

Glandŵr Cymru as Statutory Consultee: Duty to Respond and Report for Wales

The Trust is known as Glandŵr Cymru, the Canal & River Trust in Wales. We are the charity who look after and bring to life 76 miles of canals in Wales. Our national network of canals, rivers, docks, reservoirs and towpaths contribute to the health and wellbeing of local communities and economies, creating attractive and connected places to live, work, volunteer and spend leisure time. Glandŵr Cymru's historic, man-made inland waterway network is vulnerable to new development and increasingly fragile in a changing climate. It includes earth embankments and cuttings, bridges, tunnels, aqueducts and culverts, providing protection to communities, businesses and other infrastructure providers, including critical national infrastructure, such as transport, telecommunications and utilities, that is hosted on our network. Our waterway network is a historic, natural and cultural asset that forms part of strategic and local green-blue infrastructure, connecting urban and rural communities as well as habitats. By caring for our waterways and promoting their use we believe we can improve the wellbeing of Wales. Glandŵr Cymru, the Canal & River Trust in Wales is a statutory consultee in the Development Management process and a relevant specialist consultee for Significant Infrastructure Projects.

Purpose of the Report

Glandŵr Cymru is a statutory consultee as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 (as amended) (the DMPO). As a statutory consultee we are required to compile a report for the Secretary of State on our performance in responding to consultations. This is our annual report for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

Glandŵr Cymru is a Statutory Consultee on planning applications involving:

Development likely to affect –

- *any inland waterway (whether natural or artificial) or reservoir owned or managed by the Canal & River Trust; or*
- *any canal feeder channel, watercourse, let off or culvert,*

which is within an area which has been notified for the purposes of this provision to the local planning authority by the Canal & River Trust.

Regulations (for full list see footnote at end of report) require that the Trust is consulted by LPAs as per a notified area provided to them by the Trust; that the Trust provides a substantive response within the prescribed timescales (14 or 21 days or longer where agreed); and that the Trust reports on its performance in relation to this requirement. The Trust has provided relevant LPAs with a notified area in which consultation should occur, which was last reviewed and updated in April 2023. These requirements are replicated for different types of application in different pieces of legislation. **All** cases where the regulations require the Trust to be consulted and to respond, and where the LPA notified us of the consultation or we were made aware of the case, are included in the report below. This includes planning applications, pre-application consultations, advertisement consent applications and EIA scoping opinion requests.

This notified area falls within **eight** local authority boundaries in Wales.

In preparing a substantive response, Glandŵr Cymru's Planners take advice from a range of internal specialists including, bridge, geotechnical and structural engineers, hydrologists, ecologists, environmental scientists, heritage advisors etc.

Planning Consultations

During the period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026 Glandŵr Cymru was asked to respond to **91** pre-application, planning and related application consultations. This figure includes:

- **8** consultations to which Glandŵr Cymru has no statutory duty to respond, including applications for the discharge of conditions, listed building consents and Prior Notifications, but to which we chose to respond;
- **17** consultations from LPAs which were outside the notified area for consultation and where the LPA was consulting us for no specific reason. These were returned to the relevant LPA without further action; and
- **25** pre-application consultations were received and returned without further action as they were also outside the notified area for consultation and we were being consulted for no specific reason.
- **1** application which was withdrawn before Glandŵr Cymru had responded.

For the purposes of the remainder of this report, these **51** consultations have been excluded.

Glandŵr Cymru therefore considers that there was a duty to respond to **40** consultations within the period 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026. The figures reported below relate to these consultations.

Consultation Type	Number of consultations received requiring a response in 2025/26
Statutory pre-application consultations received from third parties	1
Registered Planning Application Consultations received from LPAs	39
TOTAL	40

Glandŵr Cymru is required to make a substantive response within 21 days (or 28 days for pre-applications) or within an extended period which has been agreed between the parties.

The table below sets out our compliance in this regard:

Consultations	No. of Registered Planning Application Consultations	Statutory Pre-applications	Total No. of Consultations
No. of consultations in compliance with statutory deadlines	39	1	40
No. of consultations in Compliance with statutory deadlines & agreed extensions	0	0	0
No. of application consultations in non-compliance	0	0	0
TOTAL	39	1	40

In summary, the overall response rate for statutory consultations within the statutory consultation period is **100%**.

Pre-application consultations

In addition to the 1 mandatory pre-application consultation included above we also responded to the following pre-application consultations:

- 1 pre-application consultation which was outside our notified area
- 1 pre-application consultation received from a LPA

Glandŵr Cymru also returned 25 third party pre-application consultations that fell outside of our notified area.

How Glandŵr Cymru respond

Whether advising on structural integrity or wider planning matters, Glandŵr Cymru approaches its role in the planning system with a pragmatic and solution-focused approach that strongly values the benefits that high-quality, sustainable development has brought to the rejuvenation of our waterways.

Objections are a last resort and only used where co-operation and engagement have failed to result in an acceptable development proposal. Glandŵr Cymru did not object to **any** of the consultations reported above.

Reflection on Performance as a Statutory Consultee

The response rate for all consultations for which there is a statutory duty to respond is **100%** within the statutory timeframes.

Looking forwards

Glandŵr Cymru's vision for *'living waterways that transform places and enrich lives'* and its key themes of *'place and prosperity'*, *'nature and biodiversity'*, *'health and wellbeing'*, and *'resilience and security'* strongly align with the wellbeing goals established within The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. Our multifunctional canals and infrastructure are already helping to deliver outcomes across all seven of the wellbeing goals.

As the charity with the responsibility for the stewardship of these amazing assets, our mission is to unlock the potential of our canals in Wales as catalysts for growth, wellbeing, and environmental resilience, supporting the communities and industry of tomorrow.

More than just stretches of water, our canals are living heritage and green corridors that cut through towns, cities and rural areas, offering peace and space to breathe. In many of our towns through which they run, they are the fastest route out to the countryside and opportunities to access rural spaces. They provide places for boaters, walkers, cyclists, anglers, and communities to connect with nature. They are also havens for wildlife, from kingfishers to rare plants, proving the waterways are as vital today as ever, though in new ways. Additionally, canals provide assets which are vital for our economy and important parts of managing water in a climate where the management of our natural resources is paramount.

Canals are a catalyst for economic development and regeneration making a strong contribution to our local economies. However, we believe that there is much more potential to leverage our canals in place-based plans across all of Wales four regions to aid sustainable economic development.

Caring for this network requires constant dedication. Glandŵr Cymru works tirelessly across Wales to repair historic locks, strengthen towpaths, improve water quality, and create safe routes for leisure, recreation and active travel. Each project ensures the canals remain accessible and enjoyable for millions of people living and working nearby. Our work is supported by passionate and highly committed volunteers from all walks of life bringing skills and expertise.

Glandŵr Cymru continues to recognise the importance of ensuring land stability and the protection of our assets and the communities they run through in our statutory consultee capacity and embed this in the core of our responses to LPA consultations. We continue to seek to reduce risk to the public and to the historic fabric of our network, by increasing resilience through early engagement in the planning process, climate adaptation and regular inspection & maintenance. The best way to ensure that future development maximises opportunity is our early engagement in the planning process. Whilst already engaging in pre-application discussions about specific sites and proposals, it is also key to ensure that the benefits of the network are identified as opportunities and protected and promoted accordingly in local, strategic and national planning policy.

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Relevant legislation

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 (as amended)
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2012/801/contents/made>

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended)
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1995/418/made>

The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992 (as amended)
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1992/666/made>

The Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (as amended)
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2017/567/contents/made>