

## Meeting Note

File reference	None
Status	FINAL
Author	Eleri Davies

Meeting with	Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)
Meeting date	7 <sup>th</sup> February 2011
Attendees (IPC)	Ian Gambles (Director of Operations) Glyn Roberts (Commissioner) Emrys Parry (Commissioner) Mark Wilson (Case Leader) Simon Butler (EIA and Land Rights Manager) Karl Hardy (Head of Knowledge and Information) Eleri Davies (Bilingual Case Officer)
Attendees (non IPC)	Matthew Quinn (Director of Environment and Sustainability) Rosemary Thomas (Deputy Director of Planning) Ron Loveland (Deputy Director of Sustainable Energy and Industry Wales) Theresa Davies <i>Apologies from Jasper Roberts (Deputy Director of Waste and Local Environment Quality) and Rhodri Griffiths (Head of Clean Energy Production and Steel)</i>
Location	WAG Offices, Cathays Park, Cardiff

Meeting purpose	Liaison meeting between IPC and WAG
-----------------	-------------------------------------

Summary of outcomes	<p><b><u>Terms of Reference for WAG/IPC Liaison Group Meetings:</u></b></p> <p><b>IPC:</b> advised on its policy of openness and transparency. Under Section 51 of the Planning Act 2008, the IPC can not discuss the merits of projects and a note of the meeting will be recorded and published on the IPC's website following review by IPC and WAG attendees.</p> <p><b>WAG:</b> suggested that 3 meetings per annum would be sufficient, alternating between Cardiff and Bristol. Attendees from the waste and marine sections of WAG may attend future meetings.</p> <p><b>WAG:</b> intention to integrate the Environment Agency</p>
---------------------	---

Wales (EAW), the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) and the Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) into a single environment body as part of the Natural Environment Framework. A Board level Steering Group has been established and consultation on the Natural Environment Framework is due in the Autumn (2011). Ministers in the new administration are due to take a decision on this in late summer/early autumn 2011 with a vesting day due in 2013.

**WAG:** A Welsh devolution referendum is being held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 2011. A National Assembly for Wales (NAW) election is being held on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2011. Jane Davidson (Minister for the Environment, Sustainability and Housing) has confirmed that she will stand down at this election. IPC were made aware of the 'Purdah' period immediately before the NAW elections on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2011.

**WAG:** As the next WAG meeting with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) will involve introducing the new Minister for the Environment, Sustainability and Housing to Local Authorities (LAs), WAG consider it more appropriate for Sir Mike Pitt to attend a subsequent meeting to be held in late 2011.

#### **Integration and Wales:**

**WAG:** Welsh Ministers are seeking more devolved powers for Wales. The current arrangement involves the WAG funding PINS Wales but the WAG does not fund IPC functions in Wales as these are not devolved.

#### **IPC Outreach:**

**IPC:** need to gain experience of the end-to-end process of dealing with projects and will then be able to advise LAs on potential issues, for example the timing of the Local Impact Report (LIR) and the delegation of powers at LAs.

**WAG:** advised that the 25 Welsh Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are working together to devise a common approach to LIRs.

**IPC:** have engaged with LAs across Wales at project-specific and regional outreach events. Where possible, the IPC will continue outreach work in Wales to advise on the IPC process and will also continue to prepare literature to assist all stakeholders.

**WAG:** the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is responsible for Planning Aid in England. In Wales,

Planning Aid Wales (PAW) is a charitable organisation and independent from the RTPI. If the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) provide funding for Planning Aid in England, this funding should also be available for PAW in Wales for IPC projects as these are not devolved.

**Briefing on IPC projects in Wales:**

**IPC:** provided a map of IPC projects in and around Wales.

**WAG:** queries why the Mid Wales and Wylfa grid connections are not included on the map.

**IPC:** to date, the IPC has not been formally notified of these projects<sup>1</sup>.

**Welsh Language Scheme:**

**IPC:** the IPC Welsh Language Scheme has been adopted and is being implemented across the organisation including bilingual publications and correspondence (where required), the use of translation facilities at events, the recruitment of two bilingual case officers and a Welsh version of the website under development.

**IPC:** the new statutory process that is to replace the Welsh Language Board may not apply to PINS and the IPC so these organisations may not be bound by the same standards as other public bodies operating in Wales. The IPC would have to review the requirements of these standards and make a decision based on resource implications.

**WAG:** to explore this matter and confirm whether a Welsh Language Commissioner has been appointed.

**Operation of the Planning Act 2008 in Wales:**

**WAG:** in discussions with central government about gaining further devolved powers for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) in Wales and bringing associated development in Wales within the IPC process. The WAG will retain decision-making powers over any elements that are devolved to Wales.

**Any Other Business:**

---

<sup>1</sup> **NOTE:** Since the WAG/IPC Liaison Group meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2011, the IPC has been notified by Scottish Power of the proposed Mid Wales Grid Connection to Strategic Search Areas B (Carno North) and C (Newtown South); this will be included to the list of projects on the IPC website on the week commencing 14<sup>th</sup> February 2011.

	<b>WAG:</b> advised that Peter Burley has been appointed as Director of the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) Wales replacing John Davies.
--	---

<b>Record of any advice given</b>	None
-----------------------------------	------

<b>Specific decisions/follow up required?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange next WAG/IPC Liaison meeting for early September (ED)</li> <li>• Sir Mike Pitt to attend WLGA meeting at the end of 2011</li> </ul>
---	--

<b>Circulation List</b>	<b>Attendees</b>