



Sustainable Development

Introduction

In 1983 the United Nations set up the World Commission on Environment and Development, chaired by Dr Brundtland. In its 1987 report, *Our Common Future*ⁱ, a definition of sustainable development was proposed which has become the widely accepted international description:

"development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The Welsh Ministers have a duty under section 79 of the *Government of Wales Act 2006* to promote sustainable development in the exercise of their functions. The Act requires the Ministers to make a Scheme setting out how they propose to implement the duty, to consult before making it, keep it under review, publish an annual report on progress, and evaluate its effectiveness every four years.

Current and proposed legislative competence of the Assembly

Under the *Government of Wales Act 2006*, the National Assembly for Wales can seek legislative competence through Acts of Parliament or Legislative Competence Orders (LCOs) to make a piece of law in the form of an 'Assembly Measure'. Measures can only be made in a specific policy area (or 'Matter') added to one of the 20 'Fields' (or broad subject areas) which are contained in Schedule 5 to the Act.

Power over a substantial number of policy areas which affect sustainable development in Wales has already been devolved to the National Assembly for Wales.

Forthcoming EU and UK primary legislation

- The EU Waste Framework Directive is currently being revised.
- A Draft Marine Bill was published on 3 April 2008. The European Commission published its vision for an Integrated Maritime Policy for the EU on 10 October 2007.
- The Climate Change Bill was published on 14 November 2007.
- The Local Transport Bill was published on 7 November 2007.
- A White Paper on Energy was published in May 2007.

EU Policy

The EU has wide jurisdiction over matters that can impact on sustainable development. The following are examples of such European legislation and guidance:

- The EU Sustainable Development Strategy, which was renewed on 15/16 June 2006, sets targets and actions for seven key priority challenges for the period until 2010.
- The EU Regulation on the registration, evaluation and authorisation of chemicals was adopted in December 2006.
- The EU has set itself the objective of halting the loss of biodiversity on its own territory by 2010.
- The second European Climate Change Programme was launched in October 2005.
- Directive 2006/118/EC (12 December 2006) on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration.
- An EU target for 20 per cent reduction in carbon emissions by 2020, and for 20 per cent of energy generation from renewable sources by 2020, was proposed on 23 January 2008.
- On 10 January 2007, the European Commission published a Communication on a climate change strategy for Europe, with the aim of limiting climate change to 2°C above pre-industrial levels.

Key Welsh Government strategy documents and action plans

- The *Renewable energy Route Map for Wales* consultation document was published in February 2008ⁱⁱ.
- The One Wales agreement commits the Welsh Assembly Government to cut carbon emissions by 3 per cent year-on-year by 2011 in areas of devolved competenceⁱⁱⁱ. The Climate Change Commission for Wales provides advice to the Welsh Assembly Government on climate change.
- The *Sustainable Development Annual Report 2007* was published on 28 February 2008^{iv}.
- *Starting to Live Differently*^v is the Welsh Assembly Government's sustainable development scheme.
- *Wales: A Vibrant Economy*^{vi} is the Welsh Assembly Government's framework for strong and sustainable economic growth.
- The *Environment Strategy for Wales*^{vii} and its accompanying Action Plan^{viii} are the principal means of tackling environmental issues.
- The *National Waste Strategy for Wales* is the waste management strategy^{ix}. It is currently undergoing revision.
- The *Walking and Cycling Strategy for Wales*^x was launched in 2003. *Climbing Higher*^{xi} is the Welsh strategy for sport and physical activity.

Useful Links

- The Sustainable Development Commission regularly publishes information on its specialist subject: <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/>
- Cynnal Cymru is the sustainable development forum for Wales: <http://www.cynnalcymru.org/>
- The Welsh Assembly Government has a website covering sustainable development: <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/sustainabledevelopment/?lang=en>
- DEFRA has a sustainable development page on its website: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/sustainable/index.htm>
- The sustainable development webpage of the European Commission's Directorate-General of the Environment can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/welcome/index_en.htm
- Wales Environment Link is an umbrella organisation for environmental and countryside NGOs in Wales: <http://www.waleslink.org/>

Further information

Research papers are available on waste management in Wales, the Environmental Protection and Waste Management Legislative Competence Order, fortnightly collection of residual domestic waste, and the Environment Strategy for Wales at:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-assembly-publications-economic.htm>

For further information on any aspect of sustainable development, please contact Gareth Clubb, Members' Research Service (Gareth.Clubb@wales.gsi.gov.uk), 029 2089 8638

ⁱ United Nations, [Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future](#)

ⁱⁱ Welsh Assembly Government, [Renewable energy route map for Wales: Consultation on way forward to a leaner, greener and cleaner Wales](#), February 2008

ⁱⁱⁱ Welsh Assembly Government, [One Wales: A progressive agenda for the government of Wales](#), June 2007

^{iv} Welsh Assembly Government, [Sustainable development annual report](#), February 2008,

^v United Nations, [Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future](#)

^{vi} Welsh Assembly Government, [Starting to Live Differently](#), March 2004

^{vii} Welsh Assembly Government, [Wales: A Vibrant Economy](#), November 2005

^{viii} Welsh Assembly Government, [Environment Strategy for Wales](#), May 2006

^{ix} Welsh Assembly Government, [Environment Strategy for Wales: First Action Plan](#), May 2006

^x Welsh Assembly Government, [Wise About Waste: The National Waste Strategy for Wales](#), June 2002

^{xi} Welsh Assembly Government, [Walking and Cycling](#)

^{xii} Welsh Assembly Government, [Climbing Higher: Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity](#), January 2005