

Carl Sargeant AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol  
Minister for Natural Resources



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-619  
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/00243/15

William Powell AM  
Chair Petitions Committee  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

 February 2015

Dear Bill

Thank you for your letter dated 10 February addressed to Leighton Andrews AM seeking his views on proposals relating to “localism in planning and compensation for third parties re. infrastructure projects (P-04-519)”. As the matter relates to reforms to the planning system, I have been asked to reply.

The matters raised by the petition are addressed in turn below:

#### The level of planning decisions

It is my intention to introduce a new development management hierarchy in the planning system, the proposals for which are detailed in my Positive Planning consultation paper (November 2013) at pages 25-30. This clear hierarchy allows different types of planning application to be dealt with in a proportionate way dependent on their likely benefits and impacts. I consider that these proposals strike the correct balance in allowing decisions to be made in a proportionate way, while enabling applications to be scrutinised at the appropriate level dependent on whether they have impacts which are of national, major or local significance.

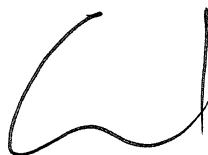
Each year, around 25,000 planning applications are decided in Wales. It is expected that no more than ten of these decisions per year will be made by the Welsh Ministers. Local planning authorities will still determine local and major applications in the first instance.

Measures contained in the Planning (Wales) Bill place duties on developers to engage proactively with the public when preparing applications for major and nationally significant developments and there will be opportunity for the public to submit their views throughout the application process. These proposals will strengthen, rather than weaken, community engagement.

Impact of major infrastructure schemes on third parties

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 contains a series of provisions in relation to compensation and planning blight. In October 2011, the then Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development established an Independent Advisory Group ("IAG") to review the delivery of the planning system in Wales as part of the evidence base for a consultation paper, leading ultimately to a Welsh Planning Bill. The IAG did not receive evidence suggesting that a review is required of compensation provisions in the realm of town and country planning. The Environment and Sustainability Committee, of which you are a member, also did not receive evidence in this respect.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CS', written in a cursive style.

**Carl Sargeant AC / AM**  
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