

Key Issues, Vision, Objectives, Growth and Spatial Options Consultation Paper (May 2024)



**Replacement Local
Development Plan (RLDP)
2023-2038**



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council



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Foreword

1.0.1 This document is an initial consultation draft setting out Key Issues, Vision and Objectives, Growth Options and Spatial Options identified by the Council for the forthcoming Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). Comments are now invited on all aspects of the document, and any suggestions for changes or amendments are welcome.

1.0.2 All duly made comments will be taken into account and resulting changes incorporated into future versions of the document and the RLDP where appropriate. Future iterations of the document will form part of future RLDP consultations, including the Preferred Strategy stage at the end of this year/early 2025.

Have Your Say

1.0.3 The consultation will commence at mid-day (12 noon) on **Tuesday 14th May 2024** and will run for a 3 week period. The **deadline** for comments is **midnight on Wednesday 5th June 2024**. Comments received after the deadline will not be accepted. We would prefer comments to be submitted directly on line:

- Via the Consultation Portal at:
<https://neath-porttalbot-consult.objective.co.uk/kse> following the instructions on how to submit a comment.

If you are not able to submit comments directly on-line, please request a Comment Form from us and return it by:

- E-mail to: **ldp@npt.gov.uk** ; *or*
- Post to:

Mr Ceri Morris
Head of Planning and Public Protection
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council,
The Quays,
Brunel Way, Baglan Energy Park,
Neath, SA11 2GG.

Please complete the form in BLOCK CAPITALS and in **Black Ink** only.

NB - All comments received will be available for public inspection and cannot be treated as confidential. The NPT Planning & Public Protection Service Privacy Statement can be viewed at: **www.npt.gov.uk/16275**

Introduction

2.0.1 This informal consultation document is separated into three parts; each dealing with a different aspect of the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) for Neath Port Talbot Council (NPTC).

2.0.2 The first part of this document sets out the draft Key Issues, Vision and Objectives that the RLDP will need to take into account.

2.0.3 The second part of this document details the potential Growth Options that could be used to formulate the RLDP. This section looks at how many homes and jobs we will plan for.

2.0.4 The final part of this document looks at the various realistic Spatial Options possible. This section deals with where the authority will see development come forward throughout the RLDP.

2.0.5 A more detailed paper on the Key Issues, Vision, Objectives, Growth and Spatial Options will be published alongside the preferred strategy.

3.1 Key Issues, Vision and Objectives: Introduction

3.1.1 The draft Key Issues, Vision and Objectives for the RLDP have been developed in accordance with the relevant legislative and guidance framework to take account of and reflect other relevant local and national plans and policies. Development of the new Key Issues, Vision and Objectives took as its starting point the extensive consultation work that was undertaken by the council as part of the 'Let's Talk' campaign during 2020 and 2021 to inform the council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This was subsequently continued with a further open-ended consultation ('Let's Keep Talking') during 2023. The issues, visions and objectives expressed in other relevant national and local strategies and plans have also been analysed and taken into account.

3.1.2 The process leading up to the formulation of the Key Issues, Vision and Objectives is explained in a separate background paper. A preliminary version of the background paper was prepared in early 2023 for consultation / involvement purposes which was circulated to stakeholders in March 2023 for comment / input. It was also subsequently assessed as part of the Integrated Sustainability Assessment (ISA) which is required to be undertaken for all aspects of the RLDP. Amendments were made as a result of these inputs which are incorporated in this document and it is anticipated that additional changes will be made as the new RLDP preparation process progresses and further consultations are undertaken.

3.1.3 The intention is that the issues and priorities identified through this process will subsequently be taken forward in the RLDP to inform the planning policies and approaches to be implemented over the new plan's 15 year timescale (2023 - 2038).

3.1.4 The draft Key Issues, Vision and Objectives for the plan that have been identified through the above process are set out below.

3.2 Key Issues, Challenges and Drivers

3.2.1 The above considerations have fed into the identification of 14 new draft Key Issues for the RLDP to supersede those of the original LDP. The new Key Issues have been categorised into the RLDP topic areas derived from the structure used for Planning Policy Wales.

RLDP Draft Key Issues

Overarching Issues

NKI 1 Climate Emergency: Action to tackle the causes of increasing climate instability and to address its current and future impacts has now become urgent.

NKI 2 Nature Emergency: Addressing the local and global decline in biodiversity has become urgent. All public authorities are required to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems to ensure a net biodiversity benefit from all new development.

NKI 3 Health and Well-being: NPT has an ageing population and one of the least healthy diets and lowest levels of physical activity in Wales resulting in increasing rates of obesity and ill health.

Strategic and Spatial Choices

NKI 4 Strategic Placemaking: The majority of NPT's population, economic and cultural activity, significant infrastructure and facilities are located in the coastal belt, resulting in geographical inequalities in well-being to the detriment of inland and valleys areas.

NKI 5 Placemaking in Action: There has been a perceived loss of natural, cultural and built heritage and character across NPT's communities, natural environment, townscapes and landscapes coupled with a loss of role and purpose for many valley communities.

Active and Social Places

NKI 6 Moving: Transport links, especially for Active Travel and Public Transport are poor in many areas (particularly the valleys), causing disadvantage and having detrimental impacts on spatial inequalities, carbon footprints and health and well-being across the county borough.

NKI 7 Living: The need for additional homes of all types, including affordable housing and provision for Gypsies and Travellers, must be addressed.

NKI 8 Activities: In order to be sustainable, all communities need ready access to goods, services, jobs and local recreation and community facilities.

Productive and Enterprising Places

NKI 9 Economic Recovery: Major structural economic changes are in progress that are likely to have a transformative effect on the national and regional economies and locally on industry and employment uses within NPT's coastal corridor (including proposed Freeport provisions and development at the steelworks). These changes will need to be fully addressed and potential benefits maximised.

NKI 10 Economic Infrastructure: The benefits of sustainable economic development and growth need to be spread across the county borough through the provision of appropriate modern economic infrastructure, including digital services.

NKI 11 Energy: In order to meet ambitious climate change targets, NPT will need to harness its significant green energy resources and maximise decarbonisation in all sectors.

NKI 12 Material Resources and the Circular Economy: NPT's mineral resources and minerals infrastructure should be conserved and safeguarded while enabling an appropriate and proportionate contribution to mineral supply and ensuring adverse impacts are minimised, together with provision of appropriate waste treatment, recycling and disposal facilities.

Distinctive and Natural Places

NKI 13 Special Characteristics of Places: NPT's rich historic and natural environments, Green Infrastructure, soils, townscapes, landscapes and coastal areas need to be conserved, protected and enhanced to be enjoyed by future generations.

NKI 14 Environmental Qualities of Places: Flood risk, water resources and water quality are likely to become more significant concerns in future years and will need to be addressed alongside all types of pollution including air quality issues.

3.3 Vision

3.3.1 The vision for the RLDP needs to align with the visions from other relevant strategies and plans, and it is proposed to follow a similar approach of identifying desired *outcomes* to focus and clarify what the new plan is setting out to achieve. 14 RLDP draft outcomes have been identified. These are listed below as elements of the RLDP draft vision to set out a numbered series of aspirations and expectations for the new plan across all topic areas.

RLDP draft Vision

(By 2038) Neath Port Talbot will be a place where:

1. ***The climate emergency is being positively addressed:*** NPT will be on track to meet its agreed climate change targets and will be adapting appropriately to a changing climate.
2. ***The nature emergency is being positively addressed:*** NPT will be delivering on-going net benefit for biodiversity, geodiversity and soils and will be promoting the resilience of ecosystems as a result of development proposals over the plan period.
3. ***Public health and well-being is improving:*** Significant public health and well-being and environmental benefits including facilities for older people will be being delivered through new built developments.
4. ***Key valleys settlements have a more sustainable long-term future and the economic potential of the coastal belt is maximised while conserving and enhancing terrestrial and marine environments:*** NPT's position and role as a key economic driver within the Swansea Bay City Region will see significant new green technological developments and economic opportunities emerging associated with Swansea University Bay Campus, Baglan Bay and Harbourside employment areas. The benefits of this will be more equitably distributed through development of key settlements in each of NPT's valleys and an increasing emphasis on visitor attractions including heritage sites, outdoor adventure based attractions in the Neath and Afan valleys and traditional seaside attractions at Aberafan Beach.
5. ***The important natural, cultural and built heritage of all NPT's communities is supported, enhanced and enriched through the application of placemaking principles:*** The distinctiveness and character of the three main towns of Neath, Port Talbot and Pontardawe, their individual histories, cultures and natural assets will be conserved, sustainably managed and enhanced. The distinctive and separate characters of each of NPT's five valleys will be conserved and enhanced through support and enhancement of their key settlements and distinctive environments.
6. ***Travel and transport is more sustainable, convenient, accessible and efficient:*** Improvements with an emphasis on Active Travel and public transport especially in the valleys areas will be improving accessibility for all communities.
7. ***The need for homes of all types across the county borough is being addressed.*** Measures to enable and encourage new homes in sustainable locations will be addressing housing needs.
8. ***All communities have ready access to goods, services, jobs and community facilities.*** Measures to enable and encourage the provision of services, employment and facilities in sustainable locations will be addressing community requirements.
9. ***The benefits of major national and local structural economic change are maximised:*** Ongoing structural economic changes affecting major local industries and employment are fully embraced and the potential benefits for health, well-being, employment, and the local environment are maximised for residents of NPT.

10. **All areas of NPT are served by up-to-date physical and digital economic infrastructure:** Improvements to economic infrastructure will be helping all communities to benefit from modern economic infrastructure appropriate for their economic, social, environmental and cultural needs and aspirations, while enhanced visitor attractions particularly in the Neath and Afan Valley areas will encourage growth in the tourism sector.
11. **An important contribution to the energy needs of Wales is made:** Measures taken to address energy demand and efficiency will be taking effect while appropriate benefit will be coming from NPT's renewable and low carbon energy generation potential addressing carbon reduction targets and improving building efficiency.
12. **Mineral resources, reserves and infrastructure are conserved and safeguarded and appropriate waste treatment and disposal facilities provided to meet needs.** Measures to safeguard mineral resources and infrastructure, protect mineral reserves and enable their use when required together with the appropriate treatment, recycling and disposal of waste will be addressing all appropriate requirements.
13. **Natural and historic assets and environments, biodiversity, Green Infrastructure, landscapes and coastal areas are conserved, protected and enhanced.** Appropriate measures will be conserving and enhancing the unique historic environment of NPT surviving from all periods from prehistoric hill forts to the key roles played in global industrialisation by the coal and metal industries, set in the spectacular natural setting of valleys and coast.
14. **Flood risk, coastal change and pollution issues are appropriately addressed and adverse impacts minimised.** Appropriate measures will be leading to a reduced risk from environmental change with reducing pollution levels.

3.4 Objectives

3.4.1 The RLDP Objectives are intended to set out what the plan is aiming to achieve in respect of each of the topics, in order to meet the outcomes contained in the vision. The objectives are therefore aligned to both the key issues and the outcomes, and are listed under the same topic headings. This has resulted in 14 draft RLDP objectives as set out below.

Draft RLDP Objectives

NO1: Minimise the causes and adapt to the current and predicted impacts of climate change through:

- Minimising greenhouse gas emissions;
- Requiring appropriate location and design of development; and
- The protection and enhancement of all environmental assets required for climate adaptation and resilience.

NO2: Achieve a net biodiversity benefit and enhanced ecosystems resilience from new developments across the county borough.

NO3: Ensure all new developments provide a healthy local environment that encourages more active and healthier lifestyles for all age groups.

NO4: Realise the full benefits of green economic growth across the county borough to provide fully sustainable communities in all localities while conserving Neath Port Talbot's environment.

NO5: Support, enhance and enrich the distinctiveness of NPT's communities through positive placemaking actions at a local level.

NO6: Reduce spatial inequalities in travel and transport across the county borough by improvements to Active Travel and public transport links and services, especially in valleys areas.

NO7: Deliver sufficient good quality new homes of the required types in the most suitable locations to meet the identified need.

NO8: Encourage and support the retention and provision of a mix of community, retail, employment and recreational facilities in appropriate locations across the county borough.

NO9: Encourage and enable the establishment and growth of new clean green technologies and industries to promote and maintain a leading role for NPT in the national and international renewables and industrial economies.

NO10: Ensure that all areas of NPT are able to benefit from economic growth and from modern economic infrastructure appropriate to meet their economic, social, environmental and cultural needs and aspirations.

NO11: Enable NPT to make an appropriate contribution to renewable and low carbon energy generation while encouraging all appropriate steps to be taken to reduce energy demand and improve efficiency across all sectors.

NO12: Conserve and safeguard mineral resources, reserves and infrastructure while making an appropriate and a proportionate contribution to the supply of minerals to meet local, regional and national need while ensuring adverse impacts are minimised and the provision of appropriate waste treatment, recycling and disposal facilities and processes are facilitated.

NO13: Ensure the conservation, protection and enhancement of NPT's natural and historic assets and environments, Green Infrastructure, landscapes, undeveloped coast and coastal areas.

NO14: Ensure that environmental issues and future changes including flood risk, coastal change and pollution issues are appropriately avoided, addressed and adverse impacts minimised.

4 Growth Options

4.1 Growth Options: Growth Scenarios

4.1.1 In April 2022, consultants Turleys, SQW and Edge Analytics were appointed to undertake an Economic and Housing Growth Assessment (EHGA)¹ for Swansea and Neath Port Talbot. The work was updated in early 2024 to reflect the revised plan period (2023-2038), and a number of contextual changes including the release of the re-based population estimates, the successful Celtic Freeport bid, updated commuting information and the recent TATA Steelworks transition announcement.

4.1.2 In line with the Development Plans Manual (DPM), a number of growth scenarios have been modelled to establish the most appropriate level of housing and employment growth for Neath Port Talbot over the 15 year plan period (2023-2038), including demographic led, economic led and dwelling led, as follows:

Table 4.1.1

Growth Scenario	Homes (Per Annum)	Homes Plan Period	Homes Plan Period (including 10% Flexibility)	Jobs (Per Annum)	Jobs Plan Period
1. Adjusted Core	130	1,950	2,145	121	1,815
2. Baseline Employment	161	2,415	2,657	130	1,950
3. Adjusted Supplementary	232	3,480	3,828	237	3,555
4. Average 15 year Past Delivery Rate	238	3,570	3,927	N/A	N/A
5. PG-Long Term	261	3,915	4,307	181	2,715
6. WG 2018 Principal Projection	285	4,275	4,703	152	2,280
7. Housing Need (LHMA)	296	4,445	4,890	N/A	N/A

4.1.3 The economic-led scenarios used forecasts from Cambridge Econometrics, with the **Baseline Employment (Option 2)** taking the macroeconomic trend, providing a 'base-case' which accounted for historic trend data, sectoral breakdowns and national trends. However, this scenario is based on the national picture and does not reflect locally specific circumstances.

4.1.4 Taking account of anticipated job losses resulting from the initial phases of the TATA steelworks transition, and potential investment opportunities that could come forward and generate additional jobs, further scenarios were modelled.

¹ The EHGA is currently in draft and will be published as part of the Preferred Strategy Consultation.

4.1.5 The ‘**Adjusted Core Scenario**’ (**Option 1**), modelled the job losses at TATA and made some moderate economic growth assumptions arising from the Celtic Freeport designation and other potential investment opportunities. Given there is some uncertainty around these potential investments, more modest assumptions were factored in.

4.1.6 The most positive economic forecast is the ‘**Adjusted Supplementary Scenario**’ (**Option 3**) which reflects a more ambitious assumption around future investment and assumes a higher level of growth arising from further investment opportunities associated with the Freeport.

4.1.7 The two demographic-led options are:

- **Welsh Government (WG) 2018 Principal Projection (Option 6)**, modelled using the Principal variant of the WG official 2018-based projection, which is based on demographic trends of the last 5 years;
- **Population Growth (PG) Long-term (Option 5)**, which re-bases the WG official Principal Projection to take into account mid-year estimates for 2019, 2020 and 2021 and assumes population growth will perpetuate the trends of the previous 10 years.

4.1.8 **Option 4 (Average 15 year Past Delivery Rate)** presents a dwelling-led growth scenario, which shows the average rate of build over the 15 year period 2008/09 – 2022/23, which equates to 238 homes per annum. Over this period, 433 jobs were delivered per annum, however, replicating this level of job growth is not considered feasible.

4.1.9 In the context of the above, it is useful to note the delivery of housing and jobs in NPT over the existing LDP period (2011-2026).

Table 4.1.2

Adopted Plan	Homes (per annum)	Homes Plan Period	Homes Plan Period (incl 12.31% Flex)	Jobs (per annum)	Jobs Plan Period	Homes Plan Period Delivered up to 2022/23 (average per annum)	Jobs Plan Period Delivered up to 2019 (average per annum)
NPT LDP 2011-2026	520	7800	8760	257	3850	2,559 (213pa)	5,100 (567pa)

4.1.10 Under delivery of housing has had implications for existing residents; with younger adults living in increasingly larger households. Turleys have taken this into consideration when modelling future projections by making an adjustment to Household Membership Rates (HMR), (the rate at which population is converted into households). The adjustment would provide an uplift in housing need, assuming the development of additional homes would allow hidden households to make a choice to form their own households. Options 1-3, 5 and 6 include this adjustment.

4.1.11 **Option 7 (Housing need LHMA)** considers the housing need in the draft 2023 Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA), based on the WG 2018-Based Principal Projection and covers the period 2021-2036. The LHMA identified a backlog of affordable housing need

4 Growth Options

of 542 dwellings per annum to be met over the first 5 years of the Plan. Together, the market and affordable housing needs over the 15 year period equate to 4,445 homes. Whilst the economic growth for this option has not been specifically modelled, it is considered reasonable that this would correspond with the jobs growth modelled for Option 6 - WG 2018 Principal projection, as the same household projection (which drives jobs growth) has been used in the LHMA. This is not an affordable housing led scenario as suggested by the DPM.

4.1.12 All options are presented above including a flexibility allowance which is set at 10% as suggested as the starting point in the DPM. This has been done for illustrative purposes at this stage to give a more accurate picture of the potential housing requirement figure arising from each growth option. The appropriate level of flexibility will be considered as part of the RLDP preparation.

4.2 Growth Options Analysis

4.2.1 The advantages and disadvantages of each option are considered below:

5.1 Spatial Options: Introduction

5.1.1 The consideration of realistic spatial options is an important part in the preparation of the RLDP. Each spatial option will need to have regard to legislation, national planning policy, local and regional strategies. Furthermore, the Plan must take account of the specific characteristics, assets and issues within NPTC and seek to guide development in the way that responds to this. The following have been considered:

- Settlement assessment background paper;
- Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA);
- Affordable Housing Viability;
- Flood Risk;
- Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land;
- Ecological Constraints;
- Landscape Constraints; and
- Welsh Language.

5.1.2 This section will look at the various spatial options considered. These are:

- Option A – Continue with the existing Adopted LDP Strategy;
- Option B – Dispersed growth across the authority;
- Option C - National Growth Area and Sustainable Transport Infrastructure;
- Option D – Building on key opportunities in the Valleys;
- Option E - Town Centre First approach; and
- Option F – Hybrid option of Option C and Option D.

5.2 Spatial Option A - Continue with the Adopted LDP Strategy

5.2.1 The Adopted LDP divided the County Borough into eight spatial areas, comprising the two towns of Neath and Port Talbot and the surrounding areas of the Afan Valley, Amman Valley, Dulais Valley, Neath Valley, Pontardawe and Swansea Valley. It then grouped these into two strategic planning areas:

- **The Coastal Corridor** (comprising the two main urban towns and supporting communities of Neath and Port Talbot); and
- **The Valleys** (comprising the Afan Valley, Amman Valley, Dulais Valley, Neath Valley, Pontardawe and Swansea Valley).

5.2.2 The **Coastal Corridor** contained the main centres of population, infrastructure and facilities and benefits from easy access to the M4 making the area more attractive in terms of investment for business, commercial and residential development.

5.2.3 **The Valleys** were more rural in nature with more limited scope for development due to topography and some limitations to accessing the main arterial transport routes (rail and M4).

5.2.4 **The current LDP strategy** therefore aimed to “*facilitate growth within NPT, with a focus on the Coastal Corridor whilst reinvigorating the valley communities*”.

5.2.5 Specifically, this meant:

- Focusing development along the Coastal Corridor and in the urban areas of Neath and Port Talbot, in recognition of the important role these settlements play within the wider context;

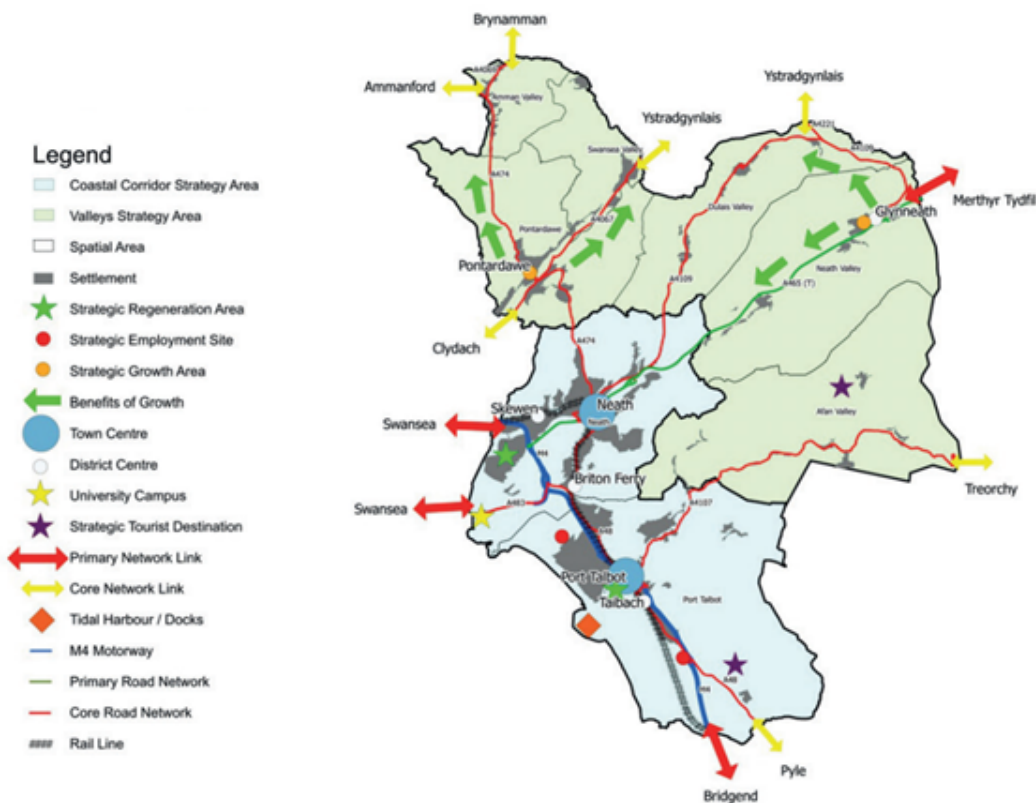
5 Spatial Options

- Maximising the benefit of market interest along the Coastal Corridor and stimulating growth through the delivery of strategic employment sites and strategic regeneration areas;
- Identifying Pontardawe and the Upper Neath Valley as strategic growth areas in the Valleys which will create a mechanism to co-ordinate investment and ensure the benefits of growth and regeneration are shared more widely throughout the Valley communities; and
- Providing a flexible approach to development within the Valley communities.

5.2.6 The level of growth was based on an economic-led scenario which was aspirational and aimed to maximise job growth within the local economy.

5.2.7 The spatial strategy recognised the need to ensure appropriate infrastructure is already in place or could be provided to accommodate the level of growth identified. An integral part of the strategy was therefore to deliver new infrastructure to support allocations and future growth. The strategy supported a number of key infrastructure projects that were considered essential to delivering a number of strategic allocations, including housing, employment and regeneration sites.

Figure 5.1 Option A: Continue with the Adopted LDP Strategy



5.2.8 The key advantages and disadvantages of this strategy are summarised below.

Advantages

- Allowed for differences in strategy between valleys and coastal communities;
- Key infrastructure improvements delivered – Port Talbot Parkway Station and Integrated Transport hub; Baglan Energy Park Link Road; Harbour Way and Ffordd Amazon; and

- Provides continuity; and
- Would provide growth in sustainable areas that have access to facilities.

Disadvantages

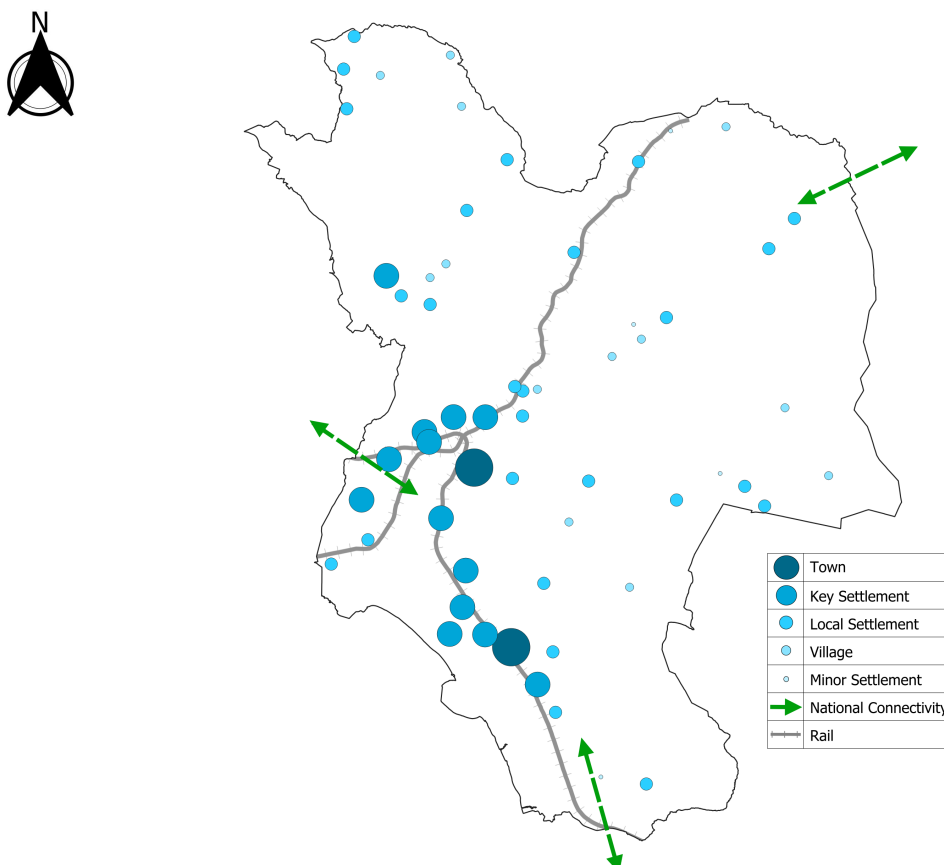
- Key strategic regeneration areas still have not come forward as anticipated (e.g. Coed Darcy, Harbourside, Baglan Bay);
- Jobs growth has been higher than anticipated during the plan period, however uptake of strategic employment sites has been low;
- Level of housing delivered falls short of the annual build rate of 520 and is around 213 per annum; and
- Growth points around Glynneath and Pontardawe have not been realised as anticipated (Residential and Tourism).

5.3 Spatial Option B - Dispersed growth across the Authority

5.3.1 This option focuses on growth occurring across the authority – from towns through to minor settlements as identified in the settlement hierarchy. This would be through a series of small to medium sites with no reliance on individual large scale strategic sites.

5.3.2 The key infrastructure requirements are likely to encompass schemes across the county.

Figure 5.2 Option B: Dispersed Growth across the Authority



5.3.3 The key advantages and disadvantages of this strategy are highlighted below:

5 Spatial Options

Advantages

- Dispersal strategy that targets development across the whole County Borough proportionate to the size of each existing settlement;
- Would help support facilities in existing settlements, particularly in rural areas;
- Would not rely on one individual large-scale strategic site;
- Focused on a proportionate sustainability assessment; and
- There is potential for smaller settlements to become bigger and for them to become more sustainable through the inclusion of additional local every day facilities or to sustain their existing facilities.

Disadvantages

- Viability of sites may mean that sites do not come forward;
- Dispersed development growth may lead to a greater reliance on the private car due to limited active travel provision in the more rural parts of the authority and a mismatch between co-location of homes and jobs;
- There may not be suitable sites in all settlements identified;
- Growth would be predominantly on greenfield sites;
- Could lead to small scale piecemeal development;
- Some rural areas could be disadvantaged as they would not all benefit from additional housing or growth to attract additional facilities;
- Infrastructure requirements could be required;
- There could be limited services within lower tier settlements; and
- No consideration would be given to the character and environmental constraints of the settlement.

5.4 Spatial Option C - National Growth Area and Sustainable Transport Infrastructure

5.4.1 This spatial option would see growth in accordance with the existing LDP strategy where the majority of the growth is located in the Coastal Corridor; albeit a more tempered approach given the lower than anticipated delivery rates of the Adopted LDP.

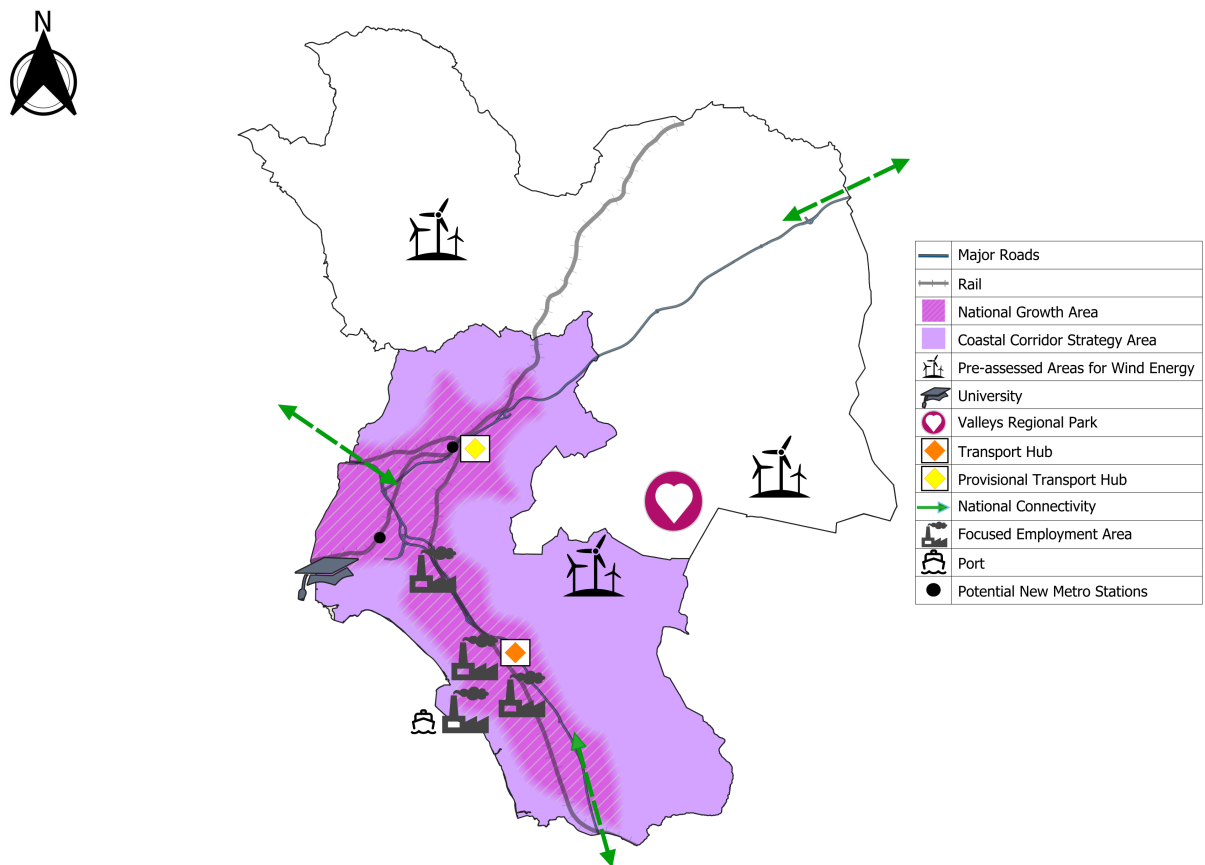
5.4.2 Key features would include:

- Focused development in line with the National Growth Area (NGA);
- Focused employment growth across the NGA through the development of the Freeport, the Port, Harbourside and Baglan Energy Park;
- Valleys growth will also occur to complement the job creation within the NGA, however this will be proportionate to size, role and function of existing settlements;
- Maximising the benefit of market interest along the NGA and stimulating growth through the delivery of strategic employment sites;
- Opportunities to meet local needs will be supported in the rest of the county;
- Co-location of jobs and homes in the Coastal Corridor to reduce commuting;
- Sustainable patterns of development; and
- Building on developments from Adopted LDP to provide opportunities for expansion of industry and knowledge economy, green growth (net zero).

5.4.3 Key infrastructure requirements:

- Encouraging investment opportunities focussed in the NGA to support the South Wales Industrial Cluster (SWIC), the Celtic Freeport status, the Port of Port Talbot, and the Swansea Bay City Deal aspirations;
- This may include improvements relating to the South West Wales Metro, M4/A465 Junction, Active Travel Network, A465 Glynneath corridor (links to midlands) and other infrastructure requirements as identified as further studies are undertaken; and
- Building on developments from the Adopted LDP – Swansea University Bay Campus, Baglan Energy Park, and Harbourside spin off development providing opportunities for expansion of industry and knowledge economy, green growth (net zero).

Figure 5.3 Option C: National Growth Area and Sustainable Transport Infrastructure



5.4.4 The key advantages and disadvantages of this strategy are summarised below:

Advantages

- Developing areas that are already identified in the upper tiers of the settlement hierarchy;
- Growth of international, national and regional significance;
- Conformity with Future Wales;
- Maximises Green Growth opportunities in the coastal area;
- Directs the majority of growth to most sustainable locations with active travel and public transport infrastructure; and
- Ability to further spread Active Travel to the valleys.

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Disadvantages

- Development would only be focused around key areas; and
- Only a limited amount of growth occurring in the valleys so the full potential of opportunities like the Afan Forest Adventure Resort and GCRE may not be realised.

5.5 Spatial Option D - Building on key opportunities in the Valleys

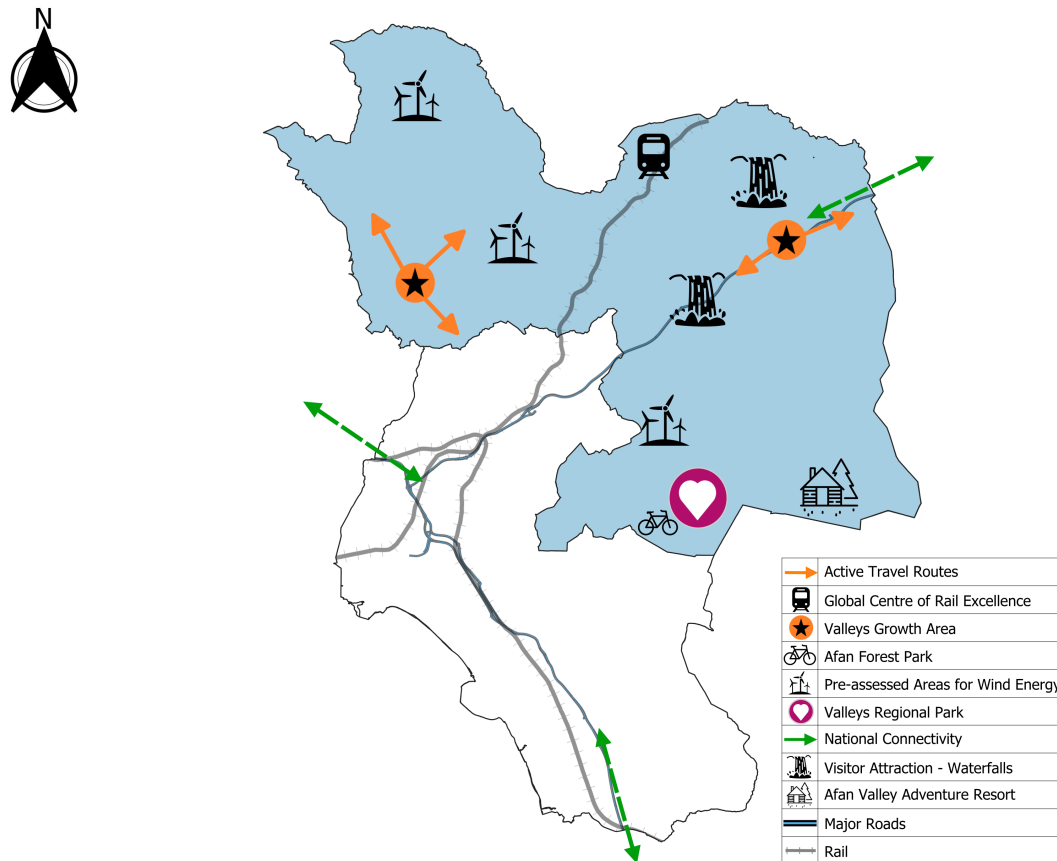
5.5.1 A focus on the valleys to deliver innovative and visionary development. This means:

- Identifying focus areas for growth delivery in each valley and how benefits from each key location will be dispersed;
- Key rural regeneration areas will be identified around Afan Valley Adventure Resort, Global Centre of Railway Excellence (GCRE), the Levelling up projects and other green growth opportunities (such as wind farms, battery storage projects) where the scale of the proposals has the potential to have a major impact on the area. Projects of national and international significance will act as a catalyst for long term opportunities;
- 1st class broadband infrastructure will facilitate a step change in working patterns allowing people to work from home in a beautiful and active area, making the valleys more attractive places to live and work;
- Heritage and tourism projects and opportunities such as Neath Heritage Valley, Mountain biking in Afan Forest, and numerous waterfall walks will help develop the valleys as a destination and to take advantage of their location as gateways to the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park;
- Identify Pontardawe and surrounds as a growth area;
- Identify Glynneath as a potential for connectivity due to the improvement works ongoing to the A465; and
- More modest growth dispersed around the rest of the County Borough.

5.5.2 To deliver this, the following infrastructure requirements are needed:

- Rural Regeneration Sites including: GCRE including innovation campus, Afan Valley Adventure Resort, Neath Heritage Valley, Levelling up project, waterfall country);
- Key Infrastructure: A465 corridor (links to midlands);
- Expansion of Active Travel Network into the Valleys;
- Green growth renewable energy developments (Wind, Solar, Battery Storage); and
- Broadband infrastructure and flexible policy approach to promote home working.

Figure 5.4 Option D: Building on key opportunities in the Valleys



5.5.3 The key advantages and disadvantages are summarised below:

Advantages

- Regeneration of valleys communities which have lacked investment for long periods;
- Encourages further related industry investments;
- Makes the most of valley economic assets; and
- Maximising opportunities that the large scale developments could bring.

Disadvantages

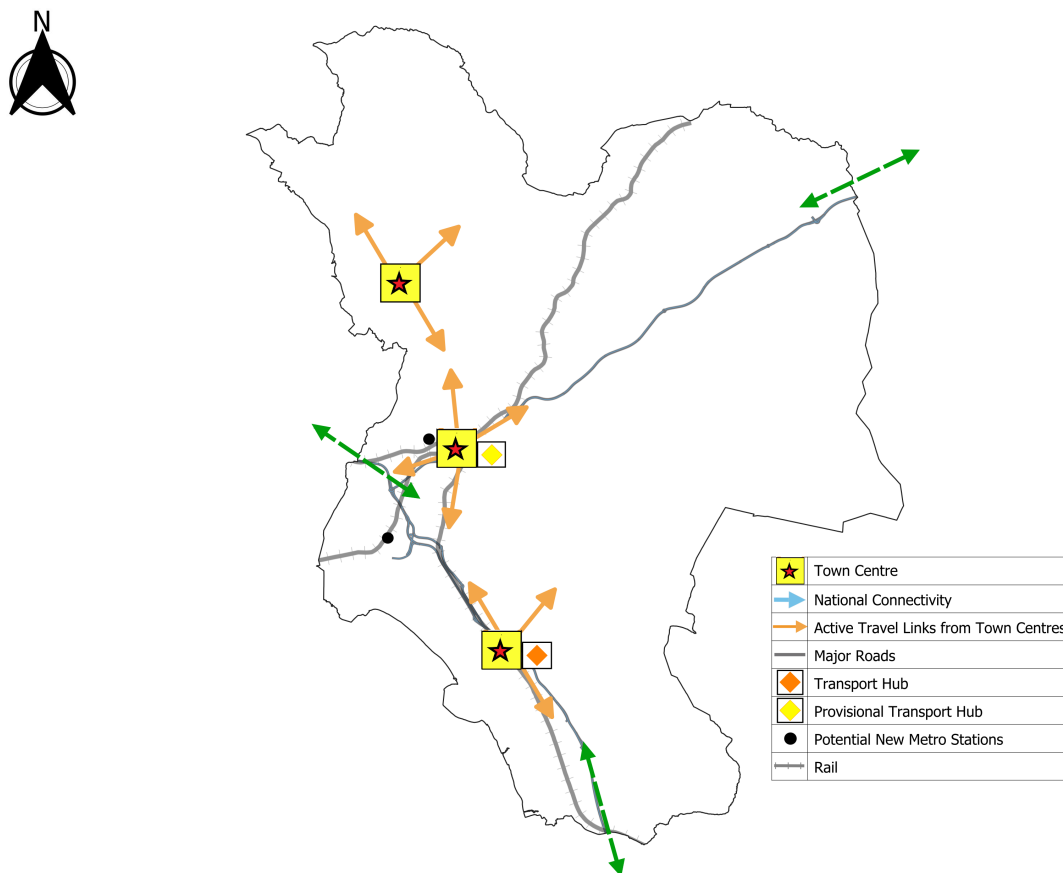
- Does not accord with Future Wales policy 28 in that plans should recognise the NGA as the focus for strategic and economic growth
- Does not acknowledge the economic strength and importance of the Coastal Corridor;
- Limited housing developer interest in the valleys may limit the number of properties built;
- Active travel linkages more limited;
- Locational mismatch of homes and jobs which may encourage more commuting;
- Viability remains marginal across NPT, particularly in some communities; and
- Housing not delivered in areas of greatest need.

5.6 Spatial Option E - Town Centre First Approach

5 Spatial Options

5.6.1 This option takes forward the approach set out in Future Wales and PPW that all development should be in town centres first.

Figure 5.5 Option E: Town Centre First approach



5.6.2 The key advantages and disadvantages of this strategy are summarised below:

Advantages

- Creation of sustainable town centre environments containing a mix of complementary and interdependent uses, including housing, community facilities and, where appropriate, employment, as well as retail and commercial leisure;
- Reducing the need to travel through co-location of housing, infrastructure and services, and increasing the potential for realising Active Travel benefits; and
- Reusing vacant / underutilised town centre sites and premises and undertaking redevelopment where necessary.

Disadvantages

- Town centres within NPT are constrained by flooding and other constraints;
- Opportunities for only small scale developments;
- Major infrastructure investment required to successfully deliver e.g. existing road re-routing;
- Reusing vacant / underutilised town centre sites would require public sector intervention and public-private sector collaboration which has time and viability constraints; and
- Lack of suitable development sites in town centres.

5.7 Spatial Option F - Hybrid of Option C and Option D

5.7.1 To facilitate a sustainable distribution of growth to support innovative green developments in both the Coastal Corridor and the Valleys areas. This would include:

- Focused development along the Coastal Corridor, in line with the NGA;
- Focused employment growth across the NGA through the development of the Freeport, the Port, Harbourside and Baglan Energy Park;
- Valleys growth will also occur to complement the job creation along the Coastal Corridor, however this will be proportionate to size, role and function of existing settlements;
- Maximising the benefit of market interest along the NGA and stimulating growth through the delivery of strategic employment sites;
- Opportunities to meet local needs will be supported in the rest of the county;
- Co-location of jobs and homes in the Coastal Corridor to reduce commuting;
- Building on developments from the Adopted LDP to provide opportunities for expansion of industry and knowledge economy, green growth (net zero);
- Identifying focus areas for growth delivery in each valley and how benefits from each key location will be dispersed;
- Key rural regeneration areas will be identified around Afan Valley Adventure Resort, GCRE, the Levelling up projects and other green growth opportunities (such as wind farms, battery storage projects) where the scale of the proposals has the potential to have a major impact on the area. Projects of national and international significance will act as a catalyst for long term opportunities;
- 1st class broadband infrastructure will facilitate a step change in working patterns allowing people to work from home in a beautiful and active area, making the valleys more attractive places to live and work;
- Heritage and tourism projects and opportunities such as Neath Heritage Valley, Mountain biking in Afan Forest, and numerous waterfall walks will help develop the valleys as a destination and to take advantage of their location as gateways to the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park;
- Identify Pontardawe and surrounds as a growth area; and
- Identify Glynneath as a potential for connectivity due to the improvement works ongoing to the A465.

5.7.2 Key infrastructure requirements:

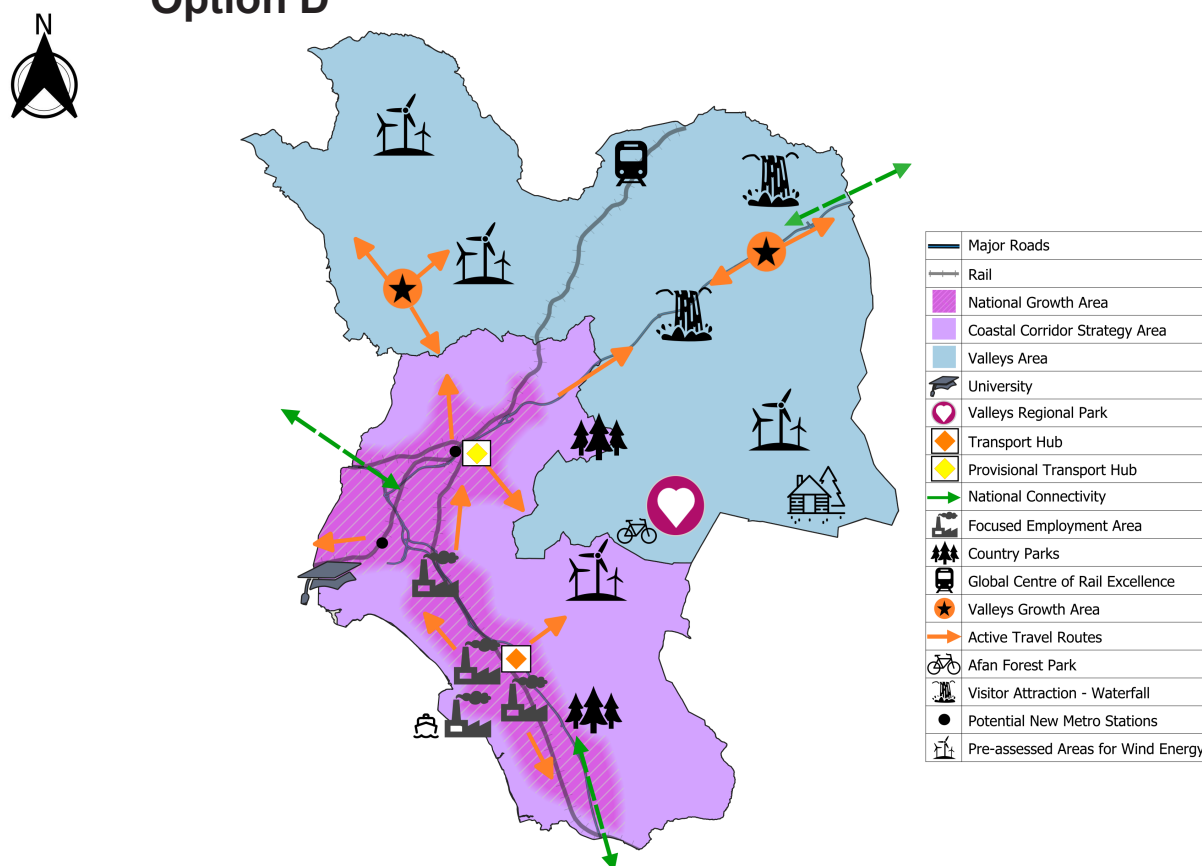
- Encouraging investment opportunities focussed in the NGA to support the South Wales Industrial Cluster (SWIC), the Celtic Freeport status, the Port of Port Talbot, and the Swansea Bay City Deal aspirations;
- This may include improvements relating to the South West Wales Metro, M4/A465 Junction, Active Travel Network, A465 Glynneath corridor (links to midlands) and other infrastructure requirements as identified as further studies are undertaken;
- Building on developments from the Adopted LDP – Swansea University Bay Campus, Baglan Energy Park, and Harbourside spin off development providing opportunities for expansion of industry and knowledge economy, green growth (net zero).
- Build in tourism and supporting growth and opportunities that are coming forward, such as GCRE, Afan Valley Adventure Resort, Biking in Afan Fforest, Heritage Valley Levelling up project; Gnoll Country Park, waterfall country and Gnoll Country Park will help develop

5 Spatial Options

NPT as a destination and to take advantage of our location as a gateway to Bannau Brycheiniog National Park;

- Green growth renewable energy developments (Wind, Solar, Battery Storage); and
- Broadband Infrastructure and flexible policy approach to promote home working.

Figure 5.6 Option F: Hybrid of Option C and Option D



5.7.3 The key advantages and disadvantages of this strategy are summarised below:

Advantages

- Directs the majority of growth to most sustainable locations with active travel and public transport infrastructure;
- Co-location of homes and jobs to reduce commuting and promote active and healthy lifestyle;
- Housing delivered in areas of greatest need and to meet local needs; and
- Regeneration of valleys communities which have lacked investment for long periods.

Disadvantages

- Viability remains marginal across NPT, particularly in some communities;
- Would mean development on some greenfield sites, some of which may have biodiversity, landscape or agricultural importance.

Click on the QR code below
for further information



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council