



Planning Aid **Wales**
Cymorth Cynllunio **Cymru**



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Planning your places

Planning policy & Place Plan training for communities

Workshop Manual - Spring 2019



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Introduction

Every planning application in Wales is decided against local and national planning policies. But what are these policies and how are they made?

Good planning policies can improve the places we live in and protect the things that are important to us. Local communities are experts on where they live and by getting involved in making planning policies, they can help make places better for everyone.

With funding from Welsh Government, Planning Aid Wales is delivering a programme of training workshops called 'Planning Your Places' for community and town councils and community groups. Taking place in 10 locations across Wales, the courses will explore:

- The National Development Framework, a new 20 year land use National plan for the whole of Wales being prepared by the Welsh Government.
- Planning policies set out in Planning Policy Wales by the Welsh Government and how they can affect local decisions.
- How Local Development Plans, prepared by local planning authorities inform decisions on planning applications and how people can be involved in shaping these plans.
- How communities can work with local authorities to prepare their own Place Plans.

Using this booklet

This booklet brings together presentation slides used during the *Planning Your Places* training workshops delivered in Spring 2019. It has been designed to act as a standalone document that can be read by anyone.

The training and the accompanying booklet was developed and delivered by Planning Aid Wales, a charity that supports community engagement in planning in Wales with funding from Welsh Government. It can be used as a reference source but should not be used as a complete statement of planning law or practice – links to further technical information sources are provided in Part 6.

Planning Aid Wales is a charity that supports community engagement in the planning process in Wales. For more information about Planning Aid Wales, visit www.planningaidwales.org.uk

Electronic versions of the workshop presentation slides and this Manual will be available for free download from: www.planningaidwales.org.uk/planningyourplaces

PART 1: Planning Overview

What is planning ?

Planning manages development and the use of land in the public interest. It deals with the physical environment, such as buildings, roads and the use of natural resources. It takes account of economic, social and environmental issues.

The planning system helps to shape the future of our cities, towns, villages and countryside. It provides individuals, communities and their elected representatives (for example, Town and Community Councillors) with the opportunity to have a voice in decisions which will influence the future of their surroundings.

If you want to get involved in the planning system it is important that you know how it operates, as this will increase the effectiveness of your comments on planning decisions.

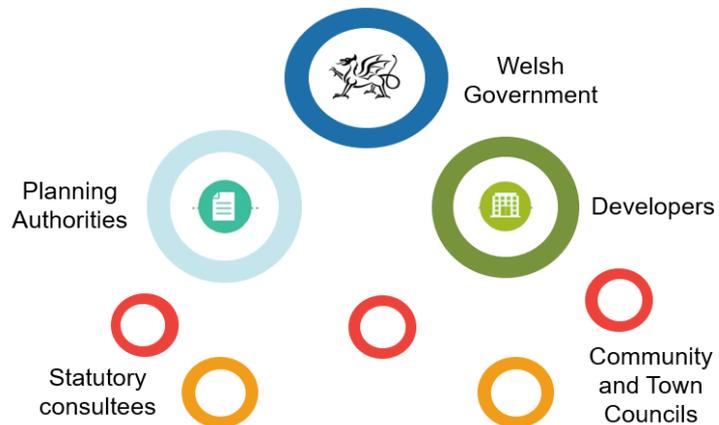


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Who's who in planning?

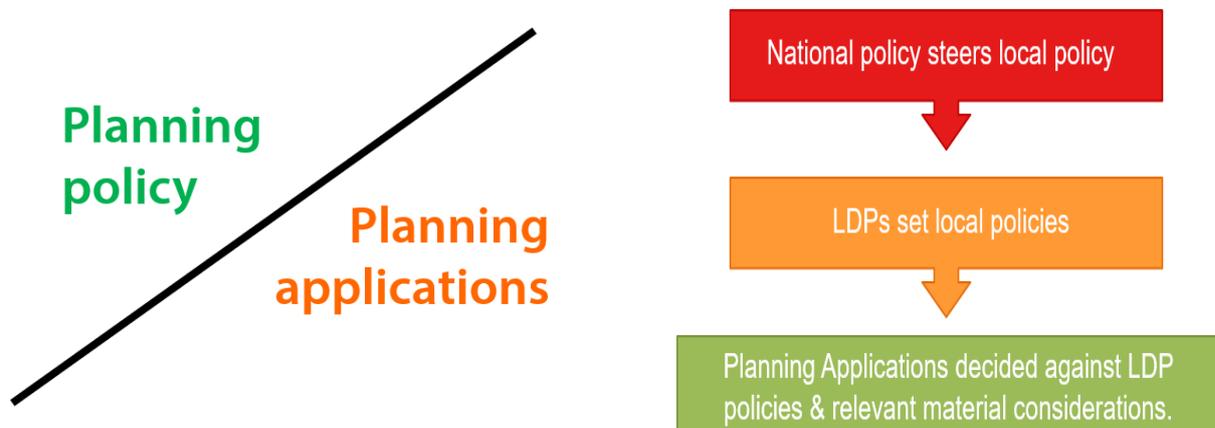
The **Welsh Government** sets the legal framework for the planning system and makes national planning policy that provides guidance on how planning decision makers should approach a wide variety of topics.

The 25 Local Planning Authorities produce Local Development Plans. These plans inform how decisions on planning applications submitted by **developers** will be made. Local Planning Authorities, and in some cases developers, are required by law to consult a wide range of people and organisations on planning decisions. These are known as **statutory consultees**, and include organisations like Natural Resources Wales, Local Highways Authorities and **Town and Community Councils**.



The shape of planning

Planning has two main parts. **Planning policy** plans for how towns, cities and rural areas should develop and informs how decisions on **planning applications** should be taken. The process for making decisions on planning applications is known as **Development Management**.

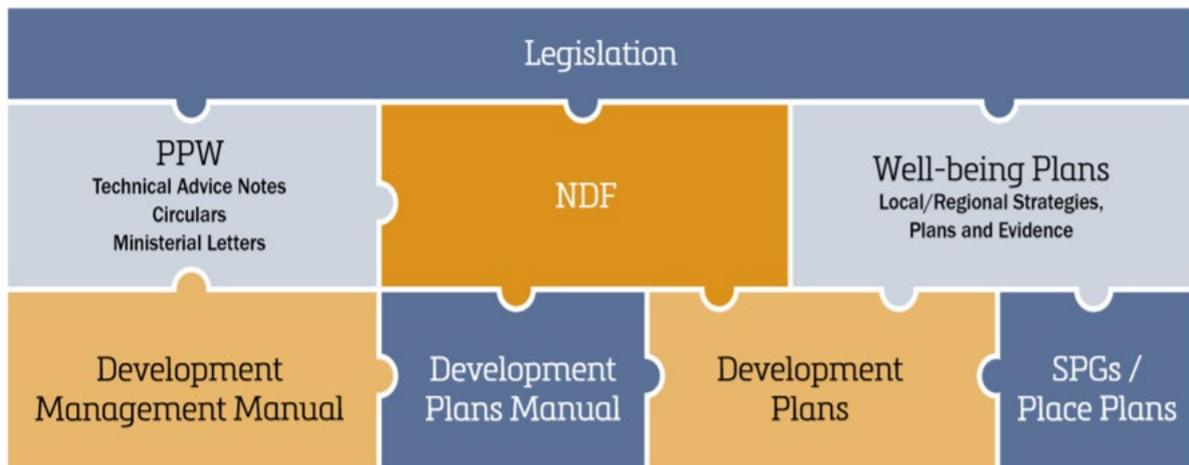


PART 2:

National planning policy

National planning policy is issued by the Welsh Government and sets out a wide range of issues to consider when Local Planning Authorities prepare Local Development Plans and make planning decisions. National policy:

- Delivers well-being goals
- Informs local policy (LDPs)
- Informs decision making



Source: Planning Policy Wales, Edition 10

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Planning Policy Wales Edition 10

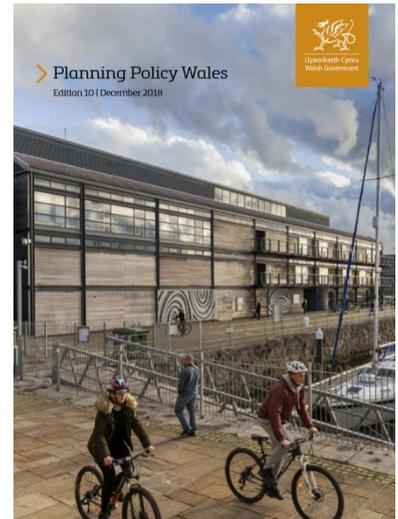
- How planning should deliver well-being goals
- Importance of placemaking
- Key principles – economy, resources, environment & community

Download at: <https://beta.gov.wales/planning-policy-wales>

Technical Advice Notes

- Detailed planning advice for local planning authorities
- Must be taken into account in development plans
- 21 planning topics

View and download at: <https://beta.gov.wales/technical-advice-notes>



PART 3: The National Development Framework

In 2019, the Welsh Government will consult on its first draft National Development Framework, which will act as a 20-year land use plan for all of Wales on nationally important matters such as economic development, housing, infrastructure, energy and transport. The NDF will deliver Government policy, action & investment spatially.



What will the NDF do?

- Identify growth areas
- Plan for infrastructure and nationally significant development
- Co-ordinate delivery of housing & employment
- Inform Strategic and Local Development Plans

The Welsh Government will consult on the draft LDP in July 2019. Once adopted, the NDF will be reviewed every 5 years. For more information and updates, visit:

<https://gov.wales/topics/planning/national-development-framework-for-wales/?lang=en>

PART 4: Local Development Plans

Why are LDPs important?

Each Local Planning Authority in Wales must prepare a Local Development Plan. LDPs are important because:

- They set a framework for future development and land use over a period of 10-15 years.
- They identify, inform and plan for future investments and infrastructure at an authority-wide and local level.
- They help protect and enhance the area's environmental assets.
- They are the primary material consideration in planning application decisions.



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What do LDPs cover?



LDPs have a broad remit. Plans must consider National Policy as well as a wide range of local issues such as economic development, countryside protection and the provision of housing.

What do LDPs contain?

LDPs will usually contain statements, policies and maps under the following headings:

- Policy Context, Key Issues and Drivers
- Vision and Strategy
- Strategic Policies
- Specific Policies
- Implementation and Monitoring
- Maps (called 'proposals maps') with land allocations

An example LDP Policy

Monmouthshire LDP 2011-2021:

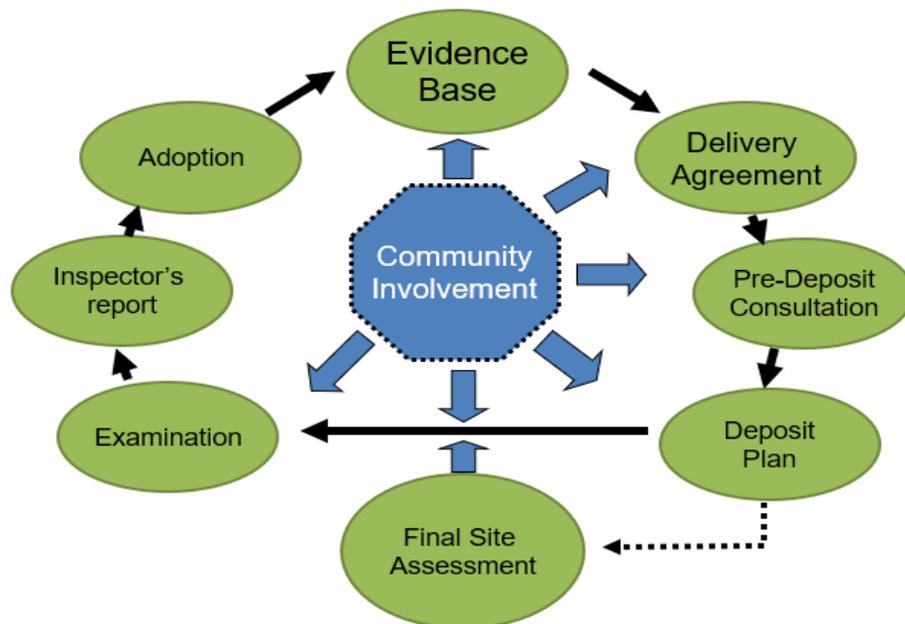
Policy S17 – Place Making and Design

Development shall contribute to creating high quality, attractive and sustainable places. All development proposals must include and promote high quality, sustainable inclusive design which respects local distinctiveness, respects the character of the site and its surrounding in order to protect and enhance the natural, historic and built environments and to create attractive, safe and accessible places.

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The LDP preparation process

Local Development Plans are usually prepared in four years and go through several stages to make sure they are robust and relevant.



Evidence base

The aim of this stage is to identify the main issues and objectives to be addressed in the Plan, and to establish the information which is needed to prepare a good plan. Developing this evidence base is a continuous process; the evidence base will be added to throughout the remaining stages of the plan.

Delivery Agreement

The planning authority needs to agree a 'Delivery Agreement' with the Welsh Government. This includes:

- 1) A timetable for producing the plan, indicating when each stage of the preparation process will happen.
- 2) A 'Community Involvement Scheme', which explains how and when the authority will involve 'stakeholders' and the local community in the plan-making process.

Once approved, the Delivery Agreement commits the local authority to produce its LDP according to the stated timetable and using the consultation methods described in the Community Involvement Scheme. If the authority does not keep to the timetable, it needs to agree a new timetable with the Welsh Government.

Pre-Deposit consultation

Once information and evidence has been gathered and the objectives for the plan have been set, planning authorities work with **stakeholder** organisations and local communities to develop a range of future options for the plan area. They will also invite the public, landowners and developers to put forward proposed sites for housing or other land uses for inclusion within the plan – these are known as **candidate sites**. These are considered to see which option, or combination of options, are most appropriate for the plan area. Planning authorities have choices as to how they work with communities at this stage.

After considering broad options, a Pre-Deposit Local Development Plan is then prepared by the planning authority. This goes out for public consultation for a minimum period of six weeks. It is not a full draft version of the plan, but sets out the authority's overall objectives for the plan and the **preferred strategy** for growth or change over the plan period. This preferred strategy will usually include options for major development sites.

During the consultation period, local communities and stakeholder organisations are invited to give their views on the pre-deposit plan. Responses to the consultation can influence the preferred strategy, by suggesting modifications or alternatives, providing they are compatible with the LDP's main objectives.

Deposit plan

This is a full draft version of the Local Development Plan, which is based on the evidence and information gathered and the responses to the pre-deposit consultation. The deposit plan contains:

- The preferred strategy
- Proposals for key areas of change, regeneration or protection
- Specific sites to be used for particular purposes
- Other specific policies and proposals

Once the Local Development Plan is placed on **deposit** with the Welsh Government, the planning authority cannot change it. Any changes to the plan from this point onwards can only be made by the independent Inspector who will examine the plan.

Once the plan is placed on deposit, there is a further public consultation for a minimum period of six weeks. During this time, members of the public can make comments about any aspect of the Deposit Plan.

LDP Examination

After the public consultation on the Deposit Plan, the plan and all its accompanying documents are handed on to the Planning Inspectorate for a public **examination** by an independent Planning Inspector.

The independent Inspector will look at the submitted plan and consider how it performs against ten ‘tests of soundness’. There are three key questions that the Inspector will ask to test the ‘soundness’ of the plan:

1. Does it fit? - is it consistent with other plans?
2. Is it appropriate? - does it address the evidence?
3. Will it deliver? – will it be effective?

Monitoring & Review

Once the plan has been adopted it is monitored every year through an Annual Monitoring Report. There will also be a major review of the LDP every four years.

The 4-year review report is subject to consultation and can trigger the preparation of a full new development plan or a specific revision; The report will identify reasons for either.

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Importance of early stage involvement

There is a significant role for the community in the Local Development Plan preparation process. In the past, local planning authorities prepared documents and asked people what they thought of them through consultation.

Authorities will engage and consult with their communities and organisations at a much earlier stage, aiming to prepare the plan in partnership. Working with their communities, authorities will develop a vision (or **core strategy**), and proposals and policies for its area.

This means people need to be aware of the Local Development Plan preparation process at a much earlier stage. Local planning authorities, developers, the public and interested groups need to work together to pool information, and to explore options which will be in the best interests of the plan area.

The aim is to produce a plan that enjoys public support, and to reduce disagreement at later stages of plan preparation. The authority will aim to prepare a **sound plan**.

For communities wishing to engage and influence the planning system, the following formula is essential:

**Increased understanding + early & ongoing engagement
= increased influence**

Part 5: Supplementary Planning Guidance & Place Plans

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) provides more detailed information on the policies in an LDP.

SPG does not form part of the LDP and is not subject to independent examination but there must be local engagement in its preparation and it must be consistent with the LDP and with national planning policy. SPG cannot introduce new major sites not allocated in the LDP (although small sites can be identified).

SPG can be location or theme based and normally include further detail such as layout of uses within the allocations and detailed design requirements. Typical SPG issued by planning authorities cover topics like affordable housing, renewable energy, shop frontages and tourism as well as location or specific design guides.

Town and Community Councils (and community groups in areas without a TCC) are now able to produce their own SPG – these are known as **Place Plans**.

What is a Place Plan?

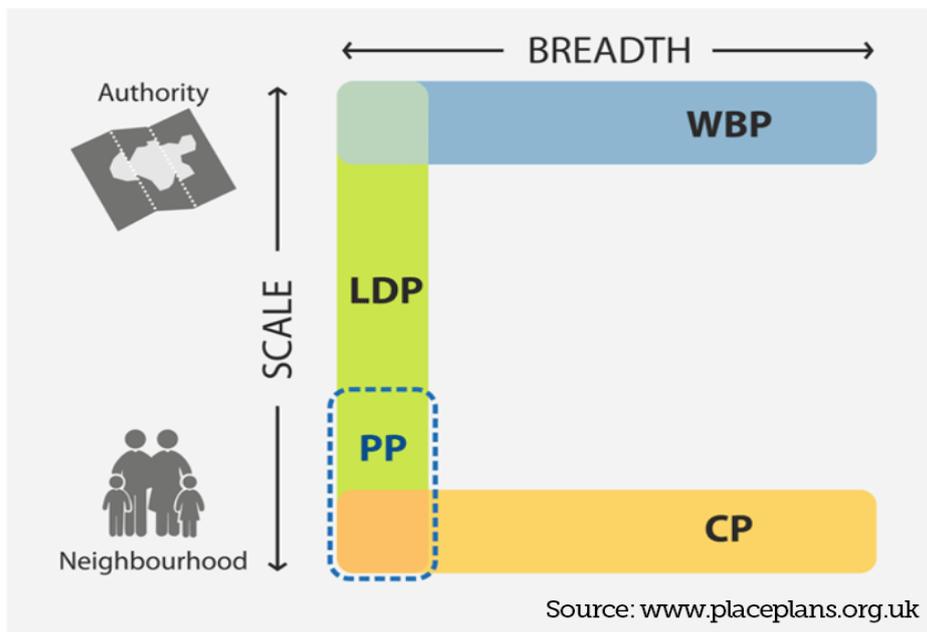
Simply, a Place Plan:

- can be a document that sets out local level planning guidance on the use and development of land
- links to planning policies set out by your Local Planning Authority
- is written by local people who know the area well and can add more detail to the work done by the planners
- can link to other local / Community Plans on a wide range of issues

Through creative collaboration with local planning authorities, local communities can develop community-led guidance to help achieve local aspirations and improve community well-being.

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Where do Place Plans fit?



WBP – Well-being Plan LDP – Local Development Plan PP – Place Plan CP – Community Plan

Just as the LDP will overlap with Well-being plans at a regional level, Place Plans as land-use planning documents can create a link between the LDP and Community Plans prepared by Town and Community Councils.

Place Plan benefits

Place Plans provide a method to encourage greater community engagement in local planning decision making by providing an opportunity for communities to shape their local areas.

Place Plans can provide an opportunity to offer a finer planning policy detail for local areas set out as SPG to support local community aspirations. Welsh Government stress that the aim of a Place Plan should be to “*reflect local distinctiveness and address local, specific community scale issues*”.

If prepared rigorously and collaboratively with the Local Planning Authority, Place Plans can be adopted as SPG, but can also be used as evidence for future planning engagement (on applications and LDP development) as well as funding applications for future development.

Place Plan ‘must haves’

Only Local Planning Authorities can adopt Place Plans as SPG. Given this, it is essential that your work closely with your LPA planning policy team from the outset. They will be able to advise on their procedures and criteria for SPG development and may be able to offer information and support to help you develop your plan.

It is essential that the Place Plan aligns with the LDP, demonstrates broad engagement of your community and proposals within the plan have been arrived at using an evidence-based approach.

Place Plan Guidance

Planning Aid Wales has produced detailed guidance on Place Plans for Town and Community Councils, community groups and Local Planning Authorities, which is available at www.placeplans.org.uk



The guidance provides step-by-step information on deciding whether a Place Plan is right for your community, a range of toolkits to help gather evidence and contacts for Planning Authority policy teams across Wales.

PART 6:

Sources of further information

National Planning Policy

Planning Policy Wales: <https://beta.gov.wales/planning-policy-wales>

Technical Advice Notes: <https://beta.gov.wales/technical-advice-notes>

The National Development Framework

<https://gov.wales/topics/planning/national-development-framework-for-wales/?lang=en>

Local Development Plans

Welsh Government has issued detailed technical guidance on the preparation of Local Development Plans, called 'The LDP Manual':

<https://gov.wales/topics/planning/policy/policy-and-guidance-on-development-plans/ldpmanual/?lang=en>

Contact Information for all Local Planning Authorities is available at:

www.planningaidwales.org.uk/about-planning/your-authority/

Place Plans

www.placeplans.org.uk

Planning Aid Wales

Planning Aid Wales operates a telephone Helpline: 02920 625000

For further planning guidance, visit: www.planningaidwales.org.uk/about-planning

For upcoming training events, visit: www.planningaidwales.org.uk/events