

**RESPONSE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
JOINT TASK AND FINISH GROUP INQUIRY REPORT ON THE
REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN - STRATEGIC
AND DELIVERY OPTIONS**

**TRANSPORT & STRATEGIC PLANNING (COUNCILLOR DAN
DE'ATH)**

AGENDA ITEM: 13

Reason for this Report

1. To approve the Cabinet response to the letter from the Chair of Environmental Scrutiny Committee dated 17th March 2022 relating to the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group - Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) – Strategic and Delivery Options.

Background

2. At a meeting of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee on the 11th November 2021, Members agreed to form Joint Task and Finish Group to undertake an inquiry on the preparation of the Replacement LDP at key stages in the preparation process. This report covers the latest stage in the process the consultation on the strategic and delivery options.
3. The task and finish group reviewed the scope of the inquiry at its first meeting and agreed for the terms of reference to be:
 - To explore, scrutinise and act as a consultee on the Strategic Options for the Replacement LDP focusing on how these have addressed:
 - Accessibility and Inclusivity
 - One Planet Cardiff.
 - To review the Council's consultation process to date; to examine its effectiveness and make recommendations for future consultation on the next stages of the Replacement LDP
 - To understand the supporting rationale for the projected growth provided by Welsh Government in order to consider whether the evidence base is robust, realistic, and viable.

- To consider how Cardiff's replacement LDP and the Strategic Options are aligned with regional planning.
 - To hear and consider views of stakeholders to inform the recommendations of Scrutiny on both the Strategic Options and the Council's consultation processes.
 - To coordinate and provide a single joint response from the Scrutiny Committees.
 - To make recommendations that will inform the decisions and considerations that the Council's Executive will make in the development of the Preferred Strategy.
 - To make recommendations that will inform any future scrutiny of the replacement LDP.
4. The Inquiry held a series of meetings in winter 2021/22 with Planning Officers, Cabinet Members, and consultant forecasters from Hardisty Jones Associates (Economic Forecasters) and Edge Analytics (Demographic Forecasters), to explore and gather evidence on the Strategic and Delivery Options. In addition to this the Joint Task and Finish Group undertook a '*Call for Evidence*' with a range of external stakeholders to inform the scrutiny findings and recommendations.
 5. The findings and recommendations are set out in a letter from the Chair of Environmental Scrutiny dated 17th March 2022 which was presented to Cabinet for consideration in July 2022 and is attached at Appendix 1.

Findings and Response to the Recommendations

6. The letter from the Chair of Scrutiny sets out a series of findings relating to the consultation process, the strategic and delivery options, accessibility, inclusivity and environmental sustainability issues and further scrutiny involvement in the plan preparation process. These findings translate into 6 formal recommendations to Cabinet. A formal response to each of the 6 recommendations is set out in Appendix 2 to this report.
7. Although the work that Scrutiny have undertaken on this exercise is appreciated the overriding conclusion set out under the evidence and key findings presented in relation to recommendation 1 that the consultation process is flawed is rejected in the strongest possible terms.
8. It is considered that the Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group findings and recommendations appear to have misunderstood the consultation process to date, the amount of consultation which has taken place and the growth in responses compared with previous consultations.
9. Normally at this point in the process only informal consultation is required as there is no statutory duty to consult on the 'Vision, Issues and Objectives' or the 'Strategic Options' stage. The first formal consultation stage would usually take place at the Preferred Strategy stage early next year.

10. Despite this, from the outset, the council decided it would fully engage with the public and stakeholders at each stage of the process. The 'Community Involvement Scheme' (CIS) which is part of the 'Delivery Agreement' agreed with Welsh Government, clearly set out how this engagement would take place and sets out seven principles for community engagement including, commitment; inclusiveness; appropriateness; transparency and accessibility; accountability; productivity, and realism, with the aim to build as much consensus as possible on the overall strategy of the plan.
11. The CIS also set out a range of groups which will be involved, including members of the public, businesses, landowners, developers and agents, community councils, partnership groups, consultation bodies and equalities and ethnic minority groups.
12. The measures agreed in this document included direct contact through email or letter; social media engagement; engagement with councillors through workshops or drop-in sessions; engagement with established focus groups - such as the Youth Council and the Citizens Panel; up-to-date information on the council's website; public exhibitions and engagement sessions and virtual engagement through web-based technological tools.
13. The following engagement has taken place to date during the first two stages of the process:
 - Development of a new bespoke user-friendly standalone website with information on the Replacement LDP process, latest news and contact details;
 - Development of user-friendly accessible online surveys so residents and stakeholders can make their comments on the consultation easily on-line. These were hosted on the Council's Replacement LDP website and were publicised through a social media campaign and mail out to residents and stakeholders on the LDP consultation database;
 - Development of a child friendly short film to explain the LDP process and consultation;
 - Investment in the use of a user-friendly, on-line consultation tool, using the latest virtual consultation room technology with virtual display panels, giving links to the consultation documents, the online survey and a short film;
 - Use of social media, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to publicise and explain the consultation process, with a comprehensive and targeted campaign of posts over the first two stages of the consultation process using the agreed LDP branding to engage with individuals that do not usually take part in the LDP consultation process;

- Engagement with existing networks to reach out to those who do not usually take part in the LDP consultation process including the Youth Council, and engagement with children and young people networks;
 - Hosting a virtual launch event at the start of each consultation stage, which explained the consultation process and how people can get involved, providing an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to ask questions;
 - Hosting a virtual briefing session with Community Council's prior to the launch of each consultation phase to explain the purpose of the consultation and how they and their local areas can get involved in the process and how they can cascade information down to residents;
 - Extending consultation periods to enable more time for people and organisations to engage in the process;
 - Planning officers being accessible to the public to discuss the consultation process and answer any queries;
 - Personal commitment by the Head of Planning and senior officers to directly engage and facilitate meetings with any organisation or individual wishing to participate in the Replacement LDP process; and
 - The first ever Virtual Grand Schools Council has taken place recently exclusively on the LDP with 50 schools taking part, with a potential reach to 1,500 children.
14. It is important to note, that during the pandemic face-to-face meetings were not possible. To compensate for this, an extensive campaign was produced to ensure that simple messaging on the process was available across the council's social media channels.
 15. During the consultation on the 'Vision, Issues and Objectives' the Council received over 3,500 visitors to the new LDP website, and the social media campaign collectively generated over 350,000 impressions or views.
 16. There was a similar figure of 332,000 impressions or views generated during the more recent consultation on the 'Strategic Options', and the number of people visiting the LDP website doubled to 7,400 visitors. This demonstrates that these measures successfully brought the consultation to a much wider audience compared with the previous LDP.
 17. It also demonstrates that the Council went above and beyond the requirements agreed with Welsh Government to ensure we engaged with as many different people as possible and, to date, it considered that this has been achieved as demonstrated by the evidence set out in the paragraph's above.
 18. A series of focus groups have also taken place to engage with hard-to-reach groups, including Women's First; 50 Plus Forum; homelessness groups, ethnic minority groups and young people and student workshops to inform the next stages of LDP preparation.

19. As the plan develops over the coming years, we will continue to provide comprehensive consultation and engagement with residents and stakeholders to support the process going forward.
20. In relation to remaining recommendations 2 to 6 it is agreed that the evidence and findings presented in relation to the Strategic and Delivery Options and accessibility, inclusivity and environmental sustainability issues can be used to inform the development of the Preferred Strategy. It is also agreed that early engagement with Scrutiny will be prioritised in future preparation stages of the plan.

Reason for Recommendations

21. To respond to the Environmental Scrutiny Committee Joint Task and Finish Group on the Replacement Local Development Plan – Strategic and Delivery Options.

Legal Implications

22. There are no Legal implications for this report.

Financial Implications

23. No direct financial implications are expected to arise from this report with any costs associated with the preparation of the Local Development Plan being met from within existing resources.

Human Resources Implications

24. There are no HR implications for this report.

Property Implications

25. There are no property implications for this report.

RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is recommended to approve the response to the recommendations of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee Joint Task and Finish Group on the Replacement Local Development Plan – Strategic and Delivery Options, as set out in appendix 2.

SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Andrew Gregory Director of Planning, Transport & Environment
	14 October 2022

The following Appendices are attached:

Appendix 1 Environmental Scrutiny Committee Joint Task and Finish Group, Letter from Chair of Scrutiny Committee dated 17th March 2022 - Replacement Local Development Plan – Strategic and Delivery Options.

Appendix 2 Draft Response to Recommendations of Environmental Scrutiny Committee Joint Task and Finish Group on the Replacement Local Development Plan – Strategic and Delivery Options.