

Annual Report

April 2016 to March 2017



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Cymorth Cynllunio Cymru
Ymgysylltiad y gymuned a chynllunio

Planning Aid Wales

Community engagement in planning



Charity number 1000115

Annual Report, April 2016 to March 2017

About Planning Aid Wales

Our purpose is to support communities and planning authorities to work better together in shaping places.

We work with local planning authorities to support approaches for thoughtful community engagement as part of a proactive planning process.

We work with community and town councils to see the world from their perspective and to explain the planning process, their role in it and what they can achieve.



Planning Aid Wales is placing itself at the centre of community engagement in Welsh planning by:

- Continuing to build capacity for positive community engagement
- Becoming the network hub for community engagement in planning.

More information about our strategy is contained in our current Business Plan 2017-2020 that can be found [here](#).

Main activity areas

Network events

Over the year we delivered **six** network events across Wales on Place Plans, Developments of National Significance and pre-application community consultation. Network events are designed as learning environments for planning authorities, community and town councils and developers to understand different perspectives, find and share good practice and create new ideas for doing planning better.

More information on our past and future events programme is available [here](#).

Community engagement e-bulletin

Our new community engagement e-bulletin '*planning4communities*' gives an update on activities, good practice, news and resources for community planning in Wales. It is circulated to over **1,000** recipients interested in community planning.

Past copies of the bulletin are [here](#).

To sign up to receive '*planning4communities*' go [here](#).

Community and Town Council forward training programme

Community and Town Councils represent their local communities and have an important role in community planning.

Over the past year we have delivered **10** planning training events across Wales to help Community and Town Councils better understand how the planning system works, the role of Clerks and Councillors in planning, and how to engage more effectively with the planning process.

More information about the training we offer is [here](#).

Helpline

Over the year, we helped over **275** individuals from different backgrounds address their planning concerns. Our volunteers spent over **75** hours helping people to comment on planning applications and to get involved in Local Development Plan preparation.

Some highlights from the past year

Network Event, 'Pre-application community consultation: getting the benefits'

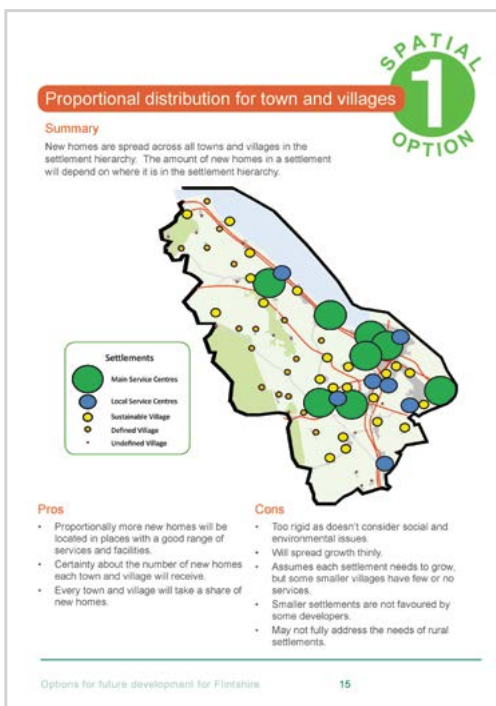
In January 2017, we held a network event that used real examples of good practice in pre-application community consultation to tease out issues and perspectives. The event made clear that good developments are those that work well with their local areas, which means working with local communities.



Using what we've learnt from this and other network events, Planning Aid Wales will be working to continue supporting and encouraging better pre-application community consultation.

For an overview of findings on pre-application community consultation click [here](#) (page 13).

Community engagement in Local Development Plan preparation: Flintshire County Council LDP



In October 2016, we supported Flintshire County Council to help design and deliver a community engagement programme for the early stages of Local Development Plan preparation. Our approach involved community engagement workshops, preparation of bilingual plain language consultation booklets and exhibition boards. These consultation materials were designed to give an overview of the process, raise awareness of the importance and relevance of the LDP in influencing where new development could go, and encourage greater community involvement in how Flintshire develops in the future.

The project has helped to build the capacity of local communities to engage with LDP preparation. It also helped to build political support for the Plan and help communities recognise the importance and relevance of being involved in the LPD process, reducing the potential for conflict later on.

Preparation of Place Plan Guidance

We have begun work with key stakeholders to prepare an accessible online guidance resource for those interested in preparing a Place Plan.

Place Plans are envisaged as providing opportunities for local communities to engage creatively with the local planning process. They are a tool for establishing a finer grain of planning policy detail for local areas, helping to ensure that future development reflects local circumstances and needs.

Place Plan preparation will require new ways of working in the local planning process, which we will be helping to encourage and support.

Supporting LDP Review: Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority is embarking on a first review of its LDP. We were commissioned to deliver a second round of workshops for Community and Town Councils in February 2017.

The workshops were designed to help community representatives to understand the process for assessing sites that come forward for inclusion in the LDP, and the contribution of suitable sites to developing a preferred strategy.

Volunteers

As a small charity we rely on our network of around 40 volunteers. Volunteers help out with a wide range of activities, including providing advice to members of the public, delivering training and developing accessible guidance. More information on volunteering is [here](#).

Management Board

For more information about the Management Board, visit our webpage [here](#).

Financial information

Planning Aid Wales is core funded by Welsh Government. We also generate additional income through commissioned project activities.

Each year the Management Board reviews the financial position and sets an annual budget against its Medium Term Financial Strategy. Through this process the Board aims in general to balance the books or, where necessary, to seek to achieve a small surplus to build up the charity's reserves for future investment and for mitigating against financial risk. Risk management and reserves policies are set out in the Directors' Report which accompanies the [Final Accounts 2016/17](#).

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