



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RECORD OF DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION

SUBJECT: Consultation on the Welsh Government Review of the Local Development Plans Process Review.

PURPOSE OF ATTACHED REPORT:

The purpose of the report is to outline the contents of Rhondda Cynon Taf's response to the Welsh Government consultation on the Local Development Plans Process Review, prior to its submission to the Welsh Government.

DELEGATED DECISION (Date):

That the consultation response; is agreed prior to the Director of Regeneration and Planning submitting the document to the Welsh Government.


Chief Officer Signature

STEVE MARLETT
Print Name

Date 13/1/15

The decision is taken in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act, 2000 (Executive Functions) and in the terms set out in Section 5 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution



NCERT

NCERT

NCERT

NCERT

NCERT

NCERT



CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE

6/1/15

DATE

OFFICER CONSULTEE SIGNATURE

DATE

| | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| Directorate: | Regeneration and Planning |
| Contact Name: | Simon Gale |
| Designation: | Service Director for Planning |
| Tel.No. | 01443 494716 |



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014 - 2015 REPORT TO ACCOMPANY DECISION OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Part 1

(Non Confidential)

RHONDDA CYNON TAF CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROCESS REVIEW

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to outline the contents of the response to the consultation on the Local Development Plan Process Review prior to the submission of the document to the Welsh Government

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that:

(1) The contents of the consultation response are agreed prior to the Service Director Planning submitting the document to the Welsh Government.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Local Development Plans (LDP's) are land use documents which outline and provide certainty about what kind of development will take place and where it will be located over the plan period. The Welsh Government has recently undertaken a consultation exercise called the LDP refinement process. This looked at how the LDP process could be made more effective and efficient using the practical experiences that Local Authorities and other stakeholders have acquired through developing these plans. As a result of the refinement process the Welsh Government are proposing changes to the regulations for the production of LDP's. These changes are based on the key outcomes identified in the LDP refinement exercise through a combination of amendments to secondary legislation and to National guidance.

4. THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS PROCESS REVIEW CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

- 4.1 The main changes being proposed are:

- a. **Increase and improve front-loading of the process**, with a more integrated approach to incorporating sustainability appraisal/ strategic environmental

- assessment fully into the preparation, a more informative Preferred Strategy and the removal of the Alternative Sites stage of the LDP process (Reg.20&21).
- b. **Reduce the required stages for plan revision**, by introducing a short-form procedure for changes which do not go to the heart of the plan.
 - c. **Repackaging of the soundness tests**
 - d. Provide greater clarity in relation to the **evidence base, deliverability, monitoring and review**.

4.2 The following questions were posed in the consultation and a summary of the Council's response is included below:

- **Front-loading/ alternative sites** – This change proposes to front-load the LDP production process which will include a much more detailed Preferred Strategy. It is also proposed to include the Candidate Sites consultation early on in the process and to remove the Alternative Sites stage of the LDP.

The Council would support these changes as they would provide much more clarity and transparency to the process. Removal of the Alternative Sites stage and bringing the Candidate Sites consultation forward in the process will reduce confusion surrounding it. **Review Report** – Local Authorities have a statutory obligation to review its LDP every four years from adoption. It is proposed that Local Authorities should produce a review report document which justifies whether the Local Authority finds it appropriate to undertake a full or partial review of the plan.

The Council would support the production of a review report document as it provides the Local Authority with the opportunity to explain its position in relation to the review and ensures transparency. Clearer guidance is sought however, in relation to the process and the content of the report.

- **Short-form Revision Procedure** – The Welsh Government are proposing to introduce a short form revision procedure which will allow Local Authorities to make minor changes to the LDP without having to go through the full LDP procedure.

The Council would fully support this proposal as it will save time, money and resources and would be more appropriate if there were only minor changes to be made. Greater clarity is sought however regarding the process including timescales.

- **Soundness Tests** – The package of soundness tests which need to be met to ensure an LDP is 'sound' are proposed for clarity and simplicity.

The Council neither agrees nor disagrees with this change. Whilst simplifying the tests is fully supported, some further clarity is needed around some of the wording included within the tests.

- **Integrated Approach** – The changes propose to fully integrate the Strategic Environmental Assessment into the LDP process.

The Council would support this proposal as it would provide greater clarity for the public regarding how sustainability has been addressed at every stage of

the LDP. The Council would disagree however that the new approach would produce significant savings as it is still a complicated process.

- **Resources** – It is proposed to add ‘resources’ as a matter to which regard must be had at Regulation 13. The Council disagrees with this change. Whilst it is agreed that allocations in the plan need to be deliverable there is concern that it is too onerous on Local Authorities to ensure that resources are in place so that every site comes forward as there are often many factors outside of its control such as landownership issues.
- **End date** – The changes propose that the end date of the plan is added to the title on the front cover of the LDP. The Council would not necessarily disagree with this and our own LDP already shows this. However the Council does have concerns and would seek reassurance that mechanisms are in place if the production of an LDP was delayed. Welsh Government needs to ensure that there are sufficient ‘safety nets’ in place to avoid a policy vacuum if a Council did not renew its LDP.
- **Notice by local advertisement** – It is proposed to remove the requirement to place statutory notices in the local press. The Council fully supports this as it will produce savings for the Council and will also allow for the more effective consultation with the public.
- **Consultees** – The Council has no reason to disagree with the new list of statutory consultees in the regulations.
- **Guidance package** – The changes proposed will result in the reduction of the package of guidance documents for LDP production to two, removing the need for LDP Wales. The Council supports this change; the regulations have been made more succinct precluding the need for LDP Wales.
- **Errors** – The Council identifies no factual errors in the document.
- **Any other comments** – The Council will seek clarification on some use of terminology in the documents.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Council agree the majority of the changes proposed by the revision of the LDP regulations. Any changes that help streamline the LDP process and help engage the local community are welcomed. However some further clarity is required in some areas of the guidance along with further explanation.

