



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



Infrastructure Planning for Communities

James Davies - Chief Executive

5th March 2026



Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Funded by
Welsh Government



Welcome

Online training format:

- Using the controls – mute/video
- Ask questions via chat / raise hand
- Translation
- Break scheduled



Evaluation Part 1



About us

- Independent Charity
- Community engagement in planning
- Welsh Government funded
- Impartial planning guidance and advice
- Helpline, Publications, training





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

We do...

- Use Plain English & Welsh
- Clarify process
- Support participation
- Encourage dialogue
- Promote meaningful engagement

We do not...

- Promote / denounce development
- Seek approval OR refusal of development
- Defend policies
- Make planning decisions

What do we mean by 'Infrastructure'?

- Large-scale projects that support how society functions
- E.g. Energy, transport, water & waste
- Today is about new system introduced December 2025 to make decisions on large infrastructure applications.
- Same principles as wider planning system...



Tonight's course

Part 1: The Planning System in Wales

Part 2: The new Infrastructure Planning process

Part 3: Engaging in the process



Part 1

The Planning System in Wales



What is Planning?



What is Planning?

Planning manages development and the use of land in the public interest.



Who's who in planning in Wales?



UK Government



Senedd, Welsh Government & PEDW



Local Planning Authorities



Developers



Statutory consultees



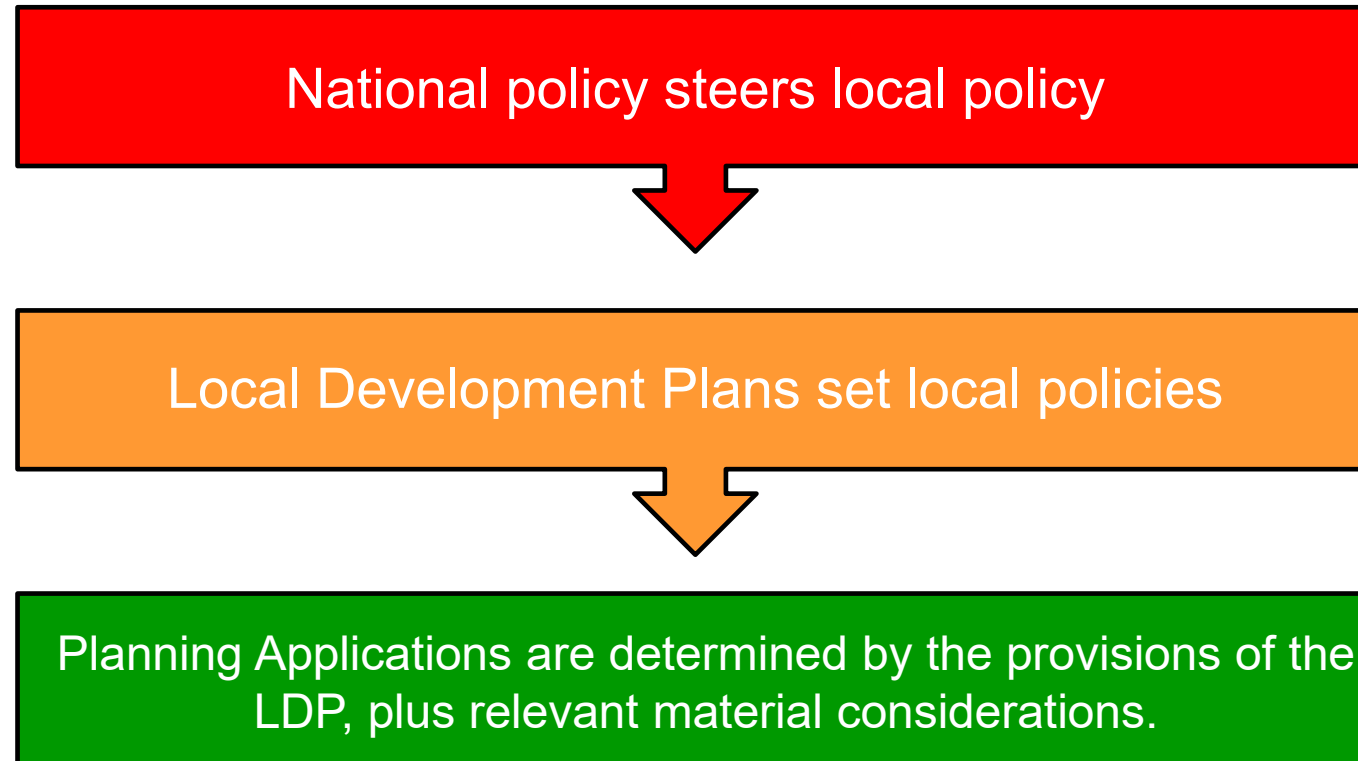
Community and Town Councils



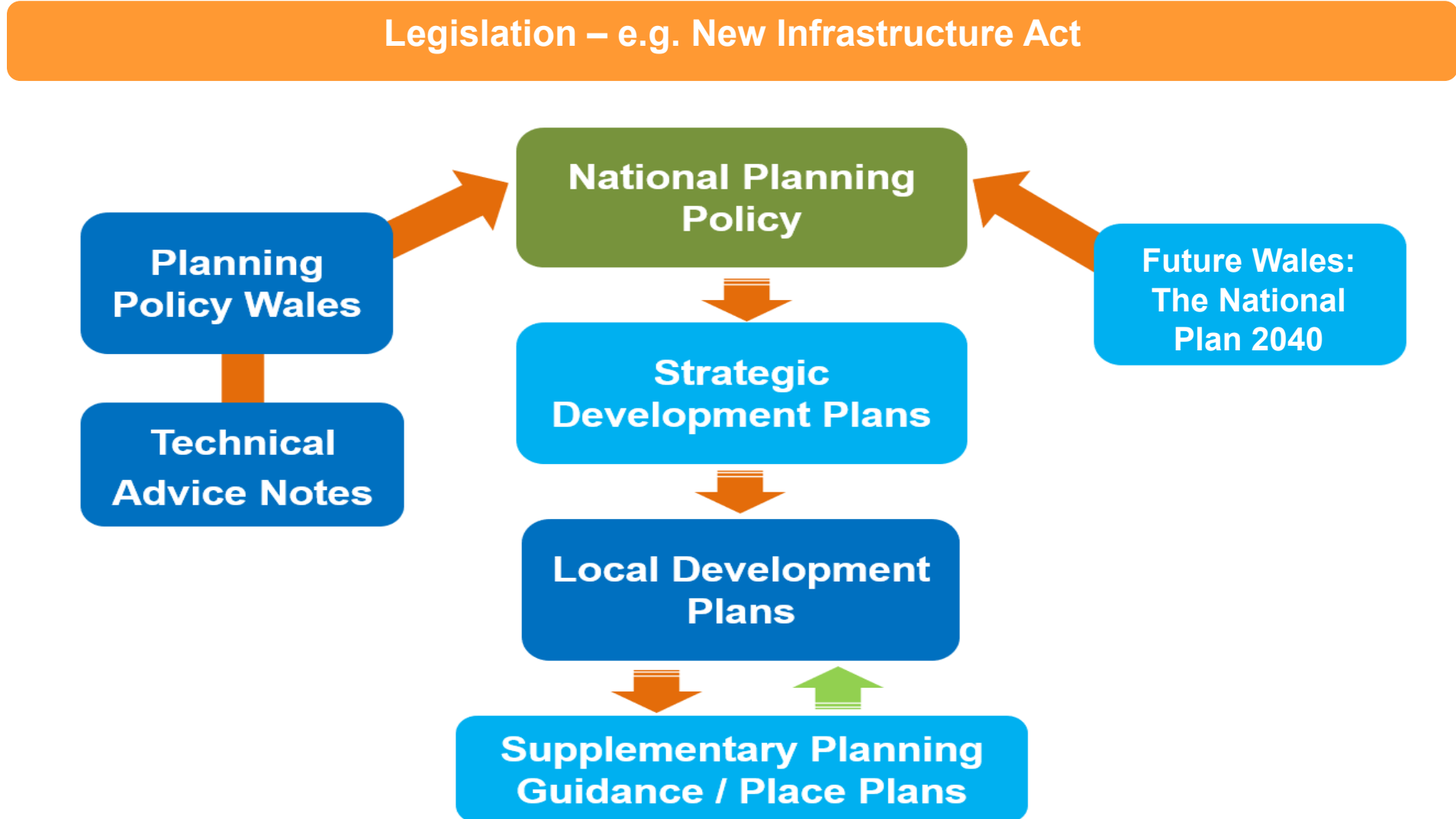
The 'shape' of planning



Importance of Planning Policy



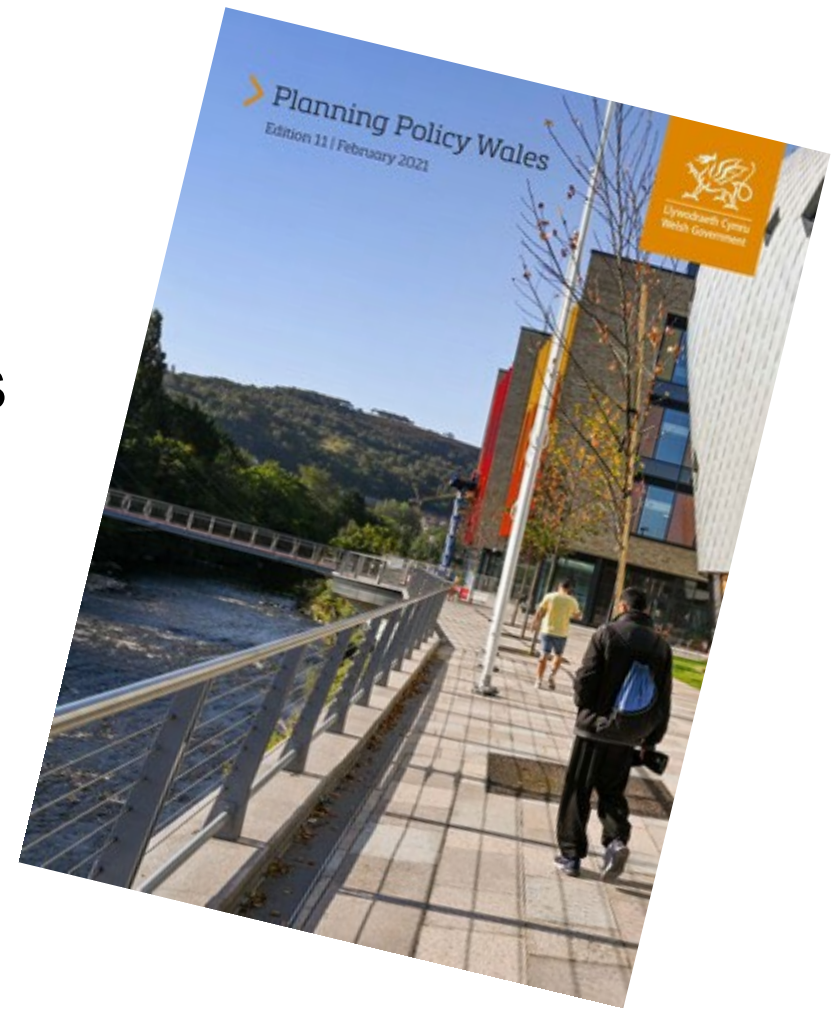
Planning Legislation & Policy



National Planning Policy

What is National Planning Policy?

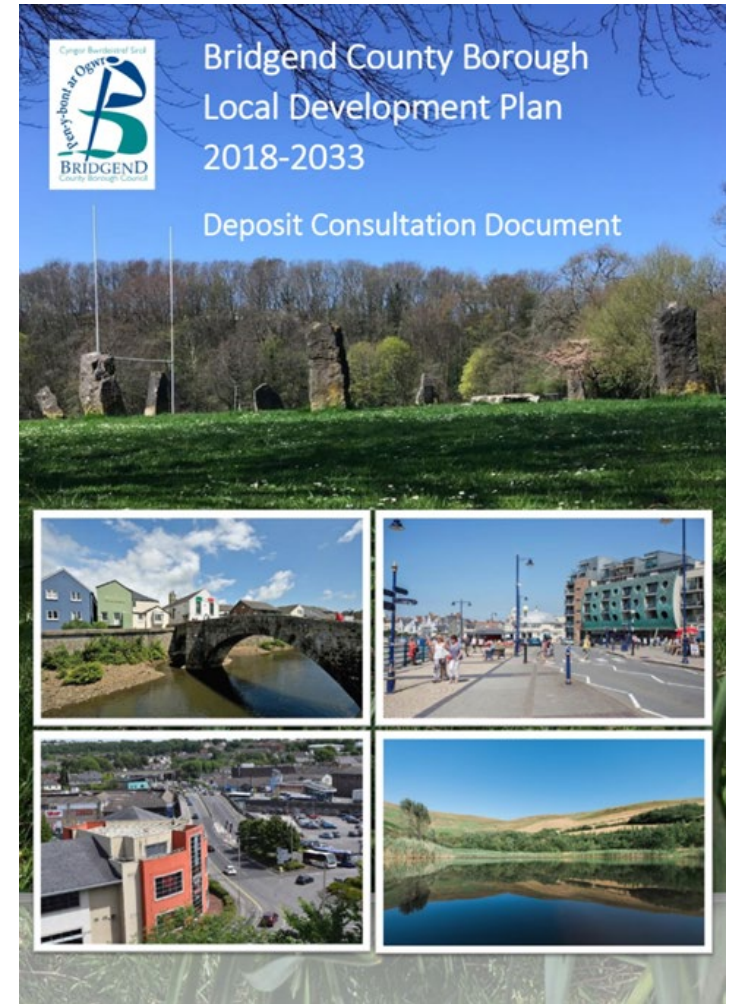
- Development Plan: Future Wales
- Guidance for Local Planning Authorities
- Delivers well-being goals
- Informs local policy (LDPs)
- Informs decision making



Local Development Plans

Why are LDPs important?

- Framework for development
- Investment & infrastructure
- Protect environmental assets
- Primary ‘material consideration’



LDP Examinations

Three key questions (tests of 'soundness'):

- 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?



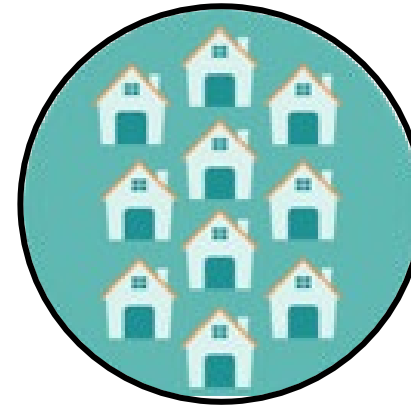
Planning Applications



Nationally
Significant
Infrastructure
Project (NSIP)



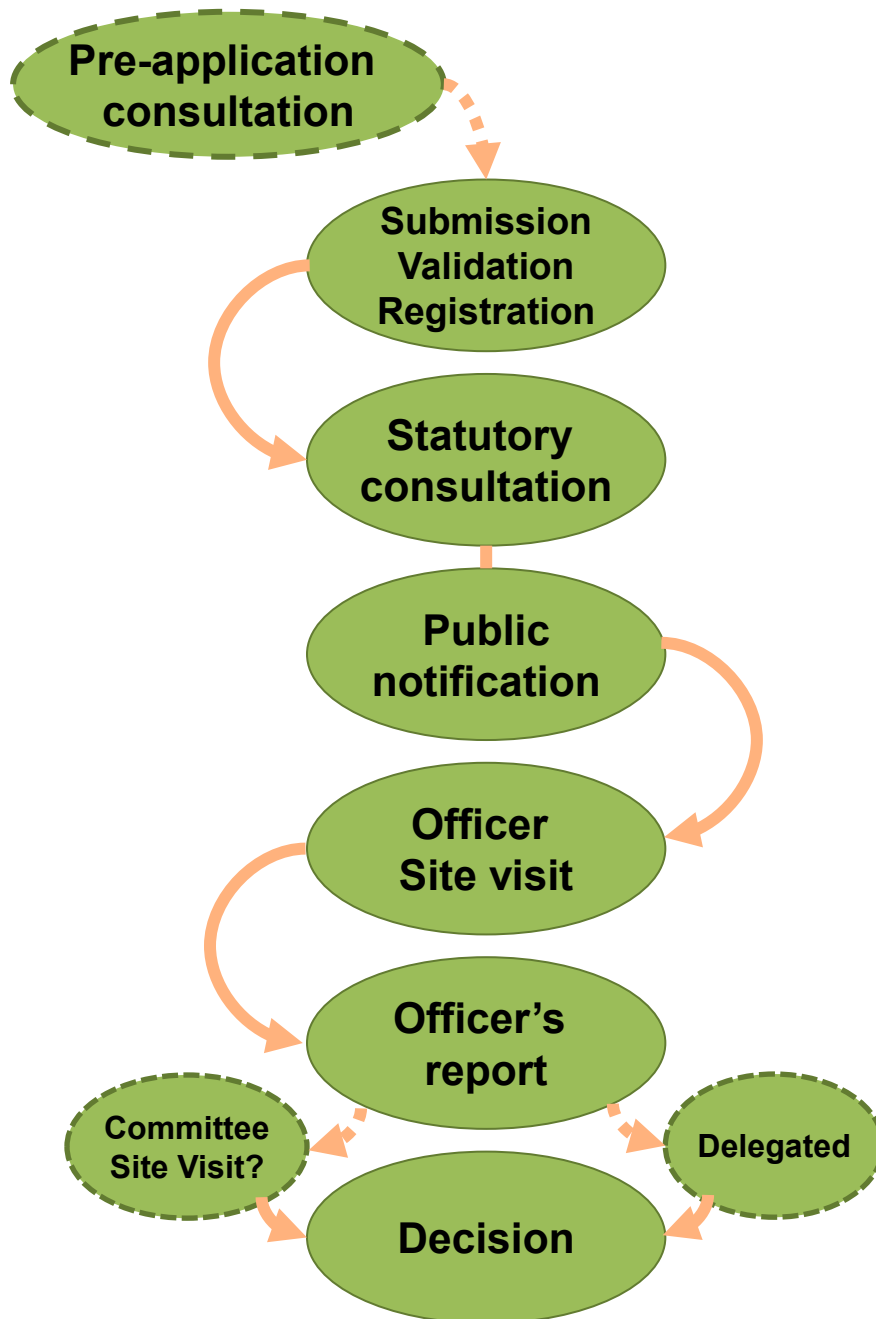
Significant
Infrastructure
Project (SIP),
Replaces DNS



Major
applications



Outline /
Reserved
matters / full /
householder
applications



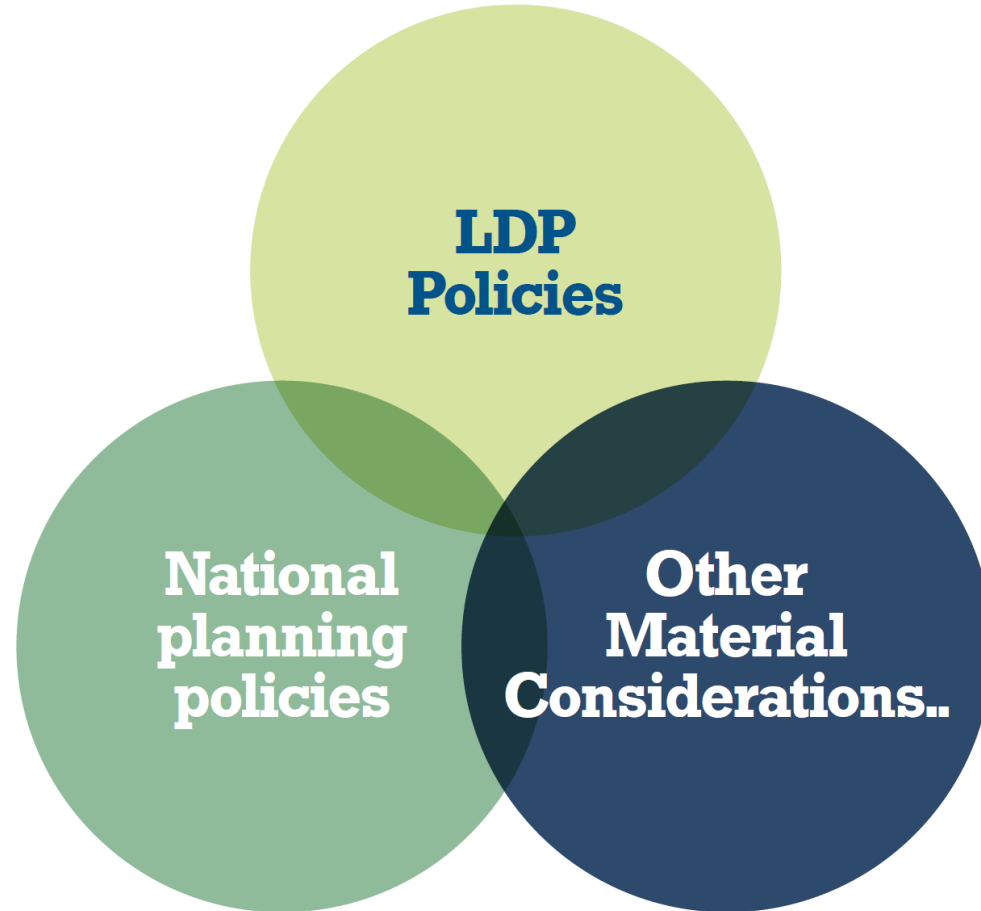
The planning application process

Planning permission granted
 Conditions ✓
 Section 106 agreement

Planning permission refused
 Appeal...? ✗
 Applicant only



How are decisions made?



Questions?



Part 2

The new Infrastructure Planning process



Infrastructure Act 2024 - Purpose

- Dedicated consenting process for Significant Infrastructure Projects (SIPs)
- Multiple consent routes > Infrastructure Consenting Order (ICO)
- Welsh Ministers via PEDW
- Formal consultation and examination
- Compulsory acquisition and associated consents within one order

Infrastructure Planning For Communities

5th March 2026



Infrastructure (Wales) Act 2024

2024 asc 3

CONTENTS

PART 1 SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Key term

1 Meaning of “significant infrastructure project”

Energy

2 Electricity infrastructure
3 Liquefied natural gas facilities
4 Gas reception facilities
5 Hydraulic fracturing for oil and gas and coal gasification
6 Open cast coal mining

Transport

7 Highways
8 Railways
9 Rail freight interchanges
10 Harbour facilities
11 Airports

Water

12 Dams and reservoirs
13 Transfer of water resources

Types of Infrastructure & Decision Making

Application Type

Covers

Decision Maker



Types of Infrastructure & Decision Making

Application Type	Covers	Decision Maker
Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project	LARGEST Energy / Road / Rail projects with UK-wide impact	Secretary of State UK via Planning Inspectorate



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Significant Infrastructure Project	LARGE Energy / Road / Rail projects	Welsh Ministers via Planning & Environment Decisions Wales
Infrastructure Projects	LOCAL / smaller scale in-county infrastructure projects – transport / energy / rail / all other types of applications	Local Planning Authority Members via Local Planning Departments



Infrastructure Act Status

- Operational from 15 December 2025
- Developments of National Significance remain:
 - Transition arrangements
 - Anything not captured in Act



What is a Significant Infrastructure Project?

- Defined in Part 1 of the Act; and
- Meets Capacity, scale or volume thresholds; or It is directed to be treated as a SIP by Welsh Ministers (opposite power also applies)
 - Electricity generating stations (including wind)
 - Overhead electricity lines
 - Gas reception and LNG facilities
 - Highways (new or significant alterations)
 - Railways and rail freight interchanges
 - Harbour facilities
 - Dams and reservoirs
 - Water transfer schemes
 - Waste water treatment and storage infrastructure
 - Hazardous waste facilities

Energy

- **Electricity generating stations:**
50–350 MW installed capacity
- **Onshore wind:**
 ≥ 50 MW
- **Extensions:**
Increase of ≥ 50 MW
- **Overhead lines:**
132 kV and ≥ 2 km (associated with qualifying stations)



*Carno Windfarm, Powys.
Source: Oliver Davies*

Transport

- **New highways:**
1 km+ (where Welsh Ministers are highway authority)
- **Railways:**
2 km of new track
- **Rail freight interchanges:**
≥ 60 hectares and ≥ 4 goods trains per day



*Newtown Bypass, Powys.
Source: Powys County Times*

Water

- **Dams / reservoirs:**
10 million m³
- **Water transfer:**
100 million m³ / yr
- **Waste water treatment plants:**
500,000 population equivalent
- **Waste water storage:**
350,000 m³



*Usk Reservoir, Bannau Brecheiniog
Source: Nigel Davies*

Waste & Hazardous Materials

- **Landfill / deep storage:**
100,000 tonnes / yr
- **Other hazardous waste facilities:**
30,000 tonnes / yr



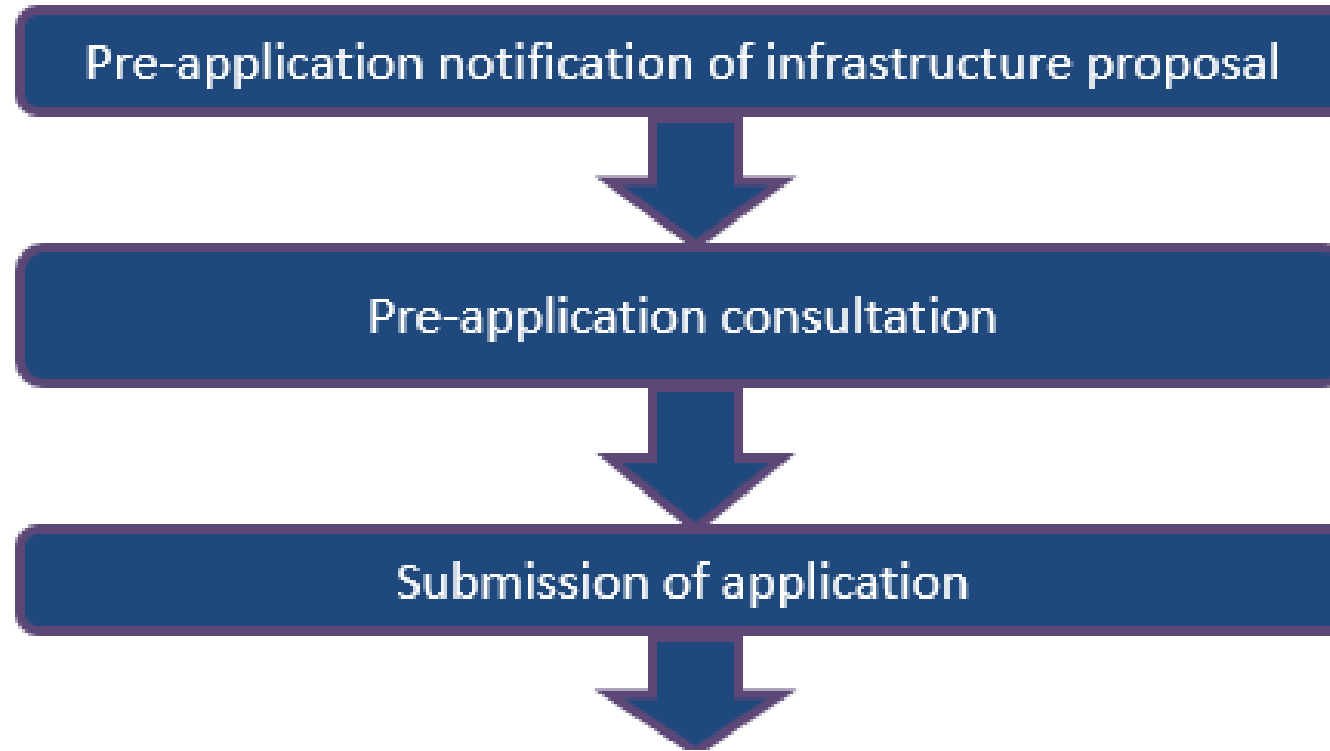
*Trecatti Landfill Site, Merthyr Tydfil
Source: Walters Group*

Notes

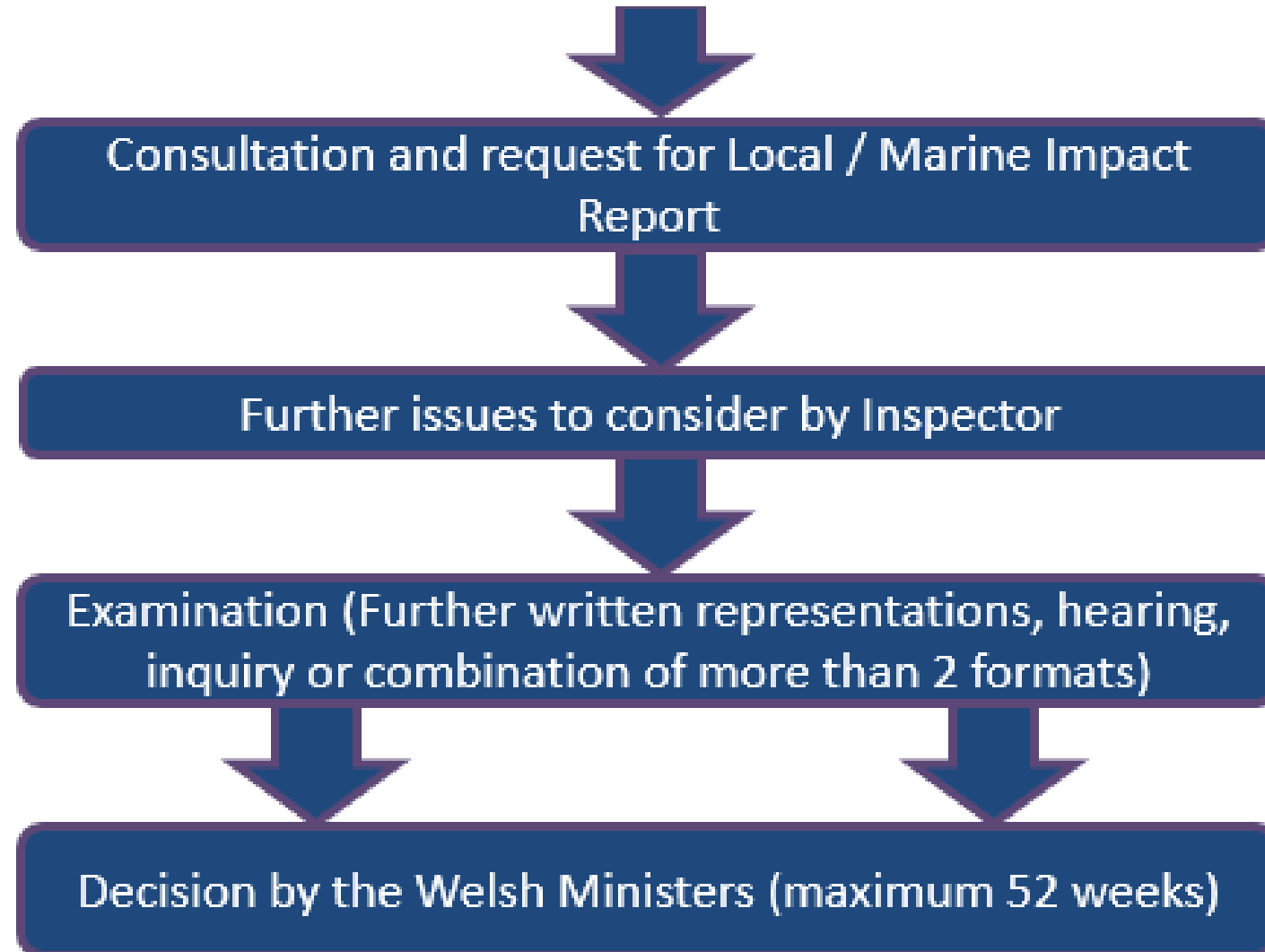
- Thresholds are statutory and sector-specific.
- Welsh Ministers may designate certain projects as Significant by direction (and vice-versa).
- Projects below thresholds remain within the Local Planning Authority.
- Electricity generation above 350 MW is generally determined under the UK NSIP regime.



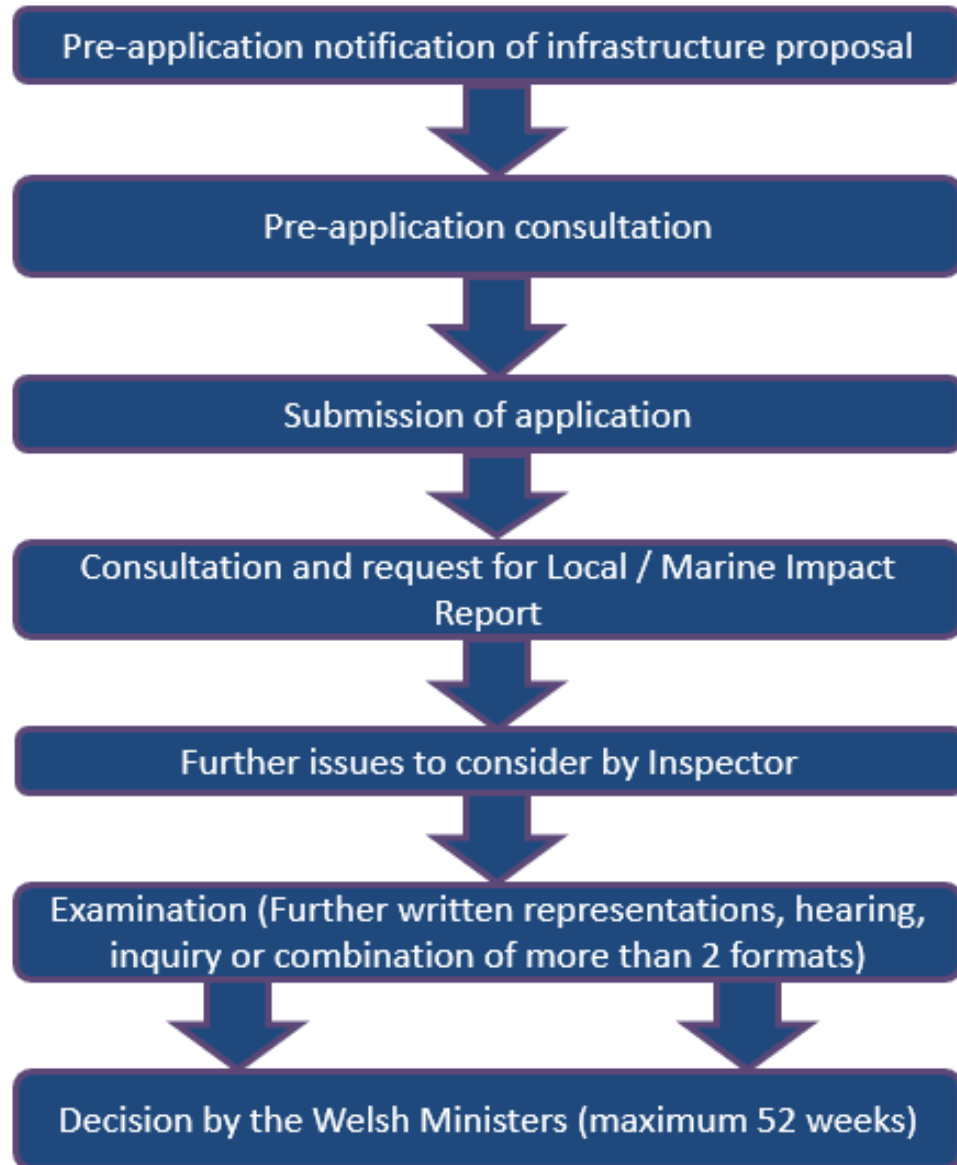
Application Process



Application Process



Application Process



**PCAC
PEDW**

Penderfyniadau Cynllunio
ac Amgylchedd **Cymru**
Planning & Environment
Decisions **Wales**

If granted, an Infrastructure Consent Order is issued that can contain:

- Planning permission
- Listed building consent
- Compulsory acquisition powers
- Highway alterations

Notes

- Statutory deadlines
- Key stages are governed by regulations
- Deadlines are set in formal notices
- Examination run to fixed procedural timetables
- Late submissions may not be accepted without justification
- No appeals – legal challenge only

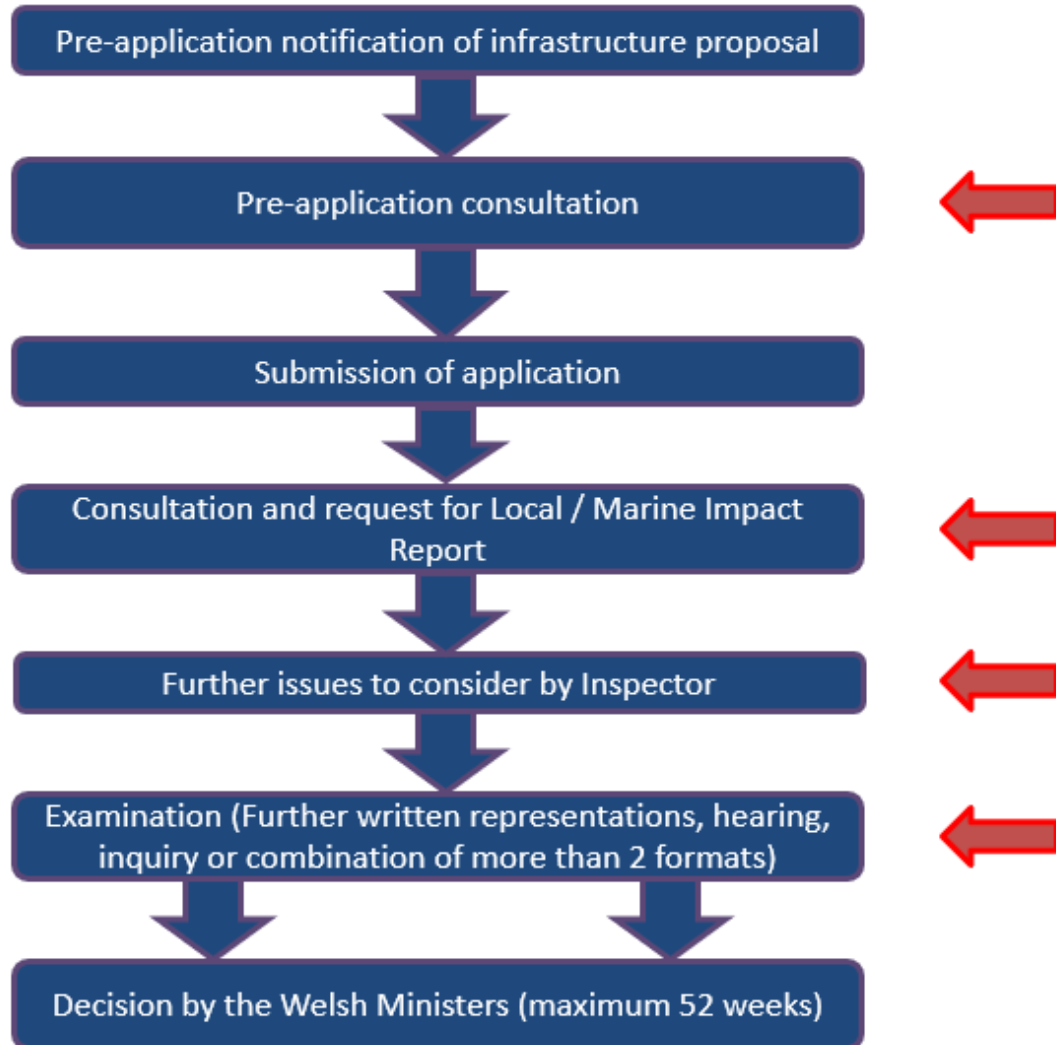


Part 3

Engaging in the process



Consultations on SIPs



- Pre-application consultations – 42 days
- Post submission consultation
- Local Impact Reports – Local Authority (Mandatory) & Community Council (Discretionary)
- Examination – further written, open floor hearing or Inquiry

Notification and Advertising

Pre-application consultation – 42 days

- Developer must consult statutory consultees and communities
- Site notice, local newspapers
- Consultation documents made available – website
- At least one consultation event
- **IMPORTANT:** Representations must be submitted at this stage



Notification and Advertising

Application stage

- PEDW issues a s.34 notice to Local Authority, Elected Members and Statutory Consultees, owner, adjoining and interested parties.
- Invites Local Impact Report, further representations and sets deadlines
- Published on PEDW website
- Identifies the start of the examination process
- **Main consultation is at the Pre-Application**



Evidence, Representations & Impact Reports

- Application must include environmental information, Consultation Report and Draft ICO.
- Interested parties may submit written comments within deadlines in s.34 notice
- Further written representations and statements may be required during examination – **evidence-led**.
- Local Planning Authority must submit a Local Impact Report (LIR). Ministers must have regard to LIRs in decision-making.



Local Impact Reports

Local Planning Authority – must submit one;
Community Council – optional.

Must state:

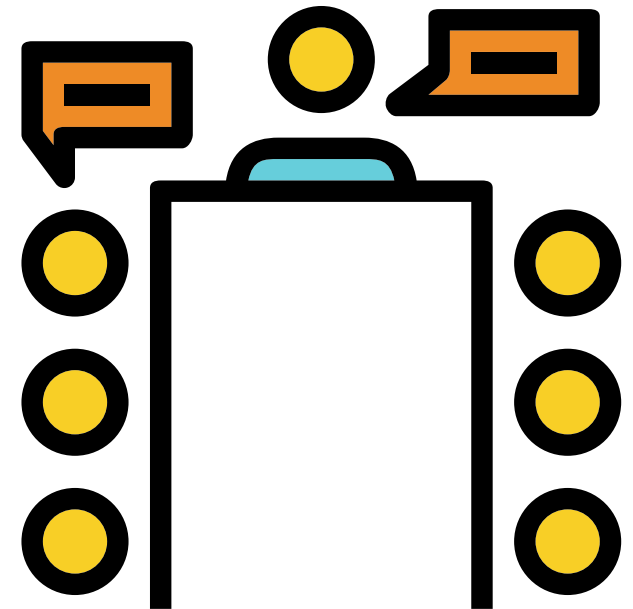
- Planning history and local designations
- Site constraints / local applications
- Local planning policies that apply
- Likely impact of the proposal
- Any conditions or planning obligations (with reasons)

Published on PEDW website



Examination: Open Floor Hearings

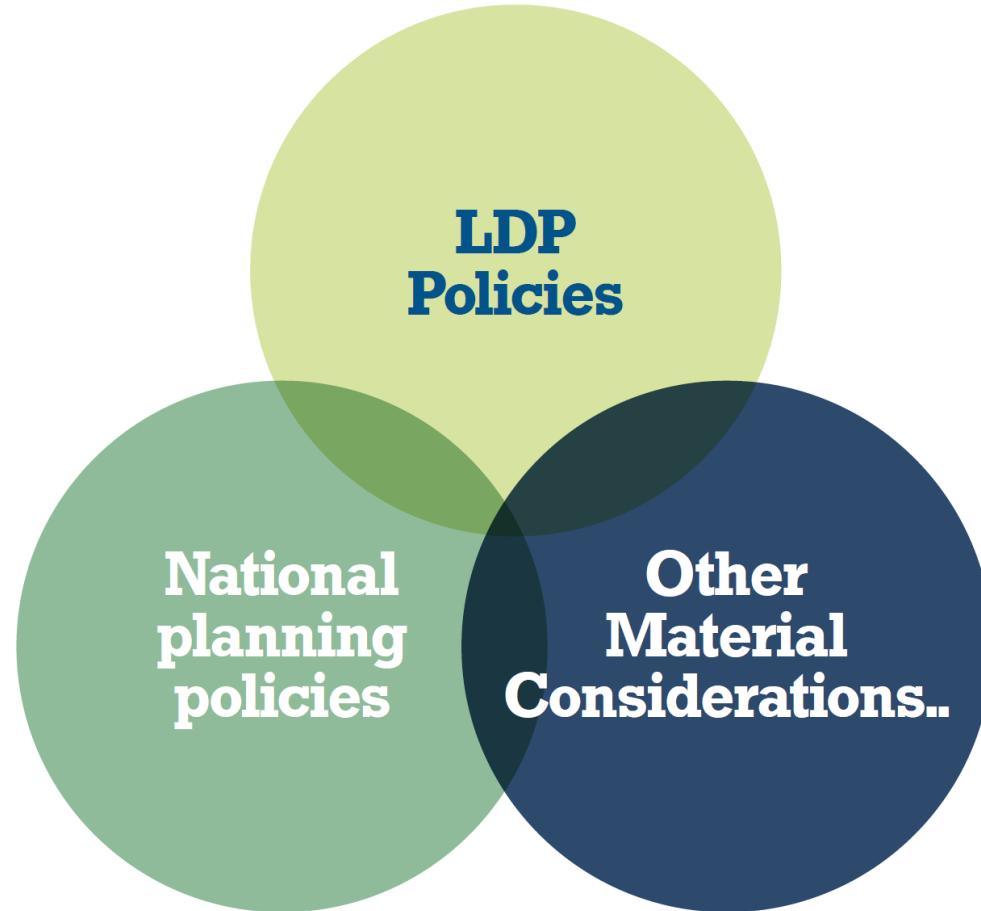
- Public session held during the examination stage.
- Individuals, community groups, councillors and organisations speak directly to the examination.
- Must request this when submitting written representation.
- Structured but informal and are chaired by the Planning Inspector(s).
- Allows people to explain their concerns, local knowledge and evidence in person.



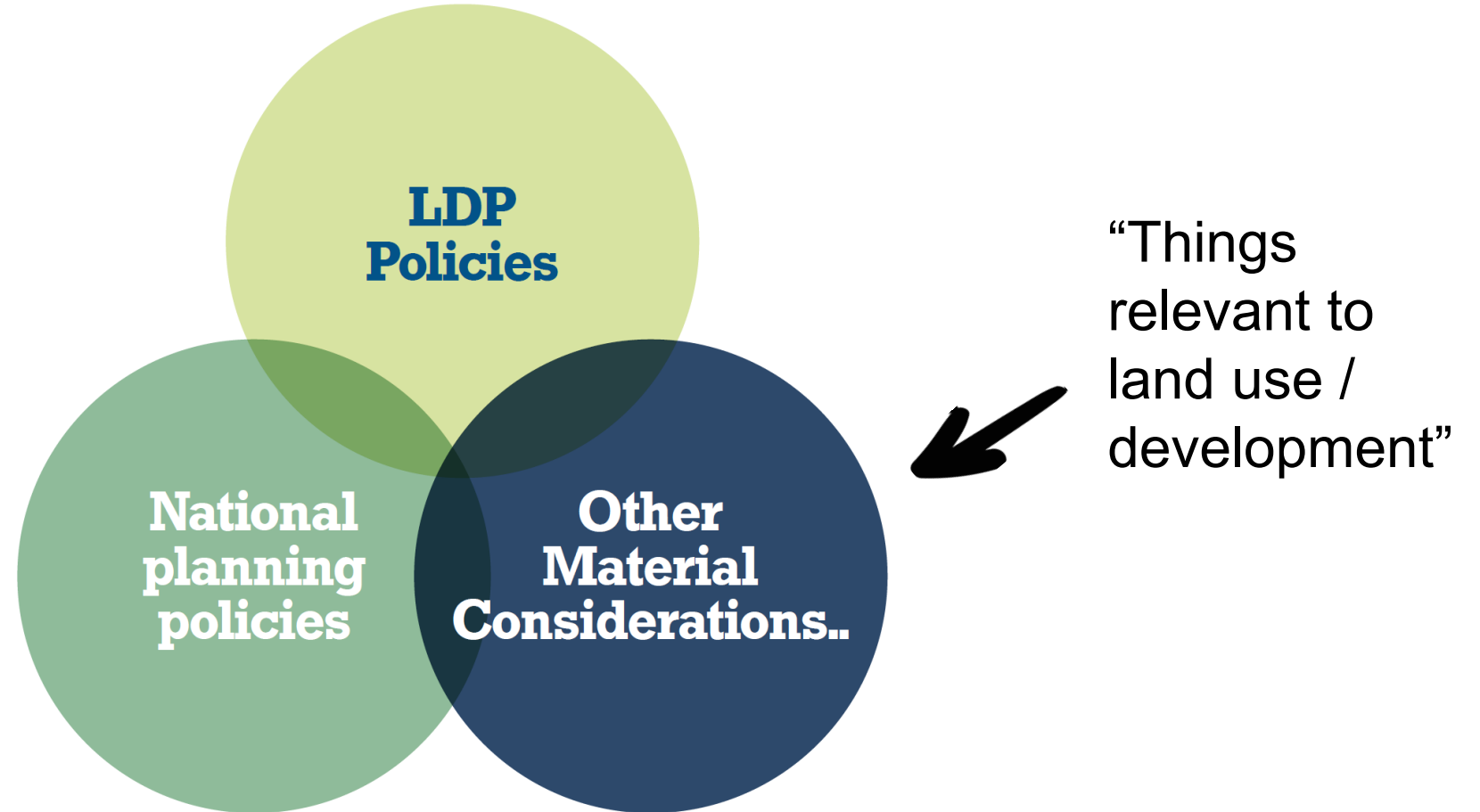
Commenting on Infrastructure Pre-Applications and Applications



How are decisions made?



How are decisions made?



Material considerations can include...

- Policies in an adopted development plan (Future Wales / SDP / LDP)
- Ecology & biodiversity
- Noise, water, air quality
- Access, transport, highways impact
- Character, Appearance, layout and design



Material considerations can include...

- Amenity, health and safety
- Economic impacts
- Connectivity (e.g. to National Grid), decommissioning & restoration
- Heritage & archaeology
- Scrutiny / countering of evidence
- Mitigations, conditions and obligations



Not material considerations ...

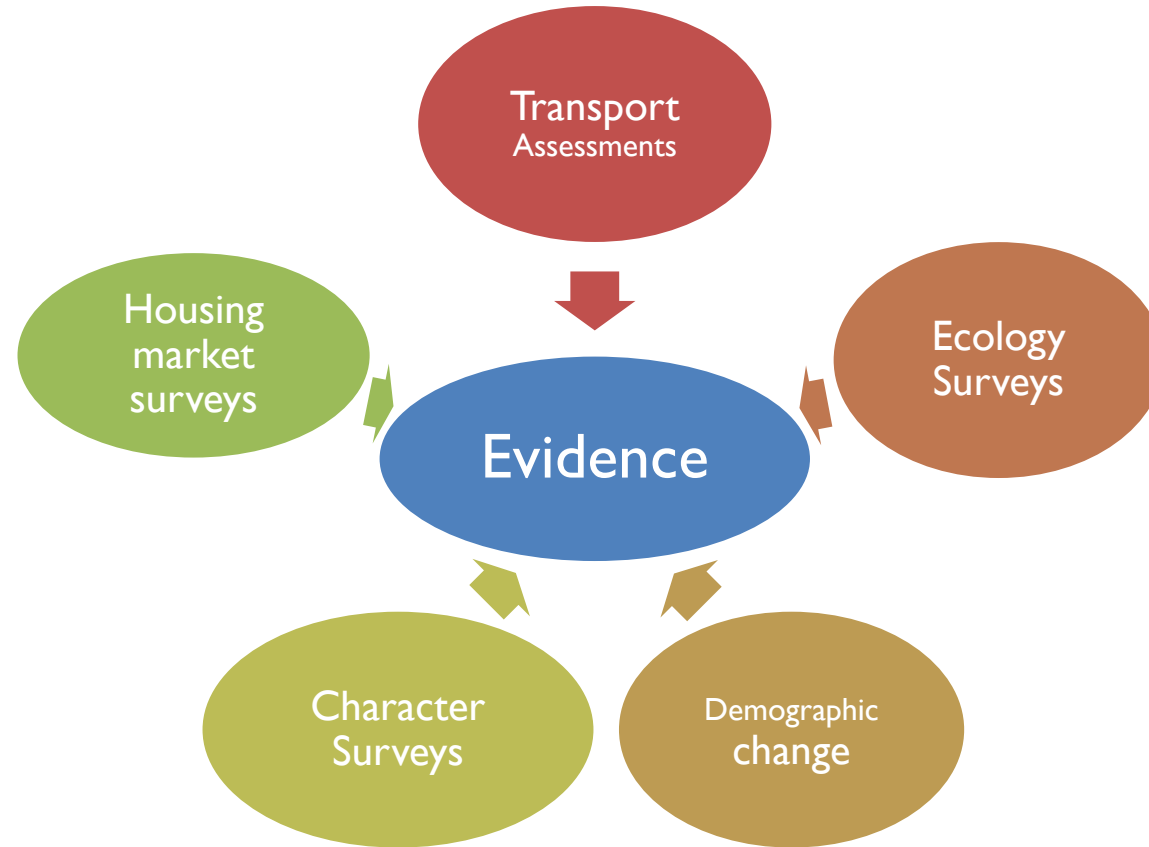
- General opposition (without material reasons)
- Moral / political objection e.g. to technology / industry
- Reputation – landowner, agents, operators
- Devaluation of property
- Loss of view
- Speculation or unsubstantiated claims without **evidence**



Where's the evidence?

Facts

Figures



Aspirations

Opinions

What is a Place Plan?

- Local land use plan / guidance
- Community Council led
- Can be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance
- ‘Evidence prepared in advance’

 **Place Plans
Cynllun Cynefin**



Place Plan Benefits

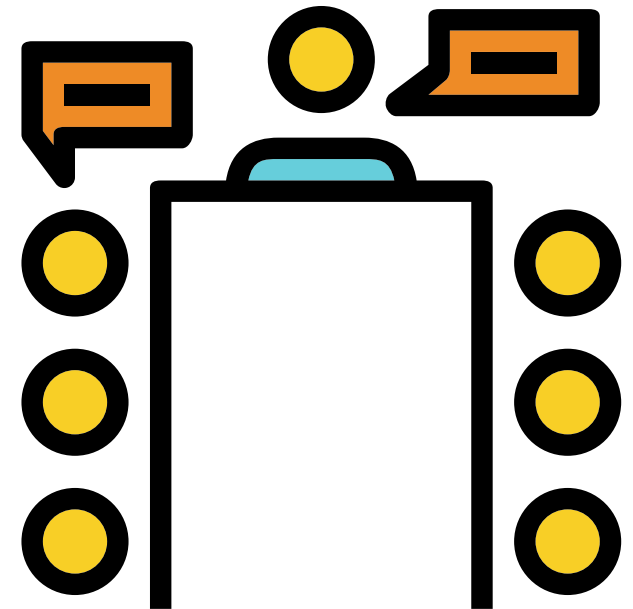
- Community-led, community needs focussed.
- Evidence-based & longer-term thinking.
- Better influence on local decisions, inspires and frames action.
- Inform LIR & obligations?

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5th March 2026



Preparation & Resources

- Identify potential schemes in Future Wales, SDPs, LDPs; consider implications.
- Consider Place Plans - great tool to plan ahead.
- Schedule extraordinary meetings if possible.
- Familiarise with PAW guidance / training.
- AI as tool for reviewing documents?



Questions?



Evaluation Part 2



Upcoming Events

11th March:

Planning and Flood Risk in Wales: An update for communities

19th March:

Improving our Local Places: Welsh Case Studies & Planning Updates

25th March

Infrastructure Planning for Communities: Training (REPEAT)



Contact us:

Training enquiries: 02920 625 004

Helpline: 02920 625 000

james@planningaidwales.org.uk

deb@planningaidwales.org.uk

**Thank you for
attending**

