

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 21.05.15

PLANNING SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION – DRAFT BRIEF

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 It is very important that the planning system corresponds with the needs of the County's communities and there is a perception that not enough consideration is given to matters such as the economy when determining planning applications. Consequently, it was decided to undertake a scrutiny investigation on the planning system, considering the Council's planning procedures and their suitability to correspond with the economic needs of the County's communities, in addition to other factors.
- 1.2 It must be noted that this investigation is specifically relevant to the Gwynedd Council Planning Authority Area only, as the Snowdonia National Park Authority is the Planning Authority for the Park area.
- 1.3 The planning system works within a statutory framework and it is believed that there is a need to understand:-
- i) what the relevant statutory requirements are
 - ii) the national and local planning policy framework
 - iii) other material planning considerations and the weight given to those material planning considerations.
- 1.4 Subsequently, it will be possible to look in more detail at how Gwynedd Council operates in terms of determining planning applications and how pre-application advice is given to prospective developers.

2. PURPOSE OF THE INVESTIGATION

- 2.1 The investigation will seek in the first place to establish an understanding of:-
- What are the statutory requirements that are relevant to the planning system?
 - What are the requirements in terms of national and local planning policies?
 - What are the material planning considerations when dealing with planning applications and how much weight is given to the various planning considerations?
 - How much freedom the planning system has within those frameworks
- 2.2 The Scrutiny Investigation will then seek to answer the following main questions:
- How does Gwynedd Council deal with planning applications in terms of order, performance, numbers etc.?

- Is there any firm evidence which suggests that the Council does not give adequate consideration to the economy when preparing planning policies and in determining planning applications?
- Are the arrangements that the Council has in place for offering advice to prospective developers as they work through the planning system smooth and convenient, conveying an image of a system that promotes and develops rather than regulating ?

3. IMPACT

3.1 The Scrutiny Investigation will:

- Form clear recommendations based on evidence to be considered by the Cabinet Member
- Give appropriate consideration to any obstacles and how to resolve them