

Planning committees, delegation and joint
planning boards consultation
Development Management Branch
Planning Division
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff CF10 3NQ

15 January 2015

Dear Sir / Madam,

**Consultation on Planning Committees, Delegation and Joint Planning
Boards**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this consultation paper.

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) is a professional body for the study and care of the historic environment. It promotes best practice in archaeology and provides a self-regulatory quality assurance framework for the sector and those it serves. The Institute was granted a Royal Charter of Incorporation on 03 June 2014

CIfA has over 3,150 members and more than 70 registered practices across the United Kingdom. Its members work in all branches of the discipline: heritage management, planning advice, excavation, finds and environmental study, buildings recording, underwater and aerial archaeology, museums, conservation, survey, research and development, teaching and liaison with the community, industry and the commercial and financial sectors.

CIfA's Wales / Cymru Group has over 300 members practising in the public, private and voluntary sector in Wales.

Planning Committees, Delegation and Joint Planning Boards

General

CIfA welcomes Welsh Government's aim to standardise planning committee arrangements and delegation to officers across Wales.

In answering the specific questions below CIfA is concerned primarily with the consideration of the historic environment within the development management process.

Specific Questions

Question 1: Do you agree that the size of the planning committee should be limited to a minimum of 11 members and a maximum of 21 members?

1.1 Yes, provided that those members have adequate training, amongst other things, in relation to the historic environment.

1.2 The Institute would welcome the opportunity to work with Welsh Government and other stakeholders to provide or facilitate training for members. Members may not need to attain the levels of skill and knowledge required for a historic environment practitioner, but still need to have a basic knowledge and understanding of the historic environment and its significance in the planning system. Such basic training does not, however, remove the need for archaeological and wider historic environment expertise in assessing planning proposals and advising planning committees.

Question 2: Do you agree that where wards have more than one elected member only one should sit on the planning committee?

2.1 Yes.

Question 3: Do you agree with introducing a quorum of 50% (rounded up where the total committee size is an odd number) for decision-making?

3.1 Yes.

Question 4: Do you agree that the use of substitute members on the planning committee should be prohibited?

4.1 Yes.

Question 5: Do you agree with the development management role of the planning committee outlined above?

5.1 Only if the third class of applications (those where there is a quantifiable, community-wide interest in a development which goes beyond protecting the private interests of one person, or group of people, against the activities of others) is interpreted to include those applications where there is potentially significant impact upon the historic environment (whether EIA is required or not).

Question 6: Do you agree with the inclusion of an exception that requires all applications that are contrary to the adopted development plan which are being recommended for approval to be determined by the planning committee? If not, please explain the reasons.

6.1 Yes.

Question 7: Do you agree with the inclusion of an exception that requires all applications involving an EIA to be determined by the planning committee? If not, please explain the reasons.

7.1 Yes. Indeed, ClfA would suggest that any application where there is potentially significant impact upon the historic environment should be determined by the planning committee whether EIA is required or not.

Question 8: Do you agree with the inclusion of an exception relating to applications made by members, LPA staff and their spouses, partners and close relatives? If not, please explain the reasons.

8.1 Yes.

Question 9: Do you agree that the development threshold should be 'major development' as prescribed in the Town and Country Planning

(Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012? If not, please explain the reasons and suggest an alternative threshold.

9.1 Yes, provided that other development which may have a significant impact upon the historic environment is excepted under another heading (see paragraph 7.1 above).

9.2 Relatively small-scale development can have disproportionate, adverse effects on the historic environment and particularly on buried archaeological remains. Even if development constitutes 'local development' within the proposed hierarchy there may still be instances where there is a significant impact upon the historic environment.

Question 10: Do you agree that LPAs should have the choice of two development thresholds?

10.1 Yes, subject to the proviso in paragraph 9.1 above.

Question 11: Do you agree that the national scheme of delegation should include an exception based on an objection threshold?

11.1 Yes, but this should not be the only determinant of whether there is a community-wide interest. For instance, if a development potentially causes significant harm to the historic environment, this should be regarded as of community-wide interest regardless of the level of objection.

Question 12: If yes, is 20 letters from different people in different addresses and/or a petition with 30 signatures appropriate to establish that there is a genuine community-wide interest in the development?

12.1 No. See paragraph 11.1 above.

Question 13: Is it necessary to limit member call-in? If not, please specify the reasons.

13.1 ClfA accepts the conclusion of the RTPI Cymru Study that 'member call-in is a key aspect of the exercise of democratic control in the planning

system and should be retained as part of the national scheme of delegation’.

13.2 Given the constraints on local authority resources, it may be necessary to limit member call-in, but care should be taken not unduly to limit the exercise of this procedure.

Question 14: Should delegation panels be introduced as measure to validate member call-in requests?

14.1 Yes. If member call-in is to be limited, this would appear to be an appropriate compromise between efficiency and democracy.

Question 15: Should member call-in be linked to another exception? If not, please specify the reasons and provide a suggested alternative measure.

15.1 No. See above.

Question 16: Do you agree that the Welsh Ministers should have the authority to determine the size of the joint planning board membership, providing that size is consistent with that for planning committees?

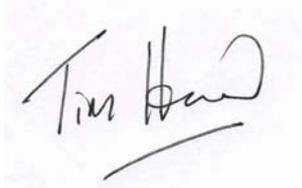
16.1 No comment.

Question 17: Do you agree with the proposed population formula for establishing the numbers of members from contributing planning authorities to form the joint planning board?

17.1 No comment.

If there is anything further that I can do to assist please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue background. The signature reads "Tim Howard" in a cursive style, with a horizontal line underneath.

Tim Howard LLB, Dip Prof Arch
Senior Policy Advisor