

Evidence from Royal Town Planning Institute Wales

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.

We welcome the opportunity to provide a submission in response to the above inquiry. Our response focuses on the vital links between transport planning, investment and the land use planning system. Strong and effective links are needed in order to meet the requirements set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and more specifically to address the requirement for 'integration' and 'collaboration' set out in the Act's Ways of Working, in order to provide for the long term and prevent problems occurring. Transport for Wales, along with other stakeholders have a fundamental role in bridging the disconnect, improving joint working, encouraging better integration of land use and transport and supporting longer term planning.

The RTPI [Planning Horizon's: Thinking Spatially](#) paper states: "a disconnect between land use planning and transport planning has in many cases created sprawling cities where car use is high and long distances make public transport systems unviable. ... Transport planning then becomes focused on providing more road space for motorised vehicles. However, this can create more traffic and more congestion, with a negative consequence for the economy as well as society." There are many reasons such as climate change, pollution, health etc. for stakeholders to work to reverse these trends.

RTPI Cymru believes there needs to be a greater integration of transport proposals with wider policy areas. The National Development Framework (NDF), Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) and Local Development Plans (LDPs) would be an effective way of setting proposals in an integrated context. The statutory status of LDPs and SDPs would also bring significant benefits in terms of the delivery of individual projects within an agreed development framework, thereby helping to mitigate delivery risks.

It is important that within the staff structure of Transport for Wales there should be expertise in the working of the planning system and up to date policy context of planning i.e. Welsh Government policy, regional strategies, local authority policy and development trends in Wales; and also an awareness of relevant policy and planning considerations in adjoining areas of England. Strategic planning is an important and proven tool under the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 and needs to be understood and engaged with by Transport for Wales. It enables an approach which can cover a wide range of areas of public policy and effective cooperation for planning across boundaries. This expertise should have an important role in informing Transport for Wales on the operation of services and infrastructure investment.

Positive planning proposals on a strategic and local level can only contribute fully to policy aims for the economy, for the provision of housing and other developments and wider social and environmental benefits if transport provision is available in a timely manner. Transport for Wales will have an important role to play in this. All sectors and stakeholders involved must recognise the importance that the early provision of public transport to serve new developments, together with longer term support mechanisms is helpful to establish sustainable travel patterns. Delaying such provision until developments are at an advanced stage is more likely to result in car based travel patterns. We believe that there are great benefits from having long term planning, funding of services and infrastructure planning. Transport for Wales should seek to agree such long term arrangements with the Welsh Government and other key players.

Local Transport Plans (LTPs) are a useful mechanism to achieve co-ordination with the development of local land use development. Any guidance in relation to transport or transport services must recognise the important links to land use. The implications for existing and planned land use development must be considered.

Transport for Wales must develop good contacts with the Welsh Government on all relevant matters including finance and budget, transport funding allocations, transport policy and strategic planning. The additional transport and planning powers given to the Welsh Government by the Wales Act 2017 is welcomed.

The Traffic Commissioner is an important external body with an impact on the work of Transport for Wales, and on the transport/planning interface. In the second annual report of the Traffic Commissioner for Wales published in January this year and discussed at a recent Assembly Committee, it was noted that a new office for Wales would open shortly but with very limited staff (three). The need for line management to be available at the office rather than outside Wales and the availability of staff for matters such as taxis and bus licensing and regulation to be handled fully in Wales was discussed. As quality and locally responsive bus and

taxi provision to reduce private car use is now a strong theme in land use planning RTPI Cymru supports the provision of those additional office resources for the Traffic Commissioner for Wales.

Engagement with the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales and the UK National Infrastructure Commission will also be important for the organisation. Also good contacts with the four regional city deal type organisations and local authorities.

The RTPI has a policy and research programme, and the publication ["Capturing the Wider Benefits of Transport Infrastructure"](#) is pertinent to some of the issues highlighted in our response.