



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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Ein cyf/Our ref 20171220

Chief Planning Officers  
Heads of Development Management  
Technical and administrative contacts

20 December 2017

Dear colleague

I wrote to you in August to notify you of the changes to the delivery of the online planning application services in Wales from April 2018. I'd like to take this opportunity to update you on the progress on the new service.

The new service is called "Planning Applications Wales", and will be hosted at [www.gov.wales/planningapplications](http://www.gov.wales/planningapplications) and [www.llyw.cymru/ceisiadaucynllunio](http://www.llyw.cymru/ceisiadaucynllunio). This is a slightly different web address to the one previously shared.

In my earlier communications I suggested it would be helpful if you engaged with your internal IT and web publishing teams, to alert them to these changes, the need to maintain effective communications with the new service, and the need to update webpages with new links. Your service users will seek reassurance when they experience this change and the above steps will help to ensure they find their way to the new service.

The Planning Portal will email Planning Portal users submitting applications in Wales to inform them of progress in the development of the new service, the corresponding cessation of Planning Portal services in Wales, and what steps they will need to take to adapt to the new service being offered.

Our primary objective in developing the new service is to procure a planning application platform which meets the needs of Welsh applicants and Local Planning Authorities. Consequently, we have sought to avoid any changes which might affect the operation of your ICT software connectors. To date, this has been achieved.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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.

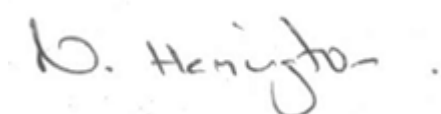
It is possible, however, such changes might be inevitable in the future. The Planning Portal will communicate with us, you and your ICT suppliers as early as possible, if this becomes necessary. I encouraged you to discuss the changes with your ICT suppliers, to alert them of the development of the new Welsh service, and encourage them to engage with the Planning Portal to prepare for the receipt of planning application information from the new service in April 2018. It would be beneficial to you if you followed up any earlier communications with a confirmation of our approach of avoiding any impact on ICT software.

The new service will not provide some peripheral functions currently available, including the “interactive house”, with which many of you will be aware. The current “interactive house” is not compatible with modern ICT security requirements or the need to function on multiple devices.

We have explored the possibility of procuring an alternative, however this has not been commercially viable and instead, the common householder development projects guidance which is currently offered via the “interactive house” will instead be offered directly from the Welsh Government’s corporate website.

Following engagement with LPA colleagues and with planning consultants, we have used the development of the new service as an opportunity to slightly enhance and streamline some application forms. Some detail on these minor changes is available in Annex A. The Frequently Asked Questions list we previously shared has also been updated, and is attached at Annex B.

More information on the development of the new service can be obtained by contacting [Kris Hawkins](#).  
Yn gywir



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Prif Gynlluniwr  
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## **ANNEX A**

We have removed and merged some questions on the planning application forms, following feedback from the South Wales DM Managers' meeting in June 2017, and engagement with planning agents and consultants in May and June 2017, as well as comments received in workshop sessions with Development Management officers during 2016.

In implementing these changes we have used workarounds to avoid impact on ICT systems; this means we have used form question logic (yes/no answers to questions such as "is this a new dwelling?") to enforce a "nil" or "N/A" answer, in order to avoid any schema changes.

Consequently you should be aware the following questions will be removed or merged, and the relevant data will not be collected in questions on the respective forms, once the new service goes live:

### **ALL FULL AND OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION FORMS, AND APPLICATIONS FOR CERTIFICATES OF LAWFULNESS**

- The question "Have arrangements been made for the separate storage and collection of recyclable waste?" will be deleted.
- The question "Is a new or altered pedestrian access proposed to or from a public highway?" will be deleted.
- The vehicle parking spaces table will be deleted, and the applicant will be asked to specify details on the accompanying plans.
- The residential units, both existing and proposed, will be deleted and the applicant will be asked to specify details for proposed units on the accompanying plans.
- The question "Land where contamination is suspected for all or part of the site?" will be deleted.

### **LISTED BUILDING CONSENT FORMS**

- The question "is this an ecclesiastical building?" will be deleted.
- The question "Stripping out of an internal wall, ceiling or floor finishes (e.g. plaster, floorboards)?" will be deleted.

### **HOUSEHOLDER PLANNING PERMISSION FORMS**

- The "Materials" question set will be deleted.

## **Annex B**

### **Planning applications**

A new online service, “Planning Applications Wales”, will be launched in April 2018 to enable users to apply for planning permission and associated consents.

Use the [Planning Portal](#) to apply for planning permission and associated consents, whilst the new service is under construction.

The new service will be a platform for planning applications and associated consents, only. Guidance and information on permitted development, the planning service and building regulations will be made available on the Welsh Government’s website.

### **Interactive House**

- The Interactive House is based on technology that is obsolete, and not compatible with mobile devices, and is to be discontinued. However, equivalent guidance on permitted development will be made available on the Welsh Government’s website.

### **Disruption to, or loss of, service**

- The new service will use the same technical architecture as the current Planning Portal. There should be no change whatsoever to the way Local Planning Authority’s back office connectors interact to download and retrieve application data. .
- We will be reducing the question sets for some little used form sections, and we will provide greater detail on these changes. These changes are being made whilst avoiding any effect on the way planning applications are processed.
- As we develop the new site, we will continually test the service to ensure it is fit for purpose before launch. We will ensure a smooth transition to the new service, over a period of low service demand. Users should experience no disruption.

### **User profiles**

- Currently, we are planning to use the existing database for Planning Portal users. This means users will not need to re-register to make use of the new service.
- Users may be required to confirm user login details before beginning or resuming work on applications, although this is related to the need to

comply with the emerging General Data Protection Regulations rather than to the creation of the new service.

### **Existing planning application drafts**

- Existing planning application drafts will be available on the new service

### **Waiting to start work on a planning application**

- There's no need to pause work on planning applications or change your working practices in any way. Once the new service launches, it will automatically make your Wales-based applications available. Any applications in draft for England will continue to be available on the Planning Portal.

### **Preparing and submitting applications in Wales via the Planning Portal, and vice versa**

- In the future the Planning Portal will cease to host Welsh forms, and will not enable applications direct to LPAs in Wales. The Welsh planning application service will be a separate, Wales-specific service.
- It will be possible to switch between the two fairly simply, although you will have to log in each time, for security purposes.

### **Local Planning Authorities**

- So far we have avoided any change in service to Local Planning Authorities and we continue to pursue this approach.