

Cynllyn Datblygu Lleol Abertawe

Trydydd Adroddiad Monitro Blynnyddol – Cyfnod 2021-22

Crynodeb Gweithredol

Swansea Local Development Plan

3rd Annual Monitoring Report – Period 2021-22

Executive Summary



Cyngor **Abertawe**
Swansea Council

Introduction

- 1 As part of the statutory development plan process, following adoption of the Local Development Plan (LDP), the Council is required to prepare an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) setting out how the objectives of the plan are being achieved, how the strategy, key policies, allocations, and infrastructure requirements are being delivered, and identifying any challenges, opportunities, and contextual changes in which the Plan operates. This document provides the third AMR of the Swansea LDP (AMR 3) and covers the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.
- 2 The AMR identifies various national planning policy and guidance changes affecting the planning context of the LDP, including the following:
 - Implications of amendments to Technical Advice Note 15
 - Welsh Development Quality Requirements 2021 (WDQR 2021)
 - New LHMA methodology/toolkit
 - Net Zero Wales
 - WG changes to address the impact of second homes and short-term holiday lets
- 3 The COVID 19 pandemic remains a factor in the monitoring for this year. The pandemic has had a significant impact on some of the activities being monitored (e.g. while traffic flows have increased from low levels during the height of the pandemic, traffic patterns remain markedly altered from pre pandemic habits). The impacts are described at the relevant points throughout the AMR document and may well continue to raise significant issues in AMR 4 going forward.

Summary of Findings

- 4 The LDP was adopted in February 2019. National legislation requires the Council to undertake a comprehensive statutory review of the LDP no longer than 4 years from the date of its adoption. Therefore, to meet this 4-year requirement, a review of the LDP is required to commence by February 2023. On this basis, irrespective of the findings of this monitoring report

regarding individual indicators, in-line with the process prescribed by WG guidance, a statutory plan review is required and that as the first stage of this process, a LDP Review Report needs to be prepared.

- 5 The AMR confirms that every LDP indicator has been reviewed against the relevant targets, trigger points, and WG guidance and this has shown that, after the third full year as the adopted Development Plan, overall, most indicators continue to show positive policy implementation (shown as green). There are, however, some key policy indicator targets and monitoring outcomes that are not being achieved, which indicates that these policies are not functioning as intended, and in these instances the monitoring has confirmed that these issues will need to be addressed as part of the statutory Plan review. The table below summarises the outcome for all the indicators.
- 6 A small number of indicators have been flagged for further investigation and research as a result of the monitoring findings, which will be required to inform the Replacement LDP. The LDP evidence base as a whole will need to be updated as part of the statutory Plan review.

LDP Monitoring Summary for 2021-22 – AMR 3

Assessment	Action	Number of Indicators
Indicators suggest that the Plan policies are being implemented effectively and there is no cause for review	Continue Monitoring (Green)	95
Indicators suggest that the Plan Policies are not being implemented in the intended manner.	Training Required (Blue)	0
Indicators suggest the need for further guidance in addition to those identified in the Plan	SPG required (Purple)	0
Indicators suggest the Plan Policies are not being effective as originally expected.	Further investigation/ research required (Yellow)	5
Indicators suggest that Plan policy/ies are not being implemented.	Policy Review (Orange)	18
Indicators suggest the Plan strategy is not being implemented.	Plan Review (Red)	7

- 7 374 homes were built in 2021-22. Housing completions have again been below the Average Annual Requirement (AAR) in 2021-22 as was the case in 2019-20 and 2020-21. As in other parts of South Wales (AMRs for other urban areas - NPT, Bridgend, Cardiff, and Newport are reporting LDP housing delivery below target levels), significant timelags have been encountered from the forecasted trajectory in the LDP to deliver the identified housing requirement. On the basis of the latest site forecasts, which have been formulated through engagement with developers, the updated forecasted housing supply illustrates that delivery in Swansea is expected to again fall below the AAR rate in the next 12 months on the basis of the sites with planning consent. Housing supply is not expected to exceed the AAR until the subsequent years of the Plan period. This

is because SDA allocations are expected to comprehensively get underway to deliver significant numbers of new homes, with more than one outlet on these large sites. In addition, other sites identified in the updated trajectory will have progressed through the development pipeline to begin delivery of new homes.

- 8 It is important to note that delays in the delivery of housing requirements are being experienced across South Wales and this issue is not confined to Swansea. For example, the latest Cardiff AMR notes that completion rates are below targets for housing sites in their LDP which was adopted several years before the Swansea LDP. These delays are attributed to a combination of site assembly, legal and logistical factors along with the time required to secure the necessary planning and adoption consents. However, the latest Cardiff AMR also notes that once their SDA sites started to deliver new homes, this drove a significant step change in housing completions in the County. Construction has now started on most of the Cardiff strategic housing sites and it is expected that housing completions over the remaining 4 years of the Plan period will increase significantly. In this context, it is important to note that development has now commenced on the first residential led SDA in the LDP (SDA C) during 2022-23, which will be reported in AMR 4.
- 9 There have been highly exceptional circumstances that have influenced this outcome over the last 2-3 years. At times within this period dwelling completions have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic affecting site operations, while labour supply issues, rising costs of materials and extended lead in times due to supply chain problems are also impacting the housebuilding industry. This, along with further factors, have impacted on viability and in some cases delayed deliverability.
- 10 As a consequence of lower than anticipated housing delivery over the initial years of the Plan, to meet the LDP housing target of 15,600 new dwellings over the plan period, an annual build rate of 2,570 new homes will now be needed from 2022 to 2025 to fully deliver the LDP housing requirement within the Plan period. This level of delivery is unprecedented and would require numerous sites to come forward at the same time. It is therefore considered highly unlikely that the LDP requirement will be delivered in full during the LDP period, and due to the time lags, some sites will come forward later than expected.
- 11 Development of some plan allocations has not progressed as quickly as originally forecasted due to several factors, despite the best efforts of the Council to facilitate progress of schemes. While many of the sites included in the LDP are considered to be sound and are progressing, the indicators suggest that the Plan is not being fully implemented as expected and these

issues will need to be addressed in the statutory LDP review which is now required by WG Regulations due to the fact that four years has passed since adoption.

- 12 While a review is necessary due to the delayed delivery of sites, the review will need to reflect the significant work that has been undertaken by both applicants and the LPA to progress several sites to an advanced stage. This will ensure that they are well placed to soon deliver homes on site and create excellent examples of new sustainable places and may well become commitments in the period before a Replacement LDP is adopted. The Review will scrutinise the deliverability and viability of existing allocations, consider what other appropriate and sustainable sites could contribute to the housing supply where necessary and highlight the change in evidence of housing requirements since the LDP was adopted.
- 13 In terms of affordable housing, 149 affordable homes were built through the planning system in 2021-22, 113 social rented and 36 intermediate tenure, while planning consent was granted in the 12-month period for a further 254 affordable homes.
- 14 The proportion of HMOs within the HMO Management Area, as a proportion of the residential properties, has been monitored. Overall, within the HMO Management Area, HMOs were identified as comprising 24.1% of all residential properties. The percentage remains within the +/-2% range identified in the monitoring indicator, showing that the indicator target has been achieved in 2021-22.
- 15 In terms of employment land, in addition to the land consented during 2019-2020 and 2020-21, the 2.4 ha consented in 2021-22 equates to a total of 5.9 ha or 9.8% of the overall LDP allocation of 60 ha. It should be noted that the Plan provides a higher level of employment land allocations than the identified employment land requirement of 19 ha. It should be noted that the Plan provides a higher level of employment land allocations than the identified employment land requirement of 19 ha. It is also useful to note that the amount of employment land granted planning consent in 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 provides 31.1% of the 19 ha LDP employment land requirement.
- 16 The Plan Review will provide the opportunity to reassess the employment land requirement against the supply of potential employment land and the significant employment related development currently in the pipeline on SDAs.

- 17 Vehicle journey times have now been analysed for AMR 3, which show a reduction on the 2014 base case which informed the LDP evidence base. Whilst this is likely due in part to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, overall daily traffic flows have largely recovered to pre-pandemic levels, but travel habits have changed significantly with a reduction in commuting trips in both morning and evening peak hours.
- 18 Monitoring of other policies such as design and placemaking, Green Infrastructure, Welsh language, the historic and cultural environment, tourism, transport, and safeguarding public health and natural resources has shown that they are being implemented effectively, delivering placemaking objectives and preventing inappropriate development. A small number of minor amendments and clarifications have been made to monitoring indicators to reflect changes in data availability and context; or to clarify what the indicator seeks to record.
- 19 AMR 3 has identified that, with the LDP having been adopted nearly 4 years ago, a Statutory plan review is now required to prepare a Replacement LDP. The current Swansea LDP (2010-25) will cease to be operational as a statutory development plan following its end date of 31st December 2025. It is therefore important that work on the Replacement LDP commences early in 2023 to avoid a prolonged period with no Replacement LDP in place.
- 20 This third phase of monitoring has shown that in broad terms many of the plan policies are working effectively. Most indicators continue to show positive policy implementation, thereby providing an indication that the LDP is delivering many significant benefits to communities across the County. There are, however, some key policy indicator targets and monitoring outcomes not being achieved with time lags being experienced in the delivery of sites. This indicates that these policies may not be functioning as intended and therefore, this is undermining the ability of the LDP to fully deliver upon the growth requirements. In these instances, the monitoring has confirmed that these policy issues will need to be addressed as part of the LDP review.
- 21 The Swansea LDP now needs to be the subject of the statutory four-year full review cycle and as such all aspects of the Plan will need to be assessed to consider if they remain sound and fit for purpose. It is important therefore that the Council progresses with the statutory review of the LDP, to address the policy issues highlighted by the monitoring undertaken to date.