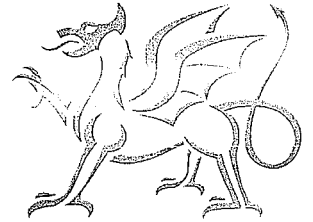


**Sue Essex AM**Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd  
Minister for EnvironmentLlywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Our ref: WAQ 16162

Nick Bourne AM  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

14 March 2002

Dear Nick

I am writing in response to your written Assembly Question (WAQ 16162) which was tabled on 22 February and which was due to be answered on 28 February.

Your question asked if I would "make a statement on the criteria used for calling in planning applications". You are already aware of the criteria which are employed in deciding whether or not to call-in a planning application. I set these out in my answer to the Written Assembly Question you tabled on 18 January (WAQ 15418) (copy attached for ease of reference).

The Assembly Government's policy is not to interfere with local authorities' jurisdiction unless it is considered necessary to do so. In 2000-01 the Assembly Government only called-in 12 planning applications, and 4 in current financial year. Call-in requests are considered on their individual merits and the National Assembly will, generally, only call-in an application in exceptional circumstances and when the application raises issues of more than local importance. Before a call-in decision is taken consultations are undertaken within the Assembly and its sponsored bodies as appropriate.

I refer you to the Green Paper "Planning Our Future", where we have raised the possibility that planning applications, in which the local authority has an interest, might be referred to the National Assembly for call-in to be considered. Clearly this is a consultation document and we await responses.

A copy of this letter has been placed in the Members' Library

Bae Caerdydd

Sue

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