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Board of Trustees

RTPI CYMRU UPDATE

Report from the Director of Wales, Northern Ireland and Planning Aid England

FOR INFORMATION

The Board is asked to note the key updates from RTPI Cymru as at May 2021.

1. Summary

This report provides an update of headline activities undertaken by RTPI Cymru since the last report to the Board in April 2021.

2. Senedd Cymru / Welsh Parliament Elections

We have continued to promote our Manifesto Asks - Plan The Wales We Need – which have been published for the Senedd Cymru / Welsh Parliament elections taking place on 6th May 2021. The Asks, recognising that planning is central to life in Wales, are centred around three core areas, underpinned by community engagement:

1. Long-term Decision Making for Future Generations;
2. Placemaking; and
3. Resourcing.

The Asks have been published on the Positif (PR / political campaigning company for Wales) website https://positif.wales/positif-policy-portal/

Previously reported to the Board, the Director has been a member of the Institute of Welsh Affairs (IWA) Welsh Places Influencing Group. The role of the Group was to develop a charter of recommendations on Welsh places (towns) for the Senedd elections. The work has been completed and the charter will be launched after the elections when the new government is forming itself.

We joined Community Housing Cymru's hustings on 22nd April to discuss housing. The hustings can be viewed at: https://hereforhomes.org.uk/hustings.

3. Policy

3.1. Consultations and Evidence

The following Welsh Government consultations have been responded to:

- 19 April 2021: Heritage partnership agreements: regulations and guidance

- 12 April 2021: Safer Buildings in Wales
- 9 April 2021: Developing the hydrogen energy sector in Wales
- 23 March 2021: Agriculture (Wales) Bill

3.2. Faith in Affordable Housing

The Director has been invited to be a member of a panel, chaired by the Archbishop of Wales, to advise on the new approach Housing Justice Cymru are taking with their Faith in Affordable Housing programme, which helps to bring churches, with derelict land and buildings, together with housing associations to increase the supply of affordable homes in Wales. This was launched on 21st April.

4. Apprenticeships

As part Apprenticeships Week in March, the Director wrote to the Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales to discuss introducing degree-level planning apprenticeships in Wales. A meeting was held the Welsh Government's Senior Apprenticeship Policy Manager in March. The Welsh Government are exploring a small number of degree-level apprenticeships at level 6. The RTPI degree-level apprenticeship is level 7 and the Welsh Government could not support this. They are supportive but have a very small budget to allocate.

However they would like to keep the dialogue open and are potentially interested in the new level 4 planning apprenticeship (currently under development).

5. Events

5.1. Welsh Planner Live

Welsh Planner Live – formerly the Wales Planning Conference – will be held on a virtual platform this year on 8th June. The theme follows on from the Senedd Cymru election asks: Plan the Wales we need. Full details of the event can be found at: www.rtpi.org.uk/welshplannerlive

5.2. BEAC Events

RTPI Cymru participates with other built environment bodies in Wales (Built Environment Alliance Cymru) to organise topical discussion events. In March, BEAC held a webinar on Construction Quality. Joe Ayoubkhani, RTPI Cymru Junior Vice Chair, spoke on the panel. 47 bookings were taken by the RTPI (there were a total of 200 bookings including from other partners).

6. Media

Director spoke on BBC Radio Wales' Sunday Supplement alongside Vicky Pryce (economist), talking about towns, cities and villages after the pandemic. It's the second story in – about 10 minutes or so: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000tvf0

7. Careers Promotion

RTPI Cymru supported a School of Geography and Planning at Cardiff University discussion on International Women's Day (8th March). A number of alumni (all RTPI members) were invited to be panelists – including RTPI Cymru Chair, Jane Jones, and Wales Young Planner of the Year, Emmeline Reynish, to share their experiences with students at the University.

8. Health and safety implications

Any activities consider health and safety implications; at present all activities are being carried out virtually.

9. Equality and diversity implications

Events and activities all seek to address equality and diversity factors, including Welsh language.

10. Resource implications

The activities are all funded via existing agreed budgets and staff and volunteer resources.

11. Governance implications

The work relates to activities in Wales and focuses on the devolved planning system. All activities are carried out within the data protection requirements.

12. Climate action

Climate Action considerations are built into activities undertaken, including policy positions.

13. GROWPLAN (Corporate Strategy)

Services are provided to members operating in Wales to ensure they are tailored to the devolved Welsh planning context and civic society to ensure the member proposition is appropriate supporting GROWPLAN and the Corporate Strategy.

14. Digital Transformation

None.

15. Communications Implications

All opportunities for promoting planning in Wales are taken and built into activities. The RTPI website and @RTPICymru twitter are key tools for communicating.