

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOCUS GROUP EIGHTH MEETING (OVER TWO DAYS)

10.00 am Wednesday 3rd June & 9:30 am Thursday 4th June 2009
The Rhymney Room, Ty Penallta

Meeting Minutes

Focus Group Members Present on the 3rd were:

Cllr. Lyn Ackerman	Cabinet Member for Living Environment & Housing
Cllr. Harry Andrews	Leader of the Majority Opposition
Cllr. Phil Bevan	Cabinet Member for Education & Leisure
Cllr. Jim Criddle	Vice Chair of Planning Committee
Cllr. Ron Davies	Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Countryside
Cllr. James Fussell	Chair of Planning Committee
Cllr. Rob Gough	Chairman of the LDP Focus Group & Cabinet Member for Transportation and Planning
Cllr. Colin Hobbs	The nominated Member representing the Independents
Cllr. Vera Jenkins	The nominated Female Member
Cllr. Lindsay Whittle	Leader of the Council

Tim Broadhurst	(representing Head of Information, Communication & Technology)
Bleddyn Hopkins	Head of Planning and Strategy, Education & Leisure
Rhian Kyte	Team Leader, Strategic & Development Plans, Planning
Pat Mears	Chief Planning Officer
Terry Shaw	Head of Engineering Services
Clive Campbell	(accompanying Head of Engineering Services)
Dave Whetter	(accompanying Head of Engineering Services)

Also present were Ward Members to make their case to the Focus Group:

Cllr. David Hardacre
Cllr. Graham Hughes
Cllr. Keith Lloyd
Cllr. Gaynor Oliver
Cllr. Allan Pritchard
Cllr. Judith Pritchard
Cllr. Dave Rees
Cllr. Lyn Ackerman also spoke to the Group as a Ward Member
Cllr. James Fussell also spoke to the Group as a Ward Member

Apologies for the 3rd were received from:

Cllr. Les Rees	Member for the Majority Opposition
Cllr. Colin Mann	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member For Finance, Resources and Sustainability
Paul Cooke	Team Leader, Sustainable Development & Living Environment Partnership



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Phil Davy	Head of Economic Development, Tourism & European Affairs
Phil Evans	Head of Information, Communication & Technology
John Rogers	Principal Solicitor for Planning, Land & Highways
Adrian Williams	Assistant Director, Resourcing & Performance, Social Services
Mark Williams	Head of Public Services

WELCOME

- 1 Cllr. Gough welcomed all to the eighth meeting of LDP Focus Group and asked for approval for non-member officers to remain in the meeting. The group gave its approval for this.

PROCEDURAL ISSUES

Minutes of the last meeting:

- 2 The minutes of the seventh Focus Group Meeting held on the 5th May 2009 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

DEPOSIT PLAN SESSION

Confidentiality

- 3 The officer reports that were subject of consideration at the Focus Group meeting may be subject to minor amendment as a result of work ongoing for the Council meeting on 15th September and in this context they are in Draft format. The Focus Group Members were advised that all recommendations contained within this report are strictly confidential at this time.

Purpose of the Meeting

- 4 The first purpose of the meeting was for the Focus Group to continue to make recommendations to Full Council in respect of those issues where there is conflict between officer recommendation and the views expressed by Ward Members. The second part of the meeting was devoted to those individual ward members who disagreed with officer recommendations and therefore wished to persuade the Focus Group to reverse their agreement with said recommendation to be communicated with Special Council.

Outstanding Ward Issues requiring Focus Group approval

- 5 Rhian Kyte reminded the Focus Group that there were a number of Ward issues which could not be aired at the previous meeting in May. A second report was presented that contained officer recommendations on these further site issues which had been raised by Councillors during the formal consultation exercises, and during the Member Briefing Seminars in March / April 2009. In order for the Focus Group to gain an understanding of other representors' views, the site-specific reports once again also contained the representations made by other interested parties / individuals on the same site.



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- 6 The Focus Group were to treat these extra items in exactly the same way as the ones which had been considered at the May meeting. Ward Members had been advised in advance where the officer recommendations in this second report were to go against their representations. This had allowed them to request that they be heard at this Focus Group meeting.

Clarity Sought over Members Declaration of Interest

- 7 Before discussion on the sites representations began, Cllrs. Ron Davies and Phil Bevan asked for clarification on the need to declare an interest in particular issues. There was discussion of why it was important for Ward Members to be able to represent the views of their constituents. Cllr. Gough was of the view that only pecuniary interest need be registered.

DECISIONS MADE BY THE FOCUS GROUP

- 8 Prior to going through the officer recommendations for the Ward issues in the second report Cllr. Ron Davies wanted assurance that potentially controversial issues would be flagged up by officers because Focus Group Members were not going to be familiar with every site. This assurance was given to the meeting. The Focus Group approved every officer recommendation in the second report but made the following comments with regard to particular sites:

Crumlin Ward

- 9 E143 - Abertillery District Hospital Site, Aberbeeg – Cllrs. Vera Jenkins and Lyn Ackerman supported the recommendation. Cllr. Harry Andrews wondered whether redundant sites such as this should be returned to their original state, but Pat Mears reminded the meeting that in this case the Hospital was a Listed Building.

Llanbradach Ward

- 10 CF1.22 - Pencerrig Street, Llanbradach – The public support for the allocation was noted, although because the Local Health Board had not formally selected the site, it was also realised that the site owners might seek housing consent in the meantime.

Maesycwmmmer Ward

- 11 TR99.3 - Maesycwmmmer By Pass – Cllr. Lindsay Whittle raised a discussion about the eventual need to deal with the congestion on the A472 at Maesycwmmmer.

WARD MEMBER ISSUES (IN HEARING ORDER):

Hengoed Ward

- 12 D61 - Land off Penallta Road, Ystrad Mynach
Cllr Judith Pritchard spoke in favour of designating this unallocated land within the settlement boundary for allotment use, i.e. for formal leisure purposes. A local survey had established there was local demand for allotment plots. Information was needed from Leisure Services in order for grant funding to be made available. Leisure Services is carrying out a borough-wide survey but this is not yet complete. Cllrs. Lindsay Whittle, Harry Andrews, Ron Davies, and Colin Hobbs all spoke in favour of the amendment.



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RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the officer's recommendation be rejected.
2. That the LDP Focus Group support for the Ward Member's amendment to be referred to Special Council.

Crumlin Ward

13 LE99.16 - Old Landfill Site, Hafodyrynys Hill

Cllr. Keith Lloyd argued that there was a lack of leisure land available for the benefit of the community and asked for the land to be allocated for leisure use. He described the land as in public ownership whereas the site identified by officers was privately owned. At this point it became apparent that there might be confusion over the location of the site and the discussion was deferred to clarify matters.

RECOMMENDATION: Decision deferred.

Penmaen Ward

14 HG1.26, LE99.13 – Land to the rear of Brynhoward Terrace, Oakdale

Cllr. Lyn Ackerman, having read the officer report on this issue, stated that she was now happy with the officer recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION: That the officer's recommendation be agreed and referred to Special Council with the support of the LDP Focus Group.

St. Cattwg Ward

15 LE99.5 – Land adjacent to Haulwen Road, Penpedairheol

LE99.6 – Land off Berllanlwyd Street, Penpedairheol

Cllr. Graham Hughes spoke in favour of allocating these sites for informal open space because they were viewed as such by the residents. He added that part of one of the sites was a village green. Rhian Kyte explained that the Criterion Policy CW10 was sufficient to protect these sites from development. The village green designation has its own protection and doesn't need another layer of protection. Rhian Kyte added that Supplementary Planning Guidance on open space (SPG) would be prepared in due course.

RECOMMENDATION: That the officer's recommendation in respect of both sites be agreed and referred to Special Council with the support of the LDP Focus Group.

Darren Valley Ward

16 TM99.5 – Parc Cwm Darren

Cllr. David Hardacre spoke about the need to designate the Country Park for Tourism as well as for Leisure. This would allow grant aided development to go ahead, such as the abandoned proposal for a youth hostel. He considers that there is too much emphasis on conservation at the expense of tourism, unlike Bryn Bach Parc where the LDP designates a tourism proposal. Rhian Kyte explained that the Country Park management regime places tourism as a secondary objective behind ecological protection, and unlike Bryn Bach Parc there was no tourist development proposal to be allocated. It was suggested that there might be some adjustment to policy wording to accommodate tourism more explicitly.



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RECOMMENDATION:

1. That an adjustment to the relevant policy wording be sought which accommodates tourism.
2. That an amended policy that makes reference to Tourism related activities be agreed and referred to Special Council with the support of the LDP Focus Group

Penmaen Ward

17 SB99.29 – Site at Llwyn Onn Crescent, Oakdale

Cllr. Allan Pritchard objected to the minor alteration to the settlement boundary. He considered it an encroachment into the countryside in an area where community facility provision was lagging behind recent house building. Rhian Kyte explained that the revised boundary merely reflected planning consent already granted for residential purposes.

RECOMMENDATION: That the officer's recommendation be agreed and referred to Special Council with the support of the LDP Focus Group.

Pontlloftyn Ward

18 HG1.7 – Land at former Depot south of Pontlloftyn Link Road

Cllr. Gaynor Oliver has objected to the proposed amendment to the boundary of this allocated housing site. She told the group that originally this site was an old shale tip before becoming a Highways Depot and now a pallet yard. She was worried about the height of the pallet stacks and about a road closure. However, it was indicated that the boundary amendment would allow reclamation of the site prior to its redevelopment and this would result in an improved outcome.

RECOMMENDATION: That the officer's recommendation be agreed and referred to Special Council with the support of the LDP Focus Group.

Pontlloftyn Ward

19 SB99.58, E95 - Land at the rear of Southend Terrace

Cllr. Gaynor Oliver spoke in favour of allocating this land as a housing site for 4 units because she believed that land release would facilitate the creation of a back lane which would ease traffic conditions in the locality. Cllrs. Lindsay Whittle and Harry Andrews both welcomed the possibility of creating a back lane if it could be achieved. However, Terry Shaw alluded to the construction costs involved and that the practicalities were not yet ascertained.

RECOMMENDATION: That the officer's recommendation be agreed and referred to Special Council with the support of the LDP Focus Group.

Crumlin Ward

20 E31 – Land at Pendinas Avenue Croespenmaen

Cllr. Keith Lloyd requested that this land be allocated for informal open space. Rhian Kyte explained that it was considered that the Criterion Policy CW10 was sufficient to protect the sites from development and that SPG on open space would be prepared in due course.

RECOMMENDATION: That the officer's recommendation be agreed and referred to Special Council with the support of the LDP Focus Group.



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- 21 **Crumlin Ward**
EM1.7, SI99.1 – South Extension Penyfan
Cllr. Keith Lloyd was concerned that the officer recommendations for changes to the Deposit Plan did not go far enough. It is recommended that the designation of the site for employment use is deleted and the land excluded from the settlement boundary. Cllr. Lloyd had wanted it protected as a green wedge as well. It was explained that the site did not fit the green wedge concept, but that its exclusion from the settlement boundary placing it into the open countryside was sufficient protection. Cllr. Lloyd accepted this argument.
RECOMMENDATION: That the officer’s recommendation be agreed and referred to Special Council with the support of the LDP Focus Group.
- 22 **Crumlin Ward**
LE3.5 – Penyfan Pond Croespenmaen
EM2.10 – Penyfan Industrial Estate
Cllr. Keith Lloyd spoke in favour of designating a small area of undeveloped land at the north end of Penyfan Industrial Estate for leisure purposes instead. However, there was confusion over the extent of the land being considered as Cllr. Lloyd was not talking of the area with consent for a Hotel.
RECOMMENDATION: Decision deferred.
- 23 **Cross-boundary – Newbridge, Abercarn, Crosskeys, Risca West, and Risca East Wards**
NH3.136 – Crumlin Arm of Monmouthshire / Brecon Canal
LE99.2 - Crumlin Arm of Monmouthshire / Brecon Canal
Cllr. David Rees described the Crumlin Arm of Monmouthshire / Brecon Canal as potentially a tourism gem but so much more could be done to promote it for this purpose. He considers that the conservation management has gone too far, and it should not apply to the towpath itself where the grass should be kept short. He believes it was a mistake for the canal to be designated a SINC. Rhian Kyte indicated that the management plan for the canal should be able to balance the needs of Tourism Leisure and Conservation together. Cllr. Lyn Ackerman wanted to know whether the management regime employed this year was to continue. Cllr. Andrew argued that it would be necessary to establish a balance between the functions but continue to cut the grass for users on the towpath. Cllr. Phil Bevan said Health & Safety considerations should come first. Cllr. Ron Davies indicated that the existence of the SINC had to be acknowledged and perhaps a designation along the canal for Tourism as well might be the solution. Cllr. David Rees was still concerned that the SINC designation might be used as an excuse to cut management costs by letting the grass grow again. Dave Whetter indicated that the management plan this year was now working correctly and that it would continue to be applied in this form.
RECOMMENDATION: That the officer’s recommendation be agreed and referred to Special Council with the support of the LDP Focus Group.



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St. Martin's Ward

24 LE99.4 - Land to the south of Caerphilly Miners Hospital

Cllr. James Fussell was concerned over the loss of open space in this location and wondered whether this open area should be excluded from the housing allocation. Rhian Kyte explained that the best way forward would be a Masterplan for the whole site which would fully take into account the leisure needs and produce the best possible housing development layout. Cllr. James Fussell accepted this argument.

RECOMMENDATION: That the officer's recommendation be agreed and referred to Special Council with the support of the LDP Focus Group.

St. Martin's Ward

25 LE5.26 – Castle View Caerphilly

Cllr. James Fussell stated that he was now happy with the officers' advice as described in the report.

RECOMMENDATION: That the officer's recommendation be agreed and referred to Special Council with the support of the LDP Focus Group.

MEETING ADJOURNED

26 The meeting did not conclude the business of the agenda on the 3rd June and so the Chairman Cllr. Rob Gough announced that the meeting would reconvene for a second day on the 4th June at 9:30 am.

Focus Group Members Present on the 4th were:

Cllr. Lyn Ackerman	Cabinet Member for Living Environment & Housing
Cllr. Harry Andrews	Leader of the Majority Opposition
Cllr. Phil Bevan	Cabinet Member for Education & Leisure
Cllr. Jim Criddle	Vice Chair of Planning Committee
Cllr. Ron Davies	Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Countryside
Cllr. James Fussell	Chair of Planning Committee
Cllr. Rob Gough	Chairman of the LDP Focus Group & Cabinet Member for Transportation and Planning
Cllr. Colin Hobbs	The nominated Member representing the Independents
Cllr. Vera Jenkins	The nominated Female Member
Cllr. Lindsay Whittle	Leader of the Council
Tim Broadhurst	(representing Head of Information, Communication & Technology)
Stuart Burgess	(assisting Clive Campbell, for Head of Engineering Services)
Clive Campbell	(representing Head of Engineering Services)
Peter Gomer	Head of Lifelong Learning & Leisure
Bleddyn Hopkins	Head of Planning and Strategy, Education & Leisure
Rhian Kyte	Team Leader, Strategic & Development Plans, Planning
Dave Lucas	(assisting Rhian Kyte)
Pat Mears	Chief Planning Officer



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Also present were Ward Members to make their case to the Focus Group:

Cllr. Anne Blackman (she also attended on the 3rd)

Cllr. Ray Davies (he also attended on the 3rd)

Cllr. Phil Bevan also spoke to the Group as a Ward Member

Apologies for the 4th were received from:

Cllr. Les Rees Member for the Majority Opposition

Cllr. Colin Mann Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member For Finance, Resources and Sustainability

Paul Cooke Team Leader, Sustainable Development & Living Environment Partnership

Phil Davy Head of Economic Development, Tourism & European Affairs

Phil Evans Head of Information, Communication & Technology

John Rogers Principal Solicitor for Planning, Land & Highways

Terry Shaw Head of Engineering Services

Adrian Williams Assistant Director, Resourcing & Performance, Social Services

Mark Williams Head of Public Services

WARD MEMBER ISSUES (IN HEARING ORDER):

Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen Ward

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HG1.64 (Bedwas Colliery)

CM99.1 (Bedwas Colliery – Supermarket Use)

EM99.4 (Bedwas Colliery – Employment Use)

LE99.18 (Bedwas Colliery Country Park Use)

CF1.34 (Former Bedwas Colliery, Bedwas – New School)

LE4.11 (Former Bedwas Colliery, Bedwas)

TR7.3 (Bedwas Colliery Access Road)

LE2.2 (Bedwas Community Park)

Cllr Ray Davies began by listing six main concerns over these allocations:

- 1) A passenger rail link to Newport is needed to ease road congestion. He understands that Newport City Council is going to protect their part of the line in case the Quarry closes. A park and ride facility at Trehir Quarry should be considered.
- 2) Traffic congestion will only worsen if the Bedwas colliery site is developed for housing.
- 3) He is against the development of industrial units at the site when adjacent industrial estates are underused.
- 4) A proper full sized Country Park is required in the area instead of housing development.
- 5) A land reclamation scheme is certainly needed to remove the risk of fires, erosion, safety concerns, etc.
- 6) The whole site should be designated for leisure use as a Country Park.



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Rhian Kyte explained that the Deposit Plan proposed only housing, a school, associated leisure, a link road and a “Pocket Park”. Industrial units were not proposed; this was a proposal from a member of the public.

Cllr. Vera Jenkins asked about Newport’s proposed Rail Link Policy. It would be proposed within their LDP, which is at an early preparation stage and raised with South East Wales Transport Alliance (SEWTA). David Lucas stated that responsibility for the consideration of the rail link lay with SEWTA and if suitable a proposal would become part of the Regional Transport Plan (RTP). However, at present this link was not a high priority. Clive Campbell added that it would be considered in the future, but a viable business case would be the required starting point. The present Rail Programme in the RTP is longer than five years and it doesn’t appear in that. Cllr. Jim Criddle asked that if the local road network was already at capacity could officers advise whether the site could be given consent. Clive Campbell advised that the main problem was at the Bedwas roundabout onto the Caerphilly northern by pass, and such details could be resolved at the detail planning application stage. Cllr. Lindsay Whittle had sympathy for the rail proposal but the route may be difficult to re-instate. Homes have been built on the line in Machen, and this would need to be placed on the agenda now if it is to be pursued. However, overall he was happy to endorse the Plan Proposals for the site.

Cllr. Colin Hobbs was concerned about the road congestion outcome from development of the Cray Valley Paintworks site (Waterloo) as well as from the Bedwas Colliery site. It is possible the whole corridor of the A468 between the A470 and the M4 in Newport will be stressed. He was also concerned about the general loss of Greenfield sites / open spaces to development already locally. There is a need to know how bad conditions will become, and he is not convinced that a road scheme at Bedwas Bridge would be a solution to the whole problem. He was not convinced about the Park & Ride proposal and would need to consider the details in due course. While traffic on the A468 was now relatively free-flowing now that the Cray Valley trucks were gone, he considered that the Bedwas colliery site and the Waterloo site might both need second access points. If housing does go onto the Colliery site he has no doubt that a school will be needed but it is not yet appropriate for the details to be considered. Overall, he indicated that Councillors needed to consider the needs of the borough as a whole as well as be concerned about local representation. There is a responsibility for Councils to promote the development of brownfield sites first. Communities must continue to develop in order that they maintain their attractiveness to the younger generation and their facilities must be renewed. In this respect, the loss of green spaces within the communities has been irresponsible. However, he emphasised that the broader picture is that the Tips and dereliction must go and here was our opportunity to clear the site make it safe and create the necessary facilities.

Cllr. Ron Davies said he appreciated the need to maintain corporate responsibility but in the case of promoting the rail link he pointed out how successful the Ebbw Vale line had become and how it was considered silly at one time. He considered that only 5% to 10% of the line had been lost to development.



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Cllr. Colin Hobbs argued that the site access road route had not yet been decided and that the Redbrook Woods were not at risk. Dave Lucas confirmed that this road would have to go between Trethomas and Graig y Rhacca and that there might be the need for land –take of some of the wood at the junction with the A468, but that this would be minimal.

In summing up Cllr. Lindsay Whittle restated his view that in his view the passenger rail link proposal should be investigated further.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **That the officer's recommendation be agreed and referred to Special Council with the support of the LDP Focus Group.**
2. **Include a requirement in the plan to undertake an economic feasibility study into the proposed passenger rail link from Trehir to the main line at Newport.**

Nelson Ward

28 TR99.1 (Land at Llancaiach View, Nelson)

Cllr. Anne Blackman spoke in favour of designating a particular vacant site for a Park & Ride facility to complement the proposed passenger rail link to the Rhymney Valley line. She stated that this was needed to allow travellers to easily change mode of transport and encourage use of the rail link. If this site was not designated it would be developed for housing by its new owner and the opportunity for a Park & Ride would be lost. She said that Nelson had the potential to grow dramatically and needs all the urban facilities to match. In addition, the Rail link could be used by residents of surrounding communities as well, such as Treharris and Trelewis, and the Park & Ride proposal would assist this process. Dave Lucas confirmed that the British Rail residual body did offer the land to the Council but unfortunately it was put on the open market instead. It now has residential value and while being a sensible site for a Park & Ride facility in theory may not now be economic. Clive Campbell indicated that the rail link was not yet in the SEWTA programme and therefore its implementation was a remote possibility. As such, the scheme had not been examined in detail. Cllr. Jim Criddle asked for confirmation that alternative sites would be sought. It was indicated that there was potential elsewhere in the village but this would need to be established in due course. Cllr. Harry Andrews described it as an active (Mineral) line and which actually does have potential for a passenger service. He felt that SEWTA should look at this route. Cllr. Lindsay Whittle echoed his views.

RECOMMENDATION: That the officer's recommendation be agreed and referred to Special Council with the support of the LDP Focus Group.

Nelson Ward

29 TR99.2 (Nelson bypass)

Cllr. Anne Blackman spoke in favour of a Nelson By Pass, about the traffic conditions and the impact of the commuter traffic that would be generated once Ty Du is developed. A By Pass for Nelson had been in and out of development plans over the years and there had been significant development in the village and



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surrounding areas. The Bwl Road needed improvement and Shingrig Road was congested. Therefore a north –south By Pass was needed. Clive Campbell replied that the TA undertaken for Ty Du had shown that no new road was needed; and that road improvements would be sufficient. Because there were no other significant new developments proposed in the village there was no justification and no funding would be forthcoming as a result.

RECOMMENDATION: That the officer’s recommendation be agreed and referred to Special Council with the support of the LDP Focus Group.

Morgan Jones Ward

30 HG1.68 / LE4.13 / CF1.28 (St Ilans Comprehensive, Caerphilly)

Cllr. Phil Bevan indicated that Ward Members support the residents’ objections to this allocation. The woodland area within this large site is still a valuable green space even though it is no longer a SINC. Potential traffic generation is of concern for the Pontygyndy Road as is the linked problem of air quality. Another issue involves flood risk, and while a bund has been built, some areas are still at risk, although the housing area is not affected. Cllr Bevan raised the issue of the environmental capacity of the area to accommodate any additional development at this location. Rhian Kyte explained that Environmental Capacity Studies are not required in Wales.

Cllr. Phil Bevan indicated that the Welsh Medium Educational capacity would need to be addressed. Bleddyn Hopkins agreed that extra Welsh Medium places would be needed from 2012 / 2013 onwards. Substantial expenditure would be needed to bring the buildings on the St. Ilans site up to standard for welsh medium secondary purposes. The transfer of the two other schools would bring benefits, not least the poor facilities of YGG Caerffili. The Council will still face significant surplus secondary school places to be addressed. A 5 Case Business Model is required to secure WAG funding and the Welsh Medium School proposal on this site would not meet the surplus places rationalisation. In terms of access, the Welsh Medium School would mean more traffic and this would have to be assessed. Cllr. James Fussell argued that surplus school places would need to be rationalised across the board. Bleddyn Hopkins explained that the surplus places are borough-wide but principally in the Islwyn area, and Cllr. James Fussell felt that this was not the case in the Caerphilly Basin.

Cllr. Vera Jenkins asked about the air quality issue. Cllr. Lyn Ackerman referred to the as failing area in terms of air quality and requested advice on how this related to the site development. It was explained that Environmental Health advice was that the development of the site in isolation was considered acceptable. However, the air quality issues in the town as a whole still need to be addressed and that work in respect of the Air Quality Management Plan was underway. Clive Campbell indicated that detailed monitoring needed to be completed. The assumption is that the problems are caused largely by traffic and scenarios to overcome the problem need to be considered and are not yet established.

Cllr. Lindsay Whittle indicated that more education capacity would be needed as a result of the proposed development, and a review of education need is required. The



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surplus places are concentrated in the Mid Valleys east area. This site is vital to Welsh Medium provision and this would be the best solution for the area. The existing Fire Station and Ambulance Station nearby need good access through the local road network and more traffic generated by housing from this site will create more problems. He indicated that he supported Cllr. Phil Bevan's view on this issue, and mentioned that the St. Cenydd and St. Martins Schools were oversubscribed. Bleddyn Hopkins explained that extra provision had been put into St. Cenydd School already. Overall, places exist in the Basin Schools, but the two above named schools are the most popular.

Pat Mears advised the meeting that the type of school was not a planning issue, and the Deposit LDP proposals reflect the Council's decision. Having heard the Cllrs' arguments he recommended that the Focus Group consider a de-designation of the Deposit Plan allocations rather than commit to a particular alternative type of development.

Cllr. Harry Andrews spoke in support of the original scheme, arguing that it had widespread benefits, and that the alternative proposal might not be viable because extra money may not be forthcoming.

RECOMMENDATION: The Focus Group recommend to Special Council that the Deposit Plan allocations for the site be removed and the site be designated within the LDP as "white land".

- 31 **ITEMS DEFERRED FOR THE FOCUS GROUP CHAIRMAN TO PURSUE**
The Focus Group agreed that Ward Members who raised the following items but could not attend this meeting should be given the opportunity to a hearing in front of the Chairman and Rhian Kyte. It was agreed that the minutes of those meetings would be reported back to the Focus Group Members by email for them to make their recommendations to Special Council.

Aberbargoed Ward - HG1.19 (Aberbargoed Plateau)

Bargoed Ward - HG1.22 (Park Estate, Bargoed)

Crumlin Ward - LE99.16 - Old Landfill Site, Hafodyrynys Hill

Crumlin Ward - EM2.10 (Penyfan Industrial Estate) & LE3.5 (Penyfan Pond)

The Next Steps

- 32 The Focus Group Meeting was designed to ensure that the consideration of issues raised by elected members was undertaken in an open and transparent manner. In this context the Focus Group does not have the final decision on these issues from the Council's perspective. The officer recommendations, together with the recommendations of the Focus Group, will be considered at a Special Meeting of Full Council starting on 15th September 2009.
- 33 After the Chairman has completed the hearings on the deferred items listed above, the minutes of those meetings will be reported back to the Focus Group Members by email for them to make their recommendations to Special Council.



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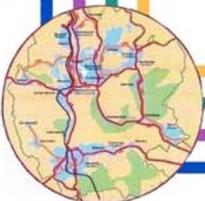
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- 34 Work is continuing with all the relevant service areas and relevant consultees in order to ensure that the report that is presented to Council on 15th / 16th and tentatively the 17th of September reflects all the facts as far as they can be ascertained and also as far as is practically possible the corporate response on each issue.
- 35 Officers will take advice from legal services as to the best practice to be employed to allow due discussion of the LDP to take place at the Special Council meeting in September while expediting the agenda in the most efficient manner.



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