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Eich cyf : Your ref: 3476
Ein cyf : Our ref: APP30-01-019
Dyddiad : Date **24th February 2010**

Dear Ms Cook

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan 2006-2021
- Consultation on Statement of Focussed Changes

Thank you for your letters of 11th January. We note that the Statement of Focussed Changes is accompanied by SA/SEA assessment of the proposed changes (SA Report Annex: December 2009).

The matter of whether a plan is considered 'sound' will be for the appointed Planning Inspector to determine. We have considered the proposed Focussed Changes in the light of the representations we made to the deposit plan and in accordance with the consistency and coherence & effectiveness tests (principally in accordance with whether satisfactory regard has been given to national planning policy - test C2).

Accordingly, we have representations with regard to four of the proposed changes as detailed in the attached annex. We have not provided any representation where a Focussed Changes does not address our earlier deposit plan representations and we do not object to the change proposed. We have also indicated whether the proposed changes meet the matters raised in our deposit representations; we have used the deposit reference numbers that you have provided in the LDP Representation Responses Register (Submission doc.EB14 – folder 1).

Yours sincerely

Mark Newey
Joint Head of Plans, Management and Performance
Planning Division
(enclosure – annex)



Annex to WAG letter (24th February 2010) in response to the Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP Statement of Focussed Changes

N.B. the order reflects the ordering in our deposit response.

Focussed Change 2 - Affordable Housing

We have considered the revised policy and reasoned justification on Affordable Housing (CS5, NSA11, SSA12) in relation to our previous comments on the deposit plan. We have also had regard to the information provided in the LDP Representation Responses Register number **3476.D1 to D3** (Submission doc.EB14 – folder 1).

The focussed change proposes:

- a reduced target in policy CS5 from “approximately 3000” to “at least 1440” affordable units;
- reduced affordable housing targets in both the northern and southern strategy areas on sites of 30 or more units (threshold unchanged), from 25% to “at least 10%” (NSA11) and from 40% to “at least 20%” (SSA12). The policy requirement for, and textual references to, contributions on sites under 30 units to reuse / rehabilitation of existing older housing stock has been deleted;
- some changes to the reasoned justification at paragraphs 4.47, 4.48, 6.49, 6.152 and 6.154.

Response:

- Affordable housing provision continues to be a priority Ministerial concern and the Assembly Government is keen to maximise the level of provision.
- There revised target figure (“at least 1440”) is not satisfactorily explained in the reasoned justification nor in the Representations Responses Register; the reasoned justification has only been partially amended to accord with the proposed change to policy CS5.
- There is no proposed change to provide information on need over the plan period.
- The LDP Representation Responses Register relating to these policies refers to an affordable housing viability study; the RCT Affordable Housing Viability Study Final Report, September 2009, prepared by Three Dragons is included in the submitted evidence base (Submission doc.EB37). This viability assessment work will greatly assist discussions at the examination (we would note in particular the conclusion in relation to the down turn in the housing market and that the policy conclusions of the report are more appropriate to the longer term upward trend in house prices – para 6.35). However, not all of the recommendations of this Report appear to have been addressed by resultant proposed changes (see on thresholds at paragraph 6.28 to 6.30); there is no proposed change nor any evidence base Background Paper to clarify how the Report’s conclusions have influenced the content of the LDP.
- Whilst area targets are given as “up to...%”, this does not provide for sufficient flexibility should the market change, and it is important that the plan’s monitoring framework keeps this matter under review.
- It continues to be unclear from the Focussed Changes and available documentation in the evidence base as to why policy decisions in relation to the affordable housing target and threshold have been made.

Focussed Change 4 - Minerals

We have considered the revised policy and reasoned justification on Minerals (CS10, AW14, AW15) in relation to our previous comments on the deposit plan in relation to mineral safeguarding and operations. We have also had regard to the information provided in the

LDP Representation Responses Register number **3476.D4toD11** (Submission doc.EB14 – folder 1).

We note that the proposed change has been supported by the **Minerals Background Paper, December 2009** (Submission doc.EB76); we consider that the information in that paper does provide important clarification to the plan's minerals policies.

Response:

- No objection to proposed changes to policy CS10 and its reasoned justification (FC4).
- Changes to policy CS10 and its reasoned justification meet certain of our deposit representations (3476.D9, D10), and partially meets representation 3476.D7&D8.
- The 10 year land-bank at CS10(1) should be a rolling 10year landbank that is maintained over the plan period and beyond; however, the Minerals Background Paper refers to limitations on the existing quarry (section 2.8 - preferred area of known mineral resources).
- No objection to proposed changes to policy AW14 and its reasoned justification (FC4).
- Changes and paragraph 5.80 of the reasoned justification to policy AW14 partially meets our deposit representations (3476.D5) in relation to prior extraction.
- The Minerals Background Paper clarifies that there are no dormant mineral sites which meets our deposit representation 3476.D11

Focussed Change 31 – Policy SSA3 Development in the principal Town of Llantrisant / Talbot Green

This proposed change addresses aspects of our deposit representation (LDP Representation Responses Register number **3476.D12**) which related to WSP Strategic Opportunity Areas.

Focussed Change 14, 15 & 17 – Policy CS11 Climate Change, Policy AW2 Sustainable Locations & Policy AW5 New Development

We have considered the revised policy and reasoned justification on Climate Change and Sustainable Locations and New Development (CS11, AW2, AW5) in relation to our previous comments on the deposit plan in relation to **climate change (development & flood risk, and, sustainable construction)**. We have also had regard to the information provided in the LDP Representation Responses Register number **3476.D13toD18** (Submission doc.EB14 – folder 1).

The focussed changes propose:

- the deletion of policy CS11 and its reasoned justification (FC14);
- amendments to criterion 5 of policy AW2 (FC15);
- deletion of section B (sustainable design) of policy AW5 and deletion of paragraphs 5.27 to 5.29 of the reasoned justification (FC17).

Response:

- Changes would meet our representations on policy CS11 (3476.D14 and D17).
- Criterion 5 of policy AW2 remains contrary to national policy in applying the tests to the whole of zone C, including zone C2 where highly vulnerable development and Emergency Services should not be permitted (TAN15 para 6.2). If the Council considers it wishes the LDP to have policy contrary to national policy it must be fully justified; there is no need to repeat national planning policy in the plan unless there is a specific local dimension.

- It is important that the plan contain references to the relevant national planning policy on matters of climate change, flood risk and sustainable construction.
- (Representations D13 & D16 remain.)

Focussed Change 13 – Policy CS9 Waste Planning

We have considered the revised policy and reasoned justification on waste planning and (CS9) in relation to our previous comments on the deposit plan. We have also had regard to the information provided in the LDP Representation Responses Register number **3476.D21** (Submission doc.EB14 – folder 1).

The focussed change proposes amendments to policy CS9 and the reasoned justification.

Response:

- Whilst we have no objection to the policy amendments, the proposed changes to the reasoned justification are not acceptable and do not meet our representation (3476.D21).
- The introduction of additional text to replace paragraph 4.78 still fails to make clear whether the 80 existing employment sites with a B2 use are suitable for waste.
- The 4th and 6th paragraphs of the new text replacing paragraph 4.78 introduces matters in relation to the national Park and mining legacy issues that could undermine the suitability of the two allocations for regional provision.

Focussed Change 22 & 23 – Policy AW12 Renewable Energy & Policy AW13 Large Wind Farm Development

We have considered the revised policy and reasoned justification on renewable energy and large wind farm development (AW12, AW13) in relation to our previous comments on the deposit plan in relation to **renewable energy**. We have also had regard to the information provided in the LDP Representation Responses Register number **3476.D22to23** (Submission doc.EB14 – folder 1).

The focussed changes propose amendments to policies AW12 & AW13 and their reasoned justification.

Response:

- These changes meet our representations (3476.D22 and D23).

Focussed Change 15 – Policy AW2 Sustainable Locations

We have considered the revised policy and reasoned justification on sustainable locations (AW2) in relation to our previous comments on the deposit plan in relation to **Special Landscape Areas (SLAs)**. We have also had regard to the information provided in the LDP Representation Responses Register number **3476.D24** (Submission doc.EB14 – folder 1).

The focussed changes propose deletion of the reference to SLAs in criterion 8 of policy AW2.

Response:

- This change meets our representation (3476.D24).

Focussed Change 6 – Gypsies and Travellers

We have considered the proposed additional policy and reasoned justification on Gypsies

and Travellers in relation to our previous comments on the deposit plan. We have also had regard to the information provided in the LDP Representation Responses Register number **3476.D25** (Submission doc.EB14 – folder 1).

The focussed change proposes an additional area wide criteria policy and reasoned justification on Gypsies and Travellers.

Response:

- This change meets in part our representation (3476.D25).
- (The evidence base query remains.)
