



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

All Heads of Planning

17 September 2020

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to you regarding fire safety and the role of the planning system in ensuring the needs of the Fire and Rescue Authorities are considered early in the planning and design process. In the context of the placemaking focus of Planning Policy Wales, I also want to highlight the importance of achieving this in a way that positively contributes to creating sustainable places that are well-designed and improve people's well-being.

You will already know of the importance of ensuring fire safety is taken into account when new building projects are being commenced, along with ensuring the Fire and Rescue Authorities can tackle a fire as effectively as possible. This is why we are currently consulting on proposals to make Fire and Rescue Authorities statutory consultees on certain planning applications. The consultation can be viewed here on our website: <https://gov.wales/fire-and-rescue-authorities-becoming-statutory-consultees-development-management-process>.

It is important that fire safety and the views of fire safety experts are considered as early as possible in the planning and design of a new development. That is why I encourage you to engage with the Fire and Rescue Authorities about the fire safety issues in your area, and involve them in the preparation and review of your Local Development Plan. Their involvement in the Local Development Plan process would assist in considering safety for the wider area, and further facilitate access for firefighting and potential changes to frontline Fire and Rescue Authorities' resources.

The access requirements for new developments are set out in Building Regulations.

[Approved Document B](#) provides guidance on meeting these requirements.

The planning system has an important role in ensuring these provisions are considered early in the design and planning process. Whilst Building Regulations only apply to development within the site boundary, the planning system can also consider the development within wider context. The planning system can also ensure the Fire and Rescue Authorities' access requirements are met in a way that creates well-designed and people orientated streets, with [Manual for Streets](#) providing guidance on how this can be achieved.

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.

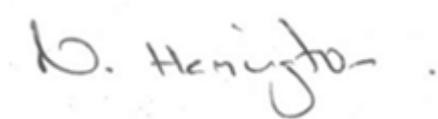
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All new developments need an adequate supply of water for fire-fighting purposes. The Domestic Fire Safety (Wales) Measure 2011 also requires all new domestic developments to have water sprinklers and automatic fire suppression systems installed. We need to be mindful that all water supply networks can be affected by fluctuations in both flow and pressure, together with complete outage, due to both planned and unplanned events. Consideration must, therefore, be given to the provision of water supply for firefighting and sprinklers early in the planning process to ensure adequate arrangements for water provision are available and to address all known operational scenarios, such as the installation of water storage tanks. Water companies' role as statutory consultees can provide invaluable advice on Local Development Plans and planning applications. Further information can also be found in Approved Document B.

Wildfires are a significant potential threat, particularly in populated areas adjoining green areas, such as hillsides, agricultural land or forestry. Therefore, it is critical that new developments are designed with this in mind. Where development is proposed in an area that is at risk of wildfire, consideration should be given to how to mitigate the spread of wildfires. Sustainable land management can, for example, assist with the prevention of wildfires. This is another example of the importance of involving the Fire and Rescue Authorities in Local Development Plans and planning applications.

Overall, I encourage you to engage with the Fire and Rescue Authorities and ensure fire safety is considered as early in the planning process as possible.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "N. Hemington". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the typed name.

Neil Hemington
Chief Planner
Planning Directorate