

Local Plan Examination Matter 3 Issue 3a Housing Needs

Over the last 14 years we have seen a continual decline in the population of Barrow from 71,340 in 2002 to 67,321 in 2016. This is a reduction of 5.6%. This compares to an increase in the UK from 59.4M in 2002 to 65.6M in 2016. An increase of 10.5%.

There has been a trend of population loss in Barrow through internal migration since 2011.

Indeed the population is projected to continue to fall to 62,898 by 2031. That is a further drop of 6.5% from the figure in 2016. From the 2002 figure this is a total drop of 12%. In the same period the UK population is predicted to rise from 59.4M in 2002 to 71.4m in 2030. This is an increase of 20%. What this shows is that the housing problem that we have in the UK does not apply to Barrow.

The predicted changes in age groups using the 2016 predicted figures rather than 2016 actuals is:- (2016 predicted was 66932, 2016 actual was 67,321)

Age Range	2016	2031	Change	% change
0-14	10914	10017	-897	-8.2
15-39	18821	17171	-1650	-8.8
40-64	22879	18691	-4188	-18.3
65+	14318	17020	+2702	+18.8
Total	66932	62898	-4033	-6

What this shows is that not only is the population reducing but it is also ageing.

The number of additional dwellings over the last 14 years has been 957. That is an average of 68 per year. Even against this figure there is no shortfall of houses in Barrow indeed there are over 1000 empty houses and new houses are proving very difficult to sell.

Houses that have been built on Ironworks Road are not selling at all. They have been built for over 2 years now and the rate of selling them is so bad that they have now stopped building.

On Thorncliffe Road where executive houses have been built sales are so slow that they have slowed the building programme and applied to have the original plans changed for 11 houses so as to reduce the number of storeys from 3 to 2 thereby reducing the number of bedrooms and the selling price. Also they have sent out flyers to many houses in the area promoting the fact that they will offer 105% of the value of houses in part exchange in order to try and improve sales.

The demand figure produced by the Council presumes a growth in business demand. However, Glaxo were proposing to invest millions of pounds in the Ulverston site but they have now pulled the plug on this and want to sell it.

Over the past decades Sellafield has provided a great deal of employment for Barrow residents and the great hope was that Moorside would be built. However it is now very uncertain if this will go ahead.

In addition BAE Systems are not recruiting in the shipyard but rather using contract labour on the new Future Submarine Contract. This is because it does not want to end up with another massive redundancy programme as happened at the end of the 1980's. Indeed it has set up a design office in Manchester rather than recruit people to Barrow.

The impact of this is that there is not a big demand for new homes but rather a big demand for rented accommodation and hotel rooms.

The Government has been consulting on a new formula to assess local housing need. From that formula it has been determined that Barrow needs no new homes (zero). An accolade only shared with the Isles of Scilly.

Clearly this is not exactly correct but what it shows is that Barrow is a very deprived area.

In my view the Council should not be trying to up the housing demand to an unrealistic level but should be declaring to the Government that unfortunately we are a deprived area and need help.

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