

BRIDGEND
REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2018-2033)
EXAMINATION

SCHEDULE OF MATTERS, ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

Matter 6: Good Design and Sustainable Placemaking – Sustainable Transport and Accessibility

Issue: Does the Plan provide a framework for the management of Sustainable Transport and Accessibility that is soundly based, justified and consistent with the requirements of national policy?

1. Does Policy SP5 provide a clear and consistent framework for the integration and coordination of sustainable transport measures and land use planning? and does it adequately promote active travel and reduce the need to travel?

Policy SP5 provides a clear and consistent framework for the integration and coordination of sustainable transport measures and land use planning emphasising that movement, connectivity and legibility of transport links are critical components in the creation of a successful, sustainable place.

Policy SP5 seeks to ensure that development is supported by appropriate transport measures and infrastructure, and depending on the nature, scale and siting of the proposal will be required to accord with the sustainable transport hierarchy for planning (as set out in PPW).

SP5 requires all development proposals to consider improving and/or expanding corresponding active travel and public transport networks. This will prove fundamental in ensuring the increasing attractiveness of active travel as a credible alternative to the private car, thereby encouraging modal shifts away from unsustainable forms of transportation, helping to promote physical activity and reducing the impact of transport-based emissions. Policy SP5 is supported by Policy PLA12 Active Travel that aims to reduce private car reliance and help the County Borough achieve the principles set out by the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, with the aim of improving and expanding upon the current active travel routes as identified in the Existing Route Maps.

The existing highway network in Bridgend experiences traffic congestion along certain main routes and junctions, which can have a negative impact on amenity, health and well-being and economic competitiveness. Poor air quality is a key issue in some parts of the County, with Air Quality Management Areas having been designated. Policy SP5 seek to secure enhanced sustainable transport

opportunities such as coherent active travel networks, improved traffic measures and increased overall connectivity to help improve air quality by preventing the proliferation of car-based traffic due to new development.

In more rural environments, a lack of public transport access needs to be balanced against the contribution the proposal would make towards the rural economy of that area. Policy SP5 seeks to ensure that development in rural locations should preferably be sited within and adjoining settlements that benefit from key services and facilities, rather than at sporadic countryside locations.

Policy SP5 seeks to ensure that all transport measures will be positively integrated into the places which they serve or pass through. They must also adhere to the user hierarchy rather than continuing to design infrastructure which supports motorised transport. Developments will also be expected, where the Council deems the potential transport implications significant, to produce a comprehensive Transport Assessment and Travel Plan. These must consider all modes of transport in line with the transport hierarchy and develop a strategy to reduce traffic demand and mitigate transportation impacts caused by the proposal.

The available capacity of existing networks also needs to be evaluated and supported by targeted new infrastructure where appropriate. Policy SP5 seeks to ensure that development will therefore be required to deliver, or contribute towards the provision of, active travel schemes, public transport measures, road infrastructure, and other transport measures, in accordance with the Bridgend Local Transport Plan and the Bridgend Integrated Network Plan. Transport measures and infrastructure will need to be delivered in a timely manner to meet the needs of existing and planned communities, with priority given to the provision of active travel connections at the earliest possible opportunity. Where necessary, planning obligations will be sought to ensure that the effects of developments are fully addressed in order to make the development acceptable.

Whilst developments should be encouraged in locations which reduce the need to travel and promote the use of sustainable transport, the Council recognises that any development growth will likely result in greater travel demand, and that increased traffic levels and congestion is likely to occur if appropriate mitigating transport measures and infrastructure are not delivered.

2. Does Policy PA11 provide an appropriate framework for the management of vehicular parking? and is it consistent with the requirements of national planning policy?

PLA11 provides clear reference to the Council's existing adopted SPG17: Parking Standards, which seeks to ensure a transparent and consistent approach to the provision of parking, travel plans and sustainability considerations. This will inform

developers, designers and builders of what is expected of them at an early stage of the development process. PLA11 is therefore considered to provide an appropriate framework for the management of vehicular parking, which will be updated and kept under review through subsequent SPGs once the RLDP is adopted

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11) states (inter alia) that local authorities should develop an integrated strategy on parking to support the overall transport and locational policies of the development plan. Local authorities will need to ensure that their parking standards reflect local transport provision, are adopted by individual authorities as supplementary planning guidance, and are kept under review. On this basis, it is considered that PLA11 provides a suitable framework that is consistent with national policy.

3. Is Policy PLA7 based on robust and credible evidence?

Policy PLA7 is based on robust and credible evidence. Background Paper 16: Development West of the Railway Line, evaluates the existing and future highway capacity issues in Pencoed and concludes that the existing development moratorium for land west of Pencoed (Policy PLA6 of the existing Bridgend Local Development Plan 2013-2021 refers) should be retained within the Replacement Local Development Plan (2018 – 2033) until a suitable transport intervention materialises.

As detailed in Background Paper 16, The Pencoed Level Crossing – Traffic Capacity Study (Redstart, February 2021) provides a junction capacity assessment of the level crossing on Hendre Road, Pencoed along with assessment of key junctions in the vicinity. This assessment clearly demonstrates that the highway network is operating at maximum capacity. When a junction reaches operational capacity, any subsequent additional traffic creates an exponential increase in queuing and delay. Whilst queuing and delay is seen as an acceptable component of some transport planning strategies, this can only be applied where there are genuine, attractive alternatives to motor vehicle travel in the form of high-quality active travel and public transport infrastructure.

In areas where sustainable infrastructure is of a high standard, motor vehicle delay will encourage modal shift to alternative, cleaner modes of travel or will lead to phenomena such as 'peak spreading' whereby essential car users seek to avoid peak hour congestion by commencing a trip earlier or later.

Another common outcome of highway congestion is alternative route choice, whereby existing and future motor vehicle users avoid problem areas altogether. In a balanced highway network, this results in journey time equilibrium as each individual seeks the fastest available route.

However, it is considered that the issues in Pencoed (land west of) prevent the above mitigating measures from materialising, as the physical highway constraints prevent suitable active travel and public transport improvements from materialising to such an extent that new development traffic can be accommodated. Furthermore, the restricted highway network prevents alternative route choice so the impact of additional development traffic in the vicinity would be magnified.

Background Paper 16 reviews a number of evidence base studies which have identified solutions to the current capacity issues. However, the available solutions are subject to many constraints which would need to be overcome through further assessment and design and will require collaboration of several statutory undertakers.

The preferred transport intervention solution identified in WelTAG Stage 2 has a total cost estimate in excess of £9,857,828 and no committed funding through to delivery at this stage.

Other potential funding streams for progression include Welsh Government (e.g. Local Transport Fund/Local Transport Network Fund), Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, Bridgend County Borough Council internal budget and Network Rail (which has also indicated a desire for improvements as a mechanism for increasing future rail services).

and is it necessary to provide a framework for the management of new development?

Yes. Policy PLA7 is required to maintain a moratorium on further development which generates a net increase in vehicular movement to the west of the railway line. New development that generates a net increase in vehicular movement will exacerbate congestion either side of the level-crossing and at the complex over-bridge junction between the eastern end of the relief road and Penybont Road.

To the west of Pencoed, Hendre Road provides a link over the M4 and into Bridgend via Coity. However, this route is restricted in many parts to a single-track lane with passing places so capacity is restricted. To the northwest, the B4280 provides a semi-rural, single-lane carriageway link to Bryncethin, via Heol-y-Cyw. Due to the limitations of the above links, along with the natural desire lines, the vast majority of vehicular traffic on land to the west of the railway line is required to pass over to the eastern side of the track to complete a journey.

The second major capacity constraint in Pencoed is located to the northeast of Pencoed railway station where Penprysg Road railway bridge (also known as

Grants Bridge) forms a controlled traffic signal arrangement between Min-Y-Nant, Penybont Road south/north and Penprysg Road. The junction is restricted to single-lane approaches on all arms and requires four separate stages for each approach and an additional fifth all red stage for pedestrians. The delay associated with this configuration is further compounded by the size of the junction, which requires significant inter green times to prevent collisions between stage changes. Due to these capacity constraints, coupled with relatively high demand, the Penprysg Road railway bridge junction results in significant queues and delay at peak times which is apparent through on-site observation and traffic modelling, discussed further in Background Paper 16.

Background Paper 16 concludes that it is appropriate that the existing development moratorium for land west of Pencoed is retained within the replacement Local Development Plan (2018-2033) until a suitable transport intervention materialises. Therefore, Policy PLA7 is considered necessary to provide a framework for the management of new development.

4. Should Policy PLA12 be amended to recognise the potential for enabling development to take place to fund the delivery of the active travel network?

The LPA does not consider it appropriate to amend Policy PLA12 to recognise the potential for enabling development to take place to fund the delivery of the active travel network.

The recently approved Integrated Network Map sets out Bridgend Council's strategy to improve cycling and walking routes across the county borough, to meet the requirements of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013. The routes identified in this document will be the focus of external and internal funding during the RLDP plan period.

Policies SP3: Good Design and Sustainable Place Making, SP5: Sustainable Transport and Accessibility, PLA12: Active Travel provide a strong framework to promote active travel and ensure that new developments incorporate well-designed safe features and facilities that will be accessible to all people to walk and cycle for everyday journeys, reducing existing heavy reliance placed upon the private car.

Such an amendment to PLA12 could inadvertently give rise to speculative planning applications that seek to fund the delivery of the active travel network as justification for development that may otherwise be out of accord with the development plan. This could risk placing the Council in a tenuous position, with undue weight being apportioned to active travel at the expense of the more holistic range of issues the Replacement LDP is seeking to address. It is therefore not

considered appropriate to amend PLA12 in this respect and such an amendment could risk undermining the Council's INM and the Replacement LDP spatial strategy.