



Adam Price AS/MS
Member of the Senedd for Carmarthen East and Dinefwr

27 Ionawr 2026

Annwyl Adam,

Planning consolidation Bills: proposed removal of urban development corporation planning powers

Thank you for your e-mail of 23 January 2026 proposing that the planning consolidation Bills should retain the power to give an Urban Development Corporation (UDC) certain planning authority functions for its area. The Government's position on the removal of this power has been clear and consistent, and is underpinned by the evidence provided by the Law Commission. I summarise our position and the reasoning behind it below.

Before doing so, I wish to address the comments in your email that touch on the nature of consolidation Bills and suggest that they should not remove "live" enabling powers. A consolidation exercise is not a vehicle for substantive policy changes, but Standing Order 26C.2 expressly envisages that minor changes may be made to improve the operation of the law, including omitting provisions that are "no longer of practical utility". In assessing whether a provision has any practical utility, it will be necessary to consider matters such as whether it has been used, whether the purpose for which it was enacted still applies, and whether other more suitable powers have taken its place.

Planning is an area where a number of powers were created in the past that did not prove useful or effective and have been overtaken by later changes. The Planning (Wales) Bill therefore omits various unused provisions, such as the powers to create simplified planning zones and establish planning inquiry commissions, for reasons that are set out in the Drafters' Notes. Omitting these powers (along with other spent and obsolete provisions) is an important way in which the consolidation improves the accessibility of the law.

Turning to the power to confer planning authority functions on UDCs, the removal of this provision was carefully considered by the Law Commission in their detailed review of planning law in Wales. They consulted extensively on the matter and concluded, based on the stakeholder responses and the factual history of UDCs in Wales, that the provision is no longer of practical utility.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I would draw your attention to Law Commission recommendation 5-12 and supporting text in their [Planning Law in Wales: Final Report](#), published in November 2018. Only one UDC has ever been established in Wales, that being the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation in 1987, and even in that case the provision to provide it with certain planning authority powers was not used. Therefore, the provision has never been used in Wales since its enactment just over 45 years ago in the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 (“the 1980 Act”). The Law Commission’s proposal was endorsed by a large majority of consultees that responded to their question on this specific matter.

The [Government’s detailed response](#) was published in November 2020 and set out our position and comments in relation to this specific recommendation. In summary, we agree with the Commission’s rationale on removing this specific provision, and we believe it is critical that any UDC must work in close partnership with planning authorities to promote the regeneration of its designated area. Removing this provision assists in creating this important partnership approach and ensuring local democratic accountability.

In considering the Law Commission’s recommendation, the Government took account of the other planning powers that would be available if a UDC were established.

Since the legislation about UDCs was first enacted, planning authorities have been given the power to make local development orders, under provisions that were brought into force in Wales in 2012. When working in partnership with a UDC, planning authorities could use this power to grant planning permission for specific development types or categories in the designated area. This would avoid the need for the UDC to submit multiple planning applications to a planning authority, whilst also providing greater planning certainty. The power to make such an order is restated in section 45 of the Planning (Wales) Bill.

Alternatively, if the partnership between the parties were to break down, the Welsh Ministers would retain the power to directly grant planning permission for development proposals submitted by a UDC within its area, by means of a special development order. This is provided for under section 148 of the 1980 Act, with the power to make such an order restated in section 44 of the Planning (Wales) Bill.

Given the above considerations, the Government agrees with the Law Commission that the power to confer planning authority functions on a UDC is very unlikely to be used in future and is no longer required. I am therefore satisfied that the omission of this provision is appropriate within the scope of a consolidation Bill, as it is a change in the law that falls within Standing Order 26C.2(iii).

No concerns have been raised about this proposal since the Government published its response to the Law Commission report. There were no comments on it when a draft of the Planning (Wales) Bill was published in June 2025, in the evidence provided by stakeholders at Initial Committee Consideration stage, or during my appearances before the Committee in relation to these Bills.

As you heard me say at the Detailed Committee Consideration proceedings on 19 January, I do not propose to bring forward any further amendments to the Bills and believe they should proceed direct to Final Stage. I do not believe the matter you have raised merits the Bills having to enter Detailed Senedd Consideration proceedings. However, I will await the Committee’s report and recommendation to be published by Friday (30 January).

I hope the above sets out and provides clarity on the Government’s position on the matter you have raised. If you have any further concerns or questions, I am happy to meet you alongside my officials at the earliest opportunity.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee.

Yn gywir,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie James". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie James AS/MS

Y Cwnsler Cyffredinol a'r Gweinidog Cyflawni
Counsel General and Minister for Delivery