



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL RLDP STEERING GROUP

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the RLDP Steering Group meeting held on Thursday, 8 December 2022 at 10.00 am.

County Borough Councillors - RLDP Steering Group Members in attendance:-

Councillor D Grehan
Councillor C Middle
Councillor L Tomkinson
Councillor R Williams

Officers in attendance

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr J Bailey, Head of Planning
Mrs C Hewitt, Planning Policy Team Leader
Mr O Jones, Development Services Manager (Planning Policy)
Mr I Williams, Senior Planning Policy Officer

1 Welcome & Apologies for Absence

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting to receive an update on the progress of the Revised LDP preparation to date.

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors S Rees, J Bonetto, G Hughes, W Lewis, W Owen, M Powell, J Smith, S Trask and G Hopkins.

An apology of absence was also received from the Cabinet Member for Development & Prosperity.

2 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

3 Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the RLDP Members Steering Group on the 27th January 2022 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

4 Introduction & Background

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications provided Members with background to the RLDP Members Steering group for the benefit of new Members. He advised that the RLDP Steering Group was initially agreed by Full Council, to provide the opportunity for the cross party Members Steering

Group to provide their views on all stages and content of the local development plan to ensure there is appropriate consideration in all areas of its preparation.

5 To Appoint a Chair

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint County Borough Councillor L Tomkinson as Chair of the RLDP Members Steering Group.

6 To Appoint a Vice Chair

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint County Borough Councillor D Grehan as Vice Chair of the RLDP Members Steering Group.

7 Introduction and Overview of the Revised Local Development Plan 2022-2037

The Planning Policy Manager and the Planning Policy Team Leader provided an overview of the key points contained within the briefing paper which had previously been circulated to Members to include the following headings:

- Revised Local Development Plan and Delivery Agreement
- Delivery Agreement timetable
- The role of the Members' Steering Group
- Work undertaken to date
- Vision, Issues and Objectives
- Issues in RCT identifies to date
- Growth and Spatial Options
- Strategic Policies

The Vice Chair queried whether there was an opportunity for changing the areas previously identified for the LDP and whether previous developments would be added to the new LDP even if it is felt they are no longer appropriate. The Planning Policy Manager advised that in 2021 and 2022 there was a call for candidate sites where new sites could be submitted. These new candidate sites, along with the current LDP allocations that have not yet been built, will all be assessed in the same way. The appropriate ones will be allocated or re-allocated. Those that are not suitable will not be allocated/re-allocated.

Councillor Middle asked whether social landlords of older, larger town centre developments can be encouraged to develop them, and he referred to the old town hall in Tonypany, which he considered ideal for conversion into flats rather than developing on Brown/Greenfield sites which can be used for other more appropriate facilities. He also queried whether there is a mechanism within the LDP for these types of buildings to be identified.

The Planning Policy Manager agreed that appropriate buildings in town centres that are empty and could suitably be converted to residential use will be identified where possible. He referred to the 'Future Wales National Plan for Wales' (formerly the NDF) which promotes the development of town centre buildings. He also advised that the onus is now on Planning Departments to consider land and town centre buildings for housing development rather than developing on greenfield sites.

The Planning Policy Manager also invited any similar contributions from Members at the meeting or at any time to be considered by the team.

With regards to the growth of housing and housing needs, Councillor Middle sought clarification on the definition of housing need and whether it referred to single dwellings, family homes or HMO's. The Planning Policy Manager referred to the figures derived from the population growth, and the standard equation which means that the housing need will range between 1 and 4 bed dwellings. He added that the local market assessment produced by colleagues in Housing Strategy will identify the affordable housing figure. He added that the LDP and overall housing figure will not meet the affordable housing need and it is a balance between the actual housing need and the private housing sector giving up the required percentage of social housing.

Members were keen for the empty properties within RCT to be a consideration rather than building more houses, for the existing stock of empty properties to be brought back into use, particularly for young families and first-time buyers. The Head of Planning advised that RCT has been awarded £10m through the Valley's Taskforce Fund to oversee the project to bring empty houses back into use and RCT has been identified as the lead authority on the national scheme.

The Vice Chair commented that it is important to make the distinction between social and affordable housing. The Head of Planning advised that it would be useful to provide clarity both through the LDP and to Members through the Planning and Development Committee via a specific session.

Through the discussion of local housing demand, the Vice Chair also referred to the importance of the local housing demand within the LDP rather than national, centrally led demand and identifying how the local demand looks.

A concern was raised by the local member for Tonyrefail and Vice Chair of the Steering Group, requesting that the residents are consulted on and engaged with the LDP as he feared that they did not agree to having further housing developments in the area. The Planning Policy Team Leader confirmed that the residents of RCT would be further consulted on the important issues for the LDP to address early in 2023 and then on the Preferred Strategy proposals in summer 2023.

Councillor Middle commented that the road and rail links (from the Rhondda to Llantrisant and to the M4) need to be improved to relieve the pressure on existing communities and certainly before more housing is developed in these areas. The Planning Policy Team Leader advised that National Policy does not encourage road-based allocations but will provide residents with a choice of transport modes. She added that these issues will be considered before a final spatial policy is developed.

At this point during the proceedings, Members **RESOLVED** to re convene the meeting in the New Year to continue to provide their views on all stages and content of the local development plan to ensure there is appropriate consideration in all areas of its preparation. Members stressed the importance of extending the duration of the subsequent meeting to ensure that appropriate opportunity is afforded to finalise Members' contributions.

8 Next Steps

The Chair thanked Members of the Steering Group and Officers for their time and attendance at the meeting. The Chair confirmed that there would be another meeting to consider the remaining topics within the briefing paper at a future date and time to be confirmed.

This meeting closed at 11.00 am

**L Tomkinson
Chairman.**