

DYFODOL I'R IAITH

Response to Carmarthenshire County Council
Local Development Plan (LDP) 2018-2033

Carmarthenshire LDP 2018-2033 outlines the plan to build 8,822 houses

DYFODOL I'R LAITH

Dyfodol i'r Iaith believes that Carmarthenshire does not need 8,822 new houses as:

- ▶ There is no organic population growth in Carmarthenshire
 - The death rate has been higher than the birth rate since 2000
 - There is a consistent and substantial migration of young people from the County.
- ▶ There aren't sufficient new jobs being created to replace redundant posts following the closure of many businesses such as *Debenhams, H & M, Topshop, Monsoon, Fat Face, Schaeffler, Calsonic, AIM Altitude*, and *some local banks*, etc.
- ▶ It is a period of significant financial instability following Brexit and Covid 19. Creating work for local people should be a priority and we believe that the economic situation does not justify building so many new houses. It is likely that Yr Egin and Pentre Awel will create a number of new job opportunities but, generally speaking, the signs of economic recovery are not favourable.
- ▶ Without sufficient new jobs to replace the 3,000* lost posts why do we need 8,822 new houses in the county?

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Houses for Sale, empty buildings and priorities



- No data is available regarding the total number of houses for sale in the county, which is thought to be significant. These houses are not included in the LDP but they form an important part of the housing stock and are available to buyers.
- Empty buildings (e.g. shops, offices, banks, chapels) are available for change of use to residential accommodation. According to the property company **Good Move, (August 2021)** there were 2,964 empty houses in Carmarthenshire, the highest number in any Welsh county. Council estimates note that there are nearly 2,000 empty properties in the county.
- Problems affecting local people need addressing, such as homelessness, the need for social housing and for affordable housing. However, we believe it is not necessary to build 8,822 new houses to address these problems.

The Welsh Government and the Welsh Language – Legislation and Policies

- **Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015** Wales with a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.
- **A million Welsh speakers by 2050** Recommends a stronger relationship between language planning and land development planning.
- **Future Wales: The National Plan 2040** notes the importance of creating conditions: for the Welsh language to thrive; to continue as a community language; that will result in a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

The Situation in Carmarthenshire

- The LDP is a great deal less favourable to the Welsh language than the Welsh Government's planning policy **Future Wales – The National Plan 2040**.
- According to the 2011 census 24% of the County's population was born outside Wales; the 2021 census showed an increase in this number to 26.4%. We believe that the proposed LDP encourages more in-migration to the County. This population movement is no surprise:
 - House prices are much lower than in many areas of the UK
 - Carmarthenshire is an attractive place to live considering leisure facilities, quality of life and scenery
 - Without new jobs, new housing will not keep local people in the County; it is likely that new housing will attract people who have retired or those who can work from home.
- There are serious concerns about the effects of housing policy on the Welsh language:
 - What provision is there to help adults learn Welsh when they move to the county?
 - What data does the Local Authority have regarding the number of people who have become fluent in Welsh since moving to Carmarthenshire?
 - For the sake of our economy as well as our Welsh-speaking communities, the LDP needs to focus on the needs of the people and economy of Carmarthenshire rather than on over-estimating the number of houses required and therefore attracting further migration from non-Welsh speaking areas.

Others sharing concerns re. 8,822 houses – comments on the Local Development Plan received by the County Council



The Welsh Government's **Future Wales: The National Plan 2040**, published in 2021, notes the median estimate of 5,000 to 6,250 new houses for the county between 2020-2040. Why doesn't Carmarthenshire County Council accept this median estimate?

The following concerns were raised with the County Council in response to the Local Development Plan:

- **Welsh Government**.... concerned about the impact of a further inflow of people on the Welsh Language
- **The Welsh Language Commissioner**... concerns that the number of houses in the LDP is too high
- **Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg** concerned about the reality of the economic situation, the absence of hard evidence to support the LDP, and the threat to Welsh Language communities.

An expert's opinion about housing supply ...



Research by Ian Mulheirn* based on Office for National Statistics figures concludes that there is no shortage of housing, as such, within the UK.

He demonstrated that there was an excess of housing available – the surplus stock in Wales increased from 56,000 in 1996 to 92,000 by 2017.

The Welsh Government's paper "Dwelling Stocks Estimates," 2019, came to a similar conclusion.

**Ian Mulheirn – former Treasury economist, and Director of Consulting at Oxford Economics; now, Executive Director and Chief Economist at "Renewing the Centre," a Tony Blair Foundation.*

General Conclusions

Dyfodol i'r Iaith concludes that Carmarthenshire does not need 8,822 new houses. There should be a change of emphasis in the County's LDP from land use to the effects of the LDP on communities. The housing figure should be revised.

Dyfodol i'r iaith believes that:

- there is no concrete evidence that 8,000+ new houses are need in the County
- the economic situation in the County is not strong enough to warrant building so many new houses
- the LDP is likely to have a negative effect on Carmarthenshire's communities and services for those communities
- the LDP will have a serious, detrimental effect on the Welsh language and on Welsh speaking communities
- current data (Census Results 2021) concerning the situation of the Welsh language within the county reveals further deterioration, which calls for firm action, including a more significant change to the number of houses in the LDP.

Note: Dyfodol i'r iaith has prepared a Welsh language document which provides greater detail relating to the points outlined in the slides. If you would like a copy please contact Wyn Thomas: [REDACTED]

Census Results 2021

- The current results (Census 2021) show the linguistic deterioration within Carmarthenshire.
- According to the 2021 Census results Carmarthenshire saw the most significant deterioration in the use of the language throughout Wales.
- We conclude that adding 8000+ new homes to the housing stock will only serve to speed up this pattern of linguistic deterioration.
- Approving the CDP, as it stands, will undoubtedly lead to a situation of linguistic deterioration that will be too severe to be overturned by the education sector, or by investing in special projects.