

Cynllunio

The Journal of RTPI Cymru

Spring 2025



Planning for the Environment

RTPI Cymru Contacts

Mark Hand

Director
Tel: 07725 798 383
e-mail:
mark.hand@rtpi.org.uk

Rhian Brimble

Policy Officer
Tel: 07973 785 122
e-mail:
rhian.brimble@rtpi.org.uk

Dorine Chantepie

Member Services Officer
e-mail:
dorine.chantepie@rtpi.org.uk

Georgina Nee

Planning Assistant
e-mail:
georgina.nee@rtpi.org.uk

RTPI Cymru
Studio 107, Creative Quarter,
Morgan Arcade
Cardiff
CF10 1AF
Tel: 020 7929 8181
wales@rtpi.org.uk

[RTPI Cymru LinkedIn](#)

For further information,
please visit:
www.rtpi.org.uk/wales

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

Editor:

RTPI Cymru

Potential articles and images
are welcome. The Editors
reserve the right to amend
articles as necessary.
Croesawn erthyglau yn y
Gymraeg.

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

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

Contents

3	RTPI Activities
5	A word from our RTPI Cymru Chair 2025
6	Time to embrace strategic planning (again)?
10	Planning for the Conservation and Enhancement of Dark Skies in Wales
12	Understanding the new TAN15
13	Walking the Talk: Turning Active Travel Policy into Practice
14	Delivering homes through planning reform: A collaborative roadmap
15	Awards for Planning Excellence
16	Wales Planning Conference 2025
17	RTPI Cymru Summer party
18	Digital Planning Course

Front Cover: Image by Roman Grac from Pixabay

Editorial

Welcome to the first edition of Cynllunio for 2025! We have great articles on dark skies (Gayle Lister of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and Siobhan Wiltshire of Welsh Government), TAN15 (George Baker of JBA Consulting), transit-oriented development (Allan Pitt of Arup), active travel (our very own Rhian Brimble) and an update on the housing delivery roundtable and Affordable Housing Taskforce.

This year marks RTPI Cymru's 25th birthday, and we've got lots of plans to celebrate throughout the year – but more of that in the next edition.

Speaking of birthdays, my first year at the RTPI has flown by and I've had the most fantastic time. Thank you to everyone who has been a part of it. I've made new, and strengthened existing, relationships with so many amazing people who are passionate about making the world a better place. After all, that's why we became planners. Despite having been involved with the RTPI as a volunteer in the past, I've learnt a huge amount in the last twelve months about the vast amount of work the RTPI does on behalf of our members to promote the planning profession. All via a small but brilliant team and a host of wonderful volunteers who sit on committees, policy fora, judging panels, speak at events or webinars, write articles or sponsor events. The RTPI really does punch above its weight.

I've met several planning teams throughout the year including 12 consultancies, six Councils, PEDW and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water as well as colleagues in sister built environment professions. Thank you so much to everyone who has given up their time to meet me. If your team would like a meeting, please get in touch.

We have some great events planned for the year, including our Summer Party at the Botanist on 25th June (sponsored by C2J Architects and Carney Sweeney), the Wales Planning Conference at the Leonardo Hotel on 26th June (sponsored by Savills and Francis Taylor Building with post-conference networking drinks sponsored by WSP)– book [here](#). You can now get regular updates on our activities from our new LinkedIn showcase page RTPI Cymru.

Mark Hand, Editor

RTPI Activities

Grangetown Primary school Careers Fair



In February RTPI Cymru took part in a careers fair event in Grange-town Primary school, Cardiff.

It was an excellent opportunity to engage with children on placemaking and planning as a career. We had students from Reception to Year 6 and tailored our activities accordingly, offering drawing sessions on the favourite thing where they live, and using lego bricks to build their ideal town. We also handed out copies of the RTPI comic Agent PlanIt to the older children, and hopefully inspired them to consider a future career in Planning!

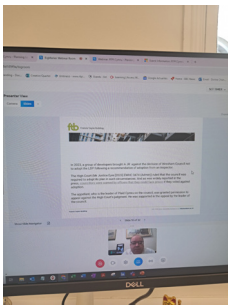
Planning for the Conservation and Enhancement of Dark Skies in Wales

RTPI Cymru attended the launch of the Good Practice Guidance: Planning for the Conservation and Enhancement of Dark Skies in Wales in Cardiff. We also had a stand at the event.

Developed collaboratively with a Dark Skies Working Group including representatives from NRW, National Park Authorities, Local Authorities, the guidance is aimed at those working within the planning system to ensure planning pollution is minimised- more info in our in depth article in this issue of Cynllunio page 10.



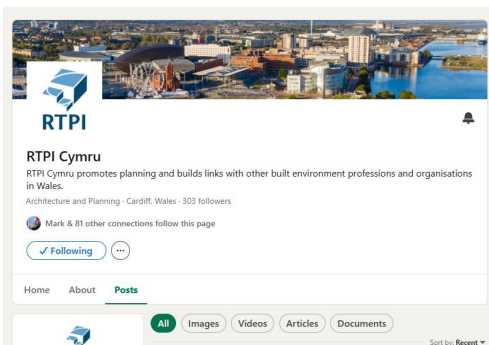
FTB Planning Law Update



FTB delivered their annual online Planning Law Update on 28th February (a day earlier than usual due to St David's Day falling on a Saturday). A big thank you to Gregory Jones KC, Andrew Fraser-Urquhart KC and Annabel Graham-Paul who covered Wrexham LDP, Renewables and updates on various cases.

As usual FTB will be present in the Wales Planning Conference on 26th June.

RTPI Cymru LinkedIn page launched



Want to keep up with the latest from RTPI Cymru? Follow our LinkedIn page!

Launched earlier this year this page replaces our X account which has now been deactivated.

With over 600 followers and regular updates the page has already received great feedback- follow [here](#).

RTPI Activities

Women of Influence 2025 revealed

The Planner published its annual Women of Influence list on 8th March, to coincide with International Women's Day.

A special Llongyfarchiadau to the women on the list representing Wales: Lindsay Christian MRTPI, Rebecca Evans MS, Dr Sarah Groves-Phillips MRTPI, Catrin Newbold MRTPI, Lucie Taylor MRTPI and Laura Williams MRTPI.



Techniquet World of Work event



RTPI Cymru took part in the final day of Techniquet's World Of Work event, a three day STEM careers event funded by the The Edina Trust — designed to inspire primary school children to pursue careers in STEM [science, technology, engineering, maths]. Rob Chichester and Allan Pitt, two members of the RTPI Cymru Executive Committee assisted us on the day. They answered children's questions on the best part of being a planner and the challenges of the role. A big thank you to both of them for helping us out.



Report from Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities Conference



Following on from the publication of the Empowering communities, strengthening the Welsh language report from the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities in the summer, and the RTPI Cymru North Wales Conference in October, RTPI Cymru held an



event to discuss the recommendations from the additional report from the Commission published in early 2025.

Delegates heard from Dr Simon Brooks, Chair of the Commission, Gwion Lewis KC from Landmark Chambers, and Owain Wyn before engaging in discussion workshops.

RTPI Cymru 25th Anniversary dinner

This year RTPI Cymru is 25 and we started the celebrations with a dinner thanking volunteers and key partners for their support over the last 25 years. Thank you to Savills who sponsored the event.

We're planning a very special edition of Cynllunio around our anniversary later on the year- keep an eye out!



A word from Aneurin Môn Parry, RTPI Cymru Chair 2025

This is a reprint of Aneurin Môn Parry's blog published on 26th February 2025 on the RTPI website. Aneurin is the RTPI Cymru Chair for 2025. He currently works for Gwynedd Council as a Planning Enforcement Team Leader.

I can't quite believe we're already almost at the end of February, and this is my first blog of the year! Actually, it's my first ever blog!



When I accepted the position of junior vice chair of RTPI Cymru, little did I realise what significance 2025 would be for us as a nation within the wider RTPI family. Jump forward almost two years later, and I find myself on a train heading south to RTPI HQ at Botolph Lane for an induction session with other incoming chairs and convenors from the nations and regions for the coming year. We were fortunate to hear from our President Helen Fadipe MBE about her themes for the year, and on the way home I found myself thinking of my own aims and goals. I reflected on Helen's themes of championing collaboration, investment and inclusivity for a resilient planning profession.

One of the aims I have for the year is increasing our membership numbers here in Wales, and I've already started talking with Mark, our Director, on ways we could go about this, including the possibility of potential members being able to apply for membership using Welsh language. We currently have approximately 1250 members here in Wales and I am eager to see this number increase in the future. I'm sure we are all aware of people out there who are more than eligible to be members of our wonderful organisation. We've also had initial discussion about our theme for this year's conference, and I also submitted observations to Rhian, our Policy Officer, in response to the consultation paper on the new regulations on preserving trees and woodlands.

In the next few weeks I will be chairing RTPI Cymru's Planning Law Update, which is being kindly delivered once again by Francis Taylor Building, and on 8 April I will also be attending a follow-up event to the RTPI Cymru North Wales Conference held in the autumn, which will focus on an additional report that has been published following last summers' Empowering communities, strengthening the Welsh language report by the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities. I would encourage you to attend.

Finally (for this blog at least), I would mention that although I've only been Chair for a few weeks, I've quickly realised just how much hard work Mark, Rhian, Dorine and Georgina put in organising conferences, consultation responses, the RTPI Cymru Awards, attending meetings and conference, and for this year at least, our 25th anniversary dinner. It really is impressive, and I'm certain this won't be the last time I mentioned them or the work they put to making RTPI Cymru what it is during my year.

RTPI Mentorship platform- call for mentees!

If you are looking for a mentor to help develop your career as a planner, you can now register as a mentee on the new RTPI mentoring programme.

It is open to all members, anywhere in the world through a bespoke platform. Once registered, mentees can browse mentor profiles on the platform and send a mentoring request.

Mentees benefit from clarity on career goals, learning from an experienced mentor's insights and guidance, and receiving tailored advice based on their unique circumstances.



Find out more: <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/membership/rtpi-mentoring/rtpis-career-development-mentoring-programme/learn-more-about-being-a-mentee/>

Time to embrace strategic planning (again)?

Identity crisis: am I a land use or transport planner? Does it matter?

My role at Arup involves overseeing town and transport planners working across Wales and England, helping bridge the two disciplines and focus on opportunities to achieve more sustainable outcomes through joined up ways of working. Arup is a multidisciplinary organisation dedicated to sustainable development and is renowned for its philosophy of 'Total Design' which emphasises the integration of all aspects of design and

engineering to create cohesive, innovative, and high-quality solutions. My role gives me insights into different perspectives, which when they come together, helps us achieve the outcomes we want around safe, inclusive and resilient communities, whilst prioritising conservation of natural resources, and seeking stable economic growth for the prosperity of all.



I started my career in the transport planning team in Cardiff, before moving across to town planning. I now work across both and as part of a wider collective of planning, design, and engineering specialisms. I have always enjoyed the sense of pride each discipline has for their specialism. In my own role, I enjoy the debate around which should come first when it comes to economic development and regeneration: land use planning, or transport planning.

Whilst different disciplines often interface at a local project level to help make a development acceptable, there is arguably an even greater impact to be had to make economic development sustainable at the strategic level. Some planners argue that land use planning should come first to set the strategic direction for growth and development, which transport infrastructure and services can then support. Others believe that transport planning should drive land use decisions around unlocking development through transport infrastructure and accessibility. The best outcomes are often achieved when both land use and transport planning are integrated and coordinated from the outset. This holistic approach helps ensure that transport services and infrastructure, land use and economic development are truly integrated, leading to more sustainable places.

An example of how this can be achieved is through transit-oriented development (TOD). TOD focuses on creating compact, walkable communities centred around high-quality public transport systems. TOD areas typically include a mix of residential, commercial, and recreational land uses within walking distance of stations, helping support placemaking and sustainability by locking-in demand for public transport and reducing the reliance on the car. A famous example of TOD at a regional scale, and as part of a strategic plan, includes Copenhagen's Finger Plan. Development is concentrated along the railway and metro lines that sprawl out from central Copenhagen and allocating housing alongside the public transport network has enabled a more sustainable form of suburban living in the Greater Copenhagen Area than is seen in many urban areas across the world. A key aspect of the Five Finger Plan is that it is not just allocating housing, but also industrial, work, health, and education centres.

A planner's shared passion for sustainable development and placemaking

Most of us involved in development are all working towards a common cause: creating high-quality, distinctive, and vibrant places where people want to live, work, and visit. This approach is central to achieving sustainable development. This is the focus of good placemaking, which is a thread through our national strategies and policies, filtering down to our local plans.

In Wales we have even tried to legislate ways of working to ensure sustainable development through the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Transposed into land use planning, Planning Policy Wales aims to ensure that the planning system contributes to all aspects of well-being and emphasises a placemaking approach. The Wales Transport Strategy then provides the framework for transport planning, and sets out the strategic priorities for a safe, integrated, sustainable and efficient transport system serving Wales. Its sustainable transport hierarchy supports a modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport, and reflects Planning Policy Wales and Future Wales by putting placemaking at the heart of the planning system. The Welsh

Government's Economic Mission emphasises long-term planning, sustainability, and inclusivity, helping ensure that economic growth benefits all communities and future generations.

Whilst the policy framework in Wales is admirable in terms of its objectives, many of us would agree we need to do more to see the policy intent and ambitions for placemaking play out in practice. An RTPI study looked at more than 1.6m homes given planning permission in England from 2012 to 2021, finding that while major housing developments are supposed to be designed around transport infrastructure, this has not happened. There is often a gap between what we set out to achieve and what we end up seeing delivered. I recently led the technical work for the Place-based Development Advisory Group, which explored this in Wales.

Working together for a place-based approach

Published in October 2024, Councillors Anthony Hunt and Llinos Medi (now MP), supported by the Welsh Government, Design Commission for Wales, Transport for Wales, and Arup, released a report outlining strategic recommendations for place-based development in Wales. It makes three key recommendations supported by nine actions, which focus on improved ways of working for aligning economic development with land use and transport. They seek to break down siloed working through integrated teams and improve public engagement in regional planning. They emphasise developing a co-created skills plan (across sectors and disciplines), updating transport policies (including Technical Advice Note 18, 2007), and creating accessible resources for sharing best practice. The recommendations also seek to facilitate better sharing of data to inform policy, aligning national and regional plans, preparing regional estate strategies, and developing a strategic funding strategy to support regional autonomy and embed placemaking principles.

The report acknowledges several challenges, including resource constraints, skills shortages, and the need for better integration across sectors. Local government cuts have impacted planning services, reducing their capacity to focus on strategic developments and sustainable transport. The recommendations emphasise the importance of collaboration between public bodies, private sector partners, and communities, to achieve shared goals and make the most of existing levels of resource, which remain under pressure. The Welsh Government response to the report sets out:

"The Welsh Government [has] provided for Corporate Joint Committees to allow existing regional collaborations to evolve and make use of the additional tools that the structure of a corporate body offers. Aligning economic development, transport and land use planning in the CJC provides the opportunity for councils to pool resources and consider and capitalise on the interdependencies between these functions. It enables our councils to demonstrate yet again how they can work together to deliver better outcomes across their regions...We will work collaboratively across Welsh Government, Corporate Joint Committees and Business Wales by taking advantage of place-based approaches on a regional footprint. This is certainly true where regional transport plans and economic wellbeing duties of CJCs can be drawn together to help shape local and regional priorities. These should aim to boost job creation, business investment, and business development in specific places."

The Welsh Government sees an opportunity for regional governance, collaboration and strategic planning to help bridge the gap between national policies and local delivery.

What are CJCs?

Not everyone has heard of a CJC, despite their growing influence and potential. Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) were established by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and are designed to facilitate regional collaboration among local authorities, focusing on strategic planning and regional development. They are responsible for preparing their emerging Strategic Development Plans and Regional Transport Plans alongside satisfying an economic well-being duty.

Regional planning in Wales isn't something new, for example Strategic Planning Guidance for South East Wales was published in 2001, whilst Joint Transport Plans for South West Wales and North Wales both date back to 2015. Whilst some appear sceptical about the opportunity to return to regional plans, the difference this time is that rather than being based on having a common approach to issues which cross authority boundaries, CJCs have statutory responsibilities and duties, can directly employ staff, own assets, and hold budgets.

The Welsh Government also intends to devolve funding of transport projects to the CJsCs via their Regional Transport Delivery Plans. These powers give regional planning and delivery weight and influence, and a reason for local authorities to embrace their involvement.

Whilst I have observed grumbles about Wales introducing a third tier of governance and plan making to a population the size of Greater Manchester, the creation of CJsCs appear to be the most palatable option to facilitate cross-border collaboration when considering the alternatives such as more radical local authority reform and amalgamation to reduce administrative costs and improve the strategic capacity of councils.

What can regional planning and governance do for us?

Regional planning seeks to recognise that our lives are not limited to geographical boundaries, and provides an opportunity to resolve local frustrations such as funding for bus services that won't cross boundaries because of their source of funding being limited to one local authority area. A considerable proportion of trips in North Wales are cross-border to the Liverpool City region, and the Western Gateway serves the pan-regional partnership between South Wales and Western England recognising the opportunities for collaborative economic investment and development. Balancing economic development across different areas can help to address socio-economic disparities and ensure equitable growth, which requires spatial and strategic planning at a regional and cross-boundary scale. Users of public transport services don't care much for governance and funding limitations, they just want a service that is easy to use, affordable and connects the places they want to go.

The Welsh Government is working on refining its approach to regional development, focusing on better resource allocation and addressing local needs through a regional lens. For example, the Welsh Government is progressing its plans for a grant modernisation process, which seeks to bring together several local transport grants, aligning these funding streams with the Regional Transport Plans. This aims to provide CJsCs with greater decision-making capability in how local transport grant funding is spent. By allocating funding to regional transport, this will also help to reduce the administrative burden on our local authorities, who currently have to compete with each other for funding and manage multiple funding applications and monitoring processes. It will also unlock local constraints, allowing for cross-authority services to be more easily funded.

Addressing issues such as climate change and adaptation requires a combined effort across national, regional and local government and partners. Regional planning could help better coordinate policies and actions to achieve national targets for modal shift and decarbonisation, with local authorities working together to consider their different and cumulative contributions and impacts across urban and rural areas.

Looking into the future, there appears to be a significant opportunity to better coordinate resources at a regional scale, which would more efficiently manage people and funding. For example, pooling expertise and knowledge sharing at a regional level to distribute tasks at a local or sub regional scale would help achieve many of the opportunities the Place-based Development Advisory Group identified in their work.

Rather than council planners and other specialists being bound to their local authority area and workload, I'd like to see more opportunities for cross-border collaboration, skills and resource sharing. Why not organise six county ecologists (or any other local authority expert) in North Wales in a way that they work together, share ideas and best practice, allocate work across the region based on local and regional priorities, rather than see a project in one of the six local authority areas get held up because of a lack of availability. There are pockets of good practice for collaboration found across Wales but this regional coordination could offer greater resilience, learning opportunities and address some the resourcing issues that face the industry, as highlighted so well in the Building Capacity through Collaboration and Change work of the RTPI Cymru, led by Neil Harris of Cardiff University.

The Planning and Infrastructure Bill was introduced earlier this month across the Welsh border in England, reinstating strategic planning. It mandates that spatial development strategies (SDS) be created by Strategic Planning Authorities (SPA). SDS must identify strategic infrastructure, describe the amount and distribution of housing, consider climate change adaptation and mitigation, and address health issues, inequalities, and nature recovery. The Bill emphasises a focus on delivery, requiring the SPAs to develop SDS timetables, set out consultation programmes, conduct examinations and monitoring. My colleague Katya Fox has recently posted

her insights [here](#). This approach draws some similarities with CJC's and the role of Strategic Development Plans in Wales.

What could this mean for development and developers?

Developers and their investors, whether public, private or third sector, want confidence and a clear pathway to development. Strategic planning and regional coordination have the potential to help unlock local issues and shift priorities to a regional level, with Regional Transport Plans and Strategic Development Plans being progressed to make it clear what those priorities are, and where the public sector funding will be focused. The CJC's also offer an opportunity to pool or coordinate the skills needed to unlock development and support the making and delivery of policy.

The opportunities may initially be greatest for North Wales and Southeast Wales where Ambition North Wales and Cardiff Capital Region are more mature bodies experienced in delivering their respective Growth Deals, who will transfer the functions of their CJC's. Mid and Southwest Wales CJC's are operating more of a local authority led model, building on their existing legacies of collaborative working, where it will be interesting to monitor how they may evolve. Whilst in England there is a political buzz around Development Corporations, in Wales all the four CJC's offer an exciting opportunity to operate as a different type of delivery model, facilitating collaborative decision-making across boundaries. This regional focus on local delivery could help give developers and investors greater confidence, complementing the existing tools and mechanisms for growth, such as the Freeport Programme, Investment Zone and Enterprise Zone designations.

Turning back to transport and land use planning, with a lens on delivery, in Wales we have a once in a generation opportunity to maximise the value and legacy investment in the Metro programme, with new or improved stations offering new opportunities for sustainable and TOD development. Mark Barry has been vocal about that opportunity and Transport for Wales has recently commissioned Arup to advise on development corporation and delivery model design. In my opinion, the key will be Transport for Wales working closely with CJC's as regional authorities focused on delivering economic development, who will work with their local authorities responsible for local scheme delivery, and strategic economic partners, to maximise those project opportunities in a joined-up way.

Earlier this year, the UK Government in a major new growth push, set out that the government will ensure that when developers submit an application for acceptable types of schemes in key areas – such as in high potential locations near commuter transport hubs - that the default answer to development is 'yes'. This sets out a clear message that there will be a presumption in favour of TOD. The government claims these measures will transform communities, with more shops and homes nearer to the transport hubs that working people rely on day in day out. It cites an example of working with Greater Manchester to release growth-generating land around transport hubs through local development orders, such as around Castleton Station, with the potential for this innovative use of existing powers to kickstart building in these sites to be a blueprint for the rest of the country so that every corner of the UK benefits from growth.

Whilst many planning officers may argue there are already a number of planning tools that councils can use to facilitate development around public transport interchanges, developers will no doubt be monitoring the clear intent from government to show support for such schemes, helping them make decisions about where to invest.

Conclusion

Much like the success of the Well-being Act, the success of CJC's and the opportunities for regional planning will rely on strong leadership, collaboration, long term thinking, and doing things differently. All of us planners and our collaborators all have a part to play in delivering the outcomes we want to see. This will need us to better work together towards a common cause and vision, with shared values.

One of the Arup values that I often come back to is humanitarianism, and that we should always aim to produce socially useful work or act in ways that benefit the communities touched by our work. And so, I will conclude this piece with a quote, going full circle to Sir Ove Arup:

“Humanitarianism implies a social conscience, a wish to do socially useful work, and to join hands with others fighting for the same values.” Sir Ove Arup, The Key Speech

Allan Pitt is a Planner at Arup and a Member of RTPI Executive Committee.

Planning for the Conservation and Enhancement of Dark Skies in Wales

The Welsh Government published national good practice planning guidance in February 2025 aimed at protecting dark skies across Wales. The “Good Practice Guidance: Planning for the Conservation and Enhancement of Dark Skies” will help to ensure the well-being of people while enabling wildlife to thrive in Wales for generations to come. Endorsed by the CEO and Executive Director of DarkSky International, this guidance is designed to assist all involved in planning decisions, including developers and local authorities, to focus on the right light at the right time in the right place. By addressing light pollution and promoting dark sky-friendly practices, future generations will continue to enjoy the wonder of the natural night sky.

Avoiding light pollution, which wastes money, energy, and carbon, also benefits Wales’ cultural heritage and its tourism offer. Wales is renowned for having the highest percentage of protected dark skies in the world. From Bannau Brycheiniog to Eryri, Wales boasts internationally recognised Dark Sky Reserves where visitors can see up to 2,000 stars at a time, compared to less than 100 in most urban areas. Parts of Wales have also earned prestigious designations as a Dark Sky Park, Dark Sky Sanctuary, and Dark Sky Community, yet there is much more to be done to get lighting at night right in communities where people live, and for nature.

The document is a result of collaborative efforts by a Dark Skies Working Group, which includes representatives from Natural Resources Wales, Eryri National Park Authority, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, Conwy County Borough Council, Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape, Ynys Môn National Landscape, and the Welsh Government. It was launched at an event to mark the beginning of Dark Skies Week in Wales by Rebecca Evans, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning.

Rebecca Evans emphasised the importance of preserving the night sky for future generations, stating “the night sky is one of Wales’ most precious natural treasures, connecting us to countless generations who gazed at the same stars above Wales”. The Cabinet Secretary highlighted the fundamental role of the planning system in protecting celestial heritage, not just for stargazers, but for the countless species that depend on natural darkness for their survival. She also expressed pride in Wales leading the way by launching the Planning Good Practice Guidance, which will help advocate for and protect dark skies in Wales.

Light pollution is caused by artificial light at night in areas where it is not wanted, is excessive or inappropriate to context. Although awareness of the opportunities of a night sky and of light pollution and its effects are becoming more apparent, light pollution remains a problem across much of Wales.

The guidance outlines key lighting principles and recommendations for planners, developers, and stakeholders that will secure the following outcomes:

- **Energy and carbon saving:** Install minimal lights, choose low-energy options, and use timers and sensors to reduce electricity use and carbon emissions.
- **Attractive and safe spaces:** Sensitive lighting enhances public spaces, improves safety, and increases nighttime usage of active travel routes.
- **Higher quality residential amenity, health and wellbeing:** Good lighting minimises sleep disruption, prevents light spill, and supports natural circadian rhythms.
- **Enjoyment of dark sky culture and heritage:** Eliminating skyglow supports astro tourism and protects dark sky designations.
- **Protecting biodiversity:** Sensitive lighting is essential for ecosystem resilience and it must address existing poor lighting, skyglow and the illumination of natural habitats, especially near designated sites.

The lighting principles are purposefully framed in straightforward and pragmatic terms and they are designed to deliver the above outcomes.

Lighting Principles

- Don't light unless it's necessary.
- Light only where needs to be lit, avoiding over-lighting and clutter.
- Light should be no brighter than necessary.
- Use warm colour temperatures 2,700K or lower.
- Use switch-off, dimming or passive infrared (PIR) sensor.
- Use a lower mounting height where possible.
- Limit internal lighting spilling outside target area.
- Keep light away from wildlife.

The Good Practice Guidance provides detailed practical advice for planners in plan-making and decision-taking and it has weight as a material planning consideration. It includes model policies and conditions, as well as a good practice case study section that highlights 'before' and 'after' examples of the implementation of the good lighting principles for different land uses.

The recommendations, lighting design principles, and advice set out in the guidance are applicable to the whole of Wales. They will lead to more sensitively designed and appropriate lighting schemes that deliver improved outcomes for the night sky, species and ecosystems across Wales.

The guidance can be viewed here - [Dark skies: planning guidance | GOV.WALES](#)

Siobhan Wiltshire works for the Welsh Government. Gayle Lister is a Principal Planning Officer at Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and a member of the RTPI Cymru Executive Committee. Both were part of the Dark Skies Working Group which helped develop the guidance.

RTPI Cymru will offer a webinar on this guidance in July- look out for updates on our LinkedIn page and in our regular e-bulletin.



Understanding the New TAN15: Development, flooding and coastal erosion

Introduction

The Welsh Government's recent release of the updated Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15 marks a significant milestone in flood risk management and development policy in Wales. This is the first update since 2004, reflecting a changing climate, advancing technologies, and the continued need for sustainable development practices. As planning professionals, it is essential for many developments to understand these new guidelines and how they will influence decision-making processes across Wales.

Key Changes in TAN15

The revised TAN15, released on 31 March 2025, comes with several notable updates and shifts in approach:

1. **Retirement of the Development Advice Map (DAM) :** The DAM has been retired and will shortly be removed from Natural Resources Wales (NRW)'s website. Instead, the new TAN15 will use the Flood Map for Planning (FMfP) for decision-making, supporting a more risk-based approach. Flood Zone 3 has the highest level of risk, Zone 2 a low level of risk, and Zone 1 little or no flood risk.
2. **Defended Zones :** The introduction of Defended Zones identifies areas protected by high-quality flood defences maintained by Risk Management Authorities (RMAs). A Defended Zone classification effectively overrides any Flood Zone classification.
3. **Vulnerability Classifications :** While largely unchanged, the new guidelines introduce the category of 'Water Compatible Development' for developments which are required to be located near water by virtue of their nature, and developments which are resilient to the effects of occasional flooding (inc. marinas, flood defences and open spaces).
4. **Justification Test Replacement :** The previously rigid Justification Test has transitioned into a more nuanced plan-led approach. This change aims to recognise the differences associated with level of flood risk, vulnerability classification, and nature of development. The shift away from a one-size-fits-all framework allows for more risk-based decision-making that can reflect the unique circumstances of each development location and community.
5. **Emphasis on Local Development Plans (LDPs) :** Greater flexibility is afforded to sites allocated within LDPs, particularly those supported by a Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment (SFCA). The SFCA is now essential for demonstrating how developments can be safely executed in some of the most challenging flood risk and development scenarios, where development is required to support key economic, social or environmental strategies. This approach is a step towards enhancing collaboration between local authorities and developers to achieve sustainable outcomes.
6. **Clarification on Form of Development :** The new TAN15 clearly differentiates between 'New Development' and 'Redevelopment', providing more leeway for redevelopment on Previously Developed Land. In contrast, Greenfield developments in flood risk areas are greatly discouraged. The new classification ensures that we preserve natural landscapes and existing habitats while promoting regeneration in urban spaces.
7. **Surface Water & Small Watercourse Flooding :** New requirements have been laid out for Flood Consequences Assessments (FCA) applicable to developments potentially impacted by surface water and small watercourses. The inconsistency in surface water risk mapping may pose challenges that need to be navigated carefully. Stakeholders will need to work closely with flood risk and drainage specialists to ensure that these assessments accurately and proportionately reflect the realities on the ground.
8. **Updated Acceptability Criteria :** A key change regarding the acceptability criteria involves the treatment of river flooding events. Developers must now factor in climate change impacts to the previously established extreme design event (0.1% Annual Exceedance Probability). This approach acknowledges the increasing risks posed by climate change. Tolerable conditions have also been tightened for Less Vulnerable Development.
9. **Call-in Referral :** Proposals for new Highly Vulnerable Developments on Greenfield land within Flood Zone 3 will require referral to the Welsh Government, ensuring that higher-level scrutiny is applied to developments so clearly contrary to the TAN.
10. **Transitional arrangements:** Planning applications submitted and registered before the TAN's release will be evaluated under the 2004 version of TAN15.

Navigating the Complexities of the New Guidelines

While the release of the new TAN15 has provided much-needed clarity on development and flood risk issues, it has also introduced many new complexities that planners and stakeholders must navigate. The Welsh Government's commitment to flexibility in the application of a risk-based approach, especially for redevelopment projects, is promising, yet it raises questions about how local authorities will implement these guidelines uniformly across various contexts.

As society faces increasing environmental challenges, it is essential that planners consider social, economic, and environmental factors holistically. By integrating flood risk management with broader community resilience strategies, we can create places that are not only safe but also vibrant and sustainable. Collaboration with diverse stakeholders, including community groups, regulators, and the private sector, will be crucial in this effort.

Moving forward, a robust understanding of TAN15 will be critical in fostering sustainable development practices whilst mitigating flood risks. Planners should remain proactive in engaging with these guidelines, ensuring that they are not just compliant but also contribute to the resilience of communities against the backdrop of climate change.

Conclusion

As we look to the future, the implications of TAN15 will reverberate across local planning strategies and development practices in Wales. The evolution of these guidelines represents both a challenge and an opportunity for planning professionals. By embracing the changes and utilising them to enhance flood resilience, we can take significant steps towards securing a sustainable future for our communities.

Ultimately, the success of TAN15 will hinge on continuous dialogue between the Welsh Government, local authorities, and practitioners. As we implement these guidelines, ongoing education, training and practical guidance will be vital in ensuring that all parties are equipped to make consistent, informed decisions that prioritise flood risk management alongside economic and social imperatives.

George Baker is an Associate Director at JBA Consulting

Walking the Talk: Turning Active Travel Policy into Practice

RTPI Cymru welcomed the Senedd's recent consultation on Active Travel in Wales. Many of the towns, cities and neighbourhoods most noted for the quality of their built environment are those where people can get around easily on foot, wheeling or by bicycle (including wheelchair users/mobility scooters). Active Travel is a key component of 'liveable' communities. The prevalence of motorised transport presents a continuing challenge to planners and other built environment professionals seeking to create the attractive, healthy, vibrant and sustainable places which many people aspire to live in.

In our response to the Senedd Committee, we recognised the clarity provided by [Llwybr Newydd: the Wales Transport Strategy \(2021\)](#) and the ambition of aligning land use and transport planning at a regional level via emerging Regional Transport Plans and Strategic Development Plans, and at a local level, alignment of Active Travel Network Maps and Local Development Plans. RTPI Cymru have long called for the links between policy areas including planning, flooding, transport and connectivity, and energy if we are to adapt to climate change and we continue to highlight the opportunity for more joined up working to improve integration between transport, land use and economic development, etc.

The progress made by the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 needs to be considered in context. Implementation of the Act came at a time when Local Authorities, Welsh Government and other key stakeholders faced unprecedented pressures on budgets and capacity due to the pandemic and public sector resourcing, as a result, time and support are required to deliver Active Travel ambitions on the ground. We remain concerned regarding capacity and resources in the system to delivery Active Travel ambitions. Key actions should be



prioritised to support delivery, including training and development for practitioners, sharing best practice, support with monitoring, improving linkage between policy and programmes, and support with promotion and messaging.

The RTPI (2021) report, '[Overcoming Barriers to Net Zero](#)' noted, "behavioural attachment to cars, and the idea that streets and roads are primarily for the movement and storage of vehicles, is perhaps the most intractable barrier to delivering place-based solutions to decarbonisation." Behaviour change is currently under-funded and under-recognised and yet forms a significant part of the requirements of delivering Active Travel. Much more emphasis is needed on behavioural change.

While the principle aims of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 are welcome and align well with the wider placemaking agenda, there are limitations in relation to rural areas. The requirement for the designation of Active Travel towns means smaller rural settlements do not meet the threshold despite being sizeable service centres (in a rural context) to their communities. These settlements are unfortunately excluded from Active Travel improvements. The swell of tourism to coastal areas also means settlements that could benefit on a seasonal basis are often excluded. The issue is further compounded by poor rural bus provision. As a result, it is difficult to promote a modal shift to the public when many rural areas are not accessible via public transport.

Delivering Active Travel requires a concentrated effort and the collective commitment of multiple organisations and professionals across the public, private and voluntary sectors. We look forward to hearing from the Senedd's Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee with their response to this important consultation.

Rhian Brimble is the Policy Officer at RTPI Cymru.

Delivering homes through planning reform: A collaborative roadmap

Although the primary theme of this edition of Cynllunio is environmental, it's timely to update readers on recent discussions about housing delivery.

Housing Roundtable

Hugh James Solicitors kindly hosted a roundtable event on 14 February 2025. This collaborative event brought together key stakeholders in the delivery of new homes - including RTPI members from Local Planning Authorities and planning consultancies, and representatives from affordable housing providers and private developers, as well as the RTPI, Home Builders Federation, Cardiff University and the Welsh Local Government Association.

The roundtable arose in part from delegate discussions at the June 2024 RTPI Cymru Wales Planning Conference, and in part from collaborative discussions with Mark Harris at the HBF and Emma Poole at Hugh James Solicitors. The Housing Delivery Roundtable was hosted by Alex Madden of Hugh James and chaired by Nick Bennett of Savills.



Credit: Matthew Horwood

There was considerable consensus from attendees, and a genuine focus on solutions. The roundtable's recommendations can be read here: [Delivering homes through planning reform: A collaborative roadmap](#).

The report has been shared with the Affordable Housing Taskforce led by Lee Waters MS. We hope to arrange similar roundtable events on other planning-related topics in the near future.

Affordable Housing Taskforce

The Affordable Housing Taskforce, chaired by Lee Waters MS, has met on a weekly basis since November 2024 and includes representatives from the planning sector, elected members, Design Commission for Wales, RSLs and developers with additional guests invited on key matters, and advice from Welsh Government officials.

The Taskforce's remit has been to explore solutions to the barriers to delivering targets of 20,000 affordable low-carbon homes for rent.

The work has comprised two complementary strands:

Strand 1: Short-Term Challenges. How can we unblock sites that are at risk of delay (whether that's planning, funding, land availability, procurement or other permissions) and explore opportunities to utilise viable public sector sites for 'meanwhile' use.

Strand 2: Making system changes. Informed by the issues identified above, the Delivery Group has drafted recommendations for practical change to streamline the delivery of more homes for social rent. This has included thinking about skills and resources and the pipeline of land and permissions.

The final draft of the Taskforce's recommendations are being agreed this week before being reported back to the relevant Cabinet Secretaries.

It has been an intense bit of work but a great opportunity to work with stakeholders throughout the industry to identify solutions, many of which will hopefully benefit the delivery of all homes not just the 20,000 affordable low carbon homes for rent.

Mark Hand is the Director for RTPI Cymru, RTPI NI and Planning Aid England.

Awards for Research Excellence

Get your entry in for the 2025 RTPI Awards for Research Excellence, which recognise and promote high quality, impactful spatial planning research.

This year the RTPI has renamed two categories in honour of distinguished academics who passed away in 2024:

- Tony Crook Award for Early Career Research
- Patsy Healey Award for Academic Excellence

The awards ceremony will take place during the UK-Ireland Planning Research Conference at Ulster University on Wednesday 10 September 2025.

Learn more: www.rtpi.org.uk/researchawards

Entries close on 18 May.



Wales Planning Conference



RTPI Cymru

Wales Planning Conference

Cynhadledd Cynllunio
Cymru

Planning for the Future – What do the next 25 years look like?

Thursday 26th June 2025, Leonardo Hotel, Cardiff

The Wales Planning Conference is Wales' primary annual Conference to discuss all issues related to planning. The 2024 Conference looked at how planning can contribute to a resilient and sustainable future through decarbonisation.

This year to coincide with our 25th anniversary we are looking ahead at what do the next 25 years look like for Planning.

Speakers already confirmed include Cardiff University, WSP, Public Health Wales, Savills, Lichfields, Woodlands Trust and Young Planners Cyru. There will also be a keynote speech from Rebecca Evans MS.

The Conference will feature presentations, Q&A panels as well as workshops, and will use Menti throughout the day for a fully interactive experience. You will also have plenty of opportunities to network with colleagues from all over Wales.

4 for 3 spaces offer now available (cheapest place free)

We have a minimum invoice limit of £199+VAT – if your bundles is over this amount please contact wales@rtpi.org.uk and we can book your places and arrange for an invoice to be sent to you.

If your bundle does not reach the invoice threshold, but you would still like to take up the 4 for 3 offer – please book the three places and then contact us with the details of the fourth place (remember this must be the cheapest priced ticket) and we will book them on manually.

The Conference is sponsored by Savills and FTB. We will hold a post conference networking event with drinks sponsored by WSP.



Francis Taylor Building



RTPI Cymru
Royal Town Planning Institute
Sefydliad Cynllunio Trefol Brenhinol

25th Anniversary
25ain Penblwydd

25



savills

RTPI Cymru Awards and Summer Party



The Summer Party is back!

Now in its fourth year and set the day before the Wales Planning Conference our Awards and Summer Party is the chance to celebrate planning, network and get together.

This year we will hold this event on 25th June, from 6.30pm in the top floor of The Botanist in Cardiff Central. We will announce RTPI Cymru Awards for Planning Excellence 2025 winners and recognise our newly Chartered Members. We will also celebrate our 25th anniversary with RTPI memorabilia on display, customised selfie frames and more.

Get your ticket [here](#). RTPI Members go for free but places are limited so booking is essential.

This event is sponsored by C2J and Carney Sweeney.



CARNEYSWEENEY
PLANNING



Digital Planning Course at Cardiff University



School of Geography
and Planning
Ysgol Daearyddiaeth
a Chynllunio



RTPI
Royal Town Planning Institute



Professional Development
Datblygiad Proffesiynol

Eich cyfle i fynd i'r afael â

CHYNLLUNIO DIGIDOL

Gweithdy DPP undydd ar gyfer gweithwyr proffesiynol ym
maes cynllunio cyhoeddus

10 Gorffennaf 2025 | £295

Ydych chi eisiau trawsnewid eich gwasanaethau cynllunio a pharatoi ar gyfer cyflwyno digidol? Ymunwch â ni ym Mhrifysgol Caerdydd ar 10 Gorffennaf i ddysgu gan arweinwyr yn y maes. Cynhelir y cwrs, a luniwyd ar gyfer gweithwyr proffesiynol ym maes cynllunio cyhoeddus, gan Brifysgol Caerdydd ar y cyd â Sefydliad Cynllunio Trefol Brenhinol (RTPI) Cymru a chaiff ei gydnabod yn DPP cenedlaethol craidd gan y Sefydliad. Mae'r cwrs yn cyfateb i tua 1.5 diwrnod o ddysgu, gan gynnwys un diwrnod o ddysgu wyneb yn wyneb.

Datblygwyd y cwrs hwn gan yr Athro Peter Madden OBE, Athro Ymarfer yn Ninasoedd y Dyfodol a Dr Ruth Potts, Darlithydd mewn Cynllunio Gofodol. Maent ill dau yn gwneud gwaith addysgu, ymchwil ac ymgysylltu blaengar yn y maes cynllunio digidol.

A bydd y siaradwyr gwadd yn cynnwys:

Nikki Webber

Arweinydd Tîm Cynllunio Digidol yng Nghorfforaeth Dinas Llundain

Mark Hand MRTPI

Cyfarwyddwr Sefydliad Cynllunio Trefol Brenhinol (RTPI) Cymru a Gogledd Iwerddon

Josh Hoare-Matthews

Cyfarwyddwr Cyswllt gyda Urban Intelligence

Joanna Goodwin

*Pennaeth Dylunio sy'n Canolbwyntio ar y Defnyddiwr
Canolfan Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus Digidol*

Cofrestrwch
yma!



cardiff.ac.uk/cy/professional-development
(Chwilio 'cyrsiau byr')

Get to grips with DIGITAL PLANNING

1 day CPD workshop for public planning professionals

10 July 2025 | £295

Want to transform your planning services and get ready for digital delivery? Join us at Cardiff University on 10 July to learn from leaders in the field. Designed for public planning professionals, the course is run by Cardiff University with RTPI Cymru and will be recognised as core national CPD by RTPI. The course is equivalent to approximately 1.5 days of learning, including the one day of in-person learning.

This course has been developed by **Professor Peter Madden OBE**, Professor of Practice in Future Cities and **Dr Ruth Potts**, Lecturer in Spatial Planning, who are doing cutting-edge teaching, research, and engagement work on digital planning.

The course will benefit from guest speakers including:

Nikki Webber

Digital Planning Team Lead at the City of London Corporation

Mark Hand MRTPI

RTPI Director of Wales and Northern Ireland

Josh Hoare-Matthews

Associate Director at Urban Intelligence

Joanna Goodwin

*Head of User Centred Design
Centre for Digital Public Services*

cardiff.ac.uk/professional-development
(Search 'short courses')

Book
now!



Next edition of Cynllunio- we need you!



RTPI Cymru
Royal Town Planning Institute
Sefydliad Cynllunio Trefol Brenhinol

25th Anniversary
25ain Penblwydd

25

We're preparing a very special edition of Cynllunio to celebrate our 25th anniversary- which includes celebrating our members and volunteers who made RTPI Cymru what it is today.

Do you have any pictures, memories you would like to share? Would you like to contribute to our anniversary edition?

Simply email wales@rtpi.org.uk with your suggestions. We can't wait to hear from you all.

RTPI Cymru upcoming events

- RTPI Cymru Awards and Summer Party 2025 Wednesday 25th June, The Botanist- Cardiff Central
- Wales Planning Conference Thursday 26th June, Leonardo Hotel Cardiff
- Dark Skies webinar, early July (date TBC), online
- Professor Tony Hall Lecture, 4th November, Cardiff
- North Wales Conference Thursday 16th October, location TBC
- Enforcement Conference Thursday 13th November, Mid Wales

The next edition of Cynllunio will be published in July.