

Wales Spatial Plan

Introduction

There is a statutory requirement under the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* for the Assembly to produce a Spatial Plan for Wales. Such a plan should set out a strategic framework to guide future development and policy interventions, whether or not these relate to formal land use planning control.

The Wales Spatial Planⁱ was adopted by the National Assembly for Wales on 17 November 2004. It covers a 20 year period, although it will be subject to review. The Welsh Assembly Government sees the spatial plan as providing high level strategic guidance and a framework for collaborative action.

The plan identifies six distinctive areas within Wales:

- ◆ *North West Wales*
- ◆ *North East Wales – Border and Coast*
- ◆ *Central Wales*
- ◆ *South East – the Capital Network*
- ◆ *Swansea Bay – Waterfront & Western Valleys*
- ◆ *Pembrokeshire – The Haven*

For each of these, an area group has been established to develop projects and oversee implementation.

Overview of current statutory powers of the Assembly

“Town and Country Planning” is field 18 of Schedule 5 of the *Government of Wales Act 2006*. This means that the National Assembly for Wales can seek Measure-making powers over town and country planning matters through Legislative Competence Orders.

The Wales Spatial Plan provides strategic guidance across many other policy areas which are covered by fields in Schedule 5.

The responsibilities of the Second Assembly under Section 60 of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* to prepare, monitor and review the Wales Spatial Plan will transfer to Welsh Ministers in the Third Assembly. However if and when a revised plan is prepared, it is likely that this will need to be approved by the Assembly.

Forthcoming EU and UK primary legislation

A Marine Bill White Paper was published on 15 March 2007. This advocates a system of Marine Spatial Planning.

EU policy

In 1999, a document called the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP)ⁱⁱ was signed by the Ministers responsible for regional planning in the EU Member States. Although the ESDP has no binding status, and the European Union has no formal authority for spatial planning, the ESDP has influenced spatial planning policy in European regions and Member States.

Key Assembly Government strategy documents and action plans from the Second Assembly:

The Cabinet sub-committee on Sustainable Development and the Spatial Plan of the Second Assembly was responsible for overseeing progress towards implementing the plan. The Welsh Assembly Government committed to updating (not rewriting) the Spatial Plan during 2007 to reflect both progress nationally and in the six areas.

Each of the spatial plan area groups is in the process of producing an 'Interim Statement' to consolidate and communicate the work on individual projects. These documents represent an update of where the groups have reached in agreeing the priorities for their areas.

Legacy issues from the Second Assembly

The Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee's legacy paper highlighted the proposed UK Marine Bill for the attention of the Third Assembly

The Local Government and Public Services Committee's legacy paper identified future development of the Wales Spatial Plan and the incorporation of marine planning for the attention of the Third Assembly.

Useful links

The Welsh Assembly Government web pages for the Wales Spatial Plan:

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/strategy/spatial/?lang=en>

South East area Interim statement:

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/strategy/spatial/1262341/seastnews?lang=en>

North West area Interim statement:

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/strategy/spatial/1262341/1262485?lang=en>

Cabinet Sub-Committee on Sustainable Development and the Spatial Plan:

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/cabinet/cabinetsubcommittees/529600/?lang=en>

Further information

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ⁱ Welsh Assembly Government, *Wales Spatial Plan*, November 2004
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/strategy/spatial/sppublications/walesspatial?lang=en>

ⁱⁱ European Commission, *The European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP)*, agreed at the Informal Council of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning in Potsdam, May 1999
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/pdf/sum_en.pdf