to the distinctiveness of its market towns such as Carmarthen and Llandeilo. Such aspects require protection and enhancement in terms of planning and promotion in terms of tourism.
- 9.5.24 Similarly, there are links with the Environment discussion paper as another of Carmarthenshire's strengths in terms of tourism lies in its scenic qualities – the natural resource of coastline, hills and forests that draws people to the County to engage in a variety of activities. Sometimes these pursuits are large scale and could have beneficial effects on the local economy (e.g. the ongoing developments in Brechfa Forest, and might require individual considerations in terms of planning.
- 9.5.25 Finally, this Paper should be read in conjunction with the discussion paper on Recreation, as tourism often involves recreational activities such as walking and cycling which improves health and well-being – a key factor in sustainable living promoted by the Welsh Assembly Government in many of its key strategies.

10. Recreation

10.1 National Context

- 10.1.1 National planning guidance in respect of recreational issues is mainly contained within Draft Revised Technical Advice Note (TAN) 16: 'Sport, Recreation and Open Space' and Planning Policy Wales (PPW), with further strategic guidance provided by the National Playing Fields Association and the Sports Council for Wales.
- 10.1.2 The Welsh Assembly Government's long-term strategy for sport and physical activity is entitled *Climbing Higher*. Amongst the Strategy's main aims is the need to increase the amount of physical activity to improve people's health and well-being
- 10.1.3 Further related documents include the *Wales Spatial Plan, Wales: A Better Country* and the *Environment Strategy for Wales*.

10.2 Local Context

- 10.2.1 The land use planning issues relating to recreation in the County are set out in the Carmarthenshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The UDP was adopted in 2006 and the policies are up to date and in accordance with national guidance at the time. The Authority's agenda in terms of recreation is largely addressed in the Community Strategy and the Carmarthenshire Leisure Vision (2006-2011).

10.3 Key Objectives

- 10.3.1 The aim of Carmarthenshire County Council in respect of its recreation policies is to ensure that existing recreational facilities/areas (including open space) are maintained/improved to an acceptable standard, and that provision is made for new facilities/areas, subject to demand, location and resources. It must be emphasised that the provision of an adequate network of recreational facilities will contribute to the Assembly Government's sustainability targets of achieving social inclusion and improving people's health and well-being.

10.4 Issues

10.4.1 Open space assessment

- 10.4.2 PPW requires that the planning system must ensure that adequate land and water resources are allocated for formal (e.g. sports fields) and informal (e.g. public footpaths) sport and recreation and that local authorities should provide the framework for well located sport, recreation and leisure facilities. TAN 16 sets out that these objectives can be achieved by undertaking an open space assessment detailing existing provision and future need, and which should be carried out as a joint exercise by the relevant sections within an authority.
- 10.4.3 The open space assessment could then inform the LDP process. However, where an open space assessment has not yet been completed the LDP should be prepared by using reliable information which is already to hand.
- 10.4.4 The Local Planning Authority (LPA) will liaise with the relevant sections of the Authority in respect of the availability of data and the carrying out of an open space assessment.

10.4.5 **Co-ordinated approach in working with partners and relevant bodies**

10.4.6 In addition to establishing a coordinated approach within the Local Authority in respect of an open space assessment, the LPA will also consult with other bodies that can assist in the formulation of standards of provision.

10.4.7 The National Playing Fields Association's (NPFA), the Sports Council for Wales (SCW) and the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) will be consulted in respect of providing up to date advice on aspects of planning for sport and recreation which would prove useful in the evidence gathering stage of the LDP.

10.4.8 **Protecting and enhancing existing sport, recreation and open space facilities**

10.4.9 The LDP needs to identify areas of recreational and open space value that require protection. In liaising with other relevant sections within the Council the LPA will be in a position to identify which areas need protecting and set this out in the LDP accordingly. The following paragraphs identify particular types of facilities that would need to be considered:

10.4.10 *Playing Fields*

The most appropriate ways of retaining and enhancing existing playing fields should be investigated.

10.4.11 *Allotments*

The UDP contains a specific policy protecting this important category of green space, which could form the basis for discussion on this topic.

10.4.12 *Water Based Recreation*

The Environment Agency have produced a specific document entitled 'Catching the wave: Water Sports Strategy' which could assist in the process. The EA will be consulted as part of the LDP process. Marina provision is also an issue to be considered.

10.4.13 **Planning for new open space and recreational facilities**

10.4.14 The LDP should make provisions for new forms of open space and recreational areas, based upon an open space assessment if one has been prepared. Particular issues that could be addressed in the LDP when considering provision include:

- accordance with sustainable spatial strategy for the County;
- the inability of many disadvantaged groups to travel far from their local areas;
- redevelopment of previously used land;
- multiple use of open spaces and facilities, particularly school facilities;
- open space provision at new major residential and mixed-use allocations.

10.4.15 *Major sport and recreation facilities*

TAN 16 stresses that where possible, major sport and recreation facilities like rugby, football and athletics stadia should be located in, or adjacent to, town centres. However, major recreational facilities can have different forms which sometimes require more rural locations; Country Parks and Forest Parks are examples. There is overlap here with tourism as recreational activities associated with such facilities can attract people from all over the County as well as from further afield. Brechfa Forest is the prime example, and there is a need to discuss the requirements of large scale recreational developments such as these. Whilst contributing social and economic benefits to the County, the possible environmental impacts of such developments would have to be kept to a minimum.

- 10.4.16 *Off-road recreational vehicles*
The merits of providing facilities for regulated practise and racing should be investigated during preparation of the LDP. Segregation from neighbouring land uses would be a key issue.
- 10.4.17 *Golf Courses and driving ranges*
Golf courses often double up as popular tourist attractions as well as important recreational facilities. TAN 16 states that LDPs should identify suitable locations for golf courses and advises that out of town locations may be appropriate, as is the creative use of brownfield sites in accessible locations.
- 10.4.18 *Cemeteries and Churchyards*
Cemeteries and churchyards can provide additional forms of greenspace that have an amenity value to the communities in the locality. Demographic information will provide the necessary information from which to forecast future need and allocate accordingly.
- 10.4.19 *Rights of way and accessibility of sport and recreational facilities*
The rights of way network across the County provides an important recreational resource. The LDP should identify the potential for extending and enhancing recreational routes for walking, cycling and horse riding. Appropriate consultation will be made with the Rights of Way Team as well as the staff involved with development of the National Cycle Network within the County.
- 10.4.20 The LDP should make sure that sport and recreational facilities and open spaces are highly accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. Where this is not possible, consideration should be given to adequate parking for sport and recreation users.

11 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

11.1 Background

11.1.1 Community facilities play an important role in creating and achieving sustainable settlements. Community facilities can be defined as uses and services that provide support to communities and can be operated by public services, other agencies or the private sector.

11.1.2 Ensuring the provision and retention of community facilities, close to where people live can assist in creating a sustainable pattern of development. The location of community facilities in appropriate locations can contribute towards a reduction of car use while at the same time encourage a sense of community in the area. The provision of such facilities is also an important concept of sustainable social inclusion.

11.2 The Local Context

11.2.1 The rural and urban settlements of the County require varied facilities dependent upon their size and location. In the County's rural areas, communities are sustained by facilities such as village halls, schools and post offices, which can bring about a sense of community and promote social inclusion. A number of rural areas in recent years have seen a loss of such facilities, in particular post offices and local shops. Whilst urban areas need access to similar facilities, policies relating to urban areas must cater for the provision of new locally focused facilities in an attempt to discourage the centralisation of facilities which create problems for certain members of the community (e.g. the elderly accessing centralised health facilities).

11.3 Local Development Plan

11.3.1 Sustainable development and communities must lie at the heart of the LDP. The provision of new, and the safeguarding of existing community facilities must be a key objective for the LDP. The location of new housing in the LDP, in line with the spatial strategy to be developed should operate to ensure the continued support and viability of facilities. The ambition to create sustainable communities will ensure that facilities, including schools are supported. The location of new development, in particular housing should recognise the availability of facilities and services including stop and call services (for example postal deliveries, medical services) and is more easily provided in established settlements.

11.3.2 The adopted UDP provides a solid foundation for LDP policy formulation. Additional factors that require consideration in the development of the policies ultimately centre around safeguarding existing facilities and the provision of new facilities.

11.3.3 The overall settlement strategy adopted for the LDP will be key in the approach taken towards the provision and protection of community facilities. The settlement strategy will ultimately determine where community facilities are provided in general terms. The settlement strategy adopted in the UDP which focuses development in growth, secondary and tertiary areas, and then to village clusters automatically channels investments in improved and new community facilities to those settlements. Any settlement pattern put forward will have to consider the effect on community facilities.

11.3.4 Facilities such as post offices, convenience food shops and other essential village services can play a vital role in the community. Policies within the LDP can aim to protect these facilities from closure, particularly through the promotion of new

housing development in villages. Existing policies in the UDP do not seek to retain such facilities in settlements, however it should be noted that the extent to which planning policies can protect such facilities is mainly influenced by market forces, not planning policies. Appropriate policies will however help the relevant agencies to programme for the provision of services.

- 11.3.5 Community facilities are one area where contributions from developers can be sought as a planning obligation. In terms of current UDP policy, policy GDC33 enables negotiations to take place where they may be used to offset negative consequences of the development, to help meet local needs or to secure benefits which will make the development more sustainable. The policy allows for the type of contribution to be negotiated dependent upon the need to the community.
- 11.3.6 Social, leisure and cultural facility availability varies throughout the County, with most facilities lying in the urban areas. Information is lacking in terms of identifying the need for facilities. Criterion policies currently exist in instances when planning applications are sought for such developments, it may be appropriate, if the information is available for the LDP to determine the need for facilities and identify suitable sites.

12 THE WELSH LANGUAGE

12.1 Background

12.1.1 The Welsh language has equal status in the government of Wales and the planning system itself seeks to support and foster the Welsh language and culture, while avoiding discrimination on the grounds of linguistic ability. The future well-being of the language in Wales will depend on a wide variety of factors relating to education, demography, community changes and community capacity, housing access, and a sound economic base, factors that the planning system can influence. The aim of this document is to set out the background to the consideration currently given to the Welsh language and planning nationally and locally in order to identify options, issues and objectives to consider during the production of the Local Development Plan for Carmarthenshire.

12.2 The Local Context

12.2.1 The Welsh language in Carmarthenshire plays an important role in the social, cultural and economic life of its residents and visitors. Carmarthenshire has the highest number of Welsh speakers across Wales. The protection and promotion of the language is an important policy objective of the UDP. In terms of the use of the Welsh language within the County, the number of people using the language in recent years is increasing. In 1991, the percentage of people who could speak, read and write Welsh was 37%, in the 2001 census it stood at 39%. A larger rise was seen in the percentage that possessed one or more skills in the Welsh language (skills being defined as having one or more of the following, understanding spoken Welsh, speaking, reading or writing Welsh). In 1991 this accounted for 55% of the population of Carmarthenshire and in 2001 it rose to 64%. An increase in the language's use has been seen among young people, particularly between the ages of five and fifteen.

12.2.2 On a local level, the number of persons using the language differs from area to area. In the Quarter Bach electoral ward, 74.9% of the residents speak Welsh, whereas in the Laugharne Township electoral ward 23.8% of the residents speak Welsh.

12.3 Local Development Plan

12.3.1 It is essential that the LDP secures the well-being of the Welsh language in the County by protecting and promoting the language. This objective will be implemented by the formulation of policies which seek to ensure that developments do not erode or harm the use of the language and the encouragement of developments that will have a positive effect on the language.

12.3.2 Since the production of the UDP policy, the study "*Planning and the Welsh Language: The Way Ahead*" has been produced and sets out guidance for the identification of those communities where the use of the language is part of the social fabric. The study suggests that the identification of such communities should be those where 25% or more of their Community Council areas speak Welsh based on the 2001 Census. 2001 Census figures reveal that if the figure of 25% is considered suitable, two community areas within the County do not meet this threshold figure, these being Pendine (15.62%) and Laugharne (21.28%).

12.3.3 The issue for consideration, in the production of detailed LDP policies is whether the LDP should identify language sensitive areas, or should this be an issue more appropriate to be detailed in Supplementary Planning Guidance. A further issue for consideration, if the LDP is considered to be the best mechanism to identify language sensitive areas, is whether the threshold figure of 25% of members of the community able to speak Welsh is considered to

be an appropriate measure, or should all communities in the County to be considered as being communities where the use of the language is part of the social fabric.

- 12.3.4 Allocations relating to housing and employment are considered to be developments most likely to have a significant effect on the language. The Sustainable Strategic Settlement Framework adopted in the UDP seeks to ensure the sustainable development of settlements, which included linguistic sustainability. This strategy ensures that development opportunities are appropriate to their scale and need by directing the majority of development to the County's main settlements, whilst also sustaining rural communities.
- 12.3.5 The UDP allocated land suitable for housing development and consequently the total number of dwellings per site were identified based on the densities being developed on sites at that time. In more recent years, developers have been submitting proposals for schemes that significantly increase the density on sites. When identifying land for housing in the LDP, allocations should be made being mindful of the fact that densities on the sites may vary during the lifetime of the plan.
- 12.3.6 In identifying development sites, it will be important to achieve a balance, be the sites housing or employment, which would sustain communities but not swamp them with in-migration. All proposed allocations will have to be assessed to determine their effect on the Welsh language, those that would have a detrimental impact should not be allocated.
- 12.3.7 Phasing housing development on allocated sites would offer a solution to managing the effect on communities of an influx of development in a particular period. The identification of sites suitable for phasing in the LDP is considered to be an acceptable approach, and Planning Policy Wales specifically states that a broad indication of the time-scale for the release is the preferred approach rather than limit on permissions or a precise order of release of sites in particular periods. Phasing does however restrict market forces and restrict choice, it will therefore be important, if phasing is considered to be an appropriate approach to housing release, that the policy or approach taken is relatively flexible.
- 12.3.8 Affordable housing and housing for local people is an important issue in sustaining local communities particularly in areas with a high level of Welsh speakers, particularly in relation to first-time buyers. There is a requirement for the LDP to include an affordable housing target in the development plan (TAN2: Planning & Affordable Housing, 2006) either through the provision of a capacity threshold figure(s) or through site specific targets. Specific issues relating to this issue are addressed in the Housing section.

12.4 Conclusion

- 12.4.1 The protection and promotion of the Welsh language must be a central aim of the LDP strategy. Whilst the UDP provides a good policy foundation, the approach to be taken in the LDP could be stronger and provide more robust guidance.

13 INFRASTRUCTURE

13.1 Background

13.1.2 Planning for infrastructure is critical for successful development. The existence of suitable infrastructure services including water supply, sewerage, land drainage, gas, electricity and telecommunications is vital for future development. In addition, the quality and capacity of services is of critical importance in determining the location, scale and phasing of development. The planning system does not provide infrastructure, but through appropriate settlement planning the planning system can assist in achieving better provision.

13.2 The Local Context

13.2.1 Infrastructure provision plays a key role in the delivery of the development plan's objectives. The County has a number of locations where infrastructure provision is either at capacity or is in need of renewal, these problems are not necessarily restricted to rural areas. Of particular concern is water supply, sewerage and broadband access. Whilst the main solutions in resolving these problems lie outside the planning system (the provision of public utility services is chiefly the responsibility of the relevant utility companies) the development plan's policies have an important role to play in terms of:

- the location of future development, in that it does not place an unreasonable burden on existing infrastructure;
- the location of development in certain areas in order to facilitate infrastructure improvements;
- the provision of criteria policies in order to assess the impact of utility and infrastructure developments not specifically allocated.

13.3 Local Development Plan

13.3.1 The adopted UDP provides a solid foundation for LDP policy formulation. Additional factors that require consideration in the development of the policies are set out below.

13.3.2 Flood risk in the authority's area remains to be an issue, large areas of existing development lie in areas that are at risk of flooding, both from tidal and fluvial waters. Whilst the siting of new development can be located in areas outside these areas which could ultimately inhibit the development of certain settlements, criteria policies must cater for development that provides for the protection of existing areas at risk. In the development of LDP policies, a balance should be struck between the need to protect existing development and ensuring that any schemes do not adversely affect the surrounding landscape and biodiversity.

13.3.3 There are a number of locations within the County's area that have water and sewerage infrastructure provision problems, be it in terms of existing capacity of systems being full or systems being old. Information provision from infrastructure providers is proving to be a problem, whilst the Authority was advised during the UDP that Dwr Cymru would prioritise their programme (AMP) around the allocations within the plan, certain improvements have not been made to date. The importance of working together with Dwr Cymru must be a priority in order to facilitate development in the correct locations, which may ultimately affect the settlement pattern adopted for the LDP.

- 13.3.4 The disposal of surface water is a material consideration for local planning authorities in determining planning applications. Development can reduce surface permeability in that it will replace vegetated ground with hard landscaping and roofs. This reduces the amount of water infiltrating into the ground and therefore increases surface run-off which will have to be drained. Traditionally surface water has been drained by using underground pipe systems designed for quantity, to convey water away as quickly as possible and thus prevent flooding locally. Development can harm our water resources if a traditional approach to drainage is adopted. Removing water from the site as quickly as possible can cause a range of impacts.
- 13.3.5 SUDS are designed with three objectives in mind:
- i. to control the quantity of run-off from a development;
 - ii. to improve the quality of the run-off ;
 - iii. to enhance the nature conservation, landscape and amenity value of the site and its surroundings.¹²
- 13.3.6 The Environment Agency now requires greater use of sustainable drainage systems to control surface water run-off this involves moving away from traditional piped drainage systems to engineering solutions that mimic natural drainage processes. Whilst the UDP policy (UT8 – Surface Water) promotes the use of appropriate measure to deal with surface water run-off, it may be necessary for the LDP to take a stronger approach.
- 13.3.7 The availability of broadband is an issue affecting a number of communities throughout the County at present. One of the sustainability objectives identified in Planning Policy Wales is to facilitate the development of an advanced broadband telecommunications infrastructure throughout Wales (par 12.1.4). Whilst the issue of broadband availability is not strictly a planning matter, it's availability does affect community's availability to services and affect the success of businesses in areas that do not have broadband. Should and how can LDP policies facilitate necessary improvements?
- 13.3.8 Telecommunication development, like broadband services, is poor in some areas of the County. LDP policies should not restrict telecommunications development unreasonably.
- 13.3.9 It is essential that development should not take place until the infrastructure needed to support it is available. Contributions should be sought from developers through Section 106 agreements especially for the implementation of sustainable infrastructure for example SUDS & grey water systems. In terms of current UDP policy, policy GDC33 enables negotiations to take place where they may be used to offset negative consequences of the development, to help meet local needs or to secure benefits which will make the development more sustainable. It may be necessary for the LDP to be more prescriptive in the expectations from negotiations in respect of developer contributions.

13.4 Conclusion

- 13.4.1 Infrastructure plays a key role in the success of future development. It is vital that policies in the LDP do not unreasonably restrict infrastructure development and that the development strategy adopted is developed around the availability of existing infrastructure.

¹² Environment Agency. *Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS): A Guide for Developers*.

14 SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

14.1 Background

14.1.1 Addressing Climate Change is an increasingly important issue in all aspects of policy making, be it at a global, national or local level. Decisions made at a local level, particularly in relation to energy generation and conservation can influence the impact on climate change. Current government policy and guidance is centred around reducing greenhouse gas emissions in an attempt to slow down climate change. The extent to which energy is sustainable may be considered a function of both the source of the energy e.g. fossil fuels, biomass, wind etc. and the uses to which it is put. Given the impact of fossil fuel use on climate change, such use will be less sustainable than renewable sources. Moving to more sustainable lifestyles will involve increasing use of energy from renewable sources and also more efficient use of energy.

14.2 The National Perspective

14.2.1 PPW defines renewable energy as “sources of energy, other than fossil fuel or nuclear fuel, which are continuously and sustainably available in our environment. This includes wind, water, solar, geothermal energy and plant material often referred to as biomass”. Sustainable energy encompasses both renewable energy and energy conservation and is an important element of sustainable development, providing benefits which are environmental, economic and social. The challenge to the planning system is to balance the impact of such schemes on the local environment against that of continuing producing energy in traditional methods which ultimately affect the global environment by contributing towards climate change.

14.2.2 Whilst the focus on achieving targets of renewable energy production have concentrated on electricity generation, mostly through wind power, there are other forms of production which need due consideration. Renewable resources for generating electricity in Wales are identified¹³ as biomass, marine – tides and waves, hydro, waste and wind on shore and off shore. In addition there is enormous scope for rooftop solar-powered water heating. The special siting considerations necessary to possible combined heat and (electrical) power systems (CHP) need also to be considered.

14.2.3 In addition to encouraging renewable energy generation, the planning system has the ability to influence energy efficiency in new buildings. By the year 2011 building regulations will require new buildings to be zero carbon. The Energy Saving Trust recommends that policies of development plans introduce a requirement for new developments to meet a specific level of the Code for Sustainable Homes¹⁴. Whilst the guidance is aimed at authorities in England, it can be seen as good practice in order to achieve the targets set by both the Welsh Assembly and the British Government. The Welsh Assembly Government will be consulting on a new National Energy Efficiency and Saving Plan later this year, which may contain similar guidance.

14.2.4 Existing Assembly targets are set out in annex B of the Route Map¹⁵, and include carbon reduction-equivalent emissions reductions of 3% per year by 2011 and

¹³ Renewable Energy Route Map for Wales – Welsh Assembly Government 2008

¹⁴ http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/uploads/documents/housingbuildings/code_for_sustainable_homes_bn.pdf

¹⁵ Renewable Energy Route Map for Wales – Welsh Assembly Government 2008

renewable electricity targets set out in TAN 8 as being 4TWhr by 2010 and 7TWhr by 2020.

14.3 **The Local Context**

14.3.1 In terms of renewable energy projects, Carmarthenshire is well-placed to make use of renewable energy. Locally-grown wood still provides fuel for heating in more rural parts and electricity is generated renewably at three wind farms, a hydropower plant at Llyn Brianne, and a landfill gas plant at Nantycaws. Expansion of wind farming may be anticipated, including extension of an existing wind farm, and especially new wind farms in the Brechfa Forest area. Small-scale renewable electricity generation, solar panels for water heating, heat pump schemes, etc. are currently scarce in the County, and significant increase should be encouraged.

14.3.2 Coastal waters provide tidal potential for renewable energy, although European nature conservation designations are likely to rule out significant use of this resource in the foreseeable future. Agricultural land has much potential for growing biomass which may be converted to energy. The economics of harvesting and transporting crops will limit potential, particularly in remoter areas. There may be potential to combine burning biomass and waste to generate electricity and reduce demand for landfill.

14.4 **Local Development Plan**

14.4.1 Sustainable development plays a vital role in the development of future planning policies and will be at the heart of the Local Development Plan. Two suggested sustainable energy objectives are to:

- (i) ensure that sustainable energy systems are incorporated in new development ; and
- (ii) recognise the importance of supporting innovative ways of generating sustainable energy in appropriate locations.

14.4.2 Improved standards of energy conservation through insulation, etc. are largely controlled under Building Regulations, the planning system has the ability to influence the design process at an earlier stage in the process. The LDP has a role to play by encouraging appropriate siting of buildings, e.g. orientation of buildings to maximise solar gain, avoiding exposed or heavily shaded locations, or which would generate excessive transport demands. The Welsh Assembly Government Assembly's targets for "zero carbon buildings" has set the agenda for future development. More advice from the Assembly which will help move towards this ideal is expected later this year.

14.4.3 The roofs of buildings are increasingly likely to be locations for solar panels, currently mainly for heating water, but in the future also for photo-voltaic generation of electricity. Landscaping should avoid trees overshadowing suitable roofs. New development should be designed to include south-facing roofs to facilitate efficient use of solar panels. In exposed locations a development's electrical energy demands may be partly met by one or more wind turbines, although these will need to be carefully sited to ensure adequate wind flow characteristics and avoid significant impact on local amenities.

14.4.4 Combined heat and power schemes may be encouraged in particular locations, where emissions are managed to be compatible with heat-using buildings.

14.4.5 Approaches in English development plans in relation to energy efficient design policy are more stringent than previous approaches in Wales. Two approaches are leading the way, the first being the Code for Sustainable Homes and the second is known as the "Merton Rule". Some Development Plans have adopted targets relating to the

Code for Sustainable Homes¹⁶, where the Energy Saving Trust recommends a requirement is set out in local planning documents for new developments to meet a specific level of the code. The “Merton Rule” is a requirement for developers to incorporate on-site renewables to generate a proportion of a development’s energy use and is generally aimed at larger schemes. This is measured through either a reduction of the development’s energy use or carbon dioxide emissions.

- 14.4.6 Rapid technological developments in the use of wind energy has led to an unanticipated increase in scale, both in the size of individual turbines and in the size and number of wind farms likely to be developed in the County. In 2005 the Welsh Assembly Government identified the Brechfa Forest area¹⁷, including part of Mynydd Llanllwni, as an area for major wind farm development. Although the UDP was not approved until 2006, lengthy plan approval procedures did not allow this issue to be addressed in that Plan. The Welsh Assembly Government’s policy will apply until at least 2010, after which there may be a requirement for more wind turbines, depending on overall electricity consumption, and the availability of other sources of electricity, including nuclear, offshore wind and clean coal technology.
- 14.4.7 General public perception of wind energy projects in the authority’s area is not encouraging, as has been seen by the number of public objections received to recent projects seeking planning permission. Scepticism surrounds the efficiency and reliability of turbines and the resulting effect, both in financial terms (e.g. the effect on property prices) and the ability to live and spend leisure time in areas where the turbines exist (e.g. noise, safety, shadow flicker etc.). The challenge for the LDP is to produce planning policies that permit and encourage appropriate renewable energy projects in locations that do not cause harm to the environment and habitats, to the quality of the lives of the people living and those that use the area for enjoyment.
- 14.4.8 The energy implications of travel and transportation and how it will influence settlement patterns will need to be considered.

¹⁶ http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/uploads/documents/housingbuildings/code_for_sustainable_homes_bn.pdf

¹⁷ *Planning Guidance (Wales) Technical Advice Note 8: Planning for Renewable Energy (2005)*

15 Minerals

15.1 National Context

15.1.1 Land use planning policy guidance for mineral extraction and related development in Wales is set out in Minerals Planning Policy Wales (MPPW, 2000) and supplemented by Minerals Technical Advice Notes (MTANs) and relevant Circulars. Currently only MTAN 1: Aggregates (2004) has been finalised. Minerals Technical Advice Note 2 (Wales): Coal is currently in consultation draft form.

15.2 Regional Context

15.2.1 MPPW establishes that minerals will, in most cases, be an appropriate subject for collaboration between local authorities. Consideration as a regional approach is often the only sensible way to determine where extraction will have the least environmental impact and ensure the integration of transport options.

15.2.2 In terms of aggregates, the regional consideration of aggregates provision is carried out by the South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party (SWRAWP). MTAN 1 established a requirement for each of the two RAWPs to draw up a Regional Technical Statement (RTS). The main purpose of the RTS is to set out the strategy for the provision of the aggregates in the South Wales region for the period until 2016/25.

15.3 Local Context

15.3.1 The planning policies in respect of mineral extraction in Carmarthenshire are contained in the Carmarthenshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The UDP was adopted in 2006, and therefore the policies are up to date and in accordance with national guidance. The UDP provides a useful base from which to begin the discussion of issues in respect of the Local Development Plan (LDP).

15.3.2 Mineral industries in Carmarthenshire involve quarrying for stone, sand and gravel, coal mining, and the treatment and distribution of products. Metalliferous ores were mined in the past, however, economic factors render it unlikely that metal mining will take place within the Plan period.

15.3.3 The mineral types predominant in the County in terms of future extraction include:

Carboniferous Limestone. - limestone quarrying is the largest of the extractive industries in the County;

Pennant Sandstone - will likely continue to be extracted in small scale quarrying operations;

Millstone Grit - two quarries are still operating, producing hardcore, bulk fill, building stone, and some graded aggregate;

Sand and **Gravel** – including off-shore deposits, river deposits and burrows (tracts along parts of the coast);

Coal – opencast coal mining is likely to continue, and there is a growing possibility of extracting naturally occurring methane from the coal seams.

15.4 Key Objective

15.4.1 The overriding objective in respect of planning for mineral development is to provide a sustainable pattern of mineral extraction by adhering to 5 key principles (listed in MPPW) that authorities must take into account when formulating development plan policies. The key principles are to:

- provide mineral resources to meet society's needs and to safeguard resources from sterilisation;
- protect areas of importance to natural or built heritage;
- limit the environmental impact of mineral extraction;
- achieve high standard restoration and beneficial after-use;
- encourage efficient and appropriate use of minerals and the re-use and recycling of suitable materials.

15.5 Issues

15.5.1 Using the key principles above as a framework, the LDP will need to consider the following issues:

15.5.2 Provide and safeguard mineral resources

15.5.3 *Ensuring supply*

15.5.4 Minerals Planning Policy Wales (MPPW) sets out that minerals planning authorities (MPAs) should ensure that appropriate contributions are made in development plans to meet local, regional and national needs for minerals. For aggregates, development plans should reflect the work carried out by the SWRAWP, in particular the RTS. Where it is considered necessary the MPAs will then be expected to include allocations for future aggregates provision in their area as part of the LDP process.

15.5.5 *Safeguarding*

15.5.6 It is important that access to mineral deposits that might be needed in the future is safeguarded. National planning guidance requires that areas to be safeguarded should be identified on development plan proposals maps and that policies should protect potential mineral resources from other types of permanent development which would either sterilise them or hinder extraction.

15.5.7 In preparing the LDP, the UDP could form a useful starting point. Further investigation will need to be assessed in relation to more up to information and guidance, for example, MTAN 2: Coal (currently in consultation draft), and the most up-to-date data from the British Geological Survey.

15.5.8 *Areas of future working*

15.5.9 In terms of **Non-energy minerals** MPPW stresses that development plans should indicate clearly on their proposals maps and in policies where mineral extraction should, or is most likely to take place. Information contained within the UDP, such as the depiction of quarries and reserves of sand and gravel on the proposals maps, will assist this process.

15.5.10 Similarly with **energy minerals** the LDP should provide as much guidance as possible to indicate where it is likely to be environmentally acceptable for these resources to be worked. The ACERs and the South Wales Coalfield highlighted on the UDP proposals maps will provide a useful source of information.

15.5.11 *Landbanks - and the issue of apportionment*

15.5.12 A landbank is a stock of planning permissions for the extraction of minerals and comprises the sum of all permitted reserves at active and inactive sites at any given point in time and for a given area. LDPs should include an assessment of both the current landbank (stating how many years of mineral extraction the landbank will provide) and also the future landbank (to include land specifically allocated for the working of aggregates).

- 15.5.13 The SWRAWP has assessed the “environmental capacity” of the authorities in its region to supply aggregates and has published the results in the RTS. A key function of the RTS is then to apportion primary aggregate supply between the individual authorities. This has implications for Carmarthenshire in particular as this Authority has been identified as a possible candidate for accepting part of the apportionment for the Brecon Beacons and Pembrokeshire Coast National Parks. A large proportion of the reserves in Carmarthenshire are at dormant/inactive sites and their likelihood of reactivation in the future must be considered.
- 15.5.14 **Protect areas of importance to natural or built heritage;**
- 15.5.15 The LDP will have to contain robust policies that ensure the protection of these areas. Such areas include, for example Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Landscape Areas (SLAs), Ancient Monuments and Surface and Groundwater Resources. In preparing the LDP the LPA will need to consider the specific requirements for each type of area and ensure that there is sufficient protection afforded in accordance with the provisions of national guidance. The UDP covers this issue and could provide a useful starting point in terms of policy content.
- 15.5.16 **Limit the environmental impact of mineral extraction;**
- 15.5.17 The LDP should set out clearly the criteria that will be applied to minerals proposals to ensure that they do not have an unacceptably adverse impact on the environment and the amenity of nearby residents. The UDP contains up to date policy criteria in this regard which could be used as the basis for further investigation.
- 15.5.18 Buffer zones are important features that are used by MPAs to provide areas of protection around mineral workings. MPPW and MTAN 1 (and the Consultation Draft of MTAN 2: Coal) provide guidance on buffer zones. Having taken national guidance into account, the details on buffer zones contained in the UDP will be a source of useful background information.
- 15.5.19 *Transport* – in accordance with the Government’s sustainability objectives the transport of aggregate by rail or waterway instead of road, wherever this is economically feasible, will have to be investigated.
- 15.5.20 **Achieve high standard restoration and beneficial after-use;**
- 15.5.21 Reclamation means the treatment of land affected by mineral working in such a way as to restore the land to a satisfactory state, and includes both restoration and aftercare. An appropriate reclamation scheme should provide the means to maintain, and preferably enhance, the long-term quality of land after mineral extraction has taken place. The LDP will need to include criteria based policies to ensure that the land is reclaimed to appropriate standards.
- 15.5.22 The proposed after-use of the land is also important and, for new mineral proposals, should be set out in the application after prior discussions with the LPA. The LDP should provide guidance on preferred after-uses and reclamation standards. In addition, the LDP will need to provide guidance on the after-uses that are likely to be acceptable for existing sites that may be reclaimed during the Plan period.
- 15.5.23 **Encourage efficient and appropriate use of minerals and the re-use and recycling of suitable materials.**
- 15.5.24 Although the County has a large resource of minerals, it is important to ensure that they are not wasted and that they are used efficiently. The use of alternative or recycled materials

is an option – industrial by-products, for example, have been used for many years as secondary aggregates which enable primary resources to be conserved. Construction and demolition (C&D) waste is a significant potential source of alternative aggregate material. Indeed, the Waste Strategy for Wales sets specific targets on the recycling of all types of waste, including C&D waste, and these must be implemented at authority level through the provisions of the LDP (see *Allocation of Sites* in Waste Discussion Paper).

16 Waste

16.1 National Context

16.1.1 National Planning Guidance in respect of Waste Management is set out in 'Planning Policy Wales' (March 2002) and supplemented by 'Technical Advice Note (TAN) 21: Waste' (November 2001) and relevant Circulars. These documents adhere to the principles set out in the Welsh Assembly Government's National Waste Strategy for Wales 'Wise about Waste' published in June 2002, which in turn accords with the requirements of European legislation, most notably the Waste Framework Directive and the Landfill Directive.

16.2 Regional Context

16.2.1 TAN 21 establishes the requirement for regional arrangements within Wales in terms of how waste is managed. Three regions have been identified – South West Wales, South East Wales and North Wales. Carmarthenshire forms part of the South West Wales grouping and the Regional Waste Plan (RWP) for this region was completed in November 2003. The RWP covers information on waste production and management in order to establish what new facilities are required. TAN 21 emphasises that each local authority should reflect the contents of the RWP in its own respective development plan. The First Review of the SWWRWP has recently been completed and is awaiting endorsement by the constituent authorities and the Welsh Assembly Government. The document sets out 8 possible options to be taken forward in respect of how waste is managed in the Region. The options allow flexibility to individual local authorities who will need to reflect them in their Local Development Plans (LDPs) and Municipal Waste Strategies.

16.3 Local Context

16.3.1 Statistics from the Environment Agency (EA) indicate that municipal solid waste (MSW) comprises about 20% of the total waste stream arisings in Carmarthenshire. It is likely that tonnages of industrial waste, and construction and demolition (C&D) waste account for the largest waste streams, although at present exact quantities are unknown.

16.3.2 With regard to municipal solid waste (MSW) in Carmarthenshire, over 17% is currently recycled. The remainder is landfilled, largely at the disposal facility at Nantycaws. In drawing up the LDP, the Local Planning Authority should have due regard to the requirements of County's Municipal Waste Strategy.

16.4 Key Objectives

16.4.1 The Waste Strategy for Wales sets out the framework for a more sustainable and integrated approach to waste management. In terms of land use planning this requires the utilisation of a mixture of waste management options (therefore avoiding over-reliance on landfill), the provision of an adequate supply of land to accommodate the required facilities in which to manage the waste streams, and effective protection of the environment.

16.5 Issues

16.5.1 Whilst the recently adopted Carmarthenshire UDP provides a solid foundation, waste planning is continually changing in light of new legislation and guidance. All this will need to be assessed during the process of evidence gathering for the LDP. The principle issues that need to be addressed are as follows:

- 16.5.2 *Sustainable waste management*
- 16.5.3 Two key principles are central to achieving the key objectives listed above – the waste hierarchy and the proximity principle. The waste hierarchy prioritises waste management options in the order of their effect on the environment, with waste reduction being the most acceptable, followed by re-use, and then recovery and finally disposal. The proximity principle states that waste should be treated and/or disposed of as close as possible to its source of origin in order to reduce the environmental impact of transporting it. Both principles are key elements in the Welsh Assembly Government’s aim of achieving more sustainable waste management and should be borne in mind when preparing the LDP.
- 16.5.4 *Allocation of sites*
- 16.5.5 ‘Policy Clarification Note Unitary Development Plans – Waste Policies, Hazardous Waste Planning Applications’ (WAG, 2004) sets out guidance on how Unitary Development Plans should accommodate the necessary provision for the new waste facilities that will be required to meet government targets. The guidance specifies that sites on B2 general industrial land will be appropriate for many future waste facilities that can be contained within an enclosed building (‘in-building’ facilities) i.e. such sites would not be appropriate for ‘open’ operations such as landfill or windrow composting.
- 16.5.6 Local planning authorities now have the requirement of identifying appropriate sites for waste facilities – both ‘in-building’ and ‘open’ as part of the LDP process. The South West Wales Regional Waste Plan incorporates a spatial element that will assist this process by providing a guide to the location of new facilities.
- 16.5.7 *Protection of the environment*
- 16.5.8 In preparing the LDP, the Local Planning Authority should maintain a close liaison with the bodies involved in the management of waste, particularly the Environment Agency (EA), to ensure that strict environmental standards are maintained at waste facilities and that the effects on the amenity of neighbouring land uses is kept to a minimum. The EA also possess information regarding licensed and exempt waste management facilities within the County, this data is essential to the evidence gathering element of LDP preparation.
- 16.5.9 *Reconciling conflict, consultation and sustainable design*
- 16.5.10 Waste by its very nature is a contentious issue. Proposals for new waste facilities invariably meet with opposition, particularly when located in close proximity to residential areas. In 1998 the Chartered Institution of Wastes Management published a technical document entitled ‘Communicating with the Public, no time to waste’ in which a more open approach to managing waste was called for. In the past it was argued that both the waste industry and policy makers had often been too secretive when dealing with waste, not informing the public of the full facts.
- 16.5.11 The Planning System, perhaps more than any other agency involved in the management of waste, brings practitioners in direct contact with the public through both the development plan consultation periods and at the planning application stage. This fact is more relevant now with the LDP process and its emphasis on greater community involvement and the need to identify sites where waste facilities would be acceptable.
- 16.5.12 When preparing the LDP, the Local Planning Authority could utilise the greater emphasis on community involvement to stress that the waste industry is amongst the most tightly regulated in the country and that modern ‘enclosed’ waste facilities can be architecturally

pleasing and can fit in comfortably alongside other employment activities at B2 industrial sites.

16.5.13 *Types of waste*

16.5.14 Local authorities collect and manage only a small percentage of the total waste arisings – namely municipal solid waste (MSW) and commercial waste. In the South West Wales region in 2001 MSW accounted for only 14% of the total waste arisings and commercial waste made up a further 10%. Industrial waste and construction and demolition (C&D) waste accounted for the largest proportions during 2001 – 41% and 35% of the total waste arisings respectively. Whilst industry often disposes of its specific wastes in-house, a large proportion of the C&D waste generated is currently landfilled. Hazardous waste is another important waste arising, and one which was the subject of a specific report forming an addendum to the SWWRWP. The different types of wastes and their specific requirements must therefore be considered when preparing the LDP. The UDP provides a useful starting point from which to assess the situation.

16.5.15 *Links with other discussion papers*

16.5.16 This Paper should be read in conjunction with the following related issues papers:
Minerals – in particular the use of alternative or recycled materials which enables primary resources to be conserved;
Energy – in particular the reference to energy from waste. There are a number of different processes available to obtain energy from waste and the SWWRWP proposes energy from waste as a possible future option for dealing with waste in the region.

APPENDIX A - Core and Background Documents

The following documents have been used to inform the preparation of the discussion papers.

- Planning Policy Wales (2002)
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/policy/planpolicywales/?lang=en>
- Planning Policy Wales – Technical Advice Notes
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/policy/tans/?lang=en>
- Minerals Planning Policy Wales WAG, 2001
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/consultations/closed/plancloscons/1207987/?lang=en>
- Draft Minerals Technical Advice Note (MTAN) 2: Coal WAG, 2006
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/consultations/closed/plancloscons/1207987/?lang=en>
- Planning Policy Wales Draft Technical Advice Note 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space Welsh Assembly Government, 2006
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/consultations/closed/plancloscons/1207864/?lang=en>
- Draft Revised Technical Advice Note 13 Tourism, Welsh Assembly Government, July 2006.
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/consultations/closed/plancloscons/1207857/?lang=en>
- Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statements (MIPPS)
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/policy/mipps/?lang=en>
- Planning for Climate Change – Consultation Document (December 2006)
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/consultations/closed/plancloscons/1193217/?lang=en>
- The Affordable Housing Toolkit – Welsh Assembly Government (June 2006)
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/desh/publications/housing/affordablehousingtoolkit/toolkite?lang=en>
- Statutory Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing
- Wales Transport Strategy – Connecting Wales, Consultation (July 2006)
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/consultations/closed/busandeconclocons/951740/?lang=en>
- Environment Strategy for Wales, Welsh Assembly Government, 2006
http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/epg/Envstratforwales/about_the_strategy/?lang=en
- Walking and Cycling Strategy for Wales, Welsh Assembly Government (December 2003)
http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/4038231141/403821125/IntegTransport/WalkCycle/30623_NAFW_Final_English.pdf?lang=en
- Wise About Waste : The National Waste Strategy for Wales , WAG, 2002
http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/epg/waste_recycling/wise_about_waste_strategy?lang=en
- Policy Clarification Note Unitary Development Plans – Waste Policies, Hazardous Waste Planning Applications
http://wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40371/403823112/40382/40382/circularletters/CL-04-04_Policy_Clarificati1.doc?lang=en
- Wales: A Better Country, WAG, 2003
http://www.elwa.ac.uk/doc_bin/SkillsObservatory/Learning%20Country.pdf
- Local Development Plans Wales: Policy on Preparation of LDP's – December 2005
http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/epc/planning/403821/403829/Local_Development_Plans-e.pdf?lang=en
- Local Development Plan Manual – June 2006
http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/policy/developplans/ldp_manual?lang=en
- Renewable Energy Route Map for Wales – Welsh Assembly Government 2008
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/consultation/desh/2008/2003479/routemape.pdf?lang=en> (English)
- “Iaith Pawb” – A National Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales (Welsh Assembly Government 2003)
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/depc/publications/welshlanguage/iaithpawb/strategy/iaithpawbe.pdf?lang=en> (English)
- Planning Inspectorate Wales – A Guide to the Examination of Local Development Plans
- A Winning Wales - The National Economic Development Strategy of the Welsh Assembly Government - Refresh April 2004
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/strategy/strategypublications/strategypubs/935814/?lang=en>
- Wales: A Vibrant Economy
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/departments/dein/publications/wave?lang=en>
- Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A companion Guide to PPG17, Communities and Local Government

- <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/assessingneeds>
- Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism, Dept for Communities & Local Government, 2006
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/151753>
 - Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) – Guidance Environment Agency
<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/444304/502508/464710/464914/>
 - Energy White paper. Our Energy Future – Creating a low carbon economy. DTI 2003
<http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file10719.pdf>
 - Energy Act 2004
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APPENDIX B (** Under Development **)																									
						Public Services and Facilities					Transport and Accessibility				Retail				Community Facility						
SETTLEMENT	Population (2001 Census Est.	Spatial Plan Recognition	Residential Alloc ¹	Employment Land ¹	Sewerage Infrastructure	Further Education	Secondary School	Primary School	Hospital	Surgery/Health Centre	Emergency Service(s)	Railway Line	Road Network (Highway Classification)	Public Transport - Rail (Rank in order of Service Level)	Public Transport - Bus (Rank in order of Service Level)	Town Centre ²	Local Centre	Regional Shopping Centre	Supermarket/General Shop	Post Office	Library	Place of Worship	Village/Community Hall	Leisure Centre	Recreation/Sports Facility
¹ Residential and Employment Land Allocations as contained within Adopted Carmarthenshire Unitary Development Plan																									