

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 16 October 2019

PRESENT: Councillor F. Akhtar (Chair)

Councillors:

S.M. Allen (In place of W.R.A. Davies), J.M. Charles (In place of C.A. Davies), H.L. Davies, R.E. Evans, W.T. Evans (In place of G.B. Thomas), S.J.G. Gilasbey, B.W. Jones, H.I. Jones, M.J.A. Lewis (In place of A. Vaughan Owen), S. Matthews and H.B. Shepardson

Also in attendance:

E. Dole, Leader of the Council
L.D. Evans, Executive Board Member for Housing
D.M. Jenkins, Executive Board Member for Resources

The following Officers were in attendance:

L. Quelch, Head of Planning
I.R. Llewelyn, Forward Planning Manager
K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP. - 10.00 - 11.45 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors A. Davies, W.R.A. Davies, D.C. Evans, G.B. Thomas and A. Vaughan Owen.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS INCLUDING ANY PARTY WHIPS ISSUED IN RELATION TO ANY AGENDA ITEM

There were no declarations of prohibited party whips.

The following declarations of personal interest were made:-

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
J.G. Gilasbey	4 – Revised Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2018-2033 Draft Deposit	A relative has submitted a candidate site for inclusion within the Plan
W.T. Evans	4 – Revised Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2018-2033 Draft Deposit	A close relative has submitted a candidate site for inclusion within the Plan
M.J.A Lewis	4 – Revised Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2018-2033 Draft Deposit	Has wind turbines on her farm

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)

No public questions had been received.

4. REVISED CARMARTHENSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2018 - 2033 DRAFT DEPOSIT

(NOTE:

1. Councillor J. Gilasbey having earlier declared an interest in this item left the council chamber during its consideration by the Committee,
2. Councillors W.T. Evans and M.J.A Lewis had earlier declared an interest in this item)

The Committee received for consideration the Revised Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2018-2033 Draft Deposit produced in accordance with Council's decision in January 2018. It was noted that the report represented an important milestone in the Plans' delivery by identifying the Council's land use vision, strategic objectives and strategic growth requirements through to 2033.

The Committee was advised that following its consideration the Plan, including candidate sites and other supporting documents, would be submitted to Council in November 2019 for approval for public consultation, anticipated for December 2019. Any representations received as part of that consultation, along with the Draft Deposit LDP, would then would be reported back to the Council for consideration prior to submission to the Welsh Government in August 2020 for an Examination in Public and formal adoption by December 2021.

It was noted that page 9 of the report's Executive Summary detailed a number of the key themes and policy areas set out within the revised LDP with the Plan's fundamental ethos being the promotion of growth. Those themes and policies had regard to issues such as place making, climate change and the creation of cohesive communities whilst also reflecting Welsh Government National Planning Policies.

The following questions/issues were raised on the report:

- It was noted that Strategic Policy SP12 – Rural development set out how the Plan would support development proposals that would contribute towards the sustainability of the County's rural communities. Whilst those proposals were welcomed, a question was raised on whether the Revised LDP could address the limitations of the current plans policies in relation to the granting of new homes to enable children of farmers to reside on the farm holding.

The Forward Planning Manager advised that whilst the LDP could endeavour to help promote that provision, any adopted policies would have to take cognisance of, and adhere to, National Planning Policies set by the Welsh Government. He advised that the Council's Rural Task Force had previously discussed the issue and made a number of recommendations thereon which had been included within the Draft Deposit Plan, where possible.

The Forward Planning Manager also stated the above position was not unique to Carmarthenshire and was reflected throughout rural Wales. Whilst officers could lobby the Welsh Government on the point, similar political representations would also need to be made.

- Reference was made to 4.30 on page 46 of the report on migration levels and an explanation sought on the reasons for the increase in the 30-44 age group moving into the county.

The Committee was advised that whilst the statistics were showing a positive migration pattern in the above age group, it was difficult to quantify any particular reason behind the statistic. What was evidenced, was the migration was coming from within and not outside Wales and, as part of that inward migration, work was being undertaken on evaluating any positive/negative impact it may be having on the Welsh Language and understanding the nature of the movement and how people integrated into society. The Plan also sought to address the flow of youngsters out of the county to attend universities etc by providing an environment and job opportunities to encourage their return.

- In response to a question on extending an invitation to the Welsh Government Inspector appointed to consider the LDP to address the Council, it was noted that whilst the authority was able to request certain things of an Inspector e.g. to be a Welsh Speaker, acceptance of an invitation would be a matter for the Inspector to consider. The Inspector would be visiting communities across the county as part of the Plan's familiarisation process and an opportunity would be available for members to attend examination sessions where they could participate and convey their views on matters affecting their local communities.
- In response to a question on the potential number of candidate sites to be included within the Draft Plan, the Committee was advised that a total of 926 sites had been submitted. However, as examination of those sites was continuing, it was not possible at the present time to provide a definitive answer on the final numbers to be included in the plan.
- Reference was made to Policy TRA4 on the use of redundant railway corridors for potential future recreational purposes. A view was expressed that the corridors should not be labelled purely for leisure as they could be used as vital commuting routes to regenerate local communities.

The Forward Planning Manager advised that while the policy wording bracketed the usage of the routes for leisure purposes, they would however, in effect contribute as active travel routes and a means of enabling communities to access transport in a different way. The wording could therefore be re-examined and amended if appropriate.

- Reference was made to the progression of the Revised Plan towards its ultimate adoption in December 2021. Clarification was sought on how that progression could impact on the determination of planning applications submitted under the existing LDP.

The Head of Planning advised that as the draft deposit plan progressed to formal adoption consideration would need to be given to introducing a protocol for processing such applications where the decision would not be made until soon after adoption. That would be particularly relevant for large complex applications requiring significant lead in times prior to their determination.

- Reference was made to the Council's recent launches of the Moving Rural Carmarthenshire Forward and also the 10 Towns initiative that aimed to develop individual plans for those towns to provide a long term strategic vision to secure economic, cultural, social and environmental sustainability. Whilst those initiatives were welcomed, it was recognised there could be planning implications for their delivery especially, in relation to the conversion of old buildings in conservation areas. A view was expressed on the need for a flexible approach to be adopted in considering such conversions including, any discussions with CADW.

The Head of Planning confirmed that whilst the Council was keen to progress the 10 towns initiative, it was recognised that difficulties could be encountered in identifying appropriate uses for old buildings. However, the authority would work with CADW to identify acceptable ways forward wherever possible.

- Reference was made to mobile phone coverage across the County and whilst 88% of the county had good coverage the remaining 12% did not. It was considered vital additional masts were erected in the rural areas to increase both coverage and boost regeneration.

The Head of Planning advised that in approving masts consideration had to be given to their environmental and visual appearance especially in sensitive environments and areas of significant natural beauty. In that regard, the authority had recently approved the erection of two masts for the emergency services with a third currently under consideration as part of all Wales proposals for the erection of 89 such masts. Their erection involved discussion with the providers on blending the masts in with the surrounding countryside.

- Reference was made to large scale renewable energy schemes being undertaken within the county and the need to ensure communities benefited from those developments.

The Head of Planning advised that national planning policies were very explicit on the type of contributions local authorities could exact from such schemes and the use of the planning process to facilitate community benefits was not permitted. Accordingly, discussions around community benefits were a matter between the communities and the developer.

- In response to a question on the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) within Carmarthenshire, the Forward Planning Manager confirmed the proposal was currently in abeyance pending clarification from the Welsh Government on the future of Cil's in Wales.
- In response to a question on the Council's recent decision to provide 900 new council homes over the next ten years, the Forward Planning Manager confirmed that had been factored into the Draft Plan and would not result in a corresponding increase in the provision identified for new homes over the plan period.
- Reference was made to the impact the NRW's flood maps were having on development within both historic and other areas that may be prone to flooding. Clarification was sought on whether any discussions had been undertaken with the NRW on revisiting those maps.

The Forward Planning Manager confirmed regular discussions had been held with the NRW on the consideration of candidate sites for the draft plan,

with all sites having been forwarded to that authority for its consideration. The approach sought to avoid any developments falling within a flood plain. He confirmed that the Welsh Government had recently published a revised TAN 15 for consultation and the NRW was currently reviewing the two sets of flood maps for Wales (NRW and the DAM maps) with a view to their replacement by one set which would then be reviewed every six months. This is in contrast to the existing DAM maps which were reviewed every 4-5 years.

The Head of Planning advised that as part of the change to a single set of maps developers would be required to liaise directly with the NRW in advance of submitting planning applications and, where necessary, work with the NRW to prepare revised flood consequence maps thereby speeding up the planning process when an application is subsequently submitted.

- Reference was made to Policy CCH2 on the provision of at least one electric vehicle charging point for new homes and flats. Clarification was sought on whether that provision should be increased in light of the current national emphasis for electric vehicles to replace fossil fuel vehicles.

The Forward Planning Manager confirmed that the current plan provision complied with national policy. However, with the passing of time and technological advances, the plan would be monitored and revisited to assess whether the provision required amending to address evolving circumstances.

- In response to a question on cross border collaboration it was confirmed other local authorities in the South West Wales region have been engaged with and will be consulted on the plan's preparation. That would allow for a potential commonality of approach across the region which, to some extent was covered by the National Development Framework. The Forward Planning Manager also highlighted areas where joint evidence is being prepared between authorities across the region
- In response to a question on Policy SP18 on mineral resources the Head of Planning confirmed that discussion were undertaken regionally on the extraction of minerals. Consultations were also taking place on the development of a Regional Technical Statement to set future extraction levels for inclusion within the LDP. That statement would be particularly important in determining the regional sourcing of aggregates.

With regard to a question on the level of recycled materials currently used within the construction industry, the Committee was informed that whilst the information was not readily available arrangements would be made for its provision to members via e-mail. It was reported that one important element on the use of recycled materials was the 'Circular Economy' that placed an emphasis for their retention on site to avoid transportation costs and to encourage developers at an early stage in a sites development to give consideration to using on site waste. That approach had already been adopted by the authority for a number of its developments.

- Reference was made to the current position whereby the LDP set indicative levels for housing developments only to often find those levels were often exceeded by developers when submitting planning proposals.

The Forward Planning Manager confirmed the above scenario was not

uncommon whereby density levels had been set for each development tier. It was noted that had proved an issue with the current LDP in relation to certain sites. The new plan would adopt a different approach with densities based on how the developments would fit in with the areas character, its local environment and the creation of cohesive communities. Whilst there would inevitable be variations between indicative levels set in the LDP and developers aspirations, part of the approach in the draft plan, especially in relation to large housing developments, would require the submission of a master plan indicating how the development would link with the wider community.

The Head of Planning advised that whilst the current LDP set indicative housing levels, the actual number of units developed was dependent on their design. It was only when a developer submitted development proposals could a full assessment be made on density levels.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL THAT

- 4.1 the Draft Deposit Revised Local Development Plan 2018-2033(and supporting documents) be approved for formal consultation**
- 4.2 the Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance on the Burry Inlet and the Caeau Mynydd Mawr Special Area of Conservation be approved for consultation concurrent with the Draft Deposit LDP**

5. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

The Committee considered a list of forthcoming items to be considered at its next meeting to be held on the 19th November 2019. It was noted there was also an intention for a budget monitoring report to be submitted to the meeting.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items for the Committee meeting to be held on the 19th November, 2019 be agreed subject to the inclusion of a budget monitoring report

CHAIR

DATE