

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru Pwyllgor Amgylchedd a Chynaliadwyedd	National Assembly for Wales Environment and Sustainability Committee
Dyfodol Ynni Craffach i Gymru?	Smarter energy future for Wales?
Ymateb gan Royal Town Planning Institute Cymru (Saesneg yn unig)	Response from Royal Town Planning Institute Cymru
SEFW 11	SEFW 11



Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales

4 September 2015

e-mail response sent to: [SeneddEnv@Assembly.Wales](mailto:SeneddEnv@Assembly.Wales)

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **Response to: A Smarter Energy Future for Wales?**

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is the largest professional institute for planners in Europe, representing some 23,000 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 views and evidence to this inquiry.

We have found the focus and questions set by the Committee very broad ranging. Our particular interest relates to the questions on energy efficiency and demand reduction and the role of the planning system:

- How can the planning system and building regulations be used to improve the energy efficiency of houses (both new build and existing stock)?
- What would the environmental, social and economic impacts be if Wales set higher energy efficiency standards for new build housing? (e.g. Passivhaus or Energy Plus)

Planning needs to balance a number of different issues when granting consent for a wide range of developments. This means that planning is unable to solely focus on one specific issue. However, as planning policy evolves the importance of all development being 'sustainable' is increasing, as part of this more holistic approach different elements of energy efficiency are considered but are still balanced against a number of other considerations.

In our recent response to the 'Development of an Energy Efficiency Strategy for Wales' <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/the-rtpi-near-you/rtpi-cymru/policy-in-wales/> we highlighted the potential contribution of the Welsh Government's policies on both planning and

sustainable transport towards the energy efficiency agenda, comments which have equal relevance for this consultation. We drew attention to planning's important role in encouraging and facilitating buildings and urban design that meets high sustainability standards.

We believe it is important that the process of designing a building takes on sustainable building standards as a central principle, rather than relying on potentially expensive renewable energy bolt-ons to meet energy savings. Building regulations is the route for sustainable building standards but issues such as siting, orientation etc. are best dealt with through the planning system. Both disciplines need to work closely together; ensuring roles are clearly defined to avoid uncertainty and duplication.

The role of planning should be emphasised in expecting new development to contribute to energy efficiency, filling in any gaps left by building regulations to ensure higher environmental standards. Planning should actively support the retrofitting of energy efficiency improvements to existing stock, for example through playing a proactive role in urban regeneration schemes.

By influencing the location and density of new development, planning can reduce car travel and influence the level of demand on transport and journey distances to encourage walking and cycling.

We also refer to our response to the Building Regulations, Part L Review (2012). [http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/12673/121022\\_rtpi\\_cymru\\_building\\_regulations\\_response.pdf](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/12673/121022_rtpi_cymru_building_regulations_response.pdf)

RTPI Cymru believes that sustainable development must balance economic, social and environmental objectives to address the challenges of climate change. We are aware that higher standards do not always sit comfortably alongside economic impact and therefore consideration needs to be given to how best to build wider stakeholder support particularly in the development industry, taking into account impacts on development costs, viability, delivery, five year land supply etc.

If you require further assistance, have any queries or require clarification of any points made, please contact RTPI Cymru on 029 2047 3923 or e-mail Roisin Willmott at [walespolicy@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:walespolicy@rtpi.org.uk)

Yours sincerely,



**Director  
RTPI Cymru**