

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOCUS GROUP SIXTH MEETING

Thursday 24th July 2008, 1.00pm
The Rhymney Room, Ty Penallta, Tredomen Park

Meeting Minutes

Present:

Cllr. Allan Pritchard	Deputy Leader
Cllr. Rob Gough	Cabinet Member for Transportation and Planning
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 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
Pat Mears	Chief Planning Officer
Chris Francis	Housing Strategy and Resources Manager (representing Chief Housing Officer)
Clive Campbell	Transportation Engineering Manager (representing Head of Engineering Services)
Bleddyn Hopkins	Head of Planning and Strategy, Education & Leisure
Peter Gomer	Head of Lifelong Learning & Leisure
John Rogers	Principal Solicitor for Planning, Land & Highways
Paul Cooke	Team Leader, Sustainable Development & Living Environment Partnership
Roger Tanner	Strategic Planning & Urban Renewal Manager, Planning
Rhian Kyte	Team Leader, Strategic & Development Plans, Planning
Tim Broadhurst	Section Head Valuation & Property Information (representing Head of Information, Communication & Technology)

WELCOME

- 1 Cllr. Gough welcomed all to the sixth 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. Lindsay Whittle	Leader of the Council
Cllr. Phil Bevan	Cabinet Member for Education & Leisure
Cllr. Les Rees	Member for the Majority Opposition



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LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Phil Davy	Head of Economic Development, Tourism & European Affairs
Terry Shaw	Head of Engineering Services
Phil Evans	Head of Information, Communication & Technology
Colin Jones	Head of Performance Management
Steve Delahaye	Head of Public Protection
Mark Williams	Head of Public Services
Adrian Williams	Assistant Director, Resourcing & Performance, Social Services
Jane Roberts - Waite	Regeneration Partnership Co-ordinator

Minutes of the last meeting:

- 3 The minutes of the fifth Focus Group Meeting held on the 26th June 2008 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Point of Information:

- 4 It was noted that the 'Chief Engineer' should be renamed as the 'Head of Engineering Services' in the revised terms of reference.

DRAFT DEPOSIT PLAN SESSION

Results of Member Meetings:

- 5 Rhian Kyte circulated a report outlining the issues raised by Members at the Member Briefing Sessions. She thanked Cllr. Criddle for chairing all of the sessions in Cllr. Gough's absence. Report attached at Appendix A. Cllr. Davies and Cllr. Hobbs indicated that they did not attend the Member Briefing Sessions, as they did not feel that this was appropriate as they were members of the LDP Focus Group.
- 6 A discussion was held in respect of the five housing sites that had been subject to objection:

i) Land fronting South View Terrace, New Tredegar

Rhian Kyte explained that Cllr. Rees had put forward an alternative site for consideration to this site. Land at Woodland Terrace. The Countryside Section has raised an objection to the alternative site. Cllr. Hobbs enquired what the objection related to. Rhian Kyte indicated that the site was important in terms of providing connectivity between two sites of importance for nature conservation and that development at this location would result in an unacceptable intrusion into the Countryside.

Cllr. Pritchard indicated that Phillipstown is an area in need of regeneration and that in this context it is important to encourage private sector investment into the area.

Cllr. Jenkins asked whether there would be another chance to raise comments in respect of sites. Rhian Kyte indicated that the sites would be open for discussion at



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LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

full Council and the Deposit Plan will be subject to Public Consultation in October. If the site was retained in the Plan after this, the public could also make representations to any future Planning Application. Rhian Kyte drew the Group's attention to the fact that the Inspector has the power to put sites in to the Plan.

Recommendation: No Change

ii) Gilfach Fargoed, Gilfach

Ward members objected to the site. The site has had the benefit of planning consent in the recent past but this has now lapsed. The development would have to make provision for adequate open space and play provision as an integral part of the development.

Recommendation: No Change

iii) Land off Penallta Road

Members expressed the desire to bring the site back into use as allotments. Tim Broadhurst explained that a petition for the site to be developed as an allotment has been submitted to Council with approximately 55 names on. Two other sites have been identified to meet this need and these sites are being considered in terms of their potential for use as allotment sites in Ystrad Mynach within a 10-minute walk from this site.

Cllr Pritchard noted that there is a far bigger need for allotments than there was 12 months ago. He was not convinced that there is a huge need to allocate this land for Housing, and in this economic time allotments are a need not a desire. He asked if the decision on this site could be deferred.

Rhian Kyte indicated options as follows:

- 1) Allocate as 'White' land in the Plan.
- 2) Recommend as allotments in the Plan.
- 3) Leave as Housing.

Tim Broadhurst indicated that the sale of the land would represent a £1 million capital receipt for the Council.

Peter Gomer suggested that the Council should speak to the people who have signed the petition to ascertain the likelihood of these people actually taking up an allotment if they were provided.

It was agreed that Tim Broadhurst and Peter Gomer undertake further work to ascertain whether this site was needed for allotments.



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LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Recommendation: Defer decision to Council pending further information in respect of the need for allotments in the area

iv) Land East of Codecae Road, Abertridwr

Rhian Kyte indicated that Cllr. Taylor objected to this allocation on Highway Grounds. The Engineers have been re-consulted and they have indicated that provided off street parking is provided as part of the scheme they would have no objection to the allocation being included in the Plan.

Recommendation: **No Change**

v) St Ilans Comprehensive

Cllr. Fussell and Cllr. Davies declared an interest and left the room.

Rhian Kyte indicated that the Cabinet Member for Education and Leisure, Cllr. Bevan raised objection to the development of this site for housing. Property Services are awaiting reports in respect of Air Quality and Transport to support any future planning application on this site. Cllr. Pritchard expressed concern that air quality in the area is poor.

Cllr. Ackerman enquired whether or not the playing fields would be replaced as part of the re-development of the site. Rhian Kyte indicated that the playing fields would have to be replaced like-for-like if the development goes ahead.

Cllr. Hobbs enquired whether the site could be developed in a piecemeal manner and therefore, consider the development of the various elements, such as education, leisure and housing separately. Rhian Kyte indicated that in order to get the most satisfactory development of the site it should be developed comprehensively. In order to achieve this it would be advantageous to prepare a Masterplan for the site.

Cllr. Hobbs expressed reservations regarding the number of units recommended for the site (200 units).

Recommendation: To retain the site within the plan for a mixed use development subject to satisfactory Air Quality and Transport Reports; and to prepare a Masterplan to guide the development of the site

Bedwas Colliery

- 7 Cllr. Davies raised the issue of public consultation in respect of the future development of Bedwas Colliery. He raised concern in respect of the mixed messages that the Council have given to the public regarding the future development of the area in the past and indicated that he felt that there was a need for a separate



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LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

consultation exercise specifically on the development options in respect of Bedwas Colliery. Cllr. Davies further indicated that the need for a Welsh Medium School on Bedwas Colliery would no longer arise if the school at Waterloo were developed as a Welsh Medium School.

Cllr. Davies also indicated that there is an active campaign to declare land at Upper Glyn Gwyn Street as a Village Green.

Cllr. Gough agreed that there is a need to get some kind of exhibition set up for the general public. The Authority needs to go to the public, to show what is acceptable and what the alternatives are, however this is what the consultation in respect of the LDP will do.

Roger Tanner highlighted to the group that if the site is not developed it is not an option to simply delete the site as the Council will need to demonstrate that we have sufficient land for housing, so there could be a problem with the Soundness of the plan. The Council would need to allocate other sites in the Caerphilly Basin for housing and these would probably be on Greenfield sites outside of existing settlement boundaries. In addition there is the danger that the Inspector could allocate such sites in the Plan as part of the Examination process.

Cllr. Davies accepted the point, however was firm in his belief that a consultation exercise in Bedwas outlining the options should be undertaken.

Rhian Kyte indicated that the purpose of the six-week consultation exercise in October was precisely to do this. This would take the Council's preferred option out to the public and give them an opportunity to support or object to the proposals, which would then be considered by an Inspector at Examination. She also indicated that she did not feel that it was appropriate to carry out a separate exercise on Bedwas Colliery. No other proposed allocation in the plan would be the subject of a separate consultation exercise in advance of the six-week Deposit consultation in October. Further the Planning Division does not have the resources to undertake such an additional exercise in advance of the Deposit Period.

Cllr. Gough indicated that in the past a working group was set up to look at the feasibility of developing this site, which comprised approximately 20 local people. As a part of this consultation residents indicated that their preferred option was for the site to be developed as a Country Park. This option would not be feasible as funding would not be forthcoming for this development in isolation.

Cllr. Davies noted this comment and indicated that a wider consultation was necessary. He further indicated that he was not prepared to vote on the inclusion of the site within the Local Development Plan unless a serious debate had been undertaken with the public on the options.

Cllr. Gough enquired whether the group would wish to leave the site as undesignated until a consultation exercise was carried out.



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LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Cllr. Davies and Cllr. Hobbs indicated that they would be prepared to carry out a consultation exercise in Bedwas to gauge the public view on the development options for the site. Other members offered to help out with this work. Cllr. Gough indicated that he felt it was important that officers be present to answer questions at any exhibitions.

Cllr. Andrews expressed his disappointment that Caerphilly Basin was poorly represented at the Member Briefing Meetings. He also expressed concern that only 2 Members were requiring this consultation to be undertaken.

Cllr. Gough indicated that any consultation exercise would need to be completed before the Plan is placed on Deposit in October and should not take place in August.

Rhian Kyte expressed concern regarding any consultation taking place in advance of the Deposit Period. She also indicated that this issue did not only affect Bedwas but would have consequence in other areas if Bedwas Colliery were not allocated in the Plan for mixed-use development. In particular alternative sites would need to be found for the housing provision.

Cllr. Andrews enquired whether other Members could raise issues like this.

Cllr. Gough wanted it noted that 10 Member Briefing Sessions were arranged and nearly 50% of members did not attend. He indicated that he would be meeting with the Director of the Environment straight after the meeting and would discuss the possibility of a consultation exercise being undertaken.

Recommendation: **Defer decision to assess the possibility of undertaking a consultation exercise by September**

Consideration of the Draft Plan

- 8 Rhian Kyte indicated that the Plan that the Focus Group had been circulated was Version 7 of the working draft and that the Strategic Planning Team were now working on Version 8. Ongoing work needed to the Plan to make minor modifications in terms of quality control and ongoing amendments as a result of consultations with the Welsh Assembly Government. Specifically an Implementation Chapter needs to be included. WAG have also requested that the Safeguarding Areas for Sand, Gravel and Coal be moved from the Constraints Map to the Proposals Map.

Site Specific Changes to be noted: Land at Hawtin Park should be included for employment purposes.

Rhian Kyte asked the Group to note that in previous meetings she had indicated that there would be no proposal for a South East Bypass in Caerphilly. However, in Version 7 of the Plan, land has been safeguarded for the Bypass.



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A report is being undertaken on the air quality issues in Caerphilly and as an integral part of this work the issues relating to the need for a Bypass are to be examined. This work will take approximately 12 months and on completion the Council will need to determine whether or not to proceed with this proposal.

Cllr. Hobbs suggested that if the M4 link proposal goes ahead the A469 it would result in an increase in traffic in the Caerphilly Basin.

Cllr. Pritchard commented that the Plan read very well and was easy to follow.

Recommendations:

- **That the Plan be approved to go forward for consideration to Council**
- **That outstanding work highlighted in discussion be reported to Council**
- **That officers be given delegated powers to undertake necessary minor modifications to the Plan**



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