



To: Chief Planning Officers

13 January 2016

Dear Colleague

## **AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORTS**

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) paragraph 4.10 outlines national policy towards safeguarding Wales' Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land. Further guidance is provided in Technical Advice Note (TAN) 6, including the consultation arrangements with the Welsh Government included at Annex B.

Local Planning Authorities (LPA's) are required to consult with the Welsh Government before granting planning permission for any proposals which do not accord with the Development Plan and would involve the loss (both permanent and temporary) of 20 hectares or more of BMV land. This includes losses which are less than 20 hectares but likely to lead to further losses amounting cumulatively to 20 hectares or more (TAN6, Annex B2).

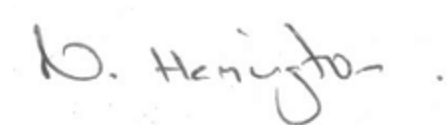
Whilst LPA's are not required to consult with the Welsh Government on planning applications which do not 'trigger' the statutory requirement as set out in Annex B2, any loss of BMV land may be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

To apply BMV policy it is important to have access to accurate land quality information. The Provisional Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) map for Wales is not accurate at a site specific scale. Information should be obtained from a detailed ALC survey. ALC surveys are complex and the reports technical in nature and the Welsh Government therefore offers a free ALC report validation service which we would encourage LPAs to utilise. All consultations can be emailed to the Land Quality Advisory Service: [LQAS@Wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:LQAS@Wales.gsi.gov.uk)



The Welsh Government is preparing Best Practice Guidance and updated ALC maps for Wales. Collectively these will provide further assistance to LPA's when considering BMV agricultural land issues. For further information, please contact the Land Quality Advisory Service using the email address above.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "N. Hemington". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

**Neil Hemington**  
Chief Planner  
Planning Directorate  
Department for Natural Resources