

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOCUS GROUP SEVENTH MEETING

Tuesday 5th May 2009, 10.00am
The Old Council Chamber, Ty Pontllanfraith

Meeting Minutes

Present:

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	Cabinet Member for Transportation and Planning
Cllr. Colin Hobbs	The nominated Member representing the Independents
Cllr. Les Rees	Member for the Majority Opposition
Cllr. Lindsay Whittle	Leader of the Council
Paul Cooke	Team Leader, Sustainable Development & Living Environment Partnership
Richard Hartshorn	Head of Public Protection
Donna Jones	(representing Head of Planning and Strategy, Education & Leisure)
Rhian Kyte	Team Leader, Strategic & Development Plans, Planning
Roland Lamble	(representing Head of Information, Communication & Technology)
Pat Mears	Chief Planning Officer
Terry Shaw	Head of Engineering Services
Dave Whetter	(accompanying Head of Engineering Services)
Mark Williams	Head of Public Services

WELCOME

- 1 Cllr. Gough welcomed all to the seventh 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

- 2 **Apologies were received from:**

Cllr. Vera Jenkins	The nominated Female Member
Cllr. Colin Mann	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member For Finance, Resources and Sustainability



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LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Phil Davy	Head of Economic Development, Tourism & European Affairs
Phil Evans	Head of Information, Communication & Technology
Chris Francis	Housing Strategy and Resources Manager (representing Chief Housing Officer)
Peter Gomer	Head of Lifelong Learning & Leisure
Bleddyn Hopkins	Head of Planning and Strategy, Education & Leisure
John Rogers	Principal Solicitor for Planning, Land & Highways
Adrian Williams	Assistant Director, Resourcing & Performance, Social Services

Minutes of the last meeting:

- 3 The minutes of the sixth Focus Group Meeting held on the 24th July 2008 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

DEPOSIT PLAN SESSION

Confidentiality

- 4 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

- 5 Rhian Kyte outlined that the purpose of the meeting was for the Focus Group 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.
- 6 A report was presented that contained officer recommendations on the site issues 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 also contained the representations made by other interested parties / individuals on the same site.
- 7 Rhian added that reports on a number of those issues raised had not been completed in time for inclusion. The Focus Group requested that they should be treated in the same way as the ones to be considered at this meeting. Rhian advised that they would be reported as first item at the next Focus Group meeting on 3rd June and that Ward Members would be advised in advance if the officer recommendations were to go against their representations. This would allow them to also be allotted a time slot in order to make their case in front of the Focus Group later in that meeting or on 4th June.



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- Clarity Sought over Members Declaration of Interest**
- 7 Before discussion on the sites representations began, Cllrs. Colin Hobbs, Ron Davies, and Phil Bevan asked for clarification on the need to declare an interest in particular issues within the report. There was discussion of why discussions on the development plan differed from that of a Planning Committee item, and that 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 and Rhian Kyte referred Members to the section in the LDP Delivery Agreement where this situation was discussed and advice provided.

- Decisions made by the Focus Group**
- 8 The Focus Group approved every officer recommendation but made the following comments with regard to particular sites:

Aberbargoed Ward

Aberbargoed Plateau - Cllr Harry Andrews made the point that 35 dwelling / ha would be inappropriate for this site. Rhian Kyte indicated that the figure was a notional average.

Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen Ward

Bedwas Colliery – Cllr Lyn Ackerman asked for a definition of “Pocket Park” and Rhian Kyte explained that the area available for a park was insufficient to describe it as a Country Park like others in the Borough so it had been decided to convey its smaller size by using that terminology. In addition, Cllr Colin Hobbs and Cllr Ron Davies requested to have sight of one of the Petition leaflets that had been submitted to the Council in opposition to the Plan proposals.

Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen Ward

Land at Mountain View – Cllr. Ron Davies noted that the recommendation was against allocation for development, but requested that the point be made that the possibility of routing a cycleway through the site would be another reason for non-allocation.

Morgan Jones Ward

St. Ilan Comprehensive School – Although the officer recommendation to maintain the Plan proposals for the site was approved by the Focus Group, Cllr Phil Bevan voiced his opinion that this was the wrong use of the site in advance of reviewing education needs in the County Borough.

Nelson Ward

Land at Llanciaich View, Nelson – Cllrs. Harry Andrews and Jim Criddle both considered it unfortunate that this potential Park & Ride site could not be allocated in the Plan. Dave Lucas (Forward Planning) explained that there was no support for this site to be developed for such a use in the RTP nor the SEWTA rail strategy, and therefore such a proposal would not be defensible at inquiry.



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Pontllanfraith Ward

Land at Glanbrynar Farm – Cllr Jim Criddle wished to amend his representation on this site due to misreading its location. He now wishes to object to employment at this site.

Blackwood Ward

Blackwood Gate – Finally Roger Morgan (Forward Planning) presented a brief statement on the Food superstore proposal, which will shortly be the subject of a Section 78 appeal. The Focus Group approved the officer recommendation on this item.

Thanks due to Officers in other Service Areas

- 9 Rhian Kyte stated that she was indebted to officers in other service areas throughout the Council who had assisted the forward planners to quickly turn around the work necessary to produce the report tabled at the meeting.

The Next Steps

- 10 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 on 15th September 2009.
- 11 A copy of the officer report tabled at the meeting will be sent to all Councillors on a confidential basis together with an indication of the views of the Focus Group in readiness for the next Focus Group meetings on 3rd June and 4th June 2009. Where it has not been possible to agree to a Ward Member's desired changes to the Plan they will be permitted to address the meetings to outline their concerns and be allocated a time slot to do so.
- 12 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 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.



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