

AGENDA ITEM NO.

REPORT TO:	Planning Committee
REPORT NO.	CPLO/54/10
DATE:	6 December 2010
LEAD MEMBER:	Mark Pritchard (Housing and Planning)
LEAD OFFICER:	Chief Planning Officer
CONTACT OFFICER:	Nicola Corbishley (Ext 2511)
SUBJECT:	Wrexham Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021: Deposit Consultation
WARD:	All

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To report the proposed changes to the Wrexham Local Development Plan following the Deposit Plan consultation and recommendations of the Planning Policy Panel.
- 1.2 To seek the views of the Planning Committee on the proposed changes to the Local Development Plan for consideration and approval by the Executive Board which if approved will be advertised as an addendum to the Local Development Plan prior to submission to WAG and the Planning Inspectorate (due August – September 2011).

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Executive Board on the 9th March 2010 approved the Deposit Local Development Plan for public consultation in accordance with the previously approved Delivery Agreement. This public consultation took place for a statutory period of 6 weeks from Friday 4th June 2010 until Friday 16th July 2010.
- 2.2 Approximately 800 representations have been made on the Plan by 207 consultees. The vast majority of representations are objections to the Plan

- v) That no change be made to policy P5.
- c) Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation (P10)
- i) Proposed New Gypsy and Traveller Site at Ruthin Road (P10):

That the allocation at Ruthin Road (Policy P10) be retained as a site for gypsy and traveller accommodation and that the wording of the reasoned justification for the policy excludes the word 'extension'.
 - ii) Policy P10 sub-section 2: Private Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation:

That the policy remains unchanged other than to clarify the following (*italic*) minor word changes to the policy:

'Proposals for new gypsy and traveller sites generated by local need will be permitted on privately owned single pitch sites, up to a maximum of seven pitches in total during the Plan period, subject to satisfying the following criteria:

 - a) the proposal would not *have a detrimental visual impact* and incorporates screening provisions to enhance the landscaping of the site where necessary;
 - b) the proposal is *reasonably* well related to existing community, social, educational and other facilities;
 - c) the proposal is environmentally acceptable and would not *have a detrimental impact upon the amenities* of neighbouring properties
 - d) as per the Plan
- d) Mixed Use Regeneration site: Flexsys
- That the site remains allocated for mixed use with an allocated housing requirement of 465 units (Policy P1) and that the policy is split and amended (*italics*) to reflect the differing requirements of the former Flexsys and Air Products sites as follows:
- Policy P2:**
- 3) 'The former Flexsys site, Cefn Mawr is safeguarded for comprehensive mixed-use development that will include residential, employment, community, leisure, *tourism and heritage conservation* and local need retail uses'
 - 4) 'The former Airproducts site, Cefn Mawr is safeguarded for comprehensive mixed-use development that will include residential, employment, community, leisure and local need retail uses'

currently being experienced in the County Borough (and the rest of the Country) as well as a basis for comparison when a site proposal is submitted.

5.1.35 RECOMMENDATION: That policy P3 requiring a 30% affordable housing quota on general market sites of 3 dwellings or more be retained unchanged.

v) Delivery of 100% Affordable Housing Allocations (Policy P5)

5.1.36 Policy P5 allocates a number of Council and WAG owned sites for 100% affordable housing purposes. These sites are located in Wrexham Town and the Western Villages.

5.1.37 The representations received, mainly from house builders and developers, state that it is unrealistic in the current financial climate that funding will be available for the development of 100% affordable housing on these sites. As such, this would reduce the deliverability of the affordable housing target forming part of the overall housing figure.

5.1.38 In contrast, WAG has stated that they believe that it is possible to deliver the 345 units identified in this policy.

5.1.39 A number of the sites identified under this policy have already been granted outline planning permission (14 sites with a yield of 96 units) as part of a package of joint venture proposals between the Council and WAG. Prior to the adoption of the LDP it has been demonstrated through securing permission for some of these sites that they are deliverable. Good progress has been made to date on a number of these sites therefore it is reasonable to conclude that the rest of the sites are also likely to be delivered in accordance with the policy. Based on this, there would appear to be no justifiable reasons to change this policy.

5.1.40 RECOMMENDATION: That no change be made to Policy P5.

c) Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation (Policy P10):

i) Proposed New Gypsy and Traveller Site at Ruthin Road:

5.1.41 Policy P10 provides for 15 new social-rented pitches at a new site at Ruthin Road for gypsy and traveller accommodation and allows up to 7 private pitches, in single plots, elsewhere in the County Borough, subject to sustainability issues being satisfied.

5.1.42 Members will recall that it is a requirement of national policy that, where there is an identified need, sites for gypsies and travellers should be allocated in the LDP.

5.1.43 The Fordham Gypsy and Traveller Housing Needs Survey (2008) identified a need for 27 new pitches arising from an increasing

household formation from within the existing resident Wrexham gypsy and traveller population. This need results in a requirement for additional sites capable of accommodating 15 extra permanent pitches by 2013 and a possible 12 more by 2021 (the LDP plan period). This further breaks down to a requirement for 20 social-rented pitches and 7 private pitches.

- 5.1.44 35 representations have been received in relation to the location, social and transport implications arising from the proposed new gypsy and traveller site at Ruthin Road. The majority of these representations have been made by the residents of New Broughton and adjoining areas and relate to issues regarding the intensification and concentration of gypsy and traveller accommodation in one area and the overall need for an alternative site (see **Appendix 1**). Representations have also been received regarding the inappropriateness of proposing that private accommodation be restricted to single plots (see part ii) below).
- 5.1.45 The representations received dispute the need for the additional pitches, stating that the existing site at Ruthin Road is under occupied, with half (about 7) of the pitches empty, thus negating the need for the number of pitches identified in the study (20 social rented). In addition, concerns have also been raised in relation to the intensification and concentration of gypsy and traveller accommodation in one area, i.e. the perceived 'extension' to the existing site being contrary to national planning policy guidance and the associated impact of the new site on the settled communities nearby (noise, disturbance etc). Comments have also been made with regards to the prohibitive cost of developing the site given that it is in private ownership and the current financial climate.
- 5.1.46 The site has been through a lengthy and robust site selection process involving the consideration of over 700 sites for gypsy and traveller accommodation. Members will recall the depth of discussions previously held on this issue at the Panel, Planning Committee, Executive Board and Full Council in reaching a decision on this site.
- 5.1.47 This new site was selected due to it having no significant detrimental impacts on the landscape or transport networks and for its close proximity to a range of community facilities.
- 5.1.48 In the absence of evidence from the representors to demonstrate that the Fordhams study is flawed, it must continue to be assumed that the need is accurate and must be provided for through the allocation of a site for gypsy and traveller accommodation.
- 5.1.49 Members of the Panel agreed that the evidence base justified the allocation of an additional Gypsy and Traveller site within the County Borough and that the proposed site had been selected due to it having no significant detrimental impacts on the landscape or transport networks.

5.1.50 RECOMMENDATION: That the allocation at Ruthin Road of a site for gypsy and traveller accommodation (Policy P10) be retained and that the wording of the reasoned justification for the policy exclude the word 'extension'.

ii) **Policy P10 sub-section 2: Private Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation**

5.1.51 Representations have also been received regarding the inappropriateness of proposing that private accommodation is restricted to single pitch sites (i.e. part 2 of Policy P10). These have been made by members of the gypsy and traveller community and the Multi Agency Forum who state that this part of the policy is arbitrary and does not consider extended families within the gypsy and traveller community.

5.1.52 If the policy is amended to allow the development of more than one pitch on an individual site, this would be likely to have a greater adverse impact on the landscape and other sustainable development criteria, and would be undesirable.

5.1.53 RECOMMENDATION: That the policy remains unchanged other than to clarify the following (*italic*) minor word changes to the policy:

'Proposals for new gypsy and traveller sites generated by local need will be permitted on privately owned single pitch sites, up to a maximum of seven pitches in total during the Plan period, subject to satisfying the following criteria:

- a) the proposal would not *have a detrimental visual impact* and incorporates screening provisions to enhance the landscaping of the site where necessary;
- b) the proposal is *reasonably* well related to existing community, social, educational and other facilities;
- c) the proposal is environmentally acceptable and would not *have a detrimental impact upon the amenities* of neighbouring properties
- d) as per the Plan

d) **Mixed Use Regeneration site: Flexsys (Policy P2)**

5.1.54 Policy P2 identifies four mixed use regeneration opportunity sites: Bridge Street / Cambrian Yard; the former Groves School, Powell Road; and the Flexsys and Air products sites in Cefn Mawr.

5.1.55 38 representations have been received in relation to Policy P2 with regard to the mixed use regeneration site at Flexsys. This site is allocated in the plan for a mix of residential (465 units), employment, community, leisure, and local need retail uses.