

# DISCUSSION PAPER: LOCAL HOUSING NEED AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE IN THE PLANNING SYSTEM

## SUMMARY OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

### LACK OF INFORMATION AND METHODOLOGIES (CHAPTER 1)

1. Local authorities should review their processes for assessing local housing need. This work should be based on recent good practice, investing in external expertise when required (section 1.1.2)
2. Research should be commissioned to investigate the relationship between the housing market, the planning system, and the demise or growth of Welsh as a community language. One of the objectives of such research would be to establish a robust methodology and provide stronger guidance for undertaking assessments of the impact of planning strategies and decisions on the Welsh language (section 1.2.3)
3. Local authorities should be encouraged to come together to assess their methodologies for undertaking language impact assessments, sharing any good practice and new processes (section 1.2.3)
4. The good practice, the methodology and processes used by Gwynedd and Môn to create the Local Housing Market policy should be shared with a view to disseminating this policy more widely (section 1.3)

### WEAKNESSES IN THE GUIDANCE (CHAPTER 2)

5. TAN 20 should be revised without delay to make it clear that language impact assessments should be undertaken on individual applications in specific circumstances (section 2.1.2)
6. TAN 20 should make it clearer that local authorities may in any case undertake Welsh language impact assessments on individual planning applications if they so wish (section 2.1.2)
7. There is a need to press for far stronger guidance in TAN 20 regarding the definition of linguistically sensitive areas, and the factors that should be considered in their designation. In doing so, the needs of Welsh speaking heartlands should be addressed in terms of providing infrastructure and facilities (section 2.2).
8. the Welsh Government should be urged to amend TAN 20 in order to provide greater clarity regarding considerations relating to the Welsh language when monitoring and reviewing the Local Development Plan; and to provide more guidance regarding the mitigating measures and measures to promote the Welsh Language which should be included when a language impact assessment has been carried out (section 2.3)

## ASSISTANCE TO ACCESS HOUSING (CHAPTER 3)

9. The success of all existing schemes to help local people purchase or build their own homes should be critically and holistically investigated (section 3.1)
10. Welsh local authorities should be required to maintain registers of those who wish to acquire land for self-build projects (section 3.2)
11. A specific capital fund should be set up to increase the housing stock for local people in rural communities, and a plan drawn up to implement this (section 3.3)
12. There is a case for looking in more detail at the success of land trusts and local enterprises, with a view to introducing new policies to promote them in the future (section 3.4)

## THE SYSTEM FROM TOP TO BOTTOM (CHAPTER 4)

13. The Welsh Government's plans as it draws up the National Development Framework require very careful monitoring (section 4.2)
14. There is a need to ensure that the National Development Framework contains a clear statement regarding the importance and relevance of the Welsh language in planning for land use (section 4.2)
15. It should be ensured that any methodology used to undertake the assessment is as robust as possible, and reflects any findings arising from the recommendations in chapter 1 (section 4.2)
16. There is a need to carefully monitor the intentions of the Welsh Government for Strategic Development Plans, ensuring that they do not address issues that would be best dealt with at a local level (section 4.3)
17. It is important to keep a watchful eye on the way in which regional economic growth plans might eventually impact upon land use in those regions (section 4.3)
18. The current consultation on *Planning Policy Wales* is an opportunity to question whether its contents really does enough to demonstrate how the planning system might achieve a Wales of a "thriving Welsh language" (section 4.4)
19. The current consultation on *Planning Policy Wales* is an opportunity to present some of the arguments put forward in chapters 1 and 2 regarding the lack of a consistent methodology for undertaking language impact assessments, when such assessments should be undertaken and also regarding other weaknesses in TAN 20 (section 4.4)
20. Further consideration is required regarding the desirability of introducing a lower tier of development plans at a community level, within the context of Plaid Cymru's policy for the reorganisation of community councils and its wider policies for the decentralisation of power. Funding for this work and training for councillors should be considered (section 4.5)

## OTHER MATTERS (CHAPTER 5)

21. Guidance in TAN 1 needs to be revised in order to ensure that joint land availability studies do not undermine other housing allocations in the Local Development Plan, especially when the practice of land banking has impacted upon this (section 5.1)
22. The composition of the panels undertaking joint studies should be revisited, so that developers and their representatives do not wield excessive power (section 5.1)
23. The introduction of a levy scheme on land that has been awarded planning permission should be encouraged and it should also be considered whether there might be an opportunity to introduce more substantial legislative changes to prevent developers from banking land (section 5.1)
24. Plaid Cymru should proceed with its policy to set up a separate Planning Inspectorate for Wales, so that it can focus on specialising in the Welsh planning system (section 5.2)
25. The proposal to consolidate planning law in Wales should be supported, as it is a sensible step towards simplification. It might also offer an opportunity to make other necessary revisions to planning law (section 5.3)
26. When consolidating the legislation, the Law Commission's proposal that the Welsh language becomes a general consideration in all issues relating to planning should be supported (section 5.3)
27. Further steps are required to address the loss to public funds due to second homes becoming converted into holiday accommodation. This might include introducing a requirement to secure planning permission before a domestic property can be eligible for change of use to a holiday business (section 5.4)