# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **A Planning inspectorate for Wales** |
| **DATE**  | **09 May 2019** |
| **BY** | **Julie James, Minister for Housing and Local Government** |

The Planning Inspectorate is an executive agency, which is funded by and reports to the Welsh Government and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The Inspectorate’s Wales Division, which is based in Cardiff, manages casework on planning and related applications and appeals, including Developments of National Significance. It also examines Local Development Plans (LDPs), which set out land use planning policies and are the basis of local planning decisions, using a team of dedicated Welsh Inspectors and administrators.

Last November the former Minister for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs Lesley Griffiths AM, gave a commitment in the Senedd to consider the need for a separate Planning Inspectorate for Wales.

Increasingly the Inspectorate operates within two legislative regimes, with differing priorities and planning objectives. Planning law and policy has diverged and continues to diverge at an accelerating rate from planning law and policy in England, in order to meet the unique needs of communities and businesses in Wales. We are also moving forward to consolidate and unify planning law in Wales to form a separate Welsh planning Code.

Since April we have taken responsibility for consenting energy projects up to 350 Megawatts onshore and in Welsh territorial waters and have aspirations for all energy infrastructure projects to be decided in Wales.

For these reasons, I have instructed officials to begin work on a separate, dedicated service for Wales. I am mindful of the need to ensure applications for infrastructure schemes, planning appeals and the examination of LDPs are not interrupted or delayed, as we move to the new service. Communities and businesses need to retain confidence that the planning system will continue to deliver.

Officials will work closely with the Planning Inspectorate to devise the most effective way forward for the new organisation, whilst protecting the Planning Inspectorate Wales Division’s reputation for integrity and excellence and delivering decisions in accordance with Welsh Government’s targets.