



# **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This document sets out the methodology for evaluating the suitability of potential development sites for inclusion in the revised Pembrokeshire Local Development Plan (LDP2).
- 1.2 In doing so, it identifies the guiding principles for reviewing land previously allocated in the current Local Development Plan (adopted February 2013), and for establishing potential new site allocations and settlement boundary changes, consistent with national planning policy, the LDP Vision and strategic options and the LDP Preferred Strategy.
- 1.3 Sites for consideration include those on the Candidate Site Register, sites allocated but undeveloped within the LDP, and any other sites considered appropriate.
- 1.4 This document will be used as part of the evidence base to support the Authority's approach towards identifying those sites included within the revised LDP2, in addition to those omitted from the Plan.
- 1.5 The methodology is prepared to reflect National Planning Policy and legislative provisions to ensure that the identification of sites is founded on a robust and credible assessment of the suitability and availability of land. The deliverability of sites is an important aspect of the methodology and will be essential in the identification of sites for inclusion within the revised LDP.
- 1.6 All these factors will, where appropriate, be addressed through consultation with specific consultation bodies during the evaluation of sites, whilst promoters of land will be required to provide an appropriate level of detail to allow a full consideration of their sites.
- 1.7 This methodology will form the basis for the consideration of sites throughout the preparatory process of the revised LDP. It will however be subject to ongoing iteration to provide further information in relation to requirements and specific considerations at subsequent stages. In this respect the following provides further clarity on the candidate site stage.

## **Candidate Sites**

- 1.8 The Local Development Plan Manual – Edition 2 (August 2015) advises that early engagement should take place with developers and landowners to obtain information on candidate sites. It is vital that promoters of sites appreciate that bringing them forward after the candidate site stage will mean that it is unlikely they can be considered for inclusion in the Deposit version of the Plan.
- 1.9 The submission of sites at the candidate site stage should not be interpreted as a commitment that they will be included within the Plan. To be considered they will need to meet a criteria-based assessment as set out in this Methodology Paper. It should be noted that the invitation for candidate site submissions will be undertaken over a set period of time, as specified within the Delivery Agreement, and is supported by stakeholder engagement leading up to this stage. Any sites which are submitted outside this time period for the invitation of sites will be deemed as 'not-duly made'.
- 1.10 It should be noted that sites submitted as part of the candidate site process will be made available for public viewing as part of the Pre-deposit Preferred Strategy. However, the assessment to support the inclusion or exclusion of the sites within the

LDP will be considered at the Deposit LDP stage, when interested parties will have the opportunity to comment.

## **2. SITE ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

- 2.1 This methodology aims to provide a framework for the comprehensive appraisal of the development potential of sites and for the appropriateness of safeguarding sites. It is however noted that this cannot replicate the detail considerations required through a planning application. Rather, it is designed and intended to provide confidence around the acceptability and deliverability of sites for inclusion within the Development Plan.
- 2.2 The LDP stages for landowners, agents and developers to get involved are highlighted below in chronological order:

### **Candidate Sites Submission Stage**

- The invitation to allow promoters of land to submit sites for inclusion within the revised Local Development Plan. Such submissions may include a range of uses including: residential, employment, retail etc. The invitation also includes potential to submit sites to safeguard from development.

### **Preferred Strategy stage**

- The Register of Candidate Sites is published with the Preferred Strategy. At the Preferred Strategy stage, it is not a consultation to support or object to site submissions.
- General areas of Pembrokeshire where development growth will be promoted will be identified in the Preferred Strategy. This will be critical in the assessment of sites later on in the process.

### **Deposit LDP**

- The Deposit LDP will indicate those sites which are both included and excluded from the Plan. This includes sites allocated for a particular land use as well as those areas protected and safeguarded, in addition to the drawing of settlement boundaries. Representations may be submitted as part of the Deposit LDP consultation process. Representations, including those on sites submitted during this stage will be presented for consideration at the Examination as below.

### **LDP Examination**

- The Deposit LDP, the Pre-Deposit documents, along with all the responses submitted as part of every consultation stage will be submitted for examination to be considered by an independent Planning Inspector. It should be noted that comments and representations submitted during Pre-Deposit stages will not be for consideration at the Examination.

### **3. THE CANDIDATE SITE PROCESS**

3.1 The candidate site submission form sets out the questions necessary to fulfil the requirements of the methodology. This will allow an assessment of the site and its deliverability to take place. The Site Assessment Methodology for the Candidate Site Stage includes criteria to filter sites out where they may be contrary to National Policy, or unsuitable due to overarching constraints. A landowner or developers commitment to the delivery of the site, and additional supporting evidence including the potential viability of a site will be important factors. This will be drawn out from the submission form.

3.2 There is a requirement to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) as well as a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as part of the preparation of the LDP. It is intended that the SA process will be combined with the requirements for an SEA into a single appraisal process (SA/SEA). The Council will also need to create a LDP2 that will have no significant effect (alone and in-combination) on the European Sites resource (Habitats Regulations Assessment - HRA) during its implementation. In this regard, those emerging proposals (including site selection) will need to be informed by an iterative review against such frameworks as the plan making process proceeds towards deposit.

#### **Candidate Site Stage**

3.3 In conjunction with the invitation for candidate sites, the Authority will re-evaluate and where appropriate consider the sites which are allocated for such uses within the existing Local Development Plan. Development sites which have planning permission (outline or detailed) will not necessarily be carried forward as allocations in the revised Plan. Consideration will be given to the commitment of the landowner/developer, as well as the viability and other informing factors for bringing that site forward. Landowners who have current allocations that are undeveloped (irrespective of planning status), should re-submit these as candidate sites during this period.

3.4 Reference should be drawn to the population and household projections for Pembrokeshire and the proposed reduction in the household requirements. It is clear in certain instances there will be sites submitted as part of the candidate site process which may be suitable, however they may be omitted simply on the grounds of appropriate land elsewhere, which has been supported by robust evidence of their deliverability.

3.5 The potential implications arising from any revision to the LDP Strategy and settlement framework will also have an impact on site selection. In this respect, the role and function of the settlement, along with its position within the settlement framework will have a direct bearing on the selection of sites. Where sites are proposed for protection from development, there will need to be clear justification for this.

3.6 Each candidate site will be subject to an assessment process identified in the table below.

**PCC Candidate Site Assessment Methodology:**

<b>SA/HRA Assessment (On-going through all stages)</b>					
<b>Initial Registration</b>	<b>Phase 1 Assessment</b>	<b>Phase 2 Assessment</b>	<b>Phase 3 Assessment</b>	<b>Phase 4 Assessment</b>	<b>Phase 5 Assessment</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sites sorted by size</li> <li>• Use type</li> <li>• Mapped</li> <li>• Previously Developed Land or Greenfield?</li> <li>• Affordable Housing submission?</li> <li>• Custom build/self-build?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>GIS mapping against constraints layer showing impact on:</b></li> <li>-Flood risk</li> <li>-Site of Special Scientific Interest</li> <li>-Special Area of Conservation</li> <li>-Listed Building</li> <li>-Scheduled Ancient Monument</li> <li>-Minerals</li> <li>-Conservation Area</li> <li>-Historic Park/garden</li> <li>-Contaminated land</li> <li>- Other safeguarding</li> </ul> <p>Level of site area affected noted. Assessment against relevant PPW &amp; TANS recorded.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assess against the Preferred Strategy</b></li> <li>• Housing – overall level of growth and relationship to spatial strategy.</li> <li>• Position in hierarchy/spatial grouping</li> <li>• Other uses – specific requirements from National Policy/relevant evidence base.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Consultation with internal departments and key organisations:</b></li> <li>• Hywel Dda Health Board</li> <li>• National Resources Wales</li> <li>• Dwr Cymru</li> <li>• WG Agricultural land body</li> <li>• Highways</li> <li>• Trunk Roads</li> <li>• Public Protection</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Dyfed Archaeological Trust</li> <li>• Listed Building Officer</li> <li>• Property Team</li> <li>• Regeneration Team</li> </ul>	<p><b>Landscape and Biodiversity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the site relate to the landscape, landform and other site features?</li> <li>• Does the current habitat provide valuable ecosystem service?</li> <li>• Is loss of protected woodland/trees/hedgerows proposed?</li> <li>• Are there protected or locally important species or habitats present?</li> <li>• Presence of species/watercourse</li> <li>• Is the site itself at risk of flooding or causing pollution?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Deliverability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connections for Electricity and water</li> <li>• Sewerage capacity</li> <li>• Land owner intent</li> <li>• Land ownership</li> <li>• Legal obstacles to delivery</li> <li>• Viability</li> <li>• Transportation links</li> <li>• SUDs compliant?</li> </ul>

## **FURTHER ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

3.7 The determination of a development proposal will be supplemented by a wider appreciation of planning policy, including general planning principles. These include those relating to ribbon development, back land and tandem development for example.

3.8 Such general planning principles can often be qualitative issues and will be considered as part of a site's appraisal in Stage 4. These will be considered based on the site's individual characteristics, its impact on the character of the area, in addition to its location within the settlement. Other site constraints which may impact upon the site selection process, or indeed the sites deliverability will be considered as part of the selection process. These may include issues of land stability, mineral safeguarding, mineral buffer zones, agricultural land quality and sites of cultural importance.

3.9 Where appropriate, PCC may request further information from promoters of land for development or safeguarding purposes.

3.10 As with the Strategic Sites, this assessment may require additional information to be provided by internal departments such as drainage, highways and education as well as external consultation with statutory agencies and organisations where appropriate (see table above).

## **CONSIDERATION OF NON-RESIDENTIAL SITES**

3.11 The allocation of non-residential sites submitted as part of the candidate site methodology will be considered against the planning principles identified within the preceding paragraphs. In addition, reference will need to be drawn to any relevant evidence and background papers which identify the requirements of such land uses.

## **TECHNICAL LIAISON**

3.12 The Council will undertake liaison with technical and other officers of the Authority and external parties (incl. Natural Resources Wales, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water and the Dyfed Archaeological Trust) to assist and contribute to the plan-making process. This will assist in the screening or consideration of potential sites for inclusion, or otherwise within the LDP and is identified in Stage 3.

## **SA/SEA (and potentially HRA) APPRAISAL**

3.13 In relation to the Deposit LDP stage, regard will be required to the SA/SEA. The Council's SA/SEA framework will be established by this stage. The Council will ensure that its proposals (including sites) as set out within the Deposit LDP will be subject to review against the SA-SEA framework. Subsequent iterations of this methodology will identify further detail in relation to process and its requirements.

3.14 In relation to the HRA, it will be matter for the Council to produce a Plan that will have no significant effect (alone and in-combination) on the European Sites resource. In this regard, the Council will ensure that its proposals (including sites) as set out within the Deposit LDP will be subject to review against the HRA Report (should the initial pre deposit Screening fail to conclude that there is no potential effect).

## **Further Information**

3.15 For further assistance on the Site Assessment Methodology process or the LDP process in general please see our website (see links to Planning and Policy) or email [ldp@pembrokeshire.gov.uk](mailto:ldp@pembrokeshire.gov.uk) or contact the Development Plans Section on 01437 764551.