

DOES CARDIFF'S RLDP NEED TO BE RECONSIDERED?

There is a real possibility that land owners and developers will be given permission to build houses across Cardiff on green field sites when there is no need to do so. A Radyr & Morganstown based group has been examining the 2021 Census figures, which have just been published. They show that the growth in the number of households in Cardiff is much lower than the projections used for the existing 2006-2026 Cardiff Local Development Plan (LDP). Specifically, the LDP Census shows that, in 2021, there were 147,300 households against a prediction of 165,523.

Why is this important? Cardiff's Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP), covering 2021-2036, uses the higher figure as a starting point for the plan and continues to predict a higher rate of growth than has been the case. The existing LDP states "These official figures show a 42% rise in Cardiff's population for the period 2008-2033 and a 33% rise for the Plan period 2006-26 for which the Plan makes provision." In fact the population increase from 2011 to 2021 was only 5%.

The potential consequences of using the wrong base figure are severe. The next stage of the RLDP process (in October 2022) will consult on sites already put forward by land owners and developers etc to cope with the currently forecast growth. It would now appear that few, if any, of these new sites will be required as there is sufficient land already allocated for development to cover the period up to 2036. Granting permission to develop land when that is unnecessary will result in the loss of much needed agricultural and leisure area spaces. This will unnecessarily increase pollution, decrease biodiversity and potentially cause environmental damage such as flooding.

It is essential that Cardiff bases its development plans on real figures as opposed to aspirations. Developers are, of course, keen to see new areas, right across Cardiff, designated for development as they can then 'cherry pick' the best sites – often on green field land – in advance of building on less attractive sites in the existing LDP.

Peter Fortune, previously a Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and a Principal Planner in Cardiff City Council, said that "it is very worrying that Cardiff may disregard the Census figures and press on with the next stage of the RLDP without rebasing the plan. Many areas of Cardiff have been shocked at some of the sites that have been put forward for development in the RLDP. That is certainly the case for NW Cardiff, where there are already mounting problems with traffic management and lack of infrastructure."

Cardiff Council Planners have been invited to comment.

BACKGROUND FOR EDITORS

See the attached paper, prepared by Peter Fortune, giving his analysis of the Census figures.

Peter is a member of the Radyr & Morganstown Local Development Group, which has become associated with a number of other groups in NW Cardiff.

Their website (<https://radyr.org.uk/clubs/rmldggroup/>) states:

The Radyr and Morganstown Local Development Group (RMLDG) is an independent group of local residents which has come together to be informed, and take positive action on matters relating to the development of our Capital City. In particular, we have particular interest in the production of the Cardiff Council Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP), and how it will affect both the area of Radyr & Morganstown and the whole of North West Cardiff. In doing this, we have joined forces with other groups in NW Cardiff, namely:

- The North West Cardiff Group
- [St Fagans Community Council](#)
- [Danescourt Community Association](#)
- Rhydlafer Residents' Group
- [The Radyr & Morganstown Association](#)

Contact Peter Fortune, peter.fortuneuk@gmail.com , for more information.

RADYR & MORGANSTOWN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT GROUP

UPDATE ON POPULATION FIGURES

1 The preliminary figures for the 2021 Census were released on 28 June 2022. They indicate that the population of Cardiff was 362,400 and the number of households was 147,300.

2 Stats Wales projections of population for Cardiff in 2021 were 367,190 and for the number of households 165,523. So there is a reduction of almost 2% in the actual against the projection in terms of the population but a 12% reduction in then number of households.

This figure for Cardiff's households is very interesting. It shows a percentage growth of only 3.3% which is lower than the figure for Wales as a whole (3.4%), and lower than surrounding local authorities: Newport (8.1%), Vale of Glamorgan (7.5%) and Bridgend (6.6%). The only explanation at the moment could be a significant downturn in the number of students.

3 Initial comments from planning consultants highlight the increase in household size across the whole of England and Wales, bringing to an end the long decline in household size.

4 It is the number of households which is significant for the LDP and the RLDP as that determines the number of dwellings required.

5 The current LDP (to 2026) was required by Welsh Government to be based upon the official projections for setting levels of growth in LDPs and makes it clear that any departure from these figures should be fully justified by demonstrable evidence. (Para 4.13 LDP) "These official figures show a 42% rise in Cardiff's population for the period 2008-2033 and a 33% rise for the Plan period 2006-26 for which the Plan makes provision."

In actual fact the population increase from 2011 to 2021 was actually only 5%.

6 Currently it is not possible to estimate the population growth beyond 2021 because the detailed components of the population change from 2011 to 2021 are not yet available. However it is possible to suggest that the reduction in the actual against the projected is due to reduced internal and international migration, which would be unsurprising due to Brexit and COVID.

7 Welsh Government projections have previously indicated that the number of households in Cardiff would significantly increase by 37% between 2008 and 2026 from 136,741 to 187,302 households. According to the Welsh Government projections, this is driven partly by in-migration (particularly net international migration), partly by natural population increase (births less deaths), and partly by a decline in average household size with over three quarters of the growth being for 1 and 2 person households. (Paragraph A3.6 LDP)

Just to restate, the Census figures show that there were only 147,300 households in 2021, a significant reduction against the earlier projections.

8 In Summary

| | 2021 | Stats Wales Projection for 2021 | 2011 |
|---------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---------|
| Population | 362,400 | 367,190 | 345,442 |
| Households. | 147,300 | 165,523 | 142,557 |
| Current LDP basis to 2026 | 187,302 (later revised by Stats Wales to 177,592) | | |

At the moment, and based upon the figures released today, it is clear that there is no basis for any of the growth focused Strategic Options included in the RLDP. However, I assume the Council will await the Stats Wales projections based on the 2021 Census before taking any further decisions but I suggest that we make sure that they know our views above as soon as possible.

Peter Fortune
28 June 2022