



Rural Affairs

Topic Paper No 14 – Summary

Introduction

Although Flintshire has some large areas of population and economic activity, much of it is rural in nature. The rural area has different characteristics and needs to the built up areas and needs a different approach in terms of land use planning and development. It is important to have sustainable rural communities which meet the needs of existing and future residents as well as protecting the environment and having a strong agricultural economy.

Context

There are important European, National, Regional and Local influences on rural areas and these need to inform the development of LDP policy for the rural area. The LDP can identify sustainable locations for development in rural areas, and can also provide protection to sensitive landscape and natural and historic environments.

As well as the overarching theme of sustainable development, some of the key aspects relating to the rural environment are:

- Affordable housing
- Access to public transport
- Access to essential services
- Employment opportunities
- Agriculture
- Tourism

There are however particular issues which need to be addressed and these include:

- Ageing population
- Migration
- Housing affordability / provision
- Transport
- Economic change and pressures on local facilities
- Pressures on agriculture
- Protection of the environment
- Climate change

The Role of the Plan

Ensuring that rural communities are sustainable is a key objective for the Plan and means that a balanced approach is needed that integrates social, economic and environmental aspects of the rural area. This will require policies and proposals that:

- Seek to protect rural facilities and services
- Identifying those rural settlements which can sustainably accommodate new housing
- Secure affordable rural housing
- Allow development for small scale rural employment uses
- Promote agricultural diversification and protect agricultural land
- Protect the character and landscape of the rural area
- Protect biodiversity and promote nature conservation
- Support the development of the Welsh language and culture
- Strictly control development in the open

countryside

- Require well designed development
- Promote sustainable transport choices
- Mitigate the causes of, and adapt to, the impacts of climate change
- Provide renewable energy

The LDP cannot address all the issues relating to the above, and some issues overlap with other topics.

Key Plans and Strategies

- The EU Rural Development Policy 2007-2013
- Overview of Common Agricultural Policy Reform 2014-2020
- Climate Change Strategy for Wales (2010)
- Rural Development Plan 2014-2020: Next Steps
- Sustainable Tourism – A Framework for Wales (2007)
- One Wales: One Planet – the Sustainable Development Scheme for Wales (2009)
- Energy Wales: A Low Carbon Transition (2012)
- Planning Policy Wales, Edition 5, 2012
- TAN2 Planning and Affordable Housing (2006)
- TAN6 Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010)
- TAN8 Renewable Energy (2005)
- TAN12 Design (2012)
- TAN13 Tourism (1997)
- TAN20 Planning and the Welsh Language (2013)
- TAN23 Economic Development (2014)
- Clwydian Range AONB Management Plan 2009-2014
- Flintshire County Council Community Strategy 2009-2019

Issues to be addressed by the Plan

- Reliance on and cost of road transport
- Lack of public transport
- Access to community facilities and services

- Development and protection of local facilities
- Provision of affordable housing
- Improved opportunities for small scale rural employment development
- Ensure that all development respects the historic built environment and character of the rural area
- Encourage appropriate renewable energy schemes
- Protection of the Welsh language and culture
- Rural diversification and protection of the agricultural industry

Potential Land Use Policies / Proposals

The UDP contained a chapter on Rural Enterprise and Agriculture with 5 policies. Other policies relevant to rural affairs were found across other chapters.

It is proposed that the key policies and proposals in the LDP are broadly along the lines of:

- Protection of the open countryside and agricultural land
- Protection of biodiversity and habitats
- Providing opportunities for affordable housing and small scale rural employment in sustainable settlements
- Reducing the reliance on the private car
- Support for expanding rural businesses and agricultural diversification
- Protecting and developing rural services
- Ensuring that development does not detrimentally impact on the Welsh language and culture
- Permitting appropriate tourism facilities, attractions and accommodation
- Protection of the historic and cultural landscape