

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
29 SEPTEMBER 2020

Minutes of the special meeting of Flintshire County Council held as a remote attendance meeting on Tuesday, 29 September 2020

PRESENT: Councillor Marion Bateman (Chair)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Bernie Attridge, Janet Axworthy, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Sean Bibby, Chris Bithell, Helen Brown, Clive Carver, Geoff Collett, Bob Connah, David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Jean Davies, Rob Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Chris Dolphin, Rosetta Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, Mared Eastwood, Carol Ellis, Veronica Gay, Patrick Heesom, Cindy Hinds, Dave Hughes, Kevin Hughes, Ray Hughes, Paul Johnson, Joe Johnson, Rita Johnson, Christine Jones, Richard Jones, Tudor Jones, Colin Legg, Brian Lloyd, Richard Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Hilary McGuill, Billy Mullin, Ted Palmer, Mike Peers, Michelle Perfect, Vicky Perfect, Neville Phillips, Ian Roberts, Tim Roberts, Kevin Rush, Tony Sharps, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Ralph Small, Ian Smith, Carolyn Thomas, Owen Thomas, Martin White, David Williams, David Wisinger and Arnold Woolley

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Derek Butler, Ron Davies, David Evans, David Healey, Gladys Healey and Andy Williams

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy), Chief Officer (Housing and Assets), Service Manager Strategy, Legal Services Manager, Team Leader Planning Policy, Democratic Services Manager, Democratic Services Team Leader and Democratic Services Officers

8. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2020 were approved as a correct record, subject to an amendment by Councillor Owen Thomas, as moved and seconded by Councillors Bithell and Paul Shotton. Approval of the minutes of 27 February 2020 was moved and seconded by Councillors Bithell and Peers.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the amendment on the minutes of 18 February 2020, both sets of minutes be approved as a correct record.

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chief Officer (Governance) reiterated the advice given to Members throughout the Local Development Plan (LDP) process on the various circumstances where a prejudicial interest would apply. He reminded Members of the nature of interests declared when the Deposit LDP was approved in July 2019.

On that basis, the following Members declared a personal and prejudicial interest and would leave the meeting before the item:

- Councillor Glyn Banks - closely associated person owning an allocated site.
- Councillor Bob Connah - related to occupier of land in the Local Development Plan (LDP).
- Councillors David and Gladys Healey - having opposed a site in the LDP (not in attendance).
- Councillor Joe Johnson - owner of land within the LDP.
- Councillor Hilary McGuill - related to owners of land within the LDP.
- Councillor Ralph Small - property overlooking one of the candidate sites.
- Councillor Andy Williams - home and business near to a candidate site (not in attendance).

The following Members declared a personal interest:

- Councillor Christine Jones - having supported the Northern Gateway development.
- Councillors Paul Cunningham, Michelle Perfect, Vicky Perfect and Ian Roberts - Members of Flint Town Council which had objected to a candidate site.
- Councillor Ted Palmer - as a close friend of Councillor Joe Johnson.
- Councillor Mike Peers - recently made aware that a distant relative had been part of the consultation.
- Councillor Kevin Rush - plans possibly submitted by a distant relative.
- Councillor Martin White - property backing onto a site in the LDP.

10. FLINTSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN - CONSIDERATION OF DEPOSIT CONSULTATION REPRESENTATIONS AND RESPONSES AND SUBMISSION FOR PUBLIC EXAMINATION

The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) introduced the report for Members to consider and agree the Council's responses to representations received to the Deposit Local Development Plan (LDP) consultation exercise. This was a key stage towards achieving one of the priorities within the Council Plan, to adopt the LDP and it had been subject to lengthy scrutiny by the cross-party Planning Strategy Group (PSG). One priority of PSG was to protect existing Green Barrier land and Settlement boundaries where possible. If agreed by Members, the Plan would be submitted to the Welsh Government and Planning Inspectorate for Public Examination by an independent Planning Inspector, providing an opportunity for further representations to be made at the discretion of the Inspector.

The Service Manager Strategy gave a presentation covering:

- Purpose
- The Deposit LDP, the Council's Plan
- Main elements of Plan strategy
- Deposit LDP housing allocations

- Consultation on Deposit LDP
- Work of Planning Strategy Group
- Consideration of representations
- Main issues raised
- Pressures
- Example Green Barrier comparison map
- Submission of the Plan
- Member briefings and Cabinet recommendation

The presentation highlighted the range of benefits in adopting a Plan, the approach to responding to representations and the broad spread of sites in sustainable settlements - some of which had potential for early development. A key element of the process was the contributions of the PSG in scrutinising progress and making recommendations to Cabinet that were now submitted to Council for approval. The Service Manager advised that Welsh Government had found no fundamental issues with the soundness of the Plan and that key infrastructure providers/stakeholders had raised no major objections. Work was continuing with Natural Resources Wales to resolve flood risk concerns on five small employment sites. In summary, having considered all representations and evidence, there were no significant changes recommended to the Plan with only minor editing/wording changes required for clarity.

The Chair thanked the officers and their team, together with PSG Members for their work on this matter.

During the item, a number of Members also paid tribute to the officers and PSG Members for their commitment to the lengthy process in producing a sound Plan.

As Chair of the PSG, Councillor Bithell moved the recommendations - as endorsed by Cabinet - and highlighted the importance of progressing to adopting a Local Development Plan for Flintshire.

As Vice-Chair of the PSG, Councillor Peers seconded the proposal and echoed the positive comments about the work of all those involved in the process. He referred to a potential conflict on the response to the proposal for an original candidate site as an employment site and asked if this could be reviewed prior to the Council issuing its full response. He thanked officers for more clarity on changes to the Green Barriers and asked if Members could comment on those comparison maps.

The Service Manager said that, whilst Members were welcome to raise queries with him on the review of Green Barriers, there could be no extension to the consultation period. The comparison maps would be made available publicly to support any comments submitted by third parties during the examination stage. It was agreed that the officer would liaise with Councillor Peers on his initial point which would be a clarification, rather than a change to the Council's response.

Following comments by Councillor Dunbar, the Service Manager spoke about the comprehensive review of Green Barriers by the PSG which sought to protect

areas such as Wepre Park. He also provided clarification on the introduction of a specific policy on Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) within the LDP.

Councillor Richard Jones said that the delay in adopting an LDP - which was no reflection on the work of the Planning department - had resulted in the Deeside Plan being used as a document to underpin and subsequently weaken the LDP. He said that the Deeside Plan, which had not been subject to wider consultation, should never have been used to inform the LDP and he considered other documents used to evidence the LDP appeared to be biased towards the Deeside area. For that reason, he was unable to support the first recommendation.

In response, the Service Manager said that the Deeside Plan was one of a large number of relevant plans and strategies in the public domain that were referenced as a material consideration on the soundness of the LDP. He went on to refer to the broad spread of allocated sites within the LDP which spanned the whole of Flintshire.

Whilst Councillor Heesom agreed with some parts of the LDP, he said that the focus was around the Northern Gateway and Warren Hall, and had concerns that areas to the west of the County - including Mostyn - were not represented. He said that issues such as the handling of employment land, flood defences and climate change had not been addressed sufficiently.

On the points raised, the Service Manager said that there were a number of strategic sites that had existed for some time which were appropriately reflected in the Plan and that the importance of Mostyn Docks had been recognised in the Proposals Map. He explained that ongoing engagement with Natural Resources Wales to resolve the employment land issues relating to five small sites did not significantly affect delivery of objectives of the Plan nor its soundness.

In welcoming the report, Councillor Gay expressed her disappointment that Saltney was not adequately represented in the LDP and said that more investment was needed in that area. She shared the concerns raised by Councillor Dunbar about HMOs.

Councillor Christine Jones welcomed the progression of the Northern Gateway development as an important strategic site which would benefit other areas of Flintshire as well as the region.

Councillor Tony Sharps noted the next stage of the process and raised concerns about the infrastructure required to support housing developments. In response, the Service Manager clarified that there was no scope to introduce new sites at this stage and that the Planning Inspector would review the representations and supporting evidence as submitted. The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) said that relations with key infrastructure providers would continue in order to provide statements of common ground at the public examination stage. On the County Hall complex, the Chief Executive said that following the demolition of Phases 3 and 4, there was no agreed use for that part of the site and would need future determination as the opportunity arose.

Councillor Ellis praised the work undertaken but did not support the Plan as she felt the road infrastructure could not support development sites put forward for Buckley.

The Chair said that whilst she supported both recommendations, her concern with an aspect of one particular candidate site would be raised at the next stage of the process.

Following the debate, the Chief Officer (Governance) suggested that the recommendations remain as set out in the report and that the Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) bring a report back to clarify the limited scope for him to make any changes in wording that would not affect the substance of the Plan, for Members to consider.

To reflect some of the concerns raised during the item, Members were invited to vote on each recommendation in turn. Having been moved and seconded earlier in the meeting, both recommendations were put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council note the representations made during the Deposit Local Development Plan consultation (appendix 1) and endorse the recommended responses, and agree that they will be forwarded to the Welsh Government and the Planning Inspectorate for consideration as part of the examination in Public; and
- (b) That the Council agree that the Flintshire Local Development Plan (2015-2030) be Submitted to the Welsh Government and the Planning Inspectorate for Examination in Public.

11. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2pm and ended at 3.50pm)

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Chair