

# LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

## LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOCUS GROUP FIFTH MEETING

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2008, 10:00am

The Penallta Chamber, Ty Penallta, Tredomen Park

### Draft Meeting Minutes

#### Present

Cllr. Allan Pritchard	Deputy Leader
Cllr. Lyn Ackerman	Cabinet Member for Living Environment & Housing
Cllr. Ron Davies	Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Countryside
Cllr. James Fussell	Chair of Planning Committee
Cllr. Jim Criddle	Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee
Cllr. Harry Andrews	Leader of the Majority Opposition
Cllr. Vera Jenkins	The nominated Female Member
Cllr. Colin Hobbs	The nominated Member representing the Independents
Terry Shaw	Chief Engineer
Pat Mears	Chief Planning Officer
Kevin Fortey	(representing) Chief Housing Officer
Phil Davy	Head of Economic Development, Tourism & European Affairs
Peter Gomer	Head of Lifelong Learning & Leisure
Bleddyn Hopkins	Head of Planning and Strategy, Education & Leisure
John Rogers	Principal Solicitor for Planning, Land & Highways
Rhian Kyte	Team Leader, Strategic & Development Plans, Planning
Paul Cooke	Team Leader, Sustainable Development & Living Environment Partnership

#### 1 WELCOME

Cllr. Pritchard welcomed all to the fifth meeting of the LDP Focus Group and asked for approval for non-member officers to remain in the meeting. The Group gave its approval for this. He then asked for nominations for the posts of Group Chairman and Vice Chairman. The Group agreed that the Chairman should be Cllr. Rob Gough and the Vice Chairman should be Cllr. Jim Criddle. As Cllr. Gough was on leave Cllr. Criddle took over the Chairmanship of the remainder of the meeting.

#### PROCEDURAL SESSION

#### 2 Apologies were received from:

Cllr. Lindsay Whittle	Leader
Cllr. Rob Gough	Cabinet Member for Transportation and Planning
Cllr. Les Rees	Member of the Majority Opposition
Colin Jones	Head of Performance Management
Mark S Williams	Head of Public Services



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## **Minutes of the last meeting:**

- 3 The minutes of the fourth Focus Group meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2007 were agreed by Pat Mears and Peter Gomer.

## **Revised Focus Group terms of reference:**

- 4 The revised terms of reference were agreed with regard to three changes in Officer representation on the Group. Rhian Kyte pointed out an error of description with regard to the representation of the Independent Members. Group Members agreed that the Independents should be referred to as individuals and not as two groups. The revised terms of reference are attached as an **Appendix**.

## **DRAFT DEPOSIT PLAN SESSION**

### **Draft Environmental Report:**

- 5 Phil Griffiths, Countryside and Landscape Services, Planning Division, began with a PowerPoint presentation on the Legislative Framework of the SEA/SA process (Strategic Environmental Assessment/Sustainability Appraisal) which the LDP must take into account in its preparation. He explained the appraisal process for the Strategy Policies and the Countywide Policies and the recommended changes and mitigation measures from the Sustainability Group that made the draft Plan more acceptable with regard to the SEA/SA requirements.
- Cllr. Ron Davies queried why WAG had published a Good Practise Guide in advance of the legislation coming into force. Phil replied that the legislative requirement had been established well in advance of the Guide being issued.
  - Cllr. Ron Davies also questioned the paucity of environmental pressure groups on the LDP Sustainability Group. Phil replied that the group numbers were limited and this had led to many statutory consultation bodies taking up the representation at the outset.
  - Cllr. Colin Hobbs noted that there would be a great deal of effort needed by new Members to get up to speed on this complex process and Cllr. Allan Pritchard agreed that there was a massive amount of information to consider.
- 6 Dave Lucas, Strategic & Development Plans, followed with a PowerPoint presentation on the process of the SEA / SA assessments in relation to the Area Specific Policies and the recommended changes and mitigation measures from the Sustainability Group that made the draft Plan more acceptable with regard to the SEA/SA requirements. Then he went on to describe the particularly onerous HRA procedure (the EU Habitats Regulation Assessment) which will be carried out by consultants for the Council.
- Cllr. James Fussell asked for sight of an example of the way the HRA will be handled and Dave Lucas said he would seek to do that for the group.
  - Cllr. Ron Davies was concerned about the procedures set down in the EU directive because they will tend to require us to deal with the site assessments in a fragmented way whereas a Habitat wide approach would be comprehensive. He also felt that the Council's Biodiversity Plan was an



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inadequate policy vehicle to control future possible developments and that the issue would be better addressed within the LDP itself.

- Cllr. Hobbs was concerned about the power of CCW in the HRA process. It was explained that if the Council disagreed with the CCW in their approach to the HRA there was recourse to put our position to the Inspector in the Examination of the Plan.

## **Draft Deposit Plan:**

7 Rhian Kyte, Team Leader, Strategic & Development Plans, delivered a PowerPoint presentation describing the progress to date in the preparation of the LDP, the main issues and controversial matters, including Waste Management, Housing Sites, Transportation and Education closures. Finally, she outlined the immediate next stages, meetings and internal consultations which are scheduled leading us to the Special Council Meeting in September and the six-week formal Public Deposit period starting in October.

- Cllr. Criddle asked whether the decision to modify the WAG housing apportionment figure for Caerphilly would be problematic at the Examination. Rhian explained that it was accepted that the WAG figure was a starting point and the Council would be able to justify modifications because of local considerations. We are seeking to satisfy a need of 8625 units instead of 9750 which would be implied by the WAG starting point, but because of the requirement to allow choice for the house builders the plan allocations at present total 10,100 units.
- Cllr Ron Davies enquired how Caerphilly CBC were planning to address the provision of affordable housing to meet the needs for 6500 houses in Wales. Rhian indicated that the One Wales figure provided the target for affordable housing up to 2010 for the whole of Wales. Whilst there is no specific target for Caerphilly the figure can be disaggregated across the region leading to a need for Caerphilly to develop approximately 38 units per annum. The LDP proposes to develop approx 90 units on new housing sites pa in the LDP. This figure has been reached by calculating the number of units that could potentially be delivered applying the proposed thresholds of 25% and 40%.
- Cllr. Pritchard asked whether there were improvements planned for the A467 between Crosskeys and Newbridge and Cllr. Ackerman similarly wished to have information on any improvements to the Hafodyrynys road. Rhian indicated that she would make this information available.
- Cllr. Criddle noted that the LDP did not propose a by pass for South East Caerphilly and asked whether the line for such a road would at least be protected. Rhian explained that it was likely that housing developers would raise this issue at the Plan's Deposit and by that stage the Council anticipates that it should have completed its assessment as to whether the road building could be justified.
- Cllr. Hobbs asked whether there were opportunities to improve road links to the M4 from the Caerphilly Basin and Terry Shaw indicated that he would provide advice on this matter.
- Cllr. Ackerman was concerned about the depth of advice received from Dwr Cymru on potential housing sites in the past. Rhian explained that there had



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been a series of meetings with the company and their advice should be dependable.

- Cllr. Davies questioned what treatment would be proposed for the Bedwas Colliery Tips on the valley side. Roger Tanner advised that the extent to which the material could be spread on site would be limited by ecological concerns. Engineers are to supply information on current proposals.
- Cllr. Davies also asked whether it was possible to indicate the earliest possible date where development could occur on Bedwas Colliery surface. Roger Tanner explained that because of the constraints on the site it was unlikely that building work could commence for at least three years.
- Cllr. Hobbs asked whether it had been established what type of Primary Schools were needed for Waterloo and Bedwas Colliery. Bleddyn Hopkins explained that the proposal was for Waterloo as English medium and Bedwas as Welsh medium. This would likely be subject to review, given recent discussions by Members regarding the Waterloo proposal.

## GROUP DECISION

- 8 Unfortunately due to an oversight three Members had not had seen the draft documents prior to the meeting. It was also thought premature to approve the draft Plan at this stage in advance of further discussions which might well amend it.
- 9 The Group decided to endorse the plan preparation process going forward as described by Rhian Kyte and agreed to reconvene once Local Members had had the opportunity to discuss the draft Plan in the forthcoming Councillor Briefing Sessions.

## Next Meeting

The date of the next Focus Group meeting has been fixed for 24<sup>th</sup> July 2008 at 1:00 pm in the Rhymney Room, Ty Penallta.



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