

Ref: RK/RP/CW/22.11.2021

Date 2021

Councillor Caro Wild,
County Hall,
Atlantic Wharf,
Cardiff CF10 4UW.



Dear Cllr Wild,

Scrutiny Joint Task and Finish Group - Replacement Local Development Plan – 22 November 2021 – Strategic Options Consultation Process

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee, I would like to thank the Head of Planning and the Group Leader, (Policy) Planning, Transport and Environment for their attendance at the Scrutiny Joint Task and Finish Group on Monday 22nd November and for facilitating the Group's consideration of the next stage in the development of the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). We were very sorry that you were unable to attend the meeting and very much missed your input into this issue. Members were disappointed that the Director, Planning Transport and Environment was also unable to attend and request that for future meetings, the Director should be in attendance, particularly if you as Cabinet Member are unable to attend.

As part of their deliberations, the Group examined the planned consultation process surrounding the RLDP Strategic Options. Given that the consultation went live on the 30th November, Members requested that it would be more beneficial that their observations and recommendations relating to it be provided immediately, rather than waiting until the end of the Task and Finish Group's inquiry. This way, Members concluded, their comments and recommendations could hopefully inform the current consultation process and be incorporated into it.

This letter, therefore, provides a summary of the comments, observations and recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group at this meeting that they have asked me to feedback to you.

Whilst understanding that the overall focus of the Strategic Options for Cardiff is on housing and job growth, there was an overall concern from the Group regarding the limited information provided in the consultation document. It was the view of the Group that in order to assist the public in understanding the various options presented and to be able to provide views on their preferred option, further background information as to the rationale behind them as well as their implications, such as that related to transport, infrastructure and climate change.

During discussions over the Growth Options, the Group queried why there was no detail as to the types of houses required under each option and likewise the types of jobs; whether there were particular sectors that the Authority envisioned these jobs in. Whilst appreciating the Officers' explanation that the aim is not to lead with any assumptions up front, without any basis for explanation for the options being presented, respondents will simply be comparing numbers with no comprehension of what difference each one will mean and what impact it will have on them or the community.

Further to this the Group expressed concern over the accessibility of the document in that the language was too technical and needed to be made simpler to allow for respondents to fully understand the RLDP process as well as the options, and thus enabling them to fully engage. It was highlighted that as it stands, only those directly engaged with the LDP, such as developers, would fully comprehend the consultation paper and what is being asked of them. Furthermore, Members referred back to the comments made at the September Scrutiny Committees over the consultation that was undertaken on the RLDP Vision and Objectives. The Group reiterated the views that it was vital that the Plan facilitate the opportunity to engage with Cardiff residents, particularly those hardest to reach. The consultation paper, in its current format and language would make it even harder for those from hard-to-reach groups such as the homeless, traveller communities, refugees, asylum seekers, BAME groups etc to participate in the process.

Members appreciate that the current consultation document cannot be amended as it has already been agreed for publication. Nevertheless, and subsequent to the Group's discussions with Officers at the meeting over their concerns highlighted above, Members wish to **recommend** the following:

- That a 'user friendly' summary be developed in addition to the consultation document, providing more explanation on what the consultation is about, a clear rationale behind the various options being presented and what the various options represent, in order that they can be compared appropriately;
- That this summary also provide clear guidance to respondents on why their views are being sought, what exactly they are being asked to provide as a response, how they can respond appropriately and how their views will be used to inform the development of the Preferred Strategy. It is suggested that the latter will also require further explanation;
- That consideration be given to presenting a visual representation of the options, in their widest sense, appreciating that exact sites have not yet been determined. Officers agreed that whilst a map of sites would not be possible at this stage, spatial infographics could be provided;
- That further details be incorporated into the summary paper of what types of houses might be included in the options presented, such as affordable or social housing, housing for older people etc. Likewise, broad details be included of what types of jobs might be considered and how they meet the assessed needs of Cardiff and its residents. This information will assist the public to understand the implications of the options presented and help provide practical comparators for respondents.
- That a glossary of terms be provided alongside the consultation paper.

In addition to the above, on the subject of hard-to-reach or under-represented groups, specifically those from a BAME background or those with disabilities, Members again referred back to some of the comments provided at the September Scrutiny Committees. One of the recommendations from these

meetings was that future consultation look to engage with Council Members who are from these backgrounds and utilise their knowledge of these communities to assist with identifying representatives and groups to engage with. So far, the Group commented that they had not seen any evidence of this and therefore **reiterated this recommendation**.

Recommendations to be monitored following this scrutiny

To summarise, the Task and Finish Group made six formal recommendations which are set out below. As part of the response to this letter we would be grateful if you could, for each recommendation, state whether the recommendation is accepted, partially accepted or not accepted and summarise the Cabinet’s response. If the recommendation is accepted or partially accepted, I would also be grateful if you could identify the responsible officer and provide an action date. This will ensure that progress can be monitored as part of the approach agreed by Cabinet in December 2020.

Recommendation	Accepted, Partially Accepted or Not Accepted	Cabinet Response	Responsible Officer	Implementation Date
1. That a ‘user friendly’ summary be developed in addition to the consultation document, providing more explanation on what the consultation is about, a clear rationale behind the various options being presented and what the various options represent, in order that they can be compared appropriately;				
2. That this summary also provide clear guidance to respondents on why their views are being sought, what exactly they are being asked to provide as a response, how they can respond appropriately and how their views will be used to inform the development of the Preferred Strategy. It is suggested that the latter will also require further explanation;				

<p>3. That consideration be given to presenting a visual representation of the options, in their widest sense, appreciating that exact sites have not yet been determined. Officers agreed that whilst a map of sites would not be possible at this stage, spatial infographics could be provided;</p>				
<p>4. That further details be incorporated into the summary paper of what types of houses might be included in the options presented, such as affordable or social housing, housing for older people etc. Likewise, broad details be included of what types of jobs might be considered and how they meet the assessed needs of Cardiff and its residents. This information will assist the public to understand the implications of the options presented and help provide practical comparators for respondents.</p>				
<p>5. That a glossary of terms be provided alongside the consultation paper.</p>				
<p>6. Future consultation look to engage with Council Members who are from these backgrounds and utilise their knowledge of these communities to assist with identifying representatives and groups to engage with.</p>				

Regards,



Councillor Ramesh Patel
Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Cc:

- Andrew Gregory – Director for Planning, Transport & Environment
- Simon Gilbert – Head of Planning
- Stuart Williams - Group Leader (Strategic Policy), Planning

- Imelda Seymour – Personal Assistant, Director PTE
- Heather Warren, Cabinet Support Office
- Leaders of the Opposition
- Tim Gordon - Head of Communications & External Relations
- Members of Cardiff's Environmental Scrutiny Committee
- Members of Joint Task & Finish Group