

## **Council for Economic Renewal**

### **National Development Framework**

#### **Introduction**

The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on the Welsh Government to prepare a National Development Framework (NDF) which will replace the Wales Spatial Plan. On the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2016, a three month Call for Evidence and Projects for the NDF commenced.

The planning system is integral to the decisions we take nationally, regionally and locally on how places will grow and change and how the infrastructure we need to ensure future well-being and economic prosperity will be delivered.

As a Government, we want a stronger, fairer economy, improved and reformed public services, and a united, connected, and sustainable Wales. We have already reformed the planning system to help achieve this. Through the NDF, we will set out how national development projects will help deliver our vision and provide direction for regional and local decision makers, to ensure the planning system is aligned at all levels to work together to help achieve our objectives.

#### **Background**

The NDF preparation process commenced in Feb 2016 with consultation on the Statement of Public Participation (SPP), which set out the timetable and process for preparing the NDF and how the Government would engage with people and organisations. One of the key messages from the consultation was the need for early engagement in the process. The final version of the SPP published last year emphasises the importance of this.

#### **Role**

The NDF will be a national development plan. It will be a high level strategic framework and will focus on supporting the delivery of national level objectives and Government policy. Decisions made through the planning process should accord with the NDF and it can set the tone and context for Strategic Development Plans and Local Development Plans. Where the NDF identifies that new nationally important transport or energy infrastructure is required for example, the planning system will work to support the delivery of this infrastructure. It will not be necessary to re-visit the principle of these developments through the planning system in the future. This will provide a high level of certainty and help co-ordinate public and private sector investment.

#### **Call for Evidence and Projects**

The Call for Evidence and Projects is an open invitation for views on the NDF and will help to steer our work in delivering the plan. It runs until 7<sup>th</sup> March 2017. The Call for Evidence and Projects is an important stage in the preparation of the NDF and we hope it will allow us to work collaboratively with a wide range of interested partners across Wales from the outset, identifying opportunities and solutions to the challenges we face.

We welcome evidence on the national issues that the NDF should address. From an economic perspective, we need to consider questions such as:-

- How can the NDF support growth?
- Is there national scale infrastructure which is required to enable areas to grow?
- How can we facilitate the movement of people and goods across Wales, the UK and the rest of the world?
- How can the NDF help align transport, environmental, regional, digital, agricultural and other policies to maximise the opportunities arising from investment and ensure decisions taken by the planning system deliver as wide a range of benefits as possible?
- How do we ensure that the national planning framework is able to deal with uncertainties, such as those arising from Brexit, and we can be responsive to the new and emerging opportunities and challenges ahead?

We are also interested to hear of specific projects that could be included in the NDF and which can help deliver our objectives. Projects of a national scale are likely to be significant, either in terms of scale or their contribution to meeting national goals. Inclusion in the NDF will give projects significant status and we will wish to understand how potential projects make a major contribution to delivering the well-being goals and how they support as broad a range of policy objectives as possible. Projects identified in the NDF may have the status of Developments of National Significance and will be consented by the Welsh Ministers.

### **Next stages**

The final NDF will be published following Assembly consideration in March 2020. The key milestones and dates are below:-

Call for Evidence & Projects	Dec 2016 – March 2017
Consultation on Main Issues, Options and Preferred Option for the NDF	Sept – Dec 2017
Consult on draft NDF	Jan – April 2019
Assembly consideration of the draft NDF	Oct – Dec 2019
Publish NDF	March 2020

Further information on the process, timetable and Call for Evidence and Projects is available on the Welsh Government website.