Flintshire Local Development Plan
Revised version - August 2016

Key Messages

Setting the future direction for the Plan.

Tell us what you think.

CYNGOR
Sir y Fflint
Flintshire
COUNTY COUNCIL

Contents

1. **Introduction** p3
2. **Where are we now?** p3
3. **Where are we trying to get to?** p4
4. **The vision for the Plan** p4
5. **The issues facing the Plan** p5
   - Enhancing community life p5
   - Delivering growth and prosperity p10
   - Safeguarding the environment p15
6. **The objectives for the Plan** p19
7. **Moving forward** p21
8. **Settlement categorisation** p23
   - Settlement surveys p23
   - Settlement categorisation options p24
9. **Next Steps** p26
10. **How to comment** p27

Appendices:

1. **Discussion Paper – settlement surveys and the formulation of a basic settlement banding** p28
2. **Discussion Paper – settlement categorisation options** p43

Flintshire Local Development Plan.

Key Messages – Setting the direction for the Plan.
Tell us what you think.

1 - Introduction

1.1 - The Council is preparing a Local Development Plan (LDP) to cover the 15 year period 2015 to 2030 and when adopted this will replace the adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The LDP will contain policies and proposals which together will provide for the development needs of the County over the Plan period as well as protecting the social and environmental assets of the County.

2 - Where are we now?

2.1 - The Council is in the early stages of Plan preparation and the various stages are set out in the Council's Delivery Agreement. A summary of progress to date is set out below:

- undertaken a **Call for Candidate Sites** and published a **Register** of all valid site submissions
- undertaking **Candidate Site Assessments** of the 734 sites involving internal and external consultations on the candidate sites as part of the on-going assessment
- consulted upon a **Candidate Site Assessment Methodology Background Paper** setting out the methodology by which candidate sites will be assessed and subsequently published an amended paper
- consulted upon a suite of 18 **Topic Papers** on a range of topics and issues and published amended versions where changes made
- appointed with Wrexham County Borough Council (CBC) a joint **Local Housing Market Assessment** undertake by Arc4 consultants which has been published
- appointed Arc4 to undertake a **New Housing Occupancy Survey** on all properties constructed / converted in the last 5 years to gain a better understanding of the local housing market
- appointed Arc4 to undertake a **Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment**
- jointly commissioned with Wrexham CBC an **Employment Land Needs Study,** undertaken by B.E group, which will be published shortly. Follow up work on forecasting economic and jobs based growth scenarios has also been commissioned and this will feed into population and household modelling work
- appointed consultants jointly with Wrexham to undertake initial **viability** work on development sites
- held the first meeting of the **Key Stakeholder Forum** which will act as a sounding board at key

stages in the Plans preparation and has considered the Plan's vision and objectives

- appointed Hyder Consulting to undertake a **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)** and the draft SA Scoping Report has been consulted upon.
- commencing a range of other studies including **green barrier review, urban capacity study, Welsh Language Assessment and Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment**
- **appointed COFNOD (North Wales Environmental Information Service) to undertake biodiversity mapping in relation to the County's main towns and settlements within areas of development pressure**
- **undertaken an assessment of settlement services and facilities and consulted with Town & Community Councils**

2.2 - The website provides a range of information about various aspects of the LDP as well as any completed studies and can be found at the following web address: http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Planning/Flintshire-Local-Development-Plan.aspx

3 - Where are We Trying to Get to?

3.1 - The Council is presently working towards preparing and consulting upon the Pre-Deposit Consultation Draft Plan which will set out the Council's Preferred Strategy i.e. the amount of growth to be provided for the Plan and how that growth is to be distributed spatially across the County. Before this the Council will publish and consult on a range of growth and spatial options before deciding on the draft Preferred Strategy within the pre-deposit Plan.

3.2 - Before consulting on growth and spatial options however, it was considered important for an initial document to be prepared which would set the scene in terms of lessons learned from the emerging evidence base and early engagement and also provide key stakeholders and the general public with the opportunity to give their initial views on how the Plan is emerging and should be shaped. In this way, the Council should have a clearer picture that the Plan is heading in the right direction and from this be able to develop a series of realistic growth and spatial options.

4 - The Vision for the Plan

4.1 - Each LDP needs to be based on a vision as to what it is seeking to achieve over the Plan period. The Council has drawn up a draft Vision which has been debated by the Key Stakeholder Forum and this is considered to represent a sound basis for the preparation and subsequent implementation of the Plan. The vision is also informed by the Council's Community Strategy / Single Integrated Plan and is set out below:

The LDP is about people and places. It seeks to achieve a sustainable and lasting balance which provides for the economic, social and environmental needs of Flintshire and its residents, through realising its unique position as a regional gateway and area for economic investment whilst protecting its strong historic and cultural identity.

Q1 Do you agree with the Vision for the LDP? If not, how and why do you consider it should be changed?

5 - The Issues Facing the Plan

5.1 - In drawing up the Plan a number of issues have been identified which need to be addressed as the Plan is progressed. Each of the Topic Papers set out a number of issues and the key issues have been grouped under the general themes of sustainable development i.e. enhancing community life, delivering growth and prosperity and safeguarding the environment. Under each of the three themes are a number of 'headline' issues and each of these refers to a number of key issues or considerations. Not all of the issues from the Topic Papers have been reproduced below as the Topic Papers are available separately on the website as part of the Plan's evidence base. By grouping and identifying key issues under 'themes' and 'headline' issues, it begins to form the basis for addressing them through the subsequent formulation of suitable policies.

Enhancing Community Life

5.2 - Ensure communities have access to a mix of services, facilities, community and cultural facilities, to allow community life to flourish, to provide for the health and well-being, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community and particular groups such as the elderly.

Issues and Considerations:

- Lack of facilities and services
- Addressing quantitative and qualitative deficiencies in open space
- Ensuring new housing development incorporates or contributes to well-designed open space which is properly managed and maintained
- Accessibility of / to facilities and services
- Financial pressure on facilities and services – numbers / location / accessibility i.e. it is not realistic for all settlements to have a comprehensive range of facilities and services but recognising the availability of services and facilities in adjacent or nearby settlements
- Should facilities and services respond to development or direct where development should go?
- Provision of health centres and facilities

- Ensure that facilities for education either exist or can be provided
- Ensure that new development contributes where necessary to school improvements where capacity issues exist with the present level of accommodation
- Ensure that education facilities are accessible to local communities especially younger children in a safe and convenient way
- Safeguard and protect community identity
- Ensure the principles of equality are applied in preparing the plan.

Q2 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading? If not how and why do you consider it should be changed?

5.3 - Encourage the development of town and district centres as the focus for regeneration

Issues and Considerations:

- recognising the role of town / district / local centres in terms of provision of services and facilities and seeking to maintain or enhance through regeneration or other measures

Q3 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading? If not how and why do you consider it should be changed?

- Seeking to address decreased vitality and viability resulting in associated problems with management and maintenance of both public realm and also built fabric with vacant units and poor maintenance.
- The means to attract new investment to traditional town centres.

5.4 - Promote a sustainable and safe transport system that reduces reliance on the car

Issues and considerations:

- need for joined up transport system involving road, rail, bus, cycling and walking and recognising the role of town centres as transport hubs
- social exclusion in rural areas
- social exclusion to certain groups of population
- access to jobs for those without private car e.g improved accessibility to Deeside Industrial Park (DIP)
- addressing the potential for improvements to the railway system both for freight and passengers e.g. the need for new or improved rail station at DIP and the electrification of the Wrexham Bidston Railway
- public transport nodes and routes
- identifying disused trackbeds and other potential routes for recreation / commuting
- identifying capacity and congestion hotspots and scope for either new road schemes or road improvement schemes
- recognise the health benefits of promoting alternative method of transport such as walking and cycling'
- Safeguarding the continued operation of Hawarden Airport
- consider the role of Mostyn Docks and River Dee as a transport corridor
- designing and managing roads to reduce journey times, increase safety and reduce congestion
- the outcome and implications of the WG consultation on the blue and red options for improving the A494T/A458 route corridor.

Q4 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading? If not how and why do you consider it should be changed?

5.5 - Facilitate the provision of necessary transport, utility and social / community infrastructure

Issues and considerations:

- water treatment capacity and network
- water supply capacity
- lack of timely investment in infrastructure eg water treatment to deliver development – pressure on service providers to respond – feeding into service provider plans and providers

- need better understanding of infrastructure provision
- energy provision – renewable energy generation and improving energy efficiency and conservation'
- understanding the scope for renewable energy within the County in order to inform the development of suitable policies and proposals.

Q5 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading? If not how and why do you consider it should be changed?

5.6 - Facilitate the sustainable management of waste

Issues and considerations:

- identifying future waste management and disposal needs – North Wales Residual Waste
- the need for firm allocations rather than areas of search
- contributing towards an adequate network of waste disposal and management installations
- design of housing and other development to facilitate increased recycling
- ensure risks posed by active or former landfill sites, given the landfill legacy in parts of the County, are minimised by directing sensitive development away from inappropriate sites
- reviewing existing employment sites to identify those which can accommodate waste management facilities.

Q6 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading? If not how and why do you consider it should be changed?

5.7 - Protecting and supporting the Welsh Language

Issues and considerations:

- Identify the use of Welsh Language within the County and identify trends whereby the language is flourishing or declining
- assess the impacts of proposed housing allocations on the Welsh Language, including Welsh language schools where necessary and appropriate

Q7 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading? If not how and why do you consider it should be changed?

5.8 - Create places that are safe, accessible and encourage and support good health, well-being and equality

Issues and considerations:

- Placing emphasis on the creation of safe and good quality public realm as part of new development
- Ensuring new development is accessible to all users
- Ensuring that new development creates the conditions which are condusive to healthy living.

Q8 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading? If not how and why do you consider it should be changed?

Delivering Growth and Prosperity

5.9 - Facilitate growth and diversification of the local economy and an increase in skilled high value employment in key sectors

Issues and considerations:

- Recognising the importance of the Flintshire economy to Wales and West Cheshire and chester / Wirral
- Have regard to the Mersey Dee Alliance and Northern Powerhouse agendas in terms of implications for the economy of Flintshire
- Over-reliance on manufacturing yet Deeside Enterprise Zone (DEZ) focus on 'advance' manufacturing
- Focus on storage and distribution at Northern Gateway
- Underdeveloped / disjointed tourism industry – outcomes of tourism destination management project.
- Accessibility to work opportunities
- Need to review older industrial allocations – new uses?
- Ensure key existing employment sites and allocations are protected from inappropriate development
- Lack of understanding as to what the market is likely to need over Plan period in terms of location, size and type of sites
- The need to ensure an adequate and appropriately skilled and trained labour supply is maintained
- What is the Council's / Welsh Government's target in terms of job creation and how does this translate into supporting development requirements?
- Addressing the needs of and implications of special and hazardous industries and protecting community
- The need to ensure a sustainable supply of minerals over the Plan period in which the economic importance of minerals extraction is balanced against environmental effects.

Q9 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading? If not how and why do you consider it should be changed?

5.10 - Support development that positions Flintshire as an economically competitive place and an economic driver for the sub-region

Issues and considerations

- Need to identify and deliver the right strategic sites – location, size, type to meet present / future needs (more informed view than traditional approach of over – allocation) either through allocations or a flexible but robust policy approach
- Recognizing key economic drivers such as Airbus, Tata, Toyota etc
- Address the impact of Northern Gateway and DEZ and setting the scene for the remainder of the Plan period
- Recognising growth hubs and linkages with surrounding settlements to spread wealth and regeneration
- Recognise the benefits of mixed use development sites.

Q10 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading? If not how and why do you consider it should be changed?

5.11 - Reinforce and improve Flintshire's town and district centres as vibrant destinations for shopping, leisure, culture, learning and business

Issues and considerations:

- Addressing the effects of the economic downturn and cultural changes such as on line shopping
- Will economic recovery bring back town centres to their former glory or has their 'shopping' role changed fundamentally
- Need to address the role and function of town centres – is it predominantly retail or is it a mix of uses
- How to control / prevent the loss of shops in town centres – review of core retail area policy and consideration of alternative policy approaches
- Importance of night time economy – assisted by people living in town centres eg above shops.
- Is there a need to control specific types of development e.g. hot food takeaways as part of healthy living concerns?

- Need to re-look at retail hierarchy – role and function of each town / district / local centre i.e. are specific policies needed for each town centre or one size fits all?
- Utilising the information contained within existing town centre masterplans and health checks
- Determining whether there is a need for further retail floorspace and if so, the identification of sites for new retail development having regard to the town centres first principle.
- determining whether park and ride has a role to play in facilitating and supporting healthy town centres
- the need to retain and facilitate local and rural shopping facilities

Q11 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading? If not how and why do you consider it should be changed?

5.12 - Ensuring that Flintshire has the right amount, size and type of new housing to support economic development and to meet a range of housing needs

Issues and considerations:

- Providing an amount of housing which meets local needs and a reasonable level of in-migration which supports the economic growth aspirations of the Plan
- understanding and addressing the under- delivery of housing in the UDP
- undertaking a robust assessment of existing housing land bank and making informed allowances for small sites and windfalls
- The provision of housing which meets the needs of the general market as well as affordable housing and specialist housing such as elderly persons accommodation and gypsy and travellers'.
- Set an appropriate and achievable level of affordable housing for the plan area based on local need and viability
- ensure that a 5 year housing land supply can be sustained throughout the Plan period
- develop a policy framework to identify what developer contributions, through CIL or otherwise, will be required towards the community and infrastructure impacts of development.

Q12 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading? If not how and why do you consider it should be changed?

5.13 - Ensure that housing development takes place in sustainable locations where sites are viable and deliverable and are supported by the necessary social, environmental and physical infrastructure

Issues and considerations:

- Need greater emphasis on the delivery of housing – viability and deliverability
- Ensuring housing allocations deliver associated infrastructure upgrades where necessary
- Ensuring housing allocations are in sustainable locations based on a sustainable settlement and locational strategy and detailed audits of settlements
- Ensure that a range of physical, environmental and social infrastructure, including for instance an adequate road network, and public transport (rail and buses) is available or can be made available'
- Ensuring housing allocations are well related to economic growth areas
- Ensuring housing allocations are in areas where there is sufficient viability to deliver affordable housing etc
- Ensure full and realistic assessment is made of the existing housing landbank before identifying new housing allocations
- Review green barriers and settlement boundaries
- Adopting a site search sequence focusing initially on the availability and suitability of brownfield land.

Q13 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading? If not how and why do you consider it should be changed?

5.14 - Promote and enhance a diverse and sustainable rural economy

Issues and considerations:

- Recognise the contribution of the agricultural economy and need for diversification in the rural economy either as part of farm diversification or through development in and on the edge of settlements – site allocations or flexible policies?
- How realistic is it to achieve employment re-uses of rural buildings such as barns?
- Utilizing natural assets such as renewable energy
- Ensure that a sensitive and sustainable approach is taken to meeting housing needs in rural areas e.g. local needs and rural enterprise dwellings, and investigating relating to the delivery of affordable housing as part of mixed tenure schemes

Q14 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading? If not how and why do you consider it should be changed?

5.15 - Support the provision of sustainable tourism development

Issues and considerations:

- Underdeveloped / disjointed tourism industry – outcomes of tourism destination management project in terms of a strategic framework for tourism in the County e.g. accommodation and attractions
- Recognizing changes in tourism – increased short breaks and new / innovative forms of accommodation
- Recognizing that tourism is increasingly all year round
- Recognise the tourism role of market towns.
- Need for flexible policies to allow for changes in the tourism industry reflecting changing consumer preferences
- Safeguarding and enhancing natural and heritage assets i.e. coast, key landscapes etc
- Recognizing the importance of tourism ‘events’ such as Mold Food Festival
- In addition to improving existing attractions such as Greenfield Valley, the need to consider and develop new tourism destinations such as Holywell and Hawarden.

Q15 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading? If not how and why do you consider it should be changed?

Safeguarding the Environment

5.16 - Minimise the causes and impacts of climate change and pollution

Issues and considerations

- Recognizing that parts of the County are susceptible to flooding (coastal and fluvial) e.g. along Dee Estuary but also recognizing local flooding hotspots e.g. surface water flooding
- Understanding the degree of flood risk in the County in terms of tidal, fluvial and surface water
- Recognize that extreme weather events are more likely
- Adopting a precautionary and long term approach to the location / siting / design of development and travel patterns/arrangements as part of understanding the effects of climate change
- Ensuring new development has built in resilience to climate change e.g. through design measures such as SUDS and sustainable transport alternatives
- Addressing light, noise, air and other types of pollution within the County as part of identifying development sites
- Identifying physical constraints to development in terms of contaminated and unstable land (having regards to site search sequence in PPW and preference for brownfield land).
- Recognising the role that a sustainable pattern of development can play, for instance through promoting a modal shift from car to public transport, in trackling climate change.

Q16 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading? If not how and why do you consider it should be changed?

5.17 - Conserve and enhance Flintshire's high quality environmental assets including, as being of equal importance to National Parks, Biodiversity, landscape, cultural heritage and natural and built environments

Issues and considerations:

- Ensure the proper status of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area Of Natural Beauty (AONB) as being of equal importance to National Parks, is recognized, as there is a perception by some that it is regarded as being of lesser importance.
- Presence of several European designations and other protected habitats and species throughout County and implications for spatial strategy.
- Presence of great crested newts in and around several settlements particularly Buckley
- Culturally seen by some as having closer links with NW England than the rest of Wales
- Using the knowledge and information built into the Landmap system to ensure that the characteristics and features of the landscape are recognised and are considered as part of development proposal's
- Incorporating existing landscape and biodiversity features as part of development proposals and improving the ecological value of sites
- Assessing whether the Plan should identify special or local landscape designations
- Identification of a coastal zone and the review of the existing policy approach
- Safeguarding the County's rich and varied built and historic environment including listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments, archaeology sites and historic landscapes, parks and gardens whilst allowing sensitive managed change.

Q17 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading? If not how and why do you consider it should be changed?

5.18 - Maintain and enhance green and blue infrastructure networks

Issues and considerations:

- Identifying existing networks and gaps where linkages are needed
- 'recognising the Dee Estuary as a strategic linear open space opportunity and improving local accessibility to it'
- Using networks as links to open countryside but also as links to facilities, services, public transport i.e. as part of everyday life

- Recognizing the different roles of green infrastructure networks – landscape, wildlife, movement, recreation, amenity and food protection etc
- Ensuring that new development contributes where necessary to maintaining / enhancing existing networks or providing missing links
- Protecting built heritage at risk and sensitively managing change in the historic environment

Q18 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading? If not how and why do you consider it should be changed?

5.19 - Promote good design that is locally distinct, innovative and sensitive to location

Issues and considerations:

- Identifying and valuing what is the character of our settlements – layout, form design, materials etc
- Ensuring that the vernacular character or local distinctiveness is incorporated into new development
- Using design principles and policies to recognize local distinctiveness yet not stifling of innovative design

Q19 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading? If not how and why do you consider it should be changed?

5.20 - Support the safeguarding and sustainable use of natural resources and promoting the development of brownfield land

Issues and considerations:

- General support for renewable energy in terms of addressing climate change
- Identifying what scope / capacity there is for renewable energy in the County – wind, solar etc
- Does / should the Plan set targets for renewable energy
- Safeguarding minerals of economic importance and reviewing whether the minerals safeguarding designation in UDP needs to be further refined
- Reviewing whether the UDP mineral buffer zones are still fit for purpose
- Ensuring a sustainable supply of minerals is maintained over the Plan period and assessing whether present reserves of minerals are sufficient for the Plan period or will new sites or extensions to existing sites be required for aggregates and hard rock
- Protection of best and most versatile agricultural land
- Protecting water quality and conserving water supply

Q20 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading? If not how and why do you consider it should be changed?

6 - The Objectives for the Plan

6.1 - The vision for the Plan and the issues to be addressed by the Plan provide the basis for drawing up a set of strategic objectives. These objectives aim to capture the broad range of issues and considerations and set out what the Plan is aiming to achieve. The objectives can also form the basis for monitoring the implementation of the Plan. In drawing up the objectives these have again been organised according to the three themes of sustainable development. The objectives are set out below:

Enhancing Community Life	
1.	Ensure communities have access to a mix of services and facilities, such as education and health, to allow community life to flourish, and meet the needs of particular groups such as the elderly
2.	Encourage the development of town and district centres as the focus for regeneration
3.	Promote a sustainable and safe transport system that reduces reliance on the car
4.	Facilitate the provision of necessary transport, utility and social / community infrastructure
5.	Facilitate the sustainable management of waste
6.	Welsh Language and Culture
7	Create places that are safe, accessible and encourage and support good health, well-being and equality
Delivering Growth and Prosperity	
8.	Facilitate growth and diversification of the local economy and an increase in skilled high value employment in key sectors
9.	Support development that positions Flintshire as an economically competitive place and an economic driver for the sub-region
10.	Redefine the role and function of Flintshire's town centres as vibrant destinations for shopping, leisure, culture, learning, business and transport
11.	Ensuring that Flintshire has the right amount, size and type of new housing to support economic development and to meet a range of housing needs
12.	Ensure that housing development takes place in sustainable locations where sites are viable and deliverable and are supported by the necessary social, environmental and physical infrastructure
13.	Promote and enhance a diverse and sustainable rural economy
14.	Support the provision of sustainable tourism development
Safeguarding the Environment	
15.	Minimise the causes and impacts of climate change and pollution
16.	Conserve and enhance Flintshire's high quality environmental assets including landscape, cultural heritage and natural, historic and built environments
17.	Green and blue
18.	Promote good design that is locally distinct, innovative and sensitive to location
19.	Support the safeguarding and sustainable use of natural resources and promoting the development of brownfield land

Q21 Do you agree with the objectives above? If not how and why should the objectives be changed?

7 - Moving Forward

7.1 - The vision for the Plan, the issues and the objectives need to be read alongside the emerging evidence base in order to begin the process of devising a Plan Strategy which identifies the amount of growth for the Plan, the spatial distribution of that growth and the formulation of strategic policies and proposals. In conjunction with this is the need to review the lessons learned from the UDP.

7.2 - The key messages emerging to date can be briefly summarised as follows:

- The County is seen as an economic driver for the economy of the North East Wales sub – region alongside the West Cheshire and Chester sub-economy, as reflected in the designation of the Enterprise Zone
- The job growth and economic development ambitions for the County should form the basis for identifying and delivering a supporting level of housing development
- The 2011 based Welsh Government household projections underestimate future housing requirements as they are based on a period of economic downturn and should be used only as a starting point, alongside a range of other considerations
- Whether and the extent to which the under-delivered housing over the UDP Plan period should feed into the new housing requirement figure
- The County, in conjunction with Wrexham forms a self-contained local housing market area. Although there are key movements in the north east of the County with Chester (which has also been recognised as a self-contained local housing market area and capable of meeting its own housing needs in the Inspector's Report on the Local Plan – Part One) the Plan needs to primarily provide for its own housing needs
- The Wales Spatial Plan identifies a key triangle of growth comprising the Wrexham, Deeside and Chester area
- The County has a number of market towns and a larger urban area focussed on the various settlements comprising Deeside, together with a wider rural hinterland
- The County has extensive areas of brownfield land but this is generally located in and around the River Dee and Dee Estuary, in areas at risk of flooding and / or of international nature conservation importance and this likely result is the need for greenfield site allocations
- The County has a range of physical and environmental constraints in the form of the AONB, Dee Estuary and areas at risk of flooding
- The County has an ageing population with particular housing needs and a continuing need for affordable housing and the implications of such a trend longer term in ensuring a supply of skilled labour to meet the needs of modern employers
- The need to assess the comments of the UDP Inspector who considered that the approach to defining settlement boundaries based on individual settlements rather than identifying urban areas was backward looking and also considered that the time was rapidly approaching whereby a fundamental review of open countryside and green barriers in parts of the County was needed.

- The need for new development to be in the most sustainable locations and bring with it necessary infrastructure improvements
- The need for new housing sites to be viable and deliverable in terms of contributing to housing land supply and other Plan objectives.
- The need for some development in rural communities to help retain service provision

Q22 Do you agree with the above summary of key messages to be taken into account in informing the LDP Strategy? If not, how and why should they be changed?

8 - Settlement Categorisation

8.1 - The Council is presently working towards developing a number of growth and spatial options which will in turn inform the Preferred Strategy for the LDP. Before getting to this stage it is necessary to look at the building blocks for the LDP in terms of defining a settlement categorisation or hierarchy whereby settlements are ranked and grouped according to their character, size, role, function and sustainability.

Settlement Surveys

8.2 - Each of the settlements identified in the UDP, in addition to other possible settlements, have been assessed in terms of their services and facilities alongside their size, population and character and whether they are readily identified as settlements. The purpose of this study is to undertake a robust assessment of the sustainability of settlements and to provide the evidence base with which to test whether the UDP settlement hierarchy is still fit for purpose and to devise and test a range of other approaches. A discussion paper explaining the process by which the services and facilities in settlements were assessed, and results compiled into a basic set of settlement bandings is explained in Appendix1. For each of the settlements assessed a Settlement Audit Report can be viewed on the Councils website, which provides a snapshot assessment and commentary.

8.3 - The UDP adopted a three tier settlement hierarchy of category A (urban), category B (semi urban – main villages) and catgory C (small villages). The Study has identified that there is considerable variation of settlements within category B and C settlements in terms of the size, role and character of settlements,. There is also variation in the category A settlements between the towns of Mold, Flint, Buckley and Holywell, which are recognisable towns and Connah's Quay, Queensferry and Shotton / Aston which appear to function as part of a larger urban area rather than towns in their own right. The Study has identified that there are a number of settlements which share facilities and services as well as smaller settlements which are able to use the facilities and services in larger towns. In looking at settlements based on the settlement boundaries in the UDP there is considerable confusion as to where one settlement begins and another ends.

Q23 Do you have any comments to make on the settlement survey work in appendix 1 or the Settlement Audit Reports?

Settlement Categorisation Options

8.4 - The settlement survey assessments has established a good evidence base for each of the settlements and provided the framework with which to look at options for categorising settlements in the LDP. A separate study has therefore been undertaken which looks at the UDP approach and identifies a number of alternative approaches and is attached as a discussion paper at Appendix 2. It identifies a number of alternative approaches and for each sets out pros and cons. The Study does not recommend a particular course of action but merely seeks feedback so that the Council can identify the option which most accurately categorises settlements and forms the basis for developing spatial options i.e. how the growth to be provided by the Plan can be distributed amongst settlements. The approaches identified in the Study are as follows:

- Option 1. No Change – Continue with the UDP settlement hierarchy unchanged
- Option 1a. same approach as option 1 but amend the settlement hierarchy to move / reclassify selected settlements based on their sustainability
- Option 2. the three category approach in the UDP is expanded to a 5 tier category with settlements, categorised based on their sustainability
- Option 2a. The same approach as in Option 2 above but with adjustments to the categorisation of certain settlements based on their close proximity and functional relationship to higher level settlements
- Option 3. A fresh approach for the LDP defining settlement categories based primarily on whether settlements are urban or rural areas
- Option 4. A hybrid approach combining the 'urban areas' defined in Option 3 with the lower three bands from Option 2a

Q24 Do you have any comments to make on the Settlement Categorisation Study in Appendix 2?

Q25 Do you consider the UDP approach to identifying a settlement hierarchy is still fit for purpose? Please explain

Q26 Do you have a preference for one of the other approaches. If so, which is your preferred approach and why?

Q27 Do you consider that there are more sustainable methods, by which settlements can be categorised, to those outlined in Appendix 2. If so, please explain

9 - Next Steps

9.1 - It is important to the Council that the Plan is progressed in a step by step manner whereby the opportunity is given through engagement and consultation for interested parties to be able to comment and be involved. In this way, the Plan should be able to gain consensus as it progresses. Before the Council reaches the stage of formally consulting upon growth and spatial options it is considered important that interested parties are made aware of the draft vision, issues and objectives as these form the basis for what the Plan is trying to achieve, and to have the opportunity to comment on them. It is also considered important to look at some of the key messages emerging from the work undertaken so far and for feedback to be gained. This should enable the Council to proceed through the next few stages with a clear steer at each stage, thereby avoiding the need for previous stages to be revisited and to avoid people being presented with the 'finished article'.

9.2 - The Council would therefore welcome your input and views on the content of this document. The Council needs to be confident that it can move towards a Preferred Strategy whereby a level of growth and its distribution can form the basis for determining which of the assessed Candidate Sites best 'fit' that emerging Strategy. It is understandable that many people only wish to be involved in the development plan process when it comes to objecting to allocations. The process which the Council is following with the LDP is seeking to ensure that there is more opportunities for up front engagement and consultation, whereby people have the opportunity to influence at an earlier stage, the way the Plan is prepared.

10 - How to Comment

10.1 - This is an opportunity to let the Council know your views on the future direction of the Plan. Please feel free to make any comments on this document either in writing or by e-mail. The document is available on the Council's website for those wishing to complete it. Alternatively a hard copy is available on request from the LDP team. Copies of this document are available for inspection during normal opening hours at Council Offices, Connects Offices and Libraries.

This consultation on the Key Messages document begins on the 18/03/2016 and the closing date for the submission of comments is 5pm on 29/04/2016. Please forward your comments to:-

Andrew Farrow

Chief Officer (Planning and Environment)

Flintshire County Council

County Hall,

Mold, Flintshire

CH7 6NF

Further Information and Advice can be obtained from the policy team by e-mailing developmentplans@ flintshire.gov.uk or contact the LDP helpline on 01352 703213.

Responses to this consultation will be made public in a report, If you have no objection to your details being released, therefore identifying you as the author of your response, please tick here:

Appendix 1
Flintshire Settlement Surveys
- An Explanatory Context

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This discussion paper presents the key findings of a sustainability survey of settlements across the County of Flintshire. The document is intended to:

i. Present a summary of the key services available (at the time of the survey) in towns and villages in Flintshire;
ii. Present the methodologies employed in undertaking the survey and analysis;
iii. Present settlements in a form of ranking which reflects their relative sustainability;
iv. Provide the evidence base with which the settlement categorisation options in Appendix 2 have been devised;

2. Introduction

2.1 The preparation of LDP's requires considerable evidence gathering which is used to inform and justify the formulation of development plan policy. This process is known commonly as frontloading the plan and is important in explaining how and why development plan policies have been drafted and in providing an early opportunity to enter into positive public engagement.

2.2 Within the LDP there will be a need to justify the preferred strategy which includes the distribution of development across the County and between individual settlements and. To this end the Council has undertaken a review of settlement services and facilities within, and in close proximity to towns, villages and a number of hamlets across the County.

2.3 This paper presents an overview of the methodology used in undertaking the Settlement Service Survey (2015) and a summary of its findings. The value of this exercise is to provide a holistic view of service and facility provision within the County and a measure of the relative sustainability of settlements. This will be used to devise a number of settlement categorisation options in Appendix 2 of the Key Messages Document. The results of the engagement process will inform the identification of the most appropriate settlement hierarchy for the County which will form the basis for developing a number of options as to how growth will be distributed across the County.

Explanatory Box 1: *In using the terms "Services" and "Facilities" this report is referring to public and private businesses and institutions that deliver services relating to education, healthcare, finance, recreation, transport and daily convenience shopping.*

2.4 For clarity Explanatory Box 1 below defines the term “services and facilities”. Traditionally the visible provision and physical existence of services and facilities has been seen as a key indicator of health and vitality of a sustainable community. Conversely where services and facilities are not present it can be indicative of a decline in the offer of the settlement and capacity of the settlement however it can also be indicative of how modern services are delivered. The Internet is transforming how service providers engage with communities, and in the process, is providing even the smallest rural communities with more power than ever before to access services such as banking, post office services and even online food shopping delivered to customers homes.

2.5 Whilst recognising the important role of the Internet there remain many services and facilities that cannot be adequately provided through technology and need to be physically present to meet local communities basic daily needs. These basic daily needs are defined in the Explanatory Box 2 below and the services and facilities quoted are considered to be critical to ensuring that the community is sufficiently supported to cater for residents basic needs.

> ***Explanatory Box 2*** *- The Basic Facility Benchmark – A sustainable settlement is considered to be a large identifiable grouping of dwellings which is sufficiently well serviced to ensure that its residents basic daily needs can be met within the locality these could include a local convenience shop, a primary school, a social meeting place, an outdoor play / recreation facility and a frequent local transportation service (bus/rail) which affords opportunity to access a fuller and wider selection of services, facilities and employment opportunities in/or adjoining nearby higher order settlements.*

2.6 Flintshire is a semi-rural County with a small number of urban settlements and a much larger number of rural settlements. As part of the survey some 81 individual settlements were assessed. The County does have several large towns wherein there are significant opportunities to access services, facilities and employment but there is no single large settlement as is the case in Wrexham or Chester. As a result the relative benchmark for service provision in Flintshire may be less than what would be expected in an urban area given the predominance of smaller rural towns and villages.

2.7 The ‘basic facility’ benchmark presented in Explanatory Box 2 is the benchmark used within the study in assessing the sustainability of a settlement. The approach looks at each settlement individually and focuses on the settlement boundary (as defined in the UDP) for that settlement and therefore does not identify the spatial pattern and massing of a settlement and its relationship with other settlements eg whether the settlement is physically adjoining another settlement where the necessary services and facilities are available. Clearly the use of the definition above is therefore not a hard and fast rule in examples such as Leeswood, Pontybodkin and Coed Talon where

the settlements are closely related and benefit from being within reasonable close proximity to provide residents with access services and facilities in all three conjoined villages.

3. The Scope and Methodology of the Settlement Surveys

3.1 The availability of services and facilities is a key factor in assessing whether a settlement is relatively well provisioned in local services and whether it is a sustainable location to support new development. In assessing provision a wide net has been cast across the County to identify many settlements and hamlets including some which were not included within the Unitary Development Plan. The Study has not sought to assess every single possible hamlet but has sought to look at reasonably identifiable hamlets and particularly those where Candidate Site submissions have been made. The inclusion of unclassified hamlets / settlements is important at this early stage since it ensures that the Council is considering all reasonable options at the outset and it provides the opportunity to critically assess the UDP defined settlements and their UDP classifications (Category A,B&C) in the context of a new LDP benchmark of settlement sustainability.

3.2 The survey of services and facilities was undertaken utilising the three part methodology outlined below:

a. Identification of services and facilities from previous FCC surveys
- i. 1997 Local Centre Survey
- ii. 2005 Town Centre Surveys (surveys 1986 – 2003)
- iii. 2006 Rural Services Survey
- iv. 2010 Local Centre Survey
- v. 2010 Pub is the Hub Survey

b. Desk based research of services and facilities from a wide variety of sources, including:
- i. Current Betsi Cadwaladr List of Medical Facilities
- ii. Current Betsi Cadwaladr List of Dental Faciliites
- iii. OFCOM 2013 Broadband speeds by (six digit) Postcodes
- iv. 2014 & 2015 Public Transport Timetables
- v. Other internet based sources of information

c. Site visits were carried out to confirm presence or not of services and facilities identified and to identify any omissions in records.

3.3 The availability of previous studies wherein services and facilities are identified affords the opportunity to present historic data (where available) in association with the 2015 findings. This approach is important in illustrating how services and facilities have changed and in demonstrating how even recognised settlements within the Unitary Development Plan have changed and become potentially more or less sustainable.

3.4 The Settlement Surveys have considered the following broad factors:

1. Settlement Size (population and number of dwellings);
2. Character and Built Form;
3. Role and Function;
4. Services and Facilities;
5. Accessibility;
6. Employment;
7. Broadband Provision;
8. Changes to Service Provision Since 2000.

3.5 The full list of the services and facilities surveyed in each settlement is set out below:

- Day Nurseries, Primary Schools and Secondary Schools
- Doctors Practice
- Dentist Practice
- Pharmacy
- Post office
- Community building
- General Store / Newsagents
- Supermarket – ie larger than a spar (500m^2>)
- Other Shops & Businesses – general notation of other shops or centres
- Financial Services – banks, building societies and stand alone cashpoints
- Place of worship
- Leisure centre
- Public house
- Library – physical library building and notation of mobile library visits
- Outdoor Recreation and Play Facilities
- Public Transport – stops, stations and services
- Proximity to Employment Centres – Town Centres & Business / Industrial Parks

3.6 The geographical scope of the study has been informed by the identified settlements within the Unitary Development Plan and historic development plans. This approach means that not only are the classified UDP settlements assessed but also unclassified settlements, which are generally referred to as large hamlets and hamlets. The locations surveyed are presented in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Defined and Undefined Settlements Assessed

Afonwen	Gronant	Pantasaph
Alltami	Gwaenysgor	Pantymwyn
Aston & Shotton	Gwernaffield	Pentre
Babell	Gwernymynydd	Pentre Halkyn
Bagillt	Gwespyr	Pen-y-Ffordd
Bretton	Halkyn	Penyffordd / Penymynydd
Broughton	Hawarden	Pontblyddyn
Brynford inc Calcoed & Dolphin	Hendre	Queensferry
Buckley	Higher Kinnerton	RAF Sealand
Cadole	Holywell	Rhes-y-Cae
Caerwys	Hope, Caergwrle, Abermorddu & Cefn y Bedd	Rhewl Mostyn
Carmel	Leeswood	Rhosesmor
Cilcain	Little Mountain	Rhydymwyn
Coed Talon / Pontybodkin	Lixwm	Saltney
Connah's Quay	Llanasa	Sandycroft
Cymau	Llanfynydd	Sealand & Caxios
Dobshill	Mancot	Sealand Road & Sealand Manor
Drury & Burntwood	Manor Lane Armed Forced Quarters (near Hawarden)	Sychdyn
Ewloe	Mold	Talacre
Ffrith	Mostyn (Maes Pennant)	The Warren
Ffynnongroyw	Mynydd Isa	Tre Mostyn
Flint	Nannerch	Trelawnyd
Flint Mountain	Nercwys	Treuddyn
Garden City	New Brighton	Trelogan & Berthengam
Glan y Don (Mostyn)	Northop	Warren Hall Court
Gorsedd & Lloc	Northop Hall	Whitford
Greenfield	Padeswood	Ysceifiog

4. Analysing the Sustainability of Settlements

4.1 A key aspect of the Plan will be its spatial strategy and how development is spatially focused or distributed within the County. Future housing growth will need to be located in sustainable locations which are well served by services and facilities. As such the assessment and identification of sustainable settlements is a key consideration in defining the settlement hierarchy of the County and in justifying the distribution of new housing development.

4.2 The Settlement Survey provides the opportunity to analyse the survey findings to assess how sustainable settlements are. In short a sustainable settlement is considered to be a large identifiable grouping of dwellings which is sufficiently well serviced to ensure that the basic daily needs of its residents can be met within the locality. At this stage in the process, this assessment of sustainability is regardless of a settlements UDP categorisation as a Category A, B or C settlement. Each settlement is being looked at afresh.

4.3 The quantitative findings of the settlement survey were tabulated to allow direct contrast and comparison of settlements against one another. This approach then suggested a need to add a weighting to some specific types of service provision, however such a mechanical exercise would have ignored the need to account for a settlements role, function and character, which requires a more qualitative assessment. A qualitative approach was therefore adopted on top of and in addition to the basic survey findings, in order to apply a more appropriate and sensitive approach to each settlement. This combines the knowledge gained finally from the quantitative survey with an informed assessment of the degree to which a settlement is considered sustainable in meeting day to day inhabitants needs.

4.4 The survey results are presented in a selected summary of core services and facilities within Figure 3. Following the application of a simple ranking system the survey was further assessed qualitatively. The initial use of a quantitative ranking system here was not to give an ultimate measure of the sustainability of each settlement but to enable the settlements to be organised into broad groupings of settlements of roughly similar size, level of facilities and services etc. The settlements and the initial bandings were then assessed using qualitative considerations to:

- qualitatively correct statistical anomalies, for example Talacre scored disproportionately well within the survey given the extent of tourism related facilities however many of these facilities are not available to permanent residents outside of the tourist season;
- reflect the role, function and character of a settlement which could not be statistically quantified;
- group settlements sensitively and logically. This approach was considered infinitely preferable to listing settlements in order of scoring and sustainability which would prove contentious given that there is no single settlement that can be identified as the single most sustainable settlement in all of the County. And also given the need to recognise

that each settlement has its own individual strengths and weaknesses. Using this approach settlements fell into 10 logical groupings as showing in Figure 2.

4.5 The identification of key services, facilities and accessibility is the starting point in assessing the sustainability of a settlement. As such the settlement survey provides the basic evidence base in the form of an initial set of settlement bandings which can be used to develop options for the LDP settlement hierarchy as set out in Appendix 2 of the Key Messages Document. Figure 2 therefore sets out the basic settlement bandings and this is supported by the evidence contained in the Settlement Audit Report for each settlement included in the Study. The evidence base comprising the settlement survey work will be kept under review and revised if necessary as new evidence emerges, possibly as a result of undertaking more detailed settlement profiling work for key settlements.

Figure 2: Tabulated Bandings of Settlement - Where Band 1 is the most Sustainable and Band 10 is the least Sustainable

1st Grouping – This group are the best provisioned settlements in the County			
Aston & Shotton	Buckley	Connahs Quay	Flint
Holywell	Mold	Queensferry	Saltney
2nd Grouping –			
Broughton	Hope, Caergwrle, Abermorddu & Cefn y Bedd		
3rd Grouping			
Ewloe	Garden City	Greenfield	Hawarden
Mynydd Isa			
4th Grouping			
Carmel	Drury	Gronant	Mancot
Pentre	Penyffordd / Penymynydd	Sandycroft	
5th Grouping			
Caerwys	Ffynnongroyw	Higher Kinnerton	Leeswood
Mostyn Maes Pennant	Northop	Northop Hall	Sychdyn
6th Grouping			
Bagillt	Brynford	Coed Talon / Pontybodkin	Pen-y-Ffordd (nr Holywell)
Talacre	Trelawnyd	Treuddyn	
7th Grouping			
Cymau	Cilcain	Flint Mountain	Gwaenysgor
Gwernaffield	Gwernymynydd	Nannerch	Nercwys
Trelogan & Berthengam	Whitford	New Brighton	
8th Grouping			
Ffrith	Halkyn	Lixwm	Little Mountain
Pantymwyn	Pentre Halkyn	Pontblyddyn	Rhes y Cae
Rhosesmor	Rhydymwyn	Ysceifiog	
9th Grouping			
Afonwen	Alltami	Bretton	Cadole
Dobshill	Gorsedd	Gwespyr	Llanasa
Llanfynydd	Rhewl Mostyn		
10th Grouping – This group are the least provisioned in the County			
Babell	Glan y Don Mostyn	Hendre	Padeswood
Pantasaph	Sealand	Sealand Road & Sealand Manor	The Warren
Tre Mostyn	Warren Hall Court	Manor Lane Armed Forces Quarters	RAF Sealand

5. Consultation and Engagement Undertaken

5.1 Following consideration by the Council's Planning Strategy Group the individual Settlement Audit Reports were the subject of a consultation exercise with all Members and also Town & Community Councils. The objective of this consultation was to ensure that the recording of services and facilities for each settlement was accurate and representative of what is on the ground. It made good use of the detailed local knowledge of Members and the Members of Town and Community Councils. The feedback was extremely useful in picking up services and facilities which had not been identified and also picked up changes in provision since the survey work was originally undertaken. Each Settlement Audit Report was updated where appropriate and necessary and the individual settlement reports can be viewed on the Council's website.

6. Next Steps & Future Refinement of the Settlement Ranking

6.1 The methodology used in assessing settlements as set out in this paper, and the individual Settlement Audit Reports are now available for comment alongside the resultant options for developing a settlement hierarchy (Appendix 2). The comments received will be reported back to Planning Strategy Group to determine whether any changes are required to the methodology adopted or the individual settlement reports. Any necessary revisions to the documents will be actioned and revised documentation made available on the Council's website as part of the Plan's evidence base.

6.2 This is not to say that no further work will be undertaken in respect of this aspect of the LDP's preparation. The settlements which are identified in the Plan as defined settlements (within the preferred settlement hierarchy) will be the subject of further assessment and refinement arising from examining a range of factors such as:

1. Settlement Role and Character
2. Monitoring of settlement services and facilities (inc public transport) eg shops, education, public houses, accessibility
3. Monitoring previous / forecast levels of Settlement Growth – ie dwellings and population
4. analysis and review of the UDP development context ie UDP policy implementation and the UDP Inspectors Report
5. monitoring of development ie allocations and applications, and affordable housing
6. emerging regeneration needs and strategies e.g. community deprivation and town centres
7. emerging information relating to settlement constraints and infrastructure

8. emerging information relating to viability of development & the ability to fund and deliver key infrastructure

6.3 The matters above may lead to a further refinement of the evidence base relating to settlement surveys and the settlement hierarchy. However, the analysis done to date is considered to represent a sound and robust evidence base with which to formulate the Plan's settlement hierarchy.

Figure 3
Presenting the Key
Settlement Survey Service Data

Figure 3: Extract of Settlement Services Survey Showing Key Services, Ranked Alphabetically and in Order of UDP Classification

UDP Cat.	Town / Village / Large Hamlet	Primary school	Secondary school	Doctors surgery	Dentist surgery	Pharmacy	Supermarket	Convenience shop	Bank/Building Society	Public house / club / restaurant	Post office
A	Aston & Shotton	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
A	Buckley	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
A	Connah's Quay	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
A	Flint	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
A	Holywell	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
A	Mold	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
A	Queensferry	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
B	Bagillt	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
B	Broughton	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
B	Caerwys	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
B	Carmel	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
B	Drury & Burntwood	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
B	Ewloe	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
B	Ffynnongroyw	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
B	Garden City	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
B	Greenfield	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
B	Gronant	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
B	Gwernymynydd	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
B	Hawarden	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
B	Hope, Caergwrle, Abermorddu & Cefn y Bedd	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
B	Leeswood	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
B	Mancot	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
B	Mostyn (Maes Pennant)	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

UDP Cat.	Town / Village / Large Hamlet	Primary school	Secondary school	Doctors surgery	Dentist surgery	Pharmacy	Supermarket	Convenience shop	Bank/Building Society	Public house / club / restaurant	Post office
B	Mynydd Isa	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
B	New Brighton	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
B	Northop	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
B	Northop Hall	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
B	Pentre	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
B	Penyffordd / Penymynydd	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
B	Saltney	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
B	Sandycroft	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
B	Sychdyn	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
B	Treuddyn	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
C	Afonwen	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
C	Alltami	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
C	Bretton	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
C	Brynford (inc Calcoed & Dolphin)	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
C	Cadole	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
C	Cilcain	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
C	Coed Talon / Pontybodkin	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
C	Cymau	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
C	Dobshill	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
C	Ffrith	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
C	Flint Mountain	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
C	Gorsedd	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
C	Gwaenysgor	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
C	Gwernaffield	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
C	Gwespyr	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
C	Halkyn	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

UDP Cat.	Town / Village / Large Hamlet	Primary school	Secondary school	Doctors surgery	Dentist surgery	Pharmacy	Supermarket	Convenience shop	Bank/Building Society	Public house / club / restaurant	Post office
C	Higher Kinnerton	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
C*	Little Mountain	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
C	Lixwm	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
C	Llanasa	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
C	Llanfynydd	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
C	Nannerch	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
C	Nercwys	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
C	Pantymwyn	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
C	Pentre Halkyn	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
C	Pen-y-Ffordd	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
C	Pontblyddyn	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
C	Rhes-y-Cae	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
C	Rhewl Mostyn	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
C	Rhosesmor	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
C	Rhydymwyn	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
C	Talacre	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
C	Trelawnyd	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
C	Trelogan & Berthengam	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
C	Whitford	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
C	Ysceifiog	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
U	Babell	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
U	Glan y Don (Mostyn)	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
U	Hendre	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
U	Padeswood	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
U	Pantasaph	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

UDP Cat.	Town / Village / Large Hamlet	Primary school	Secondary school	Doctors surgery	Dentist surgery	Pharmacy	Supermarket	Convenience shop	Bank/Building Society	Public house / club / restaurant	Post office
U	Sealand (& Caxios)	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
U	Sealand Road & Sealand Manor	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
U	The Warren	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
U	Tre Mostyn	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
U	Warren Hall Court	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Note: U. denotes that the settlement / dwelling cluster was unclassified within the Unitary Development Plan

Appendix 2

Flintshire Local Development Plan

Draft Settlement Categorisation Options

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Flintshire County Council is preparing its Local Development Plan (LDP). When adopted the LDP will set the local planning context and the statutory basis for the determination of planning applications. At the present time the Council is at an early stage of developing its LDP and must provide an evidenced approach for the development of policies and proposals within the plan.

1.2 The development of a settlement hierarchy and a logical approach to settlement banding is an important aspect of the LDP which will inform how the spatial strategy is developed i.e. how development is distributed across Flintshire's towns and villages. This report follows on from the settlement survey work recently undertaken, whereby an assessment of each of Flintshire's settlements has been undertaken in terms of their sustainability, referenced in terms of settlement size, location, accessibility, services and facilities, role and character. The process set out in this report is referred to as 'Settlement Categorisation' but this embraces other terminology defined in the boxes below:

Settlement Hierarchy – This refers to the assessment of settlements by strategic importance from the largest most important settlements such as Buckley and Holywell to the smallest and arguably the least strategically important grouping including settlements such as Afonwen and Cymau.

Settlement Bandings – This refers to the grouping of settlements within common categories. For example the UDP uses the following terminology: Category A (Main Towns), B (Large Villages) & C (Small Villages) to group settlements.

1.3 This discussion paper will present the methodology used in categorising settlements and a series of options or alternative approaches to this. The UDP sought to attach growth rates in the form of bands to the different settlement categories. Growth rates are only one of a number of methods by which growth and development can be distribute spatially. This is a matter to be addressed at a later stage in the plan process as part of developing strategic options. The purpose of this paper is to provide an evidence based settlement categorisation which can form a sound basis with which to develop spatial strategy options.

2.0 The Policy Context

Sustainable Development

2.1 Planning Policy Wales clearly promotes the Planning System as being central to achieving sustainable development in Wales. In this context sustainable development means, "enhancing the economic, social and environmental well-being of people and communities, achieving a better quality of life for our own generations in ways which: promote social justice and equality of opportunity; and enhance the natural and cultural environment and respect its limits – using only our fair share of the earth's resources and sustaining our cultural legacy." (PPW Para 4.1.4).

2.2 Local Development Plans are highlighted as key components in delivering sustainable development in Wales. To meet their required function, development plans must set out an Authority's objectives for the development and use of land in its administrative area and general policies to implement them. Planning Policy Wales is the national statement of planning policy and identifies a number of priorities for Local Planning Authorities when allocating land. It also provides specific guidance both on the scale and location of housing growth.

2.3 Planning Policy Wales states that Development Plans "should secure a sustainable settlement pattern which meets the needs of the economy, the environment and health." (PPW Para 4.7.2). Overall the key messages from PPW regarding a sustainable settlement pattern are:

- **Well connected** – locating development to reduce the need to travel by maximising accessibility to employment opportunities, services and facilities by walking, cycling and public transport. Improving linkages between urban areas and their rural surroundings

- **Concentration** – development should be directed to existing urban areas which are well served by public transport, and benefit from concentrations of jobs, facilities and services. In rural areas development should be focussed on settlements that act as local service centres for surrounding areas or clusters of settlements where a sustainable functional linkage can be demonstrated

- **Quality services** – meeting the needs of present and future communities by focussing development in areas where services are viable and can be realistically maintained or enhanced.

- **Robust and vibrant communities** – where people are satisfied and value where they live and are able to participate in a range of community activities.

- **Self-containment** – settlements should be more self-contained, providing the opportunity to both live and work in the same area, with access to facilities and services to meet the needs of the communities. (Summary of PPW Para 4.7.2)

2.4 PPW also states that "In producing their development plans, local planning authorities should devise a settlement strategy which establishes housing policies in line with their local housing strategy and a spatial pattern of housing development balancing social, economic and environmental needs." (PPW Para 9.2.5)

Priorities for Urban and Rural Areas

2.5 PPW sets out the Welsh Government's priorities for urban and rural areas respectively as follows:

- to secure environmentally-sound and socially inclusive regeneration in those urban areas which require it, so that they become more desirable places in which to live and work; and foster sustainable change, in particular making it possible to live with less noise, congestion and traffic pollution, and improving the quality of life. (PPW Para 4.6.1)

- to secure sustainable rural communities with access to affordable housing and high quality public services; a thriving and diverse local economy where agriculture-related activities are complemented by sustainable tourism and other forms of employment in a working countryside; and an attractive, ecologically rich and accessible countryside in which the environment and biodiversity are conserved and enhanced." (PPW Para 4.6.3)

Wales Spatial Plan

2.6 Whilst the new Planning Act introduces the concept of Strategic Development Plans, more work is required to understand what the content and geography for these will be. In the mean-time the Wales Spatial Plan remains a useful and relevant reference for planning in the wider sub region. The document contains an overall vision for the whole of Wales along with individual visions for the 8 spatial plan area strategies. Flintshire County Council is located within the North East Wales – Border and Coast (NEWBC) spatial plan area, Wrexham Town is the closest and highest ranking settlement to Flintshire but otherwise Flintshire's main settlements (Mold, Flint, Connahs Quay, Deeside, Buckley etc.) are identified as a Key Settlements (2nd tier settlements in the National Hierarchy).

2.7 The WSP provides an input into the settlement categorisation work and will also set a strategic context for the development of spatial options. However, the development of spatial options will be dealt with in a separate paper.

Settlement Function and Location of Development

2.8 National Policy outlines where development should be directed in order to achieve a sustainable development pattern, and it is possible to extrapolate from this the role and functions key settlements should perform:

- well connected to transport infrastructure including sustainable travel options;
- provides a range of retail and community services;
- have a range of employment opportunities;
- well serviced by existing infrastructure; and
- co-location of housing and employment.

2.9 In the case of Flintshire, development should be directed to those settlements which best perform the functions set out above.

2.10 Whilst it is the larger settlements in a more urban setting that are more likely to perform the key functions outlined above, it is important to recognise the rural areas which make up a significant part of Flintshire particularly in the North West, West and South West of the County. National Policy highlights the interconnection between urban areas and rural hinterlands. Subject to effective transport links, larger settlements can provide a range of services and employment opportunities for those living in rural areas. However, in more remote locations or where transport links are poor, this may not be the case. In such instances consideration regarding the location of development may need a different approach. National Policy advises that development of housing or employment opportunities in rural areas should be directed towards local service centres, or clusters of smaller settlements where sustainable functional linkages can be demonstrated.

3.0 The Unitary Development Plan

3.1 The UDP defines a settlement hierarchy as illustrated in Table 1. The hierarchy uses three settlement bandings referred to as Category A,B&C. The use of settlement bandings was intended to allow settlements of similar characteristics to be grouped within same banding.

3.2 The UDP is therefore the logical starting point for considering which settlements will be identified, and how they will be categorised within the LDP. The settlement options that are presented in this paper have therefore used the UDP approach as presented in Table 1 as a starting point for the consideration of choices or alternative options.

Table 1: The UDP Settlement Hierarchy

Category A – Urban (10-20% growth)		
Buckley	Holywell	Shotton / Aston
Connahs Quay	Mold	
Flint	Queensferry	
Category B – Semi Urban / Main Villages (8-15% growth)		
Bagillt	Gronant	Northop
Broughton	Gwernymynydd	Northop hall
Caerwys	Hope/Caergwrle/Abermorddu/ CefnyBedd	Pentre
Carmel	Hawarden	Penyffordd / Penymynydd
Drury & Burntwood	Leeswood	Saltney
Ewloe	Mancot	Sandycroft
Ffynnongroyw	Mostyn (Maes Pennant)	Sychdyn
Garden city	Mynydd isa	Treuddyn
Greenfield	New Brighton	
Category C – Small Villages (0-10% growth)		
Afonwen	Gwaenysgor	Pen y ffordd
Alltami	Gwernaffield	Pontblyddyn
Bretton	Halkyn	Rhes y cae
Brynford	Gwespyr	Rhewl mostyn
Cadole	Higher kinnerton	Rhosesmor
Cilcain	Lixwm	Rhydymwyn
Coed talon / pontybodkin	Llanasa	Talacre
Cymau	Llanfynydd	Trelawnyd
Dobshill	Nannerch	Trelogan
Ffrith	Nercwys	Whitford
Flint mountain	Pantymwyn	Ysceifiog
Gorsedd	Pentre halkyn	

3.3 In defining the settlement hierarchy the UDP used a quantitative and qualitative assessment to review settlements. This assessment focused on the following eight indicators:

1. Number of Dwellings
2. Range, Quality and Number of Community Facilities
3. Local Sense of Place and Village Character
4. Name Sign at the Village
5. Highways Directional Signs to the Village
6. Highway Paraphenalia eg crossings, speed limits, bus stops
7. Development Capacity Scoring – capacity to support more dwellings
8. Settlement History and Function

3.4 As point 7 above indicates, the UDP scored and ranked the settlement hierarchy (amongst other things) on the basis of additional development potential. This resulted in some settlements with greater development potential appearing higher within the hierarchy than would otherwise have been if the assessment had focused purely on the sustainability of a settlement to meet existing and future community needs. The broad range between settlements classified within the same band has also been highlighted in using the adopted plan, leading to the need to review the settlement bandings to more clearly recognize and distinguish the character, role and function that settlements play within Flintshire's settlement hierarchy. A closer examination of the settlement banding is required to see how settlements differ.

3.5 The UDP settlement hierarchy is banded into three Categories which was a simple but appropriate approach at the time. The use of three categories makes sense in relation to Category A settlements where it is justifiable and clear that towns like Buckley, Flint, Holywell, and Mold should sit within the same banding. However when considering Aston\Shotton, Connahs Quay, and Queensferry which are also category A settlements in the UDP, it can be argued that these are urban areas which have historically merged and operate as a wider "Deeside" urban area rather than as individual towns. This is clearly a matter for debate as it is also the case that all of these settlements have identified town centres and all perform a wider role as strategic service centres for the rural and urban communities around them. The settlements within Category A are also identified by the Wales Spatial Plan which defines them collectively as North East Wales' Key Settlements. In relation to Category A settlements the UDP sets a strong context for the LDP and any review of this category probably only involves an element of fine tuning and/or addition.

3.6 In contrast UDP Category B Settlements require much more of a radical review as the significant number of settlements within this band range from large settlements with good service provision or in close proximity to other settlements with services, such as Mancot, Ewloe and Hawarden, to small settlements with modest to poor service provision such as Gwernymnydd, Mostyn (Maes Pennant) and Treuddyn, yet all have the same growth "potential".

3.7 Similarly, UDP Category C Settlements range from settlements with reasonable service provision such as Higher Kinnerton, Pen-y-Ffordd and Talacre (albeit seasonal) to settlements with few if any services and facilities such as Afonwen, Rhewl Mostyn and Rhes y Cae.

3.8 The recent Settlement Surveys work, In Appendix 1, is providing the evidence base to highlight the fact that there are significant differences in the character and function of Flintshire's settlements which in the UDP have been banded into the same 'growth' category or band, in particular UDP category B and C settlements. The main conclusion from this work is that there is a need to refine the settlement hierarchy by considering a greater number of settlement bands that properly and logically distinguish settlements by their essential character, role and function.

3.9 The UDP approach of ranking settlements in terms of growth potential (see paragraphs 3.3-3.4) and also the associated growth bands with individual settlement banding (e.g. Category A's 10-20%), creates the potential for conflict between the actual sustainability of a settlement and the expectation of growth that its categorisation places on it. This "growth orientated ranking and banding" approach is clearly in need of review and the evidence gained from the Settlement Survey work suggests that settlements should be ranked or categorised in sustainability order, by role and function; that more than three settlement bandings should be used; and that levels of growth and its distribution should be considered as a secondary stage when spatial options are being considered, thereby ensuring that growth takes place in the most appropriate and sustainable locations.

4.0 An Updated Settlement Context for the LDP

4.1 The preceding sections have set out the context in terms of national guidance and strategy and provided a commentary on the approach to settlement classification taken within the UDP. The next section explains the way in which options for a potential LDP settlement structure have been developed, using the UDP hierarchy as a starting point. The evidence from the settlement survey work has been fed into the process of developing draft options as an important consideration, given that these surveys have considered a number of different issues as listed below, in exploring how sustainable a settlement is:

a. Settlement Size (population and number of dwellings);
b. Character and Built Form;
c. Role and Function;
d. Services and Facilities;
e. Accessibility;
f. Employment Opportunities;
g. Broadband Provision;
h. Changes to Service Provision Since 2000.

4.2 The Settlement Surveys are a qualitative assessment which seek to record settlement service provision for future comparison, and which seeks to measure the relative sustainability of individual settlements through a process of comparison and ranking. A key output from the surveys is to provide the evidence for the categorisation of Flintshire's settlements. However the Settlement Survey alone will not provide the evidence for the final framework by which settlements are categorised in the LDP, as this is where additional qualitative considerations and evidence are required. Whilst the UDP settlement classification was fit for purpose at the time the plan was drawn up, there is scope to consider a review or refinement of the classification for the purposes of the LDP.

4.3 The Planning Inspector at the UDP Public Inquiry also expressed her concern about the UDP approach to categorising settlements and offered the following opinion:

"I note that in Topic Paper 2 (4.4) the Council says that '….settlement boundaries are pure land use planning proposals and no correlation with other ways of defining or considering what constitutes a town, village or settlement is implied'. In principle there is nothing wrong with a settlement policy which is based on the historic settlement pattern. However, that settlement pattern was developed when there was less personal mobility and significantly different social/economic conditions. These factors meant people tended to work, rest and play close to home and communities were relatively independent. The ever decreasing facilities and services within the rural settlements is evidence that things have changed significantly. Turning to boundary definition. In some

instances settlements which were once separate entities now form part of a continuous built up area and share facilities. However, they are allocated in the plan as different settlements and can be within different categories such as Mynydd Isa and Buckley. This is illogical and backward rather than forward looking. A settlement boundary on a plan does not define the identity or cohesion of a community, that will remain, despite the boundaries drawn. In principle with such circumstances I consider it would be better if the spatial strategy had regard to built up areas as well as historic settlements. This would get rid of apparent inconsistencies where what appears to be accessible land in close proximity to facilities and services is excluded from settlements and protected by countryside/green barriers/open space policies."

4.4 The Planning Inspector was clearly struggling with the difficulty of defining settlements in urbanised areas of the County where the urban character and fabric of a locality undermined the Council's approach within the UDP Proposals Map to identifying boundaries around and between individual settlements. Clearly this is one view but nevertheless an important one which has to be taken into account in determining how Settlement Categorisation Options have been derived.

4.5 Since the adoption of the UDP and with the benefit of hindsight, it has become increasingly apparent that the growth oriented approach to categorising settlements has been problematic to implement and interpret correctly and in a sustainable manner, particularly for settlements that have reached or indeed exceed their indicative growth bands, and conversely for those that appear to have grossly 'underperformed' against their growth banding., Indeed the growth bands have been interpreted by some as absolute growth targets which can undermine the ability of some settlements, particularly smaller villages, to accommodate the scale of growth proposed. It has therefore become apparent that given the approach within the UDP, the rationale of the Plan is fundamentally focused on the delivery of numbers of dwellings, rather than the sustainability of a settlement (i.e. its role and function) and whether the infrastructure exists within the settlement to support development. Perhaps a case in point is the experience of implementing Policy HSG3 (Housing on Unallocated Sites within Settlement Boundaries) which bears no relation to the sustainability of individual settlements, because applicants and developers in interpreting the policy, have sought to deliver housing to the upper end of the growth bands for settlements. This was never the intended purpose of the UDP growth bands.

Key Considerations for Settlement Categorisation

4.6 Following the review of the UDP settlement categorisation above, and taking account of the guidance in PPW in relation to developing a sustainable settlement pattern, the list of key considerations set out below, have featured in the development of draft Settlement Categorisation Options for the LDP, which are presented in the next section of this document.

a. Banding Settlements by their Sustainability (i.e. role and function) – Settlements could be banded by their relative sustainability as opposed to the potential for future development;

b. Banding settlements based on logical groupings and similarities – The UDP used 3 settlement categories (A-C) but the LDP should utilise more than 3 bands using the evidence from the Settlement Surveys, to avoid banding too greater range of settlements within the same band (as is the case with UDP category B settlements);

c. The Planning definition of a Settlement – Individual settlements could be taken forward as individual named settlements with a settlement boundary, or as wider urban areas e.g. Deeside East and Deeside West;

d. Urban & Rural Banding – The LDP could take a simplified approach to settlement hierarchy and banding by banding settlements on the basis of whether their character and function is either predominantly urban or rural.

4.7 Using the above as guiding principles, and starting with the UDP settlement hierarchy, several draft working options for the categorsation of settlements have been developed for consideration. Whilst each option is presented and explained in detail in the next section of this discussion document, in summary the options comprise:

Option 1 – Continue with the UDP settlement hierarchy unchanged;
Option 1a – Continue with the UDP approach but amend the settlement hierarchy to move/reclassify selected settlements based on their sustainability;
Option 2 – The three category approach in the UDP is expanded to a 5 category approach, with settlements being categorised on the basis of their sustainability;
Option 2a – The same approach as in Option 2 above but with adjustments to the categorization of certain settlements based on their close proximity and functional relationship to higher level sustainable settlements;
Option 3 – A fresh approach for the LDP defining settlements and categories based primarily upon whether settlements are urban or rural areas;
Option 4 – A hybrid approach combining the urban areas defined in option 3 with the lower three bands from option 2a.

5.0 The Draft Settlement Options

5.1 The six options identified in this paper are presented as draft proposals for discussion and will be the subject of further development following Member feedback, testing the options against the LDP development plan vision and plan objectives. As such the options presented at this stage are not set in stone and are subject to further amendment.

5.2 The options are presented in more detail in the following section along with a discussion of the relevant pros and cons for each approach.

Option 1 – Continue with the UDP Approach

By attaching growth levels to settlement categories, the UDP took a *'growth orientated approach'* to the settlement hierarchy and the banding of settlements, as follows:

a. Category A – 10-20% growth
b. Category B – 8-15% growth
c. Category C – 0-10% growth

(See Table 1 for UDP settlement hierarchy)

Commentary

5.3 The UDP Settlement Hierarchy as shown in Table 1 sought to distribute development across all defined settlements based on three settlement bandings. Although the growth bands were intended to be indicative only, and were accompanied by an explanation in the plan that not all settlements were suitable for growth, the UDP has been interpreted by some that all settlements (A-C) should accommodate growth. In this manner the UDP comes across as a 'planning by numbers' approach rather than a qualitative approach that has regard to local circumstance and particularly to the availability or otherwise of services and infrastructure.

5.4 A key issue in the implementation of the UDP has been the monitoring of housing growth within settlements to ascertain at what point a settlement may have reached its growth limit/threshold, beyond which local housing need came into play. The UDP settlement hierarchy and settlement banding are premised on the basis of settlement growth banding which has resulted in growth bands being interpreted by the development industry and by Planning Inspectors as settlement growth targets.

5.5 The lesson from the use of growth bands is that where settlements of different character, function and scale are grouped so that they result in housing targets being assumed for all settlements within the same category, this can be harmful and unsustainable. For example the Category B banding (8-15% growth) includes Broughton, Gwernymynydd and Ffynnongroyw which are very different from one another. Specifically Broughton and related industries therein (ie British Aerospace) is a nationally recognised driver of the Welsh economy representing a significant investment in advanced manufacturing in North Wales with cross border benefits for North West England. Neither Gwernymynydd nor Ffynnongroyw benefit from the same strategic context or importance, yet are categorised in the same band.

5.6 In conclusion the UDP approach is not refined enough in its approach to be able to successfully guide growth of the right type (ie market / local needs) to the right location. Subsequent changes in Planning Policy and to the Wales Spatial Plan

mean that Flintshire will need to take a far more considered and logical approach to the categorisation of settlements in the LDP and are unlikely to be able to justify the continuation of the UDP approach when it is challenged at Examination.

Option 1a – Continue with the UDP Approach but with minor change

The recent Settlement Surveys provide the evidence to suggest that the existing UDP categorisation of settlements should be reviewed to avoid the existing wide variation in the size and type of settlements within each band, particularly category B.

This option proposes that only some settlements should be moved or reclassified depending upon how sustainable or otherwise they are. The list below indicates examples of those settlements that could be moved/reclassified:

Settlements that move up a category (Category B to Category A)
Saltney?
Broughton?

Settlements that move down a category (Category B to Category C)
Ffynnongroyw
Gronant
Gwernymynydd
Mostyn Maes Pennant
Treuddyn

Declassified Settlements (formerly Category C)
Afonwen
Cadole
Llanfynydd
Llanasa
Rhewl Mostyn

Commentary

5.7 This approach essentially retains the UDP approach and its associated drawbacks, and whilst it attempts to build in the results from the Settlement Surveys it is only a very light touch review of the existing UDP strategy, and as such will not overcome the problem of categorising settlements together in a broad and simplistic manner, with no consideration for local services and facilities nor future infrastructure needs. This approach also downplays the importance of settlements such as Ewloe, Hawarden, Hope and Mancot which whilst not being Category A settlements are certainly of a higher ranking than settlements such

as Bagillt, Leeswood and New Brighton, but within this option remain grouped together with the same associated growth level.

5.8 The lessons from reviewing the UDP settlement hierarchy is that the approach was too simplistic and has the potential to permit levels of growth in all settlements across the County with insufficient consideration of how sustainable each settlement was. This option, whilst slightly amended, is still based upon an artificial three tier approach, which combined with growth rates, paid insufficient consideration to the sustainability of settlements.

Option 2 – A Refined UDP Approach to Settlement Categorisation

The findings of the Settlement Survey demonstrates that there are a greater number of potential logical groups of settlements based around their degree of sustainability (see summary of Settlement Survey rankings in appendix 1). This provides the basis to refine the UDP 3 level settlement classification and include two additional settlement categories. The inclusion of additional settlement categories overcomes the difficulties of banding together large urban settlements such as Ewloe and Hawarden with smaller rural settlements such as Caerwys and Northop, within the same UDP banding, when the role and function of such settlements is different.

The inclusion of the additional categories allows for a more refined approach to identifying and classifying settlements like Bagillt which are not quite a Category C settlement but that do not benefit from the services and infrastructure present in other settlements like Mynydd Isa.

This approach has the advantage of being more focused and more sensitive to different functions, roles and sizes of settlements. The settlements in the resultant 5 band categorisation are far more closely related in terms of the key factors identified in paragraph 4.1, and the wide variation experienced by the UDP approach is now overcome. This approach would also allow the smaller of the Category C settlements to be reclassified to a new tier of settlement category rather than being declassified and losing their status as a defined settlement. It is proposed that the five categories are defined as follows:

1. Main Service Centre	Settlements with a strategic role in delivery of services and facilities.
2. Local Service Centre	Settlements with a local role in the delivery of services and facilities.
3. Sustainable Village	Settlements which benefit from some services and facilities and are sustainably located.
4. Defined Village	Settlements which have limited services and facilities with which to sustain local needs.
5. Undefined Village	Settlements which have few or no services and facilities and which are not of a size or character to warrant a settlement boundary.

Commentary

5.9 Based on the evidence from the Settlement Surveys and its summary ranking of settlements, Table 2 presents a refined UDP settlement hierarchy based on the five bands highlighted above, assigning settlements to bands based solely on their role and function i.e. their degree of sustainability, rather than taking a growth oriented approach as with the UDP.

Table 2 – Five Tiered Settlement Categorisation Approach

1. Main Service Centres			
Aston & Shotton	Connah's Quay	Holywell	Queensferry
Buckley	Flint	Mold	Saltney
2. Local Service Centres			
Broughton	Garden City	Hawarden	Mynydd Isa
Ewloe	Greenfield	Hope, Caergwrle, Abermorddu & Cefn y Bedd	
3. Sustainable Village			
Bagillt	Ffynnongroyw	Mostyn (Maes Pennant)	Sandycroft
Brynford (inc Calcoed & Dolphin)	Gronant	Northop	Sychdyn
Caerwys	Higher Kinnerton	Northop Hall	Talacre
Carmel	Leeswood	Pentre	
Drury & Burntwood	Mancot	Penyffordd / Penymynydd	Treuddyn
4. **Defined Village**			
Cilcain	Gwernaffield	New Brighton	Trelawnyd
Coed Talon / Pontybodkin	Gwernymynydd	Pantymwyn	Trelogan & Berthengam
Cymau	Lixwm	Pentre Halkyn	Whitford
Flint Mountain	Nannerch	Pen-y-Ffordd	Ysceifiog
Gwaenysgor	Nercwys	Rhydymwyn	
5. **Undefined Village**			
Afonwen	Dobshill	Halkyn	Rhes-y-Cae
Alltami	Ffrith	Llanasa	Rhewl Mostyn
Bretton	Gorsedd	Llanfynydd	
Cadole	Gwespyr	Pontblyddyn	

5.10 The classification above, through the use of a greater number of categories, better reflects the role and function of settlements; better reflects available services and facilities within each settlement; and removes the issue of having too broad a range of settlements with differing levels of sustainability, together within the same category e.g. UDP category B.

5.11 However the identification for example of Bretton and Alltami within the 'Undefined Village' category is problematic as both of these settlements are in close proximity to large service centres (Broughton and Buckley respectively)

and as such benefit from the service provision available in these neighbouring settlements. There are other instances of this - the settlement of Bretton is directly adjacent to Broughton Retail Park, and the settlement of Alltami is within reasonable walking distance of some of the facilities of Buckley such as the Elfed High School, Belmont Medical Centre and related Pharmacy.

5.12 Despite some minor limitations raised by this approach, it is a much more sympathetic and logical approach to settlement categorisation which would be a significant enhancement of the UDP approach. This option would also allow a more justifiable and accurate basis for the development and implementation of the LDP spatial strategy, basing decision around the location of development on the role, function and overall sustainability of settlements.

Option 2a – A Refined UDP Approach to Settlement Categorisation & Defining Settlement Relationships

Option 2a represents a further refinement of the UDP approach. It is very similar to Option 2 in proposing the use of five settlement categories, however to better reflect the sustainability and relationship of some settlements, Option 2a proposes an approach where the close proximity of settlements is also taken into account. This means adapting the settlement hierarchy developed in option 2 by taking a common sense approach to re-categorising some settlements based on their relationship and proximity to other sustainable settlements, or conversely if they appear higher in Table 2 than they realistically should be. For example from Option 2, Buckley is classified as a Main Service Centre and as such is considered to be a sustainable location to live, relative to other locations within the County. There are a number of settlements that are in close proximity to Buckley and that are reliant on its status as a Main Service Centre for the facilities and services it provides. These settlements are Mynydd Isa, Drury, and Alltami. Whilst table 2 correctly reflects the relationship of both Mynydd Isa (Local Service Centre) and Drury (Sustainable Village) to Buckley, Alltami from the results of the Settlement Survey work, is categorised as an Undefined Settlement. This is an anomalous position particularly as some of Buckley's main facilities such as the Elfed High School and new Health Centre are within walking distance of Alltami. In this respect Alltami is considered to be a more sustainable location than the categorisation in Option 2 suggests.

In this context Option 2a therefore proposes that some settlements in the Option 2 categorisation which are well related to higher level sustainable settlements are re-categorised to reflect the nature of this relationship. The results of this slightly revised five tiered categorisation is illustrated in Table 3.

Commentary

5.13 This refined approach to that shown in Option 2 is the result of a process of re-categorising settlements depending upon their relationship and proximity to a nearby larger sustainable settlement which has additional services and facilities. As an additional example to that of Alltami above, because of Coed Talon's relationship with Leeswood and the associated services and facilities therein Coed Talon is considered to be a more sustainable location than is shown in Table 2 from Option 2. In Option 2 Coed Talon is ranked as a Defined Village but because of its relationship with Leeswood it is considered that it should be categorized in Option 2a as being a Sustainable Village (see Table 3). This approach is forward looking and reflective of how settlements and the communities therein operate on a day to day basis and as a result is pragmatic and realistic in its scope.

5.14 This approach does not propose wholesale changes to the settlement categorisation proposed by Option 2 in Table 2, but it does identify a small number of settlements that should be reclassified. To identify which settlements are considered to meet the need to be reclassified, Table 3 replicates table 2 but shows some settlements twice in terms of their proposed re-categorisation – where settlements have moved from they will be crossed out; where they have moved to they will be shown in bold type.

5.15 Option 2a is considered to be a further positive step in refining the UDP approach for the LDP in that it represents a more developed and insightful approach to identifying how settlements function and relate to each other.

Table 3: Option 2a Five Tiered Categorisation Considerate of Settlement Relationships

1. Main Service Centres			
Aston & Shotton	Connah's Quay	Holywell	Queensferry
Buckley	Flint	Mold	Saltney
2. Local Service Centres			
Broughton	Garden City	Hawarden	Mynydd Isa
Ewloe	Greenfield	Hope, Caergwrle, Abermorddu & Cefn y Bedd	
3. Sustainable Village			
Alltami	Drury & Burntwood	**New Brighton**	~~Talacre~~
Bagillt	Ffynnongroyw	Northop	Treuddyn
Bretton	Gronant	Northop Hall	
Brynford (inc Calcoed & Dolphin)	Higher Kinnerton	Pentre	
Caerwys	Leeswood	Penyffordd / Penymynydd	
Carmel Carmel	Mancot	Sandycroft	
Coed Talon / Pontybodkin	Mostyn (Maes Pennant)	Sychdyn	
4. Defined Village			
	Pen-y-Ffordd	Nercwys	Trelawnyd
~~New Brighton~~	Cilcain	Gwernymynydd	Pantymwyn
~~Coed Talon / Pontybodkin~~	Flint Mountain	~~Cymau~~	Trelogan & Berthengam
Nannerch	Gwernaffield	~~Gwaenysgor~~	**Talacre**
Pentre Halkyn	Rhydymwyn	Lixwm	
Rhosesmor	Whitford	Ysceifiog	
5. Undefined Village			
~~Bretton~~	Llanfynydd	Afonwen	Llanasa
~~Alltami~~	Cadole	Dobs Hill	Rhewl Mostyn
Ffrith	Halkyn	Gorsedd	**Cymau**
Rhes-y-Cae	Pontblyddyn	Gwespyr	**Gwaenysgor**

Option 3 – A Fresh Approach to the LDP

All options so far identified within this paper have referenced the approach taken within the adopted UDP and with the exception of Option 1 (UDP as is) presented options for categorising settlements with differing degrees of refinement from the UDP.

The UDP is the current adopted development plan and is itself a refinement of previous development plan approaches. For example in moving from the Alyn and Deeside Local Plan and the Delyn Local Plan to the UDP a total of 8 settlements were declassified, many settlement boundaries were drastically reduced eg Glan y Don Mostyn was excluded from Mostyn, and the settlement hierarchy was significantly amended.

Whilst development plans should evolve and take their lead from previous plans, it is necessary to explore what other options may exist. The purpose of Option 3 is in part to demonstrate that there are options for settlement categorisation that do not involve using the UDP as the starting point. Option 3 is therefore the "blank sheet" option of how settlements may be categorised, were the Council to consider starting from scratch without the UDP as context.

Option 3 proposes a fresh approach to LDP settlements and categories based primarily upon:

- defining urban and rural areas;
- recognising physical relationships; &
- seeking to consolidate links between sustainable areas.

From these principles, Option 3 proposes that urban areas are defined on the basis of the following settlement areas:

- **Broughton** – incorporating Broughton Retail Park and Bretton
- **Buckley** – incorporating Alltami, Burntwood, Drury, Little Mountain & Mynydd Isa
- **Deeside West** – incorporating Aston, Connahs Quay, Garden City, Queensferry, and Shotton
- **Deeside East** – incorporating Ewloe, Hawarden, Mancot, Pentre and Sandycroft
- **Flint**
- **Holywell** – incorporating Bagillt, Carmel and Greenfield
- **Hope** – incorporating Abermorddu, Caergrwle & Cefn y Bedd
- **Mold**
- **Saltney** – incorporating Saltney Ferry

5.16 Option 3 proposes that outside of the identified areas listed above that all other settlements be listed as rural settlements. This approach is perhaps too simplistic and/or radical in terms of the difference between it and a multi-layered settlement structure (whether 3 or 5 categories) and as such could be further amended should the view of Members, Stakeholders and/or the future assessment of the Options in relation to the LDP Objectives and the Sustainability Appraisal, recommend the need to do so. This could for example involve the development of a further hybrid option where elements of say Option 3 are combined with 2a for example.

5.17 This approach is therefore only partially developed at this time and would represent a significant departure from the direction of travel of previous development plans. Option 3 is not ideal and does have shortcomings not least is the very rigid approach of categorizing settlements as either urban or rural with no middle ground for semi-urban / semi-rural areas. However the approach is very much in line with the UDP Public Inquiry Inspectors comments that Flintshire settlements particularly within the Deeside area are difficult to define with individual settlement boundaries given the degree of coalescence that has already taken place. The approach also recognises the relationships and linkages that exist between individual settlements and provides a framework where these settlements can be viewed collectively. This approach also allows for a future spatial strategy that could locate growth in areas that are sustainable rather than spreading growth out to all settlements regardless of whether those settlements have the infrastructure to support that growth.

Option 4 – Combining Urban Areas from Option 3 with the 3 Lower Settlement Categories in Option 2a

Following on from the commentary regarding Option 3 and the fact that as an option it fails to adequately recognize or distinguish between the rural areas of Flintshire, this option attempts to build on the idea of established Urban areas within Flintshire by retaining those defined in option 3, and by adding the lower settlement categories from Option 2a to recognize the distinction between semi-rural and rural settlements within the County.

Commentary

5.18 This Hybrid approach attempts to take the elements of Option 2a in terms of the definition of semi-rural and rural settlements that it has via the three lower settlement categories, and marry that with the concept of defining urban areas as groupings of associated or dependent settlements outlined in Option 3. The resultant settlement structure is as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4 Hybrid Settlement Categorisation Option

Urban Areas			
Broughton (inc Broughton Retail Park and Bretton)			
Buckley (inc Alltami, Drury and Burntwood, Mynydd Isa)			
Deeside West (inc Aston, Shotton, Connah's Quay, Garden City, Queensferry)			
Deeside East (inc Ewloe, Hawarden, Mancot, Pentre, Sandycroft			
Flint			
Holywell (inc Bagillt, Carmel and Greenfield)			
Hope (Caergwrle, Abermorddu, Cefn y Bedd)			
Mold			
Saltney (inc Saltney Ferry)			
Sustainable Village			
Bagillt	Treuddyn	Leeswood	Talacre
Caerwys	Higher Kinnerton	Mostyn (Maes Pennant)	Northop Hall
Coed Talon / Pontybodkin	Northop	New Brighton	Brynford
	Sychdyn		Ffynnongroyw
	Gronant		
	Flint Mountain		
	Gwernymynydd		
Defined Village			
Nannerch	Pen-y-ffordd	Nercwys	Trelawnyd
Pentre Halkyn	Cilcain	Cymau	Pantymwyn
Rhosesmor	Gwenaffield	Gwaenysgor	Trelogan and Berthengham
	Rhydymwyn	Lixwm	
	Whitford	Ysceifiog	
Undefined Village			
Ffrith	Llanfynydd	Afonwen	Llanasa

Rhes y Cae	Cadole	Dobshill	Rhewl Mostyn
	Halkyn	Gorsedd	
	Pontblyddyn	Gwespyr	