

National Assembly for Wales
Environment and Sustainability Committee
PB 09
Planning (Wales) Bill
Response from Various local authority leaders

We write to urge you to re-consider the contents of the Welsh Government's Planning Bill in order to create a planning system which answers Wales' needs through tackling poverty, protecting our environment, and strengthening our unique national language.

The state of the Welsh language is very fragile at a community level. As you know, at the moment, there is no means for councillors, under the present statutory framework, to permit or refuse developments on the basis of their impact on the Welsh language alone. That situation needs to change through the Bill, given that the matter cannot be solved without legislation. If this historic opportunity is lost to ensure a planning system which reflects the needs of Wales, it would endanger our ability to strengthen the Welsh language in our communities for a number of years to come.

We are concerned as well about the number of ways in which the Bill proposes centralising power in Cardiff, we strongly believe that councils should have the freedom to set housing targets based on local needs independent of central government. Again, the Bill's framework must devolve that power as well as establishing a new process which leads and supports us in assessing that local need in a thorough way.

We also agree with your committee of experts that there needs to be a statutory purpose for the planning system, which gives direction to the system, and explains that protecting our environment, getting to grips with poverty and strengthening the Welsh language are some of the foundations running right through the planning system.

Yours,

Cllr. John Nott, Leader, Bridgend Council

Cllr. Jamie Adams, Leader, Pembrokeshire Council

Cllr. Mark Pritchard, Leader, Wrexham Council

Cllr. Kevin Madge, Leader, Carmarthenshire Council

Cllr. Dilwyn Roberts, Leader, Conwy Council

Cllr. Ieuan Williams, Leader, Ynys Môn Council

Cllr. Ellen ap Gwynn, Ceredigion Council

Cllr. Phil Edwards, Conwy Council Cabinet

Cllr. Sian Gwenllian, Gwynedd Council

Cllr. Bob Parry, Ynys Môn Council

Cllr. Victor Hughes, Ynys Môn Council

Cllr. Ann Griffiths, Ynys Môn Council

cc: Assembly Environment Committee