

11 December 2025

Dear

ATISN 26447 – Call-in

Thank you for your request submitted on 4 December, which I received on the same day.

You requested:

“Information held by the Planning Casework Branch for the period 1 January 2022 to 4 December 2025.

Ministerial Call-in Criteria/Neutrality

- a) Any internal guidance, instructions, procedures or decision-making frameworks used by Planning Casework Branch staff when assessing whether a planning application should be considered for call-in by the Welsh Ministers.*
- b) Any documents setting out how impartiality, neutrality, and political non-involvement are ensured in casework decisions.*

External Communications

Copies of correspondence (emails, letters, briefings or notes) between the Planning Casework Branch and:

- Local authorities,*
- Elected representatives (Senedd Members, MPs or councillors),*
- Third-party organisations, that relate to ministerial call-in considerations for any planning application.*

Complaints & Conflicts

Any recorded procedures, logs, or assessments relating to:

- a) Complaints about improper influence or perceived unfairness in the call-in process.*
- b) Identification or management of conflicts of interest within the Planning Casework Branch.*

Handling of public correspondence

Documents or internal instructions explaining how the Branch triages, processes, or evaluates correspondence from members of the public relating to planning applications potentially subject to call-in.”

Our response

Ministerial Call-in Criteria/Neutrality

Officials consider National Planning Policy as set out in Planning Policy Wales and other policy statements and technical advice notes, available at: <https://www.gov.wales/national-planning-policy>.

Detailed guidance on the call-in process is available at: <https://gov.wales/calling-planning-applications-guidance-html>.

A copy of officials' call-in desk instructions and a blank call-in checklist are also attached.

The Civil Service Code can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-code/the-civil-service-code>.

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) code of conduct for members can be found at: <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/membership/professional-standards/code-of-professional-conduct/>.

External Communications

The volume of correspondence between Planning Casework Branch and local authorities and third parties relating to call-in requests for any planning application would exceed several thousand documents. It would also involve personal information of a large number of private individuals. **You are invited to narrow the scope of your request to a specific application or local planning authority before we can consider this further.**

Planning Casework Branch officials do not, however, directly correspond with elected representatives; the approach for correspondence within the Civil Service and the Welsh Government is that Elected Members correspond with Elected Members and officials correspond with officials. The only exception to this is when Elected Members have requested to receive a copy of a decision on a case to be determined by the Welsh Ministers, in which case the Deputy Director of Planning Division will send a copy of the decision accordingly.

Complaints & Conflicts

No such log exists. Officials are required to abide by the Civil Service Code, as outlined above, and the Welsh Government's complaints policy can be found at: <https://www.gov.wales/complain-about-welsh-government>. Officials are required to declare any conflict of interest on a form, a blank copy of which is attached.

Handling of public correspondence

No specific guidance exists for the triaging, processing, or evaluation of correspondence from members of the public relating to planning applications potentially subject to call-in.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Any information released under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or Environmental Information Regulations 2004 will be listed in the Welsh Government's Disclosure Log (at <https://gov.wales/about/open-government/freedom-of-information/responses/?lang=en>).

Data Protection

The request you sent me contains personal information about you - for example, your name and e-mail address. The Welsh Government will be the data processor for this information and, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation, it will be processed in order to fulfil our public task and meet our legal obligations under the Act to provide you with a response. We will only use this personal information to deal with your request and any matters which arise as a result of it. We will keep your personal information and all other information relating to your

request for three years from the date on which your request is finally closed. Your personal information will then be disposed of securely.

Under data protection legislation, you have the right:

- to be informed of the personal data we hold about you and to access it
- to require us to rectify inaccuracies in that data
- to (in certain circumstances) object to or restrict processing
- for (in certain circumstances) your data to be 'erased'
- to (in certain circumstances) data portability
- to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection

For further information about the information which the Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you wish to exercise your rights under the GDPR, please see contact details below:

Data Protection Officer
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
CARDIFF
CF10 3NQ
Email: DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales

Yours sincerely,