

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2006-2021)**

# **Employment Topic Paper**

April 2008

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## BACKGROUND

In January 2007 the Council issued for public consultation the Local Development Plan: Preferred Strategy. The Strategy was the first stage of the new statutory local development plan (LDP).

The next stage in the plan making process is the production of a deposit draft LDP. In order to ensure the soundness of the emerging LDP and transparency in the plan making process, the Council has produced a series of topic papers.

The topic papers address the main area of policy to be considered in the LDP. **It should be stressed that these papers are a starting point for policy development, through the sustainability appraisal process and as the Council's evidence base develops, emerging LDP policy will evolve and be refined.**

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The provision of a strong economy is one of the key aims of the LDP. The Council is committed to building a modern economy with a broad economic base that provides job opportunities for all. The Council will ensure that through the LDP, land is available to accommodate a range of employment opportunities over the life of the Plan. In addition to providing a range of employment sites, land allocations will accord with the principles of sustainable development and support the Preferred Strategy for the LDP.

This topic paper will directly inform the development of the LDP and will consider:-

- *the national policy context*
- *local policies and strategies*
- *key issues*
- *the aims and objectives set out in Preferred Strategy and the issues raised in its consultation.*

The topic paper will then develop draft LDP policies, which will set out the policy framework for the delivery of employment sites.

This Topic Paper should be read in conjunction with the Employment Land Requirement Topic Paper (Jan 2007).

### 2. NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

#### *Planning Policy Wales*

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Assembly Government. Chapter 7 'Supporting the Economy', identifies the objectives for economic development and issues to be taken into account in development plans. It states that local planning authorities should ensure that:

- Sufficient land suitable for development for enterprise and employment use and well served by infrastructure is designated for employment so as to meet both identified and as yet unidentified needs.

- New development for enterprise and employment uses is located and implemented in accordance with sustainability principles.

### ***Planning Policy Wales Companion Guide***

The Planning Policy Wales Companion Guide has been prepared to guide planners and other stakeholders in applying the Welsh Assembly Government's planning policy to the new system of LDPs. It refers specifically to and should be read in conjunction with, Planning Policy Wales.

Chapter 7 'Supporting the Economy', summaries the key issues and tasks, as set out in PPW, that local planning authorities should take into account in formulating land-use planning policies for employment-generating and wealth creating development.

The Companion Guide also summarises the main considerations that should inform locational and topic based policies within LDPs and identifies national development control policies which should not be repeated as local policy in LDPs.

### ***Technical Advice Note 3: Simplified Planning Zones (1996)***

Local planning authorities have a statutory duty to keep under review whether Simplified Planning Zone (SPZ) schemes are desirable in their area. An SPZ is one way in which an authority can help secure development or redevelopment of part of its area. An SPZ allows the developer or landowner to avoid delay incurred in determining planning applications for

successive stages of development. It also provides certainty on what is permitted and flexibility to make changes within the framework of the scheme. It can also create development value in land, which can make project funding more likely.

For local planning authorities, SPZs can be a means allowing them to provide development where they wish it to happen and of generating private sector interest in the area. This can be enhanced by appending to the scheme arrangements for other necessary consents and, for example, details of possible financial assistance.

TAN 3 sets out the procedures involved in designating SPZs, including guidance on the selection of sites, excluded areas where SPZs should not be permitted and the relationship of SPZs to development plans.

### ***People, Places, Spaces: The Wales Spatial Plan***

The Wales Spatial Plan is a material consideration for Local Planning Authorities. The National Framework sets out a vision where by the challenge of economic change will be tackled through '*Promoting a Sustainable Economy*' in Wales. The Plan aims to deliver 'an innovative, high value economy for Wales which utilises and develops the skills and knowledge of our people' and delivers 'an economy which both creates wealth and allows the prosperity to be spread throughout Wales' whilst adding 'to the quality of people's lives as well as their living and working environments'. The Wales Spatial Plan identifies six distinct spatial regions with Wales. Rhondda Cynon Taf is included in 'The Capital Network'.

### ***South East – The Capital Network***

The Strategy recognises the major economic and social disparities across this region, with the coastal zone being the main economic driver. With heavy commuting flows between the Valleys and the coast, the area functions as an interdependent but unplanned urban network.

In specific relation to employment, the Plan proposes that:

- The Valleys need to be strengthened as desirable places to live, work and visit – combining a wider mix of types of housing and good access to jobs and services – in distinctive communities set in an attractive environment; and that
- Employment site provision should be reviewed in consideration of the Wales Spatial Plan and the WDA Property Strategy to bring forward new proposals and reallocate sites where necessary, optimise the potential of existing sites and develop proposals for the location of a Premier Business Park in South East Wales.

### ***South East – The Capital Network: Area Interim Statement***

The Area Interim Statements have been prepared by the Assembly Government in conjunction with Stakeholder Working Groups and provide an update on the work undertaken to develop the Wales Spatial Plan within each region.

The Capital Network Area Interim Statement states that in order to help build sustainable communities, housing growth, new employment sites, and retail and indoor leisure development should be located at sites that are well served by

public transport; mixed-use developments should be encouraged; and that the planning tests for out of town developments need to be applied effectively to avoid undermining the viability of town centres.

The Statement identifies that due to market factors, net private-sector employment growth is likely to be mainly in the south of the city-region. It advises that public sector intervention should recognise this, but seek so far as is possible without losing opportunities, to steer strategic developments into the Valleys or to locations that are easily accessible to people living in the Valleys using public transport. This will give an additional impetus to the regeneration that is already occurring in settlements in the Connections Corridor.

### ***Heads of the Valleys Programme***

The Heads of the Valleys programme is providing targeted action to support regeneration further inland, linked to the opportunities for growth presented by the dualling of the A465 Heads of the Valleys road. It is a 15 year regeneration strategy developed in full partnership with five local authorities, (Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, Blaenau-Gwent and Torfaen), and other local stakeholders to tackle the root causes of economic inactivity and other key issues in the area within the context of the Wales Spatial Plan. The aim is that the Heads of the Valleys will become a rich, dynamic network of communities helping to drive the success of south east Wales.

The main aims of the Strategy are based around 5 priority themes:

- An attractive and well-used natural, historic and built environment
- A vibrant economic landscape offering new opportunities
- A well educated, skilled and healthier population
- An appealing and coherent tourism and leisure experience
- Public confidence in a shared bright future

### ***Turning Heads: A Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys 2020***

The aim of the Strategy is to provide a better focus for the estimated £1 billion public sector annual spend in the Heads of the Valleys. The Welsh Assembly Government has committed an additional £140 million of special funding over 15 years to help achieve this, and to lever in further investment from the private sector, EU Structural Funds and other sources. Progress will be tracked against a number of key indicators, linked to the priority themes.

### ***Wales: A Vibrant Economy (Consultation Document)***

Wales: A Vibrant Economy is the Assembly Government's Strategic Framework for Economic Development. It sets out a vision of a vibrant Welsh economy delivering strong and sustainable economic growth by providing opportunities for all. The delivery of this vision is built around Wales' core strengths: an increasingly skilled, innovative and entrepreneurial workforce; an advanced technology and

knowledge base; strong communities; a stunning natural environment and an exceptional quality of life.

The key priorities to help deliver this vision are:-

- to increase employment further, so that over time the Welsh employment rate matches the UK average, even as the UK employment rate itself rises; and
- to raise the quality of jobs, so that average earnings increase and close the gap with the UK average.

To deliver these priorities, the Framework identifies the following key actions:-

- supporting job creation and helping individuals to tackle barriers to participation in the world of work;
- investing to regenerate communities and stimulate economic growth across Wales;
- helping businesses to grow and to increase value-added per job and earnings by:
  - investing in our transport networks and other economic infrastructure;
  - attracting more high value-added functions to Wales and supporting businesses and sectors with strong growth potential
  - further improving our skills base and using the opportunities created by the mergers to deliver more demand-led training tailored to the needs of businesses
  - helping businesses to become more competitive by supporting other drivers to business growth: entrepreneurship, innovation, investment and trade

- ensuring that all economic programmes and policies support sustainable development, in particular by encouraging clean energy generation and resource efficiency.

### ***WDA Property Strategy for Wales (2004-2008)***

It is understood that the Department for Enterprise, Innovation & Technology (formerly known as WDA) will be updating their Property Strategy in Spring 2008. Until the publication of an updated version, the 2004-2008 Strategy remains the formally approved Strategy.

The Strategy is aimed at providing a clear focus for property developments and investments in Wales so that both public and private sector resources can be more effectively targeted and channelled to foster the growth and regeneration of the Welsh Economy. The fundamental aim is to enhance the prospects for securing high value added investments and jobs from both indigenous and inward investors, whilst also encouraging economic prosperity throughout Wales.

The Strategy emphasis is on property action needed to support employment generation and recognises that Wales competes in different markets from local to international and that there is a wide spectrum of companies to be supported from small business start ups to overseas investors. The strategy is not focused on inward investment and recognises that the core demand is likely to come from either new start-up businesses or from the expansion of companies already based in Wales.

The strategy sets out the types of property identified as being necessary to support the growth of target market areas. These property types are then used as the main basis for shaping the strategy:-

| <b>Sites</b>                   | <b>Buildings</b>               |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Premier business parks         | Offices                        |
| Business parks                 | High tech units                |
| Strategic Sites                | Traditional                    |
| Strategic mixed use sites      | industrial/manufacturing units |
| City/town centre sites         | Distribution units             |
| Industrial estates/local sites | Innovation/incubator centres   |
|                                | Multi-occupancy units          |
|                                | Bespoke units                  |

Collectively this range of sites is designed to cover the particular target markets illustrated in the strategy. The aim is to ensure good coverage of the new economy target markets, whilst also ensuring that the more traditional employment and local market areas in Wales are also addressed.

### ***Further Analysis of Land Survey Data, South East Wales Economic Forum***

The South East Wales Economic Forum (SEWEF) is a partnership of the major bodies involved in economic development in South East Wales. Its purpose is to examine strategic issues, policy direction and action plans for specific area of economic activity. In 2007 they commissioned the above study to:-

- a) identify the amount of employment development that has occurred on the available land over the period 2000-05 in each local authority within the study area and to provide an analysis of spatial and land use trends that may be emerging.
- b) undertake an analysis of the available land and any development plan trends against the employment provisions of extant development plans; and
- c) identify changes in employment trends across South East Wales, to identify whether there is a correlation with land supply and to review future growth scenarios and the implications this may have for land-use policy and future site availability.

The study revealed that between 2000 – 2005, 281 hectares of employment land was developed in the 10 authorities that comprise the study area. Of this 281 hectares, 253 hectares was developed for B1, B2 and B8 uses (56 hectares for B1, 93 hectares for B2 and 85 hectares for B8). The study found that whilst a smaller amount of land was developed for B1 use than that developed for B2 or B8, B1 uses contributed to 58% of the jobs created. Consequently the number of jobs created per hectare for B1 use (226 per hectare) was considerably higher than the jobs per hectare figure for B2 (40 per hectare) and B8 (19 per hectare).

| Type of Employment Development on Employment Land 2000-2005 in RCT |         |         |         |                |                          |                          |
|--|---------|---------|---------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Total Hectares employment developed                                | B1 (ha) | B2 (ha) | B8 (ha) | Mixed Use (Ha) | Sui Generis & Other (Ha) | Jobs Created (B1,B2, B8) |
| 33.17  | 16.21   | 31      | 6.29    | 1.82           | 5.75                     | 1901                     |

The study found that for all authorities except Newport, the rate of take up of employment land is below the annual development plan requirement.

The study reviewed employment forecasts, which showed a continued decline in agriculture, production and construction and an increase in the service sector. Within the service sector the main growth areas, which are forecast to account for over 70% of the anticipated growth, are:-

- financial and business services
- health and social work
- miscellaneous services (recreational, cultural, sporting, personal services etc)

On the basis of the most optimistic assumption that all jobs will require employment land and assuming a similar split in employment to use classes as occurred in the 2000-2005 period, it is estimated that there is a total land requirement for the SEWEF region of between 392 and 568 hectares over the 2005-2016 period which compares with an identified land availability in 2005 of 1389 hectares. Whilst it is unlikely that all the forecast employment growth will require employment land, it is important to ensure an adequate range and choice of employment land in the future which will require a flexibility of supply. However, rather than on the quantity of land, the emphasis should be on ensuring that good quality employment land is allocated in LDPs which will be attractive to the market.

### ***EU Convergence Funding***

The West Wales and the Valleys region has been awarded the highest level of support (£1.4 billion), known as Convergence, from the European Union for the new European Structural Funds programming round 2007–2013. Convergence is the successor to the Objective 1 programme 2000–2006, and geographically will cover 15 local authority areas in the West Wales and the Valleys region.

The Convergence programmes for West Wales and the Valleys comprise funding from two separate European Structural Funds: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF). Around £856 million of ERDF funds will be channelled through the Welsh Assembly Government to help progress the region's transformation into a sustainable and competitive economy by investing in the knowledge economy and helping new and existing businesses to grow. It will also focus on regenerating Wales' most deprived communities, tackling climate change and improving transport. Some £570 million from the ESF will be used to tackle economic inactivity, increase skills and employment. Together, the funds will total more than £1.4 billion of Convergence spending, which combined with match funding, will drive a total investment of £3.2 billion in the West Wales and the Valleys region.

### ***ERDF and ESF Operational Programmes for Convergence***

Separate Operational Programmes have been developed for each of the ERDF and ESF Convergence programmes. Essentially, they are planning documents, which show how the funding will be spent in West Wales and the Valleys. The

documents outline the Priorities for each programme which have been based on social, economic and environmental analyses of the needs and opportunities of the region, and eligible areas of activity in line with European Commission and Council Regulations.

### **3. LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT**

#### ***A Better Life: Our Community Plan 2004-14***

'A Better Life' is the Community Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf. It sets out a framework through which *'Rhondda Cynon Taf will be a community where everyone who lives, works in or visits the area will enjoy the benefits of a better quality of life, achieving their potential, while helping to develop and protect the area for the benefit for others'*. The Community Plan contains five action themes which are:

- Safer Communities
- Our Living Space
- Our Health & Well Being
- Boosting our Local Economy
- Learning for Growth

The action themes are developed under chapter headings and set out the goals that will be achieved to deliver the objectives of each action theme.

For 'Boosting Our Local Economy' the goals are:

- More 'quality' jobs and increased employment opportunities is a strong, prosperous, self-reliant local economy.
- Towns, villages, streets and homes that have been improved and revitalised, through new development which is sympathetic to our environment.
- Vibrant communities with a viable long-term future.

The Council intends to create a prosperous community by promoting economic growth and prosperity to all parts of the Borough, encouraging investment creating new jobs and demonstrating to employers that Rhondda Cynon Taf is a profitable place to do business. Enhancing the role of the social economy and maximising the benefits of local purchasing will be important aspects of new wealth creation.

### ***Economic Development Strategy: Boosting Our Local Economy***

The Economic Regeneration Strategy is one of the five key themes within the Community Plan. Boosting our local economy is crucially important to the success of the Council's other long-term ambitions. The regeneration strategy represents the framework for improving the economy of Rhondda Cynon Taf between 2004 and 2014. The strategy analyses the economic and social context and sets out the action areas that will shape the development of the economy.

The regeneration strategy sets out 7 action areas, which were chosen specifically to ensure that regeneration efforts are focused in the areas most in need of improvement. The Action Areas are:-

#### *Action Area 1*

Creating more varied and stronger business

#### *Action Area 2*

Tackling economic inactivity

#### *Action Area 3*

Stimulating community enterprise

#### *Action Area 4*

Promoting smarter working

#### *Action Area 5*

Improving where we live

#### *Action Area 6*

Spending public money locally

#### *Action Area 7*

Promoting a positive image

The regeneration strategy also sets out how the regeneration activity will be monitored. Successful implementation of the sustainable regeneration strategy will require careful tracking to help measure success and to make future regeneration activity more effective.

### ***Employment Land Requirement Topic Paper (January 2007)***

The Employment Land Requirement Topic was published alongside the Preferred Strategy in January 2007. The Topic Paper sets out the statistical background analysis and

justification for the scale of land allocations identified in the Preferred Strategy for the Local Development Plan 2006-2021 document. The Topic Paper:-

- identified the baseline situation in 2006 regarding economic and population structure, employment available, current commuting patterns etc.
- examined the economic outlook for Rhondda Cynon Taf in the context of emerging demographic and economic trends.
- identified the future needs over the Plan Period for employment land within Rhondda Cynon Taf linked to anticipated population and economic growth.

The Topic Paper identifies that over the 15 year Plan Period, 300 hectares of employment land will be required to meet the anticipated future rate of employment land development.

### ***Review of the RCT Economic Development Strategy Study (2006)***

In July 2000 Newidiam were commissioned to undertake an economic analysis of RCT on behalf of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Economic Regeneration Partnership. The purpose of that study was to gain an understanding of the underlying factors constraining the economy of Rhondda Cynon Taf. In 2003 Robert Huggins Associates were commissioned to produce an initial review of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Economic Regeneration Strategy. In 2006 RCT commissioned Robert Huggins Associates, in partnership with Arad Consulting, to prepare this study, an updated review of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Economic Regeneration Strategy.

The Study concludes that the overall picture for Rhondda Cynon Taf is positive. Economic Activity rates are rising, qualification rates are increasing, employment is rising and a number of economic development indicators, such as business density and start-up rates, show positive signs. Furthermore, after years of outward migration, the Borough is now experiencing net inward migration.

However, RCT remains a relatively poor local authority area. Low levels of economic output (as measured by relatively low levels of GVA per capita) are experienced throughout the locality, resulting in low economic activity rates, low employment rates, a low working age ratio and most dramatically - low levels of productivity.

The Study highlights the significant disparities that exist throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf. As well as high levels of deprivation, the Rhondda Valleys and Cynon Valley possess much lower rates of economic activity than the Pontypridd constituency area (69.9%, 70.9% and 79.1% respectively). Furthermore, between 2000 and 2004 the number of jobs in the Rhondda Valleys fell by over 11%, whilst over the same period, numbers rose in the Cynon Valley by 8% and Taff Ely by almost 19%. The Study predicts that the continuation of current employment trends will result in increasing disparities between the northern and southern parts of the Borough.

The Study notes the importance of ensuring employment opportunities are created across the Borough, as some residents may find it difficult to travel long distances and it is important that employment opportunities remain visible for those detached from the labour market.

Current sector trends and forecasts predict that employment growth will mainly occur within the education, health and social work sectors. Public sector employment will remain critically important for the more deprived areas of RCT, where there is low private sector growth and where topography, infrastructure and labour market issues often prove a barrier to leveraging private sector investment. A note of caution is attributed to the public sector as a whole – as employment here is typically dependent on decisions made outside of the locality and over which the Council has little control.

Whilst acknowledging the decline of the manufacturing sector, the Study highlights that this sector remains a sizeable element of the RCT economy and that sacrificing this sector is clearly not a viable strategy for RCT. Greater emphasis should be placed upon the development of higher-value added manufacturing sectors, where the competition from lower-cost production areas is less intense and where the competitive advantage of Rhondda Cynon Taf is more explicit.

The Study recommends that policymaking should take into account the needs of the key private sector growth sectors. These sectors will be the basis for growth in employment and in particular *quality* employment within the Borough. It also identifies that social enterprises and the social economy will represent an important and different opportunity for RCT. Where employment growth has been slow or negative and where it is difficult to attract private enterprise, social enterprise offers a new path for the development of enterprise. Often misunderstood, social enterprises whilst different from profit motivated businesses, are genuine enterprises and should be revenue generating and self-sufficient.

### ***RCT Economic Development Prospects and Employment Land Implications Study (2006)***

The Council commissioned a study to analyse the demand for employment land within the County Borough and to review the current employment land offer and streams of employment land that may be available in the future. The study builds upon the Review of the RCT Economic Development Strategy Study.

The Study was based on an extensive programme of research and consultation and considered:-

- The strategic and policy context at a national, sub-regional and local level that influences the supply and demand of employment land in RCT.
- An assessment of market demand characteristics in relation to type, quality and geographic spread of employment land
- A review of the current (and future) supply of employment land within RCT
- An analysis and assessment of employment land in the County Borough in response to demand and supply characteristics; and
- Sets out suggested recommendations to ensure that the future provision of the supply of land and premises – in terms of sale, type, location and timing of development – meets local employment and sector needs.

The report found that there was an adequate supply of employment land at present, with some indication of an actual

oversupply. One of the key conclusions is that the current supply does not meet future needs, in terms of:

- the type of employment sites and units available – specifically smaller, flexible space is required
- meeting the demand from micro-businesses
- the quality of office space, including town centre provision.

The report recognised that there are significant geographical differences in terms of both demand and supply of employment land in RCT. The southern end of the Borough is seen as a good location for businesses with good transport links. The Rhondda Valleys, especially northern areas, possess a poor supply and have a low demand for employment land. There are clear topographical and access issues as well as a lack of investment caused by low levels of demand and poor rates of return. The Cynon Valley is perceived as more desirable for business than the Rhondda.

In the short term the study considers that the development of the Heads of the Valleys is unlikely to have a significant impact for employment land and premises. In the long term however, it remains one of the best catalysts for some of the most deprived areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The key recommendations of the report were that:

- There is a need to develop a clear framework for investment intervention

- There is a need to develop a more responsive planning policy framework that offers more flexibility, especially with regard to mixed use developments
- Employment sites should be rationalised
- Investment is needed to ensure that sites are improved in terms of access and connectivity
- There is a need for greater dialogue with the private sector to encourage better design and environmental improvements.

The report also recommends that given the differences that exist between the northern and southern areas of RCT, different approaches are required in these areas. The two factors that need to be taken into consideration are:

- An appreciation of the higher levels of demand for employment sites within southern areas of RCT
- An appreciation that there is still need to ensure that employment sites remain in the more northern areas of RCT.

An effective geographic strategy can be developed by ensuring that the appropriate types of employment sites are developed in the northern and southern areas of the Borough. In the northern area there will be a requirement for smaller employment units that will aid the development of new businesses and ensure that employment opportunities remain in these more deprived areas. This would include, for example, ensuring that social enterprises are able to acquire suitable premises. Evidence shows that there is demand for office space in northerly parts of the Borough, particularly among start-up companies. There may be further scope for

looking at developing mixed use residential and office space, targeting start up companies with cheaper rents and housing costs.

The southern area of RCT should focus upon larger businesses that would require the accessibility afforded by the M4 and the A470 road links. The one exception to such a strategy would be the Hirwaun area, where improvements to the A465 would increase the accessibility and saleability of the area to larger businesses.

### ***Employment Land Review***

A study examining the employment land bank in Rhondda Cynon Taf has been commissioned. When complete the study will further inform the development of LDP policy.

## **4. KEY ISSUES IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

The key issues to be addressed by the Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP have been identified by making an assessment of the following:

- The results of pre deposit consultation with key stakeholders;
- The results of the Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Exercise; and
- An overview of baseline social, economic and environmental information.

The issues identified through this process will inform directly the development of the spatial strategy for the LDP.

## **Pre-deposit Consultation with Key Stakeholders**

The Council undertook a series of pre-deposit consultation events to help identify the key issues that the LDP would need to address. These included a Visioning Event with key stakeholders in January 2006 and a meeting of the LDP Forum in July 2006.

The key issues identified in relation to employment were:-

- Need for access to good quality employment and range of employment
- Attracting employment to the north of the borough.
- Need to review employment land allocations – provide land for a mix of business/employment uses
- Need to support indigenous businesses as well as attracting inward investment
- Commuting out for work figures are high - but IT could provide high quality jobs in RCT
- Need to retain wealth in the borough through reducing spending leakage
- Low skills base – need appropriate education
- Improve tourism and leisure industry job opportunities

## **Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic *Environmental Assessment Scoping Exercise***

The scoping exercise revealed the need for both economic and housing development to address issues of employment levels and opportunities and choice in housing. High levels of

economic inactivity, poor quality housing and depopulation combined with significant health problems are inter-related problems which the Council will need to address. Decisions over the proposed level of development to be ought/accepted by the Council will have a significant impact on the future of the area and the social and economic advantages will need to be carefully balanced against adverse environmental impact.

### ***Baseline Social, Economic and Environmental Information***

From a review of the relevant strategies, background studies and evidence base a number of clear issues emerge which the LDP will need to directly address if the aims and objectives set out in the Preferred Strategy are to be delivered.

### ***Range of Employment Sites***

It is clear that the LDP will need to ensure the provision of a range of employment sites to meet the employment needs of the Borough over the plan period. The LDP will allocate sites and provide criteria based policies that will allow for the provision of:

*Size & Use* – sites suitable for accommodating a range of employment development, including:-

- small business start ups
- expansion of existing companies
- relocation of companies to the area
- new inward investment from Wales/UK/Overseas

Sites will be capable of accommodating a broad variety of potential employment uses including mixed use sites, single user ‘neighbour unfriendly’ sites, sites capable of supporting traditional manufacturing to modern, high tech office based employment.

In particular, the LDP will improve the availability of employment land and premises suitable for small and medium-sized enterprises, including start up business, social enterprises, knowledge based industries and key growth sectors.

*Location/Market* – sites will be provided across the Borough. Whilst market demand varies, there is a clear need to ensure employment land to available in all parts of the Borough.

*Flexibility* – in addition to identifying ‘traditional’ employment sites, the LDP will promote flexible employment opportunities. Where appropriate, development in residential and town centre locations and opportunities such as home working will be supported. Ensuring the support of broadband development will offer a greater flexibility and reduce the effects of peripherality and enable all areas to create employment opportunities.

### ***Sustainable Development***

The LDP will recognise that in order to create balanced and prosperous communities, policy development will be based on the principles of sustainable development. Whilst recognising the requirements of a market led approach, there is a need to

develop and implement the LDP against the sustainable development policy background and the new directive on strategic environmental assessment. Economic vitality is at the heart of sustainable development and the strategy is founded on this consideration. However, the environmental and social aspects will also be taken into account in identifying employment sites and relevant policies.

### ***Support Implementation of Key Strategies***

It is recognised that the LDP, through the provision of employment sites, will not in itself deliver reduced economic inactivity and provide quality jobs. Increasing skills, tackling ill health and overcoming barriers to work such as poor transport and childcare are all crucial to increasing the economic prosperity of RCT. The LDP will support strategies such as the Heads of the Valleys Initiative, the objectives of the Wales Spatial Plan and the European Convergence Funding Programme to ensure a joined up approach and that all opportunities to deliver beneficial change are maximised.

## **5. PREFERRED STRATEGY FOR THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The Preferred strategy provides the following policy framework for employment development in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

### ***Objectives***

The Preferred Strategy sets out the key economic, environmental and social objectives for Rhondda Cynon Taf

LDP. In specific relation to employment development these include:

- Promote integrated communities with opportunities for living working and socialising for all
- Provide for a sustainable economy
- Provide for a diverse range of job opportunities
- Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable modes of transport

### **Development Strategy**

Paragraphs 6.1 – 6.11 of the Preferred Strategy sets out a development strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf. The strategy area is divided in into two distinct parts:-

- Northern Strategy Area, and
- Southern Strategy Area

The Northern Strategy area comprises the key settlements of Tonypany, Porth, Treorchy, Treherbert, Ferndale, Tylorstown, Mountain Ash and Hirwaun and the principal town of Aberdare. In this area the emphasis is on building sustainable communities and halting the process of depopulation and decline.

The Southern Strategy area includes the principal towns of Pontypridd and Llantrisant and key settlements of Tonyrefail and Llanharan. In the south of the County Borough the emphasis is on sustainable growth that benefits Rhondda Cynon Taf as a whole.

The strategy recognises the important role that principal towns and key settlements play in providing services of both local and county importance. Where possible, development will be focused on the principal towns and key settlements of the County Borough in order to support and reinforce the important role of these centres play as places for social and economic activity.

The following Strategic Employment Policy is included in the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan: Preferred Strategy (January 2007).

### SP 7 – Employment Requirements

**The economic development needs of Rhondda Cynon Taf will be met through the identification of some 300 hectares of land for general employment and business park use during the period 2006 – 2021. Proposals for Employment generating development which diversify the local economy and extend the range of high value, well paid employment opportunities available locally will be supported. Emphasis will be given to the promotion of mixed-use developments that promote the objectives of sustainability and environmental protection.**

The employment and economic growth needs of Rhondda Cynon Taf are recognised in the Strategy, which seeks the development of a business environment which delivers a strong and diverse economy; quality, well paid jobs, and addresses problems of economic inactivity. The key sectors for employment growth in Rhondda Cynon Taf are:-

- Built Environment

- Social Enterprise
- High Tech Manufacturing
- Knowledge Based Industries

There have been recent changes in the economy of Rhondda Cynon Taf that are likely to have an impact upon employment land sites. These include decreasing employment in manufacturing sectors; increasing levels of employment in construction; distribution, hotels & restaurants; transport & communications; banking, finance & insurance; etc; and public administration, education & health. Forecasts predict a continued fall in manufacturing employment and continued increase in employment in the service sector. A key issue is to ensure that the changing needs of businesses in Rhondda Cynon Taf are reflected in the supply of employment sites throughout the County Borough.

Recent studies have established that the overall supply of employment land at 195 hectares is healthy although there has been a rapid take up of B1 land (27 hectares April 2005 to Oct 2006). The current supply does not however, meet future needs, in terms of:

- Type of employment sites and units available – specifically smaller flexible space
- Meeting the demand from micro-businesses
- The quality of office space, including town centre provision

Concerns also exist regarding the redundant nature of industrial space – the ‘large box syndrome’ of provision built during the 1980s; the perceived poor environment of some

employment sites including difficult accessibility in many areas and a mismatch of supply around the M4 area.

The employment market is a dynamic and changing sector. Whilst the LDP will maintain an appropriate landbank for general and business park development over the plan period it will also encourage innovation and diversity in the employment sector.

The Northern Strategy will give favourable consideration to the development of small-scale employment opportunities in areas such as town centres and residential areas provided that development does not have an adverse impact upon the integrity of these areas. In the Southern Strategy Area and the A470 / A459 / A465 Corridor the emphasis will be on providing land for companies with potential national and global markets.

### ***Representations to the Preferred Strategy***

Representations made in respect of the Employment and Economy element of the Preferred Strategy fall consist of Representations to Paragraph 6.17 –6.21 – Employment and Economic Development and Representations to *Policy SP7 – Employment*

Outlined below is a summary of the main representations submitted in respect of Employment.

### ***Representations to Paragraph 6.17 –6.21 – Employment and Economic Development***

Issue: Treforest Industrial Estate should be identified as a Simplified Planning Zone.

Response: The Council does not consider that the designation of Treforest Industrial Estate as a Simplified Planning Zone is appropriate. The LDP will however, give further consideration to the matter.

Issue: Consideration should be given to locating new employment opportunities/locations within the Northern Strategy area this would greatly reduce the volume of traffic travelling south everyday.

Response: Agreed. The LDP will seek to promote employment opportunities at appropriate locations throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Issue: The LDP should consider an approach which balances encouraging major employers and small medium enterprises.

Response: Agreed. The LDP will provide a range of sites for employment opportunities throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf.

### ***Representations to Policy SP7 – Employment***

Issue: Policy SP7 seeks to allocate too much land for employment purposes, the effect may be to sterilise land which could be used for alternative uses.

Response: Noted. LDP will review and critically analyse the need for employment land in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Issue: Objection is expressed to the projected requirement for 300 hectares of employment land and the methodology used to arrive at the figure.

Response: Noted. LDP will review and critically analyse the need for employment land in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Issue: The LDP should not adopt an unduly negative stance towards non-traditional uses on employment sites.

Response: Noted. Consideration will be given to the development of a policy context which provides, where appropriate, a positive approach towards non-traditional uses on employment sites

## 6. DRAFT LDP POLICY

### Revised Strategic Policy

#### SP 7 – Employment Requirements

***The economic development needs of Rhondda Cynon Taf will be met through the identification of some (TBA) hectares of land for general employment and business park use during the period 2006 – 2021. Proposals for Employment generating development which diversify the local economy and extend the range of high value, well paid employment opportunities available locally will be supported. Emphasis will be given to the promotion of mixed use developments that promote the objectives of sustainability and environmental protection.***

#### *Justification*

The employment and economic growth needs of Rhondda Cynon Taf are recognised in the Strategy, which seeks the development of a business environment which delivers a

strong and diverse economy; quality, well paid jobs, and addresses problems of economic inactivity. The key sectors for employment growth in Rhondda Cynon Taf are:-

- Built Environment
- Social Enterprise
- High Tech Manufacturing
- Knowledge Based Industries

There have been recent changes in the economy of Rhondda Cynon Taf that are likely to have an impact upon employment land sites. These include decreasing employment in manufacturing sectors; increasing levels of employment in construction; distribution, hotels & restaurants; transport & communications; banking, finance & insurance; etc; and public administration, education & health. Forecasts predict a continued fall in manufacturing employment and continued increase in employment in the service sector. A key issue is to ensure that the changing needs of businesses in Rhondda Cynon Taf are reflected in the supply of employment sites throughout the County Borough.

Recent studies have established that the overall supply of employment land at 195 hectares is healthy although there has been a rapid take up of B1 land (27 hectares April 2005 to Oct 2006). The current supply does not however, meet future needs, in terms of:

- Type of employment sites and units available – specifically smaller flexible space
- Meeting the demand from micro-businesses

- The quality of office space, including town centre provision

Concerns also exist regarding the redundant nature of industrial space – the ‘large box syndrome’ of provision built during the 1980s; the perceived poor environment of some employment sites including difficult accessibility in many areas and a mismatch of supply around the M4 area. Where appropriate, proposals to modernise redundant sites, including the subdivision of large premises to create smaller units, will be supported.

The employment market is a dynamic and changing sector. Whilst the LDP will maintain an appropriate landbank for general and business park development over the plan period it will also encourage innovation and diversity in the employment sector. Whilst recognising the important role that key employment sites will play in the economic development of the County Borough, the LDP will ensure that the needs of small and medium sized enterprises are met. The LDP will also consider the needs of enterprises outside of the traditional ‘B’ use classes, such as the social economy.

In identifying employment sites, the Council will ensure that allocated sites are capable of accommodating a range of enterprises and employment uses. It will also ensure that sites are well related in relation to existing settlements and infrastructure, in order to utilise existing physical and social infrastructure, reduce the need to travel and provide job opportunities for all.

The Northern Strategy will give favourable consideration to the development of small-scale employment opportunities in

areas such as town centres and residential areas provided that development does not have an adverse impact upon the integrity of these areas.

In the Southern Strategy Area and the A470 / A459 / A465 Corridor the emphasis will be on providing land for companies with potential national and global markets.

The LDP will also recognise Rhondda Cynon Taf’s role in the Capital Network and will that the role of employment, housing and transport are integral to the success of the wider region. Developments such as the Dragon Film Studios within RCT and the proposed Business Park near Junction 33 of the M4 and the Training Centre for the Combined Armed Forces at St Athan, will have regional impacts. The LDP will look to support these developments and ensure that the County Borough benefits from the opportunities they will deliver.

There are no Simplified Planning Zones (SPZs) identified or proposed within the LDP, however the Council will keep under review the desirability of introducing such a scheme for part or parts of the County Borough.

### ***New Employment Sites***

In order to ensure that the LDP provides the range of required sites to meet the employment needs of the County Borough over the life of the plan, a two-tier hierarchy of employment sites has been identified. This will enable the Council to ensure that an appropriate mix of sites are allocated across the Borough in both the Northern and Southern Strategy Areas and that the key employment sites are clearly identified

and afforded protection from competing higher value land uses.

*Key Employment Sites* have been identified in line with sustainable development principles, with preference for the use of previously developed land, proximity to existing urban developments, good accessibility to the public transport and primary road network and good quality telecommunications. These sites represent the Council's premier employment sites and will be capable of accommodating business parks, strategic and major mixed use developments and large-scale investment opportunities. Key employment sites will also be capable of supporting technology clusters and eco-parks.

*Local Employment Sites* have been identified to provide employment opportunities for those who cannot readily access or do not require major employment sites and have been identified in line with sustainable development principles. These sites will accommodate smaller-scale uses and those which require traditional industrial estate locations. Local sites will encourage new and start up-business growth and sites allocated for B2 uses could accommodate for new waste facilities.

## AREA-WIDE POLICIES

### **Policy AW 1 – Strategic Employment Allocations**

**Land is allocated for the provision (TBA) hectares of new B1, B2 and B8 strategic employment development in the following locations:**

**(Site to be added)**

Rhondda Cynon Taf occupies a key location within South East Wales, the Capital Network Region and the Heads of the Valleys area. The Consultation draft Wales Spatial Plan Update 2008: People, Places, Futures identifies 3 Strategic Opportunity Areas (SOA). The SOAs are centred around:

- The Heads of the Valley Road (A465);
- Llantrisant and North West Cardiff, and
- St Athan in the Vale of Glamorgan

SOAs offer the potential for development to take place in a sustainable way, which will benefit the region as a whole. The Council recognises the strategic location of Rhondda Cynon Taf and is committed to ensuring that the County Borough plays a crucial role in the development of all of the SOAs and the wider region.

### **Policy AREA 20 – Local Employment Allocations**

**Land is allocated for the provision of (TBA) hectares of new B1, B2, B8 development in the following locations:-**

**(Sites to be added)**

#### *Justification*

The sites have been selected in accordance with the aims and objectives of the Preferred Strategy and in accordance with recognised sustainability principles. In accordance with national guidance, a preference has been given to the re-use of brownfield sites.

Through the allocation of a range of Key Employment and Local Employment sites, the Council will ensure a range of employment sites are available to accommodate employment opportunities of a local, Borough-wide and regional scale

### **Policy EMP 2 - Alternative Uses on Employment Sites**

**There is a presumption in favour of the retention of existing employment sites for employment purposes, unless it can be demonstrated that:-**

- i) the site is no longer required for employment purposes**
- ii) the alternative use is suitable in relation to adjacent or surrounding uses;**
- iii) the scale and design of the proposal and its environmental, access and transportation implications are acceptable;**
- iv) there are no suitable sites or premises available for the proposed alternative use and the a sequential test has been applied for retail and leisure uses;**
- v) that the proposal would improve the amenities of existing residents;**
- vi) any flood risk, ground, air and noise pollution can be alleviated effectively**
- vii) any proposals accord with the Retail and Waste policies of this Plan.**
- viii) The site is not identified in other policies in the plan.**

### *Justification*

Whilst recognising that employment sites are a scarce and valuable resource, it is acknowledged that some existing sites are no longer suited to the needs of the modern economy and may become redundant over the life of the plan. The above policy aims to provide a basis for assessing proposals for other uses on existing land in industrial/business use. There may be opportunities for windfall housing sites, for example, on land which accommodates non conforming uses in predominantly residential areas.

The Council will closely scrutinise the evidence put forward to demonstrate that sites are no longer required for employment purposes and will consider short and medium scale demand.

Proposals however for alternative uses on good quality employment land which can be marketed and developed in the short term must be closely scrutinised to assess the extent to which the loss of a site would itself, or cumulatively with other losses, have an adverse effect on the range and choice of development opportunities available. The maintenance of a landbank of sites, particularly where growth sectors can be accommodated, is vital to success in economic development.

### **Policy EMP 3 - Employment Opportunities within Settlements/Expansion of Existing Employment Sites**

**a. Within the defined settlement boundaries the provision of new, or conversion of existing, buildings to create employment opportunities in small/medium enterprises, including starter units, will be permitted in locations where:**

- i) the form and scale of development are appropriate to the location and site;**
- ii) the development does not involve the loss of a primary shopping street frontage or an existing retail premises at ground floor level within an established commercial area**
- iii) the development is compatible with other uses in the locality and there are no significant adverse impacts on the amenities enjoyed by local residents;**
- iv) there are no unacceptable traffic, access or environmental impacts;**
- v) the redevelopment of derelict, unsightly, underused and vacant land for new employment uses will have a positive effect in regeneration terms.**

#### *Justification*

The characteristics of the economy are evolving continuously. B1 business uses are generally acceptable in predominantly residential areas. Elsewhere it is preferable for buildings to be used appropriately rather than to stand wholly or partly empty. A flexible approach is required to enable suitable re-use or new uses where this might contribute to the preservation of a building or to townscape enhancement. Such development would also be valuable in fostering new and smaller businesses, in providing jobs for people in the locality and in achieving environmental improvements.

The Council is keen to support the development of the social economy and social enterprises within the Borough. Such

business and enterprises vary widely and do not necessarily fall within the traditional B1, B2 and B8 use classes. Examples include community businesses, co-operatives, local self-help or interest groups, and activities and services can range from housing and property management, cultural activities, sport, manufacturing, care services and arts. The above policy will be used to assess proposals for social enterprises and enterprises operating within the social economy.

Similarly, the Council recognises that some uses, such as crèches and training centres, also fall outside of the B1 use classes. Such proposals may be acceptable within settlements and will be considered against the above policy.

The Council recognises the important contribution of existing business in the local and often regional economy and will support proposals for the expansion of employment sites subject to the criteria of the above policy being met.

The above policy will also be used to assess proposals for Live-Work Units on sites not allocated for employment purposes.

#### **Policy EMP 4 - Employment Development in the Countryside**

##### **Employment development outside defined Settlement Boundaries will only be permitted where:-**

- i) it relates directly to agriculture or tourism;**
- ii) it is for recreational, tourism, minerals, waste or other activities for which a rural location is essential;**

- iii) **it provides for appropriate diversification of the rural economy;**
- iv) **a sympathetic conversion or re-use of existing agricultural buildings can be achieved;**
- v) **the location, scale and design of any proposed development takes account of its landscape setting and of any nearby buildings;**
- vi) **there is no unacceptable adverse impact on features of acknowledged historic, archaeological, nature conservation or mineral resource interest;**
- vii) **sterilisation of good quality agricultural land (Grades 2 and 3A) is avoided;**
- viii) **the development does not require the provision of unsightly infrastructure, and services can be readily and economically provided;**
- ix) **additional traffic generated can be accommodated on the local road network and satisfactory access and parking can be provided.**
- x) **the vital role of flood protection and the land drainage system is taken into account.**

Development in the countryside will not be generally favoured where it would be more appropriately located within settlements. There will be occasions, however, where a rural location will be appropriate or indeed, essential, particularly with activities related to agriculture, forestry, recreation and tourism, minerals and waste.

In demonstrating that a rural location is essential, it should be demonstrated that no suitable sites exist in more sustainable

locations eg within defined settlements or adjacent to defined settlement boundaries.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Policy ENV (TBA) – Conversion of Rural Buildings.

### **Policy EMP 5 - Working from Home**

**Proposals to use any part of a dwelling, its curtilage or a building ancillary to a dwelling for business use will be permitted where:-**

- i) **the primary use and character of the building would remain as a dwelling and**
- ii) **the proposal would not cause unacceptable impacts upon local amenities, highway safety or parking.**

The Council recognises that working patterns are changing. Developments in information technology and telecommunications are making it easier to work from home and more people wish to integrate their work with their home lives. This may necessitate the creation of a formal working environment in the home or an ancillary building on a scale which is not incidental to residential use and which would require planning permission.

In considering the impact upon local amenities, the Council will consider issues such as noise, dust, smell and general disturbance. Proposals that will have an unacceptable impact upon local amenities will not be permitted.

## **Policy EMP 6 - Development Involving Hazardous Substances**

**Developments involving hazardous substances will be permitted if the proposal:-**

- i) does not present additional risk to the health or safety of users of the site and does not unacceptably pollute air, water or land**
- ii) does not adversely affect the use of adjoining land by virtue of the risk and impact of potential pollution**
- iii) does not unacceptably affect the quality or quantity of water resources (both surface and groundwater)**
- iv) does not have an unacceptable effect upon the amenity and character of the neighbouring land or the environment by virtue of noise traffic congestion, exacerbation of parking problems or visual intrusion**
- v) does not unacceptably conflict with the interests of agriculture, nature conservation, areas of ecological, wildlife or archaeological importance or features of geological or geomorphological importance or landscape protection policies; and**
- vi) provides arrangements for the after treatment and future use of the site which are to the satisfaction of the local planning authority.**

### *Justification*

Certain industries and processes involve the manufacture, use, or storage of products which may be dangerous. Under the Notification of Installations Handling Hazardous Substances Regulations 1982 and the (Amendment) Regulations 2002, certain sites and pipelines are designated as notifiable installations by virtue of the quantities of hazardous substances used or stored. This policy will ensure that housing and other developments sensitive to hazardous substances or potentially polluting uses, including environmentally sensitive areas are kept apart where such uses cannot reasonably coexist. This is so that occupants of new development will be protected from pollution, and potentially polluting industry should not face unreasonable additional constraints.

In determining such proposals, the Council will consult the Health and Safety Executive.

## **Policy EMP - 7 - Development Adjacent to Hazardous Industrial Uses**

**Development will not be permitted adjacent to industrial or other establishments, which are likely to cause unacceptable pollution or hazards to users of the proposed development**

### *Justification*

Whilst notifiable installations are subject to stringent controls by legislation, it is considered prudent to control the kinds of development permitted in the vicinity of these establishments.

This policy will ensure that not only are the risks to users minimised, but that the continued operation of notifiable installations are not unduly jeopardised.

The Council recognises that some uses will be more sensitive in relation to hazardous uses than others. Where proposals for development come forward adjacent to any of these establishments, the Council will consult with the Health and Safety Executive and have regard to their advice in determining whether the future users of the development would be likely to be exposed to unacceptable risks.

#### *Northern Strategy Area Policies*

The economy of the Northern Strategy Area has been in significant decline since the closure of the Collieries in the South Wales Coalfield in the 1980's. These problems have been exacerbated by the closure of a number of well established manufacturing companies in the Rhondda Fawr and Fach. With the exception of the development of the Strategic Site 1: Former Meardy Colliery, Rhondda Fach and Strategic Site 5: land South of Hirwaun / Penywaun, the opportunities for the development of sites for large scale new employment uses are limited. The emphasis in the Northern Strategy Area must be placed on retaining and improving existing employment sites.

#### **Policy NSA 1 - Small Industrial and Business Sites**

**Small industrial and business sites (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8) will be retained for employment purposes unless it can be demonstrated that:**

- i) Suitable alternative sites are available elsewhere in the neighbourhood at a comparable rental;**
- ii) The premises have been assessed and are genuinely redundant i.e. they are vacant and have been marketed locally at price that reflects their condition and commercial value and for a period of time that reflects the likely demand for the size of premises;**
- iii) Continued use of the premises for business purposes would cause undue disturbance to residential neighbours; or**
- iv) Access to the premises does not meet an acceptable safety standard and cannot reasonably be improved.**

The Northern Strategy area, and in particular the Rhondda Valleys, has a densely developed built up area with limited opportunities for introducing new industrial and business premises. Existing small industrial sites and business sites, which operate as vehicle repair garages and builders yards serve an important role in the local economy, providing both employment and services that may not be provided if such sites were lost.

Whilst recognising that such sites can potentially cause disturbance to local residents, the Council is keen to ensure that these sites are protected unless it has been clearly demonstrated that the existing use is economically unviable, that suitable alternative premises are available nearby or that the improvements to local residential amenity outweigh the retention of the industrial or business use.

## **Policy NSA 2 – Re-development of Vacant/Redundant Industrial Sites**

**Proposals for the conversion or redevelopment of redundant and/or vacant industrial sites for mixed uses will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:-**

- i) The premise/site has been assessed and is genuinely redundant i.e. In terms of the current and future needs of the employment market;**
- ii) That it has been marketed locally at price that reflects its condition and commercial value and for a period of time that reflects the likely demand for the size of premises**
- iii) The development is compatible with other uses in the locality and there are no significant adverse impacts on the amenities enjoyed by local residents;**
- iv) The redevelopment of derelict, unsightly, underused and vacant land for new mixed uses will have a positive effect in regeneration terms.**

It is recognised that older and redundant industrial units are often unsuitable to the needs of modern industry. Furthermore, the land take required by today's employment uses can be significantly less than previous business users. Sites such as the Former Chubb Factory in the Rhondda Fach and the Cae Mawr site and (to a lesser extent) the former Burberry Factory in Rhondda Fawr are examples of sites where established large scale users have ceased operating, leaving older industrial sites in need of re-development to return them to beneficial use.

The Council recognises the important role older industrial sites have played in the local and regional economy and wishes to see such sites continue to provide employment opportunities over the plan period. In order to support the re-development of such sites, the Council will consider proposals for mixed-use schemes, where it can be demonstrated that other uses will help bring forward employment opportunities and contribute to the wider objectives of the LDP.

In considering mixed-use proposals, the Council will expect to see well designed schemes which include a mixture of uses including employment generation, housing, amenity space, community facilities and commercial development amongst other uses, as appropriate to the site. The Council will consider carefully whether proposals constitute mixed-use development in the context of this policy. For example, schemes that essentially propose one primary use on a site, such as housing, with a significantly smaller secondary element, such as employment, are unlikely to be considered mixed-use schemes for the purpose of this policy. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the mixture of uses has been developed and how they will contribute to the wider regeneration of the area.

## 7. **Further Advice**

If you require any further advice or assistance in respect this or other LDP documents or wish to be placed on the Council's consultation database please contact a member of the Local Development Plan Team at:

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