

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

WG CONSULTATION DOCUMENT: CALL FOR EVIDENCE AND PROJECTS NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK, DECEMBER 2016

Background

The Welsh Government (WG) has issued a consultation document regarding the proposed National Development Framework (NDF) and is undertaking a Call for Evidence and Projects. Organisations and individuals are given the opportunity to provide information that WG should consider as part of the preparation of the NDF. The purpose of this report is to draw Members' attention to the NDF and provide details of the BCBC response.

The WG consultation documents can be accessed by Members using this hyperlink:
<https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/national-development-framework-wales>

What is the NDF?

The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 provides a statutory requirement for the Welsh Ministers to produce and keep up-to-date a National Development Framework, which will replace the current Wales Spatial Plan. The National Development Framework will fulfil a number of roles, including setting out the Welsh Government's land use priorities and providing a national land use framework for Strategic and Local Development Plans. The National Development Framework will concentrate on development and land use issues of national significance which the planning system is able to influence and deliver.

This means that in the future the development plan system will consist of the NDF, regional Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) and Local Development Plans (LDPs) at the local level. As SDPs are unlikely to be prepared across the whole of Wales, some areas will have three tiers of development plans and others two. Bridgend is part of the Cardiff Capitol Region (CCR) and as such is a City Deal Authority and will fall under any CCR SDP.

The statutory planning system is plan led and the hierarchy of development plans is designed to ensure that these issues are considered at the most appropriate level. The NDF will have formal development plan status and set out a 20 year plan for Wales, providing a 'framework' to deliver the growth and infrastructure needed to ensure national wellbeing and that of future generations. The process of approving the Framework will include a statutory twelve week public consultation period. The National Development Framework, in line with other development plans, will have a fixed time period at the end of which it will cease to have effect as a development plan.

The NDF will be shaped by the goals and ways of working set out by the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015). Like other public bodies, the Welsh Government must work towards achieving sustainable development and meet the seven well-being goals.

The WG consultation document invites evidence as to what should be covered in the NDF and of any specific projects that should be covered.

Recommendation

- (1) That Members note the content of this report and the LPA's response to the WG consultation Call for Evidence and Projects National Development Framework (Appendix 1).

MARK SHEPHARD
CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

Background Papers

None

Appendix 1:

**Welsh Government Consultation Document
Call for Evidence and Projects National Development Framework,
December 2016
Response from Bridgend County Borough Council**

1. The purpose of the NDF

In order to provide the national framework for land use in Wales, the NDF will need to address issues of national strategic importance. The overall aim of delivering economic growth whilst positively contributing to social and environmental improvement will be a key consideration and the principal issues are discussed in more detail below.

The NDF should provide a working plan to deliver the above in conjunction with other Welsh Government (WG) strategies. It is clearly unrealistic in view of the scale of the framework to expect the statutory Town & Country Planning System in isolation to fully deliver the framework, which will also require substantial public and private investment. As such, WG should be committed to the strategy as a national priority and be prepared to invest in the necessary infrastructure improvements and or provide financial or other incentives to ensure it is delivered.

2. National Strategic Issues

Digital Connectivity

Improved access to digital communications is essential to economic prosperity and growth. The NDF should seek to establish a framework for the delivery of a national telecommunications and superfast broadband network throughout Wales that will provide appropriate digital access.

National and International Travel

There are deficiencies in the current public transport network and road access linking north and south Wales. The NDF should address the issues that constrain north-south movement in order to increase internal connectivity. This should not be at the expense of but maintain and improve current links with neighbouring regions such as the Midlands, the South West and the North West of England. As such the NDF should also consider the connectivity between Wales and surrounding regions and countries including Ireland and the rest of Europe. This will involve and impact upon Severn Bridge Tolls, ferry services and Cardiff Airport all of which will require improved integration in order to ease and improve accessibility into and out of Wales. In particular, there is an urgent need to improve both public and private transport links to and from Cardiff Airport.

Areas of growth such as the Cardiff Capitol Region will potentially place further significant pressure on existing infrastructure and the NDF should address the scale and exact nature of improvements required to serve these areas.

There are also a number of national transport issues that require consideration in the NDF. These include:

- Railway improvements such as the main line electrification from Swansea to Paddington, general upgrade of stations and improvement to valley lines and services with integration into City Region transport networks such as Cardiff Capitol Metro.
- A national network of coach stations and interchanges linked to key nodes in the national transport network.
- Improvements to the M4 motorway such as the relief road and existing junctions as well as the provision of park and ride schemes to assist in the relief of congestion.
- A national network of electric vehicle charging points.

Economic Growth

The NDF will need to consider continued economic growth and increasing prosperity levels of economic growth, which is a key aim for Welsh Government. To achieve this, the NDF should consider identifying areas of growth including employment and associated housing as well as ancillary facilities on a national scale.

The NDF should identify growth sectors and consider the employment market to ensure their continued growth. Opportunities for expanding or developing existing specialist areas should be also considered.

The NDF should identify strategic scale employment sites that will assist in attracting inward investment. The use of Enterprise Zones and Simplified Planning Zones where planning intervention is minimised will further assist in providing opportunities for fast tracking essential employment development. Linked to this is the establishment of 'Innovation Districts' as areas of concentrated specialised sectors that would benefit from being located with similar or associated industries and amongst complimentary uses.

Population

Population and household growth are key matters in the consideration of any land use strategy. The NDF should give a lead on addressing the issue of population and household requirements through its respective period. The NDF should consider identifying a network of integrated growth areas to accommodate significant levels of housing and employment growth, setting their respective scale and location through the national strategy.

Culture

The NDF should also consider identifying distinctive destinations and unique cultural attractions where the enhancement or development of tourist facilities can realise significant economic benefits. These facilities can include the natural environment, events, heritage and activity and cultural facilities.

Social Infrastructure

The NDF should consider the provision of social infrastructure from a national perspective, including health care facilities, educational facilities and other social support.

Renewable Energy

Energy generation, particularly renewable energy generation, is a key issue for the NDF to address nationally and it should identify strategic areas for wind and solar power as well as conventional energy generation. Other alternative energy sources such as energy from waste and hydroelectric or tidal power should be subject to a national strategy set out in the NDF. The connection of these energy sources to the national grid should also be covered in the strategy.

Flood Risk

The risk of flooding from either fluvial or coastal can be a major inhibitor of regeneration particularly in older town centres and coastal settlements. The NDF should address the issue of national coastal and fluvial flood defences and identify any significant areas required for flood alleviation purposes to support the implementation of the WG's Vibrant and Viable Places agenda.

Environment

The NDF has a crucial role in establishing a national strategy and framework to facilitate good stewardship of Wales' heritage landscapes, National Parks, AONBs, gardens and local assets such as ancient monuments and listed buildings.

Other areas of geological or nature conservation importance enjoy international, national and local protection under various designations. These include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Ramsar sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). NDF should consider linkages between designated sites via a national strategy which would identify sensitive areas where spaces should be protected and enhanced whilst providing opportunities for enhancing tourism development.

Regional and Local Strategic Issues

Whilst the NDF should appropriately address national issues and strategy, there will be some regional and sub-regional matters that the NDF should consider and set the framework for their delivery. This would include the City Deal regions and it is important that the overall aims and objectives of these regions accord

and integrate with the NDF but also that the NDF has regard to the potential implications that may arise from regional proposals particularly with regard to addressing housing need, economic growth and transport.

3. Submission of Projects

The Bridgend specific projects that should be included within the NDF relate primarily to M4 motorway Junction Improvements. Junction 36 is at capacity and as such will restrict any future growth proposals in this area. Bridgend is at an advanced feasibility stage and is in possession of necessary data including traffic counts and forecasts. An Options Appraisal with a preferred option has been developed.

A new M4 junction (34A) between current junctions 34 and 35 would be located at a strategic point between the Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taff and the Vale of Glamorgan and would provide opportunities for growth in the Llanaran, Llanilid and Pencoed areas.

A new road link from M4 Junction 34 would service Cardiff Airport as well as improvements to Five Mile Lane off the A48.

Railway Improvements would include the main line electrification from Cardiff to Swansea and crucially a related strategic bridge replacement at Pencoed (Penprysg Road) would lead to a resolution of the current level crossing constraint that prevents large scale development of the northern and western part of Pencoed.

A passing loop on the Maesteg valley line would allow a half hourly service (currently restricted to hourly only), serving the Llynfi Valley and also providing additional capacity on the main line as part of the wider core valleys aspiration to provide 4 trains per hour.

More general projects that Bridgend would support include Major Park and Ride schemes along the M4 to relieve congestion, evolving City Deal / Metro Investments and a general upgrading of railway stations and passenger facilities.