

Affordable Housing Policies

The main objective of the UDP in respect of housing provision will be to ensure that an adequate supply of land will be readily available for all appropriate housing developments and that there will be a range and choice of housing available to meet the needs of the present and future population of the Plan area.

New housing development within the County will be distributed in accordance with the Unitary Development Plan's Sustainable Strategic Settlement Framework. The Framework proposes the concentration of growth in a hierarchy of settlements thereby promoting sustainability by increasing accessibility to essential services and facilities (which in turn take support from a more accessible population and catchment), reducing the need to travel and increasing social inclusion. The strategy of concentrating growth in appropriate settlements will lead to more viable, self-supporting, autonomous and, therefore, sustainable communities and economies. Such policies are central to the regeneration of the fabric of urban and rural communities and give expression to the social, cultural, economic, environmental and political objectives of the County Council. Residential land will be allocated in accordance with the Plan's Sustainable Strategic Settlement Framework, namely:

- 3 Urban Growth Areas;
- 8 Secondary Settlements;
- 10 Tertiary Settlements;
- 51 Village Clusters.

There is a continuing need to provide a range and choice of housing to meet local needs within the County. The Authority is aware that a high proportion of the housing available on the open market is not within the affordable means of everyone.

Affordable housing can be defined as housing where there are mechanisms in place to ensure that it is accessible to those who cannot afford market housing, both on first occupation and for subsequent occupiers.

A range of policies were designed to reflect the various tiers of the settlement strategy:

H4 is applicable in the Growth Centres and Secondary where sufficient land and large enough sites have been identified to apply

H4 – AFFORDABLE HOUSING

IT IS THE POLICY OF CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL THAT WHERE THERE IS A DEMONSTRABLE LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO MEET PROVEN LOCAL NEEDS, THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO NEGOTIATE WITH DEVELOPERS THE INCLUSION OF A REASONABLE ELEMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES WITHIN THE DEFINED LIMITS OF SETTLEMENTS. IN SUCH INSTANCES PLANNING PERMISSION WILL ONLY BE GRANTED IF THE FUTURE OCCUPANCY CAN BE REGULATED BY MEANS OF A LEGAL AGREEMENT (SECTION 106) OR OTHER CONTROL TO ENSURE THAT THE DWELLING(S) REMAIN AFFORDABLE FOR SUBSEQUENT OCCUPIERS.

Within a large number of the Plan area's settlements there may be a lack of sites of sufficient scale to enable affordable housing to be provided under Policy H4. Provision is therefore made in the Plan to help safeguard the viability of local communities by assisting to satisfy an identified local housing need, while at the same time ensuring that such development does not have an adverse affect on environmental, amenity, highway and utility provision considerations.

Policy H5 provides for the release of sites, in exceptional circumstances, for affordable housing within or immediately adjoining the development limits of settlements where there is an identified and demonstrable local need for such provision. This is for use 10 Tertiary Settlements and not for single dwellings.

H5 – AFFORDABLE HOUSING – EXCEPTIONS

IT IS THE POLICY OF CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, THAT IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED ON SITES IN OR IMMEDIATELY ADJOINING AND FORMING A LOGICAL EXTENSION TO, THE LIMITS OF A SETTLEMENT PROVIDED THAT:

(I) THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IS DESIGNED TO MEET A DEMONSTRATED LOCAL NEED. APPLICATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL DWELLINGS WILL BE EVALUATED WITH REFERENCE TO THE APPLICANT'S CIRCUMSTANCES INCLUDING THE SUITABILITY OF HIS OR HER CURRENT ACCOMMODATION. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS INVOLVING MORE THAN ONE DWELLING WILL BE ASSESSED IN THE LIGHT OF AN INDEPENDENT, PROPERLY CONDUCTED AND UP TO DATE HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY OR BY REFERENCE TO THE AUTHORITY'S OWN UP TO DATE SURVEY; AND

(II) THERE IS NO SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION, CONVERSION OPPORTUNITY OR BUILDING LAND AVAILABLE WITHIN THE PARTICULAR SETTLEMENT OR THE OTHER SETTLEMENTS IN THE CLUSTER (PRIORITY BEING AFFORDED TO THE DOMINANT CLUSTER SETTLEMENT WHERE SERVICES AND FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE) TO SATISFY THE APPLICANT'S NEED. INDIVIDUAL APPLICANTS WILL BE REQUIRED TO SATISFACTORILY DEMONSTRATE TO THE AUTHORITY THE SEQUENTIAL MANNER IN WHICH THEY HAVE SEARCHED FOR ALTERNATIVE PROPERTY; AND

(III) THE APPLICANT OR THE INTENDED OCCUPANTS SATISFY THE AUTHORITY'S LOCAL NEED ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA (POLICY H7). PROPOSALS FOR MULTIPLE UNITS OF LOCAL NEED HOUSING SUBMITTED BY DEVELOPMENT COMPANIES, HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS, TRUSTS OR OTHER AGENCIES WHERE THE INTENDED OCCUPANTS ARE NOT SPECIFIED, COMPLIANCE WITH THE AUTHORITY'S LOCAL NEED ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA (POLICY H7) WILL STILL BE REQUIRED THROUGH A NORMAL PLANNING OBLIGATION OR AGREEMENT; AND

(IV) THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL IS OF A SIZE, SCALE, AND DESIGN THAT WILL BE AFFORDABLE TO LOCAL PEOPLE ON LOW OR MODERATE INCOME LEVELS. COMPLIANCE WITH WHICH SHALL BE ACHIEVED THROUGH A PLANNING OBLIGATION OR AGREEMENT; AND

(V) THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH OTHER POLICIES WITHIN THIS UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN INCLUDING THOSE RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND FLOODING AND THAT THE PROPOSAL SATISFIES ALL AMENITY, HIGHWAY AND UTILITY SERVICE PROVISION OBJECTIONS.

There are a number of minor settlements and groups of dwellings in the Plan area that have not been provided with development limits because they do not comply with the County Council's ambition to promote sustainable development. There may however be justifiable instances where a limited amount of housing could be provided in these minor settlements for local need purposes. To qualify under this policy there must be at least six dwellings closely and physically linked, situated within convenient walking distance of a public transport corridor together with at least one closely related community facility (village hall, place of worship, etc

Policy H6 provides for the release of sites, in exceptional circumstances, for affordable housing within or immediately adjoining the development limits.

H6 – AFFORDABLE HOUSING – MINOR SETTLEMENTS

IT IS THE POLICY OF CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL THAT PROPOSALS FOR INFILL DEVELOPMENT BY A SINGLE DWELLING WITHIN A SETTLEMENT OR LARGE GROUP OF DWELLINGS WITHOUT DEVELOPMENT LIMITS, OR DEVELOPMENT OF A SINGLE DWELLING ON SITES IMMEDIATELY ADJOINING AND FORMING A LOGICAL EXTENSION TO SUCH A SETTLEMENT OR LARGE GROUP OF DWELLINGS WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT:

(I) THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT HAVE A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE CHARACTER OF THE SETTLEMENT; AND

(II) IS DESIGNED TO MEET A DEMONSTRATED LOCAL NEED. APPLICATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL DWELLINGS WILL BE EVALUATED WITH REFERENCE TO THE APPLICANT'S CIRCUMSTANCES INCLUDING THE SUITABILITY OF HIS OR HER CURRENT ACCOMMODATION; AND

(III) THERE IS NO SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION, CONVERSION OPPORTUNITY OR BUILDING LAND AVAILABLE IN ANY NEARBY SETTLEMENTS TO SATISFY THE APPLICANT'S NEED. INDIVIDUAL APPLICANTS WILL BE REQUIRED TO SATISFACTORILY DEMONSTRATE TO THE AUTHORITY THE SEQUENTIAL MANNER IN WHICH THEY HAVE SEARCHED FOR ALTERNATIVE PROPERTY; AND

(IV) THE APPLICANT OR THE INTENDED OCCUPANTS SATISFY THE AUTHORITY'S LOCAL NEED ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA (POLICY H7). COMPLIANCE WITH WHICH SHALL BE ACHIEVED THROUGH A NORMAL PLANNING OBLIGATION OR AGREEMENT; AND

(V) THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL IS OF A SIZE, SCALE, AND DESIGN THAT WILL BE AFFORDABLE TO LOCAL PEOPLE ON LOW OR MODERATE INCOME LEVELS. PLANNING PERMISSION WILL ONLY

BE GRANTED IF THE FUTURE OCCUPANCY CAN BE REGULATED BY MEANS OF A LEGAL AGREEMENT (SECTION 106) OR OTHER CONTROL TO ENSURE THAT THE DWELLING(S) REMAIN AFFORDABLE FOR SUBSEQUENT OCCUPIERS; AND

(VI) THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH THE OTHER POLICIES WITHIN THIS UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN INCLUDING THOSE RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND FLOODING AND THAT THE PROPOSAL SATISFIES ALL AMENITY, HIGHWAY AND UTILITY SERVICE PROVISION OBJECTIONS.

In the case of Policies H4 and H5 a Section 106 agreement is required and the affordable housing linked with the formula used by housing, see Appendix 1 which provides the background.

In the case of Policy H6 the 106 agreement will set out the local need criteria as stated in Policy H7 and that all subsequent sales will be to persons qualifying under this criteria. -Should it not be possible to sell on this basis then a written request to sell as an affordable house would be considered. The following condition to be applied to all such cases:

The occupation of the dwelling shall be limited to a person qualifying under the Local Need eligibility criteria as outlined in Policy H7 of the adopted Carmarthenshire Unitary Development Plan or a widow or widower of such a person, and to any resident dependants, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority

REASON

The dwelling is provided to meet an identified and acknowledged local need, in the event of no such need existing at the time of any future sale of the dwelling an opportunity should be taken to secure a contribution to affordable housing in the area. Any such request shall be considered on this basis