

Session 6 – Natural and Built Environment

Natural Environment

- 1. Does policy PS16 and Table 23 provide an appropriate strategic policy framework for the consideration of development proposals and the protection and conservation of the natural environment, and especially Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)?**

On balance, alongside the other landscape policies within the plan e.g. AMG2 *Protecting and enhancing features and qualities that are distinctive to the local landscape character*, it is felt that on balance the policy framework reflects national policy.

- 2. Is the protection afforded to the Special landscape Areas (SLAs) listed within the explanation to Policy AMG1 supported by robust evidence?**

This is for the Local Planning Authorities to explain.

- a. Is the Plan consistent with the findings and recommendations of the LUC Review of SLAs in Gwynedd and Anglesey?**

This is for the Local Planning Authorities to explain.

- b. Does Policy AMG1 provide an appropriate policy framework for the consideration of development proposals within or closely related to the SLAs?**

It is not a specific requirement of national policy to apply SLA policy when considering the impact of development proposals outside SLAs. This will be a matter for the local authorities to consider.

- c. Is the approach to Special Landscape Areas consistent with national policy on local landscape designations (Non-Statutory designations)?**

With regards to policy AMG1 it is not clear what the implications are with regards to deliverability and viability of development through requiring proposals to address and coincide with a 'statement of significance', an explanation of this would be beneficial.

Paragraph 7.5.11 of the plan states that the 'statements of significance' are available by contacting the planning office. These should be published and made publically available, it is also not clear how these relate to the SLA reports and the rationale for the designation of SLAs and this should be made clear.

3. Does Policy AMG2 provide sufficient clarity on its aims and objectives for protecting and conserving the landscape character defined within Landscape Character Areas (LCAs)?

PPW section 5.3.11 states that local non-statutory sites can add value to the planning process particularly if such designations are informed by community participation and reflect community values. Local planning authorities should apply these designations to areas of substantive conservation value where there is good reason to believe that normal planning policies cannot provide the necessary protection. Such designations should not unduly restrict acceptable development.

It is felt that criterion 2 of the policy could be overly restrictive to achieve and should be redrafted to deliver the policy intent without unduly restricting development.

a. Are the LCAs referred to within Policy AMG2 supported by robust and up to date evidence?

This is for the Local Planning Authority to explain.

4. Does Policy AMG3 provide an appropriate policy framework for the consideration of development proposals on the coast, including the Heritage Coast? Does the Policy Comply with national planning policy?

PPW (paragraph 5.7.4) sets out that LDP policies should aim to protect or enhance the character and landscape of the undeveloped coastline. Planning policies to be pursued in Heritage Coast areas should be incorporated in development plans. Designation as a heritage coast does not directly affect the status of the area in planning terms. However, the features which contributed to the designation of such areas may be important in formulating planning policies or making development management decisions.

Policy AMG3 does not incorporate specific policies for the heritage coast but applies the general coastal protection policy to this area. It would be beneficial for the LPA to explain how the heritage elements are addressed within this policy.

PPW Section 5.7.7 requires coastal locations considered suitable for development, unsuitable for development, or subject to significant constraints

should be shown in the Proposals Map therefore Coastal Change Management Areas should be identified.

5. Does the Plan provide effective protection to the natural environment? Does the approach taken reflect the relative significance of international, national and local designation consistent with Planning Policy Wales chapter 5?

PPW section 5.4.5 states that the development plan should: provide criteria against which a development affecting the different types of designated site will be assessed, reflecting their relative significance. Policy PS16 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment does not provide criteria for the hierarchy of nature conservation sites and this should be addressed. It is noted however, that policy AMG4 addresses local sites.

6. Does the Plan through Policies AMG4 and AMG5 provide an appropriate level of protection for statutory and non-statutory sites of importance for local biodiversity and nature conservation?

Clarity is required in the policies with regards to the policies covering local biodiversity sites, AMG4 and AMG5. It is unclear what a local biodiversity site is, does it include SINCs as they are not specifically referenced within the policies and LNRs (however these are specifically identified in policy AMG 5). Clarity is also required on what a wildlife site in policy AMG5 is or an unassessed wildlife site which are identified on the constraints map.

Policy PS16 requires the settings of all natural environment sites to be protected however this is not in accordance with national policy.

7. Is the Plan sufficiently flexible to respond to changing circumstances and does it include clear and appropriate mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of the Plan's objectives?

The monitoring framework is a key part of the LDP preparation process as it enables the authority to assess the effectiveness and implementation of key policies to deliver on the LDP strategy. The Welsh Government will work with the local authority to update and amend the monitoring framework.

8. Any other matters

Drafting examples:

Policy ARNA1 criterion 5 refers to residential extensions however focussed change NF38 had changed the section heading to new or existing non-residential buildings.

Query the use of the phrases 'statutory benefits' to replace 'community benefits' 'community infrastructure contributions' and 'planning obligations' with regard to s106 or CIL.

Heritage Assets

1. Does the Plan provide an adequate framework for the protection of heritage assets?

Policy AT1 criterion 4 references the need to have regard to other detailed assessments adopted by the LPA. It is not clear what these are or could be and this would benefit from further detail in the supporting text

Within policy AT2 criterion 7 it is not clear what 'other public policies' are, clarity should be provided in the supporting text.

AT3 refers to locally or regionally significant non-designated heritage assets; clarity could be provided in the supportive text as to what these sites are, for example if there is a local list etc. This would provide clarity to the policy.

AT4 should include the settings of sites of archaeological importance in accordance with PPW 6.4.2 - Development plans should reflect national policies for the protection and enhancement of sites of archaeological interest and their settings..... Such remains and, in appropriate circumstances, other unscheduled archaeological remains of more local importance, and their settings, may also be identified in development plans as particularly worthy of preservation.

Within the plan the term 'heritage asset' is used and defined in section 7.5.29 whereas the term 'historic asset' is used in policy ISA1 clarity is required on the differences between these terms.

Table 25 states that World Heritage Sites are listed in appendix 7 however appendix 7 does not include World Heritage Sites.

2. Is the Plan consistent with the requirements of other legislation and national planning policy?

On balance it is considered that the policy framework for heritage assets reflects national policy. With regards to legislative requirements it is for the LPA to take advice on this.

3. Any other matters

Open space and recreation

Clarity is required with regards to Policy ISA2 which allows community facilities adjoining development boundaries. This would however enable the development of pubs and theatres etc. in the countryside.