



CARNO PLACE PLAN

A Community Development Plan for the next 10 years

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1 History & Setting

Carno is a village in Mid-Wales with a population of 730 (from the 2011 census) on the A470 between Llanbrynmair and Caersws. There has been a settlement in Carno for thousands of years with the remains of a Roman fort at the southern end of the village and many ancient cairns in the surrounding hills. It is said that the name Carno derives from “cairn” although there are other theories.

In recent times the village is perhaps most famous for the large office and factory complex which was the head office for Laura Ashley. This was opened in 1967 using the old railway station buildings and quickly expanded to cover a large area with offices, fabric printing, garment production, and warehousing and distribution.

The company employed a large number of local people from Carno and the surrounding area. When it closed in 2005 it had a significant impact on local employment although many people stayed with the company working in its Newtown factories and offices. The factory complex in Carno remained empty for almost 10 years, finally being bought in 2015 by a development company based in Yorkshire. Since then the factory section has been sold to an animal hide processing company and the warehouse and distribution centre sold to a local haulier. This leaves the office buildings surrounding the old station which are now scheduled for demolition leaving the station and the goods shed intact.

There is one pub, a club, a recently refurbished Spar shop and a small number of bed & breakfast and holiday let cottages in the local area. There is also a static caravan park and other small holiday parks nearby.

The village also has a large community centre with adjacent primary school, football pitch, and bowling club. The school was rebuilt in 2019 moving from prefabricated units to a permanent brick building.

2 Social & Community Development

There has been a primary school in Carno for many years and following a successful campaign to keep it open, a new school building was opened in 2019. This was entirely funded from the local Community Council and has a capacity of 90 pupils.

There is a strong community spirit in the village with a centrally located community centre surrounded by the school, the Carno football club pitch, and the bowling green for Carno Bowling Club.

There are plans to develop the old Carno railways buildings into a “Village Hub”, creating facilities and services for both local people and visitors. Until 2006 the buildings were used as part of the Laura Ashley headquarters and one of the Village Hub proposals is to create a Laura Ashley museum as a visitor attraction.

3 Sports and Leisure Facilities

3.1 Existing Facilities

The area around the Community Centre has a football pitch and a bowling green, both with active clubs which maintain the playing areas and take part in local leagues and events. The Community Centre has a large central hall suitable for indoor games such as badminton. There is also equipment for short-mat bowls which is played weekly when the outdoor green is closed during the winter.

The internal layout of the Community Centre does not always work well in terms of access to facilities when rooms are in use. A project will be undertaken to review the layout and suggest how improvements could be made.

There is also a large, fenced outdoor children's play area with a large amount of play equipment and safety flooring.

3.2 Potential New Facilities

There is an area of undeveloped land behind the existing football field and bowling green which could be used to create additional outdoor facilities such as a small running track, a "multi-use" games area etc.

Additional facilities in other parts of the village could also be developed as required.

4 Transport & Roads

4.1 A470 Trunk Road

The A470 has a 40mph speed limit throughout the village. On days when the school is open there is a 20mph temporary speed limit as the road passes the school and community centre during the morning and afternoon when children are arriving and leaving.

There are plans to create two pedestrian crossings over the A470, one near to the junction with the C2013 road to Cefn Coch, and the other close to the community centre and school.

4.2 The Campaign to Open a Railway Station

The Carno Station Action Group (CSAG) was formed in 2002 to campaign for the reopening of a station in Carno. The campaign has been through many phases and processes but has not yet reached a conclusion.

In 2018 the Welsh Government introduced a new 3 stage appraisal process for new stations. Each proposed new station had to be successfully evaluated against a number of criteria before moving on to the next stage. Carno station reached the final stage - stage 3 - in 2019 and an application for funding was made to the UK government in June 2020. This was eventually refused due to the high cost estimate by the Welsh Government. CSAG continues

to actively engage with the Welsh Government to reduce the cost estimate so that any future application for funding will be successful.

4.3 Bus Services

Carno is on the T12 bus route between Machynlleth and Wrexham via Newtown, Welshpool and Oswestry. Daily there are 7 buses in the Machynlleth to Wrexham direction, and 6 in the Wrexham to Machynlleth direction. Most of the services are “out of phase” with the train timetable at the nearest train station, Caersws. This makes planning a bus/train journey difficult with long layovers between services.

5 Environment & Sustainability

5.1 Background

Recent public building developments such as the community centre and the school have roof mounted PEV panels using the Feed In Tariff scheme to connect to the grid. There is also a vehicle charge point at the community centre and a biomass boiler is used for heating the building.

Carno has a strong reputation for the development of windfarm power with two local sites, Carno 1, and Carno 2, with a total capacity of around 5MW. An additional Carno 3 project is planned and will add significant extra generation capacity.

5.2 Biodiversity Plans for Existing Community Areas

Discussions are ongoing with One Voice Wales on how existing shared community areas could be developed to comply with Biodiversity requirements whilst still keeping the areas open and available for community use. These plans include planting regimes to improve the availability of native pollinators, as well as reduced mowing to allow vital native wildflowers to complete their life cycle supporting pollinators, small mammals, and other important invertebrates.

5.3 Future Plans

Plans are being developed to create footpaths and/or cycle paths through and around the village. These developments will fit well with the Welsh Government’s “Active Travel” legislation, creating an Active Travel Hub which would be used by both local people and visitors.

There are early plans in place to create an electric vehicle sharing scheme with a pool of electric cars available for local people to hire.

5.4 Funding

Funding for improvements to the environment and compliance with biodiversity regulations may be available from a number of sources including Local Places for Nature, part of The National Lottery Heritage Fund. This fund is available for projects in the 50% most deprived areas of Wales, as defined in the Welsh Governments Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD). Although the ranking for Caersws and Carno is generally in the least deprived 50%, the specific ranking for “Physical Environment” the area is ranked 296 out of 1909 areas in Wales, which places it among the 10-20% most deprived. The WIMD ranking data for Caersws and Carno can be viewed at <https://wimd.gov.wales/lsoa/w01000433?lang=en>

6 Housing & Land Development

6.1 Housing

Two areas of housing development in Carno have been proposed in the Powys County Council Local Development Plan 2001 - 2026. Appendix 1 is the map from the LDP and shows the two areas in red, HA1 to the south and HA2 to the north. HA1 is listed in the LDP as 0.5 ha with 14 houses, HA2 is 1.0 ha with 27 houses. Carno Community Council promotes the building of new houses, especially affordable housing.

For the duration of the Powys County Council Replacement LDP (2026-2037) the aspirational target for additional housing is 100 new houses of which 25 would be affordable housing. The location of additional housing would be dependent on land availability, planning permission, flood risk etc. The most recent Flood Risk map from Natural Resources Wales is shown in Appendix 2.

6.2 Commercial

Appropriate commercial development will be encouraged although it is anticipated that any development would take place in and around existing commercial sites such as the old Laura Ashley factory buildings. Any commercial development is likely to increase local job opportunities and in turn, impact the demand for local housing. Infrastructure projects such as re-opening the station and working towards a more integrated public transport timetable will also encourage business developers to the village.

7 Education

The existing primary school adjacent to the community centre, is relatively new and is a purpose-built building with a large outdoor play area. As housing infrastructure grows it may be necessary to expand the building, in which case there would be potential options including reducing the size of the play area or adding new car parking facilities.

There is no plan for the village to build or develop a secondary school.

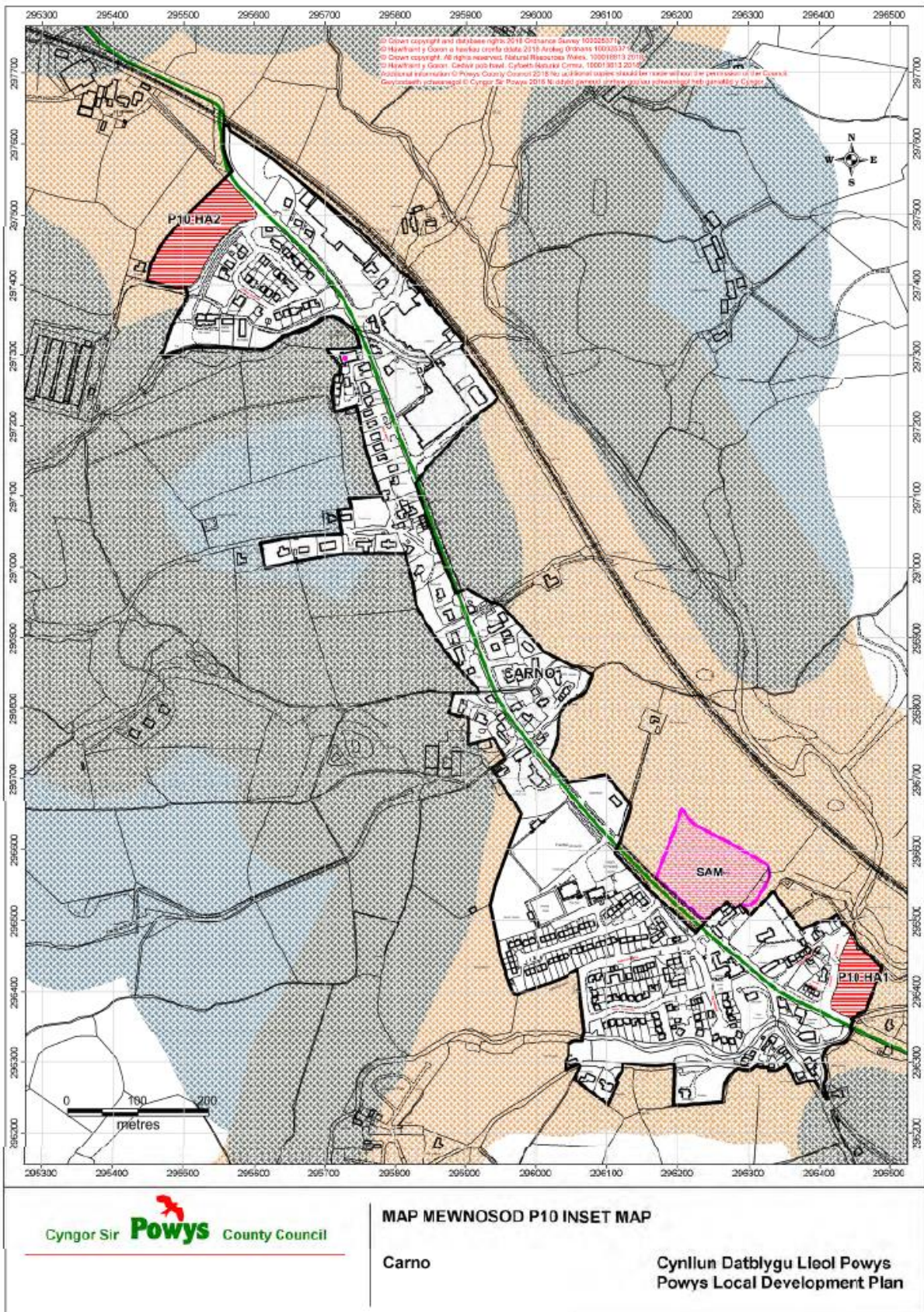
It is recognised that there is a lack of local facilities for older children out of school hours. Work will continue to improve this situation.

8 Monitoring & Maintaining The Place Plan

The Community Council can constitutionally decide to change the content of this plan at any time. This plan is however written in the spirit of offering guidelines for the current and future Community Councillors on the broad objectives and policy direction for the foreseeable future. As such it should not need frequent alteration.

It is important however that the plan is not seen as a totally static document and that it is kept under regular review.

9 Appendix 1 Extract From Powys County Council LDP 2011 – 2026. P10 Inset Map



10 Appendix 2 Natural Resources Wales Flood Risk Map – Feb 2023

