

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Tai ac Adfywio
Minister for Housing and Regeneration



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-489
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/01193/13

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

10 July 2013

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

Dear William

Thank you for your letter dated 26 June 2013 following the petition you received regarding a new national affordable and priority Housing Act for Wales.

Having read the letter I can confirm that there are no plans to include provisions on the regulation of new house building in the forthcoming Housing Bill. The contents of the Bill will be based upon the proposals set out in the Welsh Government's White Paper, entitled "Homes for Wales", published for wide-ranging consultation last year. The Bill is expected to include provisions on a range of matters including; tackling homelessness, empty homes and enabling more use of Community Land Trusts and Co-operative Housing

Whilst the Bill has no provisions to regulate new housing building in the context described by the petitioner, the Welsh Government has taken action to develop affordable housing across Wales where it is needed.

The Welsh Government's planning policy, set out in *Planning Policy Wales*, requires local authorities to optimise the delivery of housing to meet the requirements of all sectors of society in their area. *Planning Policy Wales* states that local planning authorities should promote sustainable residential environments and make appropriate provision for affordable housing. In planning the provision of new housing local authorities should make an assessment of the housing requirements of their area, covering the need for all types of housing, both market and affordable. The Welsh Government's household projections form the starting point for this assessment; however local planning authorities should consider the appropriateness of the projections for their area, based on all sources of local evidence, including the need for affordable housing. This assessment (termed a Local Housing Market Assessment) forms a key part of the evidence base for local planning authorities'

development plans. In particular, Local Development Plans (LDPs) must include a target for affordable housing, which should be based on the identified need and also take account of economic viability, and set out how this target is to be delivered.

The issues of 'affordability' and 'local need' are for local authorities to define and set out in their development plans. Affordability should be calculated for each of the housing markets that may be operating in an authority's area (and those of neighbouring authorities, if appropriate) and guidance on how to this is provided in the Welsh Government's *Local Housing Market Assessment Guide*.

Regarding the household projections for local authorities in Wales, these are prepared by Welsh Government statisticians independently of Ministers and policy officials and are designated as National Statistics by the UK Statistics Authority. This means that these statistics meet identified user needs; are well explained and readily accessible; are produced according to sound methods; and are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

I hope the above sets out the clear emphasis that we have in Wales for planning for affordable housing which is very much based on local planning to meet local housing needs.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Carl Sargeant".

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