

# Cynllunio

The Journal of RTPI Cymru

**Glan Llyn Eastern Sub-area Masterplan named  
2020 Wales Planning Award Winner**



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## Editor:

Roisin Willmott

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

The **copy deadlines** for the  
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## Contents

3	RTPI Cymru Manifesto Asks
4	PINS: Remote Meetings
6	Policy Updates
10	Wales Planning Awards for Excellence
12	Young Planners Cymru
13	Digital Engagement
14	Welsh Young Planner of the Year
16	Measuring What Matters
18	Delivering Quality Places

**Front Cover:** Glan Llyn, Newport

## Editorial

When I wrote the introduction to the Spring edition of Cynllunio in March, little did any of us know what lay ahead of us; there were hints but not to the extent of what rolled out. I hope that with the news of vaccines 2021 will bring good times for us all both as planners and in our personal lives.

What 2020 has shown us is that we can adapt. We all faced a huge challenge to reorientate our services to cope with the pandemic and keeping the show on the road. It was difficult at times and certainly not a smooth path.

If we can take a positive from the pandemic, it is that the understanding of the importance of place has been heightened and widened. We now have a window to showcase what planning can do and how it can help address the many issues we face in Wales. We have launched our Asks of the Parties standing for seats at the Senedd Cymru / Welsh Parliament and these are centred on Placemaking, Resourcing and the importance of long term decision making. A summary of these Asks is on page 3 of this edition.

This edition is of course our Awards special, with details of the Awards made in the RTPI Cymru Awards for Planning Excellence and Welsh Planner of the Year. Congratulations to all the Award recipients and all of the Finalists. Thank you to all the entrants and the judges for their time and effort. Awards are important because they offer projects and professionals to showcase and also to share good practice. RTPI Cymru Chair, Simon Power, stated that "all the Finalists make an important contribution to placemaking, in different ways and at different scales. They are highly deserving of the accolades given and provide practical expression to the principles set out in the Placemaking Wales Charter."

Policy and practice activity continues apace. Welsh Government and Senedd Cymru Committees keep a stream of consultations and inquiries coming. RTPI Cymru has responded to 22 consultations and inquiries to date in 2020.

In this edition we also report on the research project which has been undertaken to measure planning outcomes. This

is an important element of the work to demonstrate to non-planners the wider value that planning contributes.

Placemaking is an important part of our work and has been capturing wider adoption more recently. In this edition we have a thought piece from Robert Chapman on places and placemaking.

Young Planners Cymru have continued to be proactive during 2020 and we hear the reflections on the year from the steering group on page 12. There is also a write up on the Young Planners Conference in November.

Finally I would like to thank to Simon Power, RTPI Cymru Chair, and the Executive Committee for their support across the year and for adapting our services. Thank you to all of our speakers at our various events across the year and to Savills and FTB for their generous sponsorship of Welsh Planner Live.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all the best wishes for the season and a very happy, productive and sustainable 2021.

*Roisin Willmott, Editor*

# RTPI Cymru Publishes Manifesto Asks for 2021 Senedd Cymru Elections: Plan The Wales We Need

Elections for Senedd Cymru / Welsh Parliament are due to be held in May 2021, and RTPI Cymru is publishing its asks of the next Welsh Government.

The Asks set out that planning is central to life in Wales. There is a strong national planning policy framework and Wales also benefits from the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

There is increasing recognition that the planning system and Wales' sustainable development ambitions are intrinsically linked. Planning sets the context for the built environment, shaping the way people live, work and interact. Good planning can support ambitious economic, housing, health and environmental objectives; on the other hand, places that are not strategically planned may lack resources, infrastructure and economic opportunities.

The Asks are centred under three headlines - Long-term Decision Making for Future Generations, Placemaking and Resourcing, which are all underpinned by community engagement.

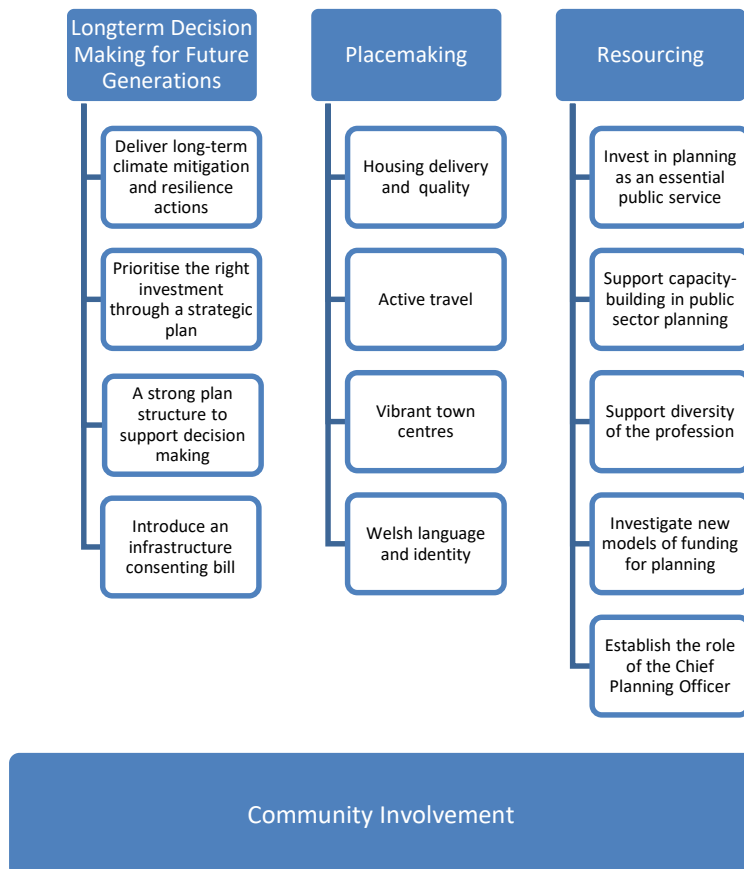
The Asks can be viewed in full on the RTPI's website: [www.rtpi.org.uk/wales](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/wales)

## Plan the Wales We Need

Wales' current and future generations face multiple place based and interrelated issues.



Planning services can be positioned to enable the solutions.





## Virtual Events



# The Planning Inspectorate Yr Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

In this article I will set out how we are preparing to run virtual Hearings and Inquiries. But before I do, I'd like to thank all of you who have worked hard in difficult and trying circumstances to keep the planning system going and to enable the Planning Inspectorate to continue to process all types of casework. Up to October we were processing 73% of HAS appeals in target, other planning appeals were running at 70% (up from 65%) and enforcement appeals at 83%.

All these figures relate to written representation cases. Since March 23rd we have been unable to conduct any Hearings or Inquiries. Those of you who keep one eye on the other side of Offa's Dyke will know that the English Planning Inspectorate has been conducting virtual events since the summer. Securing an acceptable solution to providing simultaneous translation for virtual events has meant we haven't been able to progress as quickly. However, the first virtual and blended events (a mix of face to face and virtual) are taking place in November and we plan to build up the number of events as we move through the winter.

The criteria for determining procedure has not changed and where a Hearing or Inquiry is needed Inspectors will decide which of the matters in dispute need to be scrutinised at an oral event. The purpose of a virtual Hearing or Inquiry will be no different from in person events (which we will return to once this is all over). A Hearing will continue to be a discussion led by the Inspector and there will still be cross examination at Inquiries but they will be conducted virtually.

The following is a brief outline of how events will be set up, full guidance is being prepared and will be on Gov.Wales soon and we'll tweet a link when its' ready. We will use Microsoft Teams to host events. I'm sure many of you will be have become familiar with Teams and similar products over the last few months but if you are not familiar with Teams our guidance note will direct you to where you can find out what you need.

The main parties will be informed of the procedure in the normal way. Interested persons will be asked to register their desire to participate. Invitations and instructions on

how to join will be sent closer to the date of the event. To give everyone a chance to practice using the technology and ensure they can successfully participate in the event, we will hold a brief test event a week before. This will also give people the opportunity to ask any questions they may have in relation to the technology. The Inspector will not be present and there will be no discussion other than in relation to the technical aspects of joining and participating in the event.

On the day participants will be asked to join the event at least 30 minutes before it is

*“Sessions will be shorter which means that the overall event may take longer...”*

due to start. This is to enable the event support officer to transfer all parties from the virtual lobby to the Hearing or Inquiry in time for it to open. The Inspector's opening will be a little different to what you're used to to reflect that the event is virtual but the event will be run as close to a traditional Hearing and Inquiry as we can with all parties contributing under the direction of the Inspector.

Experience in England is that looking at a screen for long periods is tiring. Sessions will be shorter which means that the overall event may take longer but limiting discussion to only those matters which need scrutiny at an oral event will reduce the time needed.

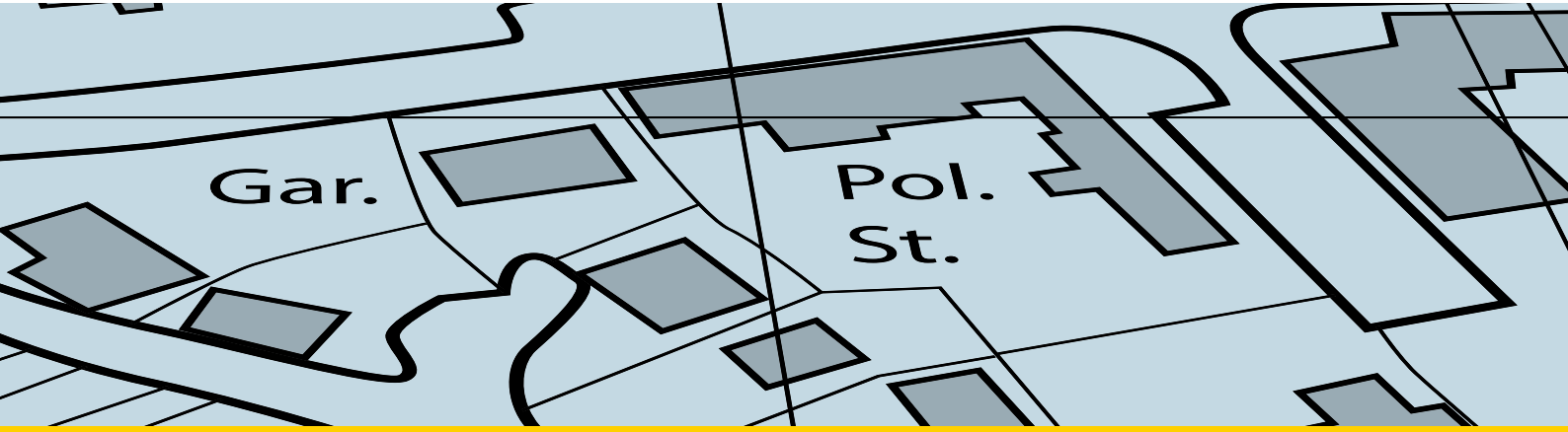
The Inspector will visit the site but probably only after the event, not before and after as we usually do. As far as is possible and appropriate site visits will be unaccompanied and arrangements for the site visit may be made before the Hearing or Inquiry.

For Inquiries and particularly where evidence needs to be given on oath, witnesses will need to be alone in a room or with only their advocate present if the advocate cannot view the cross examination from another room. This is to ensure that witnesses are not coached or fed answers.

Inspectors have received training on running events virtually but this is new territory for all of us. Undoubtedly there will be teething problems but experience in England and

Scotland has been mainly positive. We have around 50 Hearings and Inquiries on the books all over Wales so look out for a virtual event coming to you soon!





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# Written Statement: Welsh Government Detailed Response to the Law Commission's Report on Planning Law in Wales

The Welsh Government asked the Law Commission for England and Wales to undertake a detailed review of planning law in Wales, with the aim of recommending ways in which the legislation could be simplified and consolidated.

In May 2019, the Minister for Housing and Local Government, Julie James MS, issued an interim Government response to their Report Planning Law in Wales. That response focused on Part 1 of the Report which covered the Law Commission's views on the need to simplify and consolidate planning law, the case for a planning code and the scope of the initial consolidation exercises, which can be accessed at: [gov.wales/interim-response-law-commission-report-planning-law-wales](https://gov.wales/interim-response-law-commission-report-planning-law-wales).

In November, the Minister issued and published the Welsh Government's detailed response. This focuses on Part 2 of the Report, setting out the Government's position on each of the 192 recommendations made by the Law Commission to simplify and consolidate the legislation on all aspects of the planning system. The detailed response can be accessed at: [gov.wales/detailed-response-law-commission-report-planning-law-wales](https://gov.wales/detailed-response-law-commission-report-planning-law-wales).

"Having carefully considered the recommendations, I have accepted the majority of them. I believe they will result in improvements to address the accessibility and complexity of the current legislative framework underpinning the planning system, and the resulting difficulties that can frustrate the system for all stakeholders, as highlighted in the Report and recognised by the Government. For those recommendations

that I have accepted in principle, whilst I mostly agree with the aims of the recommendations, I believe they will require further development and consideration by officials during the exercise of drafting new statutory provisions."

As the majority of the recommendations which the Welsh Government will be taking forward constitute minor technical reform to aid consolidation and simplification of the law, it is anticipated that a Planning Consolidation Bill will be the main delivery mechanism for them. However, the extent to which the recommendations can be taken forward through a consolidation exercise will ultimately be decided by the final form of a suitable Standing Order for consolidation Bills which is currently being considered by the Business Committee of Senedd Cymru.

The Minister said: "It is clear that the review undertaken by the Law Commission provides a detailed and robust evidence base to support the consolidation and simplification of planning law. On this basis, and as indicated in the First Minister's legislative statement on 15 July 2020, the Counsel General and I have advised officials to continue the preparation and drafting of the Planning Consolidation Bill, given the significant benefits it will bring to all stakeholders and the urgent need for it demonstrated by the Report. It will also enable the Bill to form an important part of the formal programme to improve the accessibility of Welsh law required by the Legislation (Wales) Act 2019, which will be a matter for the Government of the next Senedd term."

## RTPI Cymru Policy Update

We have been pleased to have the opportunity to submit written and oral evidence on the National Development Framework (NDF), renamed Future Wales - The National Plan 2040, over the past few months.

RTPI Cymru have called for the NDF to come forward as a priority – and we therefore welcome the progress that has been made, particularly at this time and in light of the impact COVID19 on Government resources and the bringing forward of projects and plans.

In our evidence on the NDF we welcomed improved links with other investment areas, and the strengthening of links with other plans in particular. We support the efforts to link the Marine Plan and NDF. We recognise the difficulties in aligning plans and timescales, but where possible we believe the opportunity to create these links will provide a stronger framework for Wales. We recognise this is the first version of the NDF and future versions will help the Plan mature and forge further links over time.

The NDF poses an opportunity to push boundaries in the longer term planning for Wales. While we were pleased to see this latest version of the Plan recognise flood risk and climate change resilience, we feel the plan could go further to address the issue of coastal adaptation in the future. While we acknowledge that this currently might be beyond the term of the Plan, the NDF could be starting to set the agenda. Long-term sustainability goals, including climate change must remain priorities and at the forefront of planning for the future in Wales. We urge Welsh Government to be bold in its approach to integrating responses to climate change into its policy frameworks.

Of course, adequate resourcing of the planning function is vital. Local planning authorities have lost significant capacity in recent years. A well resourced, plan-led planning service can deliver corporate objectives, which, if properly encouraged and effectively organised can bring together objectives across services and help achieve local and national sustainable development and climate action goals. The RTPI believes that making the role of the Chief Planning Officers a more prominent and strategic position within local authorities would positively influence outcomes and support good growth and a balanced recovery.

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## Congratulations to our latest Chartered Town Planners



Congratulations to our latest Chartered Planners to be elected in Wales:

- Lindsay Christian, Newport City Council
- Llinos Hallett, Asbri Planning
- Ben Phillips, The Planning Inspectorate, Cardiff

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

*(Note those more recently awarded Chartered status will appear in the next edition of Cynllunio).*

All the information and guidance for submitting your APC (all routes) is available from: [www.rtpi.org.uk/membership/assessment-of-professional-competence/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/membership/assessment-of-professional-competence/)

A series of webinars are planned during 2021 to provide information to guide you to becoming Chartered. If you are preparing or want to find out more, keep a look out for events on the RTPI website.

## South East Wales Transport Commission recommends major improvements for transport

The commission was established to recommend ways to reduce congestion on the M4 motorway without building a new relief road around Newport.

Their main proposal is for a 'network of alternatives', providing a comprehensive and coordinated public transport alternative to the M4. The network is designed to give people and businesses new transport options that do not use the motorway – or indeed a car.

This centres on improving rail provision between Cardiff, Newport and Bristol by upgrading the existing four tracks of the South Wales Main Line, so that these tracks can be used by more trains with more flexibility. For the first time, this would allow for local, commuting services to run frequently without disrupting express rail services. They also suggest an ambitious rail station building programme, which would add six new rail stations between Cardiff and the River Severn, including: Newport Road (Cardiff), Cardiff Parkway (St Mellons), Newport West, Newport East (Somerton), Llanwern and Magor.

The rail backbone would be supported by new rapid bus and cycle corridors across the region, especially within Newport. Taken together, over 90 percent of Cardiff and Newport's population would live within a mile of a rail station or rapid bus corridor if the proposals are taken forward. Many of these recommendations can be delivered through upgrades to the existing rail and road network.

The full report can be viewed at: [gov.wales/south-east-wales-transport-commission-final-recommendations](http://gov.wales/south-east-wales-transport-commission-final-recommendations)

## Your town, your future! Auditor General for Wales Survey

COVID-19 has affected the whole of Wales. It has presented real challenges to businesses, retailers, public bodies, elected members and council officers across the country. With lots of uncertainty for all of us, Audit Wales is now undertaking a review on the future of Welsh towns.

Audit Wales knows that to successfully regenerate our town centres and ensure people access the services they need, and businesses thrive, they need to collect lots of good ideas. And that's why we are asking for your help. They would like you to provide them with their thoughts and experience on:

- What makes your local town a great place to visit and shop;
- What changes you would like to see happen in your local town; and
- What actions should be prioritised for the future.

By completing the short survey, it will help Audit Wales understand the challenges and difficulties facing our towns. They understand it is important that they capture your thoughts and ideas as planners who have invested time and money in your area and know the reality of the challenges we face.



To assist Audit Wales to understand your issues and those of your local town please complete their survey at [audit.wales/your-town-your-future-survey](http://audit.wales/your-town-your-future-survey) neu yn Gymraeg [audit.wales/cy/arolwg-eich-tref-eich-dyfodol](http://audit.wales/cy/arolwg-eich-tref-eich-dyfodol)

The survey is anonymous and should take between 5 and 10 minutes to complete.

Your views will be useful in identifying specific issues that can be further examined in Audit Wales' review and will be summarised in a national report.

All responses will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

If you have any queries please contact [Council.Studies@audit.wales](mailto:Council.Studies@audit.wales)

#YourTownYourFuture



# Recognising outstanding projects, plans and people in these categories:

## People

- Young Planner of the Year
- Planning Heroes in a Pandemic

## Teams

- Small Planning Consultancy of the Year
- Planning Consultancy of the Year
- Planning Authority of the Year
- In-house Planning Team of the Year

## Projects

- Excellence in Plan Making Practice
- Excellence in Planning for Heritage and Culture
- Excellence in Planning for the Natural Environment
- Excellence in Planning for Health and Wellbeing
- Excellence in Planning to Deliver Homes - large schemes (50 or more homes)
- Excellence in Planning to Deliver Homes - small schemes (up to 50 homes)
- Excellence in Planning for a Successful Economy
- Excellence in Tech within Planning Practice
- International Award for Planning Excellence



All categories are free to enter!

**Entries will close on 14 December 2020.**

[rtpi.org.uk/excellence](http://rtpi.org.uk/excellence) [awards@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:awards@rtpi.org.uk)

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## RTPI Cymru Award for Academic Excellence 2020

In the Autumn edition of Cynllunio we announced the Cardiff University recipients of the RTPI Cymru prize for Academic Excellence for 2020.

Here are the prize winners with their certificates, from left to right: Thomas Harding, Katharine Forbes and Thomas White.

The prizes are awarded based on the highest marks achieved in the first year of Cardiff University's two RTPI accredited undergraduate courses - BSc in Urban Planning and Development and the BSc in Geography and Planning.





# Change to planning policy and guidance on use of compulsory purchase powers

The Minister for Housing and Local Government, Julie James MS, has written to local planning authorities on compulsory purchase powers.

The Welsh Government believes compulsory purchase powers are an important placemaking in action tool which can help support local authorities and communities recover from the Covid-19 crisis.

In the immediate post-Covid-19 phase there are particular areas of policy which are the focus of action to act as a catalyst for a recovery across the pillars of sustainable development. Building Better Places: The Planning System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures – Placemaking and the Covid-19 Recovery (July 2020) identifies 8 key issues which bring together individual policy areas to ensure action is most effective. Of the eight key issues for policy action, the following three issues have been identified where the use of compulsory purchase powers can provide a useful policy implementation tool:

- Staying local: creating neighbourhoods;
- Revitalising our town centres;
- Active travel: exercise and rediscovered transport methods.

To support local authorities recover from the impacts of Covid-19 and respond to the identified key issues for policy action, local authorities are encouraged to pro-actively consider the use of their compulsory purchase powers wherever appropriate to ensure real gains are brought to communities without delay.

Alongside supporting recovery from Covid-19, a priority of the Welsh Government is to increase the supply of housing as well as bring vacant and empty properties back into use. The Welsh Government believes the use of compulsory purchase powers by local authorities and other public bodies can help assemble the land needed to deliver these policy objectives along with wider environmental, social and economic change.

Used properly, compulsory purchase powers can contribute towards effective and efficient regeneration, the revitalisation of communities, placemaking, and the promotion of business, leading to improvements in quality of life.

A consultation on revised national planning policy on the use of compulsory purchase powers and updated Circular guidance was conducted in 2019. Following this consultation, the Minister has announced the following policy changes: [gov.wales/change-planning-policy-and-guidance-use-compulsory-purchase-powers](https://gov.wales/change-planning-policy-and-guidance-use-compulsory-purchase-powers)

## Revisions to paragraph 3.53 of PPW

under the 'Strategic Placemaking' section attached at Appendix 1. The changes to national planning policy strengthen support for the use of compulsory purchase powers by local planning authorities to help facilitate the development, redevelopment and improvement of land and buildings where there is a compelling case in the public interest.

## Updated Circular guidance

Publication of Circular 003/2019: Compulsory Purchase in Wales and 'The Crichef Down Rules (Wales Version, 2020)' which cancels National Assembly for Wales Circular (NAFWC) 14/2004: Revised Circular on Compulsory Purchase Orders. This ensures accurate, up-to-date Welsh Government guidance on compulsory purchase legislation and practice is in place. Circular 003/2019 can be accessed from: [gov.wales/planning-policy-guidance-compulsory-purchase](https://gov.wales/planning-policy-guidance-compulsory-purchase).

## Consultation on reforms to compulsory Purchase power and procedures

The 'call for evidence' in 2019, highlighted there is capacity for further reforms to the compulsory purchase process as it remains, in part, convoluted and complex which can act as a barrier to the use of compulsory purchase powers. The Minister has therefore announced a further consultation which seeks views on reforms to:

- modernise statutory compulsory purchase powers and procedures underpinned by primary legislation, and
- implement technical process improvements to streamline the compulsory purchase public inquiries and written representations procedures.

The consultation will run until 19 January 2021 and can be viewed at: [gov.wales/reforms-compulsory-purchase-process](https://gov.wales/reforms-compulsory-purchase-process)

The letter from the Minister can be viewed in full at: [gov.wales/change-planning-policy-and-guidance-use-compulsory-purchase-powers-html](https://gov.wales/change-planning-policy-and-guidance-use-compulsory-purchase-powers-html)



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# RTPI Cymru Awards for Planning Announced



At our on-line Award ceremony first broadcast on 6th November, the results of the 2020 RTPI Cymru Awards for Planning Excellence were announced. The announcement is available to view at: [youtu.be/tlklUVMc1q0](https://youtu.be/tlklUVMc1q0)

Introducing the Award announcement, Simon Power, RTPI Cymru Chair said:

“This is a great opportunity to remind ourselves that we are continuing to enable, facilitate and deliver projects of real quality in the Welsh environment; and develop great Welsh planning talent.

“We should be proud as planners of what we can achieve when we adopt a leadership role over projects that contribute to good placemaking.”

## Winner

### Glan Llyn Eastern Sub-Area Masterplan

*Submitted by Savills, St Modwen Developments (Llanwern) Ltd and Stephen George & Partners*

Glan Llyn is one of the largest brownfield redevelopment sites in the UK, and will transform the Llanwern steelworks into a new neighbourhood for Newport. The approval of the Eastern Sub-Area Masterplan unlocks the regeneration of over half of the site. The project will see the delivery of approximately 4,000 new homes, a network of open spaces, community facilities, and new lakes for residents and the wider community to visit and enjoy. The Eastern Area proposals include a second primary school, as well as local retail, community and health facilities within a new local centre.



The Judges said:

**“A truly inspirational collaborative project, with placemaking at its heart, providing its own sense of place and identity.**

“Glan Llyn is a fantastic example of how a complex project - in terms of scale and timelines - can be delivered undaunted through the planning (and related) processes to ensure many benefits, including the clean-up and re-use of a vast area of contaminated land.

“The remediation strategy drove much of the masterplan by identifying green and blue waterways, and the significant biodiversity enhancement opportunities realised through SuDS and the landscape strategy.

“By overcoming the significant coastal and fluvial flooding challenges a haven for wildlife will be created in this urban environment.

“The value of planning was inherent in the masterplanning process, benefitting from a shared vision with Newport City Council.

“The scrutiny and meaningful feedback received from the Planning department made the scheme better, creating both a destination and resilient new community.”

## Finalists

### Building Wildlife

*Submitted by Building Wildlife*

Building Wildlife is a trust set up to administer and manage financial contributions from developers in mitigation for impacts on protected habitats operating across three local planning authorities in north Wales. Individual contributions provide a fund to support projects that will create new or enhance existing habitats to help achieve favourable conservation status. It works closely with planning authorities, NRW, landowners, developers, the local community and the voluntary sector to secure sustainable projects. It has been instrumental in developing local planning guidance, spatial strategies and raising awareness.

### Holyhead Market Hall

*Submitted by Cyngor Sir Ynys Mon / Isle of Anglesey County Council*

The Grade II Listed former Market Hall lay vacant for nearly twenty years. In seeking a sustainable end use the formulation and design of the project there was not only a need for a compelling business case and community buy-in but also a real need for the end result to address the climate change emergency, through exceeding building regulations standards through the use of low and zero carbon measures. This has continued into operation through a travel plan and a series of planned activities to promote the measures adopted as an exemplar for other historic buildings, as practical, deliverable and cost effective with a focus on passive approaches.

## Highly Commended

### Llys Cadwyn

Submitted by Rhondda Cynon Taf Council

Llys Cadwyn is Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's flagship regeneration project located in Pontypridd Town Centre on the former 1960s Taff Vale Shopping Centre site. The mixed-use development comprising Grade A office accommodation, restaurants/cafes and community hub incorporating a library, access to Council services, community facilities and gym and leisure studios has revitalised a derelict site at the northern gateway to the town. This exciting development demonstrates the Council's ambitious drive to regenerate the town by attracting jobs, increasing footfall and creating an environment where people are proud to live, work and play.

The Judges said:

"A modern architectural response appropriate to this prominent gateway site, demonstrating good connectivity to the park and the importance of public realm.

**"The project is an excellent example of how various disciplines and teams worked together through the planning process to overcome a number of environmental and technical constraints and challenges.**

"This was an ambitious and brave project for Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC to commit to. The planners involved used their skills to balance competing interests to ensure the benefits of the scheme were brought through. The ability to deliver the project in 5 years from inception to completion is a fantastic example of how town centre regeneration can invigorate and inject vitality into otherwise declining town centres.

"The emphasis given to consultation with Members to drive the vision forward and the continued communication with the public, was an important element of the community buy-in demonstrated by the feedback received."



## Commended

### Grange Pavilion

Submitted by Benham Architects and IBI

The Grange Pavilion is a community-led redevelopment of a formerly vacant Bowls Pavilion in Grangetown, Cardiff. Initiated by residents in 2012, partnerships between Grange Pavilion Project, Grangetown Community Action and Cardiff University began with regular community events including Ideas Picnics, Storytelling days and walking workshops.

A three-year temporary license offered space to test resident-led ideas before co-producing a design brief for planning and funding applications. On-site partnership events with Dan Benham and IBI Group have informed each stage of design development and supported the capacity building of the now-constituted community-led Grange Pavilion CIO in taking on a 99-year lease.

The Judges said:

**"An exemplar in successful community consultation.**

"Engagement with local people is really at the heart of this project and as a result will undoubtedly be (and already is) a huge success.

"The design of the space is truly grounded in the community's needs and desire to provide a multi-functional space for all. It has been designed collaboratively, and will deliver a meaningful, inclusive space for collaboration and community gatherings.

"The project demonstrates success in actively securing the use of a community asset even in these challenging times.

"The benefits of early engagement with Cardiff Council Planners are demonstrated through the design and materials choice within a historic setting and the biodiversity benefits featured across the site.

"The ambition and vision of the local community to create this facility, their ability to learn, grow and adapt to change, and the way they have maximised the benefits of working with Cardiff University was impressive.

"An incredibly passionate and admirable team who have clearly dedicated extensive time and effort to ensuring the delivery of the project."



*"All the Finalists make an important contribution to placemaking, in different ways and at different scales.*

*"They are highly deserving of the accolades given and provide practical expression to the principles set out in the Placemaking Wales Charter."*

*Simon Power, RTPI Cymru Chair*



# Reflections of 2020 from Young Planners Cymru

It has certainly been a year unlike any other. As a group of young planning professionals and students, we've all had extremely varied experiences within our work and education this year. It has been really valuable that we have continued to meet, virtually and regularly, to keep in touch and put on events to continue our professional development. We have all had a chance to reflect on what 2020 has meant for our lives, and here, we will share with you some of our reflections on how the pandemic has affected our lives as planners.



"I've enjoyed creating a new working environment within my home and reconnecting with my local area. I've slowly taught my household about planning which has been a challenge in itself but a great opportunity to learn about each others' jobs more." **Kate Coventry, LRM Planning, Young Planners Cymru (YPC) Vice Chair**

*"I was reminded that the built environment is a stage upon which we share our lives."*



"This year has both highlighted the benefits of working from home and made me realise how much I enjoy the office environment. I really miss connecting with colleagues, clients and stakeholders in person. Post-pandemic it will be interesting to see whether working from home or 'hybrid' working becomes the norm and what implications this has on our work as planners." **Emmeline Reynish, Arup, YPC Chair**



"Who would have thought 2020 would be a year of such disruption to all of our lives? Completing a Masters degree and undertaking a dissertation has certainly been met with some challenges which I have had to overcome. What lockdown has really highlighted for me is the importance of quality open space when living in the city centre. It will be interesting to see what implications covid-19 will have on the built environment of our city centres and whether there will be greater emphasis on usable green spaces in city centre developments." **Thomas Simnett, Spatial Planning and Development MSc Student - Cardiff University, YPC Student Representative**



"The covid-19 pandemic has had a number of unprecedented effects on society, with social distancing, working from home and 'lockdown' becoming the 'norm'. Some benefits arising from these effects include spending more time with family; reconnecting with the local countryside/historic landscape; and, witnessing some of the potential environmental benefits of the pandemic e.g. less car, plane and train usage. Post-pandemic it will be interesting to see how our cities will evolve to cater for social distancing and working from home. Will there be reduced demand for traditional office space? Will there be an increased need for residential properties to be developed with office space included?" **Abbie Connelly, Lichfields, YPC Communications Representative**



"From working full-time in an office environment, to having a brief spell of working from home, and then being furloughed for several months really took some adjustment. However, throughout this period I have appreciated the outpour of innovative solutions and webinars within the planning profession to keep individuals in touch and informed. Young Planners Cymru's "One Planet Development" webinars are examples of this innovative online thinking." **Lucy Benbow, Lichfields, YPC Communications Representative**



"My experience in 2020 taught me to slow down, appreciate my neighbourhood, find joy in small discoveries and rethink the relationships between people and place. I was reminded that the built environment is a stage upon which we share our lives; rainbows in windows and books on garden walls. The challenges of being apart making us more aware of the ways in which we're together. As we look to 2021, I'm hopeful because I've learned that my community is more than just a city, but a civitas, ready to shape our new normal together." **Alexandra Egge, Mott Macdonald, YPC Secretary**



"This year has been a real test of how well we adapt to and manage change, something we are very familiar with as planners. Despite the pandemic, I successfully completed my APC and became a Chartered Town Planner which has highlighted to me that progress is still possible even during the most challenging and uncertain times" **Joshua Price, Savills, YPC General Member**

## Going digital – do we see a new era for consultation and engagement?

Most of us are no stranger to hearing about our professions embracing digital platforms for communication, but this year has certainly forced 'going digital' to become the 'new normal' for many of us. When I reflect upon the impacts of Covid-19 during the past year as a planning consultant, I would say that the most significant change to my work has been the approach to engaging with the public and other stakeholders.

For example, we are so used to the traditional town hall exhibitions when holding consultation events, but this year has really shaken things up, and some of us may agree that these changes were needed.

I am currently working on a transport study focused on finding solutions to the transport problems manifesting within Chepstow and its surrounding region. This study has been commissioned by Monmouthshire County Council and their strategic partners including Welsh Government, the Department of Transport, Highways England, Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire County Council and South Gloucestershire Council. Through working on this study, I have come to realise that whilst there are so many benefits to meetings, workshops and consultations in person, I think this year has shown that there are also so many benefits to holding these virtually.

With a large number of client group members and stakeholders with an interest in the study, meeting virtually has allowed the project team to engage with numerous individuals and organisations in a way that has saved time and money for those involved (and since we're talking about a transport study – we're also reducing carbon emissions as well as costs from not travelling to village halls!). The experience is very different by moving to a 24/7 format and making information and engagement more accessible to a wider group of people, but also requiring a redistribution of staff resources and levels of effort.

For the Chepstow Transport Study, we launched a six week non-statutory public consultation on the 2nd November 2020 to present the relevant information and proposals, and to encourage people to have their say about what they'd like to see progressed further to address the identified problems and achieve the objectives for the area. Within its first week, our virtual consultation room, developed using the Arup Engage technology, has already received significantly more visits than most face to face events. It has also attracted a far more diverse set of participants, for example there has been a notable spread in the age range of visitors, allowed people all over the world to see our proposals, and we have a lot of helpful data about who is engaged, when and how.

From the onset, the project team were profoundly aware of how such virtual events could exclude hard to reach groups, for example those without access to the internet, or with disabilities. Early preparations therefore focused on ensuring that hard copies of the consultation materials were available if requested, and in accessible formats, as well as including assistive technology through keyboard shortcuts. A telephone surgery and freepost address was also set up for the project. We were also very aware of other barriers of virtual engagement, for example: how would the public ask questions to the project team?

To reduce this barrier, we set up web-chat in addition to the

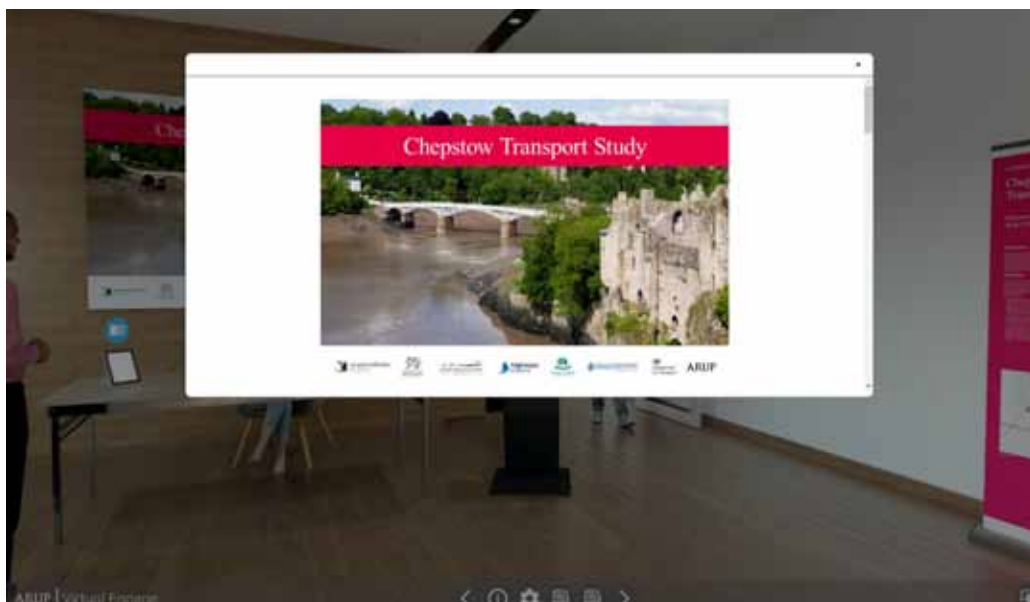
*“Within its first week, our virtual consultation room ... has already received significantly more visits than most face to face events....”*

telephone surgery for questions and answers. Whilst this doesn't fully replace the ability to study plans and drawings in hard copy around a table in a village hall over a cup of tea, it does seek to replicate the ability for people to access information and have their say in a fair and transparent way.

We are really excited to see the results of engaging in this way and I for one would be very surprised if this emerging form of engagement does not become the new normal for planners. I hope that it will sit alongside in-person events as soon as we are able; as virtual engagement cannot fully replace physical interactions. Saying that, to date we have certainly found that virtual engagement increases accessibility to those who may not be able to attend events in person. For planners to truly create accessible engagement, we should embrace the two together even more going forward.

Chepstow Transport Study – please do visit the Chepstow Transport Study virtual exhibition to see how we have been embracing digital innovation. The consultation is open until 5pm on Sunday 13th December 2020: [virtualengage.arup.com/chepstow-transport-study](https://virtualengage.arup.com/chepstow-transport-study).

*Ellie Mitchell, Arup and Young Planners Cymru Events Coordinator*



# Welsh Young Planner of the Year Announced

RTPI Cymru is celebrating the talent of early career planners in Wales and announced the Welsh Young Planner of the Year for 2020 on 6 November 2020 during the on-line ceremony.

This award seeks out the brightest RTPI members in the early stages of their careers.

The Judges shortlisted two worthy Finalists for this year's Wales Young Planner of the Year Award - Kate Coventry and Emmeline Reynish.

The Judges said: "The Finalists are a credit to the RTPI and will help inspire other young planners to not only become more involved but to challenge more experienced planners, who are perhaps more restricted by conventional approaches to an ever quickly changing environment."



Above: Emmeline Reynish, Welsh Young Planner of the Year 2020

Emmeline Reynish was announced Welsh Young Planner of the Year 2020. The Judges said: "Emmeline has a strong commitment to the profession and is acutely aware of the challenges that face us both now and in the future. Her enthusiasm will go a long way to help the Institute meet those challenges in a sustainable and inclusive way.

"Emmeline is an extremely enthusiastic young planner with a passion for promoting town planning in Wales.

"She has a good understanding of the future challenges that face planners and will act as a role model to other young planners by encouraging collaboration with other sectors and increasing diversity in the profession."

The judges were also very impressed with Kate Coventry and awarded her a Commendation.

The Judges said: "Kate showed a strong commitment to the profession and the role of young planners in delivering the new agenda for placemaking in Wales.

"Kate demonstrates a passion for planning and the work of planners in delivering affordable housing in Wales and will no doubt have a bright future in Planning."

RTPI Cymru Chair, Simon Power, said the "The Awards this year celebrate the personal achievement of some of the younger members of the profession. Welsh Young Planner of the Year is an opportunity to acknowledge the efforts Young Planner Cymru make to the future."



Above: Kate Coventry, Commended



# Savills Planners reflect on the RTPI Young Planners Virtual Conference 2020

Josh Price (Planner) and Matthew Blackie (Graduate Planner) from Savills' Cardiff office joined the first of its kind 'Young Planners' Virtual Conference 2020: New Decade New Leaders' on 11 November 2020 and offer their insights to the event.

The conference was much more than your typical online webinar – the event included all the elements of an in-person conference featuring a 'main stage', breakouts, expo, entertainment and the new concept of 'networking roulette', a 3-minute 1-to-1 call with another delegate which, despite not being there in person, still enabled connections to be made with other planners.

The conference was also an opportunity to collectively learn about the importance of planning and the role it plays in our new world. A range of topics, styles of delivery and speakers from around the globe were provided, which made for an unforgettable experience.

In the morning, RTPI President Sue Manns reflected on the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasised how this had brought to the forefront the areas that really matter to people, including sustainability, resilience and inclusive places. Sue offered an encouraging remark that "great leaders don't tell you what to do, they show you how it's done".

The first talk on Leadership highlighted the opportunity for new leaders to step up and lead the changes post the pandemic. Attributes of a good leader were highlighted, including honesty, integrity, values and vision. Mentoring was also discussed as essential at all stages of a career which assists with addressing capacity gaps and illustrated the benefits mentoring has on individual and collective development. We were encouraged to exercise practical leadership skills including problem solving, building supportive relationships and collaborating with others beyond the planning profession. This is an ethos which Savills endorses and delivers through excellent mentoring schemes as well as its award winning graduate programme.

A Planning Law Update was given by Barristers from Francis Taylor Building including a range of case law on the recent changes to the Use Class Order and Permitted Development rights, Decision Making, Heritage, Environmental Issues and the Green Belt. This session gave valuable insight into legal definitions of listed buildings and curtilage as well as addressing scenarios where policies may pull in different directions which comes down to the decision maker and what is known as the 'tilted balance'.

A session on Digitisation of Planning Committees gave a real flavour into how technology is currently being used across numerous sectors in planning and how PropTech companies are likely to lead the change, increasing accessibility and visibility of planning into the next decade. Both public and private viewpoints

of utilising software such as VU.CITY were offered. This software can improve the execution of planning committees and provide an immersive site visit experience to demonstrate proposed development through 3D imagery. The growth of this sector is certainly exciting and is likely to result in greater use of digital modelling as part of new development proposals. At Savills we have unlimited access to VU.CITY, which now includes a model of Cardiff and is a revolutionary design and masterplanning tool which is undoubtedly needed to bring the whole field of planning and development into the digital age, taking away the need for physical models and CGIs to help visualise the future of property.

The afternoon plenary focussed on Getting Design Right and started off with a unique presentation by Cam Perkins (Urban Pirates) from New Zealand. This session demonstrated the value of design and overlap with the planning profession in terms of shared goals. We learnt that design changes lives and that the green recovery needs to be at the heart of any post-pandemic world.

The day was rounded off by a key note speech given by Joanna Averley (Chief Planning Officer at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) who gave insights into what a career in planning looks like for her. Joanna reminded us that issues return but we look at them differently and advocated for the art of gentle negotiation and the importance of making time to stop, reflect and think – something often neglected with the busyness of practice.

Some reflective thoughts from the day include the reminder to be yourself, the importance of practise as this makes things easier, and with the arrival of a new decade gives opportunities for new leaders. We would highly recommend attending future young planners' conferences and hope to attend Edinburgh in 2021.

For more details of the event, search #YPCConf2020 on Twitter or visit the RTPI YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/thertpi](http://www.youtube.com/thertpi).



Above: Joshua Price



Above: Matthew Blackie

# Measuring What Matters

**P**lan the World We Need – the RTPI’s current campaign and mantra is entirely apt for where we find ourselves. Back in December 2019, we were commissioned along with team members from across practice and academia, the UK and Ireland, to undertake research into measuring planning outcomes. At the time I wrote a blog for the RTPI in which I considered the idea of we are what we measure. There are other ways of expressing this, but the sentiment is that if you want something to happen you have to be measuring. It’s not a case that measurement makes it happen but playing the long game you can only make progress if you are tracking, making change and improvement, all to ultimately reach a goal or target that has been set.

Planning by its nature is a future oriented activity. At the risk of covering old ground, I will make the point that for planning to remain future oriented there has to be a future focus. Challenges around this include a shorter-term focus on meeting immediate needs around planning consents, delivery of vital infrastructure and as many of us have found ourselves doing, crisis response. It is ok to have a focus on these things, they are important, but they cannot be everything.

## Developing a toolkit for planning outcomes

This is where the Measuring What Matters toolkit comes in. Through this research we have established a pathway that helps to shift the focus from the current view of performance by consents (and performance around process such as speed and number), through development outcomes (what actually gets built or protected) and to the end goal of impact and contribution to wider societal, economic, health and environment outcomes.

What we have produced is a series of steps with a diagnostic tool at the centre of this. It enables work on measuring outcomes to begin now, no additional work is required before beginning this (a barrier to previous good efforts to measure outcomes). The toolkit has established a process to move from current measurement of consents through different and more ambitious levels of measurement. The essence of the toolkit is a method that walks through a series of ‘meta’ questions.

Our starting point for thinking about outcomes was to look globally, and at the UN Sustainable Development outcomes. As an internationally recognised set of outcomes, these have been adopted and expressed spatially by most of the UK and Ireland’s planning jurisdictions. So, with these high level outcomes we ask what does planning need to do to achieve this? We need to understand the inputs into our planning system, policy intention and have associated objectives and targets that help us move to these

outcomes. (Level 1 in the toolkit pathway).

Once we have a good understanding of this, we can consider if our built environment and places are reflecting progress towards these outcomes? Here we measure development outcomes against policy intention (Level 2 in the toolkit pathway).

Finally, we must ask how we know we are getting there? At this point we are able to be more ambitious and consider an evaluation of impact, both direct and indirect, of planning on achieving these National Outcomes (Level 3 in the toolkit pathway).

## The measuring planning outcomes for a Welsh context

Dr Neil Harris and Dr Brian Webb from Cardiff University’s School of Geography and Planning led work on developing the planning outcomes toolkit for a Welsh context. The toolkit framework is adaptable and we could link it to the policy context in Wales both generally and for planning policy. There is close alignment between the toolkit and Wales’s wellbeing goals and the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act 2015, for example linking to a “Wales of Cohesive Communities” or “A Healthier Wales.” This also links to ways of working around the Act such as methods and approaches that have come from the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act. From this overarching context we have linked it to the planning policy context in Wales, linking the themes of the toolkit to the existing Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes included in Planning Policy Wales. There are five different groupings of Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes and the ability to link the themes and the toolkit closely to these.

Mapping to the Wellbeing outcomes, and the National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes and we see this as closely involved in the preparation of Local Development Plans - stakeholders argued that this is the place where measuring sustainable outcomes and planning really come together. But we also see this working with emerging Strategic Development Plans and also potentially having aggregation to a national context as well.

The Measuring What Matters: Planning Outcomes project has identified some useful lessons and opportunities for further embedding the toolkit in practice in Wales. The following steps could be explored to further support the identification and measurement of planning outcomes in Wales:



Above: Iain Macpherson

Mapping the National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes against the toolkit themes helps us ask what planning should be having an impact on:



- Establishing a more direct relationship between planning, placemaking and the cluster of ‘place-based’ national well-being indicators, as well as the well-being goal of ‘A Wales of Cohesive Communities’.
- The development of a series of measures and indicators for each of the national sustainable placemaking outcomes set out in Planning Policy Wales. This will assist with developing these from evaluation criteria to measures of planning outcomes. Annex B of Planning Policy Wales could be developed with a suite of measures and indicators for the qualities of ‘a sustainable place’.
- An increased emphasis in the advice in the Welsh Government Local Development Plans Manual on the evaluation of planning outcomes rather than the monitoring of objectives, policies and proposals.
- Revision of advice and guidance to local planning authorities so that the wider range of themes linked to wellbeing are better promoted alongside a current focus on housing and the economy.
- The integration of several measurement frameworks - addressing performance, monetised value, planning outcomes, and local development plan monitoring – into one simplified framework.

The Measuring What Matters toolkit is not about adding a layer of measurement, but it is fundamentally about a reframing of planning as an activity in service of the public good.

The toolkit was developed by the research team (KMA, yellow book, McCabe Durney Barnes, University of Dundee and Cardiff University) in conversation with planners, developers, other agencies and community organisations across the UK and Ireland. We are incredibly grateful to all those who took part in the research and focus groups, and in particular to stakeholders in Wales who gave generously of their time to help develop this contextualised toolkit.

The toolkit was part funded by the RTPPI with additional funding from Welsh Government, the governments of Ireland and Scotland, along with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Office of the Planning Regulator in Ireland.

*Iain MacPherson MRTPI*  
*Kevin Murray Associates*

The report can be viewed at [www.rtpi.org.uk/planningoutcomes](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/planningoutcomes)



# Delivering Quality Places



Above: Robert Chapman

**P**laces for Life II [dcfw.org/places-for-life/](https://dcfw.org/places-for-life/) is about promoting “good placemaking and building back better”. As a Fellow of the RSA, the catalyst for my thought piece was a post entitled **Developing Socially Productive Places**. It references an RSA Action and Research Centre report of the same name which was supported by British Land. It challenged and supported local authorities, developers, communities and

businesses to deepen

their understanding of what makes places good for people in the long term (Places for Life?).

Of the various learning points for Leaders, there were two that caught my attention: first, developing socially productive places means supporting local people to engage with development as a means of addressing issues such as local employment, transport and provision of health and education; second, socially productive places build community capacity to benefit from growth, increase resilience to shocks and support people’s ability to adapt together to new circumstances. Altogether, this sounds progressive: a meshing together of the relied upon built environment (the hardware) on which to live their lives (the software).

Scroll forward to July 2019, a report prepared by Grosvenor suggested a significant trust deficit facing UK developers and councils. Notably, when it comes to large-scale development just 2% of the public trust private developers to act in an honest way. Only 7% of the public trust local authorities to act in the best interests of the area.

I wanted to verify this sobering finding. Therefore, during the period between July 2019 and August 2020, I reviewed at random a range of press stories concerning developments by developers and the places they were impacting. Many were woeful. It didn’t make for great reading. The blunt truth is that things have not got better, a general theme echoed by co-founder and director at mixed-use developer Cubex, Gavin Bridge who observes that “..... as developers we need to be more open and accountable”.

The quality of development delivered by developers is hugely relevant. Why? Because of its impact on place, placemaking, people and community. British Land is one of the more enlightened developers thinking about this. In 2015, they worked with **Happy City** to develop a series of wellbeing principles to guide their placemaking. This led to seven wellbeing principles. Subsequently, they sought to do something that had not been done before. In 2018, they partnered with WPI Economics to produce a report which investigated the effects of the built environment on the health and wellbeing of people. It led to the report

‘Design for Life: the impact of good design on mental health’. With circa 46 million people now living in the UK’s urban environments, the report suggests that the cumulative impact of designing for life could be immense for people now, and for future generations. For the first time, the report quantified the potential economic benefits of designing places for mental wellbeing. It also outlined a route map for putting health and wellbeing at the heart of development. With three major examples in mind, the report states that placemaking and the built environment can influence: (1) our levels of physical activity; (2) the quality of the air that we breathe; and (3) the state of our mental health.

It highlighted that annually the NHS in England spends around £11.6 billion on mental health services, suggesting that the wider costs to the economy could exceed £105 billion. Furthermore, the report observed that better-designed cities could improve wellbeing and reduce reliance on government services, leading to an estimated £15.3 billion boost to the economy by 2050 (ignoring the potential for a productivity increase across the economy of £5.4bn).

Naturally, construction forms part of development delivered or procured by developers which impacts on places and people. Positive signs manifesting change - whether in the guise of social value, sustainability or the circular economy – have been tempered by a recently released construction industry research report: “From the Ground Up – Improving the Delivery of Social Value in Construction”. Published by the Institute of Economic Development (IED), it reveals that the industry is a long way from social value nirvana.

Developers could learn a lot from a quote by the late Tony Pidgley, who was Chairman at the Berkeley Group before he passed away in June this year. If this isn’t a plea for places for life, I don’t know what is! He said: “*Good development is all about people. It’s about making life better, creating beautiful homes and putting the wellbeing of the whole community at the heart of every plan. It’s about creating places people will love as their own and care for long after we’ve all gone.*” We definitely need more of this.

One should not tar all developers with the same brush. Think about developments delivered by Housing Associations, excellent small SME developers and the ‘environmental credentials’ of developments delivered by Sero Homes. Indeed, there is an emerging cohort of what I describe as ‘social impact’ developers who have a genuine interest in the places they are creating for the benefit of people, place and community. For example, Simon Baston of LoftCo and Jacob Loftus, founder of General Projects. Interviewed in a [podcast](#), he makes clear that he wishes to create experiential and sustainable space. Space that inspires people and connects communities. This point is echoed by Baston. Loftus argues that “*the vast majority of buildings are bland & uninspiring, designed by people who are monitoring spreadsheets & costs*”.

So, thinking about place, I recall attending a IWA conference in June 2010. The CEO of the DCfW, Carole-Anne Davies, gave a presentation in which she highlighted many important points. It was the phrase ‘places that enhance our wellbeing and quality of life’ that struck a chord with me. Subliminally, this may have been in the back of my mind when I stumbled across the RSA article entitled ‘Developing Socially Productive Places’.

Supported by British Land, the RSA paper in 2014 challenged and supported the next generation of developers and local authorities to develop new ways of working with local communities and governments, outlining the value of insight into local networks. It stated that Leaders should consider:

- Planning as a front-line service, which doesn't exist in isolation from other public sector roles which influence how a place functions;
- Investing in planning to bring value to other public sector objectives and pro-actively strengthen relationships between developers and incoming people, and businesses and existing communities;

*"... Covid-19 has heightened the need for significantly better places. The case for quality and 'value' (economic, social, environmental, cultural) is now paramount.."*

- Developing socially productive places means supporting local people (building community capacity) to engage with development as a means of addressing issues such as local employment, transport and health and education provision.

The 2014 paper concluded by observing that progress would only be made if both public and private sectors, individuals and community groups, collaborate in new ways. There is much to be done to improve this collaboration if we are to seek and require better places resulting from placemaking.

Place and placemaking is inextricably linked to planning, acknowledged by The Raynsford Review of Planning in England. Two of the three project aims included: (i) engaging constructively with politicians and council officers, communities, housing providers, developers, consultants and academics (all those interested in the built environment) about how better placemaking could be delivered through a fairer and more effective planning system; and (ii) setting out a new vision for planning in England and rebuilding trust in the planning process by communicating with the public as well as professionals. These salient points chime with key points in the Grosvenor report of July 2019. Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) is England's updated design tool for creating places that are better for people and nature. It was written by a partnership comprising Homes England, NHS England and NHS Improvement integrating the findings of the three-year Healthy New Towns Programme led by NHS England and NHS Improvement.

In Scotland, there is now in existence a 'Place Standard' and a 'Place Principle'. The latter "promotes a shared understanding of place, and the need to take a more collaborative approach to a place's services and assets to achieve better outcomes for people and communities".

Now to Wales. Housing Minister, [Julie James's speech](#) to the RTPI Cymru conference in Cardiff last Autumn set out the Welsh Government's approach in the UK to "place-making", and how it intends to turn it into reality. She opined that "The challenge for all of us is to build high quality development in communities that people can be proud to call their home. The importance of place was underscored in the [Future Generations Report 2020](#) which was issued earlier this year, in particular, chapter 5 which focuses on land use planning and Placemaking. The recommendation to Welsh Government is to: (i) invest significantly in the

implementation of placemaking and Planning Policy Wales 10 to ensure placemaking is delivered and that skills are not lost; and (ii) produce a plain language explanation of the Planning Code and process. It also suggested additional resources should be provided to the Design Commission for Wales to increase their engagement.

It may be a sign of the times but what a coincidence in timing that the RTPI's policy response to Covid-19 '[Plan The World We Need](#)' should arrive on the scene in June 2020 (Chapters 2 to 5 of the report contain RTPI's priorities for a place-based recovery, across four themes: tackling place-based inequality; enabling a green industrial revolution; prioritising healthy & sustainable modes of transport and accelerating the deployment of zero-carbon infrastructure). This was just before Welsh Government's [Building Better Places Guide](#) in July 2020 (with clear references to quality of Place, notably on pages 3 and 5).

RTPI Cymru responded to this policy push (considering the role of planning in a sustainable, resilient and inclusive recovery in Wales) with a clear statement supporting the guide but requesting appropriate funding for planning to do its job because placemaking demands truly local planning strategies, policies and approaches i.e. 'clear quality standards in the short term, for long term benefits.' It builds upon the health and well-being considerations woven throughout [Planning Policy Wales: Edition 10](#) in which 8 key issues are identified to bring individual policy areas together to ensure that action is the most effective.

In conclusion, Covid-19 has heightened the need for significantly better places. The case for quality and 'value' (economic, social, environmental, cultural) is now paramount. It is 14 months since Grosvenor 'outed' the significant trust issue pertaining to the development industry (and local authorities). Evidence suggests that not much progress has been made to address this, notwithstanding the health and wellbeing benefits of creating socially productive, great places. Developer mindsets need to change.

Planning is a frontline service that is key to supporting quality development in places and by reducing inequalities. However, it needs to be adequately resourced and there must be proactive collaboration.

We need developers to build back better, not just build, build, build. Let us not have a race to the bottom in achieving quality outcomes for places and people where the industry forgets the things (highlighted by the Covid crisis) that will lead to a better long-term outcome for all of us. The current situation represents a "once in a generation opportunity to reset the clock". The question for the development industry is this: is there an appetite to lead (to create Places for Life)?

*Robert Chapman*

*Robert is an Affiliate of the RTPI and is Director of RC2 and a Chartered Surveyor*



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