

Your Danescourt Community Association has been active, making our views known concerning Cardiff Council's Local Development Plan.

The following is correspondence between Edgar Gibbs, DCA Chair and First Minister Carwyn Jones

From: Edgar Gibbs DCA  
Sent: Thursday, 31 October 2013 13:57  
To: carwyn.jones@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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Danescourt

CARDIFF

31-10-2013

The First Minister

Dear Carwyn

Local development plan

As chairman of the Danescourt Community Association, Llandaff, Cardiff, I have been charged with writing to you regarding current situation on the Local Development Plan. Members of our committee have been trying with considerable difficulty to go through the issues regarding the local development plan and how it will affect the residents of Danescourt and how we can have input into it.

The process and consultation can at best be described as confusing complicated and convoluted, and at worst totally unhelpful to the public and hugely inflexible, to the point it is almost a tick box exercise without enough boxes where objections can be ticked.

Already two years late and we have arrived at the situation where the Local Development Plan, which has still not been adopted will be meaningless, based on the fact that, at long last, the number of authorities within Wales is going to be reduced, with new proposals for boundaries being issued within the near future. This reduction in Authorities will both reduce costs and provide a stronger basis for more strategic thinking about the future for Wales.

Cardiff Council has at best been tardy in being so late in producing a draft document which can be sent out for consultation, as it should have been completed two years ago.

Realistically, continuing with the local development plan at this stage is going to waste money, when money is very tight, especially as new authorities would be required to amalgamate and update redundant existing LDPs.

I would refer you to the City Regions Final Report of July 2012 that stated –

The main drivers behind the city region approach are to:

- Improve the planning system;
- Improve connectivity; and

- Drive investment.

The report recommends creating 2 City regions in Wales – Swansea Bay and South East Wales, which would be called Cardiff City Region – there are 22 recommendations such as 12 on Transport and 14 on Planning.

The Association would wish assurances that the content of the report has been taken into account within the preparation of the LDP.

The Association would also like assurances that the report - A Cardiff Capital Region Metro: Impact Study has also been taken into account both in the preparation of the LDP plus the recent planning application for 5000 houses north west of Danescourt

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The Association would like to suggest that the LDP process be halted, but there needs to be a level of planning protection as there is no land bank. Refusal of planning applications can easily be appealed and objections overruled at appeal, as there is no land bank, and consents could leave considerable transport and other problems.

Despite the issues regarding planning land bank and objections being overruled etc. the community association would like you to instigate a temporary hold on the local development plan process in Cardiff and I would suspect throughout all Wales as I'm sure there are other community associations, community councils, residents associations etc. also struggling considerably with the current situation.

To gain something positive from the situation we are in, the Community Association would suggest that you engage planning consultants and transportation consultants to take a fresh look at the current situation, and prepare a report on how best a local development plan can be progressed, taking into account the new boundaries that are going to exist and the City Regions Final Report of July 2012, and other reports.

I appreciate that the Assembly may not have the money necessary nor have budget to employ consultants to carry out this work, but the Association feels that if a halt was made on the LDP the money that would have been wasted on continuing with the process could be used to pay for these consultants.

The Association would suggest that a considerably smaller number of local authorities would give a far better more effective more efficient strategic overview whilst at the same time allowing the local people to have their input into the process. Also the Association would wish to have an simpler consultation process which would make local input more relevant.

The Association has written to Cardiff City Council to obtain properly considered details regarding the LDP draft proposals but has been unable to get satisfactory information.

The local councillor has done his very best to explain the process but the process is so obviously convoluted, confusing, inflexible, illogical and difficult for members of the public to understand that these explanations have led to more questions than answers.

In summary the Association would very much like you as the first minister

1. To put a hold on all local development plan processes throughout Wales
2. Give adequate protection on planning and land bank issues until the boundary and revised process is finalised and implemented
3. To consult with community associations such as ourselves and produce a brief followed by the engagement of consultants to prepare a way forward to make a new LDP process fit for purpose and relevant to Wales.
4. Include all relevant parties in a consultation to establish that the revised LDP process can be agreed as fit for purpose.
5. To set out a timetable for implementation of this revised process.
6. Give reassurances the reports mentioned above have and/or will be taken into in planning the future of our Capital, and for Wales as a country.

We look forward to your detailed and comprehensive response.

Yours sincerely

Edgar Gibbs BSc, CEng, MICE

Chair

Stewart Burgess CEng, CEnv, FICE, FCIHT, MCMI, MBA

Committee member

This message was followed up on the 16th of November with the following message

Dear Carwyn

You will recall I sent you an email regarding the Local Development Plan which you have asked Carl Sargeant AM to respond to. The situation has now developed somewhat as it appears that in July a planning application in St Fagans that was refused by Cardiff was taken to appeal. As Cardiff have not got an LDP the appeal was upheld by an Inspector..

See paragraph 6 of the link below <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/massive-expansion--cardiff-housing-6101521>

LABOUR councillors in charge of Cardiff council were tonight challenged to “stand up to their Welsh Government masters” as they approved a massive expansion of the city.

The Cardiff Deposit Local Development (LDP), adopted at today’s full council meeting, allocates land for 41,100 new homes and plans for 40,000 more jobs up to 2026.

The blueprint for growth – which includes a greenbelt of protected land north of the M4 – was backed by the ruling Labour group, despite opposition parties warning it would result in traffic gridlock and the loss of green spaces.

Opponents said the LDP process was “not fit for purpose” and called for a regional approach to planning, with the demand for housing distributed across south east Wales.

Labour said without an LDP, the council was powerless to defend itself against developers, with several planning applications for greenfield sites being approved on appeal recently.

They said the previous Liberal Democrat/Plaid Cymru administration, whose proposed LDP was rejected by a planning inspector as it did not propose any greenfield development, had “failed” the city.

Cabinet member for strategic planning Graham Hinchey said Cardiff was at a key moment in



its evolution, with an increasing demand for jobs and houses.

“Elected members need to show strong leadership and grab the opportunity to shape the next chapter in the city’s development,” Heath’s Labour councillor said.

He warned not having an LDP would not stop development, adding: “All that happens is that it happens without control”.

All councils are required by Welsh Government to produce “sound” LDPs based on evidence.

Based on population growth forecasts, Cardiff is planning for 41,100 homes, including 14,000 on greenfield sites west of Pentrebane (5,000 homes), either side of Pontprennau (5,800) and south of Creigiau (2,650).

Conservative group leader David Walker said: “It’s not a council-led plan, it’s driven by the Welsh Government and they know little about the city.”

The Lisvane councillor said the LDP did not take into account the wider region and that was “totally unrealistic” and would be looked back on “with embarrassment”.

He challenged the Labour administration to negotiate a more strategic plan with their “Welsh Government masters”, adding: “It’s time we stood up to the Welsh Government.”

Fairwater’s Plaid Cymru councillor Neil McEvoy said: “Every Labour councillor is voting to destroy the green lungs of our city.

“This is the beginning of the end of the city that we know and love, Cardiff. It’s also the beginning of the end of our communities.”

Council deputy leader Ralph Cook said the issue had not sparked protests, saying Labour's transparent approach had allowed residents to understand the need to provide for the future.

"Cardiff is the economic dynamo of the region. Cardiff is a desirable place to live and there is pent-up demand for housing. It is incumbent for the city's fathers and mothers to provide for that need," he said.

Other opposition councillors spoke to criticise the lack of specific detail on transport and infrastructure that would be needed for the new suburbs.

Coun Hinchey told them plans for a tram system were already being developed, but added: "Without the houses where is the money going to come from? We need those houses to build the infrastructure – it's chicken and egg."

The deposit LDP was approved just hours before the Business Minister Edwina Hart outlined her plan to the 10 council leaders in south east Wales to create a Cardiff Capital Region.

As reported yesterday THURS, it's understood a new body – comprised of representatives of local authorities, the private sector and universities – will be created to shape the region's planning, economic and transport priorities.

But Creigiau and St Fagans' Tory councillor Graham Thomas said: "Unfortunately for Cardiff it's a case of closing the stable door after the horse has bolted. It's going to come too late to stop Cardiff being overdeveloped."

An application for 48 houses adjacent to Danescourt which was refused is now going to appeal. It is fairly obvious that the Developer will get permission again as Cardiff have no LDP.

This is exactly the scenario we were concerned about and why we asked for protection. Please will you make this issue a matter of urgency. Will you also ensure Carl Sargeant responds to this addition to my earlier email within the original timescale.

Your urgent action is required.

Yours sincerely

Edgar Gibbs Chair of Danescourt Community Association

and this [reply has been received](#) from Carwyn Jones