

# Tests of Soundness - Self Assessment

Cynllun Datblygu Lleol Sir Gaerfyrddin



Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan

June 2011

## Tests of Soundness: Self Assessment

The requirement for the LDP to undergo an Examination in Public to establish whether it is 'sound' is prescribed in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The council is required to submit its Deposit LDP, together with associated documents and representations made, for consideration by an independent Inspector appointed by the Welsh Assembly Government. The examination of the LDP is an independent process for determining whether it is fundamentally sound. In assessing the issue of soundness the Inspector will have due regard to the evidence submitted with the Plan and the representations submitted at the Deposit stage.

Local Development Plans Wales: Policy on the Preparation of LDPs (December 2005) identifies a series of criteria or tests of soundness that the LDP is required to satisfy. There will be a presumption that the LDP is sound unless evidence considered through the examination stage shows to the contrary.

There are ten prescribed tests or criteria for assessing the soundness of an LDP which are set out in three categories namely procedural, consistency and coherence and effectiveness which are detailed below followed by an assessment of the Council's progress to date in meeting them. A Guide to the Examination of Local Development Plans produced by the Planning Inspectorate Wales has been used to assist in this process.

### Tests of Soundness

#### Procedural

**P1:** The Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Delivery Agreement including the Community Involvement Scheme.

**P2:** The Plan and its policies have been subjected to Sustainability Appraisal including Strategic Environmental Assessment.

#### Consistency

**C1:** It is a land use Plan which has regard to other relevant plans, policies and strategies relating to the area or to adjoining areas.

**C2:** It has regard to national policy.

**C3:** It has regard to the Wales Spatial Plan.

**C4:** It has regard to the relevant Community Strategy/Strategies/National Park Management Plan.

#### Coherence and Effectiveness

**CE1:** The Plan sets out a coherent strategy from which its policies and allocations logically flow and, where cross boundary issues are relevant, is not in conflict with the development plans prepared by neighbouring authorities.

**CE2:** The strategy, policies and allocations are realistic and appropriate having considered the relevant alternatives and are founded on a robust and credible evidence base.

**CE3:** There are clear mechanisms for implementation and monitoring.

**CE4:** It is reasonably flexible to enable it to deal with changing circumstances.

Wherever possible the overall objective of the Inspector will be to progress the Plan to a position where it is sound and can be safely adopted. In line with the above tests, it is fundamental to the success of the LDP that it be under-pinned by a strong evidence base and prepared in accordance with the regulations and the prescribed consultation procedures.

On completion of the examination the Inspector will produce a report detailing recommended changes to the LDP together with reasons for any change. In those instances where the Inspector recommends a change it will be binding on the Authority and as such must be accepted unless directed to the contrary through WAG intervention.

## Procedural Tests

Tests	Self Assessment
<p><b>Test P1: The Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Delivery Agreement including the Community Involvement Scheme.</b></p>	<p>The Delivery Agreement (DA) is a public statement of the Council's commitment to the LDP. It provides the timetable for the preparation of the LDP and through its Community Involvement Scheme (CIS) will detail how and when the Council will consult and engage with groups, organisations and individuals during the plan's preparatory process. The Delivery Agreement (DA) for the Carmarthenshire LDP was published in August 2007 following WAG agreement.</p> <p>The DA was subsequently revised and agreed with WAG in July 2010. Copies of the DA and other documents including the WAG letter of agreement to the revised DA can be viewed on the Council's website and are available to view at the Council's customer service centres, planning offices and public libraries.</p> <p>The compliance with this test is measured through a check against the key stages of plan preparation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Evidence and baseline (incl. SA/SEA) – Ongoing</li> <li>• Pre Deposit preparation and participation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Discussion Papers – Consultation – 2 June 2008 to 18 July 2008</li> <li>❖ Community Partnership Networks – Surgery Sessions: 10 June 2008, 12 June 2008, 17 June 2008, 19 June 2008, 24 June 2008 and 26 June 2008.</li> <li>❖ Draft Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report – Consultation 3<sup>rd</sup> September to 8<sup>th</sup> October 2008</li> <li>❖ Invitation to identified groups and bodies (as set out in Appendix 7) to attend Key Stakeholder Forum -</li> <li>❖ Key Stakeholder Forum (KSF) Session 1 - 29<sup>th</sup> October 2008.</li> <li>❖ Key Stakeholder Forum feedback period - 20 November 2008 to the 20 December 2008.</li> <li>❖ Invitation to identified groups and bodies (as set out in Appendix 7) to attend Key Stakeholder Forum -</li> <li>❖ Key Stakeholder Forum - Second Session 24 February 2009.</li> <li>❖ Key Stakeholder Forum feedback period - 18 March to the 17 April 2009.</li> <li>❖ Publication of Topic Papers for consultation in relation to: <a href="#">Issues, Vision and Objectives</a>, <a href="#">Population and Housing</a>, <a href="#">Spatial Options &amp; Settlement Hierarchy</a> as well as evidence in the form of a <a href="#">Population and Housing Technical Paper</a> - Consultation 15 May 2009 to 15 June 2009.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Reporting of Preferred Strategy to Council (Reg. 15)</li> <li>❖ Publication for Consultation of the Pre deposit Preferred Strategy along with the SA/SEA Initial SA Report and the HRA Screening Report 4 November 2009 and 4 January 2010. The consultation was carried out in accordance with the provisions of the DA and its list of consultation bodies with notification letters and where identified copies provided. Documentation was also made available for public inspection at the locations prescribed within and in accordance with the DA.</li> </ul> <p>The Preferred strategy and accompanying documentation and evidence was also placed on the Councils website and contained further advice on the submission of representations.</p> <p>Public Notices were placed in local newspapers and press releases were issued to widen public awareness of the consultation process. Details are set out within the Consultation Report.</p> <p>Reporting of Pre-Deposit Preferred Strategy and Pre-deposit background documents, and updates to strategic policies as a result of Initial SA-SEA to Executive Board (22 March 2010) and Council (21 April 2010).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Reporting of evidence (Employment Land Study, Carmarthenshire Retail Study and populations and Household Projections Report) to Executive Board (18 October 2010) and subsequent publication 1 November 2010.</li> <li>❖ Publication of Topic Papers for consultation in relation to: Revised Population and Housing, Sustainable Development and Climate Change, Waste, Minerals, Transportation and Development Limits – consultation period 1 November 2010 to 13 December 2010. Publication of additional and updated papers relating to: Critique Background Paper and updated Strategic Spatial Options and Settlement Hierarchy Topic Paper and updated Issues, Vision and Objectives Topic Paper.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deposit LDP             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reporting of revised Strategic Policies, Renewable Energy Policies and Revised Site Assessment Methodology to Council for approval on the 9 March 2011.</li> <li>Reporting of the Deposit LDP to Council prior to formal consultation together with the SA/SEA Report and the HRA Report on the 13 April 2011.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Publication for Consultation of the Deposit LDP along with the associated documents and evidence is</li> </ul>
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	<p>in accordance with the provisions of the DA and its list of consultation bodies with notification letters and, where identified, copies provided. Documentation is also made available for public inspection at the locations prescribed within and in accordance with the DA. The Deposit LDP and accompanying documentation and evidence has also been placed on the Councils website and contains further advice on the submission of representations. Public Notices were placed in local newspapers and press releases were issued to widen public awareness of the consultation process.</p> <p>Reference should be made to the content of the DA and the LDP Consultation Report in relation to this test.</p>
<p><b>Key Question:</b> It has been prepared in accordance with the Delivery Agreement including the Community Involvement Scheme (CIS)?</p> <p>Yes, as set out above and within the LDP Consultation Report</p>	
<p><b>Test P2: The Plan and its policies have been subjected to Sustainability Appraisal including Strategic Environmental Assessment.</b></p>	<p>The SA Scoping Report was produced in September 2008. This represented the first stage of the SA/SEA process and set the context for the SA of the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan (LDP).</p> <p>The Council received feedback on the appropriateness of the approach set out in the Scoping Report following consultation with all interested persons and groups. A consultation period ran from 3 September 2008 to the 8 October 2008 (6 weeks) and the draft SA Report was then reviewed in light of the consultation responses received.</p> <p>The report has been integral to the pre deposit work undertaken to date and notably in the preparation and content of the topic papers and the Preferred Strategy. The outcomes/SA objectives have also been utilised by the KSF in order to assist in its deliberations.</p> <p>The Authority in developing the LDP generated a range of strategic spatial options and strategic objectives all of which were assessed and tested against the SA/SEA objectives in order to ensure that the emerging plan, its objectives and strategic direction were sustainable. Details of these assessments were included within the relevant topic papers.</p> <p>The Initial SA/SEA Report was published in November 2009 for consultation (4 November 2009 and 4 January 2010). The responses received were reported to County Council Executive Board on the 22 March 2010 and to</p>

	<p>full Council on the 21 April 2010. This report in accounting for the iterative nature of the plan making process also sought to address issues raised and proposed changes to the content of the preferred strategy and notably the strategic policies.</p> <p>The SA Report has been published for Consultation along with the Deposit LDP and other associated documents and evidence is in accordance with guidance and with the provisions of the DA and its list of consultation bodies with notification letters and where identified copies provided. Documentation is also made available for public inspection at the locations prescribed within and in accordance with the DA. The SA has also been placed on the Councils website and contains further advice on the submission of representations. Public Notices were placed in local newspapers and press releases were issued to widen public awareness of the consultation process.</p> <p>The Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Preliminary Screening Report for the Preferred Strategy was published in November 2009 for consultation formal consultation (4 November 2009 and 4 January 2010). The responses received were reported to County Council Executive Board on the 22 March 2010 and will be reported to full Council on the 21 April 2010.</p> <p>The Deposit LDP HRA Report has been published for Consultation along with the Deposit LDP and other associated documents and evidence in accordance with guidance and the provisions of the DA and its list of consultation bodies with notification letters and where identified copies provided. Documentation is also made available for public inspection at the locations prescribed within and in accordance with the DA. The SA has also been placed on the Councils website and contains further advice on the submission of representations. Public Notices were placed in local newspapers and press releases were issued to widen public awareness of the consultation process.</p> <p>The HRA and SA/SEA have directly influenced the preparation of the plan, its policies and content. The iteration between documents is reflected in their development, with the LDP evolving to reflect the issues raised and reflecting the necessary measures etc suggested to improve the plan’s strategy and its content.</p> <p>Reference should be made to the content of the DA and the LDP Consultation Report in relation to this test.</p>
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**Key Question:**

Has sustainability appraisal (SA), incorporating the requirements of strategic environmental assessment (SEA), been carried out in relation to the LDP?

Yes, as set out above and within the LDP Consultation Report

**Key Question:**

Has an Appropriate Assessment been carried out under the Habitat Regulations 1994?

Yes, as set out above and within the LDP Consultation Report

**Consistency Tests**

Tests	Self Assessment
<p><b>Test C1: It is a land use Plan which has regard to other relevant plans, policies and strategies relating to the area or to adjoining areas.</b></p>	<p>The national, regional and local context (including those of adjoining areas) is set out within the LDP and is supplemented by the content of the discussion papers, topic papers and SA/SEA scoping report etc.</p> <p>The SA/SEA Scoping Report reviews the relevant plans and policies at international/European, national, regional and local level in order to take account of the relationship between the LDP and other relevant policies, plans, programmes (PPP) and sustainability objectives. This identifies implications in relation to the LDP.</p> <p>The influence of the above is also reflected in the identification of local, regional and national issues &amp; drivers. These are subsequently reflected throughout the Strategy and have informed the formulation of the LDP Vision, objectives and strategic policies.</p> <p>The LDP Preferred Strategy was informed by the relevant plans, strategies and policies set out both within the SA/SEA and the preceding topic/discussions papers all of which were developed in light of an understanding of the implications of other influences.</p> <p>The HRA has taken account of the potential for in combination impacts of other plans and as such has influenced plan production.</p> <p>The production of the plan has been conducted with continual liaison with partner organisations and bodies including those environmental and technical groups such as the Environment Agency, Countryside Council for Wales and Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water including as part of the Key Stakeholder Forum. Meeting schedules are set out within the LDP Consultation Report and relevant background documents.</p> <p>The establishment of the Technical Officer Group (TOG) sought to bring a range of contributory bodies into the site selection process and provided an opportunity to assist in the identification of land use allocations and to</p>

inform on matters which may impact upon this process. The TOG met on the 9 September 2010 with the initial batch of sites sent through later that month. Core membership of the group includes the following:

- Carmarthenshire County Council
  - Transport (Highways),
  - Development Control,
  - Corporate Sustainability,
  - Conservation (Natural and Built Environment),
  - Economic Development
- Countryside Council for Wales
- Dyfed Archaeological Trust
- Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water
- Environment Agency

**Cross Border Liaison and Working** – In the preparation of this LDP, and to ensure the consideration of cross boundary and wider contextual issues, the Council has had close contact with all neighbouring authorities (as well as other essential organisations) both on an individual and topic basis but also through regional frameworks. The neighbouring authorities involved are:

- Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
- Ceredigion County Council
- City and County of Swansea
- Neath Port Talbot County Council
- Pembrokeshire County Council
- Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
- Powys County Council

In liaising with neighbouring authorities the following framework is in place:

- South West Wales Regional Planning Group
- South West Wales Regional Planning Group - Pathfinder Group
- Sub-Regional Minerals & Waste Planning Group
- Sub-Regional Minerals & Waste Planning Group

	<p>SA/SEA and HRA Regional Group</p> <p>Other Cross Border Meetings have also been held between specific authorities and on topic basis. Such dialogue is expected to continue through to and beyond plan adoption. This has included collaborative working between Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Pembrokeshire Coast and WAG in relation to Complementarity within the area as part of the Wales Spatial Plan: Pembrokeshire – The Haven. The final report is still pending.</p>
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<p><b>Key Question:</b> Does the plan put forward proposals for the use and development of land that adequately take account of the relationship with the plans/policies/requirements of other organisations, such as those of utility companies and agencies providing services in the area, including their future plans or strategy and any requirement for land and premises, which should be prepared in parallel?</p> <p>Yes, as set out above, and within the LDP and relevant supporting papers and evidence. Reference should also be made to the LDP Consultation Report.</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Is it clear how the plan relates to other plans and strategies such as local transport plans which will influence the delivery of policies and proposals within the plan?</p> <p>Yes, as set out above, and within the LDP and relevant supporting papers and evidence.</p>	
<p><b>Test C2: It has regard to national policy.</b></p>	<p>Regard has been had to national policy in the identification of issues and drivers and in the subsequent preparation of the Issues, LDP Vision, Objectives, Strategy, Strategic Policies and Specific Policies.</p> <p>The Deposit LDP sets out the national policy context within which the plan has been prepared and refers as necessary to its content within the plan. It seeks to minimise repetition of national guidance only doing so where it assists in providing clarity in relation to a local issue. The Deposit LDP, topic papers and other relevant evidence and background information set out the relationship to national and other policy. Such policy frameworks have informed all aspects of the plans preparation from the identification of issues through to the identification of strategic options.</p> <p>The SA/SEA Scoping Report reviews the relevant plans and policies at international/European, national, regional and local level in order to take account of the relationship between the LDP and other relevant policies, plans, programmes (PPP) and sustainability objectives. This identifies implications in relation to the LDP and has informed the identification of implications.</p>
<p><b>Key Question:</b> If the plan contains any policies or proposals which are not consistent with national policy, is there local justification?</p> <p>Yes any justification would be set out within the relevant supporting text to the policy or in relation to the proposal.</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Does it avoid wasteful/unnecessary repetition of national policy? LDPs are intended to be shorter, focussed documents that do not unnecessarily repeat national policy.</p>	

<p>Yes, as set out above. The Deposit LDP significantly reduces the number of policies as compared to that within the adopted UDP providing references to relevant sections of national guidance as and where appropriate.</p>	
<p><b>Test C3: It has regard to the Wales Spatial Plan.</b></p>	<p>The Deposit LDP sets out the content of the Wales Spatial Plan (WSP) and its context in respect of Carmarthenshire. This is supplemented, where applicable, by the content of the discussion papers, topic papers and SA/SEA scoping report.</p> <p>The provisions of this Strategy have regard to, and seek to implement the content of the WSP in relation to Carmarthenshire. This is reflected in the identification of issues and drivers and in the subsequent preparation of the LDP Vision, Objectives, Strategy and Strategic Policies.</p>
<p><b>Key Question:</b> Does the plan contain any policies or proposals which are not consistent with the broad strategies in the WSP and, if so, is there a local justification?</p> <p>No, the LDP strategy and its policies are consistent with the WSP.</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Does the plan take account of relevant area collaborative work undertaken for the WSP?</p> <p>Yes, the LDP strategy and its policies are consistent with the area collaborative work in relation to the WSP. It should however be noted that the collaborative working in relation to the Pembrokeshire – The Haven WSP Complementarity Study is still awaiting finalisation and publication.</p>	
<p><b>Test C4: It has regard to the relevant Community Strategy/ Strategies/ National Park Management Plan.</b></p>	<p>The Deposit LDP sets out the content of the Community Strategy. This is supplemented, where applicable, by the content of the discussion papers, topic papers and SA/SEA scoping report.</p> <p>The provisions of the LDP have regard to, and seek to implement the content of the Community Strategy. This is reflected in the identification of issues and drivers and in the subsequent preparation of the LDP Vision, Objectives, Strategy and Strategic Policies. The issues/drivers and objectives have been grouped under the most relevant pillar of the Community Strategy so as to ensure corporate fit and a link between the LDP and the Community Strategy. A critique is provided within the Strategy as to the spatial and chronological relevance of the Community Strategy mission statement. The LDP also evidences how the Community Strategy has informed the development of the LDP Vision, Objectives and Spatial Options.</p>

The membership of the Community Partnership which is central to the development of the Community Strategy forms the basis of the KSF. This has promoted integration and continuity.

**Carmarthenshire’s Integrated Community Strategy 2020 – Driving Success - Review**

The review of the Community Strategy is being undertaken and incorporates the Community Strategy and other key plans and strategies including the Children and Young People’s Plan and the Health, Social Care and Well Being Strategy. The outcome of this review process has been continually monitored, with LDP input at stakeholder workshops as and where appropriate. The Vision of the LDP remains closely aligned to the Integrated Community Strategy vision, with the LDP vision providing a spatial dimension.

The draft revised Strategy (published for consultation during 2011) includes ‘new’ strategic outcomes that communicate drivers and aspirations for Carmarthenshire remain closely aligned. The revised Community Strategy makes explicit reference to the LDP as a key delivery mechanism for delivering some of the above aspirations and demonstrates an even closer synergy with the LDP.

Specific outcomes in the emerging integrated community strategy (March 2011 draft) of particular relevance to the LDP are:

- 4.1 (point 3) “ensuring that all new buildings are constructed to the highest standards of energy efficiency and are zero carbon”;
- 4.3 (point 1) “utilising the Local Development Plan land use planning policies to promote sustainable development, help build more sustainable communities, with access to local services and reducing the need to travel”;
- 4.3 (point 2) “ensuring that future development or projects take account of the impact on, and opportunities to enhance our natural environment”;
- 4.3 (point 3) “ensuring that future developments take account of and plans for changes brought about by climate change”
- 4.4 (point 3) “working towards greenspace assessment targets as part of our future land planning process”
- 7.0 - Partnership Profiles (specific mention of the LDP).

The working relationship between the LDP and Community Strategy Teams is consistent with the inter dependant

	<p>roles of the two processes and complies with guidance issued in the LDP Manual. Ongoing dialogue will continue to ensure that the LDP can provide the means to deliver the aspirations of the Community Strategy.</p>
<p><b>Key Question:</b> Does the plan have regard to the community strategy, by setting out policies and proposals which deliver key components of that strategy, which are consistent with higher-level planning policy and relate to the use and development of land?</p> <p>Yes, as set out above, and within the LDP and relevant supporting papers and evidence.</p>	

**Coherence and Effectiveness Tests**

<b>Tests</b>	<b>Self Assessment</b>
<p><b>Test CE1: The Plan sets out a coherent strategy from which its policies and allocations logically flow and, where cross boundary issues are relevant, is not in conflict with the development plan’s prepared by neighbouring authorities.</b></p>	<p>The Deposit LDP sets out the national, regional and local context (including those of adjoining areas) including the relationship to the WSP, Community Strategy and neighbouring authorities. This is supplemented by the content of the discussion papers, topic papers and SA/SEA. Account is taken of the regional work undertaken, including co-operation and collaborative work with neighbouring authorities in contributing to strategies. The issues/drivers section reviews national and regional level issues as well as local level issues.</p> <p>The Strategy flows and emerges from this policy context from the identification of issues and drivers through a logical progression to the objectives and Vision and in turn to the strategic and then specific policies and proposals. The strategy evolved through the pre-deposit stakeholder engagement with the content from identification of issues through the identification of a preferred strategic option (the strategy) driven by the KSF. In its content it sets out to introduce the LDP and the process which underpins its preparation. It also seeks to set out and identify the relevant contextual background within which the plan will be prepared and its core influences including its relationship and compatibility with those of neighbouring authorities.</p> <p>The plan sets out the how the spatial strategy will be implemented based on its sustainability principles and in line with the pre-deposit work previously undertaken with the settlement hierarchy outlining the respective position of identified settlements. The policies and proposals both strategic and specific provide the framework through which the plans objectives will be implemented and the decision-making process will be undertaken.</p> <p>Carmarthenshire is a member of the South West Wales Regional Planning Group, which includes all the neighbouring authorities. This has been further supplemented by a Pathfinder Group which seeks to develop expertise and share experience in respect of the LDP. Further individual meeting on specific cross boundary matters and in relation to the development of understanding in respect of LDP considerations have been held. Also see test C1 above. There are no significant boundary issues in respect of the Deposit LDP, indeed where compatibility is possible this will have been duly considered and incorporated as part of the plan preparation. In relation to the Brecon Beacons National Park there is no notable conflict in policy approaches in so far as it affects the implementation of either authority’s strategy or gives rise to potential future conflict. The nature of that area within the County which falls within the Brecon Beacons national Park whilst spatially fairly significant, in</p>

	<p>population and settlement terms is not. There are numerous cross border settlements but they are of a small scale and do not contain land use proposals of a notable scale or significance. In terms of population and household change requirements the impact of growth within the park boundary is of a small scale and doesn't impact on the overall requirement for the LDP. This will however be continually monitored as the respective authorities' plans progress.</p>
<p><b>Key Question:</b> Do the policies and allocations clearly relate to the aims and objectives in the strategy set out in the submitted plan? It may help if policies are cross referenced to the key aims and objectives.</p> <p>Yes, the policies and allocations reinforce and deliver the aspirations and objectives of the strategy. Cross-referencing to indicate the relevant objectives and the issues underpinning the identification of the objectives runs throughout the content of the plan.</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Are the policies within the LDP themselves consistent?</p> <p>Yes, the plan policies all emerge from the core principle of sustainability and are consistent in reflecting the strategic direction of the plan.</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Are there any obvious gaps in the coverage of the plan having regard to its purpose and the relevant requirements set out in national planning policy?</p> <p>No obvious gaps exist.</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Is it clear how the plan relates to those prepared by neighbouring authorities and how cross-boundary issues have been addressed?</p> <p>Yes, as set out above and within the Deposit LDP.</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Where there are overlaps, are these consistent/complementary?</p> <p>Yes, as set out above.</p>	

<p><b>Test CE2: The strategy, policies and allocations are realistic and appropriate having considered the relevant alternatives and are founded on a robust and credible evidence base.</b></p>	<p>The identification of issues and objectives and the selection of the preferred strategic spatial option followed consideration of the alternatives presented to the KSF and their subsequent deliberations. The resultant strategy having been subject to consultation throughout the pre-deposit stages of plan preparation (including topic papers and the preferred strategy) is founded on the principles of sustainability and seeks to reflect the characteristics of a diverse County. It reflects and is guided by robust evidence, for instance with the forecasts for growth and change in population founded upon a sound assessment of previous and evidential future trends.</p> <p>Strategic Spatial Options were presented through the topic and discussion papers and subsequently considered by the KSF. These options were considered and consulted upon to ensure that matters relating to deliverability etc. were appropriately considered. The preparation of options also required an understanding of growth implications. In developing the plan it has, however, been necessary to review the emerging projections for population and household change within the County. In this respect the Deposit Plan differs from the preferred strategy and preceding pre-deposit work by including revised projections based upon a robust re-assessment of evidence. This resulted in the creation of a range of potential options in respect of household requirements each of which are influenced by different considerations and assumptions. These options were tested to reveal their respective impacts which together with the robustness of the evidence underpinning the respective options (or scenarios) influenced and informed their final selection. In this respect the chosen option was influenced by what was considered to represent that founded on the most robust and credible evidence. The hierarchy of settlements has been developed taking account of the respective sustainability credentials of each settlement which define which settlements are most suited to accommodate growth. This hierarchy reflects the availability of services and facilities, accessibility issues and other considerations. Reference should be made to Topic Paper 9 – Development Limits.</p> <p>The Advisory Panel was established consisting of elected members of the Council. Its role in guiding and taking ownership of the plan making process has been key in ensuring that the content of the plan is suitably vetted and that the plan is appropriate and realistic. Details of meetings of the Advisory Panel from its inaugural meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2007 together with copies of reports and minutes can be viewed via the Councils website.</p> <p>Realism should also be related to flexibility and to the ability of a plan to be robust and account for changing circumstances. In this respect reference should be made to test CE4 and notably the flexibility in terms of employment and housing provision within the Deposit LDP.</p>
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	<p>The SA/SEA has an integral and iterative role in the preparation of an LDP. In this respect, its use in testing or measuring the performance of the LDP from its inception through to the preparation of the Deposit LDP is indicative of the iterative feedback between the SA and the LDP as work progresses. The SA process to date is outlined in test P2 above.</p> <p>The <b>SA Scoping Report</b> was produced in September 2008. This represented the first stage of the SA/SEA process and set the context for the SA of the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan (LDP). This Scoping Report is the first stage in the SA/SEA of the Carmarthenshire LDP. It sets out the social, environmental and economic characteristics (baseline) of Carmarthenshire and reviews international, national and local plans, policies and strategies that Carmarthenshire's LDP will need to align with.</p> <p>This Scoping Report was produced as a consultation document (3 September 2008 to the 8 October 2008 (6 weeks)) and made available to statutory consultees (Cadw, Environment Agency Wales and Countryside Council for Wales) as well as a wide range of other interested stakeholders. This was to ensure that the most important sustainability issues in Carmarthenshire have been identified and that the SA/SEA framework of objectives will be as effective as possible in assessing the likely impacts of the LDP. The draft SA Report was then reviewed in light of the consultation responses received.</p> <p>The assessment of the LDP Strategic Objectives and that of the Strategic Spatial Options formed an important component of their consideration and were included in the topic papers published for consultation in May 2009. This part of the process afforded an opportunity to test the appropriateness and suitability of the strategic options and the strategic objectives. It did so looking at the relative sustainability credentials of the objectives and the preferred strategic option (as selected by the KSF) and that of the other options and any sustainability implications.</p> <p>The Initial SA/SEA Report was published in November 2009 for consultation (4 November 2009 and 4 January 2010). The responses received were reported to County Council Executive Board on the 22 March 2010 and reported to full Council on the 21 April 2010. The Council report, in accounting for the iterative nature of the plan making process, also sought to address issues raised and proposed changes to the content of the preferred strategy notably the strategic policies.</p> <p>The SA Report has been published for Consultation along with the Deposit LDP and other associated documents and evidence. The iteration necessary as part of the plan making process was again evident in the assessment</p>
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	<p>of its content with the recommendations from emerging drafts of the SA influencing the Deposit LDP. The SA Report is available on the Councils website.</p>
<p><b>Key Question:</b> Is it clear that the LPA considered the relevant options and alternatives in preparing the plan? LPAs will not be expected to deal with every possible alternative or option but they will be expected to consider those put to them during the process of preparation and engagement.</p> <p>Yes, as set out above, and within the LDP and relevant supporting papers and evidence.</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Are the assumptions in the LDP set out clearly and supported by evidence?</p> <p>Yes, as set out above, and within the LDP and relevant supporting papers and evidence.</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Does the evidence clearly support the plan’s strategy and policies?</p> <p>Yes, as set out above, and within the LDP and relevant supporting papers and evidence.</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Is the evidence robust and credible and has it been prepared in accordance with national planning policy and good practice guidance?</p> <p>Yes, as set out above, and within the LDP and relevant supporting papers and evidence.</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Where a balance has been struck in taking decisions between competing alternatives – is it clear how those decisions have been taken?</p> <p>Yes, as set out above, and within the LDP and relevant supporting papers and evidence.</p>	<p>of its content with the recommendations from emerging drafts of the SA influencing the Deposit LDP. The SA Report is available on the Councils website.</p>
<p><b>Test CE3: There are clear mechanisms for implementation and monitoring.</b></p>	<p>The deposit LDP includes a specific section in relation to implementation and monitoring. This outlines a monitoring framework which will be used as a tool for measuring the implementation of LDP policies. The framework comprises a series of core and local performance indicators and targets in order to monitor LDP policies.</p> <p>The SA/SEA Scoping Report identified the indicators that will be used to monitor progress on sustainability issues</p>

and more specifically, sustainable development. These, along with additional indicators, are outlined in a separate framework which will be used as a tool for monitoring sustainable development in the Plan area. Appropriate targets which correspond to these indicators will be developed once the suitable data sources have been identified and the initial data has been collated.

An AMR of the final plan will be produced to review its progress, including the relevance and success of the LDP's policies and proposals, identifying any changes necessary. Irrespective of the AMR's findings, Carmarthenshire County Council will be required to carry out a review of the whole Plan every 4 years.

**Key Question:** Does the plan contain realistic targets and milestones which relate to the delivery of the policies?

Yes, as outlined within the above and set out within the Deposit LDP.

**Key Question:** Is it clear how these are to be measured and how they are linked to the production of the annual monitoring report?

Yes, as outlined within the above and set out within the Deposit LDP.

**Key Question:** Are the delivery mechanisms and timescale for implementation of the policies clearly identified?

Yes, where applicable as outlined within the above and set out within the Deposit LDP.

**Key Question:** Is it clear who is intended to implement each policy? Where the actions required are outside the direct control of the LPA is there evidence that there is the necessary commitment from the relevant organisation?

Yes, the Deposit LDP reflects those commitments expressed within relevant plans and strategies and through monitoring and continued dialogue seek to ensure that changes are identified and taken account of.

**Key Question:** Do the processes for measuring the success of the plan accord with national planning policy and best practice guidance?

Yes, as outlined within the above and set out within the Deposit LDP.

**Key Question:** Does the plan set out the factors essential to the delivery of key policy objectives of the plan?

<p>Yes, as outlined within the above and set out within the Deposit LDP and associated evidence and background documentation.</p>	
<p><b>Test CE4: It is reasonably flexible to enable it to deal with changing circumstances.</b></p>	<p>The Deposit LDP is considered to be sufficiently flexible to deal with changing circumstances and is capable of retaining that flexibility through the application of the indicators etc, employed within the implementation and monitoring framework. Flexibility is provided in the identification of land for both employment and housing with the former making appropriate provision to provide a range and choice of sites whilst also reflecting the strategic and spatial objectives of the plan. The identified household requirement and its translation into site allocations provides for flexibility in applying an uplift in the 15,197 requirement and as with employment land supply, provides for contingencies.</p> <p>The plan makes provision through policy topic areas for the consideration, where appropriate, for alternative uses to be considered either on specific allocated sites or on unallocated sites. This provides an opportunity outside of the monitoring process for the plan to react to changing circumstances.</p> <p>Supplementary Planning Guidance also provides a useful tool in providing appropriate flexibility. This is particularly relevant in relation to a subject matter which requires reappraisal and updating. In such instances the identification of an SPG as a means of elaborating on the content of the plans policies and proposals may afford an opportunity to respond more proactively and quickly (providing it does not affect the strategy or go to the heart of the plan) than the monitoring and review process may necessarily allow. A schedule of SPG is set out within Appendix 5.</p> <p>The flexibility afforded through the monitoring and implementation framework and its indicators, targets etc. includes triggers for actions to be undertaken should issues arise in relation to plan delivery.</p>
<p><b>Key Question:</b> Is the plan flexible enough to respond to a variety of , or unexpected, changes in circumstances</p> <p>Yes, as outlined within the above and set out within the Deposit LDP.</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Are development control policies written in a form to enable them to provide a robust and consistent framework for considering planning applications?</p> <p>Yes, they in conjunction with all policies of the Deposit LDP and the guidance contained within national policy provide a concise, consistent and robust decision making framework.</p>	

