

# LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

## LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOCUS GROUP INAUGURAL MEETING

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2006, 11:00am  
Innovation Centre, Tredomen

### Meeting Minutes

#### Present

Cllr Harry Andrews	Leader
Cllr Keith Griffiths	Cabinet Member for Transportation and Planning
Cllr David Hardacre	Cabinet Member for Education and Leisure
Cllr Lindsay Whittle	Leader of the Opposition
Cllr Geoffrey Hibert	Member of the Majority Opposition
Cllr John Evans	
Rhian Kyte	Team Leader for Strategic and Development Planning
Pat Mears	Chief Planning Officer
Peter Gomer	Head of Lifelong Learning and Leisure
Bleddyn Hopkins	Head of Planning and Strategy, Education & Leisure
Stuart Bates	Chief Property Officer
Mark Williams	Head of Public Services
Sian Brace	Living Environment Co-ordinator
Paul Cooke	Sustainable Development Co-ordinator

#### 1 Welcome

Rhian Kyte welcomed all to the inaugural meeting of the LDP Focus Group and highlighted the importance of the group in ensuring a consistent approach in the delivery of the Caerphilly LDP.

#### 2 Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Cllr Paul Ford	Cabinet Member for Living Environment and Housing
Cllr Tudor Davies	Cabinet Member for Regeneration
Cllr Janet Jones	Representative of the Sustainable Development Panel
Cllr Graham Simmonds	Member representing both Independent Groups
Cllr Stan Jenkins	Chair of Planning Committee
Cllr Les Rees	Vice Chair of Planning Committee



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Mark Rees-Williams	Chief Engineer
Cris Davies	Chief Housing Officer
Tim Peppin	Head of Policy & Central Services
Steve Delahaye	Head of Public Protection
Phil Davy	Head of Economic Development, Tourism and European Affairs

## MORNING SESSION

### 3 Terms of Reference

3.1 The Group were asked to agree on its Terms of Reference (Agreed revised version attached in Appendix A). Draft Terms of Reference were circulated as a basis for discussion. In particular the Group were asked to consider:

- Inclusion of Chair and Vice Chair of Planning Committee
- Inclusion of Director of Social Services
- Frequency of meetings
- Appropriateness of sending substitutes to the meeting

### 3.2 Primary Purpose

The Primary Purpose of the group was agreed as worded in the draft.

### 3.3 Objectives

It was resolved to accept these objectives subject to the following changes:

a) To including a further objective:

‘- monitor the progress of the LDP in relation to the scheduled time-table contained in the Delivery Agreement’.

b) To amend draft objectives:

The draft objectives 3 to 5 contained the word ‘consider’. It was decided that this term was not robust enough to be used whilst setting objectives and should therefore be replaced with ‘take account of’ or ‘to approve formal responses to’.

### 3.4 Mandate

The mandate was agreed by the group, subject to the amendment of the wording ‘single consensus’ which should be changed to ‘corporate consensus’.

### 3.5 Additional Group Members

The Group agreed upon the inclusion of the Chair and Vice Chair of Planning Committee subject to:

- Approval from the Monitoring Officer with respect to declarations of interest
- Sufficient on-going supervision from the Monitoring Officer

The Group also endorsed the inclusion of Joe Howsam, Director of Social Services.



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## 3.6 Quorum

The Quorum details were agreed by the Group.

The Group recognised that not all officers and members identified would be available to attend every meeting throughout the process, but resolved that it would be inappropriate to send substitutes unless they were of 'equal status' and have both the capacity and authority to make high-level decisions.

The Group raised the issue of continuity and recommended that substitution should be minimised in order to ensure consistency of approach in the delivery of the LDP.

## 3.7 Chairman

The Group resolved to elect a Chairman for the Focus Group and in addition recommended that a Vice-Chair be elected in the case of the Chairman's absence.

The following Member and officer were nominated as Chair / Vice-Chair and seconded:

Cllr Keith Griffiths	Chairman
Mrs Rhian Kyte	Vice-Chair

## 3.8 Frequency

The Group agreed that the LDP Focus Group should meet as necessary in order to provide its advice on the key stages in the Plan preparation process.

It was recommended that where a meeting of the Focus Group is likely to require 1-full day, that it is scheduled over 2 half days. This recommendation was emphasised by Chief Officers and Service Heads who find difficulty in scheduling meetings due to ongoing work commitments. It is believed that by doing this there will be consistency in the attendance of officers.

## 3.9 Format of the Working Session

The Group endorsed the format of the working session, subject to the amendment of the draft Terms of Reference, from the wording 'there will be no AOBs on the agenda' to 'AOBs will be considered by the Chairman'.

## 3.10 Reporting Mechanism

The Group resolved that a reporting procedure should be established and approved in conjunction with Mr Jonathan Jones, Scrutiny Co-ordinator.

Recommendations made with respect to amending the draft reporting mechanism are as follows:

- the wording 'Any matter requiring a decision will be reported to Cabinet and/or Council as appropriate' should be changed to 'Any matter requiring a Policy decision will be reported to Council'.



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In addition the Group would like to see further clarification as to what constitutes a 'formal paper' and a definite timescale within which a 'formal paper' is made available electronically. It was recommended that all formal papers should be made available 7 days in advance of a meeting.

## 4 Dates of Next Meetings

Rhian Kyte confirmed that the dates of future meetings were currently being scheduled up until December 2006 and would be distributed in due course.

## AFTERNOON SESSION

## 5 SEA/SA Presentation

Phil Griffiths (Principal Planning Officer) presented to the group, informing them of the SEA/SA process, its background, its basis in EU and UK legislation, and what the implications are for the preparation of the Local Development Plan. Following a short question and answer session, the Focus group split into two groups, for a workshop session to discuss the issues arising from the SEA/SA requirements within the County Borough of Caerphilly. Details of the workshop and its outcomes are contained in Appendix B.



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## APPENDIX A

### CAERPHILLY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

#### REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE LDP FOCUS GROUP

##### Primary Purpose

The Local Development Plan (LDP) Focus Group will test policy and proposals at key stages throughout the plan preparation process as outlined in the Delivery Agreement.

##### Objectives

The LDP Focus Group will:

- monitor the progress of the LDP in relation to the scheduled time-table contained in the Delivery Agreement
- fulfil the function otherwise carried out by full Council to sign off intermediate stages of plan preparation in order to speed up decision making
- contribute to the plan preparation process by meeting at key stages to help to generate options and alternatives for inclusion in draft policy papers and documents
- receive and take account of the recommendations from the SA/SEA working group with regard to sustainability issues arising from the plan preparation process
- receive and take account of the comments from the Stakeholder Panel arising out of the various public involvement stages in the plan preparation process
- receive and take account of the representations from the General Public arising out of the various public involvement stages in the plan preparation process

##### Mandate

- to be an internal group of key individuals; both Members and Officers of the Council
- to be an active working group, functioning to create a corporate consensus view rather than as individuals pursuing sectional interests

##### Composition

The group will comprise a small group of key Elected Members and cross-directorate representatives:

Leader (substituted by Deputy Leaders as appropriate)

Cabinet Member for Transportation & Planning

Cabinet Member for Living Environment & Housing

Cabinet Member for Regeneration

Cabinet Member for Education and Leisure

Chair of the Planning Committee

Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee

Leader of the Majority Opposition

A nominated member of the Majority Opposition – [Cllr Geoffrey Hibert]

A nominated member representing both Independent Groups – [Cllr Graham Simmonds]

A representative of the Sustainable Development Advisory Panel – [Cllr Janet Jones]

Chief Planning Officer

Chief Engineer

Chief Property Officer

Chief Housing Officer



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Head of Public Services  
Head of Public Protection  
Head of Lifelong Learning and Leisure, Education & Leisure  
Head of Planning and Strategy, Education & Leisure  
Director of Social Services  
Head of Policy & Central Services  
Head of Economic Development, Tourism & European Affairs  
Principal Solicitor for Planning, Land and Highways  
Living Environment Partnership Co-ordinator  
Regeneration Partnership Co-ordinator  
Sustainable Development Co-ordinator

(Note: individuals are invited to join the group based on the role they fulfil within the authority and not on the basis of their individual interest. Therefore as officers/members leave their current role/post their place on the group would also be relinquished.)

## Quorum

It is recognised that not all officers and members identified will be available to attend every meeting scheduled throughout the process, nor would that be necessarily appropriate at every stage. It is agreed that substitutes will only be acceptable where they were of equal or sufficient status to have both the capacity and authority to make high level decisions on behalf of the Council. To enable a LDP Focus Group Meeting to proceed it is proposed that there should be a quorum of seven people, four of whom should be Elected Members.

## Chairman

An Elected Member will be appointed to Chair the LDP Focus Group in the inaugural meeting.

## Frequency

The LDP Focus Group will meet as necessary in order to provide its advice on the key stages in the Plan preparation process. In order to assist Members of the group, these meeting dates will be established as far in advance as possible by reference to the Timetable produced as part of the LDP Delivery Agreement. Where any meeting is likely to take a full day to complete business it will be scheduled over two half days instead in order to fit more easily with other work commitments.

## Agendas

It will be the responsibility of the Team Leader, Strategic and Development Plans to agree the agenda in consultation with the Leader, or one of his Deputies, and the Focus Group Chairman. All material for discussion by the Group will be released onto the 'web' for public access. Group Members will receive all papers seven days before meetings. If there are no adverse comments within these seven days these papers will subsequently be published on the 'web'. Requests for the Group to deal with 'Any Other Business' will be considered by the Chairman.

## Reporting Mechanism

Minutes of the LDP Focus Group will be submitted for scrutiny purposes to the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. Any matter requiring a Policy decision will be reported to Council. Every Member of the Council will be able to access the minutes via the internet and a copy placed in the Members Room.



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## APPENDIX B

### **Focus Group Workshop – SEA / SA**

The Focus Group split into two groups for the purpose of the workshop. Group 1 headed by David Lucas (Principal Planner, Development Plans) and Group 2, headed by Phillip Griffiths (Principal Planner, Countryside and Landscape). The purpose of the exercise was for the Focus Group to identify social, economic and environmental issues that need to be considered as part of the Scoping Report for the SEA. The primary issues identified under the topic headings provided were as follows:

#### Population and Human Health:

- Opportunities may be provided by the 'Heads of the Valleys' initiative to bring new people to the borough;
- Dispersal of development to regenerate all areas;
- Target 'growth' in the North, constrain development in the South;
- Provision of outdoor leisure facilities – good for human health.

#### Climatic Factors:

- New development should be of a higher standard in terms of sustainability – built to BREAM standards and including groundwater heating systems for example;
- The former should be encouraged with incentives such as varying existing obligations;
- Utilise existing resources more efficiently, such as Methane Gas;
- Floodplain protection as a major issue – particularly within the South of the borough;
- A more strategic take on 'SUDS' should be taken.

#### Cultural Heritage:

- Dwindling congregations within chapels – may lead to maintenance issues in the future, if they become un-used / derelict;
- Focus on the forthcoming Buildings at Risk register;
- Protection of miner's welfare facilities;
- Protection of Special Landscape Areas, common uplands and archaeological landscape;
- Problems with off-road motor vehicles damaging mountainside.



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## Water;

- There is an adequate water supply within the borough at present;
- Pollution leaking from contaminated sites;
- Loss of vegetated hillside resulting in increases in rapid water run-off and flash flooding;
- Use of water for leisure purposes;
- Possible use of water meters;
- Underground mine water levels;
- Effects of river pollution feeding into the Severn estuary.

## Air pollution;

- Vehicle carbon emissions;
- Poor public transport provision within the borough as a whole, in terms of mode and frequency;
- Possibility of subsidising public transport through 'roof tax';
- North of the borough reliant of fossil fuels;
- Car sharing to reduce per capita vehicular use;
- Traffic congestion.

## Geology and Geomorphology;

- Silting of river beds – effect on the agricultural quality of land in the south and east of the borough;
- Impact of diversification on agricultural land – e.g. motor biking, leisure pursuits;
- Heads of the Valleys initiative to encourage the planting of native species;
- Impact of forestry felling;
- Prioritise land reclamation schemes;
- Impact of EU CAP reforms.



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## **Material Assets;**

- Protect existing recreational facilities;
- Poor utilisation of natural assets such as renewable energy sources;
- Provision of highway and other transport infrastructure;
- Protection of historic buildings.

## **Cultural Heritage and Landscape;**

- No comments made.

## **Biodiversity;**

- Management of invasive species;
- Direction of watercourses;
- Ground maintenance - natural versus managed landscapes;
- Need to strengthen relationship between LBAP and LDP.



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