

# Cynllunio

The Journal of RTPI Cymru

**FUTURE WALES**  
The National Plan 2040



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

**CYMRU'R DYFODOL**  
Y Cynllun Cenedlaethol 2040



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

**First National Development Plan  
published - Future Wales**

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**Front Cover:** Future Wales

## Editorial

There may well be light  
at the end of the tunnel to  
break out of the restrictions  
caused by the public health  
crisis, although we don't yet  
know how long the tunnel  
is, but with spring emerging  
let's take a glass half full  
approach.

It's a year since we all  
shifted to a new way of  
working. It's been a long  
stint but so much has  
happened, playing out on  
our small (and in some  
cases large) screens.  
Planning is a profession  
and discipline which is  
centred around people and  
places and so moving this  
on-line has been somewhat  
at odds with normality for  
us, but it had to be done  
and there have been great  
efforts to make it work;  
we hear about some in  
this edition of Cynllunio,  
including from the Planning  
Inspectorate.

The RTPI event programme  
also moved online and  
this has meant you can  
access any of our CPD  
events across the UK and  
Ireland more easily than

if they were face to face  
events. This continues in  
2021 - and for the webinars  
we have kept these as free  
for RTPI members, with a  
charge for non-members.

We have invested in digital  
technology and this year's  
Planner Live Wales (Wales  
Planning Conference)  
to be held on 8th June  
will be virtual but a new  
exciting experience, with  
opportunities for networking  
and exhibition stands;  
we'll also be running the  
breakout workshops this  
year. Look out for details of  
this exciting day. You'll have  
to bring your own coffee  
and lunch though.

Last month, Welsh  
Government published  
Future Wales - the first  
national development plan  
in the UK. We are very  
pleased to have an article  
by the Minister in this  
edition to talk about the  
new Plan. We also invited  
a handful of members from  
different perspectives to  
give us their initial thoughts.  
International Women's Day

was on 8th March and with  
that theme in mind, we  
are pleased to introduce  
2021's RTPI Cymru Chair  
- Jane Jones - and Gill  
Bristow, Cardiff University's  
School of Geography and  
Planning's first female Head  
of School, in this edition of  
Cynllunio.

There's a new Steering  
Committee for Young  
Planners Cymru (YPC) and  
we hear about them all in  
this edition, along with their  
new Chair - Kate Coventry.  
We have other interesting  
reads in this edition,  
providing the latest updates,  
including about biophilic  
living in Swansea.

Good luck to all the Finalists  
in this year's RTPI Awards  
for Planning Excellence  
- the Welsh Finalists are  
listed in this edition. Look  
out for the invitations for  
entries to this year's RTPI  
Cymru Awards for Planning  
Excellence, including our  
search for the 2021 Wales  
Young Planner of the Year.

*Roisin Willmott FRTPI,  
Editor*



## RTPI Cymru Chair, Jane Jones looks forward to a positive year

Following on from the events of 2020 and the Covid 19 pandemic, who would have thought the start of 2021 would see us in the depths of a further national lockdown. Hopefully though we start 2021 with greater optimism that life can begin to get back to some form of normality. Vaccination roll-out continues at pace and at the time of writing, there are encouraging sounds from the First Minister that lockdown restrictions may start to ease. Despite this there are no doubt many of us suffering from the restricted life style we currently lead; working from home, home schooling, lack of meeting with family and socialising with friends are all taking its toll – hopefully though we can now see light at the end of the tunnel.

Looking back at 2020, it has been a challenging time for all, but a year which actually achieved so much and involved adapting to many changes. A year which promised a varied and far reaching events calendar was soon turned on its head. Despite the upheaval, events continued albeit in a virtual format and in particular the Wales Planning Conference on climate action was a great success. The enforcement conference resulted in a joint effort from all Nations and Regions, resulting in a jammed packed week of virtual presentations and discussions. I was able to contribute to this event with my recent involvement with undertaking direct action.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Roisin, Rhian and Georgina at RTPI Cymru for making the impossible, possible. I'd also like to thank our outgoing Chair Simon Power for all his dedication and hard work during a very challenging and unpredictable 2020.

Turning to 2021, although no one knows exactly what lies ahead, there is a sense life can only get better. I think 2021 will be a year where we can build upon the new ways of working we have become accustomed to and it will also be a time to reflect upon the past and what we have learnt from it. As Chair, I've had to consider a theme for the coming year which has not been as easy as I first envisaged. With a planning career tailored around enforcement for the last twenty years, my immediate reaction was to tread down this route. I mean what better way to champion the role of planning enforcement officers and the important work they undertake within the planning system.

However in November 2019, I took on the role of Acting Planning Manager (secondment until December 2021) at Snowdonia National Park Authority. Since this appointment it has become very apparent to me that resourcing of planning services is vitally important and my theme will revolve around this issue. Local Planning Authorities are expected to deliver more services efficiently but with fewer resources. With continued budget constraints, planning services are under immense pressure.

Without properly resourced planning services, planning simply can't deliver. If we are going to recover from the impact of Covid 19, planning services need to be fully resourced to process applications for any development to take place. If this resource is not in place, then this impacts upon the private sector needs in terms of facilitating recovery.

Resourcing forms one of the central parts of the RTPI Cymru's Manifesto Asks for the Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament elections in 2021 and is also a key component of the RTPI's Corporate Strategy. In order to 'Plan the Wales we Need' we need an effective and positive planning service which is well resourced and can deliver corporate objectives, especially at a time where recovery from the pandemic is crucial.

*Jane Jones MRTPI  
RTPI Cymru Chair*



Above: Jane Jones, Chair RTPI Cymru

### Congratulations to our latest Chartered Town Planners



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

- Nia Borsey, Fisher German
- Kate Coventry, LRM Planning
- Alexandra Egge, Mott Macdonald
- Alexander Melling, Wood Group
- Adam Provoost, Bridgend County Borough Council

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](http://www.rtpi.org.uk).

# Future Wales: The National Plan

The Welsh Government published Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 on 24th February making it the first ever national development plan in the United Kingdom. The publication is the culmination of four years work and, despite being delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic, it is a reflection of the importance of the planning system that we, as Ministers, prioritised its delivery in this government term.

Future Wales helps to define the plan led nature of the planning system in Wales, something all planners should be proud of. It complements Planning Policy Wales, which has been updated and republished alongside Future Wales. Both documents share an empowering and creative vision for the planning system which is focussed more on the outcomes of our decisions on people and places rather than the processes which lie behind them.

Some of the main policy elements of Future Wales are:

- Strategic growth should be focused in three national growth areas. Not all parts of Wales are expected to grow equally. Future Wales determines that growth should be focussed in established built up areas and, in certain other places. In some growth areas there is a requirement to establish Green Belts to manage growth. National growth areas are complemented by regional growth areas spread throughout Wales.
- A strong emphasis on sustainable placemaking. City and town centres will benefit from a town centre first policy which relates to commercial, retail, education, health and public service facilities.
- In rural areas, growth patterns should be determined locally reflecting need. The character, service provision and accessibility of places should determine the aspirations and plans for growth. Future Wales prioritises vibrancy and quality of life over the pursuit of growth for its own sake.
- Future Wales identifies where and how new major renewable energy development will be acceptable. This reflects the Welsh Government's strong commitment to tackling climate change and the declaration of a climate emergency. It also identifies priority areas for district heat networks.
- Future Wales sets out a framework for regional planning, identifying what Strategic Development Plans should look like and the policy areas they must address.
- Flood risk in the growth areas should be addressed in a strategic way, while the plan places a strong emphasis on developing resilient ecological networks and green infrastructure
- There is a strong focus on delivering active travel, metro schemes and improving national connectivity. The transport policies complement the emerging Wales Transport Strategy – *Llwybr Newydd*
- A clear focus on the delivery of affordable housing helping to ensure that everyone has access to good housing.



Above: Julie James MS, Minister for Housing and Local Government

*"How can I help to implement Future Wales to make a reality of the quality places which we all aspire to?"*



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- Support for enhanced digital communications and a commitment to identify Mobile Action Zones where there is little or no mobile telecommunications coverage
- Support for the emerging National Forest, which will evolve over multiple sites across Wales.

It is no coincidence the publication of Future Wales follows shortly behind the granting of Royal Assent to the Local Government and Elections Act. This legislation establishes Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) to operate specific government functions on a regional basis across Wales. Regional land use planning is included in their remit and the Act specifically

requires them to prepare Strategic Development Plans. A significant part of Future Wales' policy content therefore relates to regional planning and the aim of facilitating the production of SDPs across Wales.

Future Wales has development plan status. This means local development plans must be in conformity with it and so planning authorities should assess whether they need to review their plans. Furthermore, Future Wales must now be taken into consideration in the determining of planning applications under section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.



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The success of Future Wales does not, however, lie in the statute. It needs to be put into practice and become embedded into the way we write plans, design schemes, take decisions.

The Welsh Government will work with everyone to align actions and spending priorities to deliver positive, sustainable outcomes. Through the implementation of Future Wales we will ensure other plans or programmes such as the Wales Transport Strategy, regeneration initiatives, social housing provision and the Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan all work together to deliver multiple benefits that are needed to deliver quality places.

I am very grateful for the support which we have had for the production of Future Wales. Future Wales demonstrates the best of the skills and inventiveness of the planning profession and reflects the importance of our planning system to everyone. The challenge for every planner now is :How can I help to implement Future Wales to make a reality of the quality places which we all aspire to?

*Julie James MS*

*Minister for Housing and Local Government*

**Future Wales can be  
downloaded from: [gov.wales/  
future-wales-national-plan-2040](https://gov.wales/future-wales-national-plan-2040)**

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## RTPI Cymru Welcomes Future Wales

While we digest the detail set out in the newly adopted Future Wales (the National Development Framework (NDF)), we must recognise the progress that has been made on the NDF, particularly over the past year. The impact of COVID19 has placed considerable strain on Government resources and the bringing forward of projects and plans. We congratulate Welsh Government on progressing this important plan that can help to shape the future of Wales in these difficult times.

Future Wales will provide the framework to strategically guide development in Wales, at a time where there is uncertainty around the future of planned projects, infrastructure finance and now that the UK has left the European Union.

It is important to recognise the spatial distinctiveness of places in developing policy. At the national level, it will be Future Wales which can facilitate an integrated approach, linking decisions on economic development with those on housing, climate change, energy generation, transport, health and other infrastructure, providing a spatial framework for investment.

For Future Wales to be successful, it is essential that its role in delivering Welsh Government objectives across all policies is understood and embraced. It has the potential to be a powerful tool, particularly as it forms part of the development plan in Wales, providing a comprehensive national spatial strategy which can link investment decisions across Government, public authorities and private investment. It is therefore vital that we work to better integrate our policies, plans, strategies and funding as well as effectively integrating our working practices across sectors.

We support the efforts to link the Marine Plan and Future Wales. We recognise the difficulties in aligning plans and timescales, but where possible the opportunity to create these links will provide a stronger framework. We recognise this is the first iteration of the NDF and future versions will help the Plan mature and forge further links over time. The second revision for example will allow alignment with Strategic Development Plans, which will develop over the next few years.

We have seen this positive evolution take place in Scotland. Where the well established regional tier will be integrated in the new Scottish National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). In this edition of Cynllunio, we hear from Robbie Calvert, the RTPI's Scotland Policy Officer on the benefits of their equivalent and why they have continued to invest in it.



## A view from the private sector



Above: Will Ryan  
MRTPI

For those of you who remember the “launch” of the 2004 Wales Spatial Plan (and its 2008 Revision) you will not be surprised to see it disappear over the horizon. This National Plan has a bit more substance and its role as part of the Development Plan in the determination of planning applications, as well as forming the basis for the preparation of Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) and Local Development Plans (LDPs), suggests that it does not suffer a similar indignity as its previous incarnations.

There is already evidence that decisions are being delayed until the implications of the document have been understood and interpreted, and the immediate concern is that this just adds another layer of policies to an already cumbersome process. In practice, despite its 184 pages, which includes a photograph of a cheeseboard, it boils down to 18 relatively familiar strategic policies and a similar number spread across the four regions.

The real test for this document will be whether it can deliver updated LDPs and subsequently SDPs that are robust and effectively promote sustainable (in all senses of the word) development in Wales for the next generation. It is concerning that it seems light on effective economic and R&D policies that will need to form the basis of the short-term recovery from the effects of the pandemic as well as meeting longer term objectives.

By coincidence, or not, the week that *Future Wales* was launched the Welsh Government also announced policies to “futureproof manufacturing” and to provide significant additional funding to the Development Bank of Wales. The key to the effective delivery of these and other economic initiatives, and to meeting the aims of *Future Wales*, will be to ensure that there is joined up thinking in the public sector that can sit alongside private investment to deliver economic and environmental targets for the benefit of Wales.

*Future Wales* is not a ground-breaking document that will transform the country over the next 20 years, but we need to be careful that the policies are not interpreted by decision makers in a manner that will frustrate transformation where it can be achieved.

*Will Ryan MRTPI MCIWM*  
*Will is Director at Tetra Tech*



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## Future Wales and the Regions



Above: Brian Webb  
AssocRTPI

*Future Wales* might be a national development framework but it also provides the foundation for regional planning in Wales, as any potential Strategic Development Plan must be in conformity with it. As a national strategy it must also seek to ensure coordination across and between places in Wales. It does this in part through the identification of national and regional growth areas, national and international connections, areas of environmental importance, and key infrastructure. The regions identified - North, Mid Wales, South West, and South East – provide useful anchors to consider not only the broader functional dynamics present in Wales but also acknowledge more pragmatic existing partnerships at the local level.

Defining a region for a national plan is, however, a tricky task because regions also have cultural, political, and historical meaning for many people. The first iteration of the draft National Development Framework saw only three regions initially identified. These were later changed to four following consultation - highlighting how contested such a process can be. The Well-being of Future Generations Act also adds another dimension as the territorial scope of a region might change, from for instance a more functional economic perspective to a broader range of socio-cultural and environmental considerations, when viewed through the long-term well-being lens.

There have also been criticisms of the regional boundaries selected. Some argue that not all of the regions represent functional economic areas, while others suggest that they lack a shared identity. This indeed may be true at present, but we must remember that this is a twenty-year strategy. The goal is not just to assess the current strategic relationships now, but to envision and plan for what those relationships might be in the future. It now falls on the authors of the regional Strategic Development Plans to consult and consider how best to take their region forward to achieve the long-term national aspirations set out in *Future Wales*.

*Brian Webb AssocRTPI*  
*Brian is Senior Lecturer in Spatial Planning at the School of Geography and Planning, Cardiff University*

# Future Wales – An RSPB Perspective

Future Wales comes at a critical time, and the dual climate and nature emergencies are central in this new national framework.

Planning has a critical role to play in protecting, enhancing and supporting restoration of sites and habitats at a large scale, enabling our biodiversity to recover as well as helping mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change through nature-based solutions. Future Wales is one part of a suite of documents that will need to deliver on this ambition. A full and comprehensive review of Planning Policy Wales along with the development and delivery of the Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) and Local Development Plans (LDPs) will also be vital.

Given this framing, a number of policies are particularly welcome. Policy 9 'Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure' provides for the identification and protection of areas to be safeguarded as ecological networks for their potential importance for climate change, habitat restoration or provision of key ecosystem services.

The RSPB believes that the safeguarding and appropriate management of our most important wildlife sites is vital for nature's recovery and that these sites need to be at the heart of resilient ecological networks. We hoped to see the inclusion of a specific policy focusing on protected sites, recognising their important role - particularly as the latest reports show that very significant proportions of these sites are not in favourable condition. Whilst this has not been explicitly included in Future Wales, we remain optimistic that this can be addressed within the SDPs and future revisions to Planning Policy Wales. The new commitment, across the UK, to secure 30% of land protected and well-managed for nature by 2030 should add greater weight to this issue.

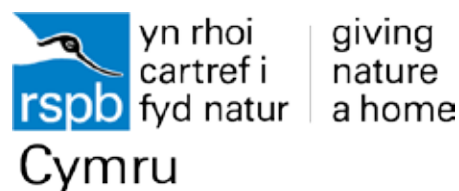
We welcome the commitment to the identification of strategic green infrastructure opportunities within development proposals. We fully support the requirement stated in Policy 9 to use nature-based solutions as a key mechanism for securing sustainable growth, ecological connectivity, social equality and public well-being. We are pleased to see Future Wales requires Planning Authorities to include these areas within Development Plans and Strategies in order to promote and safeguard the functions and opportunities they provide.

The policy support afforded to nature-based flood risk management solutions, provision of biodiversity benefit (Policy 8) and to the National Forest (Policy 15) are welcomed.

We also welcome the commitment for development to deliver Net Biodiversity Benefit – a clear recognition of the role planning must play in nature's recovery.

We note with optimism the commitment within the Framework to full suite of new documents and Plans that the Government wish to bring forward to help achieve the aims of Future Wales. However, we remain concerned about the much lighter touch currently applied to spatial planning of our marine environment, meaning that delivering marine renewable energy projects may continue to throw up individual and cumulative conflicts in terms of nature protection, protected areas and marine ecosystem resilience. This risks exacerbating the nature crisis rather than securing vitally important renewable energy in harmony with nature.

In summary, we welcome Future Wales and we look forward to working with the Welsh Government, planning authorities and other partners in ensuring it helps to drive nature's recovery.



## Project Ireland 2040

Project Ireland 2040 is the overarching policy and planning framework for the social, economic and cultural development of the Republic of Ireland.

It differs to Future Wales and the Scottish NPF in that it includes a detailed capital investment plan for the period 2018 to 2027. It also incorporates the National Development Plan 2018-2027, and the 20-year National Planning Framework 2040.

The Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, Eoghan Murphy T.D. states: "By aligning our spatial planning with our investment decisions – by aligning the National Planning Framework with the ten-year National Development Plan – we will for the first time have a meaningful planning framework that people can have confidence will deliver for their communities."

To read more about the Plan go to: [npl.ie](https://npl.ie)



# A View from a Local Planning Authority

The publication of Future Wales, the first statutory Development Plan covering the whole of Wales, is an exciting change for the planning system in Wales, particularly as it sets the framework for regional Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) which offer great opportunities to build and strengthen the existing collaborative working in the regions. In the Cardiff Capital Region we have been eager to start an SDP for some time. With support from Elected Members and the publication of Future Wales along with the establishment of the new Corporate Joint Committees, we have the tools we need to start the SDP for South East Wales.

I welcome the emphasis Future Wales places on tackling climate change and pushing for sustainable placemaking by directing that new development should take place in locations benefitting from good sustainable transport connections with a range of local facilities. This can be a challenge across Wales where existing communities differ significantly in urban, suburban and rural locations. The ability to respond to the policies in Future Wales will vary from one place to another and it will be up to Local Planning Authorities to demonstrate what works for their areas through their SDPs and Local Development Plans.

I look forward to meeting with Welsh Government officials to talk through in detail what Future Wales means for us in the Vale of Glamorgan and how we respond to this new policy framework when starting our LDP review later this year. We are already addressing it in Development Management decisions where it takes immediate effect and talking to applicants and agents about how it effects their live applications.

*Victoria Robinson*

*Victoria is Operational Manager for Planning and Building Control at the Vale of Glamorgan Council*



Above: Victoria Robinson  
MRTPI

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## Future Wales 2040 – One Small Step for Man



Above: Martin Buckle  
MRTPI

While a parallel with the “great leap for mankind” of the Apollo 11 Mission, in first landing a man on the moon, might be unfair, the Welsh Government should nonetheless be congratulated for completing the first Development Plan for Wales. This is a significant achievement.

Those of us with long memories will remember many moons ago the excitement in planning circles when work started on the Wales Spatial Plan. I recall a first consultation event around the year 2000. With new governance arrangements for planning in Wales with the Welsh Assembly, this was an ambitious step.

The Spatial Plan was not to become a statutory Development Plan, in part I believe, to avoid a lengthy national public inquiry. Now having a national Development Plan without an inquiry is a significant step. Could this be a pointer to simpler systems for Local Development Plans in the future?

From my perspective on the Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee, the final version represents great progress over the Consultation Draft. The addition of Policy 8 on Flooding reflects the Committee’s advice, and demonstrates that planning in Wales is getting to grips with climate change adaptation as well as mitigation. The recognition that most growth areas face significant flood risks from rivers and from the sea is critical. It emphasises the need for close collaboration between planning and flood risk management authorities on Strategic Development Plans, and in development management. This is carried through by the National Plan’s policies for regional growth areas.

Inevitably, many will feel that the new plan could have gone further on their own areas of interest. As our understanding of the climate and how to respond to change evolves, the 5 year updates of the plan will be crucial. For me, the key bit of unfinished business is around coastal adaptation, and how, with rising sea levels, we plan for managed retreat. Ultimately, Future Wales should be assessed alongside PPW and the TANs in how they collectively provide a framework for decisions. From a flood risk perspective, the next urgent priority is to complete the review of TAN15 on flooding.

*Martin Buckle*

*Chair – Wales Flood & Coastal Erosion Committee*





# Does Future Wales Consider the Welsh Language?

Director of RTPI Cymru Roisin Willmott FRTPI draws attention<sup>1</sup> to the need long-term support for all portfolios within the Welsh government and from wider society for the ambitious aims of Future Wales to succeed. From a Welsh language perspective this includes in particular support from economy, education, housing, local government, and social care.

Future Wales has as one of its 11 outcomes “A Wales where people live .... In places with a thriving Welsh language”.

In my Cynllunio (Autumn 2020 edition) article I called for “a better understanding of the relationship between a cultural and social phenomenon such as language and the development and the use and development of land and a better understanding of how Placemaking can maximise the conditions that will encourage an increase in the number and percentage of Welsh speakers across Wales and an increase in the number of people who speak Welsh daily”.

The forewords by the First Minister and the Minister for Housing and Local Government rightly emphasise the ground breaking nature of the plan in seeking to contribute to promoting wellbeing, a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Wales and to creating healthy, vibrant places with strong community spirit. However, for the government to justify saying it has achieved a distinctively Welsh planning system it must do more to plan spatially for a thriving Welsh Language across the nation. This means there is room for further improving the aligning of Future Wales with the ambitions in Cymraeg 2050 by strengthening the evidence base and by developing a national spatial policy.

Encouragingly, Future Wales states that “*the language will be an embedded consideration in the spatial strategy of all development plans*”<sup>2</sup> which should therefore include future reviews of Future Wales as it evolves as well as guiding strategic and local development plans. In this context it might be helpful to ask the question five, ten years down the line – has Future Wales supported the growth plans for the growth of the use of the Welsh language?

The Spatial Strategy identifies where national and regional growth is to be concentrated. It is even more vital that strategic placemaking - and specifically the growth areas - identify the appropriate economic, educational and cultural spaces and infrastructure that will enable the Welsh language to grow and thrive in such places. This may or may not include some of the traditional heartlands of the language but all should be included as future places of a vibrant Welsh language usage and culture.

From a Welsh language lens therefore seven out of ten but could do more!

Owain Wyn FRTPI

<sup>1</sup> RTPI Press Release 24 February 2021

<sup>2</sup> Future Wales, page 54, Outcome 4



Above: Owain Wyn FRTPI

## Scottish National Planning Framework

*Robbie Calvert, RTPI Policy Officer for Scotland sets out his thoughts on the evolution of the Scottish NPF and ambitions of the NPF4 giving light on the value Future Wales can offer to Wales.*

The NPF is a long term spatial plan for Scotland that sets out where development and infrastructure is needed to support sustainable and inclusive growth over the next 30 years. Following the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 a review of Scotland's strategic planning system was undertaken, one outcome of which was the identified need for a national spatial strategy. NPF1 subsequently published in 2004, NPF2 in 2009 and NPF3 in 2014. These spatial strategies have sought to support city-regions, identify key corridors and routes to enhance connectivity, support rural economies through diversification, set out priorities for infrastructure investment and recognise the need for co-ordinated action in areas. Each NPF has had a strong visual element, including a key map which sets out the proposed suite of national developments.

We now await the publication of the draft NPF4 in September 2021, which will look considerably different to previous iterations. NPF4 will for the first time incorporate Scottish Planning Policy and will take on enhanced status as part of the statutory development plan. It will also receive full parliamentary scrutiny alongside public consultations.

Ahead of the publication of the draft plan RTPI Scotland have published [10 big ideas for the NPF4](#) and we are in the process of responding to the Scottish Government's recently published Position Statement. The document contains a particular focus on net zero emissions, resilient communities, a wellbeing economy and better, greener places. We are in no doubt that the NPF, with new collaborative thinking and new ideas has the potential to help transform Scotland's environment, places, communities and economy. The Position Statement provides us with a strong and very promising foundation for this and shows how planning can support a sustainable and equitable green economic recovery that delivers the new normal we need post the Covid-19 pandemic. Our key focus at this stage is ensuring we have a national plan that clearly articulates the responsibilities, collective cooperation, funding, timing and resources to deliver on the outcomes for Scotland.

# Planning Policy Wales: Edition 11 - What's changed?

Following publication of Future Wales a new version of Planning Policy Wales has been issued and TAN 8 was revoked. The main changes that have been made to Edition 10 (December 2018) of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) which are contained in the new Edition 11 (February 2021) are summarised below.

**Chapter 1 Introduction** - has been updated to take account of changes made to the Notification Directions on major residential development and on coal and petroleum development.

Reference to the application of the Socio-economic Duty in the planning system has been added. The aim of this Duty, which is due to come into effect on 31 March 2021, is to reduce inequalities resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.

An explanatory diagram regarding the linkages between planning policy and development plans has also been added.

**Chapter 2 People and Places: Achieving Well-being Through Placemaking** - has been updated by making reference to the Covid-19 pandemic and the Welsh Government's Building Better Places document which identifies relevant planning policy priorities and actions to aid in the recovery.

Information about the Placemaking Wales Charter has also been added.

**Chapter 3 Strategic and Spatial Choices** - The section of Chapter 3 which covers the 'Sustainable Management of Natural Resources' has been updated to include wider links to decarbonisation and energy.

The section about the use of compulsory purchase powers by local authorities to unlock the development potential of sites has been strengthened.

There is an update to promote the incorporation of drinking water fountains or refill stations as part of development in public areas, in accordance with the Welsh Government's commitment to progress work on free drinking water in public places.

**Chapter 4 Active and Social Places** - The section in Chapter 4 covering active travel has been expanded to make it a requirement to put active travel and public transport infrastructure in place early in the development process. This change has been made in response to feedback on the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 received by Senedd Cymru's cross-party group on this Act.

Also under 'transport', the policy on ultra-low emission vehicles has been amended as elements of it have been transferred to Future Wales – the National Plan 2040. In addition, an update is provided regarding ensuring that the design of new streets supports the wider Welsh Government work on making 20 mph the new default speed limit and prevents pavement parking.

The 'Housing Delivery' section has been updated to reflect the policy changes regarding housing land supply that were made by the Minister for Housing and Local Government in March 2020. These changes removed the five-year housing land supply policy and replaced it with a policy statement making it explicit that the housing trajectory set out in an adopted Local Development Plan (LDP) will be the basis for monitoring the delivery of development plan housing requirements as part of LDP Annual Monitoring Reports.

The 'Affordable Housing' section has been updated to reflect the Minister's policy statement in July 2019 regarding the need for local planning authorities to make provision for affordable housing led sites when reviewing their LDPs. In addition, it has been clarified that all affordable housing, including that delivered through planning obligations and planning conditions, is required to meet the Welsh Government's development quality standards.

**Chapter 5 Productive and Enterprising Places** has been updated to reflect the renewable energy policies and approach set out in Future Wales and the wider Welsh Government energy policy. The changes have resulted in the removal of the references to Strategic Search Areas and the revocation of Technical Advice Note 8, Renewable Energy. Reference is also made to Local Energy Planning and the introduction of the Welsh Government's local ownership policy for all renewable energy projects in Wales.

Updates to reflect Future Wales have also been made to the sections on 'Electronic Communications', 'Economic Development', 'Tourism', and the 'Rural Economy'.

**Chapter 6 Distinctive and Natural Places** has been updated to emphasise the importance of National Parks in light of the involvement of National Park Authorities in the preparation of Strategic Development Plans, reflecting the relevant policy in Future Wales.

There is also a clarification to support historic environment best practice guidance on giving consideration to the settings of archaeological remains as part of development proposals.

## Other updates

Throughout PPW changes have been made to reflect the name change for Future Wales from the National Development Framework and also changes to the terminology regarding 'climate change' to reflect the Welsh Government's declaration of the 'climate emergency' in April 2019.

A number of minor changes have also been made to update reference documents and other footnotes.



# 'Gender mainstreaming' key to planning places that work for all

A gender dimension should be incorporated into all stages of the planning process to ensure benefits for all, a new research paper from the RTPI has concluded.

**Women and Planning: creating gender-sensitive urban environments post-Covid-19** argues for the implementation of urban planning policies sensitive to gender-specific needs - known as 'gender mainstreaming' - into all policy, legislative and decision-making practices.

This approach, the report says, would help to ensure that future built environment solutions have equal regard to the experiences of all people irrespective of gender, particularly as the world moves into a post-pandemic recovery period.

However, the study found that the integration of gender mainstreaming into spatial policy-making has been held back by a range of different factors including inadequacies of both the education and planning systems, which has resulted in gender inequalities going largely undiscussed and hidden from view.

The report, published on International Women's Day 2021, was co-authored by RTPI Policy and Networks Adviser Jenny Divine and Deputy Head of Policy and Research Professor Aude Biquelet-Lock.

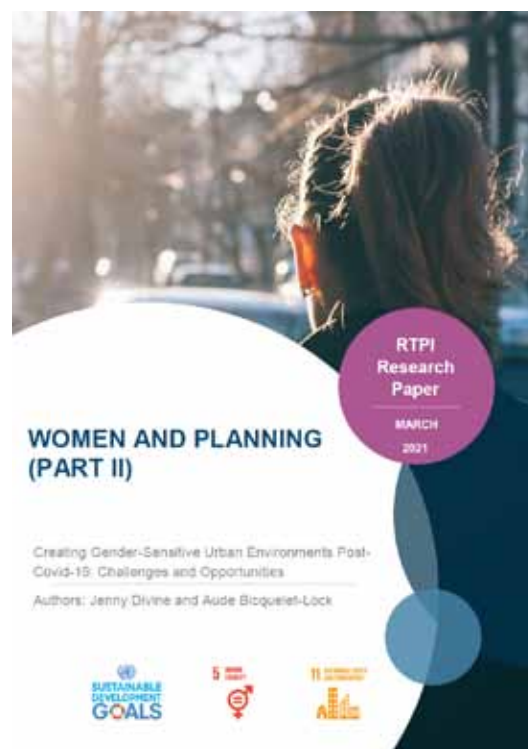
RTPI President Wei Yang FRTP said: "The implementation of gender mainstreaming into every stage of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of urban planning policies, programmes, and projects will ensure that gender equality is enhanced and that all people benefit equally.

"There is much work still to be done. Systemic inadequacies in the planning and education systems which were uncovered by our research continue to hinder women's ability to shape policies and progress decisions that have positive implications for gender equality attainment.

"However, as we begin the recovery from the pandemic, there is huge potential to integrate a gender dimension into the place-based initiatives that UK governments are increasingly exploring to facilitate a joined-up and collaborative approach to planning. Incorporating a gender dimension will create opportunities to expose hidden inequalities, break down the gender biases that have been present for too long in the built environment, and create solutions that have regard to the experiences of all people."

Qualitative data was collected for the research via questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with 50 female and 2 male planners. The majority of respondents were based in the UK but the study also includes the views of respondents based in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the US.

The new report is the second in a series from the RTPI. **Women and Planning: An analysis of gender-related barriers to professional advancement** was published in February 2020.



## Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill has now received Royal Assent. The Act provides a consistent governance mechanism for delivering services across Wales on a regional basis and establishes four Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) across the whole of Wales.

The CJCs will lead on preparing, monitoring, reviewing and revising Strategic Development Plans (SDPs); develop a Regional Transport Plan (RTP); and an economic well-being function, enabling them to evolve the current regional approaches to City/Growth Deals into the CJC structures.

Regulations are now required to implement each CJC.

## Safer buildings in Wales: White Paper

Welsh Government are currently consulting on proposals for reform of building safety legislation. It focuses on legislative change across the lifecycle of buildings as well as setting out aspirations for culture change in the way buildings are designed, constructed and managed.

It is proposed that the scope of the Building Safety Regime covers all multi-occupied residential buildings. Multi-occupied residential building refer to any building where there are two or more dwellings, regardless of whether there is a shared front door to the building.

The consultation closes on 12th April 2021 and the consultation documents can be viewed here: [gov.wales/safer-buildings-wales](https://gov.wales/safer-buildings-wales)



# A New Outlook at the School of Geography and Planning - we welcome the new Head of School

*Gill Bristow took over as the new Head of School at the School of Geography and Planning at Cardiff University in 2021 and shares with us her vision.*

The School of Geography and Planning at Cardiff University has been in existence for 55 years and whilst much has changed during this time, our strong tradition of supporting placemaking through quality education, research and engagement has remained central to who we are and what we do. We have always placed strong emphasis upon applied and immersive learning through project work, case studies and site and field study visits, and we are proud of our track record in producing graduates with a strong understanding of how and why places change and how they can be improved through planning practice and policy. In recent years we have also diversified our programmes and areas of expertise, and by expanding our breadth of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes we have grown significantly in terms of our student body and numbers of staff and have been able to broaden our reach. We have opened up new opportunities for human geography students to pursue careers in planning and development, and we have enhanced our capacity to provide planning graduates with more specialist knowledge in key areas of planning practice. Throughout our evolution, we have sustained our commitment to being research intensive and highly engaged academics. Our educational offer continues to be moulded by the internationally-renowned research and practice expertise of our staff, and both our teaching and research are powerfully brought to life and practice through our rich collaborations and commitment to engaging with others.

The School's capacity to continually adapt and change has never been more important of course. The pandemic has not been an easy time for anyone and like many, we have had to adapt quickly to the challenges of working remotely, including the demands of home schooling and the other restrictions and stresses associated with lockdown life. We have had to make a significant shift in our teaching to deliver our courses online, which has required the intensive and rapid redesign of much of our programme delivery. This has required colleagues to demonstrate considerable agility in finding the right digital platforms and tools to deliver learning outcomes and to best maintain the classroom experience and engagement with our student community. Here, particular credit is due to the outgoing Head of School – Paul Milbourne – who has skilfully steered the School through this time of uncertainty and change, and to all colleagues in the School who have found ever more innovative ways to bring online learning to life. There has been much that has been positive as well as challenging about these changes in our ways of working, and we are in the midst of taking stock and reflecting on what has worked well for us and for our students. So whilst we are undoubtedly really looking forward to the days when we are able to spend more time together in the Glamorgan Building, we are likely to retain a blended form of learning which mixes face to face teaching and online delivery into the future.

Careful consideration of what this digital transformation means for our activities and ways of working over the longer-term, will form a critical element of a wider review of our School's strategy that I'm about to initiate. We need to embark on a refresh of our mission and vision for the next five years, and it's important that we do this as a School community so that the resulting strategy is collectively owned and inclusive by design. This will mean creating time and space in the busy-ness of our day-to-day work to review and reflect, and to think creatively and long-term. There will be many questions we will want to consider including how we might consolidate our recent growth, and more broadly where are the new opportunities for us to help create spaces and places which uplift communities and which are fit for society's current and future challenges.

Finding ways to capitalise on our strengths will be a critically important part of this exercise and I see enormous value in the School's distinctive mix of planning and human geography expertise to contemporary placemaking challenges. I recently read Rob Chapman's thought piece in the Winter 2020 edition of *Cynllunio*, and found the notion of developing 'places for life' particularly compelling. This agenda gets at the heart of the intrinsic connections between the built environment, land

*there is "much to be optimistic about in terms of our scope and willingness to help develop places for life"*

use and infrastructure (the hardware of places), and the health, wellbeing and quality of life (the software of places). It is these connections that we can better understand through the complementarity of planning and human geography expertise. Our breadth of disciplinary knowledge brings us valuable additional insight into how spatial planning fits into and is supported by the wider social, economic, environmental and policy systems that shape places. We have

an enriched understanding, for example, of the impact of austerity on local authorities, of the opportunities for public procurement in support of local food systems, on how tackling poverty, homelessness, climate change and resilience all require an understanding of the complexities of local, city and regional governance, and an assessment of where the critical levers are for change. Making sure we make the most of this understanding and the intersections between planning, policy and place is a critical challenge for us.

Through our teaching teams there are opportunities to map our programmes against key place challenges and sustainable development goals, and to continue to strengthen our connections between areas of learning and critical policy frameworks such as Future Wales and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. It is also a good time to look afresh at our research clusters and groups, not least because we have come to the end of our preparations for the 2021 Research Excellence



Above: Gillian Bristow

Framework (or REF) – the periodic process of assessing the quality of research outputs, environment and impact. This means we have already started to identify where our collective research strengths lie and how our activities support those of key local, national and international organisations and partners. We will also need to better focus and co-ordinate our efforts to positively impact on the development of better places in Wales and the Cardiff Capital Region, and we will need to enhance our understanding of when and where we can take the lead, where we can facilitate or convene, and where we can support or challenge others in making positive change.

Above all, our new strategy needs to be based on a strong set of principles and values, values which I see as including amongst others a focus on promoting resilience, inclusivity, collaboration and critical inquiry. As the new Head of School, I realise the important role I can play in setting the tone for the School, embedding these values and shaping how our culture and community will work. However, I'm crucially aware that that fulfilling our mission will require a genuinely collaborative effort both within and outside the School. I'm delighted to be the first female Head of School in our history and hope this will provide a positive spur to our equality, diversity and inclusion agenda, but there is much to do collectively to enhance the diversity of the planning profession and related careers. As such, I am very keen that the School strengthens the relationship we have with RTPI Cymru and with all our partners committed to this task, and I am committed to encouraging and supporting others to do the same. As a School working in the dynamic and changeable environment of Higher Education, we will continue to need to be agile and responsive to differing demands and developments. But at the same time we will also need to hold fast to our commitment to playing a leading role in training the next generation of planning professionals and scholars in placemaking.

So, there is clearly much to do, but I feel there is also much to be optimistic about in terms of our scope and willingness to help develop places for life. I'm certainly really looking forward to the next few years and to working together with all our partners, alumni, colleagues and students on this ever more important task.



## RTPI Cymru Policy Update

There has been a climate focus in our RTPI Cymru policy work so far this year.

At the end of 2020 the Climate Change Committee (CCC) published its report 'The Pathway to Net Zero and Reducing Emissions in Wales' which states that "the Committee's evidence and analysis now supports a recommendation for Wales to pursue an ambitious target to reduce all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050." This exceeds the previous recommendation for Wales to reduce emissions by 95% in 2050.

Welsh Government has responded to this by committing to net zero by 2050, but with the ambition to "get there sooner".

With this in mind, in response to Llwybr Newydd: a New Wales Transport Strategy, RTPI Cymru called for a "more integrated approach to transport and land use planning" in line with the findings of the RTPI Net Zero Carbon Transport research. "It is vital that we work to better integrate transport and development planning policies, plans, strategies and funding as well as effectively integrating our working practices across these and other sectors, if we are to enable a modal shift, achieve decarbonisation, net zero targets and climate action goals."

We were also pleased to respond to the Welsh government's Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Strategy. Of course the change to electric vehicles will help achieve these goals, but must be considered as part of an overall integrated transport strategy. It is important that planning for EV charging continues to sit alongside plans for improving provision for active travel and other sustainable modes of travel.

We look forward to Future Wales, the national forest and other measures that will help to support Wales' ambitious net zero targets. The climate focus in our policy work will continue into the spring with further Welsh Government consultations on a Clean Air Bill and the hydrogen energy sector.

The Climate Change Committee (December 2020) report [www.theccc.org.uk/publication/the-path-to-net-zero-and-progress-reducing-emissions-in-wales/](https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/the-path-to-net-zero-and-progress-reducing-emissions-in-wales/)

RTPI Net Zero Carbon Transport research [www.rtpi.org.uk/research/2020/june/net-zero-transport-the-role-of-spatial-planning-and-place-based-solutions/](https://www.rtpi.org.uk/research/2020/june/net-zero-transport-the-role-of-spatial-planning-and-place-based-solutions/)

Members' views on consultations are always welcome and should be submitted to [walespolicy@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:walespolicy@rtpi.org.uk)

Visit the RTPI Blog webpage [www.rtpi.org.uk/briefing-room/rtpi-blog/](https://www.rtpi.org.uk/briefing-room/rtpi-blog/)

*Rhian Brimble MRTPI*

*Rhian is Policy Officer for RTPI Cymru and can be contacted by e-mail: [rhian.brimble@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:rhian.brimble@rtpi.org.uk)*



Above: Rhian Brimble  
MRTPI

# A Virtual Inquiry / Hearings Update from Planning Inspectorate Wales ('PINS Wales')

## Preparing for virtual events

PINS Wales has been busy preparing and implementing our approach to the holding of events during the pandemic.

Where possible and appropriate, casework only requiring a site visit has continued. Our approach to oral events has been developed in parallel to, and alongside, the work being carried out for casework in England. Initial casework included a blended / hybrid inquiry held for, and in conjunction with, Welsh Government that drew on technical resources and support from Welsh Government. Our other timetabled events are being delivered by PINS Wales.

This article summarises our experiences of holding one of the PINS Wales resourced events, namely, the Morlais Demonstration Zone Order inquiry. The inquiry is dealing with an application to the Welsh Ministers under the Transport and Works Act 1992 ('TWA') for a tidal energy scheme that would support the development, trialling and application of tidal energy technologies in UK waters. A pre-inquiry meeting ('PIM') for the Morlais application was held in November 2019, and approximately 140 people attended the Trearddur Bay Hotel for that. A second, and now virtual, PIM was held in November 2020: to deal with the arrangements for the virtual inquiry; but also to test our proposed virtual inquiry room, our Inspector and event administration co-ordination, and the preparedness of participants for the online environment.

In November 2020, we provided training to support our staff in the holding of virtual events, and then shared initial experiences from them. The Morlais TWA inquiry opened on 01.12.2020 and closing submissions are being heard on 11 and 12.02.2021.

## How was it?

Good to be back doing a real event, even though everyone was remote from each other. Typically we had 30-40 people in the inquiry, or inquiry round table, sessions. We had fewer people (i.e. ~10-20) during three days of formal inquiry sessions to deal with compulsory acquisition (i.e. Compulsory Purchase), but only two parties to the inquiry were active in those sessions.

## Participation in the event?

As indicated above, we ran formal inquiry sessions for some matters and inquiry round table sessions (i.e. a hearing format) for others. For formal inquiry sessions, there is little difference to being in a room, except that in a remote format, it is not possible to detect and control electronic prompting of the witness or guiding from behind the camera. (But even if that were to occur, would it change the outcome of a cross-examination?)

Perhaps virtual hearing sessions are more challenging, as they are less formal and the structure can be more fluid. As a consequence, people need to be clear about what they are participating in. There is an unambiguous, self-explanatory, logic about a table with chairs around it that the virtual environment does not convey to the same extent. The Morlais inquiry had presentations from particular interest groups during some of the round table sessions. In some respects, these assisted the virtual format by helping parties address the lack of an accompanied site visit during the pandemic. However, it is important that all those involved in these online events remember that they are still a tribunal, even if the on-line environment is often used for less formal meetings and communications.

Just how the MS Teams environment is to be used during an event will be determined by the Inspector. In the Morlais inquiry, we asked people to keep their cameras and microphones switched off until they wished to speak. In that large event, it helped to keep the inquiry focussed on the participants who were active at that time. 'Presenter' status was provided to those wishing to share a screen to draw attention to a particular piece of evidence or to make a presentation.

## How was it as the Inspector?

In comparison to a real room, the Inspector does not have the table, chair, nameplate, position in the room, and physical presence that communicates their role in proceedings. The Inspector may have to adapt their management of the event to compensate. That may include 'spotlighting' themselves to provide additional focus on what they are saying, but the event has a different 'dynamic'.

During inquiry sessions, barristers and other participants are not able to 'follow the Inspector's pen', nor are parties always clear which document the Inspector is looking at when they are responding to questions. As a result, in hearing sessions a party, using their screen and the documents on it, can start to follow their own route through the evidence to a much greater





extent than they would do in a conventional room. The Inspector will be actively seeking to ensure that everyone is in the same place in the evidence. But that is the different 'dynamic', and all parties just need to remember that the Inspector cannot see their 'desktop', as they would do in a real room.

People are used to being in virtual chat rooms. The intention is to run virtual events in the same manner as an in-room event. So, just as you would not seek to chat to the Inspector in an in-room hearing or inquiry, the 'chat' function in the Microsoft Teams virtual room is not to be used as if you are in a 'chat room'. It is there to enable emergency communication with the Inspector and administrator concerning the running of the event, for example, if you or a member of your team are having, or have had, connection problems.

We have worked hard to provide a stable and reliable platform for our virtual events. However, unusual things can happen in the Teams virtual environment, especially if a connection starts to drop out or fail. This has included difficulties in muting / unmuting an attendee and other 'loops' or 'freezes'. Thankfully, these things are rare, but there is not much that we can do in a virtual room when they do occur. If something unusual happens with your connection to the virtual room, it is best to leave and re-enter, and this is straightforward to do. If necessary, a hearing or inquiry can be adjourned for a short period to enable an active party to re-join.

It is apparent that the successful delivery of our virtual events is founded on 'real-time' teamwork between the Inspector, the event administrative support, and from time to time, specialist technical support. This has enabled our tribunals to run successfully and gives us confidence in the application of this approach, which has proven especially useful during the pandemic.

### How was it for the case / event administrator?

For the Morlais Demonstration Zone Order it was quite clear early on that an inquiry was going to be required. Of course, this was before the Covid-19 lockdowns, it was assumed that a physical event could be held. As it became apparent that this would not be possible, we set about facilitating a virtual inquiry that was practicable and met the needs of all participants and the Inspector.

A test event, or in the case of the Morlais Demonstration Zone Order a second PIM/Test event, was booked into the administrator's and Inspector's calendars. A link to this meeting was included with the Invite letter to all the parties who had engaged with the process to that date. As part of this test event the Inspector demonstrated and explained some of the key functions of Teams that would be used as part of the inquiry process. These included the basics like turning your camera and mic on and off and when this should be done, and participants were shown how to use the 'raise a hand' feature to gain the Inspector's attention. If any party had any connection issues or struggled with the platform the event administrator was able to follow up on this outside the PIM and before the main event so as to ensure those parties could adequately engage.

The invite to the main event included a fresh link which covered the whole inquiry which made things simpler for participants. Participants were advised to join 30 mins before each session to ensure that their equipment was working, and the administrator could be confident that everyone was in before the start time. During this period before the start of the event a banner was shared to welcome people and included instructions that mics and cameras should be turned off.

Ensuring that you are in an area with good bandwidth is integral to participating fully at a virtual hearing or inquiry. If connectivity is an issue, there are a number of things to try. Turning incoming video feed off means that you can still hear what is going on and be heard and may help with your connection. You would not be able to see anyone but is an easy way to free up some bandwidth. Additionally, you could turn your own camera off, this is not a preferred option as it is useful to the inquiry to see who is speaking, but if necessary, is a route that can be taken.

### Conclusion

Hopefully, this is of assistance to those participating in virtual events. The virtual platform can be demanding for the Inspector, support team and participants. That said, the option of wearing an alternative to formal hearing / inquiry shoes will be welcomed by many...so the potential advantages of the virtual event quickly became apparent.

*"would an in-room event change the outcome of a cross-examination?"*

Also for multi-day examinations and inquiries, parties may find it easier to prepare for the next day when at the end of the virtual sitting day there is no need to travel, or find suitable food and accommodation if you are away from home.

Are virtual events the way forward? Travel has always been an important part of the Inspector's job, but there are distinct advantages and potential benefits for Inspectors who can conduct events effectively from home. Even so, some events are likely still to be more effective and preferable 'face to face' in a room, not just for the engagement with and between parties, but also for critical or complex questioning / cross-examination. So, would an in-room event change the outcome of a cross-examination? Maybe not the outcome, but some in-room events have the potential to provide great clarity on the robustness of the most complex cases. The on-line environment will struggle to match the immediacy and intensity of exchanges in such an inquiry / examination room. However, virtual events are demonstrating potential advantages for a range of casework and opportunities for sustainable and inclusive participation within them.

*Clive Sproule, Inspector*

*Phil Thompson, Administrator*

# An Ugly, Lovely Town full of potential

On Thursday 4th February 2021 I was inspired.

After a long day looking at the computer screen, working from home, living a relatively sedentary lifestyle I was brimming with excitement, eagerly anticipating a 2-hour session with my computer. The title of this session 'Biophilic Living Swansea; A radical approach to living in the city'. The subject, the integration of sustainability, housing, regeneration, community involvement and green infrastructure to improve Swansea City Centre all in one building. The proposal aims to provide a mixed-use development in the centre of the city providing affordable new homes and workspace alongside a community farm. Needless to say, my excitement was warranted.

My interest in this project comes from its unique nature. The scheme was awarded funding from the Welsh Government as part of the Innovative Housing Programme and is seen as a trial for many. It is a first of its kind in the UK and therefore aims to provide the precedent to become a scalable solution in the way we conceive inner city development. In practice this scheme and many others like it could truly revitalise the way we produce development in south Wales and the way we think about land use within urban contexts.

It is essential that we rethink development in terms of environmental impact and economic viability to ensure greater resilience, health and well-being for urban centres. Especially at a time where world cities cover only 3% of the Earth's land, yet account for between 60-80% of energy consumption and ~75% of carbon emissions highlighting the role cities can play when addressing the Climate Emergency. Which in essence, is what the Well-Being of Future Generations Act aims to provide guidance for. Framed in a year where the UK hosts COP 26, this innovative, mixed use design could take centre stage, all whilst addressing two major urban issues: the need for housing and the vitality of the city centre.

The project will showcase the new technologies being developed locally and blaze a trail for others to follow. The scheme will be built on the existing structure which is located at 242-246 Oxford Street, occupied by Poundland (Figure 1). The building is boarded on 2 sides by the Oxford/Nelson/Union Street Conservation Area, though, to me this part of town has always felt run down and uninspiring. In contrast the proposal will encompass "the love of living things, which make us human. It is about happiness, community and positive mental health as much as it is about sustainability and the environment" as described by the architects who designed the proposal.

The concept built on the work of the City Roofs Project developed by Powell-Dobson Architects, which identified the prevalence of flat roofed, publicly owned buildings in Swansea City Centre which could be used to increase the biodiversity within the city.

This feeling is encompassed in the vision for the project where it aims "to enable the reconnection with nature in the urban environment, and the creation of a cohesive community to tackle the issue of social inclusion and loneliness in an innovative way". Thus, physically regenerating the wider area whilst cultivating the community which will inhabit the structure (figure 2). This will be done through the following guiding principles:

- Providing sustainable city living,
- Having a cooperative/share ownership model, and
- Have an attractive built form whilst working with the existing structures.

This philosophy has been developed on that of Herbert Giardet and the city's metabolism (figure 3), which aims to reduce the overall consumption of the city. This in turn reduces the city's reliance on external sources making the Local Authority more green and more efficient. All whilst improving the natural and built environment and the health and well-being of those who use it. In so doing the development will encourage the prospective residents to help run an urban farm as a social enterprise, with the home grown produce sold and consumed locally.

Though it would be naïve to suggest that this development is a silver bullet to the problems outlined. The concept of community is not simple and to suggest that a group of strangers can come together to grow produce and instantly become a community might be far-fetched. It was suggested that the first occupiers of the residential units would be vetted and selected on a likeminded philosophy. This is to ensure that the gardens flourish and a sense of community evolves, to establish a bond between neighbours and create the sense of shared ownership. As a prototype, there is a desire for this scheme to succeed, so I understand why this selection is needed. But developed off this basis I can see a very organic evolution of community defining itself as the cycle of people move in and out of the project. One hopes that when proven viable, the only precondition for occupation would be eagerness, a plucky heart and green fingers.



Figure 1 - 242-246 Oxford Street (Development Site)



Figure 2 -The proposed development

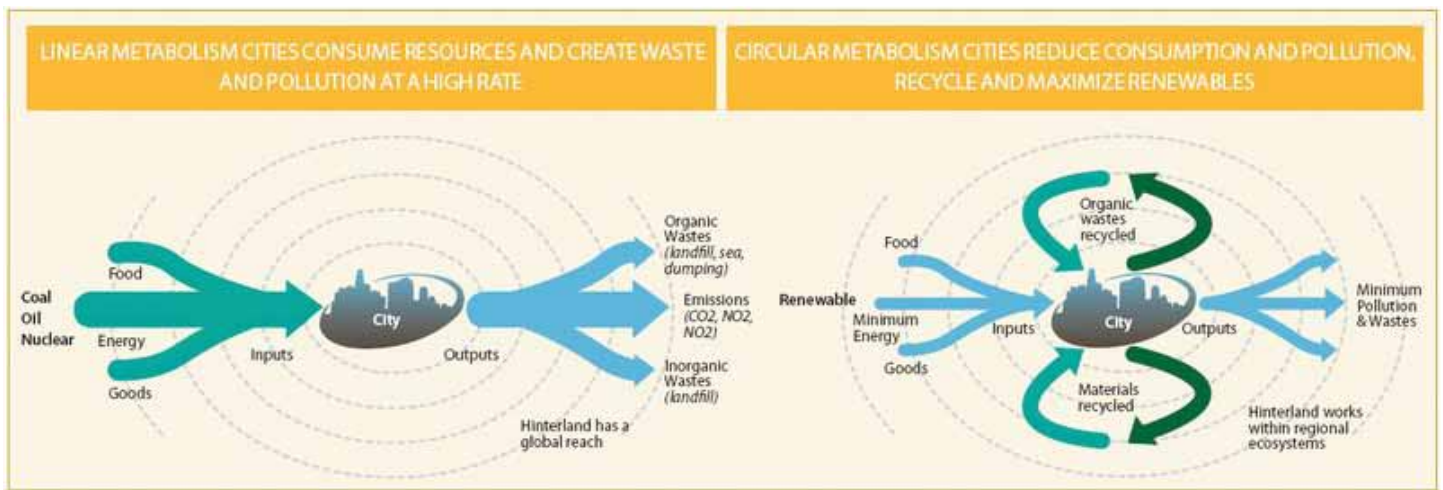


Figure 3 - Herbert Giardet, *Metabolism of the city*

Whilst noting the above, there are further questions I would like answers to, such as, how much does it cost to live there? Are there mechanisms which prevent gentrification occurring? How is the community model retained through the building's life? Though, as the ever optimist, I am encouraged at the signs of progress encompassed in this design. To be frank, it is about time that green infrastructure and development are not played off against each other as a reason not to develop a site, but rather a way to complement each other in the process to save the built and natural environment. Where once ivy clung to towers signalling their demise, flora will occupy this tower bridging the gap between the built and natural form.

We see an innovative, exciting development in front of us, with clear minds and decisive hearts, the region can be once again at the centre of a revolution, a green revolution. And I, for one, think it is time that we meet this moment!

*Nathan Goldup-John*  
Kew Planning

## Planning Apprenticeships: Vital for a diverse profession



In an open letter to the Welsh Government, published to coincide with National Apprenticeship Week, RTPI Cymru Director Roisin Willmott FRTPI said that government-funded degree-level planning apprenticeships in Wales would lead to more people entering the profession from under-represented groups and rural and Welsh-speaking communities.

An RTPI survey last year found unanimous support from both the private and public sector for the introduction of planning apprenticeships in Wales, subject to funding. Respondents agreed that there was a real need to make the profession more diverse and more representative of the communities in which it works.

Roisin Willmott said: "RTPI Cymru works with employers to promote a diverse and inclusive planning profession and we believe that the single most influential way to do this is through the education system.

"The traditional route to becoming a Chartered town planner is via university but we know that this route can be prohibitive to some in society. The RTPI would therefore welcome the opportunity to discuss with the Welsh government the development of a Chartered town planner apprenticeship qualification in Wales.

"We need to broaden the talent coming into the profession in Wales. For us to be an effective and sustainable profession, we must be genuinely representative of the society in which we work."

The letter also pointed out that planning services in Wales have reported difficulties in recruiting planners able to work in the Welsh language. The RTPI's ambition is to have a profession which is representative of all communities, including those that are Welsh-speaking.

The letter to the Minister can be viewed in full here: [www.rtpi.org.uk/media/7762/minister-planning-apprenticeships-february-2021-web.pdf](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/7762/minister-planning-apprenticeships-february-2021-web.pdf)

In 2019, RTPI Cymru responded to a Welsh Government consultation on extending government-funded apprenticeships to degree level. The responses can viewed here: [www.rtpi.org.uk/consultations/2019/december/structure-for-welsh-apprenticeship-frameworks/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/consultations/2019/december/structure-for-welsh-apprenticeship-frameworks/)

The RTPI launched a degree level Chartered Town Planner Apprenticeship in England in 2019 – the apprenticeship includes an RTPI-accredited qualification and professional membership on completion. There are currently over 240 apprentices on the programme from a wide variety of backgrounds. To read more about the RTPI Apprenticeship programme go to: [www.rtpi.org.uk/become-a-planner/apprenticeships/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/become-a-planner/apprenticeships/)



# Julie James MS welcomes publication of Places for Life II



Julie James MS, Minister for Housing and Local Government has welcomed the publication of a report by the Design Commission for Wales stating that Wales must not accept placeless and lifeless ‘anywhere’ developments.



Places for Life II features a series of articles from renowned architects, designers and built environment professionals who focus on how working from home has placed a greater emphasis on our neighbourhoods as a place to live, work, home-school and spend our free time. They examine what we do next – how will our towns and villages recover, what will the future of our residential landscape look like and how can we be ever more responsive to the people and place within which any development takes place?

The publication is the second in a series that originate from a conference held in 2016, the purpose of which was to address housing and the quality of the places we create to live. The articles in this new edition of Places for Life were written during the initial height of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring / summer of 2020.

Aled Singleton of Swansea University, urban designer Jess Richmond, architect Priit Jürim and Rhian Thomas and Amanda Spence of Alt-Architecture write about the importance of understanding places and

people and how to respond to this. They do not advocate a tokenistic or superficial glance, but a deep-rooted understanding and real care. The dangers of eliminating the past in terms of culture, heritage, community and identity are identified and the role of local people as the experts is emphasised along with the need to use a range of creative ways to engage with them.

Articles by Dr Matthew Jones of Birmingham School of Architecture & Design and Coombs Jones Architects & Makers, Sarah Featherstone architect and director of Featherstone Young and member of VeloCity, Bethan Scorey early-career building historian, Diana Snachez and Tom Wigg of award winning consultancy Hoare Lee, architect at Stride Treglown Rob Wheaton and chartered surveyor Robert Chapman discuss how we might shape places in the future.

They focus on how towns, suburbs and villages offer a range of opportunities which can be capitalised on, including those stemming from our collective re-localisation as a result of lockdown and the ongoing necessity to work from home where possible.

Julie James MS, Minister for Housing and Local Government said: “Great places are at the core of the objectives of the planning system in Wales. I am therefore pleased to support Places for Life II from the Design Commission for Wales which offers further encouragement, broadens dialogue and urges pace through the insightful and expert essays from practitioners featured in this volume.

“We know collaboration is key to involving and enabling the essential community involvement, understanding and shaping of place, creative problem solving and thoughtful design that is highlighted in Places for Life II. We must not accept placeless and lifeless ‘anywhere’ developments and whilst I encourage, I also challenge all those working in the built environment to forge creative and ambitious visions for the places we want and need to see created and shaped in Wales - places we can be proud of.”

Jen Heal, Design Advisor for the Design Commission for Wales and editor of the publication said: “COVID-19 has placed a renewed focus on the quality of both our homes and amenity spaces but also the sense of community which may or may not be able to offer support for those in need.

“The Places for Life II publication includes articles that offer a rich source of ideas and visions of an alternative future. They challenge current practice to do better for people and place. There is a common emphasis on recognising the unique qualities of a location whether that is through the landscape, existing buildings or the community that does or will inhabit it.

“COVID-19 has definitely resulted in many of us placing a greater emphasis on our neighbourhoods. We cannot and should not underestimate the relationship between the way we plan and design places and health and wellbeing.

“There is much to do to make Wales a better place. Our Places for Life conference and first publication helped to shape the placemaking agenda in Planning Policy Wales 10. The publication of Places for Life II will play an important role as we continue to work closely with Welsh Government and our colleagues in the built environment sector to inspire, influence and challenge current practices and provide a source of alternative ideas.”

*Places for Life II is available on the DCfW website.*

## Wales based Finalists

Congratulations to all the Finalists announced in the RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence. The full list can be viewed at: [www.rtpi.org.uk/media/7792/finalists-brochure-2021.pdf](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/7792/finalists-brochure-2021.pdf)

Here are the Finalists based in Wales:

**Excellence in Planning for Health and Wellbeing**  
**Cleddau Reaches Green Infrastructure -**  
**Pembrokeshire County Council.**

The project delivered Green Infrastructure improvements in Haverfordwest - creating and improving rights of way, managing habitat, creating a Green Wall and new river access.

**Excellence in Planning to Deliver Homes small schemes (up to 50 homes)**  
**Central View - Newport City Council.**

Newport City Council's planning and regeneration teams work to support sustainable activity in the City Centre successfully engaging with commercial and residential developers.

**Excellence in Planning to Deliver Homes large schemes (50 or more homes)**

**Glan Llyn - Savills, St. Modwen Developments (Llanwern) Limited and Stephen George and Partners LLP.**

The Eastern Sub-Area Masterplan at Glan Llyn is a key milestone in a major regeneration project delivering new homes, open spaces, schools and community facilities.

**Young Planner of the Year**

**Emmeline Reynish, Arup.**

Emmeline was named as Wales Young Planner of the Year 2020. Emmeline is an ambitious and enthusiastic young planner, passionate about promoting the profession to the next generation.



## The role of town planning in protecting mental health

To mark World Mental Health Day on October 2020 the RTPI published new practice advice for our members on Mental Health and Town Planning: Building in resilience. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on our lives over the last year. However well we overcome the physical impacts of the virus, the long-term impact on our collective mental health is likely to be significant. The lockdowns have thrown into stark relief the disparity between the living conditions for people across the UK.

Our advice highlights the role of town planning in protecting and enhancing mental health. The impacts range from secure housing, to access to services and proximity to greenspace. Whilst there are currently few links to mental health in planning policy in the UK nations, the links are clearest in Wales. 'Together for mental health' is the Welsh Government's strategy to improve mental health and well-being. It applies to all parts of government in Wales, including town planning. The strategy makes a direct link to Planning Policy Wales. The intentions are further reinforced through the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

Read the full advice at [Mental Health and Town Planning](#)

*Sarah Lewis, MRTPI, RTPI Planning Practice Officer*



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# Meet the Young Planners Cymru Steering Committee 2021



After what has been, and continues to be, a challenging time for young professionals and students alike, the Young Planners Cymru steering group were only too happy to meet back in December for a game of virtual bingo to distract ourselves from lockdowns, forget about the word 'unprecedented' for a little while, and of course, elect our new committee for the year ahead. As we approach Spring, we are crossing our fingers for good news and our first IRL event. In the meantime, you can meet the new committee below....

**Kate Coventry, Chair** - Kate is a fully chartered member of the RTPI and has been a member of Young Planners for a number of years now. Since completing her MSc in Spatial Planning and Development at Cardiff University in 2018 she now works as a planning consultant at LRM Planning in Cardiff. To date her work has included the preparation, submission and management of planning applications and appeals, writing Environmental Statements, promotion of land and appraisal work. Key interests include travelling, attempting to draw and running. Kate was Commended in the Wales Young Planner of the Year 2020.

**Abbie Connelly, Vice Chair / Communications Manager** - Abbie is a Planner currently working at Lichfields in Cardiff and has been involved in a range of projects across Wales and England. She is a Licentiate member of the RTPI and is in the process of working towards chartership. Abbie completed her BSc in City and Regional Planning and MSc in Urban and Regional Development at Cardiff University. Abbie is a photography and travel enthusiast.

**Rhys Jones, Secretary** - Rhys is a Planner at LRM Planning. Rhys completed his studies for a Spatial Planning and Development MSc degree at Cardiff University, whilst working part-time at LRM. Prior to joining LRM, Rhys graduated from Cardiff University with a BSc Geography (Human) Undergraduate degree. Rhys' work consists of site appraisals, assisting in the pre-application consultation process and preparing supporting documents for residential planning applications, with the majority of which are on behalf of the Housing Associations in Wales.

**Georgie Thompson, Treasurer** - Georgie is a Planner working at Arcadis and is currently working towards her APC. Georgie has a BSc in Geography from Swansea University and an MSc in Spatial Planning and Development from Cardiff University. Georgie enjoys playing netball in her free time and tries to cook something new every week.

**Dafydd Thomas, Events** - Dafydd is a Transport Planner currently working for Vectos in Cardiff. He started working in September 2017 and his day to day role consists of the production of Transport Assessments, Transport Statements and Travel Plans. This has included a wide range of land uses including residential, commercial, education, leisure and distribution. Dafydd is also a part of the Road Safety Audit Team and assists with the production of Road Safety Audits as a Team Member. He has a BSc (Hons) in Geography (Human) and Planning and outside of work Dafydd enjoys running and is currently training towards his first marathon.

**Sophie Jones, Events** - Sophie is a Planning Consultant at Wardell Armstrong LLP and is a chartered member of the RTPI. Sophie obtained a BSc in Geography in 2016 from the University of South Wales and later went on to complete a MSc in Spatial Planning and Development at Cardiff University in 2017. So far in her career, Sophie has worked on a variety of planning projects including renewable energy, infrastructure, heritage, and commercial projects. In her spare time, Sophie is a food enthusiast and has recently started a South Wales based food blog.





**Thom Simnett, Events** - Thom has recently completed his masters degree in Spatial Planning and Development at Cardiff University, and also holds an undergraduate degree in Geography from the University of South Wales. Thom is also a representative on the RTPI Cymru Executive Committee and is looking forward to working with both groups. He has a keen interest in the built environment and how planning can solve many of the problems that we face in the 21st Century such as sustainability, climate change and how we can build our cities better for people living with dementia which was the focus for his dissertation. Outside of university life Thom is a spin class enthusiast and keen swimmer.

**Ellie Mitchell, Communications Manager** - Ellie works as a Planner at Arup, with previous experience in transport planning. Ellie has a MSc in Spatial Planning & Development and a BSc in Human Geography, both attained from Cardiff University. Ellie is particularly interested in sustainable transport and development management within her role, and regularly works for both public and private sector clients across the UK. In her spare time, Ellie enjoys baking, cooking, running and exploring new places.

**Annamaria Sgueglia, Communications Manager** – Annamaria works as a planner at Geraint John Planning. Since completing her BSc in City and Regional Planning at Cardiff University, she is looking forward to completing her MSc in Urban and Regional Development this year, also undertaken at Cardiff University and begin the process towards accreditation. During her spare time, Annamaria enjoys yoga, reading and trying every dance class available at her gym!

**Danielle Halford, Student Representative** - Danielle is currently studying her undergraduate degree in Urban Planning and Development at Cardiff University. As a student representative she connects Young Planners Cymru to other undergraduates at the University, making sure to let them know about upcoming events. Danielle has been particularly interested in themes of sustainability in planning during her degree as well as urban design. Outside of university, she regularly attends a public speaking group and enjoys reading.

**Josh Price, General Member** - Josh is a Planner currently working for Savills in Cardiff. Josh joined Savills in August 2019 as part of Savills' Graduate scheme and in September 2020 successfully became a fully chartered member of the RTPI after passing his APC. Day to day, Josh provides a wide range of planning services to clients on a variety of application types covering sectors including residential, retail and energy. Josh has completed a MSc in Urban and Rural Planning with UWE Bristol and also holds a BA (Hons) in Architecture from Liverpool John Moore's University. Josh also enjoys playing golf and running.

**Georgia Peters, General Member** - Georgia has been working as an Assistant Planner at The Urbanists since September 2019 whilst studying MSc Spatial Planning and Development at Cardiff University. Having recently completed her MSc, Georgia is hoping to begin working towards the APC for chartership. Outside of work she enjoys cooking, yoga, playing the guitar and visiting natural beauty spots.

**Emmeline Reynish, General Member** - Emmeline is a Planner at Arup in Cardiff and is a chartered member of the RTPI. In her role at Arup Emmeline works on a broad range of projects related to strategic policymaking and infrastructure consenting. She completed her MSc in International Planning and Development at Cardiff University and also holds an undergraduate degree in International Relations with Spanish from the University of Birmingham. Outside of work, Emmeline enjoys travelling to new places (particularly to keep up with her Spanish and French!) and is an avid reader. Emmeline was named Wales Young Planner of the Year 2020.

*If you want to know about upcoming events and all things YPC, please follow us over on Twitter (@YPCymru) and join our Facebook (Young Planners Cymru) and LinkedIn (RTPI Young Planners Cymru).*



**RTPI Young Planners**  
Royal Town Planning Institute

**Young Planners Cymru welcome you to join us this year at our range of events, both social and CPD.**

**If you're in the early stages (up to 10 years) of your career and want to meet other planners from across Wales come along to one of our events.**

**Please find us through the following links...**

LinkedIn: RTPI Young Planners Cymru      Facebook Group: Young Planners Cymru  
Twitter: @YPCymru  
Website: <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/wales>

# Cyfarthfa Plan will reveal world importance of crucible of industrial revolution and work in harmony with nature

A 20-year Cyfarthfa Plan has been published following 12-month's work by a multi-disciplinary team led by Ian Ritchie Architects. The Design Commission for Wales has supported the work throughout; creating a day of ideas generation and testing in 2017 and providing client support for a design-led brief, tender process and progress throughout.

The plan was commissioned by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and a new company has now been formed – The Cyfarthfa Foundation - to take the scheme forward. The plans have also been submitted to the Welsh Government.

Lee Waters MS, Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport and Chair of the Valleys Taskforce, said: "The plans put forward could see Cyfarthfa Castle and Park become a flagship attraction and an important green space for residents and visitors to enjoy for many years to come. We have provided funding to the park as a Valleys Regional Parks Discovery Gateway.

"I thank all those involved for their work on this so far, and I am particularly encouraged that the ethos of this project is that of a 'bottom up, community led, long term approach to regeneration'. This echoes perfectly the aims of the Valleys Taskforce and Cadw. We will now consider the detail of these proposals."

The report sets out a three-pronged plan for the castle and a 'Greater Cyfarthfa Park' that will

- celebrate Merthyr Tydfil's unique history and heritage, as a spur to social renewal
- celebrate and heal the natural environment to provide a beautiful setting for recreation, education and scientific advance
- create an engine of creativity that can embrace the whole community.

It states: "It would also bring something new and compelling to the economy of the Capital Region, in an area of great need, with a clear agenda of social purpose".

The report sets out a menu of more than 70 possible projects; among the key proposals are:

- Almost doubling the size of the current Cyfarthfa Park, extending it westwards to take in both sides of the river Taff, 'healing a wounded landscape'.
- Renovating Cyfarthfa Castle – home to the Crawshays, the famous 19th century ironmasters - and creating new exhibition galleries that will celebrate the industrial and social history of Merthyr Tydfil and Wales.
- Rescuing the 200-year-old Cyfarthfa furnaces west of the Taff, a scheduled ancient monument of world importance, but currently endangered.
- A new 'Iron Way' - a dramatic high-level walkway connecting the castle and the furnaces, to echo the 19th century aqueduct that spanned the valley.
- A new 'Glass Way' entrance through the park to the east the castle - incorporating two giant greenhouses – the largest is 50 metres in diameter - to echo the castle's vanished 19th century greenhouses.
- Developing the Pandy Farm buildings opposite the entrance to the castle as a real community asset, offering genuine employment and workspaces.
- An eight-acre community vegetable garden – that could also supply produce to new outlets at the castle – together with the creation of bio-diversity meadows.

Jonathan Shaw, project leader for Ian Ritchie Architects, said: "This is a 20-year strategic plan that will reveal the global importance of Merthyr Tydfil's industrial past and work in harmony with nature to transform the Cyfarthfa area.

"The project should grow in parallel with the lives of the youngest generations as they grow into adults. We have developed these plans on the back of extensive consultation with schools, young people and community organisations in Merthyr.

"It draws on the unrivalled social, political and industrial history of Merthyr Tydfil and Wales, its position as a southern gateway to the Brecon Beacons, and its pivotal position in the wider Valleys Regional Park."

Geraint Talfan Davies, who will chair the new Cyfarthfa Foundation, said: "The Ian Ritchie team have produced an immensely rich and exciting report that opens up a multitude of opportunities to use our past, and Merthyr's story in particular, as a springboard to address the challenges of the 21st century. This a project of national as well as local importance."

Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive of the Design Commission for Wales, said: "The commission has been closely engaged in the evolution of this plan, and we are delighted that the end result of almost four year of collaboration is not only a set of proposals of quality and ambition, but also a plan based on sound social and environmental values. It will be important to hold fast to those values and standards as the plans are realised."

# Future Generations Commissioner's Report: Bite-size Planning and Placemaking Chapter



In 2020, the first ever Future Generations Report was born - a culmination of five years of engagement, research, and consolidation of advice and guidance I have published to help public bodies in Wales get closer to the vision for the future set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The report includes my assessment of Wales' progress towards the 7 well-being goals and sets out new ambitious recommendations to Welsh Government and Public Bodies on what needs to change in the future. It also includes a number of inspirational examples of good practice that are already happening in Wales and abroad.

The Report contains sections with detailed information and advice on all of the areas of focus I have selected for my office, including Planning and Placemaking.

Getting Planning and Placemaking right can contribute to a number of Wales' well-being goals – for example, by helping protect and enhance our ecosystems, strengthening our communities, facilitating healthy and active lifestyles, supporting a modal shift, and identifying land for clean energy production. Placing sustainable development at the heart of every planning decision will help us improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and create places fit for our current and future generations. This can be

done through integrating different areas of work like transport, planning, health and quality.

For example, when considering a planning application for a new housing development, things like active travel infrastructure and public transport links, access to green space and nature-based solutions to drainage should also be considered. This would help reduce inequalities and improve people's health while also reducing negative impacts on carbon emissions and the environment.

Planning and Placemaking needs to be a collaborative effort, with the community involved at every step of the way to help plan, design and build the places they live in to ensure that my Future Generations Report reaches everyone involved in planning.

I have developed a 'Bite-Size' version of the Planning and Placemaking chapter. I hope that this will help make the information, vision and recommendations accessible for everyone. This bite-size product does not contain any new recommendations but is tailored to specific groups and designed to highlight the recommendations most relevant to each group in a new format.

While planning consultants are not officially listed in the Act, I believe they have a crucial role to play in achieving the vision set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act and that they should be aware of the recommendations that are most relevant to their work.

These bite-sized products are only the start of a conversation and a way of ensuring everyone is aware of the way in which they can contribute to this vision. I would be very grateful to hear your thoughts and feedback. Please do not hesitate to contact my office should you wish to get involved in our work or discuss these recommendations.

*Sophie Howe*

*Future Generations Commissioner*

## Planning and placemaking

What the Future Generations Report 2020 means for Town & Community Councils, consultants and communities across Wales



The bite-size chapter can be downloaded [yma yn Gymraeg](#), or [here in English](#).



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