



JOINT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Joint Planning Policy Committee

10:30 a.m. 29th January 2016

Siambwr Dafydd Orwig, Caernarfon

Present:

IACC

Coun. Lewis Davies
Coun. Richard Dew
Coun. Ann Griffith
Coun. John Griffiths
Coun. Victor Hughes
Coun. WT Hughes
Coun. John Arwel Roberts

Gwynedd Council

Coun. Gwen Griffith
Coun. John Brynmor Hughes
Coun. Dafydd Meurig
Coun. John Pughe Roberts
Coun. John Wyn Williams
Coun. Owain Williams

Officers:

Rhun ap Gareth	Senior Solicitor (GC)
Nia Haf Davies	Manager - JPPU
Gareth Jones	Senior Manager Planning, Environment and Public Protection (Temporary) (GC)
Jim Woodcock	Head of Planning & Public Protection (IACC)
Heledd Ff. Jones	Business & Economy Team Leader - JPPU
Bob Thomas	Housing & Communities Team Leader - JPPU
Eirian Harris	Planning Support Assistant - JPPU

Apologies:

Coun. Dyfrig Jones (GC)
Coun. Jeff Evans (IACC) - Substitute
Coun. Gethin Glyn Williams (GC) - Substitute

1. APOLOGIES

As noted above

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

The following officers said they would not be able to participate in a discussion about sites within the settlements listed:

Nia Haf Davies:	Bethesda Chwilog Llanfairpwll Dolydd Dinas (Llanwnda)
Heledd Ff. Jones:	Benllech Llangaffo Llangefni Llangristiolus
Bob Thomas:	Porthaethwy Llanddanielfab Llanrug Llandwrog Telecommunications Strategic Policy (PS3)
Jim Woodcock:	Waun, Penisarwaun

Coun. Lewis Davies noted that he was a member of the Welsh Language Society and a member of the Uwch Gwyrfai Historical Society, but that he would take part in the discussion in his capacity as a member of the Committee.

General advice was given to the Committee that there was no need to leave the Chamber if they belonged to organisations that have submitted comments, but Members who had submitted comments on the Plan would need to decide whether to declare an interest in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

3. URGENT MATTERS

There were no urgent matters

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Committee on 26 June 2015 were accepted as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

5. GWYNEDD AND ANGLESEY JOINT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

A report presented by the Manager (Policy) explained the process and progress on the Joint Local Development Plan:-

- It was explained that the revised timetable had been submitted to the Panel and advertised via Newsletter - Issue 5. So far, step 9) of the schedule has almost been reached.
- An explanation was given of the process and details of the public consultation on the Deposit Plan as well as the description of the comments received.
- An explanation was given about the LDP Regulations and the relevant guidelines. Committee's attention was drawn to the requirements in considering the comments, including the kinds of changes, namely 'Minor Changes' and 'Focussed Changes' that could possibly be included if changes were needed.
- Reference was made to the report which was presented to Members in June 2015 by Mr Iwan Evans (Planning Consultant) (Appendix D) to help them understand what kind of changes would be appropriate.
- It was explained that the purpose of the examination would be to ensure that the Plan is 'sound' - and when working through the examination process, the Inspector would look at the Tests of Soundness, which are included in Appendix CH.
- A summary was given of the main issues raised in the comments received, together with an overview of the responses:-
 - Scale of housing growth including in relation to the Welsh language
 - Housing strategy to ensure growth in relation to the Welsh language
 - Spatial strategy, including the status of settlements
 - Affordable housing
 - Local housing market
 - Accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers
 - Economy and employment including the provision of land
 - Renewable energy including wind turbines
 - Protection of natural environment
 - Site-specific allocations
- It was explained that Appendix A of the report provides a summary of each individual comment and response to individual comments.
- Attention was drawn to the additional papers that were circulated on 26 January 2016 and to the Joint LDP Panel on 29 January 2016 which (i) referred to the necessary amendments to Annex B and (ii) recorded comments that were not included in Appendix A.
- Having carefully considered the issues raised in the consultation process, including discussions and feedback on the Joint LDP Panel, it can be seen that the report concludes that no compelling and robust evidence or reasons were presented to propose fundamental changes to the Deposit Plan.
- It was considered that parts of the Deposit Plan would benefit from minor changes and focussed changes, and those were set out in Annex B and Annex C to the report.
- It was reported that there is no need for the Councils to consult on the Focussed Changes but it was recommended that they did so because it would demonstrate best practice, and would provide an opportunity to gather public opinion on the changes for the Examination.
- It was explained that the Focussed Changes did not have an adverse impact on the statutory assessment of SA (including SEA), the Welsh Language Impact Assessment, or the Habitats Regulations Assessment.
- Before moving on to consider individual comments, an overview of the Examination process was given: When the Plan is submitted to the Welsh Government, this would act as a trigger to contact the Planning Inspectorate, who

would appoint an Inspector. Unless it was necessary to call an Exploratory Meeting, a Pre Hearing Meeting would be arranged so that the Inspector could explain the process and present the 'Programme Officer'. It was explained that the Programme Officer has been appointed and would administer the Examination on behalf of the Inspector. She would be the point of contact between the Inspector and the Councils, and between the Inspector and objectors. It was explained that 'Public Hearings' about themes would be organised during the Examination process. Objectors can express their wish for a 'public hearing' about their objections or they can rely on their written objections.

- The documents to be submitted to the Welsh Government and the Planning Inspectorate were listed in accordance with the LDP.

During the ensuing discussion, the following main issues were raised:

- It was understood that the timetable will be submitted to both Councils separately.
- Asked whether the Inspector was a Welsh speaker - this would be an important factor in order to understand the language situation.
- Need an explanation why the report is not considered by both Councils before being submitted to the Welsh Government.
- Clarification was sought on 'Comment 815', which raised concerns about the housing growth figure.
- Reference was made to concerns about the over-provision of housing and its impact on the Welsh language.
- Wylfa Workers Accommodation, - what will happen to these when the construction is complete?
- Noted that a large number of houses have been directed to the largest centres. Need opportunities to keep the population in rural areas.
- Asked whether the Plan recognises the National Grid project. Concerns were expressed about the impact power lines have on the Anglesey Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and therefore need to consider laying cables underground, which is Anglesey Council's position on the matter.
- Concerns about water infrastructure - Welsh Water are not addressing the problem during a period of austerity.
- Asked who had undertaken the Special Landscape Areas Study and why an independent consultant hadn't been appointed to undertake the Welsh Language Impact Assessment.
- Asked about the methodology used to assess the special landscape areas.

In response to members' comments, the officers noted:

- It was confirmed that a decision on the timetable was a matter for the two Councils separately in accordance with the agreement between the two Councils.
- It is understood that the Planning Inspectorate intends to appoint two Inspectors and that they are Welsh speakers.
- It was also explained that the role of the Joint Planning Policy Committee is to make a decision on the individual comments. When the Inspector's report is published it would be submitted to the two Councils separately for adoption. It was explained that the procedure has been agreed by the two Councils.

- Re comment 815 – it was explained that the housing growth figure is based on diverse evidence that includes population and household forecasts (base 2011), housing construction trends, economic outlook and evidence on factors that influence the local housing market and the demand/need for new homes. After considering all the evidence that had been gathered and comparing it to evidence submitted by the objector, there was no justification for amending the level of growth. The Committee was reminded of the soundness tests and the need for every aspect of the Plan to be based on evidence to ensure its soundness. It was noted that the Committee when approving the Deposit Plan to go out for public consultation in the first place had done so on the grounds that it is a sound Plan. It was emphasised that no compelling evidence was submitted in response to the public consultation which would undermine the evidence the Councils have to support the plan - and therefore there was no justification for changing the level of housing growth. It was further stated that seeking to change the level of growth at this stage, without compelling evidence, would be a significant risk to the Plan as it was likely it would not meet the soundness tests. This could mean putting the Planning Inspector in a situation where a recommendation would have to be made not to proceed with the examination. It was explained that a significant change that did not fit with the evidence would mean putting forward a different Plan to the Deposit Plan and would undoubtedly mean revisiting a lot of areas, including the Sustainability Assessment. That would mean a significant slippage in the timetable for the adoption of the Plan.
- Furthermore, reference was made to the monitoring framework set out in Chapter 8 that would record and analyse information on the level and distribution of housing. Also the Plan will be reviewed in the fourth year.
- Following from the above, it was explained that the Plan would not promote a proliferation of housing because due consideration had been given to the local demand for new homes.
- Re. accommodation for workers to build Wylfa Newydd, it was explained that the needs will be met through a number of different methods. The Plan recognises this and seeks to ensure that the greatest benefit will come through a long-term legacy where this is appropriate. For some developments such as 'Land and Lakes', the legacy, i.e. homes for the local communities, will not be seen until after the Plan period. Therefore they do not form part of the supply to meet the demand for housing during the Plan period.
- It was explained that the Plan area is considered a rural area and the spatial strategy of the Plan reflects this. It was emphasised that 45% of the housing figure will be directed to Local Centres, Villages and Clusters.
- It was explained that Policy PS8, which is a criteria based policy, covers large infrastructure projects such as the National Grid Project. Other detailed policies would also apply.
- The concerns about water infrastructure were noted - this is a matter for discussion at the planning application stage. There was no evidence that this would prevent developments from coming forward.
- It was noted that an external consultant had been commissioned to undertake the assessment of special landscape areas, namely the LUC company. Consultants were appointed to supplement the capacity of the Unit. There was no need for an external consultant to carry out the language impact assessment.

- Re. Special Landscape Areas (SLAs), it was explained that the LUC company had carried out the study. It was explained that a background paper had been prepared which reviewed existing land to see if it was worthy to be called SLA. The scientific evidence supported the designations found in the LDP. It was noted that there was no scientific evidence to support the designation in the Local Plan and that the UDP (Stopped) did not identify SLAs.

An amendment was put forward to appoint an external expert to make a language assessment of the Plan.

In response to this proposal, the officers noted:

It was confirmed that the language assessment carried out was consistent with the recognised methodology. The assessment also informed the relevant part of the Sustainability Assessment. It was noted that careful consideration had been given to the objections about the level of housing growth and distribution and the Welsh language. That work led to a recommendation to make some focussed changes to parts of the Plan. It was emphasised that revisiting the language impact assessment work at this stage would mean having to defer making a decision on the report that was before the Committee. In response to a query whether councils could re-visit the language assessment alongside submitting the Plan for examination, it was confirmed that it was not possible to do so. The submitted Plan must be based on published evidence. Reference was made to the risks of not doing so, and the risks associated with delays in the process at this stage. Objectors would have the opportunity to participate in a discussion about the issues raised in their evidence documents during public hearings at the Examination.

The amendment was not seconded.

An amendment was put forward to designate the Lairds site, near Llanfaes for mixed use.

In response to this proposal, the officers noted:

It was noted that the proposal relates to a site that is the subject of an objection made because the site is not designated in the Deposit Plan. The report about the objection came to the conclusion that not enough robust evidence was received during the public consultation to identify the site for mixed use, including housing. It was stated that, in principle, if relevant evidence were provided, the Plan could facilitate some of the individual uses referred to in the evidence of the objector at the planning application stage. Favourable consideration would not be given to the scale referred to. It was emphasised that agreeing to change the Plan in accordance with the objection was not consistent with evidence about the demand or supply of land for housing, and thus it would mean a fundamental change that would go to the heart of the Plan, undermining its soundness. That would be a significant risk to the process to take the Plan forward to Examination. The objector would have the opportunity to participate in a discussion about the issues raised in his evidence documents during the public hearings at the Examination.

The amendment was not seconded.

It was resolved:

- 1. To support the revised timetable for adoption by the two Councils.**
- 2. To approve the recommended responses to the comments (Appendix A) and the additional paper circulated to the Joint LDP Panel on 29 January 2016.**

3. To approve the Proposed Focussed Changes to the Deposit Plan (Annex B), subject to the additional Paper circulated on 26 January 2016.
4. To approve the Minor changes to the Deposit Plan (Appendix C).
5. To submit the Plan and schedule of Focussed Changes to the Welsh Government for examination.
6. To publish the Focussed Changes for public consultation.
7. To give delegated powers to senior officers and/or the Cabinet Member (Planning and Regulation - GC), Executive Member (Planning and Public Protection - IACC), to agree on possible changes to the Deposit Plan as part of independent Examination process in accordance with Welsh Government guidance.