

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Ynni, Cynllunio a Materion Gwledig  
Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: qa1317543

Cllr Hugh Evans  
Leader of Denbighshire County Council  
County Hall  
Wynnstay Road  
Ruthin  
LL15 1YN

29 March 2018

Dear Cllr Evans,

### Re: Local Development Plan (LDP) Review

In December 2017, I wrote to you inviting proposals for Joint LDPs to come forward, highlighting opportunities to maximise efficiencies around plan preparation, as well the effectiveness of policy based outcomes for local communities and business.

The invitation was made in response to numerous comments expressed in the Annual Performance Report (APR) where Local Authorities (LAs) have cited reductions in budgets, skills, capacities and experience to planning departments. Collectively, reductions in LAs future planning resources, both financially and capacity, are having an adverse effect on reviewing adopted LDPs. Consequently, taking the extra step beyond current joint working to the preparation of a Joint LDP would provide a greater ability to optimise the plan preparation process, as well as delivering better outcomes across broader geographical and functionally linked areas.

Following the deadline of 28 February, it is extremely disappointing my invitation has not received a positive response. However, it is reassuring all responses received have indicated LAs consider they have sufficient resources and capacity to review their respective LDP individually.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

[Gohebiaeth.Lesley.Griffiths@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Lesley.Griffiths@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Lesley.Griffiths@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Lesley.Griffiths@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The reassurances received from LAs sufficient resources are available to commit to plan review and adhere to timetables throughout the whole process, instils sufficient confidence for me to enable LAs to progress this round of LDP reviews on an individual LA basis. However, having been reassured this is the case, I will be expecting receipt of Delivery Agreements (DAs) within 3 months from the date of this letter, to ensure plan coverage is maintained. I will also expect DAs to demonstrate that plan preparation can be achieved within 3.5 years from formal commencement of the process, with a single additional slippage period of 3 months. This will be monitored through the Annual Performance Reporting (APR) process. I should state quite clearly due to the reassurances received I will not be minded to agree any further extensions to the DA beyond the initial agreement itself.

I remain convinced better planning outcomes can be achieved by working together, however, LAs assert this can be achieved by improved collaborative working stopping short of formal joint LDPs. I have asked the Planning Inspectorate to give special consideration to collaborative working and planning outcomes when LDPs are examined.

Finally, Local Government reform could have an impact on the preparation of your LDP. Should the National Assembly agree to reform Local Government in the future and your LDP has not reached the Deposit Stage (Regulation 17, Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005 as amended) your LA may have to re-commence the process.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Lesley Griffiths'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

**Lesley Griffiths AC/AM**

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