

LDP FOCUS GROUP
Meeting 9.30am, 29th April 2014
Conference Room, Business & Technology Centre, Tredomen Park.

Notes of Meeting

Present

Councillors

Attendees:

Cllr Andrews	Leader
Cllr Carter	Chair of the Planning Committee
Cllr David	Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee
Cllr Havard	Sustainable Development Advisory Panel Representative
Cllr James	Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Sustainable Development
Cllr Mann	Leader of the Majority Opposition
Cllr R Passmore	Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning
Cllr D Poole	Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services
Cllr K Reynolds	Deputy Leader
Cllr J Taylor	Cabinet Member for A nominated member of the Majority Opposition

Apologies

Cllr G Jones	Cabinet Member for Housing (Deputy Leader)
Cllr D Rees	Nominated member representing the Independents
Cllr T Williams	Cabinet Member Highways, Transportation & Engineering

Officers

Attendees: P Cooke- Team Leader, Sustainable Development & Living Environment

P Elliott - Head of Regeneration & Planning
R Hartshorn- Head of Public Protection
C Jones - Head of Performance and Property

J Rogers - Principal Solicitor for Planning, Land and Highways
T Shaw - Head of Engineering Services
T Stephens - Development Manager, Planning

Apologies S Couzens - Head of Housing Services
L Jones - Acting Head of ICT and Customer Services
M Donovan - Assistant Director Our Schools Our Future
J Williams - Assistant Director Social Services

Facilitators: R Kyte – Team Leader, Strategic Planning
V Morgan – Principal Officer, Strategic Planning
K Collins - Principal Officer, Strategic Planning
A Santos – Senior Officer, Strategic Planning

1. **Introduction**
2. **Apologies**
Apologies given and noted above.
3. **Notes of Meeting – 19th July 2013**
Cllr Mann raised the issue over female representatives on the Focus Group.
Notes approved as an accurate record of the meeting.
4. **Terms of Reference of the Group**
Revised Terms of Reference formally approved.
5. **Update on LDP First Review**
An important feature of the development plan process is the emphasis on identifying and testing realistic strategy options to deliver the Vision and Objectives of the plan over the plan period.

As the Council already has an adopted LDP there will be a need to assess whether the existing Development Strategy for the county borough remains appropriate within the context of the revised plan period and also within the changing regional context.

In order to test the existing strategy against alternative scenarios a series of stakeholder meetings and events will be undertaken throughout the spring of 2014 in line with the Agreed Delivery Agreement (February 2014) as follows:

<u>29 April 2014</u>	<u>LDP Focus Group</u>
30 April 2014	PDM
9 May 2014	Event with Members of Standing Conference
12 May 2014	Stakeholder Event (Developer Workshop)
22 July 2014	Report to Council – Feedback on Stakeholder Event and Council Decision on Growth Options

The purpose of these sessions will be to obtain stakeholder input into the development of the alternative strategic options that will in turn inform the Preferred Strategy that will be subject of statutory public consultation in October 2014/November 2014.

The stakeholder feedback obtained through these mechanisms will serve to inform the Council of the appropriateness, or otherwise, of alternative spatial options and will help to determine the scale of future population and household growth that would result in the most sustainable future for Caerphilly County Borough up to 2031.

The Strategy that will be subject of consultation will be reported to Council in October 2014 (7.10.14).

The Call for candidate sites has taken place and submitted sites are in the process of being assessed. Approximately 170 sites have been received through this process.

6. Future Population and Household Growth

A detailed presentation was given in respect of the assumptions that underpin population and household projections, in particular trends related to births, deaths and mortality were outlined to aid the discussion.

In order to consider the impact of different assumptions of future population and household growth, nine separate scenarios have been considered as follows:

Scenario A : WG 2011 based Principal Projection

Scenario B - Ten-Year Average Migration Projection

Scenario C - Zero Net Migration Projection

Scenario D - Average Migration for SE Wales - 5 year average

Scenario E - Average Migration for SE Wales - 10 year average

Scenario F - Moderate Migration - 5 year average

Scenario G - Moderate Migration - 10 year average

Scenario H - Dwelling led - 10 year average completions

Scenario I - Dwelling led, continuation of adopted LDP housing requirement

Officers have considered each of the options in detail, and growth options A, B, E & H were highlighted to the Focus Group as the more realistic and robust options for consultation purposes as part of the pre-deposit public consultation stage. Consideration of these options will serve to inform the Preferred Strategy up to 2031 at the later stage of the review process.

There was a discussion concerning the use of the WG Principal Projection for planning purposes. The group were advised that the Principal Projection is the starting point for consideration and that using local evidence alternative scenarios are also acceptable subject to the availability of robust evidence. This approach has recently been reinforced by a advisory letter from WG.

The Group was split into two to discuss the options. The following Notes outline the discussion in each group:

Session 1: Population

Group 1

- A broad discussion was had regarding in-migration, house prices, increasing longevity, transportation, improving the perception of

the borough and external factors including increased development along the M4 corridor and in particular the North of Cardiff.

- It was noted that there is a need to retain a balance between the economically active & ageing population.
- Discussion was had to the rationalisation of land and the need to re-align employment allocations within the borough based on need.

Group 2

- Need to try to increase the younger profile of population.
- Need to maintain population that is currently here, and to add industry.
- Transport is key, as is electrification of railways.
- County borough cannot be viewed as one – southern part of the borough needs to be dealt with differently to the north

Session 2: Preferred Growth Scenario

Group 1

- The group identified the need to achieve modest growth in order to retain the balance between the economically active & ageing population
- The modest growth scenario was felt to best achieve the corporate objectives of the Council in terms of the delivery of services (Education / Schools / Social Services etc)
- The Group concluded that growth is good and that planning for decline is unacceptable

Group 2

- Need to make it an attractive place to live – especially noting our proximity to Cardiff.
- Attract small industry – get entrepreneurs to locate and invest here.
- Cardiff is a key link
- Housing growth can only be sustained through transport improvements.
- Poor opportunity for residents – need to reverse this.
- Need to build housing that people can afford.
- Flat based apartments required for young that are affordable – however the price between house and flats are similar.
- Need to provide a wide range of housing that would be flexible and grow/contract
- CCB can't be seen in isolation.

Session 3: Spatial Options discussions

A functional analysis has been undertaken of the county borough as part of the work on the review and it is considered that the existing broad strategy areas remain valid.

Five potential spatial options should be tested for consideration at pre-deposit public consultation stage. Consideration of these options will in turn serve to inform the revised Preferred Strategy up to 2031 at the later stage of the review process.

The various alternative spatial options provide clearly different spatial development scenarios in respect of future new housing and employment development; each of which will have different environmental, social and economic outcomes for Caerphilly County Borough up to 2031.

Many of the component parts of the spatial options will be common to each of the strategies, specifically the future direction for the Principal Towns and Local Centers, the need for the school rationalisation process to be reflected and the need to ensure that the strategic infrastructure to support any new development is fit for purpose.

In particular all options will need to consider the Council's need for improvements to the strategic transportation infrastructure, in particular:

- opportunities to maximise the use of public transport to improve connectivity throughout the county borough;
- opportunities for the reopening of rail lines, specifically: the Caerphilly Machen / Newport rail line; and a passenger service on the Cwmbargoed line to Dowlais;
- provision of new stations, in particular at Crumlin;
- an increased provision of Park & Ride where practicable;

In terms of the Strategic Highway infrastructure there is a need to consider the need or otherwise for:

- a strategic highway corridor for the Upper Rhymney Valley to link New Tredegar and Pontlottyn;
- a Maesycwmmmer Bypass; and for
- a SE Bypass for Caerphilly.

RK outlined are the key components for each of the Spatial Options that serve to highlight the different approach to development across the county borough. The five options considered were:

- **Spatial Option1: Continuation of the Adopted LDP Preferred Strategy**
- **Spatial Option 2: Targeting Growth to the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area and the Northern Connections Corridor**
- **Spatial Option 3: Targeting Growth to the Northern Connections Corridor**
- **Spatial Option 4: Targeting Growth to the Southern Connections Corridor**

- Spatial Option 5: Targeting Growth to the Northern and Southern Connection Corridors

The Group were then asked to consider each option and identify one component for each strategy that they strongly supported and one that they strongly opposed. The table below indicates the views of the two groups:

Spatial Option 1- Continuation of the Adopted LDP Preferred Strategy.

	Group 1	Group 2
Components Support	Generally supported all components, in particular components 4 & 6	All key components
Components Oppose	It was noted that whilst component 3 is supported (Development opportunities in HOVRA), this is difficult to deliver	<i>Viability of schemes</i>

Spatial Option 2 - Targeting growth to the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area.

	Group 1	Group 2
Components Support	The group strongly supported component 3, public sector intervention required to deliver the necessary infrastructure. This was seen as integral to the success of the HOVRA	All key components
Components Oppose	There were no specific components that were opposed	<i>Viability of schemes</i>

Spatial Option 3 - Targeting Growth to the NCC

	Group 1	Group 2
Components Support	Component 5, Maesycwmmer Bypass was strongly supported and was seen as a vital infrastructure link. Component 7, the reallocation of suitable surplus employment land	Partial support of 5 – improvements to infrastructure required.

	was also supported	
Components Oppose	There were no specific components that were opposed	11- Release of some Greenfield sites & Agricultural lands. 7 - Loss of all integral and available employment sites.

Spatial Option 4 -Targeting growth to the SCC

	Group 1	Group 2
Components Support	The Group were generally in support of targeting development to reflect the role & function of individual settlements	5 – improving rail network to facilitate opening of Caerphilly – Machen – Newport rail line 7 – supporting Caerphilly Castle & tourism opportunities.
Components Oppose	The Group felt that targeting substantial development solely to the SCC was not balanced and was tailored to developers and not the community within the County Borough. They felt that this option signalled that we are giving up hope on attracting development to the NCC & HOVRA.	9 – this would impact the SCC severely 4 – would need to be done sensitively, if at all.

Spatial Option 5- Targeting growth to the NCC and SCC

	Group 1	Group 2
Components Support	Component 2, targeting development to both the NCC & SCC was perceived as a more balanced approach to development Component 4, improving the strategic highway infrastructure was also supported but there was more of a bias towards the Maesycwmmmer bypasss as this was perceived as a more strategic objective	Improvements to infrastructure.

	with the potential to also improve connectivity to the HOVRA.	
Components Oppose	There were no specific components that were opposed	There were no specific components that were opposed

Overarching themes

- Infrastructure is required against all spatial options to improve resilience. Relief Road in HOVRA estimated to be approx £50 million.

On balance, what is the groups preference for the five options?

	Group 1	Group 2
Spatial Option 1: Continuation of the Adopted LDP Preferred Strategy.		
Spatial Option 2: Targeting growth to the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area.	This would be a desirable option – however not viable and unrealistic without significant public subsidy / Regeneration / European funding	This would be the desirable option – however not viable.
Spatial Option 3: Targeting Growth to the NCC		
Spatial Option 4: Targeting growth to the SCC		
Spatial Option 5: Targeting growth to the NCC and SCC	This appeared to be the most preferable option with a bias towards the Maesycwmmmer bypasss	This is the most desirable spatial option, with modifications to include those aspects highlighted in the ‘support’ fields above for other Spatial Options.

The group were thanked for their input.

Meeting closed 12.30.