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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Consultation Document

Revision of Chapter 7 of Planning Policy Wales - Supporting the Economy

Date of issue: **28 November 2011**

Action required: **5 March 2012**

Overview

This consultation seeks your views on the Welsh Government's proposed update to national planning policy on supporting the economy. Current planning policy is contained in Chapter 7 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 4, March 2011). The policy has been updated to reflect many of the recommendations contained in the research report "Planning for Sustainable Economic Renewal" produced by Roger Tym & Partners in association with Asbri Planning in 2011. We are also consulting on the draft structure for a new Technical Advice Note which will provide more detailed guidance and advice on the implementation of the proposed changes to policy. A separate consultation on the Technical Advice Note will be undertaken later in 2012.

How to respond

The closing date for replies is 5 March 2012. You can reply in any of the following ways:

Email

Please complete the consultation response form Annex 3 and send it to: planconsultations-F@wales.gsi.gov.uk

[Please include "PPW draft Chapter 7 - Supporting the Economy (Consultation)" - in the subject line.]

Post

Please complete the consultation response form at Annex 3 and send it to the address provided under the "Contact Details" section below.

Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternate language versions of this document are available on request.

Further related information can be found here:
Planning Policy Wales (Edition 4, March 2011)
Chapter 7 <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/policy/ppw2010/?lang=en>

Technical Advice Note 3: Simplified Planning Zones
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/policy/tans/tan3/?lang=en>

Technical Advice Note 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/policy/tans/tan6/?lang=en>

Planning for Sustainable Economic Renewal Research Report 2011-10-24 <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/planningresearch/publishedresearch/suseconrenewal/?lang=en>

Contact Details

For further information:

Planning Policy Branch
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email: planconsultations-F@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Data Protection

How the views and information you give us will be used.

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about. It may also be seen by other Welsh Assembly Government staff to help them plan future consultations.

The Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. This helps to show that the consultation was carried out properly. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then blank them out.

Names or addresses we blank out might still get published later, though we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Assembly Government. This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decided to reveal the information.

What is this consultation about?

1. The global economic recession has affected Wales along with the rest of the UK, and it is likely that it will continue to do so for several years to come. The Welsh Government has made it clear that it will do all that it can, using all available policy levers, to help address the causes and symptoms of the recession in Wales.
2. The planning system is devolved to Welsh Ministers, and it is essential that it is fit for purpose and supports our policies for economic renewal. As a consequence we are seeking to update Chapter 7 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) which relates to supporting the economy, to align it more closely with our broader economic policies and to try to ensure that the planning system facilitates economic renewal in Wales more effectively.
3. This Consultation Document contains proposals to replace Chapter 7 of PPW as well as a draft structure of the content for a new Technical Advice Note (TAN). The updated Chapter 7 and draft TAN structure which are the subject of this consultation are contained at Annex 1 & 2.

Where are we now?

4. In July 2010 the Welsh Government published a strategy for economic recovery called Economic Renewal: a new direction. This strategy sought to implement a fresh approach to policy-making and delivery, seeking a new way to lead Wales out of recession informed by wide-ranging consultations and new evidence. As part of this new approach the Welsh Government identified that planning policy needed to be updated. In particular, the strategy states:
'To remain competitive, businesses in Wales must be able to invest in new development in an efficient and timely way. Government provides the framework for this new development, and needs to ensure that the planning system in Wales facilitates effective decisions and to impose costs only where these are justified by the benefits they bring to society as a whole.'
5. As a consequence the Welsh Government commissioned a research report from Roger Tym and Partners in association with Asbri Planning to identify what changes were need to planning policy in Wales. The ensuing Report called Planning for Sustainable Economic Renewal was published in June 2011 and forms the basis of many of the proposed changes to Chapter 7 of PPW which are the subject of this consultation.

Planning Policy Framework in Wales

6. PPW is published in an electronic format on the Welsh Government's website. This allows for easier and quicker updating of relevant chapters, and the document has already been updated several times to reflect policy changes elsewhere. However, Chapter 7 of PPW has remained unchanged since 2002 and it is considered that the policy needs to be reviewed and realigned in order to facilitate economic recovery in Wales.
7. Once finalised the revised Chapter 7 will be incorporated into PPW and will replace the existing guidance on planning for economic renewal.
8. PPW sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government and it is supplemented by a series of TANs. Together, these provide the framework for the preparation of Local Development Plans and the decision making responsibilities of Local Planning Authorities.

What are main changes we are proposing?

9. The Planning for Sustainable Economic Renewal Report highlighted the fact that there is a perception that planning policy for economic development needed updating and that the policy should be set against the Welsh Government's legal duty to promote sustainable development. Sustainable development is comprised of three components namely, social, economic and environmental development. The research highlighted that under certain circumstances there is a perception that the economic component of sustainable development has been overlooked in the decision making process at the expense of economic and social progress in Wales.
10. The revised policy, which is the subject of this consultation, seeks to redress this perception by stressing the importance of economic development within the context of sustainable development.
11. The revised policy requires local planning authorities to adopt a more holistic approach to economic development and recognise that most land uses have some economic impact. Local authorities should therefore consider the likely impacts of all development and adopt a "whole-economy" approach rather than focussing on the more traditional employment land uses as set out in categories B1-B8 of the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order.
12. The policy requires local authorities to establish a robust, locally appropriate evidence base of the economic characteristics of their areas and to develop locally appropriate development plan policies based upon informed assumptions about possible changes, whilst having regard to national economic policies.
13. As part of the evidence base, the policy now requires local planning authorities to undertake and keep up to date Employment Land Reviews. These Reviews should be based on a realistic assessment of

demand for employment land and should highlight instances of over and under provision within development plans.

14. The new policy seeks to promote more effective working and decision making both within and between local authorities. The policy seeks to ensure that Economic Development Officers are consulted on proposals which have the potential to generate job creation or retention, and that the economic benefits of such proposals are more fully understood. Similarly local authorities are required to work collaboratively to ensure that Employment Land reviews are undertaken at an appropriate strategic level and that they co-operate to ensure that development take place in the most appropriate locations in Wales even if that is outside of their boundaries.

Consultation Questions

15. Questions relating to this consultation are set out below. If you wish to respond please **complete the Consultation Response Form at Annex 3** which will allow you to make additional comments when replying to these questions.
16. Responses to consultations may be made public- on the internet or in a separate report. If you would prefer your response to be kept confidential please indicate this on your consultation response

Q1	Do you agree with the proposed definition of economic development for planning purposes?
Q1(b)	Do you have any further comments?
Q2	Do you agree with the Objectives as specified in paragraph 7.1.2?
Q2(b)	Do you have any further comments?
Q3	Do you agree that an Employment Land Review is required to provide the evidence base for Local development Plans?
Q3(b)	Do you have any further comments?
Q4	Do you agree that Employment Land Reviews should be undertaken collaboratively by local planning authorities, to reflect local economic markets?
Q4(b)	Do you have any further comments?
Q5	Do you think that policy on economic development in rural areas will help to promote diversification of the economy?
Q5(b)	Do you have any further comments?
Q6	Do you consider that the draft policy will support the growth of the green economy?

Q6(b)	Do you have any further comments?
Q7	Do you agree that the guidance on the content of development plans is sufficiently flexible to allow for local circumstances and changes in the wider economy?
Q7(b)	Do you have any further comments?
Q8	Do you agree that local authorities should work together, and with other stakeholders, to plan strategically for employment land provision?
Q8(b)	Do you have any further comments?
Q9	Do you agree with the view that Development Management decisions need to reflect economic considerations more prominently?
Q9(b)	Do you have any further comments?
Q10	Do you think that draft planning policy, as proposed, will be effective in raising the profile of economic issues as part of the Development Management process?
Q10(b)	Do you have any further comments?
Q11	Do you agree with the list of key factors to be taken into account listed in paragraph 7.6.1 when deciding planning applications?
Q11(b)	Do you have any further comments?
Q12	Do you agree that local planning authorities should look favourably on applications for economic development not in accordance with development plans, if the economic benefits outweigh any adverse impacts?
Q12(b)	Do you have any further comments?
Q13	Do you agree with broad headings which the Technical Advice Note should address?
Q13(b)	Do you have any further comments?
Q14	What further guidance would like to see contained in the draft Technical Advice Note?
Q15	We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.