



RTPI Cymru

Royal Town Planning Institute
Sefydliad Cynllunio Trefol Brenhinol

Royal Town Planning Institute
Cymru (RTPI Cymru)
Studio 107
Creative Quarter
8a Morgan Arcade
Cardiff
CF10 1AF
Tel +44 (0)20 7929 8197
email walespolicy@rtpi.org.uk
www.rtpi.org.uk/wales

14 February 2025

e-mail response sent to: SeneddEconomy@Senedd.Wales

Dear Sir/Madam,

RTPI Cymru's position on apprenticeships and bursaries

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is the largest professional body for town planners in the UK and Europe and represents around 27,000 members in over 80 countries worldwide, with approximately 1,300 members in Wales. The Institute has been shaping planning policy and raising professional standards for over 100 years and is the only body in the UK to confer Chartered status to planners, the highest professional qualification. The RTPI champions the power of planning in creating prosperous places and vibrant communities. Our ambition is to promote healthy, socially inclusive, economically and environmentally sustainable places.

We note the Senedd's Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee is undertaking an inquiry into apprenticeship pathways. While we are not providing evidence to this Inquiry, the Committee maybe interested in our current position in relation to apprenticeships and bursaries and our future work in this area, set out below.

RTPI Cymru welcomes discussion on the introduction of apprenticeships, bursaries, and other options to support the future pipeline of planners in Wales.

There are lessons to be learned from other nations where apprenticeships and bursaries have proven popular.

- In England there are approximately 850 apprentices on the Level 7 Chartered Town Planner apprenticeship programme. Up to 70% of apprentices work in local authorities, providing much needed resource within the public sector and an opportunity for local authorities to grow their own talent via this route.

- In Scotland the Future Planners Bursary has been running for a couple of years. This is for students studying a planning degree (usually post-graduate degree). The Scottish Government has recently announced it will be awarding 30 bursaries of £5k to students this coming academic year (25/26).

The RTPI has experience of running bursary programmes and has found that these are important in encouraging those from underrepresented groups into the planning profession and those who cannot afford tuition fees. Bursaries need to be of a significant value to be a genuine enticement and support. They can be aimed at undergraduates or postgraduates on RTPI-accredited programmes, this ensures that graduates have a solid grounding in core spatial planning. All accredited degrees have a route to Chartered status (fully accredited degrees via the Licentiate route; partially accredited by the Associate route). Bursaries for fully accredited postgraduate study are also useful in encouraging those who have completed undergraduate degrees in other subjects to convert to planning at postgraduate level.

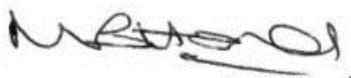
Both Welsh Government and Westminster Government have recognised the need to ensure planning services are properly resourced. The RTPI is working with a number of stakeholders including our accredited universities to grow the pipeline of planners. The recent announcement of cuts at Cardiff University, which is home to Wales' only accredited planning school, is particularly concerning and could be detrimental to achieving the shared goal of improving planning service delivery, which is essential to deliver the Welsh Government's ambitions including the delivery of 20,000 social homes for rent.

Over the coming months, RTPI Cymru will be gathering up-to-date evidence and views on early career pathways into planning, as part of a wider exploration of capacity, recruitment, and resources within the planning system in Wales, with the aim of informing a pathway into planning for early career planners that is of a scale and nature to fit the planning system and industry in Wales.

The Welsh Government have recently consulted on Promoting a resilient and high performing planning service, setting out proposals to increase planning application fees in Wales. Moving towards cost recovery provides an opportunity for Local Planning Authorities to reinvest that additional income in additional staffing capacity, providing long term employment for apprentices or students completing bursary funded schemes.

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

Yours faithfully,



Mark Hand MRTPI
Director