
STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEECOMMITTEE

9th NOVEMBER 2026

TITLE: Review of the National Development Framework

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. To provide Members with an insight into the review of a fundamental planning document, Future Wales – the National Plan 2040, its implications for regional working and planning, and the opportunities to become involved in the review process.

2. DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1. That Members endorse the content of this report.

3. REASON FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1. To seek Members endorsement for the emerging response and to add to this from their perspectives.

4. BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1. The Welsh Government Review of the National Development Framework represents the first major revision of Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 since its adoption in 2021. The review will develop a new national spatial framework to guide planning, infrastructure, housing, economic development and environmental priorities across Wales to 2050.

- 4.2. This report summarises the review process, opportunities for engagement, key issues under consideration, the timetable, and implications for regional and local stakeholders.

What is being reviewed?

- 4.3. The National Development Framework (NDF) sits at the top of Wales' statutory planning system and provides the strategic context for:

- Strategic Development Plans (SDPs)
- Local Development Plans (LDPs)
- Significant Infrastructure Projects
- National and regional investment decisions
- Development management decisions

- 4.4. The current framework, Future Wales – The National Plan 2040, was adopted in 2021. The revised framework will extend the planning horizon to 2050 and establish a new vision for how places, communities, infrastructure and natural resources should be planned across Wales.
[National Development Framework \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

4.5 The Welsh Government has launched a consultation on three elements:

1. Draft Statement of Public Participation (SoPP)

This document sets out:

- How stakeholders and communities will be engaged
- The stages of consultation
- Procedural requirements
- Proposed programme and timetable for preparation of the revised NDF

2. Draft National Conversation Engagement Plan (NCEP)

This document outlines:

- How a national conversation on Wales' future will be undertaken
- Key themes and questions for discussion
- Methods for engaging communities and organisations

3. Call for Evidence

Stakeholders are invited to submit:

- Strategic evidence
- Data and research
- Development opportunities
- Infrastructure priorities
- Policy proposals
- Local and regional challenges

4.6 This is a significant opportunity to influence the framework before drafting begins. The review is at an early stage and stakeholder input can help shape both the scope and content of the future framework. Whilst this initial consultation ends on 20 November 2026, there will be further opportunities to submit evidence to support regional and local issues affecting North Wales, and the Corporate Joint Committee has representation on the National Public Sector Stakeholder Group whose role is to track progress of the review.

4.7 It will be useful for Members to consider in advance of the meeting any matter which they feel is of regional significance that Welsh Government should consider for inclusion or reference in the review of the National Plan. The CJC will be preparing a formal consultation response via the Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer, and this will be shared digitally with Members for comment given the deadline of 20 November does not coincide with a further Sub-Committee meeting. Members feedback at the meeting on the 9th and in response to the sharing of the draft response would be appreciated to help shape the response that is sent back to Welsh Government.

4.8 The Welsh Government is seeking views on the following areas:

- The future of Wales to 2050
- What makes successful places and communities
- The Welsh Language and cultural identity
- Regional economic priorities – economic growth and prosperity
- Homes and housing need - housing requirements
- Economic Growth and prosperity - strategic employment sites

- Transport and digital connectivity needs
- Renewable energy opportunities
- Climate resilience challenges
- Infrastructure investment requirements

4.9 The above list also represents the type of strategic issues that the SDP will be considering and there is a concern that as the national plan emerges alongside the SDP, and on a similar timeframe, that a duplication or overlap of roles may emerge, unless Welsh Government is very clear at the outset to define the respective differences and policy coverage between the National plan, SDPs and LDPs. This is an essential first step in order to clarify what each plan does and how they complement each other rather than overlap.

Regional issues for the National Plan to consider

4.10 Thinking about regional issues that could be referenced in response to this consultation, an initial list might include:

- What is the national and sub-regional vision for Wales by 2050?
- How can long term economic growth and well-being be provided and sustained to 2050 given that the current UK and Welsh Government funded programmes end in 2036 and Regional Growth Plans are only intended to be 10-year plans;
- The need for other Welsh Government departments to create meaningful national strategies that provide meaningful guidance and focus on delivery of issues such as National Energy Infrastructure (e.g. nuclear), Digital Infrastructure, enablement of improvements to Power generation and supply, that can be incorporated into the National Plan and SDP;
- A focus on funding and delivery of major transport infrastructure at a larger scale than is currently funded or deliverable via the Regional Transport Plan and Grant funded projects (e.g. major bridge crossings, bypasses, urban relief roads, new rail stations)
- A robust and consistent way to assess impacts and benefits of growth and development on the Welsh Language and culture, including recognition of regional identity;
- A greater focus on delivering higher rates of affordable housing that both provides a local context to retain young talent in the areas they grew up in, access quality jobs nearby, as well as meeting a broader range of need than is currently catered for;
- How to provide a focus on the rural areas of Wales that provides positive policy interventions via a Rural Development Strategy and that seriously addresses the issues of rural housing, employment and rural enterprise, population retention, accessibility, climate adaptation, flood resilience, maintaining sustainable communities, and investing in nature;
- The urgent need to take a more balanced and pragmatic approach to nature impact and recovery in relation to growth and investment, in order to allow Wales to fully benefit from significant investment opportunities which are currently threatened by a disproportionate focus on nature 'impacts' even where these are difficult to measure or quantify;
- A focus on the development of a national and regional infrastructure investment plan, co-ordinated in collaboration with the key infrastructure providers, focusing existing and future investment priorities around future opportunities for growth, investment, and sustainable community development.

4.11 This is by no means an exhaustive list which will continue to be worked on in the run up to the consultation deadline. Members are invited to provide their views and feedback on the above, as well as raising further issues that they feel are of equal relevance to the consultation response being prepared by the Corporate Joint Committee.

Timetable for the Review

- 4.12 The Welsh Government have produced a broad indicative timetable for the review process as follows:

Milestone	Timing
Consultation and Call for Evidence Opens	August 2026
Consultation Closes	20 November 2026
National Conversation and Evidence Gathering	2026-2027
Development of Draft Revised NDF	2027-2029
Formal Consultation and Examination	2028-2029
Publication of Revised National Development Framework	Winter 2029/30

- 4.13 The review of Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 is not simply a policy update. It is a once-in-a-decade opportunity to shape Wales' long-term spatial strategy, investment priorities and development framework to 2050. Early engagement by regional and local stakeholders will be essential to ensure that future national planning policy reflects the needs and ambitions of North Wales and its communities.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. There are no direct financial implications involved in responding to this Welsh Government consultation.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. There is no statutory requirement to respond to this consultation but it is a clear opportunity for the Corporate Joint Committee to potentially influence the review of the National Development Framework, particularly in relation to issues that are import to the North Wales Region, as well as clarifying how the National Development Framework will algin with, rather than overlap the Strategic Development Plan and vice versa.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: None

STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:

- i. Monitoring Officer:

“I have no substantive legal or governance concerns.”

- ii. Statutory Finance Officer:

“The decision sought does not create a financial commitment and I have no further comments from the perspective of financial propriety.”