



RTPI Cymru

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e-mail response sent to: AgricultureWalesWhitePaper@gov.wales

Dear Sir/Madam,

Response to: Agriculture (Wales) Bill

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is the largest professional institute for planners in Europe, representing some 25,000 spatial planners. RTPI Cymru represents the RTPI in Wales, with 1,300 members. The Institute seeks to advance the science and art of planning, working for the long-term common good and well-being of current and future generations. The RTPI develops and shapes policy affecting the built environment, works to raise professional standards and supports members through continuous education, training and development.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above consultation.

The farming industry is not only central to our long-term food security, but also the sustainability of food production and consequently people's health. The industry also has a central role to play in the management of our much loved landscapes, in managing flood risk, in safeguarding and enhancing biodiversity, and in the cohesion of rural communities.

The planners' role and the planning system is equally critical in these and many other areas. Major issues such as the protection of the best agricultural land, agri diversification, drainage schemes, flood risk management infrastructure, rural energy proposals, farm dwellings, agricultural buildings etc. are addressed by planning policies and are subject to planning consent. Planning plays a vital role in preserving and enhancing the best of the Welsh countryside, landscapes, habitats etc. while accommodating important development. The strong links between agriculture and planning have been further highlighted recently with the issue of phosphate pollution in Wales and the impact of this on proposed development sites.

National planning policies set out in Future Wales, Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Notes (TANs), as well as Local Development Plans and other local strategies address agricultural and rural related development. Both development planning and the development management functions need to be recognised as important tools in addressing health, food security, climate change, flooding, energy, landscape enhancement and protection etc, with the ability to give consideration to the wider land use and spatial implications of such issues.

Any new agricultural legislation and resulting changes should reflect and support the continuing positive role of the planning system. We urge close discussions between Welsh Government's Farming and Countryside and Planning Divisions to achieve this.

Paragraph 2.47 of the consultation states that the Sustainable Land Management (SLM) policy framework has the potential to produce a range of benefits, economic, environmental and social, to farm businesses, the wider agricultural sector and the public. We would urge that planners are included in SLM discussions and the development of the framework.

It is important that both Planning Policy Wales and the related technical guidance are updated as changing circumstances require. The new Agriculture Bill, especially the new approaches to achieve sustainable land management, will have significant land use implications and therefore Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Notes will need to be reviewed to ensure they provide a consistent and update policy framework, and to provide clarity for planners and other stakeholders.

We note one of the consultation aims is to resolve the current regulatory complexity by bringing together agricultural legislation into a set of National Minimum Standards, "clarifying and consolidating agricultural regulations into one piece of legislation". A similar piece of work, led by the Law Commission has been carried out in relation to planning law in Wales. The Law Commission has proposed a new Planning Code with the aim of simplifying Welsh planning law. [Welsh Government have responded to the Law Commission's proposal](#) and we await further development of this. It would be interesting to find out if there would be any relationship or commonalities between the Planning Code and the National Minimum Standards?

If you require further assistance, please contact RTPI Cymru on 020 7929 8197 or e-mail Roisin Willmott at walespolicy@rtpi.org.uk

Yours sincerely,



Dr Roisin Willmott OBE FRTPi

Director

RTPI Cymru