



Eryri Local Development Plan Examination

Further Evidence Paper – Affordable Housing Need

April 2018

Further evidence on the affordable housing need within the National Park for the plan period.

1. Housing Need Delivery in the National Park

- 1.1 While the deposit Eryri Local Development Plan (LDP) does not provide an up to date figure for affordable housing need for the Plan period, the evidence does highlight that the level of affordable housing need over the plan period is far higher than what is achievable within the National Park environment and considering the housing requirement set out in the revised LDP, (which is based on the Welsh Government household and population projections). It is accepted therefore that it will not be possible to deliver the overall affordable housing need for the National Park within the plan period. The Authority however is committed to ensuring that affordable housing delivery is maximised to assist in the delivery of the Eryri LDP objectives, which is to maintain and promote sustainable communities and help to meet the national targets for affordable housing delivery.
- 1.2 This paper sets out and provides an update on the various sources of evidence for affordable housing need within the National Park.

2. Local Housing Market Assessments (LHMA)

- 2.1 Local Housing Authorities are responsible for producing and updating LHMA in partnership with planning authorities and other stakeholders. As noted in the updated housing background paper (November 2017) Conwy's LHMA Study 2016-2021 identifies a total of 995 additional affordable homes over the period 2016-2021 (199 units per year) for the whole of Conwy County. On a pro rata split this equates to a total of 40 units over the 5 year period (2016-2021) an annual need of 8 units for the area of Conwy which falls within the National Park. Since the housing background paper was updated in November 2017 Conwy County Borough Council are in the process of updating their LHMA for the period (2017- 2022). The Conwy LHMA (2017-2022) is currently in draft form with the aim of being finalised in June 2018. The Authority should be in a position to provide a further update on the Conwy LHMA during the examination hearing sessions.
- 2.2 Gwynedd Council's most recent LHMA continues to be the 2013-2018 LHMA Study. However, the Authority are in regular contact with Gwynedd Council's Housing Department and the Joint Planning Policy Team to keep updated with the progress and to emphasise the importance of an up-to-date assessment of the full range of housing requirements. . The Authority attended a meeting on 12th April to discuss the importance of an up-to-date LHMA and to agree a timetable. Work has started on the 2018-2023 Gwynedd LHMA with the aim of circulating a draft copy of the LHMA in May and a finalised version by the end of June. Again, the Authority should be in a position to provide a further update on the progress of the Gwynedd LHMA during the examination hearing sessions. It is important to note some of the limitations to the local housing market assessment calculation which is given by unitary authority area. The main limitation is that it has not been possible to disaggregate a figure for the SNPA area. The demographic pattern within the Snowdonia National Park is different from that of the surrounding area and as a result the housing need figure when apportioned to the National Park area is likely to be an overestimate. The possibility of double counting applicants who are on more than one housing register i.e. for both

Gwynedd and Conwy is also a limitation. The figures may also include applicants from outside Gwynedd and Conwy.

- 2.3 Once the LHMA has been produced, it will be a material consideration in planning decisions and it will be referenced in the revised Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance to ensure sufficient weight is given to the contents.

3. Rural Housing Enabler Partnership Board

- 3.1 The Authority has been working closely with local housing partners when developing the Deposit Eryri Local Development Plan and continue to do so. In order to improve the information on local housing needs and help deliver affordable housing in Snowdonia, the Authority has been part funding Rural Housing Enablers. The role of the Rural Housing Enablers is to act as independent, impartial brokers working on behalf of local communities, assist communities to come up with tailor-made solutions to meet identified local housing need and to help communities carry out housing need surveys. The Authority are partners on the Rural Housing Enabler Partnership Board who meet quarterly. The RHE partnership board members include the Rural housing enablers themselves, housing associations and also housing and planning officers of North West Wales local housing authorities. The purpose of the board is to ensure that the work of the RHEs is focussed in the right areas. The board members also provide support and assist in developing the work programme of the RHEs. In addition to the quarterly meetings of the Board, officers regularly meet with the RHEs to discuss issues specific to National Park communities, often members of the community have contacted the RHEs about a particular site and this is then discussed further with relevant officers. The RHEs is a key link when delivering sites within the National Park by acting as a contact between the National Park officers and site owners.

4. Community Level Housing Needs Surveys

- 4.1 The Welsh Government guidance on undertaking Local Housing Market Assessments state that in the context of rural settlements an additional survey at the community level is the practical way to proceed to assess housing needs in rural areas as housing need can be highly localised in rural areas. The Local Government Data Unit has developed a standardised questionnaire for the Rural Housing Enabler to conduct community based surveys. The Rural Housing Enabler approach is to sample 100% of households in order to maximise the robustness of the surveys. Welsh Government guidance states that in terms of frequency the validity of the surveys is approximately five years. From the questionnaire responses a Community Housing Needs Survey Report is produced assessing housing needs over a five year period. Each report makes an analysis of the housing market and context, pulls together demographic data and records those households wishing to move. It also assesses local affordable housing needs (including household composition, house type required, tenure, income and affordability in terms of rent and mortgages, timescale for housing and location of provision) together with the qualification for local connection.
- 4.2 Community level Housing Needs Surveys have been undertaken by the RHEs at the request of Community Councils or members of the Partnership Board in line with the agreed work programme. These provide up to date information about the affordable housing need within a settlement or community council area and provide the appropriate tenure mix need within the identified area. They provide useful information for both the Authority and site developers at an early stage in the development process. These have been utilised in the past to determine affordable housing need in

various communities across the National Park and continue to do so as and when they are prepared. It is recognised that the information can change as people move or circumstances change, however they do provide useful information during the pre-planning stages of looking at a site to determine the appropriate housing number and tenure mix.

- 4.3 The Authority considers this is a comprehensive and robust assessment of need. It is supported by paragraph 10.15 of TAN 2. Planning and Affordable Housing which advocates need surveys at a more local level in rural areas.

5. Local Housing Authority waiting lists

- 5.1 The Authority has requested information in the past from Local Authority Housing lists to provide information regarding need within the National Park this provides information to help support the development of policies and also to support exception site applications. These are a good starting point for developers when determining need in a settlement when considering the number of dwellings for a site and also an appropriate mix.

6. Tai Teg

- 6.1 The Local Authorities of North Wales and housing associations have recently come together to set up an intermediate housing register which is being coordinated by Grwp Cynefin housing association. This register provides specific information about intermediate housing needs across the whole of north Wales and it will be possible to break down the information by settlement to provide an accurate figure of intermediate housing need within settlements across the National Park. This information will be available to the Authority and housing associations. Prior to this, information was provided through First Steps (for Conwy Council area) and Tai Teg (which operated across Gwynedd and Ynys Mon). These are the figures that have been used in previous Annual Monitoring Reports. The joint intermediate housing register will provide much more detailed information and also provide an opportunity to match people with housing coming forward in the Authority area.

7. Housing Associations

- 7.1 In addition to the above, the Authority have a close working relationship with those housing associations that work within the National Park area. The Authority have regular meetings to discuss plans for the sites within their ownership. When drafting the revised Eryri Local Development Plan the Authority have worked closely with the housing associations who have put sites forward through the call for sites process to determine where they wish to develop. The Associations do not develop in areas where there is not an identified need.

8. House prices and average income Gwynedd

- 8.1 In addition to the LHMA and the community housing needs surveys, the Authority has also looked at additional up to date evidence on housing need in the National Park. Gwynedd Council have undertaken work on the income required to afford entry level house price for wards within the National Park area. They have shared this information with the Authority and it outlines that the vast majority of households within the National Park area are 'priced out of the market'.

Year	Number of Wards where over 50% of households are priced out of the market
2014	27/32
2015	26/32
2016	23/32
2017	24/32

- 8.2 Based on the information above, over 23 out of the 32 wards (some wards are not wholly within the National Park Authority area) within the plan area have over 50% of their households priced out of the market, i.e. household income is below 1/3.5 of the lower quartile house price in the same ward. It is acknowledged, that this demonstrates the worst case scenario as these figures do not account for any savings or other assets households may have to put towards the purchase of a property. It does however demonstrate there is a high percentage of households that are priced out of the local housing market, demonstrating the need for dwellings which are within the affordable housing bracket. This evidence can be used with other evidence presented in this paper to demonstrate a clear need for affordable housing within the National Park area now and into the future. A map showing the wards priced out of the market is included in appendix 1.

9. Local Knowledge

- 9.1 Many of the private house builders in the National Park area build for their local communities and therefore have a detailed knowledge of the housing market in which they operate. They are not speculative developers which work in other areas of Wales and they mostly have a clear understanding of the local housing needs with the settlements they are developing.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 The evidence on affordable housing need demonstrates need figure much higher than can be achieved. The need figure is far in excess of the household projections and the housing requirements of the Plan. The need figure is much higher than what can be delivered within the National Park environmental capacity and what can be practically delivered by the development industry. The Authority considers that the Affordable housing target set out in the Eryri LDP aims to maximise affordable housing delivery to meet the housing needs of the National Park communities, help meet the national targets for affordable delivery while taking into consideration viability matters and the environmental capacity of the National Park.