

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

**County Council
22nd October 2014**

**REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Rosemarie Harris, Portfolio Holder
for Regeneration and Planning**

SUBJECT: Question from County Councillor Wynne Jones

At the Special Council Meeting in May, called to discuss the Local Development Plan, the matter of the consultation period was discussed at some length. It was the feeling of those present at the meeting, that if the consultation had to take place over the main holiday period, then it should be an 8 week consultation. Following the meeting there seems that some problems which resulted in the consultation not being able to start until 28th July, and the consultation was at 6 weeks, to conclude on 8th September, therefore almost entirely in the main holiday period, and certainly not in accordance with Members expressed wishes. The Leaders of two Political Groups on the Council, subsequently requested an extension of the consultation period, but this was refused with no reasons being provided.

Therefore could the Portfolio Holder please explain to Council, why the expressed wishes of Members were ignored in this instance, who made the decision to have a 6 week consultation period held almost entirely over the main holiday period, and the reason why? Additionally why was the request for an extension to the consultation refused and who made that decision?

The consultation period on the deposit Powys Local Development Plan ran from Monday July 28th to Monday September 8th (6 weeks and 1 day). Advance notice of the consultation period was issued by email to all contacts held on the LDP database and in statutory notices published in the County Times on July 11th and the Brecon and Radnor Express on July 24th.

In terms of the consultation period on the Deposit LDP, this was debated by Full Council at its meeting on the 27th May. I refer to item 3 of the minutes of this meeting which I have quoted below:

“3. POWYS LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – DEPOSIT PLAN AND ASSESSMENT REPORTS, CC61 – 2013

Council discussed extending the consultation period and officers agreed that it would be possible to extend it to the first week of September but that it would be difficult to go beyond that. The consultation date would be confirmed subject to final editing and translation. Officers confirmed that typographical errors in the report would be

corrected before the documents were sent out for consultation. The Lead Professional was delegated authority to make minor amendments to Deposit Draft LDP and any amendments to the assessment reports arising from changes agreed by Council to the Deposit Draft LDP.”

You will note from the minute that Full Council made no decision on the length of the consultation period and whether this should be six or eight weeks. It states that the consultation date would be confirmed subject to final editing and translation. Having discussed the position with officers in the period following the meeting, I agreed the consultation period should be six weeks working back from the end of the first week in September. Six weeks is the period required by the LDP Regulations and is also the period of time set out in the LDP Delivery Agreement Revised March 2013 as approved by Full Council. As stated above, advance notice of the consultation period was given in order to help respondents plan ahead for the consultation.

The decision to refuse the two requests from Members to extend the period was made by myself following consultation with officers. Both requests to extend the consultation period were made during the consultation period and to extend the period at that point would have been impractical because it would have meant informing all those on the LDP database by letter and email and re-running statutory notices in the local press. Also, very few requests were received to extend the consultation period and it was for these reasons that I took the decision not to extend or change the consultation period.