

Cynllunio

The Journal of RTPI Cymru

Autumn 2023



RTPI Cymru at the Eisteddfod

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The RTPI is a charity registered in England 262865 and Scotland SC 037841

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Potential articles and images are welcome. The Editor reserves the right to amend articles as necessary.

Croesawn erthyglau yn y Gymraeg.

The **copy deadlines** for the next 3 quarterly issues of Cynllunio are:

- Thursday 9 November 2023
- Thursday 8 February 2024
- Thursday 13 June 2024

If you want to make contributions please contact us on 020 7929 8197 or email: roisin.willmott@rtpi.org.uk.

The opinions expressed are contributors' own, unless otherwise stated. The RTPI is not responsible for statements made or views expressed in this Journal.

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Front Cover: Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 2023

Editorial

Are you interested in being involved with RTPI Cymru? Nominations are currently open for a number of positions on our Executive Committee - see page 3 for details and the link for more information. We are keen to have an Executive Committee which reflects our membership in Wales, for example geographical, sectoral and gender.

We are pleased to hear about the experience of PEDW who have engaged in the RTPI's Chief Planners of Tomorrow project. I will be welcoming our own participant to a day in Cardiff shortly as well (read about this in the next edition of Cynllunio).

In September we are engaging in commenting on the Infrastructure (Wales) Bill, including giving oral evidence to the Climate Change Committee. We are also joining with the National Infrastructure Commission Wales (NICW) on gathering views from key stakeholders to support both organisations giving evidence to the Committee.

We are also supporting Community Rights Action in their event on the Aarhus Convention in Wales, 20 years after its introduction. We'll report on this in the next edition of Cynllunio.

We have a few events coming up this Autumn - our website and fortnightly e-bulletins have the most up to date information.

We will be holding the inaugural Professor Tony Hall Lecture on 2nd November. Professor Tony Hall sadly passed away last year and had bequeathed funding for the RTPI to set up a lecture series in his name. We are pleased to announce that the Board of Trustees have agreed to set up the lecture series in Wales.

I would like to give a particular thank you to Cyngor Gwynedd and Gareth Jones and Heledd Fflur-Jones for their support in our event.

*Roisin Willmott,
Editor*

It's time to nominate

For volunteer roles on our Boards and Committees in the Nations and Regions



#RTPIelections

Nominations are open for volunteer roles on the RTPI Cymru Executive Committee, starting from January 2024. The following roles are available:

- Junior Vice Chair (2024) – progressing to Chair in 2026
- Representative on General Assembly (2024 and 2025)
- Chartered Member (2024 and 2025) – three vacancies
- Associate or Legal Member (2024 and 2025) – one vacancy

Our Executive Committee members come from the public, private, academic and third sectors and play a vital role in supporting our members – volunteering their time, enthusiasm and expertise in planning.

To nominate and submit your nomination by 5pm on 29 September 2023 go to:

www.mi-nomination.com/rtpinationsandregions.

Congratulations to our latest elected Town Planner

Congratulations to our latest members elected in Wales:

Associate Member:

- Annabelle Miller - Boyer Planning

(Note those more recently elected will appear in the next edition of Cynllunio).

Employers recognise the high quality of skills and experience that are held by Chartered Town Planners and Associates. They know that they can rely upon the designation as a sign of professionalism.

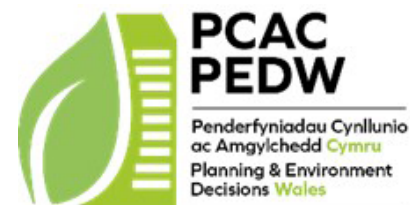
www.rtpi.org.uk/membership/assessment-of-professional-competence/



Have you recently changed your job, address, email or phone number? Make sure your details are up to date by going to 'Login' on the RTPI website so we can stay in contact.

www.rtpi.org.uk/profile

PEDW and Welsh Government supporting Young Planners



I was recently asked to host two young planners as part of the RTPi's Chief Planners of Tomorrow initiative. I was delighted to welcome Victoria Owen and Florence Hewett who are currently both working in private sector roles in England. They joined me at Cathays Park where they met with Planning Inspectors to talk about their role in Planning Appeals, Local Development Plan examinations and Developments of National Significance applications. They also met with Welsh Government colleagues to discuss working with and on behalf of the Welsh Ministers. Our Planning and Environment Team Lead talked with them about the other roles that planners do at PEDW including Environmental Impact Assessment work. We finished the day with an open and frank discussion of the highs and lows of my career path leading to the role of Chief Planning Inspector at PEDW and I was happy to share my thoughts on what it was like to be a Chief Planner at a Local Planning Authority before this.

It was a really enjoyable and thought-provoking day and I would encourage anyone able to offer a similar opportunity to do so. Both Victoria and Florence were very grateful and contacted me afterwards to emphasise how much they got out of it.



I am also very pleased that we have recently welcomed two new planning students to Welsh Government on Year-out Placements. Cleo Widdicombe and Chris Pang will each spend 6 months in Welsh Government Planning Directorate working on policy and legislation, and 6 months in PEDW learning about our casework.

Chris is studying BSc (Hons) Urban Planning at the University of West of England and chose to come to PEDW to gain related work experience. He is most looking forward to using his knowledge gained in University and applying it in the workplace, and learning new skills like problem solving.



Cleo has just finished her second year at Cardiff University studying Human Geography and Urban Planning and shared her thoughts as she embarks on her placement:

"I have really enjoyed my first two years at Cardiff, but was keen to take a year out in industry to deepen my understanding of town planning and put into practice the theory I have learnt in lectures. The Student Planner Placement offered by the Welsh Government really appealed to me in its breadth of opportunity within the year. Split across two departments, the Planning Directorate and Planning & Environment Decisions Wales, the placement offered a range of experience including policy, legislation, development management, planning appeals and Environmental Impact Assessments. As well as having an extensive coverage of work experience, I was eager to apply to the Welsh Government to experience working for the public sector as a Civil Servant, whilst being able to have a positive impact towards shaping the Welsh planning system at a national level. I have already learnt so much from my first month here in Cathays Park and everyone in the department are so welcoming and helpful. I'm really looking forward to gaining key skills and knowledge to assist in completing my degree and finding a career after university. The experience will also help me gain valuable workplace skills and professionalism, which will also be integral to my future career path, such as communication and organisational skills. I look forward to working with various teams, producing my own work and gaining as much experience as possible. I have already attended a Hearing in Swansea, and next month I am fortunate to help organise the British and Irish Council: Placemaking in Practice Conference, evidently demonstrating how the year is full of opportunity and insight into the world of planning!"

Having joined Welsh Government from the Vale of Glamorgan Council, where I started my career as a planning student, I have always been a firm believer in the benefits of the year-out placement for both students and employers alike. I am delighted to welcome Cleo and Chris to Welsh Government and look forward to helping them as they embark on an exciting career in planning.

Lichfields Briefing

Behind Wales' Housing Shortage: Spotlight on the Planning System

Lichfields has reviewed housing completions and starts in Wales over the last 20 years to understand whether there are any patterns, especially since the change in five-year land supply policy in March 2020.

Within the last 20-year period, housing delivery in Wales was at its peak in the early 2000s where on average 8,558 dwellings were completed per annum. Completions fell over a number of years following the 2008 financial crash to a low of 5,451 dwellings in 2012/13 before slowly increasing to a peak of 6,900 in 2015/16.

As a result of the pandemic, the number of completions dropped significantly during 2020/21 to 4,616 before rising to 5,785 in 2022/23. It's interesting to note that completions in England recovered more quickly, returning to the 2008 heights in 2019. There was no similar resurgence in housebuilding levels in Wales where the figures have not got close to those 2008 heights. Given that macro-economic factors are similar across both countries it raises the question whether planning policy is one explanation for this more recent divergence in the rate of house building between England and Wales.



Figure 1 Annual Housing Completions
Source: Stats Wales / ONS

Future Wales (The National Plan) estimates that an average of 5,500 dwellings per annum are required between 2019 and 2039 with 7,400 dwellings per annum required in the first five years of that period. It is important to note that the estimates set out in Future Wales do not reflect positive policy outcomes such as those desired by the Cardiff Capital Region and do not represent a housing requirement for Wales or the regions. They are, therefore, in Lichfields view an underestimate of the levels of house building required to deliver positive social and economic outcomes for Wales. However, Future Wales states that they “provide part of the evidence and context on which housing policy and requirements can be based”.

It is concerning that housing delivery has dropped significantly below the Future Wales number – with an average of 5,300dpa being delivered between 2019 and 2022 (28% below the baseline Future Wales estimate) – and that the number of housing starts in 2022/23 have fallen dramatically to the lowest level in the last 50 years (excluding 2020-2021 where numbers were impacted by the covid-19 pandemic).

When looking at housing completions, it appears that the removal of the five-year land supply policy has not helped and that the timing of the Minister’s announcement in March 2020 came at a time when Government assistance was arguably needed to boost housing supply not restrict it.

At the time of the announcement the Minister wanted to prioritise housing delivery through the plan-led system. However, three years has passed and the position on LDP production has if anything deteriorated. Flintshire and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park are the only Local Planning Authorities to adopt plans during this time and great uncertainty remains on LDPs in other parts of Wales with numerous authorities choosing to delay or re-start their review process and some LDPs (such as Rhondda Cynon Taf, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Denbighshire,

Monmouthshire, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Caerphilly) being time expired with no (or limited) prospect of a replacement plan within the next 12 months.

We note the Minister's letter to Local Planning Authorities dated 24 September 2020 which discusses the end dates of LDPs. To summarise, this allowed LPAs to be able to use their adopted LDP even if it was time expired. Whilst this may have provided some comfort to the authorities, it did nothing to accelerate the need to get up to date LDPs in place.

In the absence of up-to-date LDPs in large parts of Wales and the removal of the five-year land supply safety net it is unclear how housing delivery can be accelerated.

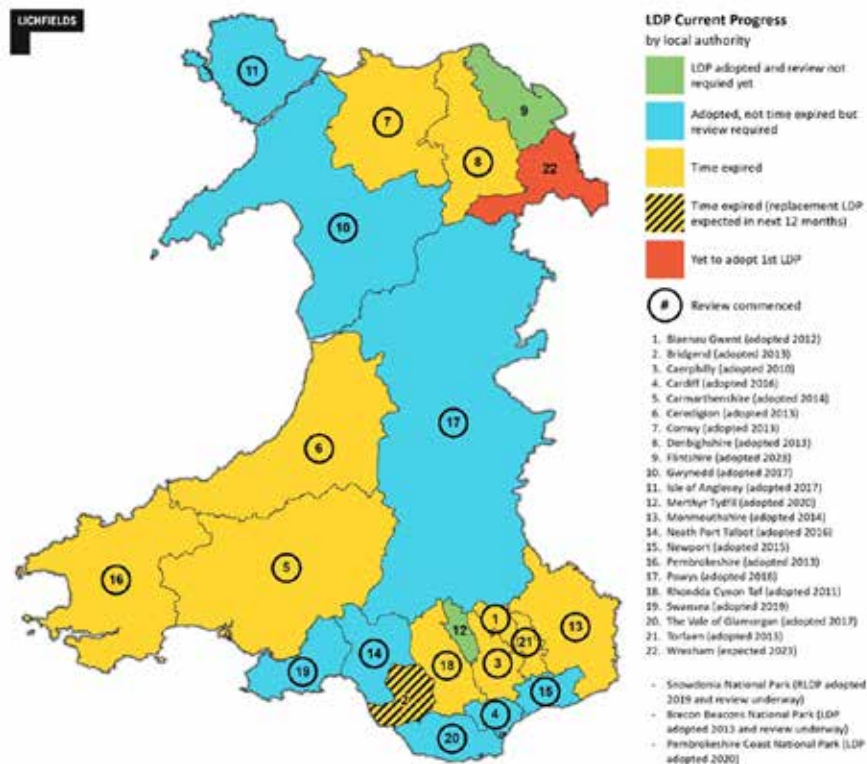


Figure 2

Lichfields consider that Welsh Government's policy direction needs to be reviewed if there is to be meaningful delivery of both new open market and affordable homes. A policy review should address the implications of under-supply in relation to affordability and the ability of households to access suitable accommodation.

Based on Inspectors' interpretations within recent planning appeals, where housing delivery is insufficient and the LDP is out-of-date (and a replacement is not forthcoming), then in theory the opportunity exists to promote sites through the appeal process. The reality seems to be that Welsh Government has been giving greater weight to the plan making process (no matter how delayed) than the urgent need to improve housing delivery.

Given the continued delays in plan making, could there be an alternative scenario where the Welsh Government sets out that applications/appeals for well-designed sustainable development sites should be positively considered by authorities in LPAs where there are land shortages, the LDP is time expired, and examination is more than 2 years away? This could assist in ensuring that the supply of new homes is not halted by the lack of an up-to-date LDP.

Indeed, subject to site-specific considerations, local planning authorities should welcome such proposals at planning application stage as an appropriate short-term intervention. Opportunities should be sought to work positively with those authorities that have housing delivery issues, especially where sites are sustainably located, free from constraints and can demonstrate adherence with Planning Policy Wales' placemaking principles.

To read the full blog please visit www.Lichfields.uk/blog

NRW announces engagement event dates for a proposed fourth National Park in Wales

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has announced the dates of a series of online and in-person engagement events where interested parties can have their say on an initial Area of Search map for a proposed new National Park in North East Wales.

Welsh Government has commissioned NRW, as the Designating Authority in Wales, to evaluate the case for a new National Park based on the existing Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The case for a new National Park will be considered within the existing Senedd term (2021-2026).

The engagement events will take place in October and November 2023 and will be an opportunity to learn more about the project, ask questions of the team and share feedback on an early map of the area being assessed.

The engagement period will run from Monday 9 October until 23:59 on Monday 27 November 2023. People will only need to attend one event, be that online or in-person as the information shared will be the same for each event.

Details of the engagement events can be found at: naturalresources.wales/about-us/news-and-blogs/news/nrw-announces-engagement-event-dates-for-a-proposed-fourth-national-park-in-wales/?lang=en

People are encouraged to drop by at the in-person events, there is no need to book a place. If interested in taking part in one of the online events, email the project team at designated.landscapes.programme@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk with your name, state your interest (e.g. resident, community leader, landowner, farmer, business owner, organisation representative, etc) and which event you are interested in (the date). These will be bilingual events with simultaneous translation provided.

NRW have prepared procedural guidance setting out the statutory process that must be followed. It is evidence based and allows for engagement and consultation with statutory consultees, the public and other stakeholders. For more information on the project and evaluation process, visit the website at: ymgyngori.cyfoethnaturiol.cymru/north-east-gogledd-ddwyrain/north-east-wales-national-park-designation-project

Join us for our Autumn Briefing

Join us for our Autumn Briefing on 26 October 2023 in Cardiff, where we will be joined by Sue Bridge, RTPI President as part of her two day visit to Wales.

We will learn from RTPI Cymru Planning for Excellence awards winners about their experiences and and hare the good practice from the schemes.

We will also welcome newly Chartered and Associate members in Wales and celebrate RTPI Cymru Awards for Academic Excellence winners for 2023.

This event will also include lunch and plenty of networking opportunities.

To book a place and for information go to: www.rtpi.org.uk/events/2023/october/rtpi-cymru-autumn-briefing-2023/



RTPI Cymru Policy Roundup

The new Infrastructure Consenting Bill is currently at the forefront of our policy work, and the RTPI Cymru Policy and Research Forum met at the start of the summer to discuss RTPI Cymru's position and strategy for responding.

RTPI Cymru has long called for a regulatory framework to enable an effective infrastructure consenting regime, to support decision making on large infrastructure, providing clarity to support needed infrastructure and balancing this with the needs of communities.

We believe that many of Wales' policy priorities are interconnected and it is vital that we consider these wider issues including biodiversity, adaptation to climate change, flood risk challenges and how these factors might impact infrastructure consent and delivery in the future.

Yet, "it is widely recognised that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), along with the wider public sector, are struggling to meet expectations and unlock the value planning has to offer". Given current capacity and resources within planning, ways of working are undoubtedly key to successful implementation and delivery on the ground.

To support the development of an evidence base and position on effective working, we have recently commissioned a project on 'Making the most efficient and effective use of existing planning resources in Wales'. The project will explore if and how public sector planning organisations are being driven to innovate and examine their efforts to make more efficient use of existing resources. The scope of the project extends to the statutory planning system, including development management, development plan preparation, and planning support and administration. The findings will be used to share good practice and ideas across the profession.

We very much look forward to involving our membership in Wales as we progress this project. Look out for updates on our work later in the year.

Our response to the Infrastructure Wales Bill can be found here: www.rtpi.org.uk/consultations-rtpi/2023/august/infrastructure-wales-bill/

If you are interested in finding out more about our RTPI policy, practice and research work, please email walespolicy@rtpi.org.uk or visit www.rtpi.org.uk/find-your-rtpi/rtpi-nations/rtpi-cymru/policy-and-research/

Rhian is Policy Officer for RTPI Cymru and can be contacted by e-mail: rhian.brimble@rtpi.org.uk



Wales Enforcement Conference

The Wales Enforcement Conference returns this year and we are pleased to have a programme on enforcement focused issues.

The Conference will be chaired by RTPI Cymrun Junior Vice Chair, Aneurin Môn Parry MRTPI and confirmed speakers include:

- Neil Hemington and Hywel Butts, Welsh Government - Welsh Government Enforcement Update
- Vicky Robinson, PEDW – Enforcement Notices workshop
- Lianne Weaver, Beam Training

More speakers to be announced soon.

Welsh Local Planning Authority Officers are able to book free places, as they are sponsored by POSW.

To book a place and stay updated on speakers go to: www.rtpi.org.uk/events/2023/november/wales-enforcement-conference-2023/#Details

Eisteddfod

At this year's Eisteddfod Genedlaethol, we joined up with Cyngor Gwynedd for a panel discussion on the Council's proposals (open for consultation at the time) for an Article 4 Direction to support the work to manage holiday homes (second holiday homes and short term lets).

The panel was chaired by Owain Wyn MRTPI and started with a presentation by Gareth Jones of Cyngor Gwynedd, setting out the proposals and Councillor Dafydd Meurig, Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet Member and panellists Rhys Davies, Director at Cadnant Planning and Sian Pennant-Jones, Tourism, Marketing and Events Manager, Cyngor Gwynedd.



Information on the proposals can be found here: in Welsh: www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/cy/Trigolion/Cynllunio-a-rheolaeth-adeiladu/Cynllunio/Cyfarwyddyd-Erthygl-4.aspx or in English www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/en/Residents/Planning-and-building-control/Planning/Article-4-Direction.aspx

Wales Planning Consultants Forum

During the summer, RTPI Cymru has supported the setting up of the Wales Planning Consultants Forum.

The Wales Planning Consultants Forum (WPCF) is a voluntary group of town planners representing the planning profession within the consultancy sector with a growing membership of town planners from both independent and multinational consultancies working across Wales.

The purpose of the Forum is to bring together the expertise and knowledge of its membership to help shape the future of the Welsh Planning System by actively engaging with its planning partners and other stakeholders.

Planning Consultants operating across Wales recognise that through a collective voice, they can engage in greater collaboration and contribute positively to informing the skills, knowledge and behaviours of those working in Wales's planning system to shape our thinking on how we each contribute to creating places that deliver well-being, sustainable homes and inclusive growth.



For more information about WPCF go to www.rtpi.org.uk/find-your-rtpi/rtpi-nations/rtpi-cymru/committees-and-forums/walesplanningconsultants/