
JOINT PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE 25.03.11

Present:

Councillors: Stephen Churchman, Trevor Edwards, O.P. Huws, W. Gareth Roberts, John Wyn Williams, Owain Williams, W.J. Chorlton, Kenneth P. Hughes, Bob Parry and Eric Roberts

Also present: Aled Davies (Head of Regulatory Department, Gwynedd Council), Jim Woodcock (Head of Planning and Public Protection Service, Isle of Anglesey County Council), Gareth Jones (Environmental Services Manager, Gwynedd Council), Rhun ap Iarll (Senior Solicitor, Gwynedd Council), Nia Haf Davies (Policy and Performance Manager, Planning and Transportation, Gwynedd Council) and Rhodri Owen (Policy and Performance Officer, Gwynedd Council).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor W. Gareth Roberts as Chair of the Committee for the remainder of 2010-2011.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Bob Parry as Vice-chair of the Committee for the remainder of 2010-2011.

3. APOLOGIES:

Apologies were received from Councillor Arwel Pierce.

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any member present.

5. ESTABLISHING A JOINT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN PANEL AND AGREE ITS MEMBERSHIP

- (a) Submitted – the report of the Policy and Performance Manager, Planning and Transportation, Gwynedd Council which noted information regarding the remit of the Joint Local Development Plan Panel and the proposal to establish it as a working group of the Joint Planning Policy Committee.
- (b) The following matters were raised by members:
 - (i) In response to a question from a member, the Senior Solicitor noted that it was not a statutory requirement to establish the Panel. It is a working group of the Joint Planning Policy Committee and it would not have any decision making powers.
 - (ii) A member suggested that the Panel, at least for its initial meetings, should

include all members of the Joint Planning Policy Committee. This arrangement could subsequently be reviewed and changes made if required.

- (iii) A member asked whether, rather than establishing a Panel, the Joint Planning Policy Committee should meet more often? Another member questioned whether there was a need for a Panel. It was noted that it would be a waste of resources as the Joint Planning Policy Committee could do the relevant work in any event. In response, the Head of Regulatory Department, Gwynedd Council noted that he was not eager to see the Committee meet more than five times a year as that would be costly and time-consuming from an administrative point of view. It would also have an impact on flexibility in terms of arranging meetings. In order to reduce costs, it could be arranged for a specific number of the Panel meetings to be held on the same day as the meetings of the Joint Planning Policy Committee. It was also noted that it was important that members could have an informal discussion on specific issues prior to them being submitted to a formal Committee. Matters that were not 'mature' could be discussed at the Panel without being made public. The public would not have access to the Panel meetings.
- (iv) A member stated that there would be a problem with establishing a Panel which would include, for example, six members (i.e. three members from each Authority). If a member had to apologise from a meeting, then only two members would be representing that Authority on the Panel. Consequently, decisions made at Panel meetings would frequently be challenged by the Joint Planning Policy Committee.

RESOLVED to establish a Joint Local Development Plan Panel and that all members of the Joint Planning Policy Committee should be members of this Panel.

7. JOINT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – CONSULTATION DRAFT DELIVERY AGREEMENT

- (a) Submitted - the report of the Policy and Performance Manager, Planning and Transportation, Gwynedd Council on the draft version of the Delivery Agreement for consultation.
- (b) The Chair noted that this agreement was a template in respect of how the work of preparing the Local Development Plan should be undertaken. The Head of Planning and Public Protection, Isle of Anglesey County Council added that any specific matters that came to light following the consultation period for the Delivery Agreement would be reported to this Committee.
- (c) The following matters were raised by members:
 - (i) A member noted that it was of key importance that the Joint Local Development Plan should attempt to tackle problems in the local economy (as noted in the Delivery Agreement). In response, the Policy and Performance Manager, Planning and Transportation, Gwynedd Council, stated that the aim of the Plan was to provide a land use planning framework for improving the situation in the future. The importance of gathering evidence for doing this was noted.
 - (ii) On the basis that the Delivery Agreement stated that it was expected that approximately £400,000 would be spent on work by external consultants during the process of preparing the Local Development Plan, a member noted that it

should be ensured that the brief for this work stated clearly that the needs of both authorities should be met. The Policy and Performance Manager, Planning and Transportation, Gwynedd Council noted that topic papers for specific matters would be submitted to the Joint Planning Policy Committee and to the Joint Panel. Some of the content of these papers would be technical and thus input from specialists would be required. It was noted that there were opportunities to share staff resources with neighbouring Local Authorities (which would provide opportunities to make financial savings).

- (iii) In relation to an observation from a member, the Head of Regulatory Department, Gwynedd Council noted that the title of the Local Development Plan did not require too much consideration i.e. the member did not believe that it was particularly 'local' in nature. Whilst the characteristics of a number of areas within Gwynedd and Anglesey are similar, the LDP will have to acknowledge that some circumstances in Gwynedd and Anglesey were different to those in other areas of Wales. It was noted that there were also clear differences within the area of the Plan. Evidence would need to be provided in order to justify pursuing a different policy approach within the Plan area e.g. between Bangor and areas that were more rural in nature. There is no need to fear being innovative and to push boundaries but one had to be careful not to push those boundaries too far.
- (iv) In response to a question from a member, the Environmental Services Manager, Gwynedd Council, noted that the Joint Planning Policy Unit would consist of existing staff from the two authorities.
- (v) In relation to a question from a member regarding how much funds the two authorities had allocated for preparing the Joint Local Development Plan, the Head of Regulatory Department, Gwynedd Council noted that preparing such a Plan was not an inexpensive process and was likely to cost hundreds of thousands of pounds for both authorities. However, through collaboration, he noted that the authorities would reduce the sum of money that would have to be spent on preparing two plans. Whilst the Joint Planning Policy Unit would undertake much of the work of preparing the Plan, it would be necessary to commission work by specialists in relation to some specific matters.
- (vi) In response to a question from a member regarding the timetable for preparing the Local Development Plan, the Policy and Performance Manager, Planning and Transportation, Gwynedd Council, noted that the aim was to adopt the Plan by 2016. The Head of Regulatory Department, Gwynedd Council noted that it was important to abide by the content of the Delivery Agreement when preparing the Local Development Plan. The Head of Planning and Public Protection Service, Isle of Anglesey County Council, added that a small grant was offered by the Assembly Government for abiding by the timetable noted.
- (vii) A member asked what the relationship was between the Joint Planning Policy Committee and the Local Development Plan Project Board? The Head of Planning and Public Protection Service, Isle of Anglesey County Council, noted that the Project Board (i.e. specific officers from the two authorities) were overseeing the process of preparing the Plan e.g. in terms of ensuring that the timetable was adhered to. The Project Board would not make any decisions regarding the content of the Plan.

RESOLVED to approve the draft Delivery Statement for public consultation and to delegate power to the Head of Regulatory Department (Gwynedd Council) and the Head of Planning and Public Protection Service (Isle of Anglesey County Council) to make minor amendments before releasing the document for public consultation.

8. THE JOINT PLANNING POLICY UNIT (JPPU) – LATEST SITUATION

- (a) Submitted – a verbal report by the Environmental Services Manager, Gwynedd Council on the latest situation in relation to the Joint Planning Policy Unit.
- (b) The Environmental Services Manager, Gwynedd Council noted that the Joint Planning Policy Unit would be operating formally from an office in Town Hall, Bangor by the beginning of May 2011. Whilst collaboration had been taking place for some time on an officer and politician level, the creation of the Unit would formalise this process.
- (c) Whilst the main work of the Joint Planning Policy Unit would be preparing the Local Development Plan, the Environmental Services Manager, Gwynedd Council, noted that it would have a wider role than this e.g. in terms of providing advice on planning policy issues on behalf of the two authorities.
- (ch) The following matters were raised by members:
 - (i) In response to a question from a member, the Policy and Performance Manager, Planning and Transportation, Gwynedd Council, noted that the Joint Planning Policy Committee could make recommendations in relation to the content of the Delivery Agreement (e.g. having considered the representations received during the consultation period), but that it was the Gwynedd and Anglesey Full Councils that would agree to its final content.
 - (ii) The Chair expressed his wish that the Joint Planning Policy Unit staff should join each other to operate from one office as soon as possible.

RESOLVED to accept the information.

The meeting commenced at 10:30am and concluded at 11:10am.