

Flintshire Deposit Local Development Plan 2015 - 2030

Planning Strategy
Group Minutes

September 2019

LDP-KPD-PSG 1

PLANNING STRATEGY GROUP

10.00am – 11th July 2019

Clwyd Room, County Hall

Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Strategy Group of the Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Thursday, 11th July 2019.

PRESENT:

Chair Councillor Chris Bithell
 Councillor Marion Bateman
 Councillor Derek Butler
 Councillor David Evans
 Councillor Patrick Heesom
 Councillor Richard Jones
 Councillor Mike Peers
 Councillor Neville Philips
 Councillor Owen Thomas
 Councillor David Wisinger

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy) (AF)
Service Manager -Strategy (AR)
Planning Policy Team Leader (AW)
Ruth Salisbury – Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

Councillor Richard Lloyd, Councillor Ian Dunbar and Councillor Owen Thomas.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

None.

3. MINUTES

Members discussed the minutes of the last meeting.

DISCUSSION:

A Member drew attention to page four acknowledging that they had received a response from officers regarding unauthorised building work by travellers. However, they advised they were unsatisfied with the response and would take the concerns further.

A Member requested information regarding the “reserve list” of alternative sites noted on page seven, asking whether the list will be published with the LDP. AR advised the reserve list is an internal document and would not be published when the LDP is consulted on. AR said the reserve list is a live document and will be continuously reviewed with input from PSG.

AW added that to support the LDP the Council must demonstrate reasonable alternatives have been considered in the sustainability appraisal report. These alternatives are published but not referred to as a “reserve list.”

A Member asked whether the reserve sites would become public knowledge if a site fails. AR confirmed the list would be considered by PSG and would not be in the public domain. AR added that after deposit, the Council are only meant to make minor changes. Accordingly, it may be the Inspector who decides whether a site is viable should an issue arise.

A Member asked whether the Inspector would have knowledge of the reserve list. AR advised the list would be considered by PSG and the Inspector would not have access to the list. A Member asked whether the perceived lack of a reserve list could be viewed as a negative from the inspector. AR responded that Welsh Government recommend this practice and it would not be considered a negative.

A Member asked about FCC’s position in terms of the flexibility allowance. AR advised that the Council is in a strong position at the upper end of the 10-15% allowance. AW advised that the informal advice from Welsh Government is that the allowance should be fixed and not move between the 10-15%. The Member asked if the reserve list of sites would need to be used to meet this advice of a fixed figure. AR confirmed this would be the case.

A Member asked whether the additional sites in the sustainability appraisal had been the subject of viability work. AR advised that no viability work had been undertaken on actual sites, concentrating instead on 'site typologies'.

A Member asked whether there is the possibility of too many sites coming forward too quickly, given that FCC is at the higher end of the allowance. AR advised potentially this could happen but if the allocated sites deliver early this could prevent speculative sites. In addition AR mentioned it is unknown what TAN1 will recommend and the higher end may be required.

A Member asked would the Inspector have the ability to change the flexibility allowance if a site failed but it still meant FCC were within the 10-15%. AR advised this would be a possibility.

A Member drew attention to the proposed letter about HMOs to Welsh Government on page 10 asking whether this had been drafted. A Member responded that the letter had not been written but that the issue had been raised at cabinet and FCCs legal team are looking into the possibility of data sharing. A response should be provided at the next cabinet meeting.

RESOLVED:

Members agreed the minutes to be an accurate record subject to the comments above.

4. FLINTSHIRE DEPOSIT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2015-2030)

To seek Members endorsement of the Deposit Local Development Plan and for it to go out for formal public consultation in line with the timescales set out in the Revised Delivery Agreement (2019) and to recommend this to Cabinet when the plan is considered at its meeting on 16th July.

DISCUSSION:

A Member introduced this item wishing to thank officers for their work in reaching this point saying that the recent briefings had been excellent sessions in preparing for the LDP to go to Full Council on the 23rd of July.

AF advised this meeting was the second in five steps in reaching the public consultation in September and these dates are bound into the Delivery Agreement with the Minister.

AR was proud to present the full LDP and said it has taken a lot of work over the last four years. He advised that there was nothing in the LDP that PSG had not seen before but it was the first time the plan had been presented in its entirety. He advised the LDP minimised community impacts but maximised the ability for growth adding that the plan should not come as a surprise to communities as ten of the eleven allocated sites are known to the public.

AR advised the plan meets the needs of travellers and this is a requirement if a need exists. AR said the plan identifies sites in advance and this places FCC in a good position to deflect speculative sites.

AR emphasised his confidence in the plan meeting the soundness tests stating the plan “fits” with other published plans and strategies, it “informs” other plans and strategies and the plan is “appropriate” as it matches the evidence collected. AR is confident the plan will deliver and thanked PSG for their help steering the plan to this point.

A Member noted some typos within the plan. AR thanked the Member and was pleased the plan had been well scrutinised.

A Member asked officers to compare details on page 36 of the plan to the LDP objectives on page 4. The Member stated on page 36 it appears to say the LDP does not depend on infrastructure but the objectives on page 41 appear to contradict this. A Member agreed and advised this was raised in the briefings, however the Council cannot plan everything and the relevant bodies have been consulted with regard to the proposed sites.

The Member appreciated this point but suggested the general public may not understand this. AR responded that external bodies have been consulted and have not expressed any concerns with regard to delivery and that the infrastructure plan supports the LDP.

A Member requested clarity regarding affordable housing figures in terms of a contradiction with the recent Northern Gateway reserved matters application. AR advised that in the UDP 30% affordable housing was sought but this figure should take into account viability. AR said the LDP takes a different approach and looks at different percentages for sub-market areas. Based on the housing allocations the LDP approach results in a figure of 1095

affordable dwellings across Flintshire. Using the previous UDP 30% the figure would be lower at 940.

A Member asked whether there is the ability to consider “viability” when making decisions with regard to planning applications. AR advised that as the LDP looks at viability it will be difficult for developers not to meet the affordable housing figures. A Member agreed that viability is a difficult subject. AF suggest some sessions on viability. The group welcomed this.

A Member expressed concerns regarding the dependency of the LDP on the Deeside Plan and said this plan is quoted throughout the LDP. The Member is not convinced that Policies 5 and 9 have looked at other rural and urban parts of Flintshire and as a result finds it difficult to fully support the LDP.

AR advised that a land use plan can only facilitate existing and agreed strategies. He advised the Deeside Plan is an FCC document and existing strategies and documents that have a land use implication have been considered in the formulation of the LDP. He advised the LDP is not the driver but can only be a response to existing documents, adding if a broader transport strategy is produced this might feed into a plan review process.

A Member agreed the Deeside Plan was a FCC document and was part of a growth bid for Deeside. A Member said they were aware of the origins of the plan and agreed it was a good way to obtain money but expressed dissatisfaction that the Deeside Plan was not part of a wider Flintshire plan. The Member added this was their only criticism of the LDP.

A Member suggested that if members of the public wish to make objections to the LDP they may require help with this. AR advised relevant guidance will be prepared to guide people through the objection process.

A Member expressed concern with regard to affordable housing and the issue of viability asking is there sufficient information in the LDP to meet the affordable housing figures. They expressed a need to deliver affordable housing before profit quoting profits from some of the larger house builders.

AR advised a background paper on affordable housing will accompany the plan and this will have the required percentages. In addition there will be closer examination of sites and bespoke work on site viability.

A Member advised they could endorse the Plan although they had some detailed concerns. They encouraged suitable guidance to help the public understand how to object. They brought attention to page 189, Policy 44, HN2: Density and Mix of Development and asked if “*should aim*” could be stronger and also queried reference to “*minimum density*” .

AR advised “*should aim*” picks up on wording from PPW and the uncertainty with SUDS advising a pragmatic and cautionary approach on density is what is required at the moment.

A Member requested a link is inserted on page 189 regarding “space about dwellings” and a link on page 197 to the relevant SPG. AR advised that the SPG is not written yet but will be provided in time.

A Member asked with regard to “the test of soundness” of the plan whether they were FCC specific and what these tests are. AR advised links will be provided to the tests that exist from Welsh Government. In addition, Officers will undertake an assessment of the Plan against the tests prior to publication of the plan. The Member stressed that the public need help with this aspect.

A Member noted that speculative planning applications for housing were still being received and how this would be dealt with. Officers suggested that the Developer Advice Note could be considered in terms of an update.

A Member stated the LDP is a good plan but noted there is opportunity for a better infrastructure plan in the future. They referred to the Deeside Plan and transport infrastructure and the need to consider links to other towns and parts of the County.

A Member brought attention to the addendum document wishing to clarify the Caravan Development policy. AW advised the policy wording is that no further static caravan development will be permitted in the coastal area. The Member was very satisfied with this wording.

A Member sought clarification on the green barrier at Sychdyn and commented about the highways matters relating to the Cae Isa site in New Brighton.

A Member asked whether 17.32 on page 159 meant there would not be any road improvements on the A494(T) between Queensferry and Ewloe. AR advised the Welsh Government

protected line related only to the section between the R. Dee and Queensferry.

A Member asked for clarification regarding Policy 53, HN7: Houses in Multiple Occupation, asking what measures would be used in relation to the number of cars needed for a HMO as the 2007 document, which informed the standard of 0.4 spaces per unit, is not fit for purpose. AR advised that the best available standard had been referenced in the Plan but that this could be looked at and reviewed.

A Member asked whether there is the ability to increase the standard size of parking spaces as cars are now much bigger. AR advised a new parking standard could look at this.

A Member asked whether we could add “off street and on street parking, permit parking etc” as an agenda item for discussion with the Streetscene department, which was agreed.

A Member brought attention to the addendum STR 4 regarding the Welsh language stating that they felt it was a negative not to have a specific policy in the LDP in relation to the Welsh language. AR advised that further research had been carried out which didn't identify any harm to the Welsh language as a result of the proposed development locations outlined in the plan. He advised that the “policy hook” is there with the wording of STR 4. Accordingly, there is reference to protecting and promoting the language but it will be assessed on a site by site basis.

A Member wished to thank the whole of the planning department for their work towards the LDP and their approachable attitude at every stage of the process.

RESOLVED:

Members voted. All except one supported the recommendation.

That Members endorse the content of the Flintshire Draft Deposit Local Development Plan 2015-2030 and forward it to Cabinet for it to recommend its approval by the Full Council at its meeting on 23rd July 2019, to go out for public consultation.

5. FUTURE ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Members requested further discussions regarding viability and a discussion regarding parking. A Member also asked for design to be discussed. AF suggested that if there is a planning appeal

decision at September's committee relating to design, this could be brought for discussion at the next PSG.

10. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

2.00pm, Thursday 19th September 2019, Clwyd Room.

