

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN STEERING GROUP
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND
ON THURSDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2011 AT 5.10PM

Present:-

Councillor M Gregory - Chairperson

<u>Councillors</u>	<u>Councillors</u>	<u>Councillors</u>
R D L Burns	M Lewis	H M Williams
N Clarke	J C Spanswick	M Winter
C J James	K J Watts	R E Young
A Jones		

Officers:-

D Llewellyn	-	Group Manager Development
N Lloyd	-	Policy Team Leader Development Planning
S Ingram		Principal Planning Officer
J Denning	-	Principal Section 106 Officer
B Davies	-	Principal Solicitor
A Rees	-	Senior Democratic Services Officer – Committees
K Stephens	-	Democratic Services Assistant - Electronic Back-up

47 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor G Thomas who had other Council business.

48 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor H M Williams notified the Steering Group that a family member had included a site for consideration reference AS059 in the LDP Alternative Sites and will withdraw from the meeting if discussed.

49 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Local Development Plan Steering Group of the 30 June 2011 be approved as a true and accurate record.

50 BRIDGEND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP): ALTERNATIVE SITES

The Policy Team Leader presented a report which informed the Steering Group of the "Alternative Sites" (also termed "Site Allocation Representations") under the Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) (Regulations 2005) that were submitted during the Deposit Bridgend Local Development Plan (LDP) consultation period which took place on the 4 July to the 9 September 2011. He also presented the alternative sites register and informed the LDP Steering Group of the requirement to consult on the sites to ascertain views on them.

He reported that in accordance with the Regulations the Council must now advertise the alternative sites (Site Allocations Representations) as soon as reasonably practicable after the expiry of the Deposit Consultation period. He

stated that the Alternative Sites and the Site Allocation Representations were received from the public, landowners and other organisations during the Deposit Plan Consultation period and are not Council proposed sites. The alternative sites sought to either:-

- a. Add a new site for a specified land use in the Deposit LDP;
- b. Alter the boundaries of a site allocated in the Deposit LDP or amend details of the site;
- c. Delete a site allocated in the Deposit LDP; or
- d. Amend the settlement boundary of the Deposit LDP.

All the Alternative Sites have been compiled into an Alternative Sites Register and the Council is now required to consult on these sites to ascertain views on them. All representations, including the Alternative Sites contained in the attached Alternative Sites Register, received during the consultation on the Deposit LDP, together with associated supporting information (including Sustainability Appraisals where provided) will be available to view during normal working hours at the Customer Service Centre and all public and mobile libraries in the County Borough.

He reported that the consultation period on the Alternative Sites is six weeks and will commence on 28 October 2011 ending on 9 December 2011. He outlined the consultation programme for the Alternative Sites. The comments received during the Alternative Sites consultation process along with all the representations made on the Deposit LDP will be reported back to the Steering Group and to Council early in the New Year.

RESOLVED: That the LDP Steering Group:-

- (1) Noted the production of Bridgend Local Development Plan Alternative Sites Register;
- (2) Noted the Alternative Sites consultation programme outlined.

51 BRIDGEND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) EVIDENCE BASE:
RETAILING AND COMMERCIAL CENTRES 2010

The Principal Planning Officer reported on the latest annual retail survey of the "health" of the Town and District Centres of the County Borough using indicators to assess their viability, attractiveness and vitality. He stated that it is an objective of both the Welsh Government and the Council (through the Development Plan System and other regeneration activities) that the vitality, viability and attractiveness of town, district, local and village centres are enhanced. The current UDP has specific qualities to help achieve this through the protection and enhancement (through regeneration activities) of these areas. Additionally, the deposit LDP includes specific objectives focussing investment towards the promotion of the town centres so that they act as hubs for growth in retailing and employment opportunities and more detailed policies allocating new retail development and protecting existing retail provision throughout the County Borough. The LDP also sought to enable Bridgend to become an attractive successful sub regional retail and commercial destination which meets the needs of its catchment as well as supporting realistic and viable town and district centres which are attractive and economically successful.

The Principal Planning Officer reported that in recent years the format of the health checks which had been undertaken on an annual basis had been altered so that they had become more compendiums of statistics from a number of sources most notable being the County Borough's annual retail survey. However in light of the emerging LDP and the desire to create a more robust evidence base, it was considered that the documents should become more comprehensive to provide more detail on a number of indicators which enable an accurate assessment of the health of the town centres. This would then enable the Council to more effectively assess the impacts and success of ongoing regeneration initiatives and the LDP.

He outlined the overall findings of the Town Centre Health Checks and the county-wide retail survey for 2010 in respect of Bridgend Town Centre which had seen primary retail rents decreasing and a sharp rise in the number of vacant units on the high street, which is comparable with other towns in the region and better than the national average. Investor confidence in the town had risen with a drop in the primary retail use. The environmental quality of the town had improved which could largely be attributed to the on-going regeneration initiatives of the Centre.

He stated that Porthcawl Town Centre had witnessed a successful year with vacancy rates decreasing, continuing public realm improvements and progress in the initial stages of the waterfront development. In Maesteg Town Centre the numbers of vacant retail outlets had risen but remained comparable with the national average and was due to benefit from major regeneration works which, along with an expectation of improved economic circumstances should contribute to a revitalised Maesteg. The other district centres throughout the County Borough continue to have a mixture of success, with Aberkenfig, Brackla and Pencoed continuing to perform well with high retailing/community occupation rates and continued investment. The remaining centres whilst mostly continuing to provide an important source of local retailing for their respective communities had been less successful in attracting investment, with higher vacancy rates or a dilution of commercial activity by residential uses. The Deposit LDP had revised District Centre boundaries which will improve their focus with policies to increase their attractiveness, vitality and viability. It also allocated Local Service Centres which recognised the role of smaller clusters of retailing units for the important role that they play in their local communities. Once adopted, the Local Service Centres would form part of this annual study in the interest of monitoring their health throughout the plan period.

He reported that the data informing this year's study was representative of the economic climate of 2010 and many of the issues being faced in the area were reflective of the circumstances in most retailing centres in the South Wales area.

RESOLVED: That the LDP Steering Group noted the production of the Retailing and Commercial Centres 2010 report.

The meeting closed at 5.21pm.