

LDP FOCUS GROUP
Meeting 2:45pm, 19th July 2013
The Chamber, Ty Pontllanfraith

Notes of Meeting

Present

Councillors

Cllr Andrews - Leader
Cllr Carter - Chair of the Planning Committee
Cllr David - Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee
Cllr James - Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Sustainable Development
Cllr Gough - representing Leader of the Majority Opposition
Cllr Havard - Sustainable Development Advisory Panel Representative
Cllr Williams - Cabinet Member for Highways, Transportation & Engineering

Officers

Bleddyn Hopkins,	Assistant Director- 21 st Century schools
Jo Williams,	Acting Assistant Director- Adult Services
Ceri Edwards,	Environmental Health Manager
Shaun Couzens	, Chief Housing Officer
Terry Shaw	, Head of Engineering Services
Colin Jones,	Head of Performance & Property
Paul Cooke,	Team, Leader, Sustainable Development &
Living Env.	
Rhian Kyte	Team Leader Strategic & Development
Plans	
Dave Lucas,	Strategic & Development Plans
Grant Hawkins	, Strategic & Development Plans

Apologies

Councillors

Cllr Passmore - Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning
Cllr Jones - G Cabinet Member for Housing (also Deputy Leader)
Cllr Poole - Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services

OFFICERS

Pauline Elliott	, Head of Regeneration & Planning
Lynton Jones,	Acting Head of ICT & Customer
Services	
Mark S Williams,	Head of Community & Leisure
Tim Stephens,	Development Control Manager
John Rogers	, Principal Solicitor
Robert Hartshorne,	Head of Public Protection

1. **Introductions**
2. **Terms of Reference of the Group**

- i. **Legal Advice**

The Agenda was agreed in advance with the Leader and the Focus Group Chairman as required prior to circulating to the wider group.

Legal Advice has also been taken from the Head of Legal Services regarding the Terms of Reference and the process of reconvening the group and no concerns have been raised.

Cllr Ken James was nominated as the Chairman of the Focus Group and it was agreed that in future the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Sustainable Development should chair the group. The Terms of Reference would need to be amended accordingly.

- ii. **To nominate an elected female member representative;**

It was agreed by the Focus Group that this was not necessary.

- iii. **Independent Member**

RK to write to the three independent councillors and seek a nomination for one person to attend the group.

- iv. **Titles of the cross directorate officers**

It was requested pre-meeting that the titles '*Acting Head of Information, Communications & Technology Services*' and '*Interim Assistant Director Adult Services, Social Services*' be altered so they read '*Head of Information, Communications & Technology Services*' and '*Assistant Director Adult Services, Social Services*' respectively.

- v. **Change of wording to fourth Objective within Terms of Reference**

It was also requested pre-meeting that the fourth 'Objective' of the LDP Focus Group as stated in the Terms of Reference be changed from '*receive and take account of the recommendations from the SA/SEA working group with regard to sustainability issues arising from the plan preparation process*' to '*receive and take account of the recommendations from the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment Working Group with regard to sustainability issues arising from the plan preparation process*' for clarity.

3. Key issues likely to be highlighted in the LDP AMR;

- **Change in Economic Climate;**

Due to the change in the economic climate the number of houses being constructed in Caerphilly has declined, and thus general housing targets are not being met and Affordable Housing targets are not being achieved.

Further to this, the 5-year land supply that is required is not being attained and the supply currently stands at 3.5 years.

On this basis, it is likely that the Welsh Government will suggest that the Council should review the LDP. In order to be proactive, rather than reactive, it would be advantageous for the Council to move to first review.

4. Implications of moving to the first review.

The process for review was explained. Essentially the plan preparation process would start again.

The group discussed the current 'Brownfield Strategy' in Caerphilly Basin and it was noted that there are only 3 major sites left, namely: Bedwas Colliery, Waterloo and Ness Tar. It was further noted that there is demand for residential development within this part of the county borough.

Due to the demand for residential sites in the Caerphilly Basin discussion took place regarding the need to release Greenfield sites in order for residential development in the revised LDP.

Questions were raised as to why the north of the borough was not being considered to make up the deficit in housing supply. It was noted that there are sites available for development in this area, however there is neither a demand nor interest by developers to develop in this area as the sites are not economically viable. If intervention is not considered, Caerphilly as a whole could fail to attract inward investment in respect of house building.

The potential implications of the Planning Bill was raised and specifically the move to regional planning. All the indications from the Minister are that even if a regional tier of planning is introduced through the Planning Bill there will still be a need for LDPs to be prepared and kept up to date. The potential timing of the Planning Bill and the associated revised regulations would mean that the new system will not be introduced for a number of years.

4. Costs associated with the review

The estimated cost of the LDP Review would be in the region of £500k. It was further stated that funds being brought into the department from projects/work etc being carried out would contribute towards this cost. A separate report is to be considered on this matter at a future date.

It was suggested that it should be highlighted in the report that the department were putting income raised towards the cost of the LDP, as this would highlight the commitment and effort of the team to keep costs as low as possible.

There is a need for funds to be set aside specifically to address this spend. The LDP is a statutory function and the funds have to be in place.

5. Draft timetable for revision of the LDP for consideration

The aim is to have the LDP adopted by 2017.

The Group were thanked for their attendance.
End.

CAERPHILLY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE LDP FOCUS GROUP

Agreed 26th June 2008 - Amended 19 July 2013

Primary Purpose

The Local Development Plan (LDP) Focus Group will test policy and proposals at key stages throughout the review 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 Sustainability Appraisal /Strategic Environmental Assessment 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:

Elected Members

Leader (substituted by Deputy Leader as appropriate)
Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Sustainable Development
Cabinet Member for Housing (also Deputy Leader)
Cabinet Member for Highways, Transportation & Engineering
Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning
Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services
Chair of the Planning Committee
Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee
Leader of the Majority Opposition
A nominated member of the Majority Opposition
A nominated member representing the Independents
A representative of the Sustainable Development Advisory Panel

OFFICERS

Head of Regeneration & Planning
Head of Housing Services
Head of Engineering Services
Head of Information, Communications & Technology Services
Head of Performance and Property
Assistant Director Our Schools Our Future
Head of Community & Leisure Services
Head of Public Protection
Development Manager, Planning
Assistant Director Adult Services, Social Services
Principal Solicitor for Planning, Land and Highways
Team Leader, Strategic & Development Plans, Planning
Team Leader, Sustainable Development & Living Environment

(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 Members / Officers 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

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Sustainable Development 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 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 and Environment 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.