



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT

Title: Streamlining the Planning Application Process in Wales

Date: 10 December 2008

By: Jane Davidson, Minister for the Environment, Sustainability and Housing

I want to ensure that those regulatory systems for which I am responsible, are contributing constructively to economic recovery in Wales. Land Use Planning is such a system. Planning is not about stopping development, but about enabling it.

Planning reconciles economic, environmental and social considerations to enable us to take sustainable decisions about the development and use of land, impacting on all our lives. Planning is increasingly used as a mechanism to sustainably manage the effects of global environmental, social, and economic change. It has continued to adapt to provide places in which communities live and work, and is a vital lever to ensure that Wales can retain and attract investment and jobs.

We have already put in place the robust national and local policy framework which is essential to enable local planning authorities to make effective and sustainable planning decisions. New Local Development Plans are being

prepared across Wales to provide positive, flexible guidance for future changes.

I am announcing today my intention to streamline the planning application system in Wales, delivered by the 25 local planning authorities

I am aware that more needs to be done to deliver a system which better meets our expectations. The system must be proportionate and efficient, delivering decisions which are open, fair, consistent and transparent. It is essential that the system inspires public and business confidence, delivering quality development and places, particularly in the light of challenging global and national economic circumstances.

This work will enable us to address the challenges we now face. It will draw upon evidence from across Wales and the rest of the UK, including the recently completed Killian Pretty review in England. It will identify examples of good practice and will propose areas for future improvement. Using the provisions in the 2004 and 2008 Planning Acts we will set out the direction of travel and identify a programme of work to ensure that we achieve our objectives. In particular we have secured, through the 2008 Act, important Measure Powers for those parts of the forward planning regime which are distinctive to Wales, namely the Wales Spatial Plan, and Local Development Plans. These powers will provide the necessary tools for the Assembly Government to update and adapt the forward planning system in Wales.

I will be looking to ensure that this shared agenda is taken forward with our key partners, including those in local government, business and voluntary sectors. I also expect the statutory consultees to play a full and effective part in the review process.

Early in the New Year I will provide more information about the programme for review.