

Minutes



Performance Scrutiny Committee - Place and Corporate

Date: 11 September 2023

Time: 2.00 pm

Present: Councillors M Howells (Chair), J Cleverly, S Adan, J Harris, G Horton, M Linton, A Pimm, C Reeks, J Reynolds and K Thomas

In Attendance: Councillor James Clarke (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Regulation, and Housing), Andrew Ferguson (Planning and Development Manager), Victoria Gee (Planning Policy Manager), Sam Schanzer (Scrutiny Advisor), Taylor Strange (Governance Officer). Katharine Majer (Deputy Democratic and Electoral Services Manager)

1 Apologies

None.

2 Declaration of Interest

None.

3 Replacement Local Development Plan Preferred Strategy for Consultation

Invitees:

- Councillor James Clarke - Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Regulation, and Housing
- Andrew Ferguson - Planning and Development Manager
- Victoria Gee – Planning Policy Manager

The Planning and Development Manager gave an overview of the report.

The Committee asked the following:

- The Committee enquired about the possibility of making street signs bilingual. The Planning and Development Manager explained that it falls outside the scope of the Replacement Local Development Plan. However, the Strategic Director mentioned that it was part of their Welsh language work, and new street signs would be bilingual when English language road signs are replaced.
- The Committee acknowledged the need for 10,000 homes in the next 10 years and asked about the decision-making process for developing Green Belt areas. The Planning and Development Manager stated that decisions regarding green belt zones were handled by the Strategic Development Plan, prepared by Corporate Joint Committees. The Local Development Plan was actioned prior to the Strategic Development Plan.

- The Committee enquired whether proposed Green Belt areas require public consultation or conform to the Strategic Development Plan. The Planning and Development Manager explained that potential Green Belt issues were researched when considering candidate sites. They also highlighted a call for potential sites and the consideration of site usage for various reasons.
- The Committee asked if more public suggestions for sites were desired to meet the target of 10,000 new homes. The Planning and Development Manager explained that key sites, as well as allocations not classified as key sites, were considered, along with buildings that already had planning permission.
- The Committee asked about the factors determining the required amount of housing. The Planning and Development Manager mentioned consulting population statistics and developing an evidence-based strategy to ensure delivery. They highlighted the ambition and deliverability of the plan, with the consultation allowing people to agree or disagree with the estimates.
- The Committee enquired about the required housing provision types and their numbers. The Planning and Development Manager commented that a range of house types, based on the Local Housing Market Needs Assessment, would be sought and that assessment would be undertaken soon.
- The Committee asked if future market needs were being taken into account. The Planning and Development Manager noted that dense developments were being considered to use as little land as possible.
- The Committee recognised Newport's transition towards becoming a technology city and discussed the potential impact on democracy. The Planning and Development Manager explained that the goal was to allocate land and opportunities.
- The Committee questioned the enforceability of affordable housing needs highlighted in the report. The Planning and Development Manager highlighted the ambitious targets and the ongoing monitoring of delivery to better understand the reality. They mentioned that if targets were not being met, the plan would be redeveloped. The Strategic Director informed the Committee that affordable housing considerations were discussed with developers, but there was no ability to force a percentage allocation of housing stock to affordable housing.
- The Committee asked what would happen if the targets were not met. The Planning and Development Manager explained that the plan would be re-evaluated in that case.
- The Committee expressed concerns about the affordability of housing and its impact on the city. The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Regulation, and Housing emphasised that these concerns would be addressed during the consultation and could be raised as issues at a later date.
- The Committee noted the mention of over 6,000 job increases in the report and enquired about the land for these jobs. The Planning and Development Manager informed the Committee that a section of employment land had been designated. The Strategic Director mentioned that new jobs tend to occupy less space.
- The Committee sought further details on the job growth projections. The Planning and Development Manager stated that the growth projection for jobs was ambitious and focused on new job creation, rather than replacing existing ones. They highlighted a range of sites being considered to attract new jobs.

- The Committee asked for the definition of affordable housing. The Planning and Development Manager referred to guidance in Planning Policy Wales and clarified that affordable housing was typically priced at 80% of the open market price.
- The Committee enquired about the number and locations of planned consultation events. The Planning and Development Manager confirmed that six events had been planned, utilising prior consultation locations. They also welcomed suggestions from the Committee.
- The Committee expressed the desire for a balanced distribution of consultation locations and highlighted the importance of drop-in sessions at the Civic Centre and the library.
- The Committee acknowledged the potential impact of instability and asked how it would affect decision-making. The Planning and Development Manager explained that the plan was structured but flexible, allowing for proactive decision-making based on available evidence.
- The Committee asked how the Council's services would handle the increased demand. The Planning and Development Manager mentioned an accompanying infrastructure plan and consultations with colleagues from other departments. However, they noted that their perspective was limited to planning matters.
- The Committee asked if an infrastructure levy had been adopted. The Planning and Development Manager clarified that no levy had been adopted.
- The Committee enquired about the types of developers involved in the developments. The Planning and Development Manager mentioned site requirements for developers before they can secure contracts. The Strategic Director added that larger sites may involve a variety of smaller companies.
- The Committee suggested changing the term "social" to "community" in the title. The Planning and Development Manager agreed to add clarification to address the ambiguity of the term "social" in other contexts.
- The Committee asked about provisions for healthcare needs in new developments, such as dentists and GPs. The Planning and Development Manager explained that the local health board was consulted, but private practices often choose their own locations. They mentioned ongoing investigations into healthcare provisions and emphasised that all infrastructure plans would be subject to public comments.
- The Committee requested attention to be given to page 91 of the agenda pack. The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Regulation, and Housing noted that the consultation would end around the time the budget consultation begins.
- The Committee noted several officer recommendations for consultation locations and requested for widespread sharing of consultation information. They also emphasised the need to avoid any appearance of bias when selecting consultation wards.
- The Committee asked about the consultation budget. The Planning Policy Manager explained that Planning Wales manages the consultation events, which are demand-driven. The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Regulation, and Housing emphasised the importance of focusing on the quality of responses.
- The Committee expressed support for the use of pop-up stalls during the consultation and highlighted the need for an easy-to-understand version of the report. The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Regulation, and Housing mentioned a dedicated website that would be signposted.

- The Committee enquired about other bodies consulted during the process. The Planning and Development Manager referred to the consultation document, which included a list of all consulted outside bodies. They also mentioned that outside bodies could request to be part of the consultation process.
- The Committee asked how outside bodies were involved in the consultation process. The Planning and Development Manager explained that outside bodies were made aware of the consultation and could provide information directly if requested.
- The Committee asked if the Capital Region had contributed to the consultation. The Planning and Development Manager noted their involvement in creating the Strategic Development Plan and mentioned seeking comments from other local authorities and ongoing discussions with neighbouring councils.

The Chair thanked officers for attending.

Conclusions

- The Committee were happy to recommend that the Replacement Local Redevelopment Plan goes forward to consultation based on the feedback provided.
- The Committee wanted to highlight the importance of face-to-face engagement for digitally excluded residents.
- The Committee recommended that Officers use public events to engage with residents, including Newport Food Festival.
- The Committee recommended that Newport Library is used in conjunction with the Civic Centre as venues when conducting face-to-face consultation.
- The Committee recommended that Planning Officers engage with Councillors in all wards as part of the consultation to identify potential sites for additional developments to be considered for the LDP, and to broaden the range of venues where engagement could take place during consultation.
- The Committee asked that the term “social” on page 38 of the agenda/page 12 of the report be clarified as a reference to the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

4 Minutes of the previous meetings held on 10th July 2023 and 24th July 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th July 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 24th July 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record with the following amendment:

Page 13 - The Committee enquired about the time scale for the leisure centre construction and the demolition of the old site. The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development mentioned an estimated 18-~~week~~ month construction period and highlighted that different teams handle the funding for demolition and construction.

5 Scrutiny Adviser Reports

Invitee:

- Samantha Schanzer – Scrutiny Adviser

a) Forward Work Programme Update

The Scrutiny Adviser presented the Forward Work Programme, and informed the Committee of the topics due to be discussed at the next two committee meetings:

Monday 27th November 2023, the agenda item;

- 2023-24 Service Plan Mid-Year Review for:
 - Environment and Public Protection
 - Housing and Communities
 - Infrastructure

Wednesday 8th November 2023, the agenda item;

- 2023-24 Service Plan Mid-Year Review for:
 - Regeneration and Economic Development
 - Finance
 - Law and Standards
 - People, Policy and Transformation

The Committee discussed the start time of the future meetings, and agreed to amend the future committee meetings to start at 2pm.

b) Action Sheet

The Scrutiny Adviser presented the action sheet to the Committee. It was advised that responses from the queries made for the Regeneration and Economic Development Service Plan End of Year Reviews were still outstanding, but were being chased.

The Committee sought further clarification about two actions within the Action Sheet:

17th April 2023:

Agenda item: **Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 23 January 2023**

Action – ***“The Committee requested an update on conversations with Registered Social Landlords contributing towards the Community Safety Warden service.”***

The Committee advised that the response didn't clarify whether the RSL's had been asked to contribute towards the service and whether they had declined or accepted. The Committee asked for an update on whether any conversations had taken place with the RSL's to seek funding and what the outcome was.

10th July 2023:

Agenda item: **2022/23 Service Plan End of Year Reviews**

Action: ***“Infrastructure - The Committee asked for a plan to address the poor condition of roads and improve the road network, especially as increased traffic and other issues affected them. The Committee confirmed the presentation of the Highways Asset Management Plan to members in February 2024, but Members requested additional data to be sent to the Committee before that.”***

The Committee asked whether a cost-benefit analysis was undertaken to determine whether it is appropriate to continue to repair roads with reactive repairs or whether it was more appropriate to invest in a capital replacement thus negating the ongoing reactive

maintenance costs in the short/medium term and what was the criteria used for making those decisions.

The Scrutiny Adviser advised that these requests would be chased up with the relevant officers.

6 Live meeting

[To view the recording of the meeting please click here](#)

The meeting terminated at 3.33 pm