

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

A Guide to Future Wales **Frequently Asked Questions**

24th February 2021

What is this document?

This document has been prepared to support the publication of Future Wales on 24th February 2021. It provides answers to many of the questions that have been asked of the Welsh Government in the run up to the publication of Future Wales.

What is the status of this document?

This document is published for information purposes only. It is not part of Future Wales. It reflects legislation and does not introduce any new requirements. Readers are advised to review legislation for certainty on statutory requirements.

When does Future Wales apply?

From the day of publication on 24th February 2021.

What is the status of Future Wales?

Future Wales is the Welsh Government's national development framework. In accordance with Section 38 of the [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) Future Wales is part of the development plan.

Does Future Wales replace Local Development Plans?

No. Future Wales will form part of the development plan for an area alongside Local Development Plans (or extant Unitary Development Plan) and in time Strategic Development Plans. From publication, when determining a planning application decision makers are required to make their decision in accordance with both the Local Development Plan (or extant Unitary Development Plan) and Future Wales; and when adopted Strategic Development Plans.

Will Future Wales affect planning decisions, planning appeals and the preparation of development plans that were 'in the system' before Future Wales was published?

Yes. All undetermined planning applications and planning appeals, and development plans that are currently being prepared will need to be in general conformity with Future Wales.

What does the publication of Future Wales mean for individual planning applications?

When determining a planning application, decision makers will need to apply the policies in Future Wales and a Local Development Plan (or extant Unitary Development Plan) to the proposal.

The vast majority of planning applications are determined by Local Planning Authorities and are small scale developments of local rather than regional or national significance. Future Wales' focus is on national and regional spatial issues and as such, whilst its policies will need to be considered, the Local Development Plan (or extant Unitary Development Plan) policies will provide the detailed development management framework in the vast majority of cases.

Which of Future Wales' policies apply to a planning application?

Future Wales should be read as a whole. Individual policies should not be considered in isolation. Aspects of policy and their application to a particular development proposal could occur in several parts of Future Wales. It is important in considering proposals, that decision makers ensure all relevant policies of Future Wales are applied.

Does Future Wales replace Planning Policy Wales?

No. Planning Policy Wales remains the Welsh Government's primary statement of planning policy and continues to apply to all aspects of the planning process. An updated version Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11) has been published on 24th February 2021.

What is the relationship between PPW and Future Wales?

Planning Policy Wales establishes the key principles for the planning system. It establishes what development plans and decisions taken by the planning system must achieve and how development should be shaped to deliver the best possible outcomes. PPW is not part of the development plan.

Future Wales applies the key principles of Planning Policy Wales and establishes where in Wales development should take place and how these places should grow and change.

Future Wales does not repeat Planning Policy Wales' key principles and it does not cover every area of planning policy. Planning Policy Wales will continue to inform the preparation of development plans and development management decisions.

What is the relationship between Future Wales and the Technical Advice Notes?

The Technical Advice Notes remain in place following publication of Future Wales. They will continue to provide additional technical advice to support the implementation of Planning Policy Wales and Future Wales.

Why doesn't Future Wales cover all planning policy topics?

Future Wales doesn't replace Planning Policy Wales or the Technical Advice Notes, and its role is not to provide planning policy in relation to all planning topics. Planning issues which are not spatial or which are already addressed by Planning Policy Wales and the Technical Advice Notes, are not repeated in Future Wales. Future Wales should be read alongside Planning Policy Wales and where relevant the Technical Advice Notes.

Does Future Wales replace the Wales Spatial Plan?

Yes. Future Wales replaces the Wales Spatial Plan from the day of publication.

What does the publication of Future Wales mean for existing Local Development Plans?

Nearly all of Wales is covered by a Local Development Plan adopted before the publication of Future Wales. Local Development Plans need to be in general conformity with Future Wales.

Local Planning Authorities should review their adopted Local Development Plan against Future Wales and satisfy themselves that their Local Development Plan is in general conformity with Future Wales. If they consider that following a review it is not in general conformity, they will need to revise their Local Development Plan.

What does the publication of Future Wales mean for Local Development Plans currently being prepared?

Local Planning Authorities have been aware of Future Wales' development over recent years and through the publication of draft versions, have been aware of the emerging policy framework Future Wales sets out. Where the Local Development Plan preparation process has already started, Local Planning Authorities will need to consider Future Wales and ensure their emerging Local Development Plan is in general conformity with it.

Future Wales refers to Strategic Development Plans. There is no Strategic Development Plan for my area. What does this mean?

There are currently no Strategic Development Plans in Wales. The Welsh Government strongly supports their preparation and will work with Local Planning Authorities and Corporate Joint Committees to deliver them.

The Local Government Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and Corporate Joint Committee establishment regulations set out the legal framework for preparing a Strategic Development Plan. Future Wales provides policies for Strategic Development Plans for each region. CJsCs have a mandatory duty to prepare an SDP.

In the absence of Strategic Development Plans, the development plan for an area will be Future Wales and the adopted Local Development Plan.

Are Strategic Development Plans required for all regions?

Yes. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 places a duty on Local Authorities to work together to prepare Strategic Development Plans. Future Wales requires Strategic Development Plans to be developed for all four regions, and provides a clear context for each region and policies to support regional planning.

Will the national and regional growth areas identified in Future Wales have implications for strategic and local development plans?

Yes. Future Wales identifies the places where growth and investment should be focused in strategic and local development plans; and where the Welsh Government will use its policies and investments to help deliver future growth. The focus for parts of Wales outside of Future Wales's national and regional growth areas, should be on planning for local needs. Both strategic and local development plans will need to demonstrate clearly how they conform with Future Wales's spatial strategy.

What does 'the three tiered development plan system' mean?

Once a Strategic Development Plan is adopted in a region, there will be three different development plans in place – Future Wales (a national development plan), a Strategic Development Plan (a regional development plan) and a Local Development Plan 'Lite' – focussing on national, regional and local spatial issues respectively.

What does Future Wales mean for Place Plans?

Places Plans can be prepared as Supplementary Planning Guidance to Local Development Plans. Whilst there is no statutory requirement for Place Plans to be in general conformity with Future Wales, Local Development Plans are required to be in general conformity with Future Wales. By default, Place Plans will align with Future Wales.

The scale at which Future Wales and Place Plans operate mean that they focus on different issues. Those preparing Place Plans are encouraged to use the policies within Future Wales where appropriate to support the preparation of a Place Plan.

Will Future Wales apply to Development of National Significance?

Yes. Developments of National Significance are planning applications submitted to and determined by Welsh Ministers and Future Wales, in accordance with the adopted development plan, which will include Future Wales.

Why does Future Wales not include off-shore planning issues?

Future Wales covers the land in Wales, down to the low water mark. The [Welsh National Marine Plan](#) covers the sea. Together they provide joined up planning frameworks for the marine and terrestrial areas.

How long will Future Wales last for?

Future Wales is a 20 year plan with an end date of 31st Dec 2040.

Will Future Wales be reviewed?

The Welsh Government will keep Future Wales under review. In accordance with the [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) Future Wales can be revised at any time, but at least within five years following publication. The Welsh Government will report to the Senedd explaining whether Future Wales should be revised and if so, a timetable for the revision process.

What is the process for changing Future Wales?

The process for revising Future Wales is set out in the [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#). The nature of the revision and the timetable for it will be set out to the Senedd.

Where can I view Future Wales?

Future Wales can be viewed online [here](#).

Where can I find more information on how Future Wales was prepared?

The [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) (as amended by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015) sets out the statutory process for the preparation and review of Future Wales.

The [Statement of Public Participation](#) sets out the timetable and process for the preparation of Future Wales.

The [Integrated Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment](#) sets out the assessment process that supported the preparation of Future Wales.

The [Evidence Compendium](#) sets out the range of evidence that informed the preparation of Future Wales.

The [Future Wales webpages](#) set out a range of supporting information.

How can I be kept informed of news about Future Wales?

Subscribe to the Future Wales newsletter [here](#).