

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
23 JULY 2019

Minutes of the meeting of Flintshire County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 23 July 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Marion Bateman (Chair)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Janet Axworthy, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Sean Bibby, Chris Bithell, Helen Brown, Derek Butler, Clive Carver, Geoff Collett, Bob Connah, David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Jean Davies, Ron Davies, Chris Dolphin, Rosetta Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, Mared Eastwood, Carol Ellis, David Evans, Veronica Gay, George Hardcastle, David Healey, Gladys Healey, Patrick Heesom, Cindy Hinds, Dave Hughes, Kevin Hughes, Ray Hughes, Joe Johnson, Paul Johnson, Christine Jones, Richard Jones, Tudor Jones, Colin Legg, Brian Lloyd, Richard Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Billy Mullin, Mike Peers, Vicky Perfect, Neville Phillips, Ian Roberts, Tony Sharps, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Ralph Small, Ian Smith, Carolyn Thomas, Martin White, Andy Williams, David Williams and David Wisinger

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Bernie Attridge, Sian Braun, Rob Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Andrew Holgate, Dennis Hutchinson, Rita Johnson, Hilary McGuill, Ted Palmer, Michelle Perfect, Mike Reece, Owen Thomas and Arnold Woolley

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive; Chief Officer (Governance); Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy); Service Manager Strategy; Team Leader, Planning Strategy; Democratic Services Team Leader; and Democratic Services Officer

27. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting on 18 June 2019 were received and approved, subject to an amendment on minute number 20 (Notice of Motion on limiting Council Tax increases). Councillor Carver clarified that his suggestion had been to enable a decision to be reached, which could be later amended if required, as deferral until September could cause complications due to the six month rule.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the amendment, the minutes be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chief Officer (Governance) explained the need for decisions to be based on public interest and the importance of public perception in having confidence in the decision-making process, which particularly relevant to the principal item of business, the Flintshire Deposit Local Development Plan (LDP) as it involved a large number of interested parties. In advance of the meeting, clear written advice had been provided

to all Members to help them consider whether they had a prejudicial interest if the matter affected their own wellbeing or financial position - or that of close personal associates. This not only applied to candidate sites in the LDP but also those which had been rejected and could potentially be re-submitted at a later stage. Whilst Members who had lobbied for or against the inclusion of a candidate site were advised to declare a personal and prejudicial interest, the exemption within the Code of Conduct meant that Members of another authority (such as a Town or Community Council) which had objected to a site, need only declare a personal interest. Membership of an internal body such as the Planning Strategy Group did not constitute a prejudicial interest.

The Chief Officer gave notice that Members declaring a personal and prejudicial interest would be invited to attend a separate session to discuss opportunities in which they could represent their communities as part of the consultation process.

The following Members declared a personal and prejudicial interest and would leave the Chamber before the item:

- Councillor Bob Connah - related to occupier of land in the LDP.
- Councillors David and Gladys Healey - having opposed a site in the LDP.
- Councillor Joe Johnson - joint owner 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.

The following Members declared a personal interest:

- Councillor Christine Jones - having supported the Northern Gateway development.
- Councillors Paul Cunningham, Vicky Perfect and Ian Roberts - Members of Flint Town Council which had objected to a candidate site.

29. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair's Communications had been circulated to all Members prior to the meeting. She highlighted a number of events and thanked all those who had attended the Flintshire Civic Service at St Eurgain and St Peter's Church, Northop.

30. PETITIONS

None were received.

31. FLINTSHIRE DEPOSIT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2015-2030)

Having earlier declared a personal and prejudicial interest, Councillors Bob Connah, David Healey, Gladys Healey, Joe Johnson, Ralph Small and Andy Williams withdrew from the Chamber before the start of this item.

The Chief Executive introduced a report to seek approval of the Deposit Local Development Plan (LDP) covering the period 2015-2030 to be taken forward for public consultation between 30 September and 11 November 2019, as recommended by

Cabinet. This represented a key milestone to enable the public and other stakeholders to comment on the Deposit Plan as part of the timetable towards the Council fulfilling its statutory duty to adopt a final LDP.

The Service Manager Strategy gave a detailed presentation covering the following:

- What is the LDP
- LDP timetable
- The Deposit LDP
- What does the Plan represent
- Supporting documents
- Challenges to progress
- Consistent focus for Planning Strategy Group
- Purpose of public consultation
- Likely contentious issues
- Housing growth and allocations
- How have we selected sites
- LDP housing allocations
- Provision for Gypsies and Travellers
- Provision of infrastructure
- Soundness tests
- Approving the Deposit LDP for consultation
- Importance of approving Deposit LDP
- What happens after Deposit

The Service Manager Strategy said that this was the culmination of significant work undertaken to develop a Plan that was fit for purpose, demonstrating soundness and maximising growth strategy whilst minimising the impact on communities. He commended the positive engagement at Planning Strategy Group for its work on this complex matter and said that the Council's approach to housing delivery had helped to strengthen its position on the LDP.

The Chair took the opportunity to thank the Service Manager and his team for their work and she paid tribute to Members of the Planning Strategy Group chaired by Councillor Bithell and formerly chaired by Councillor Attridge.

During the debate that followed, many Members expressed their gratitude to the officer team for their professionalism and diligence. Members of the Planning Strategy Group, who were also thanked for their contributions to the process, spoke about the effectiveness of the Group in its deliberations.

As Chair of the Planning Strategy Group, Councillor Bithell thanked the officer team for their comprehensive work on the Plan and also fellow Members of the cross-party Planning Strategy Group. In highlighting the importance of maintaining progress on the timetable, he said that many of the candidate sites were already in the public domain, accommodated by minor changes made to the Green Barrier and settlement boundaries. He noted the outcome of the Renewable Energy Assessment to be reported back to the Council in September prior to the start of the public consultation

process and the opportunities for Members to raise specific comments later in the process as explained by officers.

As Vice-Chair of Planning Strategy Group, Councillor Peers seconded the proposal which did not prohibit representations from Members at the consultation stage. He referred to the impact of late changes to national planning guidance, the need to understand viability and its impact on housing supply, and the importance of providing links with principal towns, including public transport to access communities across Flintshire. He provided a brief overview of the work undertaken by the Planning Strategy Group and welcomed the support available to all those wishing to raise concerns in the consultation process.

Whilst Councillor Ian Roberts acknowledged that individual Members may have specific concerns, he reminded them that the purpose at this stage was to approve the Deposit LDP for public consultation.

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin spoke in support but shared concerns about employment growth and transport links. In response to a question on provision for Gypsies and Travellers, the Service Manager confirmed that the site on Bagillt Road in Holywell - which currently had temporary planning permission - contributed towards the total need identified over the period.

Councillor Richard Jones reiterated his concerns about the lack of a Flintshire Plan for the whole of the County as this, rather than the existing Deeside Plan, could have better informed the LDP. In highlighting the importance of adequate infrastructure, he had concerns that the Local Health Board may not fully understand the impact of the LDP. The Service Manager advised that the LDP complied with the requisite key tests of soundness including that to take account of all existing strategies as its evidence base. The Chief Executive gave assurance that the Council was engaging with the Local Health Board on healthcare provision to support the growth strategy.

Councillor Dunbar welcomed the opportunity for briefings with Town and Community Council representatives in September.

Speaking in support, Councillor Paul Shotton noted the two strategic sites providing 20% of the overall housing requirement.

Following on from earlier comments, Councillor Ellis also raised concerns about healthcare provision to support the LDP, specifically on local GPs and district hospitals. In response, it was explained that assurance was being sought on capacity and sustainability of current GP provision and that the infrastructure plan to support the LDP was a live document which would also help inform the service planning of the Health Board.

In response to comments from Councillor Tudor Jones, officers agreed to amend the Deposit LDP to acknowledge Caerwys as a town rather than a village throughout the document.

Although the LDP referred to documents under their current titles, Councillor Carolyn Thomas spoke about Cabinet adopting a wider focus to reference the Deeside Plan as the Flintshire Plan, with a similar approach being taken with the 'Deeside corridor' acknowledging the impact on other areas. She also advised that the Flintshire Infrastructure Plan would be shared at a later stage.

In conclusion, the Chief Executive thanked Members for their comments and recognition of the work carried out by the officer team. In adding his own thanks, he commended the Service Manager for his dedication in developing the LDP.

Before moving to the vote, the Chair explained her intention to abstain due to local sensitivities on one element of the LDP.

On being put to the vote, the recommendations were carried. Councillor Heesom asked that his abstention be recorded.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Members approve the content of the Flintshire Deposit Local Development Plan 2015-2030 to go out for public consultation; and
- (b) That Members authorise the Chief Officer (Planning, Economy and Environment) to make any additional minor wording, grammar, editorial or cartographic changes to the Deposit LDP which may arise or be necessary prior to formal consultation to ensure consistency with the ongoing LDP evidence base and to assist final presentation of the Plan.

32. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2pm and ended at 3.40pm)

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Chair