



## COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON WEDNESDAY, 3RD FEBRUARY 2016 AT 5.00 PM

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PRESENT:

Councillor L. Gardiner - Mayor  
Councillor Mrs D. Price - Deputy Mayor

Councillors:

M. Adams, Mrs E.M. Aldworth, A.P. Angel, J. Bevan, L. Binding, Mrs A. Blackman, D. Bolter, Mrs. P. Cook, C.J. Cuss, H.W. David, W. David, H.R. Davies, D.T. Davies, C. Elsbury, M. Evans, Mrs C. Forehead, J.E. Fussell, Mrs J. Gale, N. George, C.J. Gordon, R.W. Gough, D.T. Hardacre, D. Havard, C. Hawker, A.G. Higgs, G.J. Hughes, K. James, M.P. James, Mrs B.A. Jones, Ms J.G. Jones, Miss L. Jones, S. Kent, G. Kirby, Ms P. Leonard, A. Lewis, K. Lloyd, C.P. Mann, Mrs. G. Oliver, D.V. Poole, D.W.R. Preece, M.J. Prew, J. Pritchard, J.A. Pritchard, D. Rees, K.V. Reynolds, J.E. Roberts, J. Simmonds, S. Skivens, Mrs E. Stenner, J. Taylor, L.G. Whittle, T.J. Williams, R. Woodyatt

Together with:-

C. Burns (Interim Chief Executive), C. Harry (Corporate Director - Communities), G. Williams (Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), P. Elliott (Head of Regeneration and Planning), R. Kyte (Team Leader Strategic and Development Planning), C. Campbell (Transportation Engineering Manager), H. Morgan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

#### 1. WEB-CASTING FILMING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Interim Chief Executive reminded those present that the meeting was being filmed and would be made publicly available in live and archive form via the Council's website. He advised that decisions would be made by a show of hands.

#### 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Miss L. Ackerman, H.A. Andrews, Mrs K.R. Baker, P.J. Bevan, D.G. Carter, K. Dawson, N. Dix, Miss E. Forehead, Mrs P. Griffiths, G. Johnston, S. Morgan, Mrs R. Passmore, R. Saralis, Mrs M.E. Sargent and Mrs J. Summers.

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Interim Chief Executive advised that with the subject matter, if a Member owns a property or a piece of land specifically mentioned in the plan or lives close to an area that may be allocated, or if a family member owns a property/lives close to an area that may be allocated then they should consider whether or not to declare a personal and/or prejudicial interest. It is a matter for the individual Member as to whether they wished to declare a personal and/or prejudicial.

Declarations of interest were received from Councillors L. Binding, H. David, W. David, D. Rees and L.G. Whittle in respect of Agenda Item 4 (Deposit Replacement Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan Up to 2031) and are minuted with the respective item.

A further declaration of interest was received from Councillor J. Taylor during the course of the meeting and is minuted with the respective report.

### **REPORT OF OFFICERS**

Consideration was given to the following report.

### **4. DEPOSIT REPLACEMENT CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN UP TO 2031**

Declarations of interest were recorded as follows. As they were personal and not prejudicial they were able to remain in the meeting and take part in the discussion and voting thereon.

Councillor W. David - as living opposite one of the reserve sites and having objected as a private individual at the pre-deposit stage and intending to continue that objection at the deposit stage.

Councillor L. Binding - as having a personal interest in H1.47 as his property backs onto Windsor Colliery site.

Councillor L.G. Whittle - as having a personal interest in H1.47 as his property backs onto Windsor Colliery site.

Councillor D. Rees - as having previously declared an interest at the Planning Committee in respect of land at Oakdale Golf Course.

Councillor H. David - as having a relative who lives opposite a reserve site.

Councillor J. Taylor - in relation to the site of interest for nature conservation Reference NH3.162 Senghenydd, in that a farm is owned by a relative.

The report outlined to Members the representations made to the public consultation exercise undertaken in February and March 2015 in respect of the Draft Preferred Strategy for the Replacement Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2031 (Deposit Replacement LDP). It provided an Officer response and recommendation in respect of those representations, outlined the next stage of the plan preparation process, sought approval of the revised timetable, consideration of the recommendations of the LDP Focus Group and approval of the Deposit Replacement Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2031 as a basis for a statutory six-week public consultation exercise commencing in February 2016.

Rhian Kyte (Team Leader - Strategic and Development Planning) presented the report and outlined the background in respect of the Deposit Replacement Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan (LDP) up to 2031.

She advised Members that an up-to-date LDP is a fundamental part of the plan-led system in Wales. Caerphilly County Borough Council is committed to a plan-led approach to the delivery of new development in its area and has a proven track record of delivering development plans in a timely manner through successive planning authorities and successive planning regimes. The LDP provides the planning policy to provide investors with confidence in terms of the location and type of development that will be permitted throughout the borough and also includes the land use requirements of partner organisations where they are known. Critically it provides a good indication in terms of where investment in new infrastructure should be targeted to support planned development and it also enables utility providers to plan for their forward investment programmes.

Members were reminded that the Caerphilly County Borough Council Local Development Plan up to 2021 was adopted in November 2010 and there is a statutory requirement to monitor the effectiveness of that plan. As a consequence of the Annual Monitoring of the LDP in 2013, Council resolved to move forward to the first review of the plan a year earlier than planned (there is a requirement to review the plan every four years). This review arose from the economic downturn and its resulting impact on housing development and affordable housing delivery (and thus the need to include and increase the housing land supply) and also from a need to facilitate the Council's ambitious school rationalisation process.

As part of the review process, the Council recognised a need to change the development strategy that underpins the LDP. Within the current adopted LDP there have been a number of successes, with the adoption of greenfield and brownfield boundaries in the mid-Valleys region and a brownfield-only strategy in the south of the county borough (the Southern Connections Corridor). For 20 years the Council has sought to prevent greenfield release in the south but there was recognition that the new LDP would need to revise its strategic approach. On 27th January 2015 the Council approved the Preferred Strategy for the Replacement Caerphilly County Borough LDP up to 2031 for the purposes of a formal six-week public consultation process, which took place between February-March 2015.

This consultation process examined the strategic concepts involved in preparing a Development Plan and looked at broad areas for growth in terms of the whole county borough. This process presented the first opportunity for the general public to be involved in the preparation of the Replacement LDP. Mrs Kyte explained that a high level of response was not anticipated at the Preferred Strategy stage of the process due to the lack of site-specific information available at that time. However, the publication of a Candidates Site Register in tandem with the consultation process generated a large number of responses in relation to individual sites and is believed to have increased the overall consultation response levels in respect of the Preferred Strategy.

In total, 6,840 representations were received to the Preferred Strategy and an Initial Consultation Report (Preferred Strategy), which details the individual responses received, was prepared and made available online for the public to view. Overall there was a general acceptance of the main thrust of the strategy, with comments concentrating on detailed matters and also significant comment in terms of the strategic direction of the area for growth. A summary of the representations received were outlined in the appendix to the report. It was reported that there were three notable petitions in terms of numbers, which raised concerns in respect of the Ness Tar Site and Nant y Calch Farm, Gwern y Doman and land west of Cefn Llwyna Farm. Members were asked to note that under the terms of the Council's Delivery Agreement, each petition is counted as one representation.

The publication of the Candidate Sites Register generated a large number of responses in relation to individual sites. Chief amongst these were sites in Maescywmer, Ness Tar, Gwern Y Doman, Hendredenny, Pandy Road in Bedwas, land at west of Cefn Llwyna Farm,

Snowden Close in Risca and the Rise in Llanbradach. The Officer explained that the Replacement LDP proposes two significant areas of change incorporating two planned areas of growth over the planned period up to 2031. These involve a strategic site area in Maesycwmmmer (referred to as Parc Gwernau) which proposes in the region of 2,400 houses with 1,800 of those likely to come forward in the plan period, together with an area south-east of Caerphilly comprising of a number of sites but with one strategic site which is at Ness Tar.

Of the remaining responses, a significant number of representations were received from proposers of Candidate Sites, who were either disappointed by the poor scoring of their site in the Council's initial assessment, seeking to change the boundary of their Candidate Site or seeking to submit a new site. There were significant comments received from Welsh Government (WG), Statutory Bodies and Commercial Organisations on the Preferred Strategy itself and a small number of responses to the Strategic Environmental Assessment/Sustainability Appraisal.

An Officer response to each of the representations received was contained within the Initial Consultation Report, with these representations having informed the preparation of the Deposit Replacement LDP, which is the next stage of this process. It was explained that this Deposit Plan is a full draft of the new LDP and includes the detailed policies and land allocation to guide development up to 2031. The Plan comprises of a number of documents, incorporating the Written Statement, the Proposals Map (in atlas form at this stage because it is still at the deposit stage) and Appendices to the Written Statement which give more detail on the individual allocations. Available online is a constraints plan which covers areas such as flood plains, tree preservation orders and listed buildings and should be read in tandem with the Deposit LDP.

Since the completion of the Preferred Strategy process, a number of consultation events have been held with internal and external stakeholders and elected Members. Full details of these sessions were outlined in the Officer's report. Additionally, a number of Members regularly relay areas of concern to the Strategic and Development Plans Team, and wherever possible, Officers have sought to address these issues during the preparation of the Deposit LDP.

The contentious nature of land development and the controversial considerations entailed in the preparation of the Deposit LDP were acknowledged. Mrs Kyte explained that wherever possible, every effort has been made to include stakeholder views (including elected Members) and to take into account the comments and concerns raised by the public. Members were asked to note that the Deposit Replacement LDP must reconcile the development needs of the population in terms of employment, housing, education, leisure and infrastructure with the wider environmental concerns for the general conservation of the environment. Change is therefore inevitable and development is essential, in terms of meeting basic needs and also in terms of the economy and for the benefit of both present and future generations.

It was then explained that where development has been proposed, this has been subject to a robust planning assessment, with the relevant statutory consultees consulted in order to ensure that any environmental concerns can be addressed or mitigated. Members were asked to recognise that the land use allocations such as special landscape areas (which include important local landscapes), green wedges, sites of importance for nature conservation, settlement boundaries, employment, housing, leisure and education) combined with the proposals for infrastructure support plan development (such as railroads, cycle paths etc) all serve to deliver the further development strategy that was agreed by the Council in January 2015.

It was acknowledged that elected Members might still have outstanding concerns regarding an allocation(s) in their ward but were asked to consider the Deposit Plan as a whole when determining whether to approve the Deposit Plan for consultation purposes. It was explained that subject to approval by Council, the Deposit Plan would be subject to a statutory 6-week public consultation exercise during February and March 2016. The arising responses will be

reported to a future meeting of Council for information purposes. Ultimately every representation received will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate and the Welsh Government for independent examination.

It was reiterated that this is a key stage in the Plan preparation process and is the first stage in the process where residents and stakeholders can have their say on the full Plan. Although comments had been received on the Candidate Sites, there was no certainty about which sites were going forward at that stage and hence the Deposit Plan represents the first occasion for interested parties to comment on the full proposals. It was confirmed that the consultation period commences on 11th February 2016 and concludes at midnight on 23rd March 2016. All representations need to be received within this timeframe in order to be considered.

Members' attention was directed to two replacement proposal maps tabled at the meeting relating to sites at Cwmgelli and Nelson. It was explained that these replacement maps had been prepared due to small drafting errors on the original documents in relation to green wedge considerations and that the amended versions would be placed online accordingly. Members were also advised that Officers are seeking delegated authority to make minor typographical changes to the LDP, should any be detected in the associated documentation.

In closing, Mrs Kyte asked Members to consider the recommendations contained in the Officer's report with a view to enabling full public consultation to progress with the Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan to facilitate the preparation of this Plan in a timely manner.

Pauline Elliott (Head of Regeneration and Planning) outlined the need for an LDP and the risks in not having an up to date Plan. Members were advised that planning is the regulatory means by which land use is ordered and regulated in an efficient way, and there is a need to make the best use of land resources by also increasing the benefits that they can produce. It was acknowledged that there are always difficult choices to make about land use but planning law requires that applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material determinations dictate otherwise. Therefore there is a pressing need to have an up to date LDP when making decisions on planning applications. Members were advised that as the current LDP is not up to date it leaves the Council vulnerable when making decisions on planning applications, which had been demonstrated by the complex nature of a number of applications recently presented to the Planning Committee.

In closing she advised that the LDP is needed to progress development in the county borough and safeguard the best development in the best places for local residents and businesses.

Christina Harray (Corporate Director - Communities) reiterated the points made by her colleagues and outlined the aims of the LDP. She explained that the statutory document will set out the Council's land use policy for the next 15 years. It aims to ensure that the County Borough remains an attractive and vibrant place for residents to live, work and enjoy. It also provides a framework to enable the Council to maximise the benefits from any development that takes place to ensure that the necessary schools, roads, transport and leisure infrastructure are obtained, together with jobs that are needed. Members were advised that they were being asked to approve the Council's Deposit LDP in order for it to be released for consultation purposes, and to consider the Plan as a whole, rather than as a series of individual development sites. Mrs Harray explained that if Members wished for individual sites to be removed from the Plan, then they would need to be replaced by a site of equal value in order for the LDP to meet its remit of requirements. It was acknowledged that Members may wish to raise objections to individual sites but were reminded that they are being requested to approve the Deposit LDP for consultation purposes, Members and the public will be able to make their views known during the 6-week consultation process outlined at the meeting.

Members were advised that upon receipt of these consultations and responses, Officers will provide responses to those consultations and bring them back for consideration at a future

meeting of Council. Following this, the Planning Inspectorate will consider the consultation responses together with the Council's Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan. The Planning Inspectorate will then make recommendations, which will be presented to Council for approval. After this process is completed, if anyone is minded to object to individual planning applications, the public and elected Members will be afforded the usual opportunity to offer their objections on individual sites at the relevant Planning Committee meeting where these applications are considered.

It was moved and seconded that subject to the inclusion of the amended plans as they relate to Cwmgelli, Blackwood (SI1.7) and Nelson (SI1.9)(as tabled at the meeting) and the Team Leader Strategic and Development Planning being authorised to make minor modifications as necessary to the Deposit Replacement LDP, the recommendations contained in the report be approved.

Discussion then ensued on the report and a number of Members spoke on the item.

A Member queried whether an infrastructure study had been carried out within the Aber Valley, and raised concerns regarding the impact of new developments on local communities. Particular reference was made to a need for extra schools or a contingency plan regarding transport to surrounding schools in the event that the additional housing developments proposed in the area would come to fruition.

Mrs Kyte explained that there are a series of background papers that underpin the preparation of the Deposit LDP and form the basis of evidence in respect of the plan. In terms of infrastructure, Members were advised that each site named within the Plan has been subject to individual consultation with the relevant infrastructure providers (such as utility providers, the Highways Department and Natural Resources Wales) in the same way that the consultation process is carried out regarding planning applications. Therefore every single site has been assessed on its own merits in terms of whether there is capacity or not to accommodate that allocation in a given place.

The combination and the cumulative impact of the sites have also been assessed in terms of the impact on the infrastructure and it was explained that there are a series of background documents available (e.g. highway infrastructure assessment reports) which examine these areas, address natural growth in terms of the implications for this infrastructure, and identifies improvements needed to enable the development to be accommodated. Therefore each utility/infrastructure provider will highlight what is necessary to enable the site to come forward and this is then reflected in either the Plan as an allocation or in the appendices to the Plan where for example hydraulic modelling is required that is flagged up so a developer would know it needs to be undertaken and what the concerns are.

In terms of education, Planning Officers have worked very closely with colleagues in the Education department and have examined the population projections to determine the likely impact in terms of surplus places/school capacity. It was explained that there is a document which underpins the LDP which outlines the issues in this area. Where there is a need for a new school, there is an allocation in the Plan, where it can be dealt with through an extension to an existing school or in some cases there could be a need to reconfigure catchment areas in line with revised population figures this would not require a land use allocation in the plan.

Members were reminded that the LDP is the land use framework for the Council and is underpinned by a number of other strategies (such as housing, economic development, education and transport). In respect of the financial implications associated with these education matters, it was explained that some of this would be funded through the normal capital budgets, and Members were referred to Appendix 20 which outlines further details in respect of cost areas and funding sources. Reference was also made to Section 106 agreements where the developer would have responsibility for building schools in such cases where developments generate this particular education need. Other funding mechanisms

available include the Community Infrastructure Levy and the feasibility of partnership with the Welsh Government, where appropriate, in terms of 21st Century Schools.

The Member thanked the Officer for the response and explained that a number of issues remained unanswered in regards to the local infrastructure and referred to the impact that new housing developments within the Aber Valley would have on the volume of traffic and traffic congestion across the Caerphilly area.

Reference was then made to the inclusion of large areas of greenfield sites within the Deposit LDP, and in referring to the Wellbeing and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 there was a call for these sites to be preserved and replaced with brownfield and infill sites. The Member also expressed the need for sustainable development for the long-term wellbeing of present and future generations. In making reference to the Gwern y Domen site and land south of Rudry Road, reservations were expressed as to their future sustainability, explaining that there appears to be insufficient consideration of the effect that a large housing development will have on already compromised areas in respect of traffic considerations, schools and health and social care. Reference was also made to bio-diversity issues at Gwern y Domen, and a need to retain access to open spaces within this area for the public to use for exercise and leisure activities.

The Member stated that the proposed Deposit LDP identifies several sites that were not considered in the 2015 consultation process and for which no formal evaluation appears to have been provided. Reference was made to the change of use for land south of Rudry Road in the new LDP (to mixed use employment and school use) with the allocation of part of the site for leisure (as outlined in the current LDP) appearing to have been deleted. The Member relayed the concerns of local residents and summarised objections received regarding this proposed change of use. In closing, the Member referred to the duty of planners to take into account the protection of the environment, of Caerphilly's commitment as "a greener place to live" and of the irreplaceability of the land outlined within the Deposit LDP.

A Member then outlined examples of the volume of traffic congestion in and around the Caerphilly/A469/A470 area and the effect this is having on secondary roads in neighbouring communities (such as Llanbradach) in terms of congestion and pedestrian safety. He referred to the proposed housing developments as outlined in the Deposit LDP and expressed concern as to the level of additional vehicles that would be generated as a result and their impact on the existing transport infrastructure. In citing the reactive (rather than proactive) approach to the building of roads to accommodate new development, he called on the Welsh Government to provide funding for associated infrastructure improvements.

A Member then voiced his opposition to the proposals contained within the Deposit LDP and outlined the reasons for these views. He made reference to the complexity of the issues contained within the Plan, and acknowledged the risks and implications for land development if an up to date LDP is not endorsed and maintained. He also acknowledged the opposition from Members to proposed developments within specific wards and their subsequent difficulty in being able to endorse the proposed Deposit LDP as a whole as a result of these concerns, and added that he would support those Members who oppose greenfield developments within their wards.

Although acknowledging the shortcomings arising from not having a current LDP, the Member referred to issues surrounding LDPs in that they are developed separately by each local authority. He expressed a need to consult with other local authorities in Wales in order to understand their long term strategy and called for a wider strategic plan to be developed across South-East Wales that links transport and housing across local authority borders. He explained that until this happens, in his view LDPs are simply not fit for purpose and it was for this reason he was opposed to the Deposit Replacement LDP.

Reference was then made to the inclusion of Gwern y Domen and Plas Newydd within the Deposit LDP and the impact that proposed additional housing developments and the arising

subsequent increase in vehicles would have on rural country lanes in these areas. Concerns were also expressed as to the impact of an increased population in this area on local doctor surgery waiting times, together with capacity issues in local schools.

Concerns were expressed that the proposed removal of a green wedge area between Croespenmaen and Treowen (Ty Mawr) would lead to the merging of these two settlement areas. It was explained by Mrs Kyte that both settlement boundaries and green wedges form part of the review process, and that although green wedges are an anti-coalescence policy designed to prevent individual settlements merging, it is considered that a small incursion into the green wedge at this location would be considered acceptable to enable a small expansion of the village. It was acknowledged that this would erode the extent of the green wedge but that there will remain a green wedge between the two villages until such time as the LDP is reviewed once again. Members were advised of the anti-coalescence statement included within the LDP and of the opportunity to make their views known at the public consultation stage.

Further concern were raised in relation to the traffic gridlock that is experienced in the Caerphilly basin during rush hour periods and the effect that even small local events can have in exacerbating this problem. It was perceived that further housing developments would lead to Caerphilly becoming a 'ring road town' and the Member outlined the need to remove greenfield sites from the LDP and refuse developments in such areas. Reference was also made to traffic issues along the A469 at peak periods and the effect this was having on nearby Llanbradach. The Member referred to the funding available to improve highways infrastructure and cited a need for this to be in place prior to proposed housing developments being allowed to commence.

Reference was then made to the calculation of the 5-year land supply and to the existing land supply available to developers, including brownfield sites that already have planning permission for development. It was suggested that there is a need for development to commence in these areas rather than new developments to be proposed across greenfield sites in other areas.

A Member then raised objection to TR8.2, the proposed south eastern bypass. It was explained that previously the main reason for this proposed road was congestion and to complete the ring road around Caerphilly, but that the Deposit LDP now cites air quality in Caerphilly town centre as the main reason for this road. Reference was made to a recent Air Quality Monitoring report which states that this pollution will reduce to acceptable levels within 9 years due to improved technology of motor vehicles, cleaner fuels and the use of more hybrid cars, and explained that building a south eastern bypass will only reduce emissions by 4.5% at the present time. He explained that improving and widening the existing bypass around Caerphilly will reduce pollution by up to 16%, but that these improvements are only a long term aspiration in the Deposit LDP.

He stated that it was proposed to finance this bypass via the development of 685 homes on a nearby farm and explained that this development would exacerbate problems on local highways which are regularly congested, experience regular flooding and have a large number of accidents each year. Concerns were expressed that vehicle movements would increase arising from this proposed development, which could increase congestion and pollution levels and lead to environmental damage. He referred to previous Inquiries by the Planning Inspector which found against the proposed bypass, and requested that the proposed south-east bypass (TR8.2) be removed from the Deposit LDP.

Following an observation from another Member in that those present had been asked to consider the Deposit LDP in its entirety, the Member indicated that he would withdraw the request for an amendment and vote against the Deposit LDP as a whole.

A Member referred to traffic congestion issues across the county borough, and referring to a lack of sufficient highway structure around the new Ystrad Fawr hospital, expressed a need

for improvements to be made in respect of this matter. The Member made reference to regeneration projects in the north of the county borough and called for more affordable housing developments to be built in this area. Reference was also made to proposals within the Deposit LDP to reallocate certain portions of land within the county borough (currently used as school playing fields) for other purposes. The Member expressed a need to protect this land and indicated that for these reasons, he would be unable to support the LDP.

The need for issues such as planning design and investment in public transport to be addressed within the LDP in order to reverse the trend of a decline in town centres across the county borough was raised. The Member stated that there would be little or no economic benefit to Caerphilly town centre if Ness Tar and Nant y Calch Farm are included within the Deposit LDP. He added that the original proposed area i.e. the Ness Tar site, with well-thought out design can be achieved and deliver a large number of houses and would make the use of public transport a more attractive option for commuting rather than using vehicle transport to get out of Caerphilly.

The Member added that the creation of the south eastern bypass will exacerbate this problem in that it will ultimately transport workers/shoppers out of the county borough. He explained that Caerphilly has the third highest level of commuting to Cardiff with over 15,000 out commuting trips daily. The provision of 40,000 jobs and the potential for significant housing land release within the Caerphilly basin could potentially increase or will increase the level of out commuting trips. He expressed concerns that the Cardiff LDP contained no information addressing this issue or the effect transport policies had on the adjoining local authority areas. He explained that consequently there is a concern that with the potential for Cardiff to reach traffic gridlock through its own allocated development, the Caerphilly road network could become highly congested and cause critical implications for transport in the Caerphilly basin and beyond.

A Member expressed concerns that the Deposit LDP would become a document from which developers would select certain criteria to suit their applications. The Member made reference to the areas of Penyrheol, Trecenydd and Energlyn and explained that development proposals for 2000 new properties would lead to over 5000 new vehicles accessing the roads within these communities. He outlined the congestion problems currently experienced in these areas and the dangers arising in respect of pedestrian safety, which would be exacerbated by these new developments. He expressed a need to support the interests of his local community and indicated that he would not be supporting the Deposit LDP.

In referring to proposals for housing development in Nelson, the Member called for an independent survey of traffic movements across the county borough and referred to proposals for housing developments within the Nelson area. She explained that this equated to a 25% vehicle increase in the ward which would have a significant impact on traffic congestion in the area and also expressed a need for the reclamation of certain areas of land for community use.

Reference was then made to the need for a review of the strategy surrounding the Deposit LDP with a view to maximising the individual sites that are available for development, rather than stretching them over a number of areas. The Member summarised the strength of public feeling in respect of these proposals and suggested that these be taken on board in terms of how the strategy is developed. Reference was made to the City Region proposals and it was queried as to how the Deposit LDP fits into these proposals. A need was expressed to extend proposed developments across the north of the county borough to alleviate traffic congestion and school capacity issues within the Caerphilly basin.

The Member made specific reference to proposals relating to Ness Tar and the TR8 south eastern bypass and the arising implications of these proposals. He referred to the boundaries established within the Deposit LDP and a need to have regard for bio-diversity issues in respect of woodlands and the environment contained within these proposals. The Member asked if he could move an amendment to the report recommendations in that the extent of the

boundary that restricts the Ness Tar and Nant y Calch sites be removed and that access to these sites be restricted to the bridleway.

The Interim Chief Executive explained that whilst Members had the option to move specific amendments to the report, this was a very specific request in terms of the bridleway boundaries and that the full remit of documentation associated with this issue was not available for Members consideration.

The Member explained that he was reflecting comments from previous Planning Inspectorate reports and had referred specifically to the bridleway in that it takes care of the lower half of the site. He explained that this did not include the site of importance for nature conservation, which is the meadow and that would be in conjunction with the removal of the TR8.2 as well.

Clarification was sought on whether the Member wished to move a specific amendment. It was observed that Members had previously been asked to consider the Deposit LDP in its entirety and queried whether amendments regarding individual sites/proposals were permitted. The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that Members had the right to move specific amendments. However, he explained that this particular amendment was looking to confine a particular allocation in a certain way and that this would be difficult for Members to consider as they would need to be presented with detailed boundary maps in order to appreciate the implications of this request.

The Member asked that if it was not deemed appropriate to progress this motion, then should the Deposit LDP be approved for consultation, that Officers note the details of the request and determine whether it could be taken forward. Officers sought clarification on the requirements of the Members request and it was confirmed that the Member wished for proposals surrounding the Ness Tar site to revert to the current LDP (retain the brownfield element of the proposals with indicative for the bypass). The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that this request had been noted and that the Member would have the opportunity to make this representation again during the consultation process.

Reference was then made to the fact there is no provision within the Deposit LDP to improve the safe passage of traffic through the communities of Bedwas, Trethomas, Graig Y Rhacca and Machen and the Member referenced the heavy traffic congestion in these areas. He also outlined the need for existing brownfield sites to be developed prior to the development of new greenfield sites and reiterated the need for a traffic survey across the county borough and called for a robust road infrastructure to be established across the county borough in order to protect the wellbeing of local residents.

A Member supported a number of comments previously made at the meeting and expressed concerns that the lack of an LDP could have major implications for the Authority in terms of planning of matters. She asked for it to be placed on record that she is extremely concerned about the allocation of land at Pandy Road for 300 units and would continue to work alongside residents to try and prevent development, together with making the Planning Inspector fully aware of all concerns when the Plan is out for consultation.

A Member referred to the difficulties that would arise in terms of planning considerations should Members choose not to support the Deposit LDP for consultation purposes. He explained that the Authority is required to supply a certain amount of land capable of building a certain amount of developments and called for a sense of perspective on this matter in that if Members were minded not to support these proposals, an alternative would need to be suggested in its place in order to avoid serious planning implications in future years. He added that he would be raising objections to certain areas when the Deposit LDP is presented to the Planning Inspector and when future applications come to Planning Committee.

Concerns were then raised regarding the purpose of the LDP in that it guides Planning Committee when looking at future planning applications. She explained that Members had been advised that the LDP should be read in conjunction with Welsh Government's strategies,

policies and technical advice notes. However, the Member observed that the LDP and government strategies, although they should run in tandem, do not always do so. She referred to a recent planning application where a Welsh Government technical advice note (TAN 21) was disregarded in favour of general guidance within the LDP. She explained that the current LDP states that due consideration should be given to Welsh Government strategies and guidance and should also have regard to national planning policies. However, the Member explained that she felt this wording was too open ended and should be tightened up so that the Planning Authority cannot choose to disregard government planning policy, and indicated that although she was minded to support the Deposit LDP, she would be relaying these concerns to the Planning Inspector.

A Member then summarised the recommendations within the report and the arising consultation exercise in respect of the Deposit LDP. He acknowledged the strong views regarding the LDP and the concerns expressed in relation to particular sites. He reiterated that the purpose of the meeting was to support the Local Development Plan which would address a number of housing matters across the county borough (such as affordable housing for young people and suitable housing for elderly and vulnerable residents). He acknowledged the views of Members in that more developments should be planned for the northern end of the borough, but reiterated that developers could not be directed to build in specific areas of the county borough. Members were reminded of the essential need to have an LDP that identifies a five year housing land supply and of the pressing implications that would arise in finding suitable alternatives should Members not be minded to support the Deposit LDP.

Reference was made to the City Deal and its links to the LDP and the Member explained that the key to this scheme is collective and collaborative working across the whole of South East Wales. He explained that the purpose of a City Deal is to improve the economic prospects and opportunities for people living in the borough. He confirmed that the Council are working with Welsh Government and the UK government to adhere to this £1.2b scheme that will improve infrastructure and create jobs and opportunities for young people. He appealed to Members to support the Plan and reminded them of the opportunity to put their case to the Planning Inspector at a future date and for consideration of the whole Deposit LDP to not be blighted by the contentious sites contained within the document.

Clarification was then sought on the purpose of the report and the determination that was sought of Members. The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that if the Deposit LDP was approved at the meeting, it would go out to consultation over a 6-week period and the results would then be presented to Members for consideration before they are presented to the Planning Inspector. Members were advised that should they be minded to make significant changes following the consultation period, the process regarding the preparation of a Deposit Replacement LDP would have to begin again in its entirety.

In closing the debate, the mover of the Motion explained that this review was triggered arising from the lack of a five year housing land supply, and Members were reminded of the Council's duty to review the plan every four years. He explained that whilst the Plan is under review, the Council are vulnerable in terms of planning applications and so the only way to avoid this is to have a sound LDP which gives guidance and security to the Planning Committee. He acknowledged the sincerity of the representations made by a number of Members in objection to sections of the Deposit Replacement LDP and reminded them that they would have the opportunity to present these to the Planning Inspector during the review process. He also encouraged maximum participation in this process. He explained that at the moment the Council do not have a mechanism to develop their LDP strategy with that of other local authorities but that this was a matter that could be given consideration for the future. In closing, he asked Members to use the tools available to them to enable the review of the LDP and asked them to agree the recommendations in the report to enable the Deposit Replacement LDP to be submitted for public consultation.

During the course of the debate, Members wished to record their appreciation to all those staff involved in the producing the Deposit LDP and its associated documents.

It was moved and seconded that subject to the inclusion of the amended plans as they relate to Cwmgelli, Blackwood and Nelson (as tabled at the meeting) and the Team Leader - Strategic and Development Planning being authorised to make minor modifications, as necessary, to the Deposit Replacement LDP prior to publication if any errors are detected, the recommendations in the report be approved.

In accordance with Rule of Procedure 15.4 (1) a request was made for a recorded vote.

#### **FOR THE MOTION**

Councillors M. Adams, Mrs E.M. Aldworth, J. Bevan, Mrs P. Cook, C.J. Cuss, W. David, H.R. Davies, M. Evans, Mrs C. Forehead, Mrs J. Gale. L. Gardiner, N. George, C.J. Gordon, D.T. Hardacre, D. Havard, C. Hawker, A.G. Higgs, G.J. Hughes, K. James, Mrs B.A. Jones, Ms J.G. Jones, Miss L. Jones, G. Kirby, Ms P. Leonard, A. Lewis, Mrs G. Oliver, D.V. Poole, D.W.R. Preece, Mrs D. Price, J. Pritchard, D. Rees, K.V. Reynolds, J. Simmonds, Mrs E. Stenner, T.J. Williams, R. Woodyatt (36)

#### **AGAINST THE MOTION**

Councillors A. Angel, L. Binding, Mrs A. Blackman, H.W. David, C. Elsbury, J.E. Fussell, R.W. Gough, M.P. James, S. Kent, K. Lloyd, C.P. Mann, M.J. Prew, J.A. Pritchard, J.E. Roberts, S. Skivens, J. Taylor, L.G. Whittle (17)

The Motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED that subject to the inclusion of the amended plans as they relate to Cwmgelli, Blackwood and Nelson as tabled at the meeting) and Team Leader Strategic and Development Planning Officer being authorised to make minor modifications as necessary to the Deposit Replacement LDP prior to publication if any errors are detected:-

- (i) the representations made to the public consultation exercise undertaken in February and March 2015 in respect of the Draft Preferred Strategy for the Replacement Local Development Plan be noted;
- (ii) the Officer response and recommendation in respect of those representations contained in the Initial Consultation Report were considered and noted;
- (iii) the next stage of the plan preparation process be noted and the revised timetable (contained in Appendix 1 of the report) be approved;
- (iv) the recommendations of the LDP Focus Group (contained in Appendix 2 of the report) were considered and noted;
- (v) the Deposit Replacement Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2031 be approved as a basis for a statutory six-week public consultation exercise commencing in February 2016.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 8th March 2016, they were signed by the Mayor.

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MAYOR