

RHA 04

Ymgynghoriad ar yr hawl i dai ddigonol

Consultation on the right to adequate housing

Ymateb gan: Sefydliad Cynllunio Trefol Brenhinol Cymru

Response from: Royal Town Planning Institute Cymru



RTPI Cymru

Royal Town Planning Institute
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e-mail response sent to: SeneddHousing@senedd.wales

Dear Sir/Madam,

Response to: Right to Adequate Housing

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is the largest professional institute for planners in Europe, representing some 27,000 spatial planners. RTPI Cymru represents the RTPI in Wales, with 1,300 members. The Institute seeks to advance the science and art of planning, working for the long-term common good and well-being of current and future generations. The RTPI develops and shapes policy affecting the built environment, works to raise professional standards and supports members through continuous education, training and development.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above Inquiry. While many of the issues that will be discussed during this inquiry are outside the remit of planning, our response focuses on those issues that are relevant to planning and aims to emphasise the close links between the provision of housing, planning and other sectors such as health and transport.

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) [Our Strategy | UN-Habitat \(unhabitat.org\)](https://www.unhabitat.org) is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities. As part of this, the programme sets out that “Everyone has a fundamental human right to housing, which ensures access to a safe, secure, habitable, and affordable home”. The programme recognises the strength in partnership working and the need for all sectors to work together with a shared vision. We therefore urge that the provision of adequate homes is not considered in isolation but is considered holistically and decisions are based on joined up, robust evidence, to ensure that they will resolve issues and problems.

RTPI Cymru believes that a well-resourced plan led system can support the provision of adequate housing. To achieve ambitious national housing targets, planners need to identify where housing, including affordable housing, is needed, enforce quality standards, ensure

good access to amenities, support community cohesion, and coordinate developer contributions. Planning can also support various mechanisms and initiatives in this regard, including bringing back into use empty homes. Shelter Cymru note that “studies have shown that the average cost of returning empty homes to a habitable state is between £6,000 and £12,000 per property. Around 2,000 empty homes could be brought back into use for £20m.”

[Empty homes - Shelter Cymru](#)

While discussion around housing provision is often focused on the detail of housing supply, it is important to equally recognise that high quality homes, safe living environments and access to opportunities for exercise and recreation enable population health and need to be considered alongside housing supply. Well-planned places, particularly those with access to green infrastructure and that enable community cohesion, are important for supporting the mental and physical health of residents. However, we have become aware that the availability of internal residential space is becoming an issue for some urban local planning authorities, in particular. Decreased living space can have implications on wellbeing, quality of life and mental health. Other social issues include lack of private space within dwellings, storage space and, increasingly important, reduced ability to work from home. There needs to be balanced consideration and open dialogue between all parties regarding the need to provide housing of an acceptable standard against viability.

The provision of housing must equally go hand in hand with inclusive, affordable and sustainable public transport. RTPI Cymru has long called for a “more integrated approach to transport and land use planning” in line with the findings of the [RTPI Net Zero Carbon Transport research](#). It is vital that we work to better integrate an inclusive and affordable sustainable public transport system if we are to enable more sustainable places, a modal shift, achieve decarbonisation, net zero targets and climate action goals. We support the continued preparation of Local Transport Plans (LTPs) by local authorities. These are a useful mechanism to achieve co-ordination with the development of local land use development.

If you require further assistance, please contact RTPI Cymru on 020 7929 8197 or e-mail Roisin Willmott at walespolicy@rtpi.org.uk

Yours sincerely,



Dr Roisin Willmott OBE FRTPi
Director