



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**10<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2020**

#### **PROPOSALS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MEMBERS STEERING GROUP FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE REVISED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

#### **JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE DIRECTOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATIONS**

### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to firstly inform the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the need to establish a Member's Steering Group to play a formal role in the preparation process of the Revised LDP. It is then necessary to initiate the required procedures to establish such a group.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:-

- 2.1 Establish a Member's Steering Group to play a formal role in the preparation of the Revised LDP. This would include to contribute to the initial identification of the vision, aims and objectives of the Plan, which will then feed into the preparation of the Preferred Strategy and ultimately the draft (Deposit) Revised LDP. The group was proposed in the Delivery Agreement for this revision process, which was agreed by full Council on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019. The draft terms of reference for this group are attached as Appendix 1 of this report, which will be subject to further consideration through the Overview and Scrutiny committee.
- 2.2 Submit their nominations for the membership of the Revised LDP Member's Steering Group to progress the work in coming months.

### **3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Revised LDP Delivery Agreement, as agreed by Council, commits Rhondda Cynon Taf to prepare a revision of their LDP within a 3.5 year timescale, beginning in June 2020; subject to agreement by Welsh Government to proceed (to be sought in May). There is therefore a

need to ensure that the Members Steering Group is fully set up and informed of their role, prior to this formal commencement of the process. A fundamental element of the preparation of the LDP is to ensure participation by all necessary stakeholders in it. This would include, but not be limited to, Members, officers, the public, community groups, private developers/industry representatives and other specific consultee bodies e.g. NRW.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP was adopted in 2011. The LDP sets out its aims, vision and objectives for the future of the County Borough, a spatial development strategy and a land use planning policy framework to enable its successful delivery. The LDP has formed the basis for decisions on new development in the County Borough, (excluding the area within the Brecon Beacons National Park) since 2011, with the plan having an end date of 2021.
- 4.2 The Council has reviewed the current Local Development Plan and concluded that a Revised LDP is required. This was due to a number of issues including significant changes in Legislation and Policy since the current plan was prepared and failure to deliver the allocations as expected. On the 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019, Full Council agreed to undertake the preparation of this Revised LDP, (subject to Welsh Government (WG) approval).
- 4.3 The proposed timescales for this process begins with submission of the Delivery Agreement to WG in May 2020, to secure their approval. Preparation of the aims, objectives and vision stages of the revision, along with the updating of necessary evidence base, will then begin in July. This will inform the Preferred Strategy that should be written for public consultation by August 2021. The subsequent detailed policies and site specific allocations will then be finalised to form the Deposit LDP for public consultation in July 2022. The third key stage is then its submission to WG, and the associated examination in public, led by an Independent Planning Inspector who determines if the Revised LDP is 'sound'.
- 4.4 As mentioned above, the LDP sets out a spatial development strategy for the County Borough, giving consideration to all existing social, economic and environmental factors. This 'Preferred Strategy' will seek to determine what levels of population and associated development growth are likely to be witnessed over the plan period to 2030 through analysis of updated evidence; or otherwise what aspirations are there for further growth? Moreover, it also sets out where this should most appropriately occur.
- 4.5 The LDP should then ensure that it is able to meet these needs, through incorporating appropriate policies and sufficient site specific

allocations. There should be further associated policies to allow for continued suitable development management decision making in RCT. The land use development themes that the LDP should therefore cover include the following;

- Housing,
- Industrial/Commercial,
- Retail,
- Highways,
- Transport,
- Minerals,
- Waste,
- Environmental,
- Ecological,
- Renewable energy,
- Open space,
- Leisure,
- Tourism,
- Climate change/Carbon Neutral (etc).

4.6 The Member's Steering Group has been proposed to guide and assist in the preparation and formulation of the Revised LDP, through the forthcoming Preferred Strategy and Deposit stages. It is intended to provide an effective mechanism for discussion and consultation between Members and LDP officers on these stages and content of the Plan.

4.7 The LDP revision process will incorporate a number of discussion groups, focus groups and workshop sessions in a bid to maximise engagement and ensure a community-led approach, as far as possible. The input of other groups and organisations will also be key to the success of the revised LDP. It will be the case that the Members Steering Group will also work alongside other identified groups under a broader LDP Forum, during specific preparatory stages of the plan, such as the Visioning events, etc.

4.8 The process is a revision of the current LDP, however, there have been significant changes in legislation and policy at national level, along with changing policy, agendas and priorities at Council level, since the preparation of the current Plan. For example, the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, carbon neutral and climate change requirements and the evolving tourism sector in RCT will have an impact on the revised Plan. Equally, the annual monitoring of the current LDP has indicated that this Plan has not delivered as was expected, due in no small part to market and economic changes over the past decade. Again, these impacts need to be considered when revising the LDP. In particular, contributions from the Member's Steering Group on how these matters should be addressed in the revision is one of its key purposes.

- 4.9 It is proposed that the Overview and Scrutiny committee nominate members to the group and also appropriate numbers. This would be discussed and determined at the committee meeting. However, there clearly needs to be an appropriate cover of Members from all parts of the County Borough, whilst also taking into consideration existing Member committees and groups with responsibilities associated with the broad aims and objectives of an LDP. As indicated above, there are draft terms of reference for the proposed group attached as Appendix 1 of this report, which will be subject to further consideration through the Overview and Scrutiny committee.

## **5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Equality or Diversity implications will be considered as part of the Working Group's recommendations and at subsequent implementation arrangements.

## **6. CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 There are no consultation implications arising, as yet, from this report, however wider consultation with members not sitting on this Overview and Scrutiny committee may be required for their inclusion.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Financial and resource implications will be considered as part of the Steering Group's recommendations and any subsequent implementation arrangements.

## **8. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- 8.1 The work undertaken by the proposed Revised LDP Member's Steering Group will allow for the preparation of the Revised LDP in a manner that further embraces the Corporate Plan, along with the wellbeing goals and five ways of working as identified within *WCFG Act*. 1.4.2. Preparation of the revised LDP will also include consideration of a host of guidance, policy and legislation emanating from the European, national, regional and local level. The revised LDP will also be guided by the aims and objectives set forth in the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan 2018-2023 entitled *Our Cwm Taf*. These are centred around having thriving communities, healthy people and a strong economy, with the cross cutting objective of tackling loneliness and isolation. The revised plan will also be influenced by the cultural, economic, environmental and social well-being goals and objectives within *Our Cwm Taf*, where they relate to land-use planning.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **REVISED LDP MEMBERS STEERING GROUP - DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE**

#### **Purpose**

The Members Steering Group has been established to play a formal role in the preparation of the Revised LDP. The need for this group was identified in the formulation of the Delivery Agreement for the revision of the LDP. A summary of its purpose is to provide an effective local focus and mechanism for discussion and consultation on the needs and aspirations of, and opportunities for, local communities, and on the appropriateness of particular policies or land allocations to meet them through the revision of the LDP.

A number of formal forums and steering groups will be formed through the LDP revision process. A number of consultation methods and techniques will also be employed in order to facilitate involvement throughout the plan-making process. These will include discussion groups, focus groups and workshop sessions in a bid to maximise engagement and ensure a community-led approach.

It is considered that the role of the Revised LDP Member's Steering Group is to serve as a mechanism to incorporate the views of its specific representative Members, through meetings and workshop discussion and consultation. This will be throughout the key preparatory stages of the LDP revision process, being the identification of the vision, aims and objectives of the Plan, which will then feed into the preparation of the Preferred Strategy and ultimately the draft (Deposit) Revised LDP. The further objectives of the Member's Steering Group are set out below.

#### **Objectives**

- To assist in the overall Plan making process, including Visioning, Strategy formulation and Policy development.
- To advise officers of the Council in the development of the LDP.
- To contribute to the development and improvement of the evidence base.
- To facilitate better communication, consultation and liaison across the Authority through early and regular involvement in the LDP process.

- To consider the community's response to consultation on land use policy issues.
- To help achieve consensus through open and transparent dialogue on key strategic and policy issues.
- To ensure the integration of the LDP with the Corporate Plan 2020 - 2024
- To keep under review the conformity of LDP policies with relevant European and National guidance and in particular RCT and regional level strategies.

### Membership

The LDP Forum shall comprise of an appropriate number of Members, from a range of all geographic parts of RCT, if possible. It is expected that members will also be representatives of other committees and groups that have responsibilities for matters associated with the LDP, again, where possible.

On occasion, 'visiting members' may be asked to attend the group to assist in particular areas of discussion.

Conversely, the Members Steering Group, or Members within, will be invited to take part in broader Revised LDP engagement events, alongside members of other steering groups and forums. These may include officers, public bodies, private industry, community groups and representative members of the public.

### Charing of the meeting

The Members Steering Group will be chaired by Councillor Robert Bevan, Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development and Housing.

### Responsibilities

The LDP process can often be controversial, bringing together many different opinions and views on the future development of an area. It is important therefore to seek to establish the general responsibilities for all members of the Member's Steering Group, to ensure the process is undertaken in a fair, open and efficient manner.

It is the responsibility of Revised LDP Member Steering Groups:-

- to make a commitment to the process – to attend, contribute and generally assist the process of seeking consensus.
- to be willing to listen and engage in discussions and do so with an open mind.
- to respect the opinions of others.

- to have mechanisms in place to enable them to communicate regularly with the constituency they represent, in order to ascertain and report their views to the Group and to inform them of the Group's work.
- to put the wider interests of the Community before other, narrower, interests.
- to highlight what they consider to be any gaps in the evidence base.
- to acknowledge the strict timetable for the production of the LDP and, as far as is practicable, to work to the timetable set out in the Revised LDP Delivery Agreement.

### Meetings

Member Steering Group meetings will be held at specific key stages of the preparation of the LDP revision process. This is unlikely to be more than quarterly, although may be more or less infrequent as the progression of the stages require.

### Declaration of Interest

Members of the Forum should declare publicly any interest they or the organisation they represent may have in a particular stage or element of Plan preparation, before discussion of the matter begins, particularly where they or the organisation they represent would stand to benefit directly or indirectly. Such declarations will be recorded formally in the minutes of the meeting.

Any member declaring a direct or personal financial interest may be asked by the Chair to withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the discussion of that item, or may otherwise be required not to participate in that discussion or in any decision arising therefrom.

### National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales

It should be further noted that Rhondda Cynon Taf Council has endorsed the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales, to which the Revised LDP will follow. The principles and standards have been developed and endorsed by the Welsh Government to make sure that participation happens in consistent and effective ways.

- 1. Engagement is effectively designed to make a difference** - Engagement gives a real chance to influence policy, service design and delivery from an early stage.
- 2. Encourage and enable everyone affected to be involved, if they so choose** - The people affected by an issue or change are included in opportunities to engage, as an individual or as part of a group or community, with their views both respected and valued.

- 3. Engagement is planned and delivered in a timely and appropriate way** - The engagement process is clear, communicated to everyone in a way that is easy to understand within a reasonable timescale, and the most suitable method(s) for those involved is are used.
- 4. Work with relevant partner organisations** - Organisations should communicate with each other and work together wherever possible to ensure that people's time is used effectively and efficiently.
- 5. The information provided will be jargon free, appropriate and understandable** - People are well placed to take part in the engagement process, as they have easy access to relevant information that is tailored to meet their needs
- 6. Make it easier for people to take part** - People can engage easily as any barriers for different groups of people are identified and addressed.
- 7. Enable people to take part effectively** - Engagement processes should try to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of all participants.
- 8. Engagement is given the right resources and support to be effective** - Appropriate training, guidance and support are provided to enable all participants to effectively engage, including both community participants and staff.
- 9. People are told of the impact of their contribution** - Timely feedback is given to all participants about the views they express and the decisions or actions taken as a result; methods and forms of feedback should take account of participants' preferences.
- 10. Learn and share lessons to improve the process of engagement** - People's experience of the process should be monitored and evaluated, to measure its success in engaging people and the effectiveness of that participation. Lessons should be shared and applied in future engagements.

The Council is also developing Corporate Consultation Standards. Consultation during the LDP will also be consistent with these standards once published.