

Meeting	Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date	22 February 2018
Subject	Update on the Welsh Language and Planning Investigation
Working Group Chair	Councillor Gruffydd Williams
Cabinet Member	Councillor Dafydd Meurig

BACKGROUND

- 1 The *Joint Local Development Plan for Gwynedd and Anglesey 2011-2026* was adopted by the Council at a Special Meeting on 28th July 2017.
- 2 *The Welsh Language and Planning Investigation* was established at the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee on 7th December 2017.
- 3 Here's the aim of the Investigation:

Part 1 (this specifically for the draft SPG)

- Step A Ensure that the Consultation Process on the draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPA) is an inclusive one;
- Step B Scrutinise the draft framework for preparing the Welsh Language Statement and a draft framework for preparing Welsh Language Effect Assessment;
- Step C Scrutinise how it is intended to implement the SPG in the context of the requirements of the new TAN20;
- Step CH Consider an Overview of the comments received by the public during public consultation on the draft SPG in order to present an opinion to the Joint Planning Policy Committee before the final SPG is adopted.

Part 2 (this specifically in the National policy/advice context)

- Step D Collect evidence to form ideas and suggestions for the consideration of Gwynedd Council's Environment Cabinet Member in order to influence National policy and planning guidances in the future.

WORK SO FAR

- 4 This is a brief update to Members of the Scrutiny Committee on the work of the Working Group so far.
- 5 The Working Group has held 5 meetings between 9 January and 12 February.
- 6 During this period the attention has been focussed on the first leg of the Investigation:

Step A Ensure that the consultation Process on the draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPA) is an inclusive one;
- 7 The Planning Service Informed us that they had held an engagement exercise on the current Supplementary Planning Guidance in June 2016.
- 8 They provided a list of approximately 100 stake holders who had been invited to take part in the exercise and a brief report was considered by the Working Group members.
- 9 Some of the organisations listed were invited at random to meet with members of the Working Group in order to seek their opinions on the current Guidance and to note any suggestions regarding how to improve it.
- 10 Working Group Members met with representatives of the following:
 - Welsh Language Commissioner
 - Bangor University Welsh Department
 - Cylch yr Iaith
 - Hanfod
 - Burum
 - Gwynedd Planning Department

MAIN FINDINGS SO FAR

- 11 Main Findings Of the Investigation so far
(It is not possible to elaborate due to the request of the Planning Service to maintain the details as confidential at present). Briefly then:
 - A clear statement is required stating that the developer needs to hold a public consultation on every development of 10 or more houses in an urban area and 5 or more in a rural/village area.
 - It needs to be stated that a Welsh Language Effect Assessment needs to be held on every development that is referred to a public consultation.
 - Members are concerned about the phraseology and format/style of the draft consultation document. It is difficult to see how members of the public are expected to understand the document in its current form and to contribute meaningfully to the consultation.

- Clear details are needed on the methodology of holding a Language Effect Assessment. This is a critical part of the Assessment. Full details of the methodology need to be included in the consultation.
- There is also ambiguity regarding the descriptions of Welsh Language Statement, and the relevance of the mitigating steps.
- A clearer description is required of what is expected of the language specialist from the Council's perspective and external individuals or organisations and their role.
- Members consider that the intention of the Planning Service to present a report of all comments made by consultees and a revised draft of the Guidance to Members of the Working Group by 31 May 2018 rather ambitious. We request an assurance of the ability to achieve this on time.

NEXT STEPS

- 12 Step A – In order to complete Step A, the Working Group Members intend to do the following during February:
- Interview an officer from Gwynedd Council's *Hunaniaith*/Language Unit
 - Consider the responses received in full by the Planning Service to the Engagement exercise in 2016.
 - Evaluate the engagement exercise against the National Principles on Engagement with the public in Wales.
 - Consider details of the Consultation Plan for the new draft Guideline
- 13 **Step B Scrutinise the draft framework for preparing the Welsh Language Statement and a draft framework for preparing Welsh Language Effect Assessment;**
- Consider details of both draft frameworks
 - Consider details of the current methodology
 - Consider the details of the draft methodology
- 14 Meeting of the Local Development Plan Panel on 9th March 2018
- Members of the Working Group to present Main Findings and comments of the Scrutiny Committee on 22 February.
 - Members of the Working Group to present comments following from their further work after 22 February.
- 15 **Members of the Communities Scrutiny Committee are requested to:**
- **Consider the Update and question Members of the Working Group**
 - **Approve the work so far**
 - **Approve the next steps**
 - **Approve the Main Findings**
 - **Make any further comments to Members of the Working Group so that they may present them to Local Development Plan Panel on 9 March 2018.**