



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

National Infrastructure Commission for Wales meeting notes: 27 July 2022

Notes from the meeting of the commission on 27 July 2022.

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Design Commission for Wales, Mount Stuart Square & Via MS Teams.

Present

NICW

Dr David Clubb, Chair

Jenifer Baxter Deputy Chair

Eluned Parrott, Commissioner

Helen Armstrong, Commissioner

Nick Tune, Commissioner

Stephen Brooks, Commissioner

Aleena Khan, Commissioner

Design Commission for Wales

Carole Anne Davies, Chief Executive DCFW

Jen Heal DCFW

European Environment Agency

Wouter Vanneuville Expert on Climate Change Adaptation

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Welsh Government and Secretariat

John Howells, Director, Welsh Government

Stuart Ingram, Office of NICW

Nicola Britton, Office of NICW

Apologies

Eurgain Powell, Commissioner

Welcome and declarations of interest

The Chair welcomed commissioners to the meeting.

The chair noted he had received an invitation to CECA Wales Annual Dinner and Awards 2022 and discussed the appropriateness of attending. It was agreed that any other commissioners who wanted to also attend would notify the chair.

Action

Commissioners to notify chair if they wish to attend CECA event.

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Work priorities of the Commission and update on climate change policy

John Howells explained the importance of tackling climate change to the current Cabinet explaining it is the central organising principle for the Welsh Government and the role his department (Climate Change, Energy and Planning) undertook in co-ordinating the delivery of climate change policy. He agreed to provide a note on integrated, joined up policy development.

Commissioners highlighted the importance of communities in the development of infrastructure policy and discussed how NICW can contribute to wider debate and engaging the wider populace on the issues. The chair noted that this will be an integral aspect of NICW year 3 work plan.

Commissioners were also interested in the role of skills in future policy development. John Howells noted there is to be a skills plan published later this year, which will look at the issue around green jobs, training and opportunities.

Commissioners asked about building standards to promote energy efficiency and adapting to climate change and noted the important role of housebuilders in taking a lead in this area. They requested that the House Builders Federation (HBF) were invited to a future meeting. The Secretariat said that HBF had requested a meeting with NICW and that they would be invited to a future meeting.

John emphasised the importance of the independent role of NICW and how Welsh government welcomes informed challenge. Commissioners asked for clarity on protocols for engaging with Welsh government. The chair noted that NICW can comment on anything it feels is relevant.

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Action

John Howells to provide note on policy coordination
Secretariat to arrange item on house building for future meeting

Design Commission for Wales priorities for renewables

Carole Anne Davies and Jen Heal joined NICW. They explained the role of DCFW, how they work and their role in creating better places. This includes forming the Placemaking Wales partnership which NICW was a founding member. Commissioners asked for information on good practice information in relation to design and placemaking. DCFW said they would share documentation.

DCFW are in the process of reviewing and updating their renewables guidance, in light of Future Wales, with a view to consulting later in 2022. DCFW will consult with NICW directly on this.

Action

DCFW to share documentation on good design practice with NICW
DCFW to consult with NICW on its renewable energy design guidance document

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EU Policy of Flood Risk and Coastal Erosion Management

Wouter Vanneville joined the meeting, setting out his background in climate change adaptation for the EU environment agency. He talked through a PowerPoint on the EU approach to adaptation explaining there is insufficient evidence on successful approaches to adaptation, but an increasing body of anecdotal/qualitative work.

He highlighted an historic lack of mandatory reporting requirements have been an issue but is optimistic about new mandatory requirements. He noted that due to a register of losses on natural hazards for insurance purposes the UK does have some good practice in this area.

Another issue noted by Wouter is public bodies stating intentions but following through on delivery. Linked to this is a lack of meaningful stakeholder engagement. The example of heatwave planning was discussed where impact assessments all identify vulnerable groups but plans fail to incorporate specific measures to support these groups and data shows even lower participation rates in plan delivery for and by vulnerable/at risk communities.

Wouter drew attention to the EU ADAPT Horizon 2020 resource and the groups discussed the concept of Do No Significant Harm (DNSH).

The latest thinking is to draw attention to the economic and human cost of not adapting, using concepts such as the insurance protection gap. For 1980 – 2020 total economic loss to weather events across EU was 50 9437 Million Euros and 142101 recorded fatalities (91% heatwave related)

Discussion focused on the importance of mainstreaming and integrating adaptation into all policy and the main barrier is concern and lack of understanding on costs.

Action

Wouter Vanneville to share his powerpoint presentation with NICW

NICW Business

Commissioners received updates on and discussed the following issues:

1. Budget
2. Renewable Energy update
It was noted that the invitation to tender for the first phase of work had gone live.
3. Flooding and resilience.
4. Stakeholder events
5. Youth Engagement
It was agreed that the next meeting of NICW would include a session on engagement
6. Annual Report Preparations
A scrutiny session with the CCEI committee is scheduled for early December and the intention is publish an annual report prior to this session.
7. AOB
Commissioners asked for some work to be done on stakeholder mapping.

The next meeting will take place on 23 August.

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