

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 Councillors Wynne Jones, Leader
of the PIA Group, Aled Davies Leader of the
Conservative Group and John Morris, Leader of the
Liberal Democrats Group**

In view of the letter from Welsh Government, dated 8th September, raising several strong objections to the Deposit Version of the Powys Local Development Plan, which could create a substantial delay in the LDP process, could the Portfolio provide Council with a full and up to date statement on this matter, including detailing to Council likely implications on resources, possible re-consultation and on possible difficulties that may arise with regard to the Council potentially not being able to maintain an extant development plan?

The statutory six week period of public consultation period on the Deposit Local Development Plan concluded on the 8th September 2014. Representations were received from in excess of 200 individuals or organisations and these are currently being collated, indexed and reviewed by the LDP team.

One of these responses has been sent by Welsh Government in a letter dated 8th September 2014 and it raises concerns that the LDP may be found unsound by a Planning Inspector if it progressed to Public Examination without additional supporting evidence. Welsh Government has published a copy of this letter on its website: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/development-plans/ourrole/local-development-plans-official-responses/powys/?lang=en>

It has recommended that additional evidence be prepared and published, particularly in relation to housing issues, and that the statutory deposit consultation period be repeated with a comprehensive suite of evidence to support the plan.

Together with senior officers of the Council I met with officers of Welsh Government, including Rosemarie Thomas, Chief Planning Officer for Wales on Friday 17th Oct 2014.

I also have a meeting arranged with the Council's Local Development Plan Working Group on the 20th October 2014 to consider Welsh Government's response and the

implications it may have in terms of additional evidence gathering and undertaking further consultation.

A revised timetable will be reported to Powys County Council for consideration and approval early in 2015 because the initial focus of work will be on advancing the LDP's evidence base. Welsh Government officers have advised this approach and offered appropriate support to ensure technical compliance.

Members will be aware that by its very nature the LDP process can be unpredictable, as the experiences of many other authorities have shown and that this has the potential to impact on the timetable. Members will be aware that there has already been delay in the earlier part of the planning process when I was not the Portfolio Holder. Whilst I will try to avoid the Council finding itself in a position where it does not have an extant adopted development plan in place, there is and always has been a risk that the Council could find itself in such a position. There are already other authorities in Wales that currently find themselves in such a position.

Officers from Welsh Government in discussion with our Senior Officers have agreed that the situation is manageable and that a clear plan of action, properly resourced and closely monitored will enable us to move to a situation where the LDP can be adopted within a manageable timetable.

These discussions will continue on a regular basis and it is my intention to keep the Council fully informed on progress. In addition the County Council will meet to consider these matters in detail, and as is required in respect of the LDP, to formally approve the revised timetable.