

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales
Y Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig |
Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee
Cyllideb Ddrafft Llywodraeth Cymru 2019–20 – Barn
Rhanddeiliaid y Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a
Materion Gwledig | Welsh Government draft Budget 2019–20 –
CCERA Stakeholder Views
Bud 03

Ymateb gan : Royal Town Planning Institute Cymru
Evidence from : Royal Town Planning Institute Cymru

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 1,100 members. The Institute seeks to advance the science and art of spatial planning for the benefit of the public. As well as promoting spatial planning, the RTPI develops and shapes policy affecting the built environment, works to raise professional standards and supports members through continuous education, training and development.

The response has been formed drawing on the expertise of the RTPI Cymru Policy and Research Forum which includes a cross section of planning practitioners from the private and public sectors and academia from across Wales.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute our views on the Welsh Government draft Budget 2019-20. Our comments in relation to this consultation focus on planning policy and practice.

RTPI Cymru recognises and supports efforts to decarbonise, reduce pollution and tackle climate change. We therefore welcome decarbonisation as a valuable aim for the Welsh Government which will impact upon many areas of its activities. However, if it is to be a worthwhile change it is important that the aim be reflected in practical policies and funding programmes which are critically linked to the Welsh Government budget.

It is now very timely for the Committee to address the issue of funding for the planning service. This is in light of the developing responsibilities of the Welsh Government on planning issues and supported by the recent work by RTPI Cymru on the Value of Planning which has shown evidence for the first time of the wide economic and other benefits the planning system provides.

Welsh Government has an established and important role in setting out planning policy and guidance, assisting with the development plan processes and a range of decision taking duties. This work is expanding with a renewed emphasis on regional co-operation and the National Development Framework. We also note that Welsh Government recently assumed a wide range of new powers to make critical decisions on development proposals in field such as energy and ports. These new powers are requiring ongoing work to develop the Planning Inspectorate and decision taking services in Wales. The Cabinet Secretary has also recently referred in the Assembly to consideration of a distinct Planning Inspectorate for Wales.

The current budget process provides an opportunity for the Cabinet Secretary with responsibility for planning to consider and explain to the Committee whether the draft settlement is sufficient to enable all the existing services to be continued and expanded to meet the new initiatives and any potential developments in the decision taking arrangements.

We feel that the work already referenced on the Value of Planning should provide the evidence to support the argument for full adequate resources, for planning to be able to deliver.

We also would support moves to Local Planning Authorities achieving full cost recovery from development management services to improve planning service delivery. However it is essential that any proposals to increase planning fees are accompanied by rules to ring fence this income to the planning service and that Authorities effectively resource their planning services.

The draft budget sets out a range of programmes which interlink closely to the planning system. In addition to a wide range of ongoing capital programmes there is reference to new or expanded initiatives such as the Local Transport Fund, the seven strategic hubs in the Valleys area, new housing initiatives etc. It is vital that spending decisions taken by the Welsh Government on all of these established and emerging programmes takes full account of national planning policies and of the policies and development plans of local authorities.

We also note progress on City Deal and Metro projects in the different regions of Wales. Budgeting, and relevant policy and plan making should also be informed and integrated to ensure a holistic approach towards meeting shared aims.

Dr Roisin Willmott OBE FRTPi

Director