

Thursday 4 March 2010 at 10.00 am
Penallta Chamber, Ty Penallta, Tredomen Park, Ystrad Mynach

1. Opening and Introductions

Inspector welcomed those in attendance and ensured that all attendees could hear clearly.

Copies of the meeting Agenda and supporting documentation were circulated a fortnight ago. Spare copies of these documents were made available on the side table.

Inspector introduced himself as Alwyn Nixon from the Planning Inspectorate. He explained that he has been appointed by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) Ministers to conduct an independent examination into the soundness of the Caerphilly CBC Local Development Plan (LDP) 2006-2021.

The Inspector also introduced the Programme Officer (PO), Barbara Prosser, who is appointed to assist the Inspector with the administration and organisational aspects of conducting the Examination. Richard Jenkins was also introduced as a Higher Planning Officer (HPO) at the Planning Inspectorate. He will be assisting the Inspector with some of the background aspects of examining the Plan.

Also present at the PHM were the team of Officers from Caerphilly CBC responsible for preparing the LDP. These officers will also be representing the Council at the forthcoming Hearing Sessions. The inspector invited Rhian Kyte (RK) to introduce herself and those other members of the LDP team, including an indication of which topic areas each of the officers will be covering.

RK introduced the team as follows:

Roger Tanner, Pat Mears, Roger Morgan, Phillip Griffiths (SA), Dave Lucas, Ian Mullis, Victoria Morgan, Victoria Tomlin, Kelly Collins.

RK also provided an indication of which officers will be attending which hearing sessions:

- Hearing Session 1 (20 April): Plan Preparation, Strategy and Policy Content - Rhian Kyte, Roger Tanner
- Hearing Session 2 (26 April): Housing Provision - Rhian Kyte, Vic Morgan, Roger Tanner

Alwyn Nixon B Sc (Hons), MRTPI - Planning Inspector
Barbara Prosser - Programme Officer

Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan Examination

- Hearing Session 3 (28 April): Affordable Housing Provision - Rhian Kyte, Vic Morgan supported by Kevin Forte
- Hearing Session 4 (5/6 May): Housing Sites
 - Wednesday Morning – Dave Lucas, Ian Mullis
 - Wednesday Afternoon – Kelly Collins, Victoria Tomlin
 - Thursday Morning – Dave Lucas, Ian Mullis
 - Thursday Afternoon – Kelly Collins, Victoria Tomlin

Supported by Stuart Burgess, Phil Griffiths and Alison Jones/Mel Sutherland

- Hearing Session 5 (7 May): Bedwas Colliery Site - Dave Lucas, Dave Whetter, Robert Hartshorne supported by Clive Campbell
- Hearing Session 6 (13 May): Transport - Dave Lucas, Clive Campbell
- Hearing Session 7 (18 May) : Community Facilities, Leisure and Tourism - Ian Mullis, Vic Tomlin – supported by Peter Gomer, Bleddyn Hopkins
- Hearing Session 8 (20 May) : Employment and Commercial Development Matters – Kelly Collins, Ian Mullis Roger Tanner
- Hearing Session 9 (25 May): Waste and Minerals - Ruth Amundson, Pat Mears, Rhian Kyte
- Hearing Session 10 (27 May): Matters including Other Plan Changes not covered elsewhere – Victoria Tomlin, Ian Mullis, Rhian Kyte

The Inspector thanked RK and stated that he anticipated that the PHM would be over by around 1 pm. A 15 minute refreshment break was scheduled for approximately 11.30.

It was requested that all mobile phones be switched off.

Fire exit and procedures were explained.

The Inspector invited any issues of clarification to be raised as they arose during the PHM, whilst also signalling an opportunity for questions and answers at the end of the agenda.

2. Purpose of Pre-Hearing Meeting

The purpose of the PHM was to provide all concerned with a clear idea of how the Examination, and in particular the Hearings, will be organised and conducted, and to enable any questions or issues relating to this to be discussed and resolved before the Hearings take place.

The following relevant information was circulated prior to the PHM with the letter advising of the PHM arrangements:

- Inspector's Guidance Notes – providing detailed information about the conduct of the examination.
- Hearing Programme- with details of the representors assigned to the relevant sessions
- Provisional list of Issues and Matters for each session

The Guidance Notes refer to various publications, providing the procedural framework for the examination process. These include PINS Wales LDP Examination Procedure Guidance (Nov 2009), which can be viewed on the LDP Examination website and in the LDP Examination

Alwyn Nixon B Sc (Hons), MRTPI - Planning Inspector
Barbara Prosser - Programme Officer

Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan Examination

library of documents. It was clarified that local libraries will have access to the internet. In case of difficulty obtaining information, participants should contact the PO.

Attendees were advised that a note of the PHM, including the questions raised and answers, will be circulated after the meeting, anticipated middle of next week.

3. Scope of the Examination and role of the Inspector

The examination process of the LDP is different to the former process of considering objections to a UDP or Local Plan. It focusses on the soundness of the Plan, not simply on the representations made. However the Inspector pointed out that representations made will be considered thoroughly as part of the examination.

The Inspector explained that his role is to consider:

- Whether the Plan meets the requirements of Sections 62- 64 of the 2004 Act and associated regulations; and
- Whether it complies with paragraphs 4.34 - 4.35 of Local Development Plans Wales: Policy on Preparation of LDPs, *December 2005* (LDP Wales)

These requirements are of 2 types:

- (i) Legal requirements; and
- (ii) Whether the Plan satisfies tests of soundness concerning its consistency with relevant national and regional policies and programmes; its coherence, both internally and in relation to surrounding areas; and its effectiveness in delivering the Plan's aims and objectives on the ground.

The primary purpose of the Examination therefore is to examine whether the submitted Plan is sound. The Council has submitted the Plan on the basis that it believes it to be sound and that the evidence on which the Plan is based supports this position. The Inspector stated that the Council has undertaken a self-test of soundness.

The Inspector reiterated his role of considering the representations made to the submitted Plan, but only insofar as they relate to the tests of soundness. The Inspector clarified that he is not required to determine and report in relation to every objection, but to use the representations as the starting point in considering whether the Plan is sound.

The Inspector stated that, at the end of the process, a binding report will be prepared, containing reasoned recommendations.

The Inspector clarified that if the Plan is sound, then he has no remit to go any further. It was noted that this is especially important when looking at the issues surrounding specific sites. Only where a Plan is found to be unsound will changes be made.

Inspector asked whether there were any points of clarification needed.

Q. Cllr Tudor Davies:

As much of the evidence is already documented, is there a danger that the issue of soundness will be pre-judged?

Alwyn Nixon B Sc (Hons), MRTPI - Planning Inspector
Barbara Prosser - Programme Officer

**Caerphilly County Borough
Local Development Plan Examination**

- A. Inspector:
The hearing sessions will inform the Inspector's judgement. The initially submitted evidence will only serve to provide a preliminary view. Decisions will not be made until after all evidence is heard at the hearing sessions

4. Role of the Programme Officer

The Inspector clarified that the PO acts independently of the Council and under the direction of the Inspector.

The PO is responsible for organising the programme of hearings, maintaining the Examination Library, recording and circulating all material received, and assisting the Inspector with procedural and administrative matters.

The PO will assist on any programming and procedural queries. Also any matters such as particular access requirements or a wish to speak in Welsh at the hearing session.

Any matters which the Council or other participants wish to raise with the Inspector should be addressed to the PO. In addition, it was requested that the PO be kept informed if, for any reason, a representor no longer wishes to appear at a particular Hearing session.

Questions were invited but no concerns or issues were raised at this point.

5. Procedural questions for the Council

The Inspector asked the Council to confirm that the Plan has been prepared in accordance with the statutory procedures under Section 64(5)(a) of the 2004 Act and associated regulations.

RK confirmed that this is the case.

The Inspector asked the Council to confirm that Plan is supported by a Sustainability Appraisal.

RK confirmed that this is the case.

The Council were asked to confirm that, where sustainability appraisal information has been supplied by proponents of alternative sites within the time limits prescribed, the relevant statutory consultees have been informed and have had the opportunity to comment on this information.

RK confirmed that this is the case and referred to document ED32 in the examination library.

The Council were asked to confirm that any requirements for appropriate assessment under the relevant Habitats Regulations were met before submission of the Plan.

RK confirmed that this was the case.

The Council were asked to confirm that the Plan Delivery Agreement (as revised 2009) has been complied with in respect of all stages up to Plan submission for examination.

Alwyn Nixon B Sc (Hons), MRTPI - Planning Inspector
Barbara Prosser - Programme Officer

Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan Examination

RK confirmed that this is the case, although the consultation on the Focussed Changes took place 2 weeks earlier than timetabled. It was explained that this was clarified with WAG.

The Council were asked to confirm that all elements of the Statement of Community Involvement were complied with.

RK confirmed that this is the case with the exception of site notices in respect of consultation over alternative sites. In relation to this matter the Inspector requested clarification. RK explained that a decision was made not to erect site notices at alternative site consultation stage, as was the case at Deposit stage, due to the mass confusion caused at Deposit. The site notices at Deposit stage raised concerns that the land was to be compulsory purchased and/ or subject to a specific planning application. It was felt that the process had consequently hindered rather than assisted the Deposit consultation. In addition, whilst the Deposit allocations were proposed by the Council, the alternative sites were not. The Council considered that sufficient advertising on the alternative sites consultation would be provided through local newspapers, the website, local offices etc. In light of this information it was decided not to use site notices as indicated in the Community Involvement Scheme.

RK also clarified that the Council had not envisaged a second consultation on the Focussed Changes and so this is not detailed in either the Delivery Agreement or the Community Involvement Scheme.

6. Representations on the LDP

The inspector reported that under Regulation 22(2)(iv) of the LDP Regulations, **1754** duly-made representations were received from organisations, bodies and individuals in relation to the Deposit Plan. This included **12** petitions relating to various sites. **1409** representations considered the Plan unsound, **292** expressed support for the Plan and **53** were comments not relating to the Plan's soundness. **52** representations were made out of time and so were not considered by the Council.

RK confirmed the figures were correct.

It was reported that, at alternative sites stage, there were **528** duly-made representations; **110** of support for alternative sites put forward, **265** of objection and **153** making other comments. **22** representations were not duly made.

RK confirmed the figures were correct.

It was clarified that the Council had also put forward **19** Focussed Changes and a further **34** lesser substantive changes, together with an addendum of non-substantive minor editing changes; and subsequently **9** Additional Focussed Changes (revoking 7 of the 19 earlier Focussed Changes).

RK confirmed the figures were correct.

Alwyn Nixon B Sc (Hons), MRTPI - Planning Inspector
Barbara Prosser - Programme Officer

Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan Examination

There were **110** representations in relation to the first set of changes, of which **36** were objections. **37** representations were then made in relation to the Additional Focussed Changes, of which **4** were objections.

RK again confirmed the figures were correct.

The Council confirmed that, given the various Focussed Changes, Additional Focussed Changes and Other Changes that the Council has put forward since the Plan was placed on Deposit, it wishes the Inspector to consider the soundness of the Deposit Plan as modified by these subsequent changes.

7. Methods of considering representations

The Inspector explained that the majority of representations made have been submitted as written representations, and will be considered on the basis of the original submitted representation and the Council's response to this (contained in its consideration of representations reports). Written representations will not be discussed at the Hearing sessions, and attendance at them by representors who have chosen this form is thus not required (although those who have made written representations would be welcome to observe). More information on these representations will only be sought if the Inspector needs it.

The Hearing sessions will cover the representations of those who have stated that they wish to have an oral hearing and wish to see specific changes to the Plan. **However, the focus of the Hearing Sessions will be on considering the key issues raised by the representations in terms of the soundness of the Plan, rather than a detailed hearing of each individual representation. Attendance at the Hearings will only be helpful if participants are able to contribute in terms of evidence as to the Plan's soundness.**

The Inspector clarified that the representation will be accorded the same consideration whether it is submitted as a written representation or is the subject of a request that it be examined orally as part of the Hearing sessions. The equal regard will be had to both types of representation will in considering the Plan's soundness.

- Q. Mr Richard Price, Home Builders Federation:
Concern raised in relation to the statement that attendance at the hearing is not necessary as both types of representations have equal weight. It may be essential to attend the hearing to defend one's representations in case they are subject to criticism from another party.
- A. Inspector:
The Inspector will look at the issues raised in relation to Plan soundness at the hearing sessions. Representors need to consider whether attendance will assist the process in terms of examining the issues raised and decide whether they need to appear on this basis. I will not have made a decision in relation to written representations where the matters raised are also the subject of Hearing sessions
- Q. I am concerned that it is not correct to state that there is no need to attend if written representations are made.
- A. To clarify, the point I am making is that a representor should not feel a necessity to appear just because a representation has been submitted, since both methods of representation are equally valid. Whether to appear in person is a judgement for the

Alwyn Nixon B Sc (Hons), MRTPI - Planning Inspector
Barbara Prosser - Programme Officer

**Caerphilly County Borough
Local Development Plan Examination**

representor to make on the basis of whether the matters raised require detailed oral questioning of aspects of the Council's evidence in this respect.

- Q. Andrew Muir, Harmers:
Agree that in principle both methods of representations should have equal weight. However the system does mean you need to attend the hearings as it is the right of all objectors to respond to the Council's counter-arguments.
- A. Inspector:
The LDP examination process is different to a planning appeal situation. A representor does not have a right of final reply; both sides have had the opportunity to state their position. The Examination is into the soundness of the Council's Plan.
- Q. There is no right to respond to the Inspector's questioning unless you attend the hearings. Therefore it indirectly discriminates against those not attending.
- A. Representors need to consider whether attendance will benefit the examination process. At the end of the day it is for a representor to decide whether or not to appear in person.
- Q. Mr Billy Hughes
How do we be sure you receive the information we submit?
- A. Inspector:
The PO ensures that all information is made available to the Inspector. All information in the Examination Library is available to the Inspector.
- Q. Mr. Malcolm Harry, Trethomas Action Group:
Can new evidence be taken into account if it has been withheld by the Council but is felt by representors to be relevant?
- A. Inspector:
Details of any such circumstances should be raised via the PO for consideration. The Inspector can ask for such information if he considers it relevant to the Examination. Any issues concerning such information should be raised as early as possible, so that material can be circulated to all parties well before the relevant Hearing session. Dialogue with the Council is recommended.
- Q. Cllr Mrs A Blackman:
Concern over transport issues – Nelson park and ride facility. Land now has planning permission for 31 dwellings. Controversial scheme in the community as informal leisure/ park and ride facility is wanted within the community. Is it worth attending given the planning permission on the site?
- A. Inspector:
The Inspector will consider the principle during the examination. The Plan does not propose allocation as a park and ride facility and the representation therefore seeks a change to the Plan. I will clearly need to consider the extant planning permission as part of the current status of the site. It is for you to decide whether you wish to attend or not.
- Q. I want to attend. Are you saying it would not be worthwhile attending? Are you pre-determined by the planning permission?
- A. The issue needs to be considered in terms of whether the Plan is sound and, if not, the effect of the change sought in these terms. The existence of the planning permission for housing is plainly significant – it affects the key matter of deliverability of a park and ride facility on the site in question, even if a desirable objective.

Alwyn Nixon B Sc (Hons), MRTPI - Planning Inspector
Barbara Prosser - Programme Officer

**Caerphilly County Borough
Local Development Plan Examination**

- Q. Mr Richard Price, Home Builders Federation:
If the process of SA proves that an alternative site is comparatively more sustainable than an allocated site, what happens if the Plan is considered sound?
- A. Inspector:
I have no remit to 'improve' a Plan if it is found to be sound. The Examination will consider the housing strategy and associated site selection methodology. If the Plan is sound, then an additional or alternative site will not be included within the Plan. However if I conclude that the Plan is unsound in relation to the allocation of housing sites then the appropriate response may involve considering alternative sites that have been put forward.
- Q. Therefore comments should refer to strategy etc in an attempt to find the whole Plan unsound?
- A. The process is centred on the examination of the Plan's soundness. However, if a particular representation seeking inclusion of a site fails to raise a wider failing in soundness terms this need to necessarily be fatal to consideration of that site, as other representations may raise soundness issues which may lead me to conclude that new sites need to be considered.
- Q. Mr Angus Donaldson:
In relation to the Bedwas Colliery site, I would be interested if people could be called upon to answer questions on what has gone on in the past?
- A. Inspector:
The Council has indicated which officers will be present at this session. Representors appearing may ask the Council about officer recommendations previously made if this is relevant to the issues being discussed and the question of Plan soundness.
- Q. Mr Owen Jones, Boyer Planning
The Hearing sessions are structured so that strategy is considered first, followed by issues concerning specific sites. Would it be possible for the Inspector to inform the parties of the interim findings of the strategy discussion before the consideration of omission sites?
- A. Inspector:
This will not be possible, due to the timings of the Hearing sessions programme.

8. Procedure at hearing sessions of the Examination

The Hearing sessions will be held at Ty Penallta, commencing on 20 April at 10.00am. The initial sessions, at which it is expected that larger numbers of people may wish to attend, will be held in the Council Chamber. Where numbers make it feasible, subsequent Hearings (session 6 onwards) will be held in the Rhymney Room (just around corner from Programme Officer's room). Sessions will normally commence at 10.00 am and finish by 5.00 pm, with a lunch break at 1.00 and short breaks mid-morning and mid-afternoon.

At each Hearing session the Inspector will lead a discussion structured around the Issues and Matters identified. The discussion will be conducted on the basis that all participants have read the relevant representations, statements and associated documentation. After the initial introduction to the session the Inspector will lead through the points which have been identified as requiring discussion, inviting participants to contribute to the debate by referring to their submitted evidence and seeking the Council's response. In this way the Inspector will gain the

Alwyn Nixon B Sc (Hons), MRTPI - Planning Inspector
Barbara Prosser - Programme Officer

Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan Examination

information needed to come to a firm conclusion as to the Plan's soundness in relation to the matters raised.

Subsequent participants will be expected to avoid repetition of points already made. The system of indicating a wish to speak by standing the provided name card on end was briefly explained. Participants may bring professional representatives with them to speak on their behalf, and may ask questions of the Council about its evidence. However, there will be no formal presentation or cross-examination of evidence and participants do not need to have legal representation. The Council is not intending to be legally represented at the sessions. At the end of each session, participants will have the opportunity to briefly sum up the main points of their arguments.

The focus in the Hearing sessions will be on the soundness of the Plan, having regard to the ten tests of soundness concerning procedural requirements and the Plan's consistency, coherence and effectiveness. As such, representors will be expected to explain why the Plan is unsound as it stands, and why the change sought is necessary in order for the Plan to be found sound.

The duty upon the Inspector is to consider the soundness of the Plan which the Council wishes to adopt, having gone through the due processes of consultation and community involvement. If, upon examination, the Inspector finds that the Council's Plan meets the tests of soundness, it is not part of his remit to impose changes that would improve the Plan's soundness. Such binding recommendations as might be made will be limited to changes necessary to make an otherwise unsound Plan sound, having regard to the relevant tests.

9. Hearings Programme, including issues to be debated

The Inspector referred to circulated information ED 28 and ED 29, stating that the programme of hearings has been drawn up to deal with matters as far as possible on an issue topic basis.

The sessions have been structured to deal with overall Strategy and various Policy content matters first, followed by more specific topic-based issues in turn:

Hearing Session 1: PLAN PREPARATION STRATEGY AND POLICY CONTENT

Hearing Session 2: HOUSING PROVISION

Hearing Session 3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROVISION

Hearing Session 4: HOUSING SITES (2 days)

Hearing Session 5: FORMER BEDWAS COLLIERY SITE

Hearing Session 6: TRANSPORT ISSUES

Hearing Session 7: COMMUNITY FACILITIES, LEISURE AND TOURISM

Hearing Session 8: EMPLOYMENT AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Hearing Session 9: MINERALS AND WASTE

Hearing Session 10: OTHER PROPOSED PLAN CHANGES AND MATTERS

- Q. Mr Mark Roberts, RPS:
Session 4 appears to set an ambitious time frame, with minimal time for some representors to appear.

Alwyn Nixon B Sc (Hons), MRTPI - Planning Inspector
Barbara Prosser - Programme Officer

**Caerphilly County Borough
Local Development Plan Examination**

- A. Inspector:
Depending on how much time people feel they realistically need, the programming may need adjustment in some areas. There is a need to focus on the soundness issues and as such the Inspector will expect representors seeking more time to put cases relating to individual site allocations to provide a summary of the matters they wish to explore in the Hearing in relation to soundness issues. Once this is available, a view can be taken as to whether additional time is needed. However, the Inspector does not intend to take up Hearing session time discussing matters which do not concern the Plan's soundness.
- Q. Mr Richard Price, Home Builders Federation:
If there is a need for additional housing provision, who makes the decision on which sites should be included?
- A. Inspector:
The Inspector's report is binding and recommendations in it concerning individual sites would be final. Where contemplating additional sites, the Inspector will need to consider whether there is sufficient information (including SA work) to judge the effect of including the site upon the overall soundness and coherence of the Plan.
- Q. Mr Brian Wilkins (Bryn Residents Association)
Council reports concerning land at Hawtin Park, Pontllanfraith have stated that the Plan is sound at a stage when allocating the site for housing, and also when proposing deletion of the housing site and substitution with a leisure allocation. Where does leave representors in terms of having their objection to the housing allocation heard?
- A. Inspector:
All representations opposing a proposed housing allocation will be considered. As far I am aware this matter has not been raised by a representor wishing to appear in person, but will be considered by me when examining the Plan changes proposed by the Council.
- Q. I believe someone has requested to be heard at hearing.
- A. This can be clarified via the PO.
- Q. Owen Jones, Boyer Planning
Could you clarify the need for representors to provide a focussed summary prior to the hearing?
- A. This will be addressed at item 10 on the Agenda.

BREAK

The Inspector welcomed attendees back to the PHM.

In relation to the organisation of Session 4, the Inspector stated that the hearing will be split into a series of sub-sessions dealing with the particular sites that representors have made representations about, and is currently scheduled to extend over 2 days. Details of the timing of these sub-sessions and attendees are given in the Hearings sessions programme.

Where representors have also made related representations seeking consequential changes to settlement boundaries, green wedge or landscape/nature conservation designations, these will also be covered within session 4, to avoid the need for serial appearances concerning overlapping matters.

Alwyn Nixon B Sc (Hons), MRTPI - Planning Inspector
Barbara Prosser - Programme Officer

Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan Examination

A list providing details of the housing sites and related designations to be dealt with in each part of session 4 is being prepared and will be circulated with the PHM note next week. Representors, and particularly agents representing a number of individuals and/or multiple sites, should check this and notify the PO of any apparent discrepancies or omissions.

Representors who wish to appear have been assigned to those sessions dealing with the principal matters to which their representations relate. ED29 lists the main issues and matters that the Inspector anticipates dealing with in each of the sessions. **If any representor is concerned that a significant issue or matter that they wish to raise orally at a Session is not covered, or that they have been incorrectly included or omitted from a particular session, please contact the PO.**

Any cases where representors do not now wish to appear at a particular session should be notified to the PO at the earliest opportunity – let PO know details at the close of PHM if have already decided this.

10. Preparation and submission of further material

The LDP examination reflects a different culture to previous development plan examination processes. The expectation is that representors set out their representations and the evidence on which their contention is based in full when submitting their original representation. Similarly, the Council has already provided its response to the representations made and the evidence it relies on to demonstrate the Plan's soundness. Additional material submitted should only be in response to a request from the Inspector, where such information is considered necessary to enable the Inspector to conclude on a matter in terms of the soundness of the Plan.

It would not be helpful to the examination process to have lengthy statements submitted that repeat or enlarge upon what has already been said. However, the Council has undertaken additional work in relation to several matters raised by the original representations, and in relation to matters raised at the exploratory meeting held in December. In addition the Council's position on some matters has changed in the light of further consideration or a change in circumstances.

The Inspector considers that it would be useful for both himself and other participants if the **Council** provided a brief response to the issues and matters identified in relation to each Hearing session, taking account of any additional evidence or change in circumstances since the original representations; summarising the Council's current position in relation to the matter concerned; and identifying the relevant parts of the submitted evidence base on which its position relies.

So far as **Representors** are concerned, representations which are of a brief and uncomplicated nature do not need further submissions. However, where the original representation is more extensive and detailed in nature and/or where further evidence has subsequently been produced by the Council, a brief statement will be helpful which summarises the representor's current position as regards the Plan's soundness, in the light of the evidence to date; identifies

Alwyn Nixon B Sc (Hons), MRTPI - Planning Inspector
Barbara Prosser - Programme Officer

**Caerphilly County Borough
Local Development Plan Examination**

the specific parts of the original representation which provide the basis for this position; and lists the particular disputed points in the Council's evidence that require exploration at the Hearing.

The aim of all additional material should be to focus the Hearing sessions on the critical points of difference between representors and the Council that are relevant to the consideration of the Plan's soundness, and on the evidence concerning this.

The deadline for all such further submissions is 2 weeks before the opening Hearing session, ie: 6 April 2010.

At this stage there are no other requirements for further information in relation to specific representations. Should a need for such information subsequently become necessary, the relevant parties will be informed.

- Q. Mr S Salter (Geddes Consulting on behalf of Centrica Energy)
Would the Inspector encourage Statements of Common Ground with the Council?
- A. Inspector:
Statements of Common Ground are encouraged where these would assist in narrowing down the areas of dispute that need to be explored in more detail at the Hearings. Statements of Common should be prepared within the same timescale as other submissions.
- Q. Mr K Warren (Asbri Planning)
The change in economics means the issue of viability needs to be considered in detail. How will this be addressed?
- A. Inspector:
Accept that economic circumstances have changed over the last 3 years, however the Plan is for a 15 year period and will be likely to change again. The test is whether the Plan is sufficiently responsive and deliverable.
- Q. Chair Bedwas and Trethomas Action Group
The public feel let down by the 3 meetings, with Machen excluded altogether. There is no idea in the community of the impact in terms infrastructure. Councillors and Mrs Rhian Kyte attended, but the Councillors did not allow for questioning. People are afraid of the potential development and concerned that the community's concerns will not be heard.
- A. Inspector:
A full day session will discuss the Bedwas Colliery site issue. The Issues and Matters listed aim to cover the concerns raised by the local community; if you feel they do not please raise with the PO. Remember that the hearings will be focussed on the soundness of the LDP. Also, it is important that where many individuals have common concerns, there will be a need to structure the discussion so that repetition of the same points is avoided. The best approach is for a group representing the collective concerns of the community to act as the principal spokesperson within the Hearing.
- Q. Mr Stephen Hiles GAP
Are there facilities for visual aids etc at the hearing sessions?

Alwyn Nixon B Sc (Hons), MRTPI - Planning Inspector
Barbara Prosser - Programme Officer

Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan Examination

- A. Inspector:
Please advise PO in advance if any visual aids are needed, including the format of the aid. However, please remember that I will be making site visits on the ground, so visual aids will not normally be necessary.
- Q. Mr M Hard (DLP)
Are the people who wrote the technical documents allowed to attend/assist in the hearing sessions?
- A. Inspector:
Yes; however, please advise PO in advance if this is the case.

11. Availability of Information

Examination programme information and the Examination library of documents is being kept updated by the Programme Officer. Up-to-date information can be viewed either at the Examination Library, on the Examination website or at local Libraries, where library staff can provide assistance.

As a result of requests made by the Inspector for additional information, the Council's list of Submitted Documents has been updated, with new documents added. There is also a running list of Examination Documents, which will be added to as material is issued and received between now and the Hearing sessions. For those who need it, the updated lists are also available in paper form on the side table.

Those appearing at Hearing sessions are responsible for keeping themselves aware of any changes in the availability of material or the detailed timings of the Hearing sessions, by checking the Examination website or contacting the Programme Office.

12. Site visit arrangements

The Inspector stated that he has already carried out a number of unaccompanied familiarisation visits to various locations, and will continue to do this up to the Hearing sessions and afterwards. The intention is that all site visits will be conducted by the Inspector, unaccompanied. The Inspector requested that should anybody happen to see him during this process, please understand why he will not stop and exchange pleasantries, and requested that people avoid the temptation of greeting and conversing with him. If the Inspector encounters any serious difficulties in accessing a particular site the PO will contact the representor concerned so that access can be arranged.

13. Close of the Examination

The Examination will remain open until the Inspector's Report is submitted to the Council. However, further representations or evidence after the Hearing sessions have ended will only be accepted where the Inspector has specifically requested additional material.

14. Submission of Inspector's Report

The report will be submitted to the Council with binding recommendations at the close of the Examination. Prior to publication of the report the Council will have an opportunity to check it

Alwyn Nixon B Sc (Hons), MRTPI - Planning Inspector
Barbara Prosser - Programme Officer

Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan Examination

for factual accuracy. However, this will not be an opportunity for the Council to make representations in relation to its recommendations.

The date of submission of the Inspector's report will largely depend upon the content, extent and length of the Hearings. At this stage it is expected that the report will be completed by the end of September; however, the date will be confirmed at the end of the Hearing sessions.

15. Further Questions and Answers

- Q. Mr O Jones (Boyer Planning)
You state that it is the Inspector's call for additional information. What about circumstances where you may not be aware of a change in circumstance?
- A. Inspector:
The Examination is open until the report is submitted. Therefore if there is a critical change in circumstances then it should be brought to my attention via the PO. I will then consider the significance and make a decision on what action is appropriate.
- Q. Mr S Salter (Geddes Consulting on behalf of Centrica Energy)
Minerals and Waste - session 9: The issues and matters include consideration of need for a policy concerning coal bed methane extraction. Will this also cover the detailed content of such a policy?
- A. Inspector:
Yes, it will.
- Q. Mr R Price, HBF
Can you clarify whether housing supply issues, and in particular the question of reliance on brownfield sites, is to be discussed at Hearing session 1 or session 2?
- A. These matters will be considered at session 2.
- Q. Norman Windsor
Point of clarification. Who should I contact? I have been contacting the Council, should I be speaking to PO instead?
- A. Inspector:
Representors are encouraged to speak to the Council's officers if they have questions relating to the information in the Council's evidence base. If the question relates to the Examination process or the conduct of the Hearings, please contact the PO.

There were no other questions. The Inspector reminded participants that they can contact the PO with any queries arising after the PHM.

16. Close of Meeting

The Inspector thanked the attendees and formally closed the PHM at about 12.45pm.

Alwyn Nixon B Sc (Hons), MRTPI - Planning Inspector
Barbara Prosser - Programme Officer