

Wales planning news

JULY 2017



© Ben Salter

Headline news

First Minister details legislative priorities

Welsh First Minister Carwyn Jones has set out the legislative priorities his Government will focus on in the coming year, announcing five new bills.

Of interest to housing and planning, the Welsh Government is minded to introduce a bill to scrap up-front fees for tenants and prospective tenants in the private rented sector. A similar measure was also included in this year Queen's Speech, as the UK Government intends to bring forward a draft tenants' fees Bill; as the briefing notes to the Queen's Speech underline:

'The ban would apply to England only. However, some minor amendments to the Consumer Rights Act 2015 may apply to England and Wales.'

The Welsh First Minister also announced that his Government will bring forward legislation to reform local government:

'The bill will establish a new relationship between the Welsh Government and local government, create greater transparency in decision making and ensure greater collaboration through mandatory regional working arrangements.' Finally, a bill to reform the regulatory control for registered social landlords (RSLs) will also come forward; this will propose to reform 'central and local government controls over RSLs, enabling the ONS to reconsider the [public sector] reclassification and return them to the private sector'.

LICHFIELDS

Disclaimer

This publication has been written in general terms and cannot be relied on to cover specific situations. We recommend that you obtain professional advice before acting or refraining from acting on any of the contents of this publication. Lichfields accepts no duty of care or liability for any loss occasioned to any person acting or refraining from acting as a result of any material in this publication. Lichfields is the trading name of Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners Limited. Registered in England, no.2778116. Registered office: 14 Regent's Wharf, All Saints Street, London N1 9RL © Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners Ltd 2017. All rights reserved.

UK Government to support a North Wales Growth Deal

The UK's Government Minister in Wales, Guto Bebb, has championed UK Government support for a North Wales Growth Deal, in a visit to the region to meet with business leaders and representatives of local authorities.

After having delivered the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, and signing the Swansea Bay City Region Deal, the UK Government is now focusing on delivering a growth deal for North Wales; the aim is to 'strengthen the region's economy and make the most of its connections to the Northern Powerhouse.' The UK Government Minister said:

'The Northern Powerhouse, coupled with a growth deal represents our best chance to bring transformational change to North Wales. The region is perfectly positioned to benefit from the Northern Powerhouse. Its export base and reputation for big energy projects makes it a perfect partner for closer collaboration to expand the economy of North.'

Historic Environment (Wales) Act implementation update

Welsh planning authorities have been notified of the coming into force of a series of new regulations, as a result of the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Welsh Government Chief Planner Neil Hemington has written to all planning authorities detailing the main changes; they include the publication of a new Technical Advice Note (TAN 24) which covers the historic environment, and how this should be considered through the planning process. ■

QUOTE OF THE MONTH



The bills we intend to introduce during the second year of this Assembly [...] will tackle harmful alcohol consumption, help support working parents, protect tenants from unfair fees and reform and improve local government.

Wales First Minister Carwyn Jones, setting out his Government's legislative priorities for the coming year

THE LICHFIELDS PERSPECTIVE

With it being clear from the Queen's Speech, it is acknowledged by the Welsh Government and National Assembly that leaving the EU will have an impact too on the legislative programme for Wales. What is being reiterated now is that if the devolution settlement is not respected – under which planning is a devolved subject – there could be a Welsh EU Continuity Bill, to enshrine all existing EU regulations in Welsh law.

Giorgio Wetzl, Planning Researcher

CONTACT US

Gareth Williams
gareth.williams@lichfields.uk
T: 029 2043 5880

Margaret Baddeley
margaret.baddeley@lichfields.uk
T: 020 7837 4477

Helen Ashby-Ridgway
helen.ashby-ridgway@lichfields.uk
T: 029 2043 5880

Giorgio Wetzl
giorgio.wetzl@lichfields.uk
T: 020 7837 4477

House of Commons briefing papers

Following the outcome of the general election, the House of Commons Library has published a series of briefing paper updates; those relevant to planning in Wales are:

- Home ownership and renting: demographics;
- Comparing the Right to Buy in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland;
- 5G (mobile technology);
- Connected and autonomous road vehicles;
- Transport in Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland;
- Brexit: how will it affect transport?;
- Infrastructure policies and investments in the UK; and
- General Election 2017: results, charts and analysis.

Committee raised concerns over coastal protection policy

The Welsh Assembly's Public Accounts Committee has raised concerns over how the issue of managed retreat is dealt with in Wales. Coastal flooding and erosion are managed by a series of bodies, including Natural Resources Wales, local authorities, water companies, and other organisations such as Network Rail and the Crown Estate.

The Committee's report calls on the Welsh Government to produce an 'overarching national strategy', which should include the roles of all of the different bodies that have responsibilities over how coastal protection is delivered in Wales.

One point of particular concern relates to policy on managed retreat, which has implications for how land should be sacrificed and the coastline redrawn. As the report notes, this could imply a need to relocate entire coastal communities. The Committee says:

'We believe planning and preparation are vital alongside clear and sensitive communication to engage affected communities in the process ensuring as smoother transition as possible (sic).' ■