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Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

JOINT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN PANEL

Minutes of Panel meeting held on **17 December 2015**
Glyder Fawr, Caernarfon

Present:

Gwynedd Council

Cllr. John Brynmor Hughes
Cllr. Dafydd Meurig
Cllr. John Pughe Roberts
Cllr. John Wyn Williams

Isle of Anglesey County Council

Cllr. Lewis Davies
Cllr. Richard Dew
Cllr. Victor Hughes
Cllr. William Thomas Hughes
Cllr. John Griffith

Officers:

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| Gareth Jones | Planning, Environmental & Public Protection (interim) Manager (GC) |
| Nia Davies | Manager - JPPU |
| Heledd Jones | Team Leader (Business & Economy) - JPPU |
| Linda Lee | Senior Planning Officer (Business and Economy) - JPPU |
| Jim Woodcock | Head of Planning & Public Protection |

Apologies:

Cllr. Gwen Griffith (Gwynedd), Cllr. John Arwel Roberts (IACC), Cllr. Gethin Williams (Gwynedd – substitute)

1) APOLOGIES

As noted above.

2) DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Cllr John Wyn Williams declared an interest with item 8, specifically with any discussion regarding Menai Bridge as he has family members living locally.

3) URGENT MATTER

No urgent matters were presented.

4) MINUTES

Accepted.

5) REPRESENTATIONS ABOUT POLICIES THAT RELATE TO EMPLOYMENT POLICIES WITHIN THE DEPOSIT PLAN

A presentation was made by Heledd Jones to raise the Panel's awareness of the main issues raised on employment during the Deposit Plan Consultation. The Panel's opinion was sought in relation to the JPPU's initial response to the representations relating specifically to major infrastructure policies, policies facilitating a flourishing local economy and the Plan's employment allocations.

The report and presentation was divided into the following sections:

- Context to assessing the representations
- The employment evidence base
- Main issues raised the initial response

The report concluded that in lieu of the comments received no significant changes would be needed but some focussed changes would be required to ensure that the policies could be more easily interpreted.

Points raised:

- Following the announcement on the news regarding the possible future of Parc Bryn Cegin, clarification was sought over the alternative uses of employment sites and how flexible the policies will be in dealing with such applications.

Responses:

- Policy CYF4 of the Deposit Plan deals with this issue. It is important to recognise that sites are primarily employment sites for B1, B2 and B8 uses. Robust evidence would be required prior to releasing the land for an alternative use. In line with a change in national policy and guidance the JLDP will be more flexible than the UDP in dealing with this matter. Nonetheless, the alternative uses would need to conform to relevant policies in the Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

The Panel supported the direction set out in the report in response to representations received during the formal consultation period, subject to the comments made during the meeting.

6) REPRESENTATIONS ABOUT POLICY PS13 WITHIN THE DEPOSIT PLAN

Nia Davies presented a second report on PS13 (following on from a report on the housing growth level and Welsh language in October 2015) to raise the Panel's awareness of representations received on Policy PS13 (Housing Provision) during the consultation on the Deposit Plan. The Panel's opinion was sought on the Joint Planning Policy Unit's initial response to the representations.

The report and presentation was divided into the following sections:

- Context to assessing representations
- The evidence Councils have to support the housing growth level identified in the Deposit Plan
- The JPPU's initial response to representations on the demand for housing units

The report concluded that in lieu of the comments received no significant changes would be needed but some focussed changes would be required to ensure that the policies could be more easily interpreted.

Points arising:

- General comments were raised regarding Welsh Language Assessments during the planning application process.
- An explanation of the word "churn".
- What would happen to the housing growth level if Wylfa Newydd does not happen?
- There are currently a number of planning applications being granted by both authorities. Is there a risk of over-development – have these permission been taken into account?

Response:

- Policy SP1 provides a local framework to consider language issues, whilst Policy ISA1 deals with planning obligations. A SPG will be prepared to provide guidance about gaining relevant information that will be required to assess the potential language impacts of development.
- Converting household figures into numbers of dwellings has to take account of the fact that there is a continuous supply of housing for sale as well as other houses that are vacant, and in the Plan area's case, that there are a number of second/ holiday homes present. This sometimes described as housing 'churn' – the housing market operating.
- Monitoring the Plan will enable the Council's to identify any major changes in circumstance and the system requires a full review of the Plan to address such changes.
- The Plan period spans 2011-2026. There is a difference between granting planning permission and implementing that permission. The annual monitoring system will take into account development rates in the Plan area and could trigger an early review or the results of the monitoring work would have to be taken into account at the formal review stage.

RECOMMENDATION

The Panel supported the direction set out in the report in response to representations received during the formal consultation period, subject to the comments made during the meeting.

7) REPRESENTATIONS ABOUT POLICY PS15 AND THE DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY WITHIN THE DEPOSIT PLAN

A presentation was made by Nia Davies to raise the Panel's awareness of the main issues raised about PS15 (Settlement Strategy) and the distribution of housing during the Deposit Plan Consultation. The Panel's opinion was sought in relation to the JPPU's initial response to the representations.

The report and presentation was divided into the following sections:

- The distribution strategy
- The JPPU's initial response to representations on the distribution strategy

The report concluded that in lieu of the comments received no significant changes would be needed but some focussed changes would be required to ensure that the policies could be more easily interpreted.

Points arising:

- House prices in many communities of rural Gwynedd are out of reach of most young local people therefore the development boundaries of the villages should be extended to provide ample opportunities for young people to live in their communities.
- How do Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water's comments affect the Plan?

Response:

- The development boundaries have been drawn to reflect the Plan's strategy, which identifies each settlement's role. An indicative housing target is set of each settlement based on its role and the Plan's strategy to facilitate a more balanced housing market and to reffect the plan's sustainability principles. In addition to sites within development boundaries an exception sites policy allows for affordable houses for local people to be built on suitable sites adjacent to the development boundary.
- Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water's comments can be dealt with through the planning application process. None of their comments undermine the Plan's Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

The Panel supported the direction set out in the report in response to representations received during the formal consultation period, subject to the comments made during the meeting.

8) REPRESENTATIONS ABOUT SITES WITHIN THE DEPOSIT PLAN

A presentation was made by Linda Lee to raise the Panel's awareness on site specific representations made during the Deposit Plan Consultation. The Panel's opinion was sought in relation to the JPPU's initial response to these site specific representations.

The report and presentation was divided into the following sections:

- Statistics relating to the representations
- Summary of the main issues raised during the Deposit Plan consultation
- The JPPU's initial response to the representations

The report concluded that in lieu of the comments received no significant changes would be needed but some focussed changes would be required to some inset maps in order to ensure internal consistency of the plan.

Points arising:

- Flooding will become a greater issue in the future and need to ensure the JLDP recognises this.

Response:

- The Flood Consequence Assessments undertaken by the plan take into account climate change.

RECOMMENDATION

The Panel supported the direction set out in the report in response to representations received during the formal consultation period, subject to the comments made during the meeting.

8a) PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AR FORMER LAIRDS SITE, LLANFAES

In response to a request from the Planning and Public Protection Head of Service a report was distributed to members of the Panel highlighting the Council's response to an objection which was received during the consultation period about the Deposit Plan regarding the omission of the former Lairds site, Llanfaes from the Plan. The objector seeks to allocate the land as a mixed-use development site (potential educational, housing, commercial, employment and leisure uses). The Members were given an opportunity to read the report prior to discussion. The report highlighted the

main issues relating to the inclusion of the site for mixed-use purposes within the Joint Local Development Plan and the risks involved in doing so. The report considered the implications of all of the proposed uses for the Deposit Plan's strategy and individual policies in the form of a RAG analysis. The analysis reveals that the residential elements of the proposal do not align with the Plan's Strategy and policies in a manner that were considered to undermine the Plan's soundness. Without prejudice it was considered that proposals involving industrial, leisure or visitor accommodation development could be facilitated by the Plan, without an allocation. Officers were of the view that the objection about the site's exclusion from the Plan for the type of mixed use development described in the submission was not substantiated by robust evidence. The report also sets out concerns that the Plan would determine the location of a new school ahead of a separate process associated with the Schools Modernisation Programme. Members were reminded of a previous Inspector's report about the site's development for housing. All in all the report concluded that the site's allocation represented a fundamental change to the Plan, and could lead to a direction by an Inspector to withdraw the Plan.

The Head of Service explained that the report had been requested as an additional item as the site's redevelopment presents an important opportunity to enable the Isle of Anglesey County Council deliver development that aligns with its corporate strategy, i.e. a new school and new extra care accommodation, on a significant brownfield site. The Corporate Director for Sustainable Development has led on this as the public sector proposals are major priorities in the Corporate Plan. Nonetheless care had to be taken to ensure that the site's inclusion doesn't undermine the Plan. Despite discussions about the site's potential to deliver key development it was suggested that the objector had failed to tackle the key issues.

Points Raised

- Would allocating Lairds as a mixed use site result in having to start the whole Plan process again.
- If elements of the proposal could be facilitated by the Plan it was unclear why the site's allocation would therefore undermine the Plan.
- The ability of Beaumaris to deliver the proposed housing growth for the settlement was questioned.
- A observation was made referring to the fact that the site is a significant brownfield site which would be suitable for development, subject to assurances about the site's contamination. Nonetheless the Plan had reached such an advanced stage that its inclusion wouldn't be worth undermining the Plan at a substantial cost to both authorities. Concerns were also expressed about whether the site would deliver affordable housing for local communities, - lack of housing that is suitable for local households is a key issue locally.

Response

- Officers had discussed a scenario with a Welsh Government officer whereby a change to the Plan involved allocating a site for development, which would involve a substantially higher number of housing than set out in the Plan's strategy in order to gauge whether an Inspector would view it as a focussed change or a fundamental change. It was considered that it would be viewed as a fundamental change to the Plan as the spatial and housing strategy would be undermined. There was therefore a real risk that the Inspector wouldn't be able to take the Plan forward through the Examination.

Furthermore, it was considered that the Isle of Anglesey County Council would have greater control over the type of development that could be provided on the site if it wasn't allocated.

- It was explained that the residential element was a critical sticking point. Since there wasn't any certainty that the Schools Modernisation Programme would lead to this site's selection for a new school and that the objection wasn't able to demonstrate certainty about other elements, there was a real risk that a large site would be allocated which would be promoted for housing. Even with a portion used for a new school there would still be a large piece of land benefitting from an unsubstantiated allocation. Since the Plan's Spatial Strategy seeks to carefully manage

development in and near clusters any development that exceeds 2 affordable housing units would not accord with the Plan.

- The objector has stated that Beaumaris won't be able to fulfil the proposed growth for the local service centre, however no evidence was received to support this statement. If robust evidence had been received that Beaumaris was be unable to deliver the proposed growth, then, in accordance with the spatial strategy the deficit would then be re-distributed to settlements which are higher up the settlement hierarchy due to their sustainability benefits as opposed to Llanfaes which is recognised as a cluster. Reference was also made to the Planning Committee's recent decision to renew a planning consent for housing development on the Casita site.

General comments

- Recognition was given to the fact that the site is seen as being strategically important, however the proposed inclusion of the site at such a crucial stage of the plan preparation process was questioned. Why hadn't the issue been pursued during the initial stages of the Plan preparation process.

9) REPRESENTATIONS ABOUT VARIOUS MATTERS WITHIN THE DEPOSIT PLAN

A presentation was made by Nia Davies to update the Panel on matters that have already been raised during earlier meetings and to raise awareness of further comments on some issues that have already been presented in previous meetings.

These include:

- Policy TAI18 – Clusters
- Policy ADN1 – Renewable Energy
- Policy TAI9 – Affordable Housing
- Policy TAI5 – Local Market Housing
- Policy TAI3 – Purpose Built Transient Construction Workers Accommodation

The report concluded that in lieu of the comments received no significant changes would be needed but some focussed changes would be required to ensure that the policies could be more easily interpreted.

Points Raised:

- Section 106s are a major barrier for getting a mortgage. Can the planning process do anything to alleviate this issue?
- In Gwynedd a number of applications have been granted to delete s106s

Response:

- Section 106 is an accepted mechanism for securing local need affordable housing, provided that the obligation meets the tests. This cannot be done via a planning condition.
- There are instances where planning restrictions have been lifted but these relate to older permissions relating to local need housing. The policy basis for these restrictions is no longer in place and they don't align with national planning policy. No s106 agreements have been removed from a house that was granted permission under the Unitary Development Plan.

10) DATE AND LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING

Next meeting to be held at 10am on the 29th January 2016, Siambr Dafydd Orwig, Caernarfon.