

3 THE STRATEGY

Introduction	19
Settlement Strategy	19
Transport Strategy	20
Coastal Strategy	22
Rural Development Strategy	22
Welsh Language Strategy	22

The Strategy



Neath Port Talbot
Castell-nedd Port Talbot
County Borough Council Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

3. THE STRATEGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 The County Borough has experienced population decline for some decades, although the trend levelled out during the early 1990's. The regeneration of the area's economy provides the key to stabilising the County Borough's population. It is particularly important that the UDP and Local Transport Plan (LTP) are effective in guiding the location and design of development, traffic management and the provision of transport services to secure the best solutions for our communities.

3.2 SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

3.2.1 The majority of significant development will be concentrated in the Port Talbot-Neath urban area and to a lesser extent Pontardawe.

3.2.2 Through guiding and controlling the location and design of development the Authority will seek to improve the quality of life within urban areas and settlements. New development should be environmentally sound and socially inclusive. Open space and green areas will be safeguarded and enhanced. Development proposals should seek to reduce noise, congestion and traffic pollution, and encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking.

3.2.3 The main new housing allocation will result in the creation of the Urban Village at Llandarcy on the site of the former BP refinery. It will form an extension to the Greater Neath urban area at Skewen. Llandarcy will be a sustainable, fine grained, mixed-use community. Through its internal and external transport links it will encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking rather than the car and make an important contribution to helping reduce overall traffic generation within the area.

3.2.4 The Urban Village allocations will make important contributions in terms of housing and employment and will have important implications throughout the Plan. In order that the proposal can be fully explained and considered it is addressed in a separate chapter in addition to the specific allocations contained in the relevant topic chapters.

3.2.5 Major generators of traffic (e.g. retail, leisure, recreation, education, health, community, business uses), in accordance with creating more sustainable communities will be expected to locate in or near town centres. If it can be demonstrated that this is not feasible, and in any case, they should be sited in locations which are or would be well located in terms of public transport, cycling and walking and would minimise the generation of traffic.

3.2.6 The County Borough is well served by a range of smaller town and village centres. These smaller settlements which have a range of facilities and services

meeting everyday needs (e.g. shop, pub, church, chapel, community hall, primary school, sport, public transport) of the village and surrounding rural area will be supported.

- 3.2.7 Existing commitments (extant planning permissions and local plan allocations) which conflict with these aims have been reassessed in terms of whether the allocated use is still appropriate. The potential to create higher density development in locations which have good accessibility on foot, bicycle and public transport will be encouraged provided it would not damage an area's character or amenity.
- 3.2.8 Settlement limits are defined to manage the shape and extent of settlements. They are an important means of addressing Sustainability. The identification of settlements where new housing will be allowed is based on the availability of services and facilities to meet the community's needs. The limits are based on an assessment of environmental capacity and the community's needs and aspirations (see para 1.5.4). They also provide certainty to a community in terms of its future shape and size. Through guiding and controlling the location and design of development the Authority will seek to improve the quality of life within urban areas and settlements.
- 3.2.9 The creation of new isolated dwellings, even where they would fill small gaps between existing dwellings would be contrary to the plan's drive towards more sustainable patterns of development and will be resisted.
- 3.2.10 Green wedges are used to define areas of countryside that may not be of particular scenic value but are particularly important in terms of protecting the form and setting of an urban area, or preventing the coalescence of settlements.
- 3.2.11 Although a wide range of considerations, including site conditions, ecology and visual amenity will have to be taken into account, in general, previously developed (brownfield) land should be used before greenfield.

3.3 TRANSPORT STRATEGY

3.3.1 Neath, Port Talbot and Pontardawe Town Centres

- 3.3.2 Within the Town Centres of Neath, Port Talbot and Pontardawe facilities for public transport, service vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians will take precedence. This will include traffic management schemes, facilities for bus and train passengers and parking and storage facilities.
- 3.3.3 Measures to improve access by public transport, cycling and walking from the catchment areas will be a priority.

- 3.3.4 The centres face strong competition from other centres and outlets with free parking outside the County Borough. Reducing trade loss is a key aim of the authority.
- 3.3.5 Within the centres the provision of safe, easily accessible parking for shoppers, leisure and business users will be a priority.
- 3.3.6 Other Centres
- 3.3.7 The provision of attractive, safe, easily accessible parking for shoppers, leisure and business users will be a priority. This may include a mix of on and off-street parking.
- 3.3.8 The improvement of facilities for users of public transport, cyclists and walkers will be a priority, as will be the improvement of safe routes for cyclists and walkers from the catchment areas.
- 3.3.9 Industrial Estates and Other Significant Out of Centre Developments
- 3.3.10 These are major generators of traffic. They should be well located in terms of the core/freight traffic road network, and make full use of rail and harbour facilities. Access to the main likely sources of workers should be easy by public transport, cycling and walking as well as the car.
- 3.3.11 Proposed developments should include provision both within the site and outside to ensure that they are easily accessible and minimise traffic generation.
- 3.3.12 Residential Areas and Developments
- 3.3.13 A prime concern of the Authority is to make the best use of areas that are well located in terms of existing and committed facilities and are well served by public transport, cycling and walking. Within such areas on and off street parking requirements will be minimised. New developments will be expected to make provision for cycle storage.
- 3.3.14 Wherever reasonable and feasible, all developments will be expected to be permeable (both within, and linking with adjacent paths and roads) in terms of public transport, cycling and walking. While measures to discourage crime and disorder may conflict with this, these conflicts will be minimised.
- 3.3.15 Where land is allocated for development, having been selected following its appraisal in terms of Sustainability, full use should be made of it. The Authority will review its procedures and policies when drafting Supplementary Planning Guidance to ensure that they do not arbitrarily prevent the reasonable use of such sites. However, the Authority will resist proposals where the layout and design would create unacceptable implications for occupiers and those visiting and providing services for the properties.

3.4 COASTAL STRATEGY

- 3.4.1 The undeveloped coast (including the tidal reaches of the River Neath) will be protected from unnecessary development. Measures to enhance the landscape and habitats will be encouraged.
- 3.4.2 Along the developed coast, new development will be encouraged to respect the coastal location in terms of its design, siting and layout.

3.5 RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

- 3.5.1 The County Borough's countryside is particularly attractive, varied and ecologically rich. Conserving and enhancing the landscapes and biodiversity are key duties in terms of Sustainability, and providing the basis for a thriving and diverse rural economy.
- 3.5.2 The rural communities, including people living within villages and the countryside, will be supported. The Authority will seek to encourage the provision and retention of facilities and services within or adjoining settlements, and the diversification of the rural economy.
- 3.5.3 While accepting that this will mean new development, the Authority will ensure that it is directly related to the needs of the rural community, respects the character of the surrounding area, is of appropriate scale and design, and that other impacts are acceptable.

3.6 WELSH LANGUAGE STRATEGY

- 3.6.1 Neath Port Talbot contains communities (mainly in the Swansea Valley) in which the language is a feature of community life. They make a significant contribution to the South Wales core of Welsh speaking communities, which extends across the Amman and Gwendraeth Valleys
- 3.6.2 The main problems facing the communities (in common with the other valley communities within the County Borough) are a gradual loss of population and difficulties in attracting new employment and sustaining community and other facilities.
- 3.6.3 The UDP strategy is to support the communities through ensuring that there is sufficient land available to allow the creation of local employment and the development of housing to meet their needs.