



**RTPI**

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The voice of RTPI Cymru

# CYNLLUNIO

Spring 2011 Edition

## Shaping the Future of Wales: RTPI Manifesto launched



### **INSIDE** this edition of Cynllunio:

- Awards
- LDP Progress
- Design Review
- Policy & Research News
- Events
- Manual for Streets
- Deprived Communities
- University News
- Enforcement
- much, much more



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## Welcome to the spring edition

We launch our Manifesto: Shaping the Future of Wales, in what we hope will be a positive springtime. This is the first time RTPI Cymru has undertaken this exercise and whilst it may seem as though we are just doing it because everyone else does, it is actually a useful exercise. It has given us the opportunity to drill down to what the profession across Wales feels are the issues, which is very important for when we respond to consultations over the coming few years. It is also important in raising the profile of RTPI Cymru; for far too long other bodies have been asked about planning in Wales: why not ask the profession directly? My work with the Sustainability Committee on their Inquiry into Planning certainly provided an opportunity to raise the profile of the profession.

We have a new Policy and Research Forum (see p5) and the Manifesto will give them a lead in their work. A key aim for the development of the Forum is to be proactive in policy debates, rather than purely responding to consultations.

By the time you read this, Wales will have decided on the Referendum on 3 March - so we may or may not have primary

legislative powers for town and country planning in Wales.

There are other changes a foot for the Institute and Wales. Trudi Elliot the RTPI's new Chief executive has visited Wales and is keen to work to promote the nations in the RTPI's work. We will also welcome Peter Burley in April as the new Wales Director for PINs; RTPI Cymru is looking forward to working with Peter. But of course, this means that we have to say a fond farewell to John Davies - he has finally been 'allowed' to retire as Director. John has done sterling work in Wales and has been a strong supporter of RTPI activity and with his open and helpful approach been a true ambassador of the profession. But we are hopeful that we will still see John around.

With all of this change taking place, this year's Wales Planning Conference is themed: *New Beginnings?* What will the outcome of the Referendum mean for Wales, or will it be business as usual; who will be the Minister responsible for planning in Wales, with the current Minister, Jane Davidson standing down? We all face difficult resource constraints, what does this mean for how Local Planning Authorities need to work?



*Cynllunio,*  
Winter 2010

To discuss these issues, and more we hope to see as many of you as possible on 7 June.

RTPI Cymru's Spring Conference: *Planning for Economic Renewal* is coming up very shortly. Further details are available along with the other events in this edition.

And now is the time to think about Awards. Do you have a scheme worthy of recognition - details of how to enter are on p6. We are also looking for a judge - could this be you?

Roisin Willmott  
Editor

## Contributing to Cynllunio

Contributions are welcome from RTPI members and others on a wide range of topics and in a variety of different forms:

- Conference announcements
- Reports on conferences
- Critical thought pieces
- Updates on policy in Wales
- Recent project successes
- Humorous items
- Images, photographs

### Croesawn erthyglau yn y Gymraeg.

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

- Thursday 26th May 2011
- Thursday 18th August 2011
- Thursday 27th October 2011

If you want to make contributions to the newsletter then get in touch on 029 2047 3923 or email:  
[roisin.willmott@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:roisin.willmott@rtpi.org.uk).

## Advertising

Cynllunio is distributed to all RTPI members in Wales and also to Chairs of Planning Committees, Assembly Government Ministers with a relevant portfolio and other key organisations, and therefore provides an excellent way of reaching the wider planning community across Wales. Circulation is currently approximately 1,150 each quarter, plus editions are available more widely on our website.

Current advertising rates are (excl. VAT):  
Back page: Full - £300; half - £250  
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Discounts are available for multiple editions.

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## RTPI Cymru launches Manifesto: *Members' Support Sought*

RTPI Cymru has launched its manifesto: *Shaping the Future of Wales*, in the build up to the forthcoming National Assembly for Wales' elections in May 2011.

The challenge for the next government in Wales will be to build on strong foundations and the skills and experience of the planning profession, stakeholders and the development industry, as well as to involve local people in a meaningful way to shape the right decisions for all our futures.

RTPI Cymru does not believe there is any need for significant change, but recommends a number of areas where improvements would be beneficial.

The ten areas are:

1. Promote appreciation of the planning system as an essential tool for society
2. Retain climate change as a key priority
3. Retain the Local Development Plan System
4. Promote the culture of pro-active planning to enable community wellbeing and sustainable economic growth
5. Ensure planning supports sustainable economic growth, for long term benefits
6. Review and improve the Wales Spatial Plan to ensure the right infrastructure is in place for development
7. Ensure all decisions on

renewable energy projects are devolved to Wales

8. Improve the health and use of the Welsh language

9. Provide resources for planning to perform effectively for the long term

10. Retain independent examination of planning decisions and plans

RTPI Cymru is committed to working with the next Assembly Government to positively promote a planning system which works for the public good, balancing economic, social and environmental interests to establish and maintain community wellbeing.

The Manifesto has been drawn up by a working group, chaired by Owain Wyn, RTPI Cymru's outgoing Chair of its Policy and Research Forum. The working group used the issues discussed at the autumn debates held in Cardiff and Llandudno, as well as other views and input from members across Wales.

The Manifesto will be distributed widely by RTPI Cymru, but members with links into the Parties involved with this May's National Assembly for Wales elections are requested to assist in feeding in the messages from the Manifesto.

The Manifesto is available to download from the RTPI Cymru webpages: [www.rtpi.org.uk/rtpi\\_cymru](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/rtpi_cymru)

## Introducing the 2011 RTPI Cymru Management Board

The 2011 RTPI Cymru Management Board was agreed by members at the AGM held on 3rd December 2010 at the Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff Bay. We are very pleased that for the first time we have all the RTPI membership categories represented on the Board.

**Chair:** Anna Prescott (Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners)

**Senior Vice Chair:** Chris Potts (Savills)

**Junior Vice Chair:** Alison Thomas (Cardiff Council)

**Immediate Past Chair:** Lucie Taylor (Newport City Council)

**Hon Secretary:** Tony Humphreys (retired)

**Hon Treasurer:** Martin Buckle (independent consultant)

**Licentiate Representative:** Lindsay Christian (Newport City Council)

**Student Representative:** Laura Price (Cardiff University & Savills)

**Technical Representative:** Jane Jones (Snowdonia National Park Authority)

**Associate Representative:** Ceri Porter (Capita Symonds)

**Corporate Members:**

Mark Harris (Bridgend County Borough Council)

Neil Harris (Cardiff University)

Terry Stevens (Welsh Assembly Government)

Chris Fray (retired)

Owain Wyn (Borum)

**General Assembly Representatives:**

Cath Ranson (Pembrokeshire County Council)

James Hooker (Welsh Assembly Government)

**Co-Opted Members:**

Allan Archer (City & County of Swansea)

Nick Mills (City & County of Swansea)

Karen Potter (University of Liverpool)

## RTPI Chief Visits Wales



Above: Trudi Elliott (left) meets Rosemary Thomas

Trudi Elliott, the RTPI's new Chief Executive, made Cardiff one of her stops in her first month at the helm. Trudi

places a strong emphasis on the role of the nations in the RTPI and would like to see more learning taking place between the constituent nations of the UK, as well as internationally - remembering that the RTPI operates on an international scale.

In her fact-finding / orientation visit at the end of January, as well as meeting RTPI Cymru's National Director, Roisin Willmott, she met with Rosemary Thomas, Chief

Planner at the Assembly, and Neil Harris and Gillian Bristow at Cardiff University - one of the RTPI's accredited planning schools. Over lunch she had the opportunity to meet with RTPI Cymru's Chair - Anna Prescott, Senior Vice Chair - Chris Potts and Junior Vice Chair - Alison Thomas.

Trudi went away with a good impression of Wales and how RTPI Cymru fits within the overall RTPI structure - as well as how this can be

strengthened and she plans to return to Wales soon.



Above: (from left to right) Trudi Elliott, Alison Thomas, Anna Prescott and Chris Potts.

## Richard Summers - RTPI President for 2011:

### *Promoting Planning & Planners in Challenging Times*

Richard Summers became President of the RTPI in January. His theme for the year will be Promoting Planning and Planners in Challenging Times.

Richard said: "The recession, deep spending cuts, the introduction of the Localism Bill, changes to the planning system in Northern Ireland and the coming elections in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Eire all represent a huge challenge to the profession through 2011. That's why I am determined to work tirelessly over the next twelve months to fulfil my Presidential theme to promote planners and planning at every possible opportunity".

One of Richard's key aims is to work with the Government to make the Localism Bill work effectively for local

'Leaders in Local Community Planning'. He also plans to bring back bright ideas and good practice to government, the RTPI Board and the RTPI General Assembly.

Richard is currently Head of Planning at The Landscape Partnership. He has over 40 years professional experience specialising in spatial planning and economic development. He has led numerous consultancy projects in economic strategy and urban regeneration.

"Spatial planning is not fully understood and its vital role in supporting economic recovery is still often overlooked. I will therefore be making the case to ministers across Whitehall and to local authority leaders up and down the country that planners have unique



Above: Richard Summers

communities through spatial planning: "We support the Localism Bill in principle because we believe local people should have a greater opportunity to have a say in the way their area develops. But we are still concerned about various features in the drafting of the legislation that need clarification not least the complexity of the proposed arrangements for neighbourhood planning".

As part of his Presidential year, Richard will re-launch the previous Leaders Awards as

skills including an ability to synthesise complex issues and competing interests into deliverable solutions that work strategically and locally.

Away from work, Richard is a keen motorcyclist. He has recently restored a Listed Building in Bury St Edmunds and through a deep interest in the 'spirit of place' he also teaches meditation and the art of dowsing.

*Richard will be visiting Wales in March, including Chairing the RTPI Cymru Spring Conference in Llandudno.*

## PINS Appoints new Director for Wales



Above: Peter Burley

Peter Burley is the Planning Inspectorate's new Director for Wales. He is a qualified planner and landscape architect. He joined the Inspectorate in 1989 and worked as a field inspector for some 19 years before moving to work in the Inspectorate's headquarters in Bristol in 2008. He previously held the post of Assistant Director for Innovation, Partnerships and Special projects, a role created in 2010, during which time he worked on a number of projects including integration with the Infrastructure Planning Commission. Prior to this he was Assistant Director for the Environmental and Specialist Casework Division, which dealt with all the Inspectorate's larger inquiries, including all its renewable energy casework,

and its non planning casework in England.

During his career at the Inspectorate he has dealt with a wide range of casework, including planning, enforcement, TPOs, commons, rights of way and advertisement appeals. He has also undertaken a number of Local Plan inquiries and acted as a Panel member on RSS examinations. In addition, he has been responsible for training new Inspectors.

Prior to joining the Inspectorate his career was in local government working for a number of metropolitan and rural authorities. This included eight years working for two local authorities in South Wales. Both he and his partner have strong family connections with Wales.

## Obituary

The RTPI has been notified that Dennis Harmer peacefully passed away at St David's Hospital, Cardiff in December.

Dennis was a former Chair of the South Wales Branch of the RTPI.

RTPI Cymru offers our condolences to his family and friends.

## Sustainability Committee publishes Report on its Inquiry into Planning



Many of you will be aware that the National Assembly for Wales's Sustainability Committee has been conducting an Inquiry into Planning in Wales, focusing on issues relating to policy.

The Committee set out to avoid examining issues relating to planning applications, as this was covered by the GVA Grimley study completed earlier in 2010 for the Welsh Assembly Government.

In launching the report, Committee Chair, Kirsty Williams AM, said: "There are few policy areas that have as wide-ranging an impact as planning. From sustainable development, economic regeneration and energy policy to transport, biodiversity and housing, planning systems play a central role in how policies are delivered on the ground."

"The Committee was heartened to find that there is much that works well in current planning policy, but clearly there are areas where changes need to be made.

"We heard wide-ranging evidence from those who operate the planning systems, those who are bringing forward proposals for its development and those who are affected by policy and decision-making.

"Our 30 recommendations are therefore based on a wealth of evidence from the very people delivering and affected by planning systems and the Committee hopes they are acted upon so that Wales can have a progressive and tailored planning system for the future."

The recommendations include a Planning Act or Measure for Wales to consolidate current legislation, reviewing the Wales Spatial Plan, and ensuring Local Planning Authorities have access to the right skills and technical resources.

RTPI Cymru was pleased to be involved in providing impartial support to the Committee through its National Director for Wales, Roisin Willmott, along with Cardiff University's Neil Harris.

The report will now be considered by the Welsh Assembly Government.

The report can be found at: [www.assemblywales.org/cr-ld8373-e.pdf](http://www.assemblywales.org/cr-ld8373-e.pdf)

## Householder Appeals Service Extended

The Planning Inspectorate is now able to extend the pilot of the expedited Householder Appeals Service to almost all local planning authority areas in Wales.

This provides a rapid and focussed service to appellants in advance of the introduction of any Statutory

Instruments required to put the service on a formal basis.

Appellants are encouraged to make use of the service and to obtain further details from the PINS website or from the Inspectorate's office in Cathays Park, Cardiff. Tel: 029 2082 3866.

## Policy & Research Forum

Following a high level of interest, the new-formed RTPI Cymru Policy and Research Forum membership is:

Victoria Abraham (Vale of Glamorgan Council)

Allan Archer (City and County of Swansea)

Charlotte Beattie (Wrexham County Borough Council)

Martin Buckle (independent consultant)

Jonathan Cawley (West Coast Energy)

Mike Cuddy (Welsh Assembly Government)

Tanya Davies (RWE npower Renewables Ltd)

John Maitland Evans (Vale of Glamorgan Council)

Mark Farrar (Powell Dobson Urbanists)

Mark Harris (Bridgend County Borough Council)

Neil Harris (Cardiff University)

Malcolm Hockaday (Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners)

Tony Humphreys (retired)

Karen Potter (Liverpool University)

Chris Potts (Savills)

Leslie Punter (independent consultant)

Clare Taylor (Enviro Compliance)

Janet Tyrer (Jan Tyrer Planning)

Owain Wyn (Borum)

## Localism Bill Progresses

The Localism Bill 2010-11 was published in full in December 2010. The RTPI supports the objectives that underlie the Localism Bill and is keen to work with the Government and others to make the Bill as effective as possible.

The RTPI's policy team are continually monitoring the Bill's progress and responding to issues as they arise. The RTPI's comments on aspects of the Bill can be found on: [www.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.rtpi.org.uk).

However, much of the Bill relates to England and will only be applicable to Wales,

if Welsh Ministers decide to adopt specific proposals.

RTPI Cymru has put together information about which aspect of the Bill relate directly to Wales, such as the CIL, and signposting to related information. This can be found on the RTPI Cymru web pages [www.rtpi.org.uk/rtpi\\_cymru](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/rtpi_cymru).

Of particular interest to planning Wales is that the Bill gives the National Assembly for Wales legislative competence in respect of planning applications and enforcement.

## Severn Estuary Flood Risk Management Consultation

The Environment Agency has published its proposals for flood management around the Severn Estuary over the next 100 years.

The proposals are detailed in a consultation brochure, which has three separate editions, covering the different parts of the estuary: South East Wales, Gloucestershire, and South Gloucestershire to Hinkley Point, Somerset.

Information on the proposals, including the consultation

response form can be found at: [www.severnestuary.net/frms/publications.html](http://www.severnestuary.net/frms/publications.html)

The closing date for responses is 18 March 2011.



# Alternative sites: advice for local planning authorities and promoters published by PINS

The concept of frontloading was introduced in the production of Local Development Plans (LDP) in the hope that local planning authorities (LPA) would work with their communities to formulate policies and allocations through consensus. A laudable aim and one that should not be forgotten. However, experience has shown that no matter how much a LPA consults and works with developers and communities, someone will always be aggrieved that their site didn't make it or their issue was not taken on board.

Frustration has been expressed by some promoting alternative sites who argue that no matter how good their site may be it will not make it into a plan which is considered to be sound. Soundness test CE2 says that the strategy, policies and allocations in a LDP should be realistic and appropriate having considered relevant alternatives and are founded on a robust evidence base. There are likely to be a number of ways a LPA can meet the needs of its community and all could be equally valid. The LPA is required to produce a plan that is sound. That does not necessarily mean that it presents the best solution (although that is what LPAs should be striving for). Similarly

it is not the Inspector's role to make a sound plan better.

LPAs should not submit a Plan for Examination unless they consider it to be sound i.e. finished. So, submission comes at the end of the production process and two factors limit an Inspector's discretion to make changes; the legislation that says they can only make binding recommendations necessary to make a plan sound (not better) and the SEA requirements which limit the extent to which changes can be made without introducing significant delay.

It is neither practical nor desirable for an Inspector to duplicate the work done by the LPA to reach its view that the LDP's strategy, policies and allocations are realistic, appropriate and sound. It is also the LPA's plan and Inspectors should only issue binding recommendations allocating sites not promoted by the LPA if there are significant shortcomings. An Inspector would not issue such a recommendation unless the site or sites had been subject to public consultation and a sustainability appraisal had been carried out.

Inspectors will indicate in their reports that they have considered relevant alternatives. However, it will

be made clear, in the report and the Examination, that the starting position is that the LPA considers that it has produced a strategy, policies and allocations that are sound and that the Inspector will not look beyond them unless he/she concludes otherwise. This will provide little comfort to the promoters of alternative sites who argue that the Examination is not a level playing field but turning the Examination into a beauty contest between different sites is likely to introduce complications and significant delay to the adoption of LDPs. In any event, as explained above, the Inspector is limited by statute and can only make recommendations necessary to make a plan sound, not better.

Those promoting alternative sites must get involved early in the process. LPAs may call for candidate\* sites and when they do landowners and agents need to appreciate that, to give a site the best chance of being allocated, it is necessary to ensure that the LPA is aware of it at this stage. It is for authorities to decide what information they need to be able to judge the suitability of candidate sites but they should ensure they are provided with sufficient information by landowners and agents to make that judgement.

Inspectors will be looking to LPAs to give good reasons in their Consultation Reports for not including alternative sites. Key considerations are likely to include how a site fits with the LDP's overall strategy and deliverability. Including this detail in the consultation report has two benefits; the Inspector and promoters will have a detailed explanation regarding why their site is not allocated and it should save local planning authorities time in preparing for the Examination.

Early engagement in the process does not guarantee that a site will make it into the LDP and Inspectors will continue to be faced with alternatives at Examinations. However, the later a site emerges the less chance it has of being included and it is likely to be extremely difficult to have a site allocated which is not introduced until after a plan goes on deposit.

*\* Candidate sites are those submitted to the LPA prior to the preparation of the deposit plan. Alternative sites are those put forward in representations on the deposit plan.*

## Wales Planning Awards 2011 open for Entry

The Wales Planning Award is an important part of the programme for RTPI Cymru. It gives the opportunity to showcase the work which takes place in Wales as part of the planning system and by planners. Perhaps something that as planners we don't do enough of!

To merit an award, entries must demonstrate outstanding achievement judged to have advanced significantly the science and art of town planning for the benefit of

the community, or provide an outstanding example of the beneficial impact of positive planning.

The closing date for entries is **30th June 2011**. Further information and how to enter is available from: [www.rtpi.org.uk/rtpi\\_cymru](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/rtpi_cymru)

If you are interested in serving as a judge, please contact: [roisin.willmott@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:roisin.willmott@rtpi.org.uk) or telephone: 029 2047 3923.



Above: Ellie Fry (centre left) and Mark Harris (centre right) of Bridgend County Borough Council being awarded the 2010 Wales Planning Award by Gary Sutton (left) and Arfon Hughes (right) of DPP.



## Knitting an LDP

*Lesley Punter shares with us her valuable insight and humorous take on putting together an LDP*



I have spent my last 3 years not slaving over an Assembly policy but doing a BA in textiles. When asked by planners about my change in direction, I would joke that I was knitting an LDP. Now back in the land of the analytical, I think the analogy works. So here are my thoughts on HOW TO KNIT AN LDP:

- i. Before starting, make sure your tools are collected in one place and they are all sharp! Purchase the material and equipment you don't have on hand.
- ii. Consider what kind of garment you need, how big it should be and what parts to cover and make your work incorporate those qualities.
- iii. Join a knitting group and see whether you can share ideas and materials.
- iv. Search for locally distinctive patterns, colours and materials that you could use to create your garment.
- v. Use your research and thinking to formulate with customers a unique design and draw a pattern.
- vi. Make sure that your employer and customers support the overall design.
- vii. Consider how much time and resource it will take to make and then create a timetable and financial plan.
- viii. Let other workers know what you are planning to do and share out related tasks.
- ix. Begin to knit the pieces according to the timetable, making sure you keep referring to the bigger picture.
- x. Start with the most important piece and from the bottom up.
- xi. Don't worry if you drop a stitch, most can be picked up or patched.
- xii. Stop at regular intervals, talk to the customers and check pieces against your design.
- xiii. When completed, make a final check of the size, colour and pattern against the design.
- xiv. Make sure you save the pattern and materials in case you need to change it as the employers and customers change.
- xv. Present it to quality control and focus group to test for style, fit and durability.
- xvi. WEAR WITH PRIDE AND PURPOSE.

## Rural Success for Wales at RTPI Awards

Not surprising given the rural nature of Wales, but for the second year in a row, a Welsh project has been recognised at the RTPI Awards in February.

White Consultants' Welsh Seascapes project was Commended in the Rural Areas and the Natural Environment Category. The winner in the category, (The Great Fen, Huntingdonshire: A Green Infrastructure Masterplan for people, wildlife and the local economy), went on to win the Jubilee Cup.

The distinctive character, special qualities and cultural associations of Wales' coasts and coastal waters ('seascapes') are a highly valued aspect of Wales' identity and are a significant factor in generating £1.4 billion to the Welsh economy from tourism. The exposure of the coastline to prevailing south westerly winds and strong currents in certain locations also provides potential to generate electricity from wind and waves to support the Assembly Government's commitment and legal duty to sustainable development.

The purpose of the study is to provide a consistent all-Wales baseline of seascape information which can be used for a variety of coastal and marine spatial planning needs and an analysis of sensitivity to be taken into account in the development of offshore renewable energy. The work has been used to inform the Government's Round 3 for offshore wind and is informing WAG's Marine Renewable Energy Framework, DECC's Offshore Environmental SEA and it is intended to set a character based context for future coastal landscape planning in Wales.

The study divides the Welsh coastline into 50 units each of which includes an area of sea, coastline and land. These are characterised by identifying the special qualities and cultural associations of each unit and the sensitivity of the seascape

is assessed against three different forms of offshore energy types – tall objects out at sea (wind), broad flat objects out at sea (wave) and development just offshore (tidal stream).

The study sets out the detailed criteria used and the resulting analysis in a clear and easily understood format concluding in each of the 50 units with the seascape sensitivity levels for each of the three forms of development based on a 'high', 'moderate' and 'low' scale. For each unit maps are produced showing the precise areas covered by the sensitivity analysis and supported by photographs to aid understanding of the nature of the individual seascape.

It provides the Countryside Commission for Wales and the Assembly with a strongly evidence based and non judgemental assessment of the Welsh seascape against which to assess offshore and marine development proposals and, linked to the Landscape Character Map for Wales, will assist in the assessment of shore based development. The methodology is transferrable to other locations and can be used at both the macro and micro scale – for example, it has been used to assist in the assessment of the impact of a new lifeboat station. The judges consider this study to be a very good example of planning for coastal landscapes.



## Local Development Plan Progress

As Adopted LDPs are starting to emerge, how is progress panning out across Wales? At the time of going to press, The list below summarises where each local Planning Authority is in the move to developing a Local Development Plan.

The Information has been collected directly from Local Planning Authorities and was correct at the time of going to press. Thank you to all the LPAs for providing the information.

**Blaenau Gwent:** Blaenau Gwent will be consulting on its Deposit Plan in April 2011; and anticipate having an adopted plan by March / April 2013.

**Brecon Beacons:** Consultation on the Deposit LDP has recently closed (29 December 2010). Adoption is expected in October 2012.

**Bridgend:** Bridgend has produced and consulted on its LDP Pre-Deposit Proposals and is currently strengthening its evidence base in preparation for the Deposit LDP, which is anticipated to be published in spring 2011.

**Caerphilly:** The Caerphilly LDP was adopted on the 26 November 2010.

**Cardiff:** Work is now progressing on the preparation of a new LDP for Cardiff. The Delivery Agreement for the Plan was agreed by the Assembly in October 2010. Consultation on the LDP Vision and Objectives and SA / SEA Scoping Report took place in November / December 2010. Also, a call for LDP candidate sites from developers and landowners has just been completed. The Council is due to consider the LDP Vision and Objectives in March 2011 and this is planned to be followed by consultation on strategic options and strategic sites in late spring / early summer 2011. The Delivery Agreement indicates that the Council will then consider the LDP Preferred Strategy in October 2011, followed by a consultation process. In terms of overall timescales, the Council is aiming to adopt the LDP in October 2014, with the Deposit scheduled for autumn 2012 and submission to the Assembly for examination in summer 2013.

**Carmarthenshire:** Following consultation on the Preferred Strategy and the consideration of responses, it was recently approved by Council and work is currently progressing on the production of the Deposit Plan scheduled for April 2011.

**Ceredigion:** The Council placed the LDP on Deposit on the 22nd December. Consultation runs for 8 weeks, taking into account the Christmas break, ending on midday on the 17th February. The plan will be submitted for examination later in 2011 with a view to adopt in 2012.

**Conwy:** On 27 January 2011, Conwy Council gave its approval to public consultation beginning on Monday, 14th March 2011. Adoption of the LDP is anticipated in September 2012.

**Denbighshire:** Following public consultation, the Site Allocation Representation Stage took place in May and June 2010. Examination is anticipated in Autumn 2011 and adoption of the LDP in late 2011/early 2012.

**Flintshire:** Flintshire will be advertising further modifications to the UDP in January 2011, with a view to potential adoption later in the year.

**Gwynedd:** Gwynedd Council and Anglesey County Council have agreed to prepare a Joint LDP. A Joint Planning Policy Unit will be formed shortly, which will report to a Joint Planning Policy Committee as well as other relevant committees. Work is now being undertaken to prepare a Delivery Agreement, which is anticipated to be available for public consultation before the end of March 2011.

**Merthyr Tydfil:** The further 'Post Suspension' changes were publicised, with the consultation period expiring on 27 January. There is no confirmed delivery date yet for the Inspector's final report, though we are hopeful it will be submitted before the end of February. Completion of the Inspector's report will depend upon the responses to the consultation. If objections are received, it is open to the Inspector to decide whether a further Hearing is necessary.

**Monmouthshire:** The Preferred Strategy was out for consultation in 2009. Following an informal consultation on Alternative Village Sites and Strategic Site Studies in January 2011, consultation on the Deposit Plan is intended for late spring 2011.

**Neath Port Talbot:** The initial consultation on Issues is largely completed; the second Candidate Sites and Sustainability Appraisal Scoping document consultation was carried out in 2010. The Pre-deposit Plan date is to be agreed; adoption of the plan is currently estimated to be spring 2013.

**Newport:** The Preferred Strategy was consulted on between January and March 2010. It is hoped to place the plan on deposit in June 2011, with adoption estimated for mid 2013.

**Pembrokeshire:** Following a revision to its Delivery Agreement in December 2010, Pembrokeshire County Council consulted on its Deposit LDP between January and March 2011. LDP adoption is anticipated for early 2013.

**Pembrokeshire Coast:** The Pembrokeshire Coast NPA LDP was adopted on the 29 September 2010.

**Powys:** The Powys LDP Delivery Agreement was approved by the Welsh Assembly Government on 2 November 2010 and work formally commenced on the LDP at the start of January 2011. Initial work is focussing on evidence gathering including the candidate sites process (14 Feb - 6 May 2011) and appraisal methodologies. Consultation on the Preferred Strategy will start in February 2012.

**Rhondda Cynon Taf:** The Authority have received formal confirmation from PINs that its LDP is sound. It is anticipated the LDP will be adopted in early March 2011.

**Snowdonia / Eryri:** The Hearing sessions finished in November 2010, subject to the Inspector asking for another hearing following on from consultation on matters arising from changes from the initial Hearing Sessions. Adoption is still expected in the first half of 2011.

**Swansea:** The Swansea LDP is at the Pre-Deposit Preparation Stage and Candidate Sites are currently being invited for submission and assessment.

**Torfaen:** The Torfaen LDP was reported to a Special Council on 15 February 2011; and if agreed it will be placed on Deposit at the end of March 2011.

**Vale of Glamorgan:** The pre-deposit public consultation took place in January and February 2008 and the LDP strategy was approved by Cabinet in February 2010. It is anticipated that the Deposit LDP will be published for public consultation in late Spring 2011.

**Wrexham:** Wrexham's LDP is progressing towards submission, with the Plan having been on deposit from June to July 2010 and alternative sites deposit consultation completed at the end of February 2011. It is anticipated the Plan will be submitted to the Assembly Government in summer 2011 with Hearings in winter 2011/12.

**Ynys Môn:** The timetable in the revised Delivery agreement, signed off by the Assembly in January 2009, will not be met due to the need for the LDP to take into account the implications of major new developments focusing on renewable energy production - nuclear and wind and tidal power in the Irish Sea. In December 2010, Ynys Mon and Gwynedd entered into a formal agreement to prepare a joint LDP. (The Council resolved to stop work on its UDP and prepare a LDP. Parts of the UDP can be retained as interim guidance for taking development control decisions while work on the new LDP advances).

February 2011



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**\*Special Offer:** Bookings for the Spring Conference will receive 20% discount off the price of the 2011 Wales Planning Conference on 7 June.

# Welsh Employment Survey Findings

During 2010 the RTPI conducted a survey of employers in Wales to help better understand the impacts of the recession and reduced public sector spending on Local Planning Authorities and planning consultancies. The survey also sought to better understand issues relating to CPD and the recruitment of planners and graduates. Cat Sheppard and Chris Sheriden report on the survey's findings

## Welsh employers find solutions to expected training budget cuts

28 employers responded (a response rate of 58%) from a mixture of local government and private sector organisations. All employers said they were supporting some form of training for their staff.

The average spend on training last year was £338.14 per person but there was a wide range of different expenditures from £31.25 per planner to £1,000 per planner and there is no tendency for bigger or smaller budgets depending on the sector. This average spend is slightly higher than the national average of £320 per employee in the private sector and £116 per employee in the public sector (CIPD Learning and Talent Development Survey 2010). This reflects the professional nature of the skills and knowledge needed by planners leading to higher than average training costs but does make the lowest spends even more disturbing.

In addition, 39% of employers said their budget would go down in 2011, this is a similar figure to the one presented in the 2010 CMI economic outlook which said 43% of managers think that their training budgets will be cut in 2011. It is worrying that budgets are being cut at a time when there are such wide reaching changes to the planning system. By not investing in training, employers run the risk of developing a skills shortage which could mean that their organisation or department is not equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to respond to the changes. By not investing in training, employers also risk lowering employee engagement which can lead to lower productivity and higher staff turnover.

However it isn't all bad news, as 11% said that their budget would go up in 2011 and a further 11% said their budget could go up or down in response to learning

needs. Also, despite limited budgets, the employers said that they are doing a wide variety of types of learning including internal courses, qualifications and e-learning. They are also undertaking some innovative approaches to providing learning and development with more limited resources by organising internal seminars to share expertise, collaborating with other authorities and inviting specialists and organisations to give free sessions to staff. Although it is tempting to do, when on a limited budget, on-the-job training can be an unreliable way to provide effective learning for staff. One Welsh employer is making sure that on-the-job learning works effectively in their organisation through coaching and mentoring by senior staff.

It is encouraging to see that employers are thinking about ways to meet their learning needs and are committed to supporting their planning staff. Employers of planners can have their approach to staff learning and development assessed and recognised through RTPI Learning Partners status. This status recognises employers' commitment to developing the professionalism of planning staff.

If you would like more information about applying to become an RTPI Learning Partner [www.rtpi.org.uk/education\\_and\\_careers/learning\\_partnerships/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/education_and_careers/learning_partnerships/) or contact Cat by e-mail at: [learning.partners@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:learning.partners@rtpi.org.uk) or 020 7929 8174.

*Cat is the RTPI's Lifelong Learning Officer*

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"RTPI Learning Partner status is important in our recruitment campaigns and with our clients. We also value it as a means of ensuring that our team of planners has the best possible opportunity to update and expand its skills."  
Scott Wilson

"We pride ourselves in the training and support we give to staff. This status benefits staff and underlines this commitment."  
Andrew Taylor, Development Manager, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

## Caption Competition Result

In the Winter edition of Cynllunio, we invited captions for the image below. The image was taken by an RTPI member at the DCfW's 'What Architects Do' project for the Cardiff Design Festival. For further information: [www.whatarchitectsdo.org.uk](http://www.whatarchitectsdo.org.uk).

Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive of DCfW has considered all the entries and has decided the caption below is the 'winning' entry - Congratulations to Mark Harris for sending in the entry and to everyone else that sent in ideas.



**"Planning enforcement rules strengthened as part of government's new localism agenda"**

## Welsh employers rate professional membership highly

The survey presented an opportunity to find out how employers have responded to these difficult economic times, and how this response has impacted on the profession.

Between April 2009 and March 2010, the employers represented in the survey employed a total of 308 chartered planners. LPAs are the largest employer, with a total of 247 professional planners currently employed. The responding consultancies employed a total of 61 chartered planners. The largest single employer of chartered planners (a LPA) employed 47.

The survey also found that between 2009 - 2010, employers lost nine planners through redundancy or retirement, but recruited 10 new planners. 26 vacancies were left open by employers to save money. However, there are difficult times ahead. April 2010 through to March 2011 may see a further 10 redundancies, with the potential for more between 2011 - 2012.

As for the next generation of planners, a total of 60 graduate level planners are employed, with 82% of responding LPAs employing at least one graduate. The majority of responding consultancies do not employ graduate level planners. The majority of employers (57%) do not employ Licentiate members. 68% of employers confirmed they employ a total of 73 non-chartered planners to carry out duties at a level undertaken by professionally qualified planners staff; 32% do not employ non-chartered planners to carry out MRTPI level work.

Despite the numbers of non-chartered planners employed, employers are showing a strong interest in employing those with RTPI-accredited qualifications and RTPI membership.

For much of the last decade

strong economic growth within the UK contributed to a shortage of planners. This presented recruitment challenges for many employers, who looked beyond RTPI membership to help fill vacancies. We also know that some planners believe that some public sector employers do not value professional qualifications.

One of the strengths of professional qualifications is that they provide you with an edge in a competitive job market, and the survey provides strong evidence of this. The survey asked employers to rate the importance of the following categories when deciding which applicants to interview for a vacancy: non-RTPI accredited degree, RTPI accredited degree, the classification awarded, relevant work experience, membership of the RTPI (for graduate level positions) and corporate membership for middle and senior planner positions. The categories were to be rated as essential, very important, important, fairly important or not important.

An RTPI accredited degree and relevant work experience were the two categories that most employers considered essential or very important. Corporate membership for middle and senior planning positions also rated highly, with 25% of employers rating it as important, 21% as very important and 25% rating it as essential; a reassuring message for some in the public sector. There was a positive response to whether RTPI membership for graduates is important to employers, with 29% rating it as fairly important, 29% as important, and 14% considering it to be either very important or essential.

The survey results can be found on the PIWP webpages. *Details on services to support those out of work from [www.rtpi.org.uk/member\\_services/piwp/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/member_services/piwp/)* Chris is the RTPI's Planners in the Workplace Manager.

## Hyder, nid techneg, ydy'r eisiau mwyaf yn y blynyddoedd nesaf

*Yn y cyntaf o'i golofnau, mae Huw Thomas yn annog cynllunwyr i gadw'r ffydd (a'u hyder) mewn amserau anodd.*



Uwch: Huw Thomas

Dyma ni unwaith eto yng nghanol argyfwng economaidd. Pwy a wŷr beth sydd o'n blaenau, ond gallaf ragweld yn peth: yn bendant, byddwn ni - cynllunwyr - o dan bwysau i brofi gwerth ein gwaith. Digon teg, wrth gwrs gyda chyllid cyhoeddus mor frin. Ond mae'n bwysig bod y proffesiwn yn pwysleisio rhinweddau sylfaenol cynllunio, ac nid yn adlewyrchu, heb feddwl, blaenoriaethau dros dro rhannau o'r cyfryngau, neu wleidyddwyr blaenllaw.

Yn Lloegr mae'n amlwg bod gan bobl ddylanwadol yn y llywodraeth newydd amheuan am werth cynllunio. Ar brydiau mae'n anodd gwahaniaethu rhwng syniadau ffres yn cael eu cyflwyno yn onest ac yn agored, ac ymosodiadau cudd ar egwyddorion y gyfundrefn cynllunio sydd wedi datblygu ers yr ail ryfel byd. Yn y fath amgylchiadau bydd hi'n naturiol os ydy cynllunwyr yn pryderu am eu dyfodol. Gall rhai ohonom gofio'r wythdegau a'r cwestiynau di-baid gawsom ynglŷn â gwerth cynllunio. Yn aml iawn, ein hateb oedd pwysleisio'n cyfraniad tuag at greu swyddi, neu ryw nod syml tebyg. 'Roeddwn yn aml yn rhy amheus i bwysleisio cymhlethdod cyfraniad cynllunio tuag at les cymdeithasol.

Nid ydy'r llywodraeth newydd yng Nghaerdydd, o Fai ymlaen, yn debyg o fod o'r un cyfansoddiad â llywodraeth

Lloegr. Ond serch hynny, bydd cynllunwyr Cymreig yn teimlo'r pwysau i brofi eu gwerth. Yn anffodus, tybiaf nid oes llawer wedi newid ers yr wythdegau, a'r ffordd sicraf o ddangos pwysigrwydd i'r gwleidyddwyr ydy honni ein bod yn helpu creu swyddi. 'It's the economy, stupid' oedd slogan enwog Bill Clinton; 'buddsoddiad, buddsoddiad, buddsoddiad' ydy'r fersiwn Cymreig ers talwm.

Dim byd yn bod gyda'r fath canolbwyntio, wrth gwrs. Ond rhaid i ni ofalu i beidio anghofio gwersi cynllunio gofodol y blynyddoedd diwethaf: mae swyddi a buddsoddiad yn bwysig, bwysig, ond mae gan y gyfundrefn cynllunio nodau eraill hefyd. Nid ydy'r amgylchedd yn llai pwysig heddiw nag oedd hi pum mlynedd yn ôl; mae cyfiawnder cymdeithasol, ac ansawdd bywyd yn bwysig o hyd. Yn aml, buddsoddiad newydd ydy'r sylfaen am gyrraedd y nodau eraill hyn. Ond rhaid cael y buddsoddiad iawn. Ar brydiau yn y gorffennol mae gwleidyddwyr a chynllunwyr wedi colli hyder, a chroesawi fuddsoddiad o unrhyw fath i'n cymunedau. Ar ôl degawd o ddatganoli gobeithiaf fod gennym fwy o hunanhyder, i'n galluogi i wrthwynebu cynigion am ddatblygiadau sydd yn groes i egwyddorion sylfaenol cynllunio da. Rhaid cyd-bwysu'r economi ac egwyddorion eraill o ddifri, nid mynd trwy broses ffug. Nid oes eisiau croesawi bob math o fuddsoddiad, er bod hi'n bwysig i groesawi fuddsoddiad a all adeiladu Cymru werdd, deg a blaengar.

*Darllenwyd ym Mhrifysgol Caerdydd ydy Huw.*

# Regenerating Deprived Neighbourhoods in Wales

*Stephen Hincks outlines the findings of a study on the impact of policy on regenerating deprived neighbourhoods.*

In the summer of 2007 the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) commissioned a team of researchers from the Universities of Manchester, Glasgow and Ulster to develop 'a new and innovative monitor to track housing and neighbourhood trends across the UK'. As part of this major three-year project, researchers at the University of Manchester were asked to undertake an in-depth country-specific study for Wales. The study focussed on analysing the progress that has been made in regenerating the most deprived neighbourhoods in Wales and concentrated specifically on exploring change in first generation Communities First neighbourhoods. The study was not an evaluation of the Communities First programme or the outcomes of the initiative itself but rather used the policy architecture provided by the Communities First programme to anchor the analysis to a set of specific neighbourhoods that were targeted for policy intervention. This brief piece outlines the findings of the study which was published by JRF in November 2010.

## Scope of the Study

In seeking to unpack the trajectory of change in the most deprived neighbourhoods in Wales, the study had three key lines of enquiry. First, it compared the extent to which first generation Communities First neighbourhoods improved relative to other similarly deprived neighbourhoods in Wales using key change indicators between 2001 and 2008. Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that were targeted by the first round of Communities First projects were taken to be first generation Communities First neighbourhoods. The comparator areas were simply defined as those LSOAs that fall within the 30% most deprived LSOAs in Wales but which were not first generation Communities First areas. The indicators used to assess

Table 1: Summary of Deprived Area Typology

Neighbourhood Type	Description
<b>Transit</b>	Neighbourhoods in which most in-movers come from less deprived areas and most out-movers go to less deprived areas. Typically, this implies young or newly established households coming from more 'comfortable' backgrounds and starting out on the housing ladder. Their early choice of housing and hence location reflects their initially limited resources. For them, living in a deprived neighbourhood may entail only a short period of residence before they move elsewhere to a 'better' area.
<b>Escalator</b>	These neighbourhoods have a similar role to transit areas, but in their case, since most of the in-movers come from areas that are equally or more deprived, the neighbourhood becomes part of a continuous onward-and-upward progression through the housing and labour markets. The moving households may be older than those in the transit areas since they would not necessarily be at the start of their housing career.
<b>Isolate</b>	Neighbourhoods in which households come from and move to areas that are equally or more deprived. To this degree, they are neighbourhoods that are associated with a degree of entrapment of poor households who are unable to break out of living in deprived areas.
<b>Gentrifier</b>	Neighbourhoods in which there is a degree of social improvement since most in-movers come from less deprived areas.

improvements were:

- Percentage Change in Working Age Population Claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
- Percentage Change in Working Age Population who are Economically inactive
- Percentage Change in Unemployment Rate of Working Age Population
- Change in Population
- Mean Change in House Prices

Indicators a, b and c are measures of social distress and are useful for understanding the dynamics of the labour market and specifically non-participation in the labour force. Indicator d provides a measure of the level of population within particular neighbourhoods at different points in time. Finally, indicator e provides a useful measure of the relative health of the housing market and reflects the condition of the built environment and neighbourhood attractiveness among other factors.

The second component of the study examined the trajectories of change taken

by different types of first generation Communities First neighbourhoods using the indicators of change above. Here an innovative functional typology of deprived neighbourhoods was developed for the 30% most deprived neighbourhoods in Wales defined using the 2005 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation and 2001 Census migration data. The typology captures neighbourhood deprivation but it also provides a means of distinguishing between the different types of deprived neighbourhoods based on their functional roles defined by migration patterns and subsequently their respective roles in redistributing population. The neighbourhood categories identified are summarised in Table 1 and their spatial distribution is captured in Figure 1.

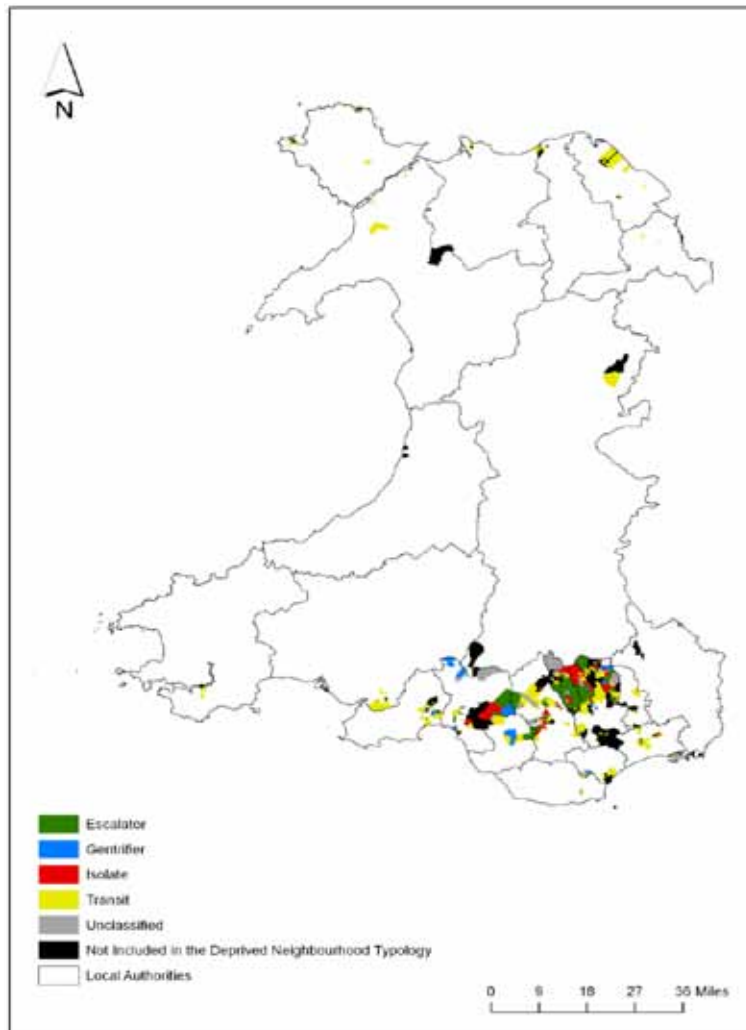
The final component of the study sought to explain the factors that have contributed to change in the first generation Communities First areas. To do this a series of multiple regression models were calculated. Put simply multiple regression is a technique used

to understand how several factors (e.g. demographic or socioeconomic characteristics of the population living in a particular area) help to explain change in another factor (e.g. population levels). The analysis focussed on attempting to determine which neighbourhood features help to explain the change that has taken place between 2001 and 2008 in the five change indicators above for first generation Communities First areas

## Progress in Regenerating Deprived Neighbourhoods: Report Findings

The analysis of the Communities First and comparator neighbourhoods revealed some interesting trends in the change that had taken place in Communities First and comparator neighbourhoods between 2001 and 2008. The analysis found positive signs that some gains have been made by Communities First areas in improving neighbourhood conditions. Indeed, both house prices and population broadly increased across Communities First neighbourhoods.

Figure 1: First Generation Communities First and Deprived Area Typology



However, the trends in the three socioeconomic focussed indicators demonstrated that the Communities First and comparator neighbourhoods have followed similar trajectories of change. In addition, although house prices and population were found to have broadly increased across Communities First neighbourhoods between 2001 and 2008, the analysis demonstrated that this change was comparable with the degree of change that had taken place in the comparator areas.

Turning our attention to analysing change in different types of first generation Communities First neighbourhoods between 2001 and 2008, the analysis found that of the four neighbourhood types, Gentrifier areas were the only neighbourhoods to make any improvement in the measure of change between 2001 and 2008 and that Gentrifier and Transit areas

significantly outperformed both Escalator and Isolate areas in both years. In contrast, Isolate areas declined between 2001 and 2008 illustrating that Isolate areas worsened in comparison to other deprived neighbourhood types. Overall, the analysis demonstrated that first generation Communities First Gentrifier and Transit neighbourhoods have made significant gains relative to Isolate and Escalator neighbourhoods and that the gap between the Gentrifier-Transit and Isolate-Escalator neighbourhood 'groups' widened between 2001 and 2008.

The final component of the analysis sought to explain the changes that have taken place in first generation Communities First neighbourhoods owing to compositional factors such as demographic and socioeconomic structure. The analysis points to a strong interaction between housing, neighbourhood structure

and the economy in affecting neighbourhood trajectories. The analysis showed that there are some key explanatory variables that help to throw light on the neighbourhood change in Communities First areas. All of the neighbourhoods are deprived but differences in their composition – especially their mix of tenures, levels of skills, ethnic and age composition and access to cars – proved to be important determinants of the likelihood of fostering positive change in socioeconomic circumstances.

Overall, the findings of the study support the adoption of area-based neighbourhood policies but suggest that a spatial policy targeting approach that recognises the importance of disentangling the interaction of people-based and place-based deprivation in developing more context specific policy interventions for deprived neighbourhoods is both necessary and logical. Otherwise, there is a danger of smoothing away the inherent variations in compositional and functional interactions that make different deprived neighbourhoods distinct from one another.

### Conclusions

As was made clear in the introduction to this piece, the study was not an evaluation of the Communities First programme. Nevertheless, lessons emerged from the study that could be used to inform the direction of future neighbourhood regeneration policy in Wales. The Communities First programme was anchored around the objective of fostering community empowerment in deprived neighbourhoods and previous studies have shown that as a result of involvement in Communities First projects, community members had begun to recognise the potentially important role that they can play in impacting positive change in their area. However, it is argued in the report that the future delivery of more substantive improvements in key housing, economic and social outcomes in the most deprived neighbourhoods in

Wales will be dependent on the empowerment agenda promoted in the Communities First programme being better integrated with evolving policy agendas and funding streams. It is also demonstrated through the analysis that not all deprived neighbourhoods are the same and that greater consideration needs to be given to the compositional and contextual factors that drive change in deprived neighbourhoods.

There is evidence that gains have been made in regenerating deprived neighbourhoods in Wales but the challenge for policymakers in the future will lie in developing a more nuanced and contextually specific approach to the development and delivery of regeneration outcomes. The overarching narrative emerging from the report is the need for a fuller discussion around how best to take forward the development of a more holistic approach to neighbourhood regeneration in Wales and the need to explore what the future policy architecture might look like. However, the current economic climate coupled with the severity of recent public sector cuts risks undermining the gains that have been made to date in regenerating the most deprived neighbourhoods in Wales whilst also potentially working to restrict the scope of stakeholders, agencies and policymakers to engage in a meaningful discussion on the future of neighbourhood regeneration in Wales. Driving forward this discussion in the months ahead will undoubtedly be challenging. Nevertheless, it is apparent that having this discussion, however challenging, is necessary for the future of neighbourhood regeneration in Wales beyond the short-term.

The report can be found at: [www.jrf.org.uk/publications](http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications)

Stephen is Lecturer at the Centre for Urban Policy Studies (CUPS) at the University of Manchester.

**Reference:** S. Hincks & B. Robson (2010) Regenerating Communities First Neighbourhoods in Wales. York. JRF.

# Complying with 'The Manual for Streets' reaps dividends for local residents

Mike Biddulph sets out the results from a recent study into the use of streets designed in line with Manual for Streets.

Do you think that a traffic calmed street and a more radical home zone would be used differently or in the same way by residents? Research which I have been working on over the summer has found that patterns of use can be very different. This is particularly interesting because the two streets I studied had broadly similar populations and building forms, which means that we can start to attribute any difference in their use to the design of the street.

The streets are only a few streets apart in the Grangetown area of Cardiff. They were both originally terraced bylaw streets, but as a result of renewal efforts in the wider area, they now have similar built forms and populations, but different street designs. The first street was calmed with a series of speed tables and build-outs, tree planting and planters. A post-occupancy study showed that the work has been popular with residents. One half of the second street is unchanged as a bylaw street, but the other end has 46 new homes built around a home zone style treatment, with a paved surface, tree planting and gate posts highlighting the start of the treatment.

The streets were both observed for a twenty four hour period using time lapse cameras mounted on lamp posts. They were studied on the same day at the same time during the school summer holidays.

Street One had 100 adults passing through on foot, often to addresses in the street. Eight children were seen in the street. Six passed through with adults and two came out with adults to buy an ice cream. Six teenagers passed through, with three of them walking straight down the middle of the road. This was the only time the pavements weren't used. No elderly people were



Above: Map showing the different forms of the two streets. Street One is below and Street Two is above

observed. No playing was observed, and hanging out was relatively insignificant, typically for brief moments of waiting for someone. The street was visited by 94 cars during the six hour period which embraced rush hour. That is roughly one car every four minutes.

By contrast the home zone was a very intensely used stretch of the street by children, but the play activity was totally confined to the home zoned area. 13 children played actively on and off for two hours and 41 minutes. They played ball, rode bikes and hung around. These children often engaged with adults who appeared to be their parents. Six older boys also came and played football for just over an hour in a makeshift goal on the railway embankment. The street was also well used by 96 adult and 19 teenagers who passed through. 20 adults also spent

a while in the street and some engaged with the children. A small number of elderly residents were seen passing through.

A film showing the intensity of street activity in the home zone can be found on You Tube at: "Children playing in home zone 1" [www.youtube.com/watch?v=DhR-poD8Qc4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DhR-poD8Qc4)

The street was actually used by more cars despite being a dead end, with 114 cars using the street during the same period. This is roughly one car every three minutes. Because there is a turning space half way up the street, many cars turned before the home zone area.

## Conclusions

This research supports the view that home zones can result in greater intensity of activity, and in particular children's play, when compared to merely traffic calmed streets. These streets

are closely comparable in terms of form and population, with the only significant difference being the street designs. Any differences in use must therefore be largely attributable to the designs of the streets.

'The Manual for Streets' encourages such innovative approaches to residential street design, and whilst it is unlikely that all streets might result in such vibrancy, this research has found few reasons not to embrace the possibilities which simple design innovations might allow.

If you would like more information on this research please contact Mike at [BiddulphMJ@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:BiddulphMJ@cardiff.ac.uk)

Mike is a member of the Advisory Group for the RTPI Urban Design Network; you can become a member of the Network and benefit from its activities, free of charge, via [www.rtpi.org.uk/urbandesign](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/urbandesign)

# Design Review - Free Advice Available

*Carole-Anne Davies demystifies the Design Review service and reports on feedback that the service is having a positive impact*

As our fitful economy bites, and more attention is drawn to construction and development, DCfW is experiencing a great deal more press comment. While it is widely considered that all publicity is good publicity, it is interesting that headlining verbiage frequently references the Commission in abbreviated phrases such as 'design police' or 'government watchdog'. As well as the latter conjuring unfortunate images of Ann Robinson, these labels usually refer to one particular service offered by DCfW. They aren't aimed toward our training, advocacy or education programmes but to the Design Review Service which offers consultation on development projects throughout Wales, ahead of their procession through the planning system.

This is hardly surprising – much mythology surrounds Design Review despite its standing as a recognised practice, precedent in the UK and internationally, and despite its popularity (DCfW's service is regularly booked two months in advance and increasingly we accommodate additional reviews). The service is also supplemented by open sessions for local authorities where we engage directly with the everyday design decisions faced by officers and members. Likewise the range of proposals is increasingly diverse – large scale proposals may return to review several times, engaged in an iterative process. Smaller projects, even individual dwellings also come forward, seeking assistance where communities or individuals are mesmerised by the demands of the development process.

This represents a good deal of activity for a small organisation and to ensure that we target our resources

to best effect, we spend a good deal of time tracking our impact. Gathering the data is not always easy when we want to capture the qualitative alongside the quantitative. It involves gathering accurate feedback from the various constituencies using the service – local authority officers, architects, urban designers, developers and investors, grass roots groups and individuals. And let's not forget that part of our analysis includes assessment of financial value and in particular, the proportion of public money invested in regeneration projects or joint ventures. Here we are seeking to identify value for the public purse – so that's the 'watchdog' bit.

This scrutiny reveals some interesting data. Last year – a year of profound economic turbulence – the Commission saw c£1.8bn worth of projects come through its doors. While this is a snapshot and includes a mix of private, public and other funding sources, it does provide an impression of the scale of investment in built environment projects in this very small country and how great is the need for that investment to stick. We therefore make every effort to use our expertise to help secure opportunities for the best possible return, through good quality, well-designed schemes that use resources efficiently and can be economically viable and sustainable in the long term.

To add this value we need to be consulted early and we now know that there is a heartening trend toward increasingly early consultation. In monthly review meetings, where five or six schemes are reviewed, we can see c65 projects – some significant scale, long term initiatives – in the course of a year (excluding extra reviews and open sessions). Some 68% of these come through in the earliest stages.

So we've got more coming

through, earlier and more coming back again. Who cares? Well it seems many do. Immediate service user surveys show 93% satisfaction with our customer interface, 77% said the review met their expectations and 62% are likely to return for further consultation. Surveys at 3 months after review showed 77% agreed the review was useful and constructive, 76% said that the Design Review report identified key issues and helped with resolving them, 47% used the report to promote a particular design solution and 71% felt that engaging with Design Review had or would influence the progress of the project for the better. User surveys specific to local authority officers at 3 months showed 44% felt the Design Review Report was useful in helping to determine the application, 34% of respondents (where applications were made) agreed strongly that the report was given significant weight in the determination process. Of schemes referred to planning committees, 75% of respondents said the views of DCfW were reported in full or in summary and 63% said that the views of DCfW were influential or partly influential.

Collated data also showed a marked drop in schemes that are unacceptable and an increase in those requiring only minor changes. For the first

time we have data reflecting an increase in potentially exemplary schemes, indicating an overall positive trend towards improved design quality, compared with the picture when DCfW was established. A record seven RIBA awards in Wales in 2010 and the highest ever number of entrants to the National Eisteddfod Gold Medal for Architecture Award, sponsored by DCfW, also bear this out.

DCfW's Design Review Panel comprises an entirely voluntary, 30 strong unremunerated, independent, expert, multi-disciplinary panel. Therein lies its strength. Its multi-disciplinary nature allows the holistic approach required to fully assess any development project. Moreover it provides an opportunity for LPA officers, clients and the public, to increase understanding of the myriad technical matters, disciplines and interests that influence proposals. This might be valuable professional development for many service users but it also enables brokerage between occasionally polarised built environment professions, provides a rounded picture of the issues that matter, and reveals the opportunities to be seized.

*Carole-Anne is Chief Executive of the Design Commission for Wales / Comisiwn Dylunio Cymru*



*Above: DCfW's Design Review in action*

# Aled Davies

*Aled Davies talks about his career in north Wales from an enforcement 'get a way driver' to heading up a wide range of local authority services and rising to the challenge of efficiency savings.*



Above: Aled Davies

## How did you come into planning in the first place?

I think it was because I fell in with the wrong crowd at an impressionable age! I always wanted to stay and work in Wales and I sat on two job offers in Nottingham and London's East End for a few weeks, waiting for a much delayed interview for the job of Llyn Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coast Officer with Cyngor Dwyfor. It was worth the wait. I was offered the job which meant working alongside the planners. On my second day, it was suggested that the Enforcement Officer should accompany me and help me "to get to know the area". It turned out that I was his 'getaway driver' for delivering papers to a particularly difficult customer of the service. I was intrigued. I suppose that within a few weeks I was hooked and for the first time I had a clear idea of the career that I wanted to pursue. Dwyfor was a great place to work. I worked with a lot of very good people. I still work with quite a few of them. Everything done through the medium of Welsh and small enough to be on first name terms with practically everyone. It was in the days before electronic communications and it was

a case of a walking down the corridor and putting your head around the door. We got a lot of things done!

## What has been your career to date?

Career wise I consider myself to have been quite fortunate, being in the right place when opportunities have come along. The job at Dwyfor developed from working alone to managing a Countryside Team and also included managing environmental improvement work in the rural areas and in the towns of Porthmadog and Pwllheli. During the early years, I completed the MSc Planning Course in Liverpool and in 1996, I was moved up to Caernarfon to work for Gwynedd Council. I had responsibility for Rural/ Countryside Services and following internal changes a couple of years later I was managing the Policy Team leading the work on the UDP. In January 2004 I moved to manage the new Environment Directorate's Policy and Performance Team. Whilst I still had responsibility for Planning and Environmental Policy, it also gave me a lot of insight into Transportation, Highways, Municipal and Engineering Services as well as being close to the Council's strategic and corporate decision making processes. I didn't really want to move away from mainstream planning, but I suppose I saw it as a temporary, but important career move. Thankfully, this proved to be the case and the move proved valuable when the opportunity to move back to the front line to be the Acting Head of Planning and Transportation came along in the summer of 2005. I got the

job on a permanent basis a year later.

## What does your job involve?

Things haven't stood still and the Council's Public Protection Service has now been added to the portfolio within a Regulatory Department. Managing this extended Service has been an interesting and challenging, but enjoyable experience. I've always tried to allocate some time to accompany front line staff as they go about their work and being out with Trading Standards and Environmental Health Officers has been an eye-opener for me. Its changed the way I shop and choose where to eat out!

## What do you like about it, anything you dislike?

Being Head of Department within a local authority, especially in these difficult financial times, can occasionally be a lonely existence. I find that lunch once a week with the Head of Highways and Municipal Services to get the negatives out of the system and the support group role played by POSW and the North Wales Planning Officers Group, help considerably! I particularly like the fact that Regulatory Services try to ensure positive engagement with service users, and to be honest, I'm actually enjoying most elements of transforming services as part of the efficiency and effectiveness agenda. However, telling staff, including some very good staff, that their employment with the authority is being terminated, is never easy or enjoyable. My main dislike is unnecessary bureaucracy and processes which do

not add any value to the provision of services. For me, whether you like your job or not is heavily influenced by what you are willing to put into it. I've always tried to put the effort in and for me there are far more good days than bad days.

## How does Devolution of planning in Wales influence your work?

There is no point in being different just for the sake of it, but devolution means that we can shape the planning system to meet Wales' needs and aspirations. This is a real challenge for all planners and those with an interest in planning who live and work in Wales. Gwynedd Council encourage us to try and push the boundaries when appropriate and the members see planning as one of the key areas which they are keen to have some influence. Success has been varied over the last decade, but that hasn't dampened their willingness to make the effort.

## Are you involved with the RTPI at all?

I'll be honest, my involvement is limited. I do appreciate the Institute's efforts to hold more events in North Wales which provides more opportunities to be active.

## How optimistic are you about the future of planning in Wales?

I'm quite upbeat about the future. There is general recognition that the planning system has a key role to play in delivering a better Wales, even if there are varying views as to the detail of how it should contribute. I think there is some work to be done to simplify and lessen the bureaucratic burden associated with some elements of the system. I

## Griff Rhys Jones unveiled as Sustainable Places Research Institute patron

suppose my biggest concern would be the seemingly increasing expectation that the planning system can be used to solve a range of problems, many of them way beyond the purpose and potential of the system. Maybe this is a result of the system succeeding in providing a balanced approach and finding practical solutions to difficult problems in the past. The provision of Planning Services is changing quite rapidly and we've got to change along with it. The public sector particularly, has to accept and promote change and collaboration on providing planning services alone will only take us some of the way. Whilst twenty five planning authorities is a very manageable group to work with WAG and other partners to improve the system in Wales, it is probably not sustainable.

As a profession, expected to look ahead, we should be proactive in facilitating and promoting change which promote efficiency and effectiveness, sooner not later, rather than potentially reacting to enforced changes later. There I go again, maybe that year working with corporate policy and performance had more of an effect on me than I originally thought.....!

Broadcaster, writer, comedian and environmental advocate Griff Rhys Jones has been unveiled as the first Patron of Cardiff University's Sustainable Places Research Institute.

After breaking through with the comedy shows *Not the Nine O' Clock News* and *Smith and Jones*, Griff has broadcast and written more recently on conservation and environmental issues, including the BBC series *Restoration*.

As Patron, Griff will support, encourage and help publicise the Sustainable Places Research Institute's work on sustainable solutions for individual cities and their surrounding regions, tailored to particular circumstances around the world.

The Sustainable Places Research Institute, launched last year, brings together world-leading researchers from across ten disciplines at Cardiff University. The Institute combines experts in buildings, energy systems, communities, the natural environment, infrastructure, health and policy-making – who often work in isolation elsewhere – to work on creating comprehensive solutions to sustainability for all parts of the world.

Talking about his role as Patron, Griff Rhys Jones who is a Cardiff University Honorary Fellow, and whose father was a graduate of the University, said: "I think everybody recognises that sustainability and an approach to the way that we as human beings have laid waste our world is something that's long overdue.

"I firmly believe that human ingenuity is the answer to the problems we face with sustainability. This Research Institute is offering to bring together different disciplines and to look at sustainability across the globe in different localities so that we can start to measure and assess



Above: Griff Rhys Jones

how different places need to respond to the challenges ahead.

"It's an exciting project and it is a very great honour for me to be asked to be Patron. I hope I can help to publicise the work that Professor Terry Marsden and his colleagues are going to undertake."

The aim of the Sustainable Places Research Institute will be to push the boundaries of traditional sustainability research. The team's vision is to achieve a world first for a new level of connectivity between academic disciplines while developing the kinds of practical, policy-led sustainable solutions needed across the globe. With a huge range of scientific disciplines working together on 'place-based' sustainability science, the Research Institute will place Wales at the centre of global debates on this vital issue, and develop a new way of approaching the science of sustainability.

Professor Terry Marsden, Director of the Institute said:

"If we fail to tackle current levels of consumption and fail to reduce pressure on the environment, the result is likely not just to have an extreme environmental impact, but also to become one of the greatest public health threats to billions of people worldwide over the course of this century.

"We are privileged to have such an ardent supporter as Griff Rhys Jones. We are looking forward to working with him to stimulate much needed debate, raise the profile of this new Institute, and ensure that its work in sustainability science continues to reach the concerns and agenda of governments, the private sector and the public."

# Events Corner

## RTPI Cymru Spring Conference: Planning for Economic Recovery

Tuesday 15 March 2010

Location: The Imperial Hotel, Llandudno

RTPI Cymru's 2011 Spring Conference will consider the planning issues around economic recovery and how the planning system can play its part. The Conference will form part of RTPI President, Richard Summers visit to Wales.

Further details available from: [www.rtpi.org.uk/rtpi\\_cymru](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/rtpi_cymru)

## Tai 2011

22-24 March 2011

Location: Cardiff City Hall and Hilton Hotel

The premier housing conference and exhibition of Wales is changing. It is no longer just the arena where the Welsh housing world unites to network, learn and debate the major issues affecting the sector. In 2011 TAI will be a unique event where the whole of the housing sector in Wales works together over three demanding days to develop the Housing Pact Cymru.

The Pact will be a statement of our 'ask' of Government and will also set out what we can do in return to offer innovative ways to deliver more affordable housing, make better use of existing homes and focus scarce resources on providing quality services to those who need them most.

Further details available from: [www.cih.org/tai2011](http://www.cih.org/tai2011)

## Encouraging Sustainable Lifestyles through Urban Design

Tuesday 5th April 2011 5pm

Location: Glamorgan Building, Cardiff University

Professor Katie Williams will discuss: Encouraging Sustainable Lifestyles through Urban Design: A Golden Opportunity or Just Wishful Thinking, as part of the Public lecture series hosted by the Innovation and Engagement Unit in the School of City & Regional Planning, Cardiff University.

Further details available from: [www.cplan.cf.ac.uk/events/](http://www.cplan.cf.ac.uk/events/)

## Regenerating the Small Towns of Wales

Thursday 7th April 2011

Location: Cardiff University

Retail led' regeneration has long been seen as the core solution for halting the decline of Welsh towns. However, finding champion retailers willing to invest has become increasingly difficult and the wider impact of such strategies are increasingly questioned by a more local perspective on economic development. Can a new model of town centre renewal be created which revives a multi-functional role for town centres which transcends the sole retail function and puts Welsh towns at the heart of social, cultural and economic life.

This is part of a joint seminar series between CREW and Wiserd.

Further details available from: [www.regenwales.org](http://www.regenwales.org)

## Why Social Sciences Should Engage with Natural Sciences

Tuesday 17th May 2011 5pm

Location: Glamorgan Building, Cardiff University

Professor Philip Lowe, Director of the UK Research Councils' Rural Economy and Land Use Programme, which is a large scale experiment in interdisciplinary working. Part of the Public lecture series hosted by the Innovation and Engagement Unit in the School of City & Regional Planning, Cardiff University.

Further details available from: [www.cplan.cf.ac.uk/events/](http://www.cplan.cf.ac.uk/events/)

## RSAW Spring School

Friday 20th May 2011

Location: Venue Cymru, Llandudno

This year's RSAW north Wales Spring School Conference will consider: Planning Ahead: Joined up thinking in architecture and planning.

Further details available from: [www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com)

## Green Jobs for Wales. Achieving the aspiration

2nd June 2011

Location: Cardiff University

Achieving a different model of production which recognises environmental concerns as well as providing stable and meaningful employment poses major challenges in the current economic climate. The New Economic Foundation has proposed radical solutions, yet to see government take up. Could these have an impact in Wales? Part of a joint seminar series between CREW and Wiserd.

Further details available from: [www.regenwales.org](http://www.regenwales.org)

## Wales Planning Conference: New Beginnings?

Tuesday 7th June 2011

Location: City Hall, Cardiff

Following the Assembly elections in May the Conference will look to the future for planning in Wales.

Further details on the back page and: [www.rtpi.org.uk/rtpi\\_cymru](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/rtpi_cymru)

## 2011 Planning Convention: Planning in the Big Society?

14th & 15th June 2011

Location: Grand Connaught Rooms, London

The RTPI's annual Convention in London will this year discuss planning in the Big Society.

Further details available from: [www.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.rtpi.org.uk)

## Do you receive a monthly bulletin by e-mail from RTPI Cymru?

If you don't it probably means that we don't have your up to date e-mail address, or you haven't registered with us. You might be surprised to know that only half of our members have given us their address to keep in contact with them.

Please e-mail [wales@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:wales@rtpi.org.uk) with your current e-mail address and we will be able to keep you in touch with up to date information.

We do not pass your details on to anyone else and we are selective about the e-mails we send to you.

## Planning Summer School 2011 – Planning with Communities

The Planning Summer School has provided a unique learning opportunity for almost 80 years giving elected members and planners a chance to increase their knowledge and understanding of current and emerging policy and best practice with fellow practitioners. As a charity the Summer School aims to advance education in planning and offers assisted places, travelling scholarships and opportunities for planners from overseas to share their experiences and learn from the UK.

This year the Planning Summer School returns

to one of our most popular venues at Swansea University. In response to your feedback there is a new, faster paced and concentrated programme for 2011 which means less time spent away from work but which still provides up to 20 hours of CPD. The Big Debate returns as well as speed briefing, mobile workshops, an excellent mix of papers and ample opportunities for discussion and networking. New for 2011 is a joint 'Planning Summit' for planning practitioners and elected members which is also available as a day ticket.

Given the challenges, uncertainties and opportunities

being posed by the emerging localism agenda there has never been a better time to attend the Summer School. For more information on all aspects of our work including our charitable aims, booking information, and the latest details on the Swansea 2011 programme and speakers go to [www.planningsummerschool.org](http://www.planningsummerschool.org) and follow the links. You can also keep up-to-date on Twitter and join our Facebook page.

## RTPI Member Awarded OBE



Above: Nic Wheeler

The former Chief Executive of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, Nic Wheeler, has been awarded an OBE for services to the environment, after 35 years at the helm.

Nic continues to be an active RTPI member and is a member of RTPI's Water and Marine Spatial Planning Interest Group.

Congratulations to Nic!

Take a peek at the Planning Summer School Web site for an opportunity to win the PSS Travelling Scholarship in 2011 - £1,000 to travel and a paid for place at PSS in Swansea.

The scholarship has been established with £1,000 available to assist with the costs of international travel to study a planning issue of personal choice. Additional money (up to £1,000) is available to cover the reasonable costs of attendance at Planning Summer School – in Swansea in 2011 - where the winners will present their findings in an informal evening session.

For more information see: [www.planningsummerschool.org.uk](http://www.planningsummerschool.org.uk)

## Planning Summer School 2011 Join us at Swansea University

...in September for the Planning Summer Schools. The Schools enable elected members and planning practitioners to:

**Empower** decision making  
**Learn** from expert speakers and fellow practitioners  
**Understand** the opportunities and impacts of development  
**Expand** skills and enhance performance

As well as providing a unique opportunity to increase your knowledge of current and emerging best practice the Schools offer exceptional value for money with the potential to earn 20 hours of CPD.

Our new programme for 2011 includes:

**Elected Members School:** 3rd - 5th September

**Planners School:** 5th - 7th September

**Planning Summit for Elected Members and Planners:**  
- 5th September. Available as a day ticket

Add [www.planningsummerschool.org](http://www.planningsummerschool.org) to 'favourites' for the:

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# All eyes on Wales

As Newport proved it had what it takes to host the infamous Ryder Cup, the UK's media had planning enforcement on its mind, as Mair Coombes Davies reports

Question:

What have:

- The Ryder Cup, golf's greatest tournament; which arrived in Wales in 2010;
- A giant sign billed as, 'the largest free standing sign in the world';
- Ireland's biggest bookmaker;

got in common?

Answer:

In the words of the Daily Mail: "Paddy Power loses with Ryder Cup stunt as court forces bookie to take down Hollywood-style sign at Celtic Manor".

## Planning Policy Wales

This is the story of the Ryder Cup emergency planning enforcement injunction, the case that made media headlines across the UK and left the professionalism of the Ryder Cup in jeopardy.

It is how the Welsh Assembly Government's latest Planning Policy Wales (Edition 3, July 2010) was - within two months of it coming into operation - put to the test in the full glare of the world's media, and the land use planning policy for Wales was decisively enforced in the High Court.

The policy states:

"An effective development

management process requires local planning authorities to be prepared to take enforcement action in appropriate circumstances. The decisive issue for the authority is whether the breach of planning control would unacceptably affect public amenity or the existing use of land and building materials meriting protection in the public interest... Enforcement action taken by an authority to prevent or remedy breaches of planning control needs to be effective and timely."

Technical Advice Note (Wales) 9 stresses the need to take immediate action where unacceptable, unauthorised development warrants it. A local planning authority, "should take vigorous enforcement action to remedy the breach urgently or prevent further serious harm to public amenity".

## The Cup

Over the course of three days, the world's leading golfers gather to take part in the only nation v nation tournament. The historic event is televised and watched by audiences across the globe, resulting in a multi-million pound marketing potential for sponsors.

Between Friday, 1 October 2010 and Sunday, 3 October 2010 the Ryder Cup was

to be played at the Celtic Manor Resort, Gwent. The Celtic Manor Resort is set in a beautiful, verdant valley, designated as a Special Landscape Area within Monmouthshire Unitary Development Plan. Along one side of the valley are the gently sloping fields of Llanhennock.

## The sign

The Irish bookmaker began to erect its giant promotional sign at Llanhennock working overnight on Monday 27 September 2010. The sign spelled out in bright, white letters 15 metres high and 82 metres long the name, 'Paddy Power'. It was in a very prominent location overlooking the 18th hole of the Ryder Cup golf course. It did not have advertisement consent.

Monmouthshire County Council, the local planning authority, immediately emailed the company secretary giving the company two days notice under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 section 225. The notice stated that unless the advertisement was removed the Council would take steps to remove the sign itself. The company prevaricated.

Paul Matthews, the chief executive of Monmouthshire County Council said: "This sign is illegal. Monmouthshire County Council has a duty to uphold planning law. We also have a wider duty to Wales. The Ryder Cup is an event of international importance that is showcasing Wales. This is why we have taken the strongest possible action."

## The Action

Action was fast and decisive. By lunch time on Tuesday 28th September, the local planning authority had sent urgent instructions to me via the clerks at Civitas Law chambers. I was instructed to act for the authority to obtain an emergency planning enforcement injunction under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 section



Above: Mair Coombes Davies

187B for the removal of the unauthorised advertisement structure and the prevention of its completion. Within a matter of two hours an application for an injunction was drafted, a statement setting out the background to events was written by the planning officer, the documents had been filed in court and the first of two ex parte hearings before the judge that afternoon had taken place. By the end of the day the local planning authority gave the Irish company and the landowner notice that the court had issued directions ordering the hearing of the application for noon the following day in the High Court, Cardiff.

## Emergency planning enforcement injunction

On Wednesday 29th September, shortly after 12 noon the Council and I appeared to renew the application that the court make an emergency planning enforcement injunction - that the giant lettering and its supporting scaffolding which made up the enormous 'Paddy Power', sign dominating the Ryder Cup golf course would be taken down immediately. Our statement maintained: "Signs such as this prominent sign should not intrude on the landscape. It is entirely inappropriate".

Needless to say the application was very hotly contested by



Above: The Paddy Power sign under construction

## So what is Planning Aid ?

*Elwyn Thomas attempts to define Planning Aid, and explains how things are playing out in Wales.*

the Irish company and its lawyers. The company stood to lose inestimable free publicity around the world when the televising of the Ryder Cup began on Friday. It would also have wasted what was rumoured to be the hundreds of thousands of pounds it had cost to erect the sign. It said imposing an injunction against the sign would be, 'severe and draconian'.

The court ruled that the sign breached planning laws. His Honour Judge Milwyn Jarman said, "I am satisfied it has been put up in an area of special landscape amenity and that the effect of such a large advertisement of 82 metres by 15 metres is harmful on the rural open character of the landscape surrounding it". The court granted the injunction against the company responsible for the illegal sign. It was ordered to dismantle the letters on the sign by noon the following day and the supporting structure within two days. The company was required to give and did give an undertaking not to erect any sign in the vicinity of the Ryder Cup golf and it was also ordered to pay the costs of Monmouthshire County Council.

### Success

By morning of 30th September, the sign had been dismantled under the ever watchful gaze of the planning enforcement officers. The 2010 Ryder Cup golf tournament in Wales was proudly described as one of the best if not the best tournament to have taken place either in America or the UK.

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[www.civitaslaw.com](http://www.civitaslaw.com)

### A simple definition

Planning Aid is similar to Legal Aid. Some form of assistance is necessary for both the legal and planning systems to cushion the impact of decisions on individuals and communities. The two systems have checks and balances to make outcomes fairer - legal representation and juries in law, public consultation and community involvement in planning, rights of appeal for both.

Planning and Legal Aid give non-specialists information, guidance and support so they can navigate through complex and unfamiliar territory. Impartial assistance is offered by professionals with the knowledge and experience needed to find solutions to procedural problems. Help is available to people who can't afford to pay the market rate for professional support.

But this is an over-simplification; in reality there is no standard definition of what Planning Aid is or how it should be done. Each member of the family of Planning Aid services in the United Kingdom (three independent charities covering Wales, Scotland and London, and an RTPI-managed service covering the rest of England) has developed slightly different priorities, approaches and ways of working. One common feature is a heavy reliance on networks of committed planning volunteers.

### Planning Aid in Wales

So how is Planning Aid in Wales defined and delivered? Planning Aid Wales has an ambitious vision: 'For all the people of Wales to be able to fully and effectively participate in a fair, transparent and responsive planning system'. To achieve it, we see four things as being needed: better public understanding; increased community capacity to engage; support for people who can't engage; and a more accessible, transparent system of regulation.

We all know that planning can



raise heckles and become fractious. So as a small, non-partisan charity operating in a highly charged arena, we have defined and developed ways of working which won't set us against planning authorities, communities or central government. Planning Aid Wales therefore defines its modus operandi as follows:

- We are independent, impartial and non-political. We don't have any particular axe to grind apart from seeking a fairer, more accessible and effective planning system.
- We ease tensions associated with planning applications. We don't take sides with applicants, planning authorities or aggrieved third parties. Our objective is to calm the fires, not to stoke them further.
- We encourage early engagement in development planning and policy making. Early engagement develops public understanding of the 'plan-led' principle (which is currently rather hazy) and the pivotal relationship between policies and decisions.
- We promote collaboration by working proactively with national and local government and a range of other partner agencies. There's a mountain to climb and we all need to be pulling together on the same rope.
- We address social exclusion by supporting groups such as gypsies and

travellers, disability access groups and communities in disadvantaged areas. Paradoxically, planning is an alien concept to those who could benefit most from it, so we use eligibility criteria to channel limited resources to where they are most needed.

- We enable our volunteers to share and develop their expertise. Volunteering with Planning Aid takes planners out to the professional planning silo, builds empathy with local communities and helps to develop useful new skills.

When you next hear that Planning Aid is involved with a difficult planning application or working with a particular group to help them engage, please don't regard us as a potential thorn in your side. Instead, try to remember that Planning Aid Wales can only achieve its aims by maintaining impartiality, which means supporting and working with planning professionals as well as communities. We need your help and support just as much as communities (and perhaps your authority or consultancy?) need ours.

*Elwyn is Chief Executive at Planning Aid Wales.*

[www.planningaidwales.org.uk/](http://www.planningaidwales.org.uk/)

# Tŷ Unnos Affordable Homes in Dolwyddelan

Robin Sandham talks about a new scheme delivering affordable homes using home-grown timber.



## Using Welsh timber....

Wales has 150,000 hectares of coniferous plantations which produce around a million tonnes of softwood 'in the round' per annum. Over 70% of current production is Sitka spruce, a native of the Pacific coast of North America which suits Wales' mild, wet climate and peaty upland soils. At present all of the modern timber frame manufacturers in Wales (and the UK) use imported softwoods because of the greater stability and superior strength of slower grown softwood from cooler and drier climates.

In its native range, Sitka spruce grows slowly to a great age. Welsh spruce grows much faster producing timber of lower density with heavier branching and larger knots. It is processed for a number of markets including fencing, woodfuel, chipboard and pallets but the most important commodity produced is carcassing timber.

Structural timber is graded into different strength classes, which will dictate how the wood is used in construction. The strength of most softwood is graded between C14 and C50, although C16 and C24 are the two most commonly used. Welsh Sitka is machine graded to C16, the lowest strength class in general use. It is therefore unsuitable for many structural applications such as truss rafters which are normally imported. The poorer structural properties of Welsh Sitka often results in twisting during drying adding

another reason for timber frame manufacturers to seek alternative imported timber produce.

Innovative methods of timber construction are common in Scandinavia, where there is an abundance of high quality timber. There are numerous timber prefabricated construction systems available that utilise Scandinavian and Baltic softwoods. Most use prefabricated structural panels. The panels are mechanically manoeuvred and fixed together on-site to form a structural shell with insulation, services and exterior cladding applied to the external wall surfaces. These innovative timber systems are beginning to impact on the UK market due to increasing government drivers and cost benefit towards off site construction.

## Building affordable houses....

Countryside Council for Wales and Wood Knowledge Wales sponsored Coed Cymru, The Welsh School of Architecture and University of Wales Bangor to develop a system of high performance affordable housing based on the properties of home-grown timber. Although spruce is proposed, the system could use various grades and species of timber. The process is an adaptable manufacturing process ideal for intermediate labour market or small enterprise.

Oswestry-based modular offsite company Elements Europe Ltd have developed the Ty Unnos Modular system and have created a range of house layouts with 1-4 bedroom layouts in various configurations. The company's products are all internally completed within the factory with bathroom, kitchen, decoration and mechanical and electrical installation all completed to factory manufacture standards. Elements Europe Ltd and parent company J.R. Pickstock Ltd have recently completed four new affordable houses

on behalf of Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd Housing Association in the Snowdonia village of Dolwyddelan. A Housing Needs Survey was conducted following a presentation of the Rural Housing Enabler to Dolwyddelan Community Council in May 2006. The community council was keen to conduct a survey to establish the need for affordable housing for local people in the Community Council area. The survey revealed there was a need and provided sufficient information to assess the requirements for affordable housing in the Dolwyddelan Community Council area.

Forestry Commission Wales released land which it previously managed on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government, which allowed Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd to work in partnership with: Dolwyddelan Community Council, Conwy County Borough Council, Conwy and Denbighshire's Rural Housing Enabler, Snowdonia National Park Authority, Coed Cymru, the Welsh Assembly Government as well as local residents and main contractor J.R. Pitstock Ltd.

The innovative construction methods combined with a solar heat capture to heat water allowed these new dwellings to achieve level 4 energy rating of the Code for Sustainable Homes. The layout is compliant with various Registered Social Landlord spatial requirements, Welsh Assembly Government, Homes and Communities Agency and Lifetime Homes standards.

Yes the properties were practically built 'overnight' true to the form of the Ty Unnos tradition, but to be accurate it took around four hours for each pair to be sited and fixed. There were, however, around six weeks of programmed works following installation to complete the external works and reaching practical completion. A deadline that was delayed due to the adverse weather conditions

experienced between Christmas and New Year. This must not detract from the considerable shortened time spent 'on-site' compared to conventional construction sites, the reduced levels of disruption to people who live in the surrounding areas and the overall cost saving. Elements Europe Ltd has also produced a short film capturing the whole process of the development which will soon be made available on its website.

The properties are offered on a tenure neutral basis which means that each occupant can rent or purchase through the Homebuy Scheme. The Community Council has ensured that housing is provided for local people only, in line with the Welsh Assembly Government's policy.

This concept can be applied to address the need for affordable housing throughout rural Wales, offering alternative opportunities and choices for rural people unable to commit to self-build or those looking for quicker solutions. The method also allows for a choice of cladding of the sub-structure, which can be easily changed to meet the local requirements of the planning and conservation officers in different regions.

Investing sustainable resources in the community strengthens the village and confirms the Welsh Assembly's One Wales vision. It is a success story due to the partnership work of all organisations involved.

*Further information: Coed Cymru: [www.coedcymru.org.uk](http://www.coedcymru.org.uk), Elements Europe [www.elements-europe.com](http://www.elements-europe.com), Timber grades: [www.trada.co.uk](http://www.trada.co.uk).*

*Robin is Senior Planning Officer at Conwy County Borough Council, Tel: 01492 575181.*

# Annual Dinner 2010



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## Wales Planning Conference 2011 New Beginnings?

**Tuesday 7th June 2011 Cardiff City Hall**

This year's Wales Planning Conference comes just a month after the National Assembly for Wales' elections. There will be a new Minister responsible for planning, whatever the result of the election, and there will also be a new Director for the Planning Inspectorate in Wales. As the passage of the Localism Bill is likely to be nearing completion, PINS is also likely to be looking to incorporate the new Major Infrastructure Unit. So there are lots of changes afoot for Wales. But does this mean new beginnings in planning policy and practice in Wales?

Does Wales need a new direction? Can we afford to change direction? Or do we need to plough on and build on the current progress, with adopted LDPs starting to emerge. How can we make public and private resources stretch to meet Wales' needs? The Conference will explore these questions, as well as looking at the latest good practice in the topic based seminars.

The Wales Planning Conference has now reached its 4th year and remains as strong as its first, despite the economic problems we all face. The conference brings together planners from all sectors and important stakeholders principally, but not exclusively, based in Wales. It is the single opportunity each year for those working in planning and associated professions to come together to discuss key planning issues for Wales.

**For further information on the programme, exhibition opportunities and bookings:**

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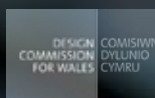


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