

**Powys
Local Development Plan**

2011 - 2026

Deposit Draft Plan

**Sustainability Appraisal Report
June 2014**



Introduction

The Powys Local Development Plan (LDP) is required to 'contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development.' (section 39 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004)

The Welsh Government defines sustainable development as:

“development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

The County Council must a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the LDP as an integral part of the process of plan preparation.

The purpose of SA is to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of a plan so that decisions on its content are made on an informed basis.

The SA considers how implementation of the plan will help to meet sustainable development objectives.

Powys County Council has signed the Sustainable Development charter for Wales. Undertaking SA to inform the LDP acts on the County Council's commitment to sustainable development by:

- being clear about our role, responsibilities and commitments in relation to sustainable development;
- providing clear leadership for sustainable development within our organisations and with those we work with;
- promoting continuous improvement so that we reduce the environmental impact of all our activities;
- embedding sustainable development into all our decision-making, including financial decision-making;
- striving to be an exemplar organisation, leading and inspire others to act.

The Council is undertaking a separate Strategic Environmental Assessment to assess the effects of the LDP on the environment and a separate Habitats Regulations Assessment to consider impacts on the County's European designated habitats. This approach does not follow the guidance in the development plan manual, however it does allow for the integration tool to be used to consider each of the sustainability capitals and for the Strategic Environmental Assessment to be focussed on the environment.

Involvement

The SA methodology was subject to a formal Baseline Scoping consultation during 2011. The final selected Methodology was arrived at through consultation and involvement with main stakeholders including statutory

consultees, the Council's internal LDP Working Group and the Council's Sustainable Development Co-ordinator.

The SA of the Deposit LDP has been undertaken by the planning policy team and scrutinised by the Council's sustainable development co-ordinator.

Background to the Sustainable Development Integration Tool.

The County Council's Sustainable Development Integration Tool has been used to conduct the SA of the LDP. It has been developed with the Forum for the Future and is based on the concept of a 'capitals' framework.

The framework is based on the idea that there are five 'capitals' from which people in Powys, and elsewhere, receive a flow of benefits.

These 'capitals' represent the resources people need to lead fulfilled lives. It applies the familiar notion of capital to assets that we don't usually associate as such. It encourages us to move to a state where we live off the income or flows of benefits that can be derived from 'capitals' rather than depleting them.

Capital assets depreciate over time unless they are maintained. If we borrow more than we can afford to repay each month, we store up problems for the future. The approach applies this thinking more widely.

The five 'capitals' are:

Financial capital (money)

This reflects the value of the other types of capital, and enables them to be owned and traded. It should accurately reflect the value of other capitals (e.g. full cost accounting to internalise environmental and social costs and show on balance sheets). Intangible assets such as brand and reputation need to be valued.

Unlike the other capitals, financial capital has no intrinsic value; whether in shares, bonds or banknotes, its value is purely representative of natural, human, social or manufactured capital.

Note: This plays an important role in our economy, by reflecting the productive power of the other types of capital, and enabling them to be owned and traded. This is referred to as the flow of benefits.

Human capital (individuals)

Enhancing human capital is central to a flourishing economy. Human capital includes human rights, health, education and training, social skills and participation and human values (different in different cultural contexts). The flow of benefits from human capital include work, creativity, innovation, healthy fulfilling lives, empathy and understanding.

Social capital (relationships)

This is the value added to any activity or economic process by human relationships and co-operation. It takes the form of structures, institutions, relationships, networks which enable individuals to maintain and develop their human capital in partnership with others.

Examples are families, communities, businesses, trusted governance and justice systems, stable socio-political structures, mutual respect and understanding and safe and supportive living and working environments.

The flow of benefits from social capital include safety and security, education, human rights and equality.

Infrastructure/Manufactured capital (stuff)

This comprises material goods such as tools, machines, buildings, and other forms of infrastructure which contribute to the production process, but do not become embodied in its output.

The flow of benefits includes living/work/leisure places, access and sanitation.

Natural capital

This comprises resources, both renewable and finite, sinks which absorb, neutralise or recycle wastes and processes: such as climate regulation and ecosystem function.

The flow of benefits include energy, nutrition, safe water, clean air, waste disposal and an adequate resource base.

How do the capitals relate to one another?

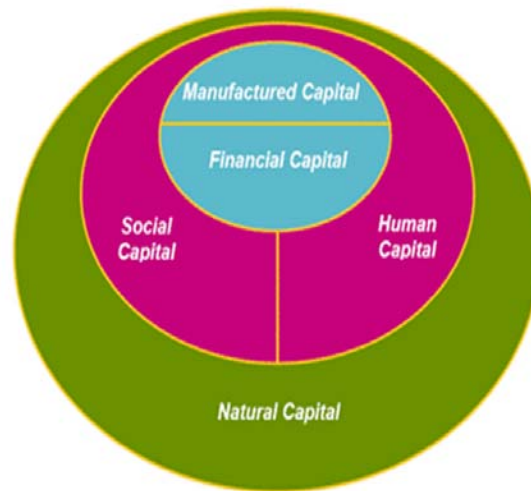
The Five Capitals Framework sets the environment as the ultimate bottom-line. This means that:

- Our human capabilities and social institutions and networks rest on the resources and services we gain from our environment.
- The economy is reliant on the environment and that *services* a healthy society, not the other way around.

The capitals accept that financial capital has no intrinsic value: it's a means of valuing and exchanging things, and enabling them to be owned and traded.

The following is an extract from Sustainability Integration Tool presentation:

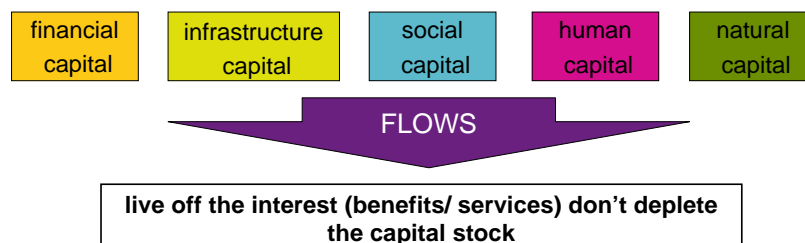
Five Capital Framework



The Characteristics of a world in which all of the capitals are maintained:

- **Outcomes:** universal and continuous access for current and future generations to the resources and opportunities necessary to live well. Equality of access regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexuality or any other form of personal identity.
- **Access to resources:** safe water and sanitation, clean air, the natural environment, adequate nutrition, information, social networks, tools and technology.
- **Opportunities:** education, employment, financial services, preventative and restorative healthcare, transparent and participatory political systems, shelter, leisure and recreation

Powys and Powys Council have 5 capital assets



unsustainability = we are depleting all of these stocks

sustainability = we are using and deriving benefits and services from these stocks in ways that protect and maintain them

How the Integration Tool has been applied to appraise the Local Development Plan

The sustainability integration tool was used to identify the sustainability impacts of the preferred strategy (and its alternatives) so that these could be considered when taking decisions on the plan.

The tool uses an excel spreadsheet to assess the options and proposals. The tool is structured around 19 criteria devised specifically for the appraisal of projects in Powys and provides a 'significance rating' across a range of criteria for each project.

The deposit plan's vision, objectives, spatial strategy, policies and proposals have been considered against the sustainability criteria. Bespoke toolkits have been developed to undertake SA at both settlement and site levels to consider the options for development sites.

Before using the integration tool to appraise the detail of the Plan, Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analysis was undertaken. It considers the key issues Powys and is reported in line the five sustainability capitals.

The SWOT identifies where the LDP can address the key issues and take advantage of opportunities to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The analysis highlighted areas where the draft plan assessed could be improved. (Appendix 1).

The LDP was considered against the sustainability capitals. Conclusions were drawn on:

1. Whether the Plan would generate **impacts** that are one of following:
 - Positive
 - Negative
 - Neutral

2. What the **magnitude** of those impacts would be; award a rating of 'high', 'moderate' or 'low' according to the cumulative effect of the following factors.
 - The duration of impact (short, medium or long term)
 - The number of people affected
 - The percentage change from current baseline
 - The range of impact (local, regional, national or global)
 - Reversibility

3. The **probability** of occurrence, specifically whether the outcome would be:
 - *high*: expected to occur in most circumstances
 - *medium*: quite likely to occur in most circumstances
 - *low*: may occur at some time or unlikely to occur

Notes were also made on any issues raised and recommendations on how to improve the significance rating (if relevant).

It is important to understand that the key questions in this corporate appraisal toolkit are simply prompting questions, designed to encourage debate during the assessment and are not absolute questions to be answered. The key assessment is against the topic.

The assessment/ recommendations section of the spreadsheet has been used to record the reasoning behind the scores awarded.

The results are contained in an excel spreadsheet. (Appendix 2).

The tool produces a spider diagram to help analyse the performance of the proposal against all of the sustainability criteria. A positive score of one indicates neutral; a negative score indicates negative impacts and a positive score of two or more indicates positive impacts.

In interpreting the diagram, the further the line is away from the centre of the web, the more positive the assessment results in terms of meeting sustainable development criteria.

To assess the settlement hierarchy and the sustainability of candidate sites the 19 criterion within the 5 capital framework have been incorporated into the bespoke toolkits devised for appraisal work at the settlement and site level assessments.

The site toolkit will be made available for those who may wish to make a “site allocation representation”.

The results of the assessment informed decisions taken on the settlement hierarchy and the selection of proposed land allocations from the pool of possible (candidate) sites. These are contained in Appendix 3.

Results & Analysis

The results of the appraisal were used to inform the LDP Working Group’s consideration of the Deposit Draft Plan at its meeting on 9th May 2014. Overall, it is considered that the Draft Deposit Plan will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

This section sets out the assessment conclusions and recommendations which have been incorporated in the LDP.

Appraisal of the Vision

The LDP Vision is considered to offer a place sensitive, holistic vision for the future of Powys towards 2026. The Vision relates to the 5 capitals and seeks a sustainable future.

Deposit LDP Vision:

“Powys is a county of considerable variety extending from the South Wales Valleys to the Berwyn Mountains in the north, and from the Cambrian Mountains in the west to the English border in the east.

As the ‘green heart of Wales’, Powys will be a place of vibrant and resilient communities (**Social & Human Capital**) providing sustainable development (**Environmental and Infrastructure Capital**) and economic opportunities (**Social, Human and Financial Capital**) set in a healthy, safe environment (**Environmental and Human Capital**), whilst celebrating, protecting, enhancing and making the most of its natural resources, native wildlife and habitats, heritage (**Environmental Capital**) and distinctive characteristics (**Human and Social Capital**).

Powys’ towns and larger villages will be vibrant and accessible service centres (**Infrastructure, Social and Financial Capital**). They will be the focus for integrating housing, economic and service development (**Infrastructure, Human and Financial Capital**) to meet their own needs and those of their surrounding communities (**Social Capital**).

Powys’s rural areas will be a working countryside (**Environmental, Infrastructure and Financial Capital**) of sustainable communities (**Social and Human Capital**) supported by a thriving and diverse rural economy of small businesses” (**Social, Infrastructure, Human and Financial Capital**).

Appraisal of the working draft Objectives

LDP Objective 11 seeks to conserve and protect Powys’ natural resources. Recommendation: geodiversity was not included in the objective but should be added.

Objective 3 promotes efficient use of land whilst protecting soils of high value: the objective should also protect important mineral resources so that it aligns with Objective 12.

The LDP Vision makes reference to the County’s distinctive characteristics, which it seeks to protect: Objective 13 which seeks to conserve, protect and enhance Powys’ built heritage should also make reference to the need to protect “distinctiveness”.

Appraisal of the working draft Policies

The following improvements were made following appraisal of the working draft policies.

Environmental Capital - Green Infrastructure

Policy DM1, criteria 14 has been made more specific, including reference to avoiding air / land / water pollution.

Infrastructure Capital – Access

Development is located via a sustainable settlement hierarchy. The hierarchy is based on population and the provision of local services/facilities, including the availability of public transport, within the settlement hence reducing the demand for travel. Development is expected to meet highway standards and incorporate the access needs of all transport users including pedestrians and cyclists. Transport and travel plans can be requested.

RECOMMENDATION - Can (should) the Plan do more to facilitate links, encourage pedestrian/cycling to services, - could there be a more specific policy for developers to investigate the potential for links (or will design & access statements do this, TAN design guidance ?).

By concentrating development in the most sustainable settlements, these locations will have the potential to be the focal points for improved digital connectivity.

Social Capital: Culture and Sense of Place

The LDP vision and objectives set out how land and settlements in Powys should be used and developed. The plan envisages vibrant places that celebrate, protect, enhance and make the most of their assets including natural and cultural heritage. Policies that promote culture and a sense of place include those relating to design, built heritage, welsh language and community facilities including for example, supporting galleries, theatres, libraries and community centres and a presumption against the loss of community facilities. The LDP vision and objectives make reference to the distinctive characteristics of Powys including distinctiveness in built heritage. Design policies make specific reference to the support of community safety and crime prevention.

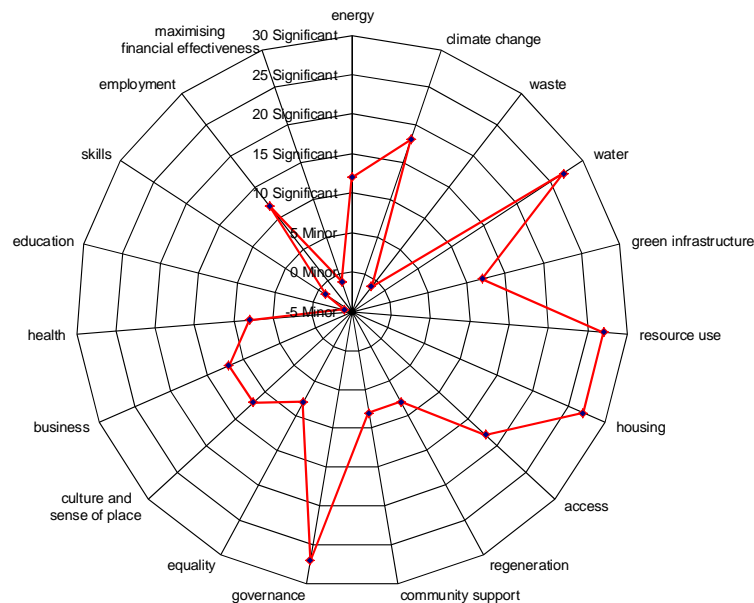
RECOMMENDATION: Is there a strong enough emphasis on respecting Local Distinctiveness at the design and build Stage (detailed planning permission)? Should policies be strengthened (e.g. need for SPG?) or will national guidance and existing draft policies be sufficient to raise design standards?

Human Capital – Health

The LDP's sustainable settlement hierarchy focusses development in areas which are well served by local facilities, hence reducing the need for car travel and encouraging walking and cycling. Development design policies support pedestrian linkages and access to the public rights of way network. Access to, and the provision of, open space is strongly supported including allotments and community growing spaces which provide opportunity for leisure, exercise and healthy food. Furthermore, the Plan policies seek to ensure that residential amenities (noise levels, air quality, outdoor space etc.) of the occupier are protected.

RECOMMENDATION - is there more the LDP can do to address areas of multiple deprivation (see objective 16) - should objective 16 be amended?

Chart Showing Summary Results of the SA



Analysis of the Results

Very Positive Impacts

Of the 19 criteria set to explore sustainable development aims/objectives, the Deposit Plan performs very well in sustainability terms (++ very positive impact) in 11 areas - Energy, Climate Change, Water, Green Infrastructure, Resource Use, Housing, Access, Governance, Culture & Sense of Place, Business and Employment.

These are all areas in which a land-use Plan, if correctly structured, could be expected to impact positively.

Positive Impacts

The Plan performs well (+ significant positive impact) in four areas of regeneration, community support, equality and health.

Consideration was given as to whether the Local Development Plan could do more in these aspects to improve its performance and more fully achieve sustainable development objectives. However, other high level plans are aligned to the LDP, for example the One Powys Plan, the single integrated plan for the County, has priorities for improvement which include:

Building stronger, safer, and economically viable communities (including a focus on Regeneration) and in supporting and empowering Healthy Lifestyles.

Powys also has a separate Regeneration Strategy which the Local Service Board partnership (which includes Powys County Council) has made a commitment to review.

The LDP has been developed and written to align with other corporate Plans and is therefore expected to be compatible with their aims and objectives. The One Powys Plan has sustainable development at its heart, citing it as one of the guiding principles upon which the single integrated plan is based.

Tables considering the compatibility of the Powys LDP objectives with the one plan priorities and the Regeneration Strategy priorities are appended at:

Furthermore it is recognised that often the catalyst for, for example, local regeneration and community projects lies outside of the land-use policy framework, e.g. such as reliance on grant funding.

Provided the LDP can appropriately support, not impede, the projects/outcomes from these other streams of intervention, it is considered that sustainability aims will be satisfactorily met and it is not therefore considered necessary to amend the Local Development Plan further as a result of the SA outcomes above.

Neutral or Negative Impacts

SA of the Plan has identified that the Plan is currently weaker in four areas:

Education (significance symbol – negative impact) Skills, Waste, Maximising Financial Effectiveness (significance symbol - ? unknown/neutral impact)

Education and Skills are part of the Human Capital framework, Waste is within the Natural (environmental) capital framework and Financial Effectiveness sits alone under Financial Capital.

Of these areas, Natural Capital is considered to be most influenced by the LDP, a land-use Plan. The Sustainability Appraisal has therefore highlighted the need to consider if the LDP goes far enough to meet the sustainable waste agenda and its priorities including the waste hierarchy (reduce, re-use, recycle).

On the contrary, Education and Skills and Financial Capital are issues which are featured in another high level strategic plan of the Local Service Board, the One Powys Plan. It is considered that this transformational plan, agreed by all members of the Powys Local Service Board (a partnership between Powys County Council, Powys Teaching Health Board, Dyfed Powys Police and the Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations) is the more appropriate Plan to focus on these areas for improvement although it is recognised that the LDP should be aligned to the priorities to avoid conflict. Section 2.3.9 of the Deposit Plan refers the relationship between the LDP and other local policy.

Potential to strengthen the Plan by making specific reference to the Design TAN 12 and policies therein. Sustainable Buildings – TAN. And/or SPG with consideration to these issues? But not expected to repeat national policy.

Conclusion

From the SA of the Deposit Plan, it is concluded that the Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. The areas of possible change highlighted in this report have influenced the content of the deposit plan.