

## **Mid Wales Regional Committee MID 02-02(p)**

**Date:** Friday 8 March 2002

**Time:** 10.30am to 1.00pm

**Venue:** Knighton Community Centre, Knighton

### **PLANNING: DELIVERING FOR WALES**

1. Historically, CPRW has been very supportive of the Town and Country Planning System and, in fact, with CPRE, was a powerful influence in getting the system established through the 1947 Act.
2. Naturally, therefore, CPRW has a great deal of interest in any change within a system that has been so valuable for over fifty years in protecting the public interest in terms of land use.
3. CPRW concurs with the view that there is a need to make the system better but, at the same time, is firmly of the opinion that the merits of the original must be retained.
4. It is fair to say that, on the whole, the recommendations in the Consultation succeed in this and, furthermore, offer some commendable improvements.
5. The words of the Environment Minister in the Foreword are welcomed especially her commitment to "keeping the fundamental structure" and we also support the main bullet points in the Introduction (para.1).
6. Under Policies and Plans, we support the continuation of integrating present guidance and we would like statutory status for the Wales Spatial Plan (para. 20). We feel that the Assembly could give a stronger lead to sub-regional planning to ensure consistency across Wales.
7. We would choose Option (b) for Local Development Plans (para. 24) but we are not pleased with the description "minimal necessary justification" in the box. The word 'minimal' can lead to people placing emphasis on counting words rather than the message. We suggest "*concise necessary justification*".
8. We do not see the justification for the establishment of Planning Business Zones (para. 30).
9. Under Procedures, we agree that a timetable should be set for a Local Plan and we would wish to see Option (b) being adopted under para. 33. We are supportive of the Local Public Inquiry as a transparent forum to discuss matters in detail but, means of making the PI less confrontational and quasi-judicial should be investigated.
10. We are pleased to see that the process of forming the current Unitary Plans will continue, with the changes coming into force following the adoption of UDPs (para. 40).
11. CPRW would welcome the establishment of Local Planning Advisory Service, however, we would like to see a specific reference to voluntary organisations as part of the process (para. 45).
12. We are aware of proposals to transfer some decision-making from CADW to local authorities in certain circumstances (para.49). Although we accept the concept in principle we cannot support changing arrangements at present because of the lack of resources, both financial

and personnel, currently in many local authorities.

13. We are unsure about demanding Statutory Consultees to respond within 21 days (para. 53) when, so often, detailed and correct information has to be supplied. Also we do not agree that they should be paid a fee for their advice.
14. CPRW is particularly pleased to see the section on Repeated Applications and Twin Tracking. Often developers with plenty of resources are able to gain an unfair advantage by applying these methods (para. 55/57).
15. We fully welcome the proposal to give reasons for ALL planning decisions (para. 61).
16. We are not confident that the recommendation in para. 67 to give timetables is sufficiently clear and strong. It should be made unequivocal that a minor start to a project does not validate the permission (thinking of the Morfa Bychan fiasco).
17. It is pleasing to see the recommendation for pre-application discussion (para. 72). Many developers already discuss projects with CPRW at this stage, and it would be good to see specific reference to non-governmental organisations here. This would go some way to answering the question about participation in para. 73 and would compliment the opportunity to address a Planning Committee.
18. The issue of local authorities charging for material is difficult - there should be consistency across Wales and the Assembly should recommend maximum charges (para. 74).
19. It is good to see the reference to Planning Aid Service and CPRW would be happy to participate in this, if at all possible (para. 77).
20. From our experience, it is absolutely essential to have a fully transparent procedure for determining Local Authority applications and so we choose Option (a) in para. 79 and similarly, we would say that councillors MUST have training to be members of a planning committee (para. 82).
21. We strongly disagree with the recommendation not to introduce a third party right of appeal. Under certain circumstances that right should be established (para. 79).
22. It should be clear how a Local Authority spends planning fees. Often, CPRW feels that more detailed analysis is done by a voluntary organisation rather than the authority (para. 86).
23. A highly significant question that is left unanswered is the Major Infrastructure Projects (para. 96). Decisions must reside within the Assembly otherwise we shall see a dual standard planning system emerging (thinking of Power Stations over 50MW).

(It should be noted that these are interim comments as CPRW is still consulting internally before making a final submission).

CPRW  
March 2002