



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Planning and Environment Decisions Wales

This letter advises Chief Planning Officers that the organisation responsible for determining planning appeals and environment casework in Wales is changing on 1 October.

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Chief Planner, Planning Directorate

Heads of Planning,
Local Planning Authorities in Wales

15 July 2020

Dear colleagues,

The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) is a joint executive agency of the Welsh Government, and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. Planning Inspectorate services in Wales are undertaken by a discrete team, known as PINS Wales.

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The current service is a legacy of pre-devolution arrangements, which have continued post-devolution. Consideration was given to the need for a separate Welsh Inspectorate in 1999 and again during the development of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015. There is now, however, increasing legislative and policy divergence between English and Welsh planning systems. Wales is also the only administration not to have its own dedicated Inspectorate.

In March 2019 Julie James MS, Minister for Climate Change, instructed officials to commence work on a new body to handle planning appeals and environmental decision-making in Wales, in order to:

- Ensure planning decisions made in Wales are fully reflective of Welsh legislation and policy with a dedicated delivery partner answerable solely to Welsh Ministers;
- Assist in moving towards a separate Welsh legislature for the built and natural environment; and
- Ensure that the service delivered offers value for money to the Welsh Ministers.

Work is now nearing completion, and the new service, which will be known as Planning and Environment Decisions Wales – Penderfyniadau Cynllunio ac Amgylchedd Cymru in Welsh – will begin operation on 01 October 2021.

Planning and Environment Decisions Wales will operate as a new Division within Welsh Government, delivered by the same experienced team with which you are familiar. Governance protocols have been established to ensure Inspectors will continue to make decisions objectively and impartially.

Planning and Environment Decisions Wales will be responsible for handling all casework previously handled by PINS Wales on devolved matters prior to 01 October 2021. From 01 October 2021, all appeals or casework for consents previously determined by PINS Wales should be directed to Planning and Environment Decisions Wales. The postal address will remain Cathays Park in

Cardiff. You should continue to direct service users to the following links for information on the planning appeals process and to be signposted towards the new service:

- www.gov.wales/planningappeal or
- www.llyw.cymru/apelcynllunio.

The Planning Inspectorate's general enquiries telephone line will also cease to operate from 01 October. Queries should be directed to the Welsh Government's customer help line, on 0300 0604400, from that date.

You should update any information you distribute to applicants to reflect the name of the new service, which will take effect from 01 October 2021. You may also wish to advise your service users, stakeholders and internal consultees that information on any live appeals or casework will cease to be available from either the Appeals Casework Portal or the Developments of National Significance Portal from that date. PINS will also inform service users of this change just prior to the transfer of functions on 01 October. Changes to the Appeals Casework Portal are also being made to prevent submission of any new casework in Wales, from 01 October 2021.

The Welsh Government thanks the Planning Inspectorate for its long and highly regarded service. I look forward to working with Planning and Environment Decisions Wales colleagues as part of a broader devolved legislative and executive framework for the planning system in Wales.

Yours faithfully,

Neil Hemington

Chief Planner, Planning Directorate

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.

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