



RTPI Cymru
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9 April 2019

e-mail response sent to: HealthyWeightHealthyWales@gov.wales

Dear Sir/Madam,

Response to: Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is the largest professional institute for planners in Europe, representing some 25,000 spatial planners. RTPI Cymru represents the RTPI in Wales, with 1,100 members. The Institute seeks to advance the science and art of spatial planning for the benefit of the public. As well as promoting spatial planning, the RTPI develops and shapes policy affecting the built environment, works to raise professional standards and supports members through continuous education, training and development.

The response has been formed drawing on the expertise of the RTPI Cymru Policy and Research Forum which includes a cross section of planning practitioners from the private and public sectors and academia from across Wales.

We welcome the opportunity to provide a submission in response to the above consultation. While many of the issues discussed in this consultation are outside the remit of planning, our response focuses on those issues that are relevant to planning, emphasising the close links between health and land use planning.

The environments in which we live, work and spend leisure time, both the physical nature of places and the social environment of communities have a large impact on our health and wellbeing. Links between health and the land use planning system are needed in order to meet the Well-being of Future Generations Act and their integration is supported by the 'integration' and 'collaboration' ways of working in order to provide for the long term and prevent problems occurring. Good joint working, better integration of land use, health and long term planning is required.

The RTPI's [Planning Horizons project](#) 'Promoting Healthy Cities', examines the vital role that Planning can play in delivering improvements to health. This report states: "We need to

develop a new urban agenda focused on healthy placemaking for all. Planning in the broadest sense, from development management and infrastructure to the location of health and community services, can play a central role in creating environments that enhance people's health and wellbeing. We need to develop more integrated strategies for healthy placemaking, gather greater intelligence on the social and economic determinants of urban health to guide decisions and investments, reform and strengthen institutions to develop systems of governance that urban populations need, and involve more professions and communities to promote healthy cities."

RTPI Cymru believes there needs to be a greater integration of health proposals with wider policy areas. National Development Framework (NDF), Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) and Local Development Plans (LDPs) would be an effective way of setting proposals in an integrated context. The statutory status of the NDF, LDPs and SDPs would also bring significant benefits in terms of the delivery of individual projects within an agreed development framework, thereby helping to mitigate delivery risks. Strategic planning is an important and proven tool under the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 and needs to be understood and engaged with by health professionals. It enables an approach which can cover a wide range of areas of public policy and effective cooperation for planning across boundaries.

The links between health and planning are already recognised in planning guidance and policy used by planners. Planning Policy Wales (PPW) clearly sets out the links and states: "The built and natural environment is a key determinant of health and well-being. The planning system has an important role in shaping the social, economic, environmental and cultural factors which determine health and which promote or impact on well-being in line with the Healthier Wales goal." (page 31)

Planning also has a more direct impact on health through decisions made through the development management process. Many Local Planning Authorities in Wales have planning guidance focusing on hot food takeaways etc. The following article relates to an English example, but does set out some of the issues faced by Planners addressing health and planning issues in our local areas. <https://www.theplanner.co.uk/opinion/how-planning-can-slow-the-growth-of-fast-food-near-schools>. Planning consents often include conditions requiring open space provision including childrens' play areas. The cost of providing these facilities is generally borne by developers as required by planning conditions or by the use of Section 106 agreements. As noted in the consultation document, Health Impact Assessments could be a useful tool, if used in a measured way and not as a tick box exercise.

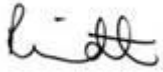
There are also many wider factors that are of common importance to both planning and health. Active travel is one. All sectors and stakeholders involved must recognise the importance that the early provision of active travel, together with longer term support mechanisms is helpful to establish healthy, sustainable travel patterns, including walking and cycling routes. Delaying such provision until developments are at an advanced stage is more likely to result in car based travel patterns. PPW, paragraph 4.1.29 states "provision for active travel must be an essential component of development schemes and planning authorities must ensure new developments are designed and integrated with existing settlements and networks, in a way which makes active travel a practical, safe and attractive choice." Local Transport Plans (LTPs) are a useful mechanism to achieve co-ordination with the development of local land use development and promote active travel provision.

You may also be interested in our RTPI Planning and Health webpage - <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/knowledge/policy/topics/inclusive-planning-and-health/> and recent work by RTPI Cymru on the Value of Planning which has shown evidence for the first time of the wide economic and other benefits the planning system provides-

<https://www.rtpi.org.uk/briefing-room/news-releases/2018/june/rtpi-cymru-launches-value-of-planning-tool/>

If you require further assistance, please contact RTPI Cymru on 029 2047 3923 or e-mail Roisin Willmott at walespolicy@rtpi.org.uk

Yours sincerely,



Dr Roisin Willmott OBE FRTPI
Director
RTPI Cymru