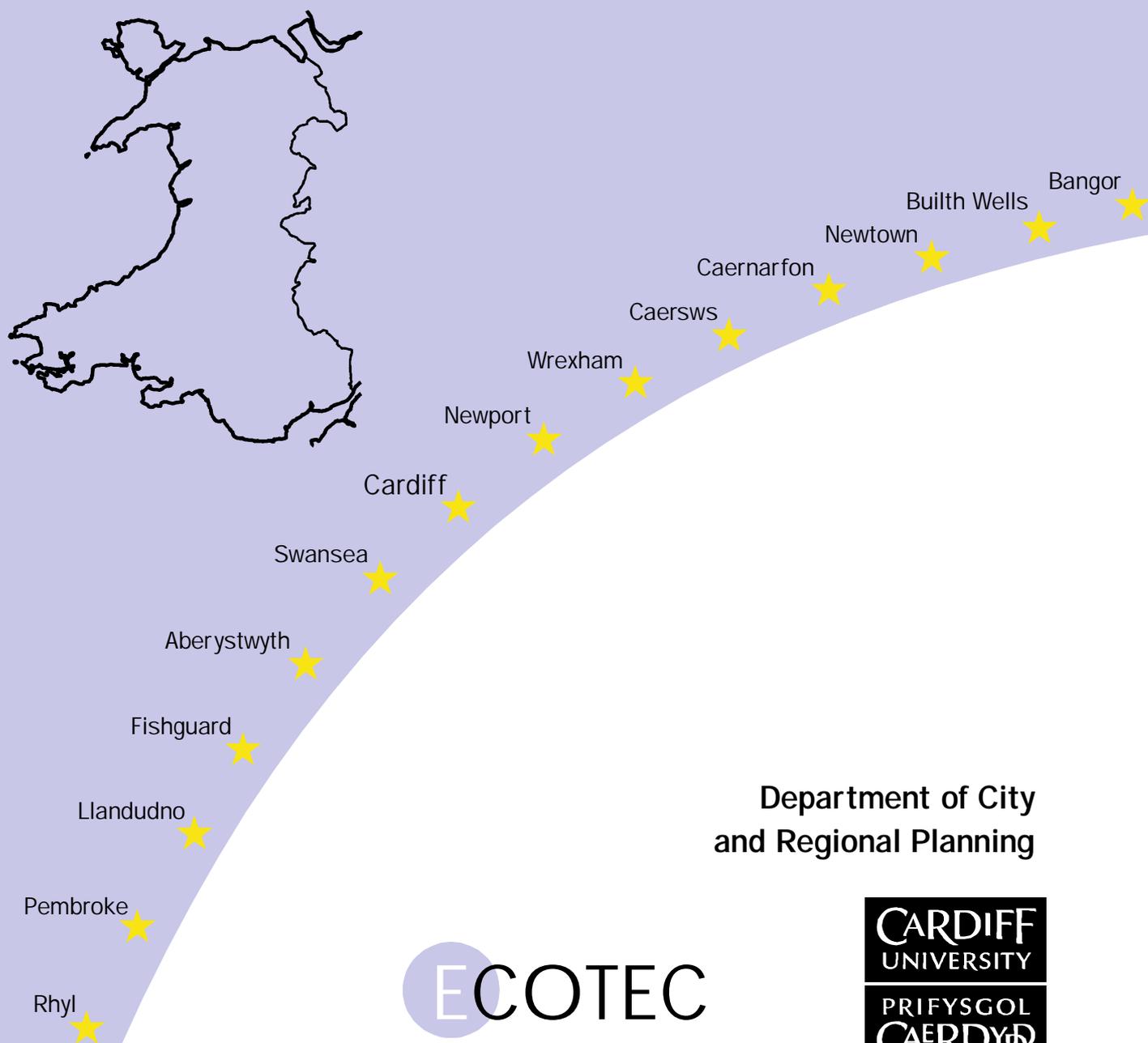


FINAL REPORT

Comparative Spatial Planning Methodologies Research Study

February 2001



Department of City
and Regional Planning

ECOTEC
RESEARCH & CONSULTING

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**COMPARATIVE SPATIAL PLANNING
METHODOLOGIES RESEARCH PROJECT**

Final Report

**Department of City and Regional Planning
Cardiff University**

and

ECOTEC Research and Consulting Ltd

February 2001

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A National Spatial Planning Framework For Wales

The strategic plan of the National Assembly for Wales “*Better Wales*” includes a commitment to prepare a National Spatial Planning Framework for Wales by March, 2003. A further commitment to prepare a National Spatial Planning Framework is set out in the Partnership Agreement between the Labour and Liberal Democratic parties in Wales. The Assembly has commissioned research as part of the Wales Planning Research Programme to assist in taking forward the commitment to prepare the framework, of which the present study forms a part.

The Study

This report presents the findings of a research study entitled “*Comparative Spatial Planning Methodologies*”, carried out by a team from Cardiff University and Ecotec Research and Consulting between November, 2000 and February, 2001. This Final Report follows an Interim Report in January, 2001, and is accompanied by a Case Studies Working Paper, which provides a detailed review of the six selected case studies.

The Final Report includes:

- An Introduction setting out the background, aims and objectives and key components of the research;
- An analytical summary of the spatial planning methodologies utilised in the six case studies;
- An examination of the Welsh context for a National Spatial Planning Framework, including a review of the major policies produced by the National Assembly for Wales, together with the views of a selection of respondents drawn from key agencies within and outside the Assembly;
- An analysis of the 14 common components of the spatial planning methodologies reviewed in the six case studies, in order to distil lessons from best practice in the context of the specific situation in Wales, taking account of the expert views of interviewed respondents and stakeholders.
- The identification of a range of options for the development of a National Spatial Planning Framework, and the selection of a recommended option most likely to meet the dual criteria of best practice and suitability to the Welsh context.

The study included a clarification of the European context for spatial planning initiatives, together with an examination of National Assembly policies to determine their explicit and implicit spatial dimensions. A stakeholder seminar was held in Knighton, Powys, at an early stage of the study to ascertain the views of significant stakeholders. Semi-structured interviews were subsequently held with 15 expert respondents to determine their views on the most suitable approach to be adopted in the formulation of a National Spatial Planning Framework.

The ‘best practice’ lessons distilled from the review of the six case studies in Section 2 were then analysed in each of 14 key methodological steps in selecting an appropriate approach and developing a National Spatial Planning Framework. The analysis in each of these steps was further informed by the detailed review of the specific Welsh context represented by current NAW policies, and by the views of stakeholders and interviewed respondents. From this process a number of broad options were produced for the formulation and development of a National Spatial Planning Framework.

Options for the development of a National Spatial Planning Framework

Four options were identified:

1. A Vision Statement

- providing an overarching aspirational vision for selected policy areas.
- The statement would be complemented by key benchmark indicators and would not include mapping or visual representation.

2. A Strategic Framework

This could take one of two forms:

- a) adopting an analytical focus, based upon functional analysis of key themes, utilising a range of techniques and computer simulations (including Geographical Information Systems), and would include visual representation at a range of appropriate scales; or
- b) based upon key principles, with broad-scale visual representation of key topics in mapped form.

3. A Master Plan Approach

- essentially concerned with land-use or three-dimensional design, prescriptive and presented in detailed plan or map form.

A preferred approach

- The research team does not consider that either a **vision statement** or **master plan** approach are appropriate for a spatial planning framework for Wales, since neither performs well in the analysis of the key 14 methodological steps set out in the study.

The majority view of stakeholders and respondents is that the NAW has numerous vision statements in key policy areas, but that these are not sufficiently reconciled in terms of their spatial implications. Moreover, vision statements are inherently difficult to monitor in terms of implementation. A prescriptive master plan approach is now absent from all leading ‘best practice’, and was unanimously viewed by stakeholders and interviewed respondents as completely inappropriate to the Welsh context.

- The report recommends that the National Assembly proceeds with the preparation of a **strategic framework** approach.

Such an approach performs well against each of the methodological steps identified in the report, and thus accords with the best practice identified from the case studies. As noted, this

approach has two variants. The **key principles** however, whilst performing comparatively well in most of the steps, tends to treat spatial dimensions of policy in a relatively implicit manner. The **analytical focus**, on the other hand, can be highly specific in its spatial focus, which greatly assists implementation, monitoring and review. For these reasons, it was the preferred choice of a clear majority of interviewed respondents.

It is to be noted that these two options need not be mutually exclusive, and the analytical focus can readily be developed out of an initial key principles approach.

- It is recommended that the National Assembly proceeds with the formulation of a National Spatial Planning Framework which will provide guidance in the form of a strategic framework, and which seeks to develop an analytical focus in the integration of key thematic areas. Such a dynamic and flexible approach is most likely to be responsive to current policy needs, and to facilitate effective implementation through improved monitoring and continuous review.
- In developing the NSPF, the principles of sustainable development embodied in the Sustainable Development Scheme, those of economic well-being in the emerging National Economic Development Strategy, and the social inclusion policies of the NAW will all need to be accommodated, together with other key policy areas. Amongst these latter, the Transport Framework and the forthcoming Planning Policy Wales will have a major impact upon the emerging spatial framework.
- The report considers the range of issues covered in the six case studies of spatial planning frameworks, and those which arise from the review of NAW policies. It is recommended that the NSPF meshes with European Union spatial planning programmes; gives spatial expression to the Assembly's policies and programmes; provides a context for major decisions and for the allocation of resources both by the Assembly and by other governmental and non-governmental agencies, and by the private sector; and provides a context for local authority policy-making and decision-making. As a spatial framework, it will appropriately address issues of development and restraint on the broad scale i.e. where issues of importance to Wales as a whole are involved. The NSPF can be used to examine a suitable range of alternative scenarios for the spatial development of Wales.
- In considering the data and research requirements for the preparation of a spatial framework, the report reviews current practice, and sets out (in Section 3.7 and 4.3) the main topic areas to be incorporated. A brief review of current data sets available at different spatial scales in Wales is provided (Table 3.1), together with identifiable gaps and preferred measures. This analysis informs the choice of preferred option, for it is argued that the development of **spatial themes** (such as transport accessibility; urban/rural capacity; economic development/land supply; sustainability etc.) will enable existing data sources and analytical techniques to be progressively developed from the existing compartmentalised topic basis into an integrated framework for policy formulation and evaluation.
- The National Spatial Planning Framework is strategic in nature, and it should therefore provide guidance for a period 15-20 years ahead.
- The framework will have the status of National Planning Policy, and will support other Assembly initiatives by providing a long-term, coherent spatial strategy for community well-being in Wales.

1. INTRODUCTION TO AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH STUDY AND WORK UNDERTAKEN

1.1 Background to the Study

- 1.1.1 The National Assembly of Wales' first strategic plan www.betterwales.com includes a commitment to prepare a national spatial planning framework for Wales. A further commitment to prepare a National Spatial Planning Framework is set out in the Partnership Agreement between the Labour and Liberal Democratic parties in Wales. The Assembly has committed itself to prepare, by March 2003, a new national spatial planning framework, linked to Assembly policies, which will be regularly updated.
- 1.1.2 The Final Report of the National Assembly's Land Use Planning Forum concluded that in the short term an additional section on spatial planning should be included in Planning Policy Wales. In the longer term the Forum recommended that the National Assembly should produce a Wales Spatial Planning perspective.
- 1.1.3 The context for the Spatial Planning Framework for Wales is also provided by the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP). The ESDP provides the European context for planning policy at all levels, linking land-use planning to economic and social development policy and programmes. The NAW's Brief for the current research project required the study team to ensure that advice was included on how to progress a Spatial Planning Framework for Wales and that this should mesh with the policies and programmes of both the ESDP and the National Assembly as well as other organisations likely to be concerned. The study team's work has therefore involved extensive consultation with both individuals and corporate stakeholders in Wales. The study team has also consulted individuals and organisations elsewhere in the UK and those with expertise on spatial planning within the European Union.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

- 1.2.1 The aims of this research project were already stated in the Assembly's Briefing document (September 2000). The aim of the study is to take forward the National Assembly's vision for a Spatial Planning Framework for Wales. The study was required to review current and emerging spatial planning methodologies, drawing upon examples from the UK and European experience. Following identification and consideration of spatial planning methodologies, the study was required to suggest the most appropriate spatial planning methodology, or combination of methodologies, to be used during the preparation of a Spatial Planning Framework for Wales (see paragraph 4.1, p.3 of Brief).
- 1.2.2 The Spatial Planning Framework is also required to mesh with the policies and programmes of the National Assembly, and in particular the need to consider its relationship to the Sustainable Development Scheme, National Economic Development Strategy, West Wales and the Valleys Objective 1 Programme, and the Transport Strategy. The Spatial Planning Framework should also provide the context for the development of policy at the local level, including Unitary Development Plan preparation.

1.2.3 The specific objectives of the research project were stated (paragraph 4.3, p.4 of Brief) as follows:

- (i) to review current and emerging spatial planning methodologies drawing upon examples from the UK and European/International experience;
- (ii) to take forward the National Assembly for Wales vision for the Spatial Planning Framework for Wales and suggest the most appropriate spatial planning methodologies for use in its preparation;
- (iii) to advise on the range of issues to be addressed by the Spatial Planning Framework for Wales; and
- (iv) to assess the data and research requirements for preparation of the Spatial Planning Framework for Wales.

1.3 The Study Team's Tender Document

1.3.1 The Study Team submitted its Tender Document to NAW in October 2000. This included coverage of the methodology to be adopted by the Study Team in undertaking and completing the research project within the three-month time period required. The Tender Document also included a description of the Study Team, the CVs of all Study Team members, study costs, and an indicative project schedule in terms of timescale.

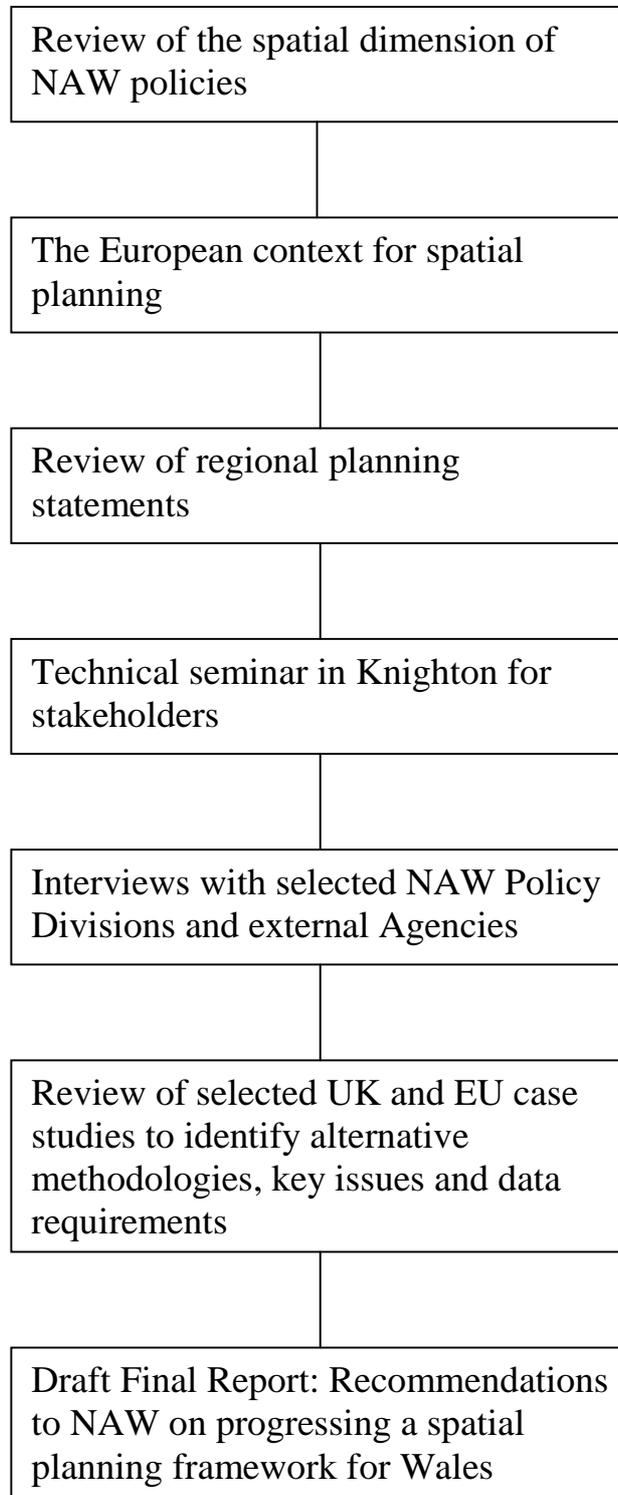
1.3.2 The methodology adopted by the Study Team to conduct the research project comprised five stages:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Stage 1 | Inception |
| Stage 2 | Review of alternative spatial planning methodologies |
| Stage 3 | Assessment of the most appropriate approach for Wales |
| Stage 4 | Advice on the range of issues which might be addressed by a Spatial Planning Framework for Wales, and data requirements |
| Stage 5 | Recommendations and selection of a/some preferred approach(es) |

1.3.3 The Study Team is pleased to report to the National Assembly that it has completed all the above stages of the project and within the time period required. The key components of the research project are illustrated in Figure 1. The review of the spatial dimension of NAW policies, the European context for spatial planning, the review of regional planning statements, and the technical seminar for stakeholders held in Knighton, were all reported in the Study Team's Progress Report (December 2000).

1.3.4 In January 2001, the Study Team completed a series of interviews with individuals in selected NAW Policy Divisions and external agencies. These interviews were conducted on the basis of a common set of questions (see Annex 1) covering the need for a National Spatial Framework for Wales (NSPF), its likely aims, what policy issues it might address, the expectations of stakeholders, the role and status of an NSPF, its role in integrating a range of different policies, the importance of linking an

Figure 1: Key Components of the Research Project



NSPF with EU initiatives, whether Wales has an adequate data base to prepare an NSPF and where were the gaps, and in what format would an NSPF be presented. Some of these questions had also been discussed by other stakeholders in Wales at the technical seminar at Knighton in December 2000.

- 1.3.5 The Study Team has also reviewed a selection of case studies of spatial planning in the UK regions and within the European Union (particularly the Netherlands and Germany, two countries with longstanding experience of spatial planning).
- 1.3.6 This Final Report contains recommendations on how the NAW might progress a National Spatial Planning Framework for Wales. The Study Team has also been mindful of the need for the NAW to progress an initiative which will be widely regarded, within both the UK and international community, as being of high quality, of relevance and use by all stakeholders concerned, and which addresses the often distinctive and difficult issues which face Wales and which need to be addressed. This Final Report therefore provides advice on spatial planning methodologies which might be adopted for developing a National Spatial Planning Framework for Wales, advice on the range of issues which might be addressed, and the data and research requirements involved.

2. A COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF SPATIAL PLANNING METHODOLOGIES

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This section draws on the results of the 6 case studies undertaken for the study. It examines the approach taken in different cases towards developing spatial plans, strategies or frameworks. The cases selected for the study consisted of examples from both UK and European experience. The following cases have been reviewed:

North West Regional Planning Guidance, England
Yorkshire and Humber Regional Planning Guidance, England
West Midlands Regional Planning Guidance, England
National Spatial Strategy, Ireland
Spatial Planning in the Netherlands
Spatial Planning in Germany

The full case studies are contained in a separate collection of working papers. Examining the case studies suggests a number of common methodological components (Figure 2.1), which comprise a 14 stage process in developing and applying a spatial strategy. These 14 steps are used to structure the section.

Figure 2.1 Common components of spatial planning methodologies

1. A stated, or understood, rationale for the spatial strategy
 2. An identified purpose
 3. A statement as to key principles
 4. An agreed status (statutory or non-statutory for example)
 5. The nature of presentation (maps, text or both)
 6. The nature of the approach (topic based, such as housing or thematic, such as balanced development)
 7. The relationship to the wider planning system
 8. The relationship to other strategies
 9. The type of background work undertaken to develop the strategy
 10. Whether the strategy is broadly analytical, sets out strategic policies or is a means of implementing policies
 11. The degree of consultation undertaken
 12. Whether the strategy is subject to independent review and/or sustainability appraisal
 13. The timescales involved in developing the strategy
 14. Monitoring and review procedures
-

2.1.2 In addition a number of process issues are also recognised to be important. The act of drawing up the strategy can be a key element in both generating understanding of the nature and role of the strategy as well as mobilising support. This is particularly the case in places where there is no history of spatial planning.

2.2 Components of spatial planning

Rationale

- 2.2.1 The rationale for spatial strategies are remarkably similar in all six cases. They are seen to provide a framework for broader policy integration and as setting out the general spatial pattern of development within the area concerned. It is, however, rare for them to be viewed as development plans which specify the acceptable locations for new development.
- 2.2.2 In the three English cases examined the rationale is that Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) should provide a spatial strategy for the region which will form “a spatial context for the economic development activities of the Regional Development Agency (RDA) and the plans of infrastructure and service providers...industry and commerce”. Similarly in Germany the spatial plans are seen to provide a spatial framework for economic, social and cultural development.
- 2.2.3 In Ireland the proposed National Spatial Strategy is seen as providing a broad planning framework which is expected to act as a framework within which sectoral policy (such as enterprise development, tourism, infrastructure, services and agriculture for example) can be formulated and implemented in a more balanced way.
- 2.2.4 The rationale for a spatial strategy is often set out elsewhere in domestic policy. For example, in England the rationale for RPG is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 11 (PPG11). However, it is valuable to set out the rationale within the strategy itself in order to inform non-specialist readers.

Purpose

- 2.2.5 In all cases the purpose of the spatial strategies reviewed was to form a context within which more detailed local development plans could be drawn up. In general the spatial strategies also tended to define the broad development priorities for national or regional authorities, dependent on the level at which the strategy was drawn up.
- 2.2.6 In Ireland the National Spatial Strategy is expected to identify indicative development patterns for different areas and set down broad policies for the location of different types of investment, as well as providing a framework for broader policy formulation. In the Netherlands the national spatial planning policy document also acts as a means of co-ordinating different policies. It serves to direct government actions and, in practice, significantly influences the actions of other public bodies.
- 2.2.7 The main role of spatial plans in Germany, at the level of the Lander, is to provide a state planning concept for the ‘order’ and development of the state (such as Bavaria) and its sub-regions. In Berlin-Brandenburg for example the plan identifies the location of growth poles. In the German cases examined state plans provide a guideline for the development of lower order spatial plans and are, in turn, influenced by the national spatial plan.
- 2.2.8 Within England the role of RPG is broadly prescribed and therefore similar between all three examples, although some differences do emerge. In general the role of RPG can be summarised as:
- To provide a regional spatial strategy within which local authority development plans and local transport plans can be prepared
 - To set out regional planning policies

- To provide a broad development strategy for the region over a 15-20 year period and identify the scale and distribution of provision for new housing, and priorities for the environment, transport and other identified sectors

2.2.9 The West Midlands goes further than this, at its current stage of RPG development. It proposes that RPG should provide a clearly articulated locational, or spatial, strategy which is based upon an understanding of the inter-relationships between the West Midlands and the rest of the world, the nature of the region and the evolving relationships between town and country.

2.2.10 The West Midlands is not alone in stressing the importance of relationships with areas outside of the region. In Bavaria the importance of cross-border relationships and trans-regional transport corridors are also stressed strongly.

Guiding principles

2.2.11 Most spatial strategies are underpinned by a number of guiding principles, or strategic objectives. These set the parameters which the spatial strategy uses to determine the broad spatial patterns of development to promote. In all cases the principles of sustainable development are a key component. This immediately moves a spatial strategy away from purely land-use considerations.

2.2.12 In England both published RPG take the four objectives of the UK sustainable development strategy as their base, namely:

- The maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment
- Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone
- Effective protection of the environment
- Prudent use of natural resources

2.2.13 In the North West this is to be supported by:

- Economy in the use of land
- Enhancing existing environmental, social and economic capital
- Achieving quality in development

2.2.14 The West Midlands have not yet published revised RPG in draft form. However, it is considering 6 challenges together with 8 core principles which together form a set of strategic choices which are the focus of early development work and consultation. The 6 challenges are set out below for they offer a useful window on some of the work required in developing a spatial strategy in practice:

- Whether growth can, and should, be channelled from the areas of greatest potential to the areas of greatest need
- Whether patterns of social change, which lead to the concentration of spatial disadvantage, can be effectively influenced
- What the nature and form of urban renaissance and regeneration should be
- How the distinctive needs of the region's rural areas can be met
- How an appropriate pattern of development can be ensured that will minimise the need to travel
- Whether certain areas are reaching the environmental limits to their capacity to accommodate further growth

- 2.2.15 In Germany, sustainable development is also a key theme, with other regional considerations providing additional principles. For example in Bavaria, developing border regions and transport corridors to neighbouring states is a key principle, as is the preservation of sub-regional identities as a strength for economic development. The latter may offer useful parallels to Wales in the desire to support the cultural and linguistic heritage of the country.
- 2.2.16 Ireland also highlights the principles of sustainable development, building out from these to identify the desire to build on the current dynamics of the urban-rural system and the need to support continuing national and economic growth.

Status

- 2.2.17 The status of the spatial strategies examined varies. In the German Lander it forms a legally binding document which lower order plans must take into consideration. In England, RPG constitute a material consideration and development plans should be revised in the light of its provisions. In the Netherlands its status is significantly enhanced through the direct and indirect effect it can have on the pattern of state investment.
- 2.2.18 Generally, however, spatial strategies have only limited implementation roles and they therefore rely on persuasive powers and the incentive effect of guiding public investment programmes. Even in Germany spatial plans have little means to influence an uncompromising application of spatial planning.
- 2.2.19 In all cases, spatial plans were viewed as being at their strongest where there was strong consensus as to their aims and objectives. It may be a truism, but where organisations were willing to 'sign-up' to the aims and objectives of the plan so policy co-ordination was more likely to be achieved, with or without statutory status. For example in the Netherlands, the provisions of the 4th National Spatial Plan began to be implemented as soon as it was first published rather than when it was formally approved some years later. This was because consensus existed around its general content and stakeholders were aware that this was not going to change significantly. In Ireland the power of the process adopted is the wide-ranging consensus that a National Spatial Strategy is desirable and the inclusion of a range of government departments in steering the Strategy, together with an inclusive, and on-going, consultation process.

Nature of presentation

- 2.2.20 Spatial strategies can be presented in the form of text which sets out the key spatial principles or policies which apply or can be presented as one or more maps illustrating the spatial structure of the area concerned. It may be appropriate for a combination of these approaches to be used. Textual material can set out more clearly than maps the variety of policies which implement the strategy. Maps can also prove restrictive by indicating precise boundaries through the simple act of drawing a line around an area. However, maps can be easy to interpret and serve as the basis for both illustrating and debating what can be complex concepts.
- 2.2.21 Often the analytical work is heavily based upon cartographic illustration. This is the case in both Ireland and the West Midlands. Here large amounts of data and the interrelationship between different activities can be more easily handled through map-based activities. Some areas are also utilising GIS and internet technologies to

illustrate and manage the large amounts of data generated in devising spatial strategies.

- 2.2.22 In many cases the resulting spatial strategy is based more strongly upon descriptive text. In Germany spatial plans at the level of the Lander consist of more than 100 pages of text and only a few illustrative maps. In RPG one key diagram supported by a text-based document setting out policies relating to the spatial structure of the region is the standard format.

Nature of approach

- 2.2.23 Spatial strategies tend to be organised either around a number of topics such as housing, employment, waste and so forth, or they take a thematic approach, integrating different topics, such as supporting balanced regional development or promoting an urban renaissance.

- 2.2.24 In the Netherlands the national spatial planning policy document is structured around a series of topics, such as those identified in Box 2.1. In England RPG also broadly takes a topic based approach although both the North West RPG and that for Yorkshire and the Humber set out a number of broad themes, such as the following in the North West:

- Achieving greater economic competitiveness and growth with social progress
- Securing an urban renaissance
- Sustaining the region's smaller rural and coastal communities
- Prudent management of the region's environmental and cultural assets securing environmental quality
- Creating an accessible region

Box 2.1 Examples of topic coverage in a spatial strategy

- Housing;
- Urban and rural development;
- Urban and rural needs;
- Transport/infrastructure;
- Economic development;
- Culture;
- Tourism;
- Domestic and European funding programmes;
- Social exclusion;
- Waste planning;
- Environmental quality;
- Sustainability.

- 2.2.25 The approach in Germany is structured more strongly around identified themes. For example, in Northrhine-Westphalia the spatial plan is structured around 14 basic principles for spatial development, four general principles and 14 sectoral principles. The general principles are: urban-rural differentiation, urban categories, central places and development corridors. These are similar to the strategic objectives set out in

Berlin-Brandenburg, namely: inner city development and secondary densification, decentralized concentration of settlement development, improvement of the quality of life in cities, improvement of public rail transport and creation of integrated freight transport concepts.

- 2.2.26 The approach in Northrhine-Westphalia is similar to that adopted in the North West of England and appears to offer valuable lessons to Wales. That is that the spatial strategy is based upon broad principles such as spatial development or accessibility, and this is translated into a number of key themes which form the strategic objectives of the strategy which are to be implemented through a sectoral or topic based approach. The implementation framework might be contained within the spatial strategy but does not need to be.

The relationship to the wider planning system

- 2.2.27 In all cases the spatial strategy has a strong relationship to the wider planning system. In the case of the Netherlands and Germany it is an integral part of the system of spatial plans and strategies operating at different spatial scales. In England, RPG also has a clear relationship to the development plan system, setting the context within which sub-regional plans are revised. In Ireland the relationship is not yet established although the intent is clearly stated, in that the strategy is intended to influence the location of future development.
- 2.2.28 In most cases the spatial strategies considered act as guidelines which lower level plans have to take into consideration when they are being drawn up. Such guidance can, of course, be difficult to counter and it is rare for lower level plans to act in a manner which is contrary to the guidance set out in the higher level planning document.
- 2.2.29 In a variation on this, a *counter current* principle operates in Germany which allows the respective lower tier to participate in the planning of the respective higher tiers. There is some concern in Germany that this can lead to a levelling down of the planning process as mutual agreement is sought.
- 2.2.30 Crucially, the wider planning system is an integral part of the implementation of the spatial strategy in all cases considered, although it is equally true that none of the spatial approaches rely solely on a land-use planning system for implementation.

The relationship to other strategies

- 2.2.31 In all cases the spatial strategy is closely related to a range of other strategies in order to ensure its successful implementation. This is partly a feature of its role of co-ordinating different policies. However, in no case was the spatial strategy clearly seen to be the pre-eminent strategy document. The relationship is more symbiotic, particularly in cases such as the Netherlands and Germany where integrated spatial planning is a central component of the planning approach and sectoral and spatial plans are drawn up through a consultative process.
- 2.2.32 Within England RPG tends to have a close relationship with a number of wider strategies. The regional transport strategy is incorporated within RPG and so is informed by the broad principles set out in RPG. The Regional Economic Strategy developed by each Regional Development Agency is generally seen to be a parallel strategy that plays an important role in delivering overall regional development. For example, in the Yorkshire and the Humber RPG there is a strong relationship drawn with the RES. In this case the broad objectives of both RPG and the RES have been

derived from a common regional strategic framework *Advancing Together into the Millennium: A Strategic Framework*. This provides a clear example of how a spatial framework can provide one 'leg' of an integrated strategic framework.

Background Analysis

- 2.2.33 All of the spatial strategies are based upon background analysis. The nature of the analysis varies quite significantly both in terms of depth and breadth. The greatest level of analysis specifically targeted towards developing a spatial strategy can be witnessed in the case of Ireland. A significant programme of research and analysis has been initiated aimed at improving knowledge of existing spatial structures and linkages between areas, including trend scenarios. This work will be used to inform the development of opportunities and choices in the pattern of development and the definition and choice of strategies, priorities and implementation mechanisms. The research programme is structured around 6 key areas:
- Urban Ireland and balanced regional development
 - Rural Ireland and balanced regional development
 - People and balanced regional development
 - Communication infrastructure and balanced regional development
 - The management of the environment and regional development
 - Delivery mechanisms and balanced regional development
- 2.2.34 Equally, in the West Midlands a number of important studies have been undertaken to inform the development of revised RPG. Two key studies are an employment land study and a study to develop a polycentric framework for the West Midlands Region. The latter study identified the spatial distribution of functions across the Region. These will be used in association with papers drawn up to develop strategic options for the future development of the Region.
- 2.2.35 The North West and Yorkshire and Humber RPG also undertook important background research but of a less in-depth nature where spatial structures were concerned. In Yorkshire and the Humber, for example, the key study examined settlement capacity and regional development options whilst in the North West the papers outlining Strategic Options and key issues contributed to the information base.
- 2.2.36 The analysis of detailed data sets forms a key part in the production of all the spatial strategies studied. For example, in the Netherlands spatial plans usually consist of data describing the situation in the past in relation to the present situation and examining likely future trends to underpin the strategy. At a Federal level in Germany space-related development trends as well as space-related strategies and programmes are set out in the *Raumordnungsbericht*, a spatial planning report which is produced every four years.
- 2.2.37 It appears that in those areas where a longer tradition of spatial planning exists a regular round of data collection and broad understanding of spatial trends and patterns reduces the need for extensive research programmes of the kind undertaken by Ireland. However, in cases such as Ireland where there is no history of such activity and limited knowledge of spatial structures a range of background studies can prove invaluable. Such research can both inform the development of the strategy but, arguably as importantly, can help to focus debate on the appropriate spatial framework and generate consensus as to what such a framework might achieve.

- 2.2.38 Background analysis is often undertaken by the body producing the spatial strategy but in both England and Ireland consultants are used to provide specialist inputs or to undertake activities which the producing body is unable to. The Netherlands has a similar tendency to augment scarce public resources with independent analysis, a practice which is believed to provide greater credibility to the resultant strategy. In Germany most of the analysis is undertaken by the responsible bodies owing to the greater resources available and the particular traditions within Germany.

From analysis to implementation

- 2.2.39 Whilst the National Spatial Strategy in Ireland and the development of RPG in the West Midlands is firmly based on extensive analytical work, none of the examples we have studied have merely set out an analytical framework. In all cases a spatial strategy has been developed which, to a greater or lesser degree, advocates certain spatial patterns of settlement development or economic development for example.
- 2.2.40 In some cases the strategy is broadly stated and is not locationally specific identifying criteria, as in the Yorkshire and Humber RPG for example, by which development proposals will be judged. In other cases a more explicit spatial strategy has been developed which identifies the location of growth poles, protected areas, transport corridors and so forth around which integrated policy proposals can be developed. This is certainly the case with the German Lander cases studied. In this instance the spatial strategy forms a strong statement of intent but broadly relies upon other providers to implement its provisions.
- 2.2.41 In one case examined in this study a spatial strategy has moved further along the analysis-implementation continuum. In the case of Berlin-Brandenburg in Germany key projects are identified for each of the core objectives, demonstrating one of the key means by which the spatial strategy will be implemented.

The degree of consultation undertaken

- 2.2.42 Consultation is a key aspect of most of the spatial strategies studied, although the form and extent can vary. In the Netherlands the spatial planning system is characterised by consensus-building at all spatial levels and between all relevant (spatial) actors (known as the Poldermodel). Typical to Dutch spatial planning practice is the need to reach consensus between government institutions and representative bodies including voluntary, community or private sector organisations.
- 2.2.43 On a national level the Ministers responsible consult with the lower tiers of government, usually the provincial authorities concerned, the water boards and in some cases, the municipal authorities. The Provincial Council consults the Provincial Spatial Planning Commission, neighbouring provincial authorities, the municipalities, the water boards and the relevant Ministries and, in border regions, the authorities across the national frontier. Consultation on a local level takes place 'where necessary' with public bodies, stakeholders and interest groups.
- 2.2.44 In England, RPG is also subject to broad and wide-ranging public consultation, in a process where minimum requirements are laid down nationally. In the North West consultation exercises were undertaken at different stages in the process of developing RPG. There was an initial consultation exercise covering the Strategic Options and Issues papers produced at the start of the process. This was primarily aimed at local and regional stakeholders such as the local authorities and representative organisations. This was followed by targeted consultation exercises to

comment on preliminary drafts of the RPG. Finally the draft RPG was subject to broad public consultation.

2.2.45 Such incremental and progressive consultation exercises help to develop consensus as to the key aspects of the strategy as well as improving understanding as to what the strategy is intended to achieve. Yorkshire and the Humber followed a similar approach whilst the West Midlands Region has also embarked upon early consultation exercises.

2.2.46 In Ireland a formal consultation process is being undertaken around the choices which have to be made within the spatial strategy and a forum of more than 250 stakeholders met for one day for a scenario planning exercise. Consultation does not just have to be after the event - it can also help to develop the options and ideas which are then developed further into an integrated framework. In Ireland an expert group has also been convened to advise on the content and process of producing the strategy. This group also includes representatives from outside of Ireland, providing a different input into the process from those based within the country. Five consultative forums have also been instigated to ensure the representation of key interest groups. The fora are:

- For the Border, Midlands and Western Region
- For the Southern and Eastern Region
- For the social partners
- For sustainable development
- For professional and technical bodies

2.2.47 In contrast, there is less of a tradition of consultation in Germany, although in Berlin-Brandenburg significant efforts are being expended to encourage residents and regional and local stakeholders to be aware of and in broad agreement with the strategy being produced. In fact, key spatial planning documents in Germany at a Federal and a Lander level are described as 'insider' documents which are not targeted at and not for the wider public.

Whether the strategy is subject to independent review and/or sustainability appraisal

2.2.48 RPG in England is subject both to independent review, in the form of an Examination in Public, and to a sustainability appraisal. Whilst separate and independent activities they both have the effect of acting as a 'check' on the contents of the spatial strategy through subjecting it to rigorous scrutiny.

2.2.49 Within the Netherlands the independent assessment of the spatial strategy is even more intensive with both the national spatial planning commission and different chambers of the Government being asked to approve the strategy at different stages. In contrast there is less independent review in Germany owing to the operation of the counter current principle whereby different tiers of government were all involved in its development.

The timescales involved in developing the strategy

2.2.50 The timescales involved in developing a spatial strategy largely depend upon the level of background analysis undertaken and, more importantly the extent of the consultation exercise. One of the criticisms of the Dutch spatial planning system is that it can take up a lot of time. The protracted procedures, with various appeal possibilities, can cause the total time involved in spatial planning to be lengthy.

2.2.51 Regional Planning Guidance in England typically takes around 2.5 years from the decision to first revise it to the date when it is issued by the Secretary of State (the responsible Minister). In Ireland the process of preparing the spatial strategy is estimated to take around 2 years.

Monitoring and review procedures

2.2.52 Whilst all the spatial plans studied are subject to revision few details have been identified. RPG for Yorkshire and the Humber and for the North West are subject to ongoing monitoring as a consequence of Government guidance issued in PPG 11, although such procedures may have been implemented regardless. In Germany the previously mentioned *Raumordnungsbericht* is published every four years but it is not clear that it forms a coherent monitoring framework informing the ongoing development of spatial strategies.

3. THE CONTEXT FOR A NATIONAL SPATIAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK FOR WALES

3.1 Introduction: the context for an NSPF

3.1.1 This section addresses the context for the preparation of a National Spatial Planning Framework by the National Assembly for Wales. An understanding of the context for an NSPF for Wales has been achieved through the following:

- A systematic review of existing and emerging policy of the National Assembly for Wales, and selected other policy documents, with an emphasis on determining the explicit and implicit spatial dimension of policies;
- A review of European spatial planning initiatives relevant to Wales and north-western Europe;
- Consultation with selected organisations, agencies and representative bodies in Wales to establish the present expectations of an NSPF.

3.1.2 Widespread understanding of and support for an NSPF is considered to be essential for its acceptance and influence. The research confirms the existence of general support among interested organisations in Wales for the preparation of a National Spatial Planning Framework. It is clear, however, that the evaluation of an NSPF will depend on the form, content and, ultimately, the practical utility of the framework. There is also an increasing familiarity with and comprehension of the concept of spatial planning, although the concept has for some only recently become meaningful in terms of its application to Wales. In spite of this, the commitment by the National Assembly for Wales to prepare a National Spatial Planning Framework, and the possible forms and approaches that this may take, were not fully understood by all of those actors for which a spatial planning framework is likely to have direct relevance.

3.2 The purpose and function of an NSPF

3.2.1 The purpose of an NSPF is stated in <http://www.betterwales.com>, the strategic plan of the National Assembly for Wales, to be the “setting [of] a clear context for sustainable development and environmental quality”. The research programme has encountered various interpretations and expectations of the function(s) that an NSPF may perform that add detail to the formally stated purpose. The following are those that have been expressed most clearly during the course of the research:

- a) To set out the spatial context for social, economic and environmental activity and policies in Wales. In this context, the framework could act to counter perceived tendencies towards insularity in policy and other government activity.
- b) To provide a clear, strategic framework for investment, resource allocation and development decisions.
- c) To explain the spatial dimension of the various policies and strategies of the National Assembly for Wales in a way that recognises the differential impact of Assembly policies in different parts of Wales.
- d) To identify and express the character of different functional areas within Wales.

3.2.2 On the first of these functions, one aspect of the NSPF could be to encourage an explicit consideration of the European and global context within which policy

development in Wales takes place (see below). In addition, a framework could also emphasise functional linkages across traditional national and regional borders, with particular consideration of economic and transport relationships with Ireland and the English regions.

- 3.2.3 An important potential function of an NSPF is to provide a clear framework for investment resource allocation and development decisions. In performing this function, the framework may identify strategic opportunities and constraints to various forms of development. Following this, it may also provide a clear expression of the disposition of the Assembly, either positive or negative, towards different forms of development in specified geographical areas. This may then be utilised as an instrument in the land-use planning system to inform the determination of call-in applications and planning appeals.
- 3.2.4 The third function, that is to explain the spatial character and differential impact of the policies of the National Assembly for Wales, appears to be that most closely aligned to the formal function expressed in Better Wales. In performing this function, the NSPF could act as an instrument to assess the practicality and compatibility of various Assembly policies and strategies in relation to one another, within the context of sustainable development. In addition to this, it may serve an explicit role in identifying where different strategies may be used in a complementary manner to assist in the realisation of objectives. The framework, in this mode of operation, may also be usefully extended to include the corporate strategies of the various all-Wales agencies that operate under the responsibility of the National Assembly for Wales.
- 3.2.5 The research included an evaluation of a wide range of strategies and policy documents of the National Assembly for Wales during the inception stage of the project. These included the principal policy statements of the Assembly (for example, Better Wales, Learning to Live Differently, and the National Economic Development Strategy) and various other policy statements considered relevant to the preparation of a spatial planning framework (for example, the Transport Framework, the National Housing Strategy, Communities First, the Waste Strategy). The review indicated that not all of the documents to which an NSPF is of clear relevance mention it or give it appropriate emphasis as a mechanism for the effective integration and delivery of policy. In limited cases, for example Learning to Live Differently, the reference to the NSPF is explicit. The review also classified the relevant strategies and policies into two categories: i) those that express and acknowledge a clear and explicit spatial dimension; and ii) those that do not express or acknowledge a clear spatial dimension, yet have important and explicit spatial implications. The review indicated that the further review and refinement of Assembly policies is encouraging greater awareness of the spatial content and effects of policies.
- 3.2.6 A further possible function of an NSPF, closely related to assessing the differential impact of Assembly policy, is to identify and express the character of different functional areas in Wales. In doing this, the framework may outline those strategic issues that require consideration to be given to them at the regional level, either through the regional committees of the Assembly or by local authorities acting together.

3.3 The scope of an NSPF

- 3.3.1 It is clear that interested organisations in Wales consider a thematic approach to be most appropriate to the preparation of an NSPF. The framework should focus upon the identification and expression of functional linkages and spatial relationships for

which an isolated, topic-based approach is deemed inappropriate. Despite a clear preference for the adoption of a thematic approach, there appears to be some difficulty for various actors to define appropriate themes. The following ‘themes’ were identified as suitable for consideration:

- Economic activity: including traditional concerns related to economic development, complemented by alternative approaches to recognise wider productivity and employment issues.
- Environmental quality: incorporating water resource management; waste management; air quality
- Accessibility: incorporating issues of transportation; access to services and employment.
- Health and social inclusion (or expressed more thematically as ‘community well-being’);
- Areas of concentration of development: capable of expression spatially in either a polycentric or ‘corridor’ approach, with particular emphasis on high-tech industrial clusters and strategic investment sites.

3.3.2 The provision in the NSPF of explicit targets related to the above themes for particular regions or geographic areas is not generally supported by key stakeholders.

3.4 Relationship to other strategies

3.4.1 The NSPF is expected by the various agencies and organisations in Wales to relate to a series of other strategies and policy documents at a variety of spatial levels. These levels consist of:

- The European level;
- The transnational level;
- The National Assembly for Wales;
- The all-Wales level;
- The local level.

3.4.2 In addition to the relationship of the NSPF to the policies and strategies at these different levels, the research has often highlighted the importance of establishing a relationship to the statutory land-use planning system and this is therefore also considered explicitly.

a) The European level

3.4.3 The research revealed an expectation that the NSPF could clarify the supra-national and European context for Wales to avoid policy approaches in Wales becoming overly ‘domestic’. In this context, the framework should address and interrogate the concepts derived from the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) and frame them within a Welsh context. However, the ESDP was not identified by the interviewees as providing the primary steer to the preparation of an NSPF. The ESDP was also not considered to provide any prescriptive approach to the preparation or content of an NSPF. The NSPF should also enable an improved understanding of the requirement for access to European Structural Funds and of their implementation. This is particularly important in the context of addressing the implications for Wales of the continued expansion of the European Union and the accession of additional member states.

b) The transnational level

- 3.4.4 It is also expected that the NSPF should reflect the series of initiatives arising from European programmes focused on Trans-national co-operative arrangements. Included in these are the Trans-European Networks and the INTERREG IIc and IIIb initiatives. Policy approaches at the European level that express functional areas transcending national boundaries should inform the NSPF. Wales forms part of two such areas: the North-West Metropolitan Area and the Atlantic Area. Particular attention should be given to the functional relationships between Ireland, Wales and the regions of England in preparing a National Spatial Planning Framework.

c) The National Assembly for Wales

- 3.4.5 There is a broad consensus among the organisations and persons approached that an NSPF should be guided primarily by the vision expressed in the principal strategies of the National Assembly for Wales and related national policy. Consequently, the framework would be underpinned by the three stated priorities of sustainable development, tackling social disadvantage and promoting equal opportunities. Of these three, Better Wales appears to emphasise the role of the NSPF in establishing the context for sustainable development and environmental quality. In addition, one of the key functions of an NSPF was stated to be the integration of Assembly policy and the provision of a spatial expression of that policy. The range of policies and strategies identified includes:

- Better Wales;
- The Sustainable Development Scheme;
- The National Economic Development Strategy;
- The Water Resources Strategy;
- The Waste Strategy;
- The Transport Strategy;
- The Air Quality Strategy;
- The National Housing Strategy;
- The Biodiversity Strategy.
- Planning policy, including Planning Policy Wales and Minerals Planning Policy Wales

A review of many of these strategies during the inception phase of the research highlighted that they include a variety of both explicit and implicit spatial elements (see above).

d) The all-Wales level

- 3.4.6 In addition to performing an integrative function in relation to the various strategies of the National Assembly for Wales, an NSPF may also serve to integrate the spatial dimension to the corporate plans of the various agencies that operate at the all-Wales level (for example, the Welsh Development Agency, the Wales Tourist Board, Countryside Council for Wales, the Environment Agency). The framework is also expected to address the private and voluntary sectors and provide an appropriate, indicative framework for investment decisions and service provision.

e) The local level

- 3.4.7 The extent to which an NSPF addresses local and regional issues within Wales has been identified as an important issue for consideration. The framework has been

identified as offering a context for the preparation of unitary development plans and collaborative working by local authorities on strategic issues. The establishment of a relationship with actors at the local level was noted as being of importance for reasons of ensuring the effective implementation of an NSPF and Assembly policy more generally.

f) The statutory land-use planning system

- 3.4.8 In addition to a relationship between the NSPF and each of the levels identified, explicit concerns were expressed that the NSPF should establish a clear relationship to the statutory land-use planning system. At the level of the National Assembly for Wales and its associated agencies, the framework is expected to clearly establish its relationship to Planning Policy Wales and to the determination of call-in applications and appeals. At the local level, the framework will provide a context for the preparation of unitary development plans and engagement in collaborative working on strategic issues by local planning authorities. Several of the interviewees preferred not to see the establishment of a formal and direct relationship between an NSPF and the statutory land-use planning system. The establishment of formal relationships to the various components of the statutory land-use planning system was noted as likely to be problematic.

3.5 The status of an NSPF

- 3.5.1 It was noted during the course of research that the status of a National Spatial Planning Framework is a delicate issue that demands sensitive consideration. Different agencies and actors expressed contradictory expectations on the preferred status of an NSPF. It is evident that the preferred status of an NSPF is a non-statutory document, although some minority views dissented from this. It was suggested that the NSPF should have a status similar to, or at least equivalent to, other policies and strategies of the National Assembly for Wales. The clarity with which the status of the framework was expressed was also noted as important. Some comments were made to the effect that the National Assembly for Wales has limited direct powers of implementation. Consequently, it was suggested that an NSPF should proceed on the basis of consensus and be of a character that the various 'implementation' agencies in Wales (including local authorities) feel able to endorse or subscribe to.

3.6 Presentation and format of an NSPF

- 3.6.1 Those persons interviewed on their expectations of an NSPF raised two broad approaches to the presentation and format of the framework:
- A policy document expressing various spatial patterns through text, maps and illustrative material (essentially an expressive framework, directed primarily towards an external audience);
 - A computer-based programme for the exploration and testing of various policy options (essentially a modelling framework, directed towards an internal policy-making audience).
- 3.6.2 On the first of these, it is expected that the framework will include appropriate diagrammatic and illustrative material. This would include map-based information on spatial context, and identify strategic opportunities and constraints (for example, on flood risk areas, opportunities for renewable energy development) at a variety of spatial scales and disaggregation. It was made especially clear that the framework

should not attempt to express 'end-state master plans' as such an approach is impractical, inappropriate and likely to frustrate the preparation and implementation of the framework. Nevertheless, a framework could identify relevant geographical areas without risk of becoming too prescriptive. The framework should include textual material for analytic purposes and to assist interpretation and understanding. The framework may incorporate a core strategy, based on a 15-20 year time horizon, that is given both textual and diagrammatic expression.

- 3.5.3 The second form, that is a computer-based framework for the testing of various policy options, offers an alternative approach to the traditional form of policy document. Those that envisaged such an approach clearly conceived of the framework as an operational tool rather than an end product. A framework designed for modelling the spatial impacts of various policy options would enable the testing of scenarios, although some reservations were expressed that such an approach could become too prescriptive in terms of spatial effects.

3.7 Data context for the preparation of an NSPF

- 3.7.1 The research is required to advise on the data and research requirements for the preparation of an NSPF. This section is concerned with identifying a series of indicators or data sources that may be required to inform the operation of a spatial planning framework in Wales. This process has followed an issue-based approach highlighting data that exists, or identifying gaps and possible preferred indicators, in a number of key areas, namely:

- Transport
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Population and Migration
- Social Exclusion
- Waste Planning
- Culture
- Tourism
- Environmental Quality
- Sustainability
- Urban and rural needs.

- 3.7.2 The project team have sought to identify key data-sets and strategic gaps within these areas. However, it is noted that a more comprehensive appraisal of data requirements (including an assessment of issues of spatial scale, timescale, data format, application etc.) would need to be carried out in any subsequent preparation of a Spatial Planning Framework for Wales.

- 3.7.3 The methodology adopted in preparing this *data and research requirements* element of the research has been twofold. Firstly the key issues, identified above, were addressed in terms of the existing data that could be called upon by policy makers to inform decision making. A view was then taken, within each key issue, of whether there were obvious gaps in the current data available, and if so, suggest a number of 'preferred measures' that might address those shortfalls. Subsequently, a matrix of data requirements within each of the key issues was formulated and is presented in Table 3.1. It is important to stress that within the constraints of the current research Table 3.1 represents a 'first trawl' of the key data-sets available and the most significant gaps. Further research would be required to add contextual and operational information to the indicators presented, and, importantly, to assess each in turn in terms of 'quality' issues such as robustness, application, and relevance to the purpose of the spatial planning framework.

3.8 Conclusions

3.8.1 Section 3 has defined the operational context for an NSPF and identified the expectations of a range of relevant organisations and other interested persons. The following are the key conclusions arising from this stage in the research project:

- There is an increasing understanding of the relevance of spatial planning and there is also support for the preparation of an NSPF among relevant organisations in Wales;
- The NSPF is expected to define the wider European context for activity in Wales; to integrate the policies of the National Assembly for Wales; and to express the differential impact and spatial dimension of the Assembly's various policies and strategies;
- A thematic approach to the content of an NSPF is preferred;
- The framework is expected to define its relationship to the statutory planning system within the context of its broader functions as stated above;
- It is preferable that the framework is afforded a non-statutory status;
- The presentation of the framework may adopt an expressive or modelling approach;
- The key data categories relevant to the preparation of an NSPF are capable of being enhanced;
- There is a high expectation among relevant stakeholders of opportunity for involvement in the preparation of an NSPF.

Table 3.1 : Issue-based Data Requirements Matrix

KEY ISSUES	EXISTING DATA	IDENTIFIABLE GAPS AND PREFERRED MEASURES
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car ownership variable in the Census of Population • Information on age of cars (only to UA level) (from DVLA) • Localised bus and rail timetable information • Bus Flow/Train Flow Data (Transport Data Maps compiled by the NAW at all-Wales level - GIS based) • Access to services measures - e.g. Those used in new Multiple Deprivation Index. • Peripherality Indices now calculated to NUTS 3 level by DGXVI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for nationally consistent information on public transport • Cost of service not readily available and may be commercially sensitive • Need to develop a wider range of accessibility & peripherality indicators with disaggregate data sources • Household availability of private transport
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Census of population • Census of employment • Labour Force Survey • GDP data at NUTS 3. • Unemployment Claimant Counts (from ONS) • Benefit Data (eg. Income Support, Disability Allowance, Family Credit, New Deal take ups - all at Electoral Div. Level) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDP by local area • Firm starts by local area • Sectoral composition of GDP by local area • Firm growth rates • Measures of hidden, seasonal and under-employment
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Housing Conditions Survey (at Electoral Div. Level) • Census of Population - Household data • Welsh Housing Statistics - eg. On social housing, homelessness (UA level) • Periodic Housing Needs Surveys • Housing Benefit Form Datasets (All UA's hold these down to postcoded level) <p>Affordable housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average UA Rent Levels • Welsh housing association tenancy and sales database (lettings data by rents and household type) • House price data (e.g. Halifax / Nationwide price surveys) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WHCS - sample based (potential errors) • Many data sets only available at UA level, e.g. average rents, house prices • No household income data (except from surveys and use of proxies from the Census) • No data on household savings and indebtedness

Social Exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Census for data on age groups • Qualitative research – ethnographic studies such as the Rural Lifestyles Surveys • Lone parent households • Elderly population • Public services provision / access <p>Whole range of datasets could be used to examine facets of the processes of social exclusion i.e. housing, population, services, economic indicators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community participation - measures of social capital • Measures of community structures • Information on community regeneration initiatives
Waste Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Agency Wales - strategic Waste Management Assessment (2000) • NAW - Municipal waste surveys (annual) • Regional Waste Plans in Wales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to ensure waste data is available down to UA level to allow effective co-ordination between the local authorities and regional waste groups
Population and Migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK Census of Population - characteristics of pop. Data • ONS mid-year population estimates • Special Migration Statistics - 1991 Census • Annual Population Projections. • Births and Deaths data - general mortality/morbidity statistics (NAW) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Area age breakdown of out-migration - particularly the young skilled group. • Possible use of health records (patient register databases to monitor migration - would need to be co-ordinated)
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Census of population – language question • Distribution of Welsh medium schools • Welsh Social Survey 1992 • Individual surveys of Welsh speaking and economic activity - e.g. TEC's skills audits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limitations of Welsh language question in census • Need standard cross tabulations with SEG, SOC from the Census • Extent of Welsh language by age. • Economic prospects for Welsh speakers -

Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism numbers, Tourism spend • Regional level UK Tourism Stats, Visitor numbers to given attractions from WTB and National Trust (south, north, west regions of Wales) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism data at finer spatial scales - eg. Numbers/spend data at UA level.
Environmental Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links between Health indicators and the environment - e.g. NHS Better Health, Better Wales, Health Survey data • Climate change - Emissions of greenhouse gases • Air Pollution - Days of air pollution • Transport - Road Traffic levels • Water Quality - Rivers or good or fair quality • Wildlife - Populations of wild birds • Land Use - New homes built on previously developed land (DETR, 1998) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental quality indicators cause problems in terms of measurement at a robust and consistent level. Many of the indicators are not easily available at the local area level.
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Quality of Life' Indicators (DETR, 1998). 4 main themes: High and stable economic growth and employment; social progress which recognises the needs of everyone; effective protection of environment; and prudent use of natural resources • LGMB Indicators for Local Agenda 21 project 1996 - 13 key themes as important for sustainability: resources and waste; aesthetics; culture; empowerment; access to skills; living without fear; access; health; satisfying work; human needs; local needs; biodiversity; pollution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As with Environmental indicators the problems with sustainability indicators is often the availability and spatial scale of data and consistency across a number of different variables.
Urban/Rural Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deprivation Indicators - eg. The Multiple Deprivation Index for Wales - used as an Index or in separate 'domains' • Access to services data - important (to varying degrees) in rural and urban contexts • NAW Agriculture statistics. - employment, production volumes etc. (UA level). • Urban settlement patterns - settlement hierarchies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important to make distinctions between indicators of urban and rural disadvantage, • Access to services data needs to be consistent and updated - need to explore GIS techniques that refine such models (network or grid-based models) • Regularly updated statistics on agricultural activity at the small area level.

4. OPTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WELSH SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 It is apparent from the review of case studies in Section 2, from the discussion of the Welsh policy context summarised in Paper 2 of the Progress Report, and from the interviews with key agencies reviewed in Section 3, that there are three main relationships which impact upon the scope and content of a national spatial framework, namely vertical, horizontal and lateral relationships. These relationships were characterised as defining the ‘basic competence’ of a national spatial framework in the Royal Town Planning Institute’s *The UK Spatial Planning Framework: a Discussion* (2000) in terms of:

- Vertical relationships – between layers of governance
- Horizontal relationships – between different issues and sectors
- Lateral relationships – co-ordinating socio-economic processes and policies with spatial dimensions

4.1.2 In addition, the issue of the ‘political status’ of the national spatial framework is crucial, determining the extent to which policies associated with the spatial framework can influence, engage or intervene. As noted in Section 3, a majority of the respondents interviewed from key agencies were concerned to emphasise this issue, and it was also one of the main issues to emerge from the stakeholder seminar held at Knighton.

4.1.3 However, these relationships can be treated in fundamentally different ways within different spatial planning methodologies, and the review provided in Section 2 provides examples of the very wide range of approaches adopted in the development of spatial planning frameworks to date. That review, however, indicates that there is an emerging consensus concerning the common methodological components involved in developing a spatial strategy, although the content often differs quite significantly. More differences can be identified in the process of developing such strategies. In particular, there has been a marked trend to develop approaches which are dynamic and flexible, responding to the very rapid transformations in the socio-economic functioning of nations, territories and regions within the European Union.

4.1.4 It is, therefore, essential to develop a spatial planning methodology which is both responsive to this process of dynamic change, and which is applicable to a specific context. In the Welsh context, an appropriate spatial planning methodology should address the particular nature of the conjunction of the vertical, horizontal and lateral relationships which apply in Wales. This in turn requires addressing the question of the political status of such a spatial framework. (It is significant, therefore, that this issue has received emphasis both from among interviewed respondents in key agencies and from participants in the stakeholder seminar).

4.1.5 As noted in the RTPI’s *The UK Spatial Planning Framework: A Discussion*, there may also be uncertainty over the interpretation of ‘spatial planning’; should it be restricted to land-use planning, or adopt a broader perspective to include all activities that have a spatial dimension? As will be noted, this is an issue which concerned a number of stakeholders and interviewed respondents.

4.2 Considerations

4.2.1 Reflecting the requirement that a spatial framework must be relevant to its particular context, a number of underlying principles emerge from the analysis of case study findings reported in Section 2 and from the review of NAW policies in the Interim Progress Report:

- that the rationale for a spatial framework is clearly articulated and set within the particular circumstances facing Wales
- that there is a need to develop a spatial ‘vision’ for Wales
- that the process of developing the framework is recognised as being as important as the framework itself, and that this process is dynamic, developing over time
- that different scenarios should be considered, in order to identify a range of relevant alternative futures

4.2.2 In arriving at alternative options for the development of a Welsh spatial framework, each of the common methodological components identified in Section 2 (see Figure 2.1) has been set out as a series of logical steps, with different considerations applying at each step. These considerations have been derived from a review of the case studies (summarised in Section 2) and from the responses of stakeholders and interviewed respondents (summarised in Section 3). Together, these have been used to address the particular configuration of vertical, horizontal and lateral relationships relevant to each step. For each step, the main conclusions relating to relevant considerations to be applied in the selection of options for developing a spatial framework are indicated.

4.3 Methodological Components

Rationale

4.3.1 The successful introduction of a useful and influential framework requires a commonly-accepted, and well-articulated, rationale. It follows from the considerations noted above that there has to be a clear need for such a framework arising from the particular circumstances of Wales. The rationale for a spatial framework in Wales cannot be suggested by experience elsewhere, or adopted because wider policy documents suggest it might be desirable. It is significant in this regard that a rationale for such a framework emerges strongly from both the review of National Assembly For Wales’ policies in Paper 2 of the Progress Report, and is given strong support by a majority of the interviewed respondents from key agencies. This applies in respect of all the three sets of relationships noted in the Introduction.

4.3.2 Thus, at the vertical level there is support for a National Spatial Planning Framework which would provide improved relationships between layers of governance (indicated, for example in both “Better Wales” and “Learning to Live Differently”) although there was a marked concern revealed by the stakeholder and interview respondents that a new bureaucratic ‘regional’ level of governance or administration would be counter-productive in this regard. One of the functions of a National Spatial Planning Framework should be, therefore, to clarify the relevant spatial scales of governance applying within Wales, and those linkages with other relevant areas of governance which apply at a UK or supra-UK (e.g. European Union) level.

4.3.3 At the horizontal level, the Progress Report (Paper 2) noted that many of the recently-developed NAW policies have either explicit or implicit spatial planning components

to their respective policy fields, but the inter-relationship between policies is not as well-developed as it might be in terms of the level of integration. The development of the inter-relationships between policy areas was a consistently-expressed priority of interviewed respondents from both key agencies and stakeholders. Both “Better Wales” and “Learning to Live Differently” advocate the development of a National Spatial Planning Framework with a strong regard to the integration of policy fields.

- 4.3.4 At the lateral level, in terms of the co-ordination of socio-economic pressures and policies with spatial constraints and impacts, notable support is to be found in a number of the NAW policy statements reviewed in the Interim Progress Report. Interview respondents from key agencies and stakeholders also considered this to be one of the major relationships which a National Spatial Planning Framework should address.
- 4.3.5 It should be noted that the issue of the Welsh language cuts across all three of these sets of relationships. Aspects of Planning Guidance (Wales) Planning Policy and the associated Technical Advice Note 20 draw attention to the issue of levels of governance (e.g in the regional planning statements of regional groupings of authorities), and the Welsh Language Board, as part of its strategy of strengthening Welsh as a community language, is promoting local language initiatives (mentrau iaith), but as yet the spatial dimension informing this initiative remains undeveloped.
- 4.3.6 Such a general acceptance of the principle of introducing a spatial framework is a positive sign and can serve as a foundation on which to build. The rationale for the framework is likely to develop over time and will be partially iterative, in that the particular need will become clearer as a greater understanding of the spatial morphology of Wales becomes clearer. Moreover, as a National Spatial Planning Framework is formulated, this process often engenders support, as resistance to the idea of a NSPF may often derive from ignorance of its underlying rationale. The stakeholder and interview stages of this research revealed widespread uncertainty over the scope and content of a NSPF, which itself acts as an inhibiting factor in relation to rationale.

Key points:

- an emerging rationale for a spatial framework can be clearly identified
- the scope and content of a spatial framework needs to be clearly established
- the continued development of the spatial framework needs to be inclusive

Purpose

- 4.3.7 As noted in Section 3, the purpose of a NSPF is stated in “Better Wales” to be:
- “ ...setting [of] a clear context for sustainable development and environmental quality”.
- 4.3.8 The research programme has encountered various interpretations and expectations of the function(s) that a NSPF may perform that add additional dimensions to this stated purpose. Section 3 summarises the most important aspects.
- 4.3.9 It was clear from a number of interview respondents in key agencies that an important aspect of the NSPF could be to consider the European and global context within which policy development in Wales takes place. The European dimension is explored in Paper 3 of the Progress Report, and is also considered in Section 3 of this Final report. With regard to the latter, the different spatial scales examined clearly have

relevance to the three sets of relationships noted in the Introduction as relating to the ‘basic competence’ to be addressed by any NSPF.

4.3.10 In terms of examples of potential roles for a NSPF and key issues which emerged as of particular significance in the interviews with key agencies, the following can be highlighted:

- to provide a national spatial strategy within which Unitary Development Plans and transport strategies can be prepared.

However, both this role and these issues imply a particular conception of the function of a NSPF which was not accepted by all stakeholders and interviewed respondents. There is both explicit support for this role (see Section 3 (f)), and an opposing view which views the limitation of a NSPF to traditional land use issues with concern. There are also methodological issues implicit in this role which will be considered below.

- to identify indicative developmental patterns for different areas of Wales

There is a strong precedent in many of the case studies considered in Section 2 with this aspect of the role of a NSPF. The discussion in Section 3 (d) and (e) provides further detail of the support for such a role from governmental and non-governmental agencies.

- to provide a framework within which other sectoral policies can be formulated/implemented

As noted in Section 3 [(c) and (d)], there was strong support from the interviewed respondents in key agencies for this role for a NSPF.

Key points:

- the spatial framework should link with EU and UK contexts
- the national spatial strategy should identify indicative development patterns for different areas of Wales
- the spatial framework should facilitate sectoral policy integration and provide clarity for investment and development decisions
- the spatial framework should form the context for the preparation of Unitary Development Plans and transport strategies

Guiding Principles

4.3.11 As indicated in Section 2 and in the Progress Report, setting out clearly articulated principles to guide the development of the spatial framework is an important element of all the spatial strategies examined. These can be identified through the process of developing the strategy itself (as Ireland is in the process of doing), or it can be based upon existing agreed principles (such as in Yorkshire and the Humber).

4.3.12 To a remarkable extent given the relatively short time in which the NAW has been in existence, there are a considerable number of clearly articulated principles set out in existing policies. As Paper 2 of the Progress Report noted, some of these contain explicit spatial referents, whilst for many the spatial dimensions are implicit or undeveloped. However, it is clear that “The Sustainable Development Scheme provides the over-arching framework for all of the Assembly’s work.” (“A Sustainable Wales – Learning to Live Differently[2000]), and it is suggested,

therefore, that the framework should be informed by the principles of this Scheme. Indeed, there was strong support among those agencies charged with delivering policies that the sustainability theme was both essential and one of the defining elements of a specifically Welsh NSPF.

- 4.3.13 In addition, the Assembly will wish to draw upon the contents of the National Economic Development Strategy where regional development is a consideration and the European Spatial Development Perspective to inform the principles of spatial strategy. In this latter regard, the explicit concern in the ESDP with the goals of economic and social cohesion sit well with the economic and social inclusion objectives of the NAW.
- 4.3.14 These principles may form the starting point which can then be tested as part of the process of developing the strategy itself.

Key point:

- the guiding principles established by NAW relating to sustainable development, economic well-being and social inclusion form a sound basis for the development of a spatial framework

Status

- 4.3.15 Very few of the spatial planning documents reviewed in Section 2 have a statutory function. Where they do this is firmly in the context of the planning system operating in that country. It should be noted that the European examples reviewed in the Progress Report and in Section 2 are set within a very different constitutional and legal system to that which applies in the UK, which profoundly affects the manner in which the three relationships of a spatial planning framework considered in the Introduction are contextualised.
- 4.3.16 Section 3 considers the responses of interviewed respondents in key agencies to the issue of status, and notes the wide range of views. However, the preferred status is advisory rather than statutory, and therefore it is suggested that the Welsh spatial framework should not have a statutory status, but should act as a guidance document, setting out key strategic directions. In this respect, it would act as a statement of national policy, guiding the implementation of national sectoral policies. In this respect, it is important to note that the status of NSPF has been agreed as National Planning Policy. Those interviewed respondents concerned with executing existing NAW policies stressed the crucial significance of seeking consensus among implementation agencies to ensure that national policies were capable of being implemented.
- 4.3.17 At a local scale, the NSPF might act as a material consideration in the formulation of Unitary Development Plans, and could help to guide the actions of local authorities. In order to serve this function, the spatial framework needs to be persuasive and relevant to local needs, without being overly-detailed and prescriptive. Responses from interviews with key agencies stressed the principle of subsidiarity, with policies being formulated and executed at appropriate spatial scales and levels of governance.
- 4.3.18 Producing a statutory document would necessitate the development of a framework which was highly rigorous and potentially inflexible, or, alternatively, one which was very broadbrush. Neither would be appropriate (or acceptable in the view of the majority of stakeholders and interviewed respondents).

4.3.19 A national spatial planning framework would gain in status as stakeholders progressively subscribe to it, which reinforces the advantages to be gained by an inclusive approach to its development noted under *Rationale*.

Key points:

- a spatial framework should provide guidance rather than have a statutory form
- a spatial framework should emphasise the process aspects of its formulation, seeking support from stakeholders rather than imposing prescribed solutions

Form of Representation

4.3.20 Two approaches can be discerned from the research undertaken:

- A policy document expressing various spatial patterns through text, maps and illustrative material, in which the spatial framework could consist of one or two schematic maps (similar to the key diagram contained in Regional Planning Guidance in England, e.g. North West Region, reviewed in Paper 5 of the Progress Report)
- Alternatively the underlying analysis could be represented cartographically, supported by a short explanatory text. The broad principles underlying the strategy could be set out in text and the representation of the spatial strategy depicted in a series of maps or diagrams. Both Ireland and west Midlands have adopted this approach for the analytical stage, although the final form of the spatial strategy is not yet visible for either (see Progress Report, Section 5). This approach might usefully include computer-based analyses for the exploration and testing of various policy options.

4.3.21 These approaches are clearly based upon different views of the NSPF as an end-product or as an operational tool. Further consideration is given to this issue in Section 3, and also in the concluding part of this Section.

Key point:

- the form of representation of the spatial framework should reflect its purpose

Nature of Approach

4.3.22 Spatial strategies can be broadly defined into those which are topic-based and those which are thematic, although the coverage of each can vary (See Section 2). Whilst a topic-based approach clearly relates to sectoral implications, such as housing or transport, it fails to realise the value of a spatial approach through integrating various facets of territorial development. It addresses only one of the relationships outlined in the Introduction – that of horizontal integration. It is, however, strongly related to the traditional approach of the planning system and will be familiar to those involved in the field and to the conventional divisions of policy and administration.

4.3.23 In contrast, a more thematic approach can be conceptually attractive but difficult to apply in practice owing to the complexity of different relationships and the difficulty of drawing together different functions which interact differently in different contexts. Thematic approaches offer a new approach to traditional planning structures and may be more challenging to implement through the statutory land use planning system. They will certainly require interpretation at lower scales if they are to be implemented.

- 4.3.24 Examples of these approaches are provided in Section 2, and a consideration of the data issues which they raise is outlined in Section 3. From Table 3.1 it can be seen that, in terms of the main substantive issues which any NSPF must address, there are certain data limitations which will affect the choice of approach. Existing data sets have been compiled within the context of a topic-based policy context. In identifying gaps and preferred measures, Table 3.1 indicates a staged approach to the development of a NSPF, in that sufficient information exists for the formulation of an outline approach, which can be developed in a more sophisticated manner as the gaps and preferred measures set out in the Table are successively addressed and incorporated in the development of the spatial framework.
- 4.3.25 However, going beyond the incorporation of this ‘toolbox’ of datasets, a second important element of the future use of data within a spatial planning framework for Wales would be to attempt to combine datasets in such a way that they inform wider *spatial themes* developed as part of the framework. An example would be to develop a Geographic Information System that could store and update the key indicators identified. As a first step a series of GIS maps could be constructed to highlight particular spatial themes (eg transport and accessibility; urban-rural relationships; regional competitiveness and relationships etc). These spatial theme-based maps have been used to good effect in the various drafts of the European Spatial Development Perspective. This would prove useful, not only in providing a spatial context for policy makers across Wales, but as a powerful tool that may be adapted in future to address spatial issues of contemporary importance. With Web-based technologies, this tool could be made available for widespread community participation in a spatial framework for Wales.

Key point:

- a thematic approach to data collection and analysis offers advantages over a topic-approach, particularly in identifying the most significant spatial themes

Relationship to other strategies

- 4.3.26 The relative position of such strategies in the hierarchy of plans and programmes elsewhere in Europe varies according to the country involved. In some cases, the spatial strategy sets the context for other plans; in other cases, it is drawn up to take account of previously agreed priorities. The Welsh strategy will need to be informed by existing policies and strategies (many of the most important are reviewed in Paper 2 of the Progress Report) and to influence their further development. This was confirmed by the responses of stakeholders and interviewed respondents from key agencies discussed in Section 3.
- 4.3.27 As noted earlier, given the priority accorded to the Sustainable Development Scheme by NAW, this would appear to be the appropriate starting point for developing a spatial framework for Wales, providing the guiding principles. The spatial framework should be developed taking into consideration the spatial context of existing plans and policies, such as those set out within NEDS and the transport strategy. Once the Spatial Framework is agreed though, it should then influence the further development of national plans and strategies.
- 4.3.28 As a guidance document setting out national spatial policy it is probable that the spatial framework will come to influence the investment plans of other public sector bodies and private sector organisations. This was a major conclusion of Section 3, and is discussed above under ‘*Purpose*’. However, it should not seek to develop detailed implementation proposals in areas where it has limited influence (another

conclusion of Section 3, and see below). Linkages to planning documents are considered below.

Key point:

- The spatial framework could become an important guidance document as part of an integrated policy approach developed by NAW

Background work and analysis

- 4.3.29 The level of analysis underlying spatial strategies varies, partly due to differences in the amount of material commonly available and partly to the approach being adopted. Where there is little experience of implementing spatial frameworks and limited knowledge of the spatial structure, or morphology, of the area concerned, more studies are required.
- 4.3.30 The initial analysis will include consideration of the spatial implications of existing policies, the spatial structure of the territory in question and the relationship between places within the territory. This can generate a mass of information which can be used to develop policy options and generally improve understanding of the operation of the territory.
- 4.3.31 The types of study undertaken typically include an assessment of population change and migration patterns; economic change (and existing structure); movement patterns by transport; the nature of the urban and rural systems; and studies on internal and external linkages.
- 4.3.32 As Section 3 indicates, within Wales it is likely that further information is required into, for example:
- Transport
 - Economic Development
 - Housing
 - Population and Migration
 - Social Exclusion
 - Waste Planning
 - Culture
 - Tourism
 - Environmental Quality
 - Sustainability
 - Urban and Rural Needs
 - Deprivation
 - Landscape Character
 - Accessibility
 - Flood Risk
 - Renewable energy potential
- 4.3.33 Table 3.1 itemises in detail some of the relevant key data-sets and strategic gaps within this range of issues.
- 4.3.34 The analytical work forms the basis of the spatial framework and high-quality analysis is required if the framework is to be robust, defensible and based on geographical analysis. If the spatial framework is to merely identify key spatial principles which should inform broader investment decisions, then a less detailed analysis will be required.

Key point:

- Sufficient data exists at present to develop a spatial framework, and the analytical approach can be extended in sophistication as the framework is developed

The analysis-implementation continuum

4.3.35 A spatial framework is more than merely an analysis of the spatial structure of the territory concerned. It moves further towards implementation dependent upon the level of resources available. There is no suggestion that a spatial framework for Wales will have resources attached for its implementation. It will be reliant for its implementation upon a broader range of policies operated by other bodies and organisations (see the principle of subsidiarity discussed in Section 3 and in ‘Status’ above).

4.3.36 However, the spatial framework should not shy away from presenting broad conclusions as to the appropriate development patterns for identified areas. This may be set out in general terms, but should be capable of influencing the investment priorities of the public, private and voluntary sectors and of guiding the more detailed plans of local authorities within the areas concerned.

Key point:

- The spatial framework is likely to rely upon a broad range of agencies for its implementation

Relationship to statutory processes

4.3.37 A key consideration is how the spatial framework will relate to other statutory processes, particularly the land-use planning system. In all cases examined in Section 2, the land-use planning system is one of the chief implementation agents. What varies is the degree to which a spatial framework must be taken into consideration by lower order planning documents. Some aspects are binding whilst others are indicative.

4.3.38 In the context of the Welsh spatial framework a more indicative approach is believed to be appropriate, based on the views of stakeholders and interviews with respondents from key agencies discussed in Section 3. This approach would set the broad framework within which more detailed strategies can be developed at a regional level, to be implemented through local actions. This is considered to be in accordance with the NAW’s policies for community renewal and social inclusion. The link to the Unitary Development Plan system would be directed through the existing regional planning strategy collaborative working arrangements.

Key point:

- The spatial framework should extend beyond traditional land-use planning concerns in its scope, but should provide guidance for the latter

Consultation

4.3.39 The spatial framework should be subject to broad-scale participation and involvement at a number of points in time. This should take place with stakeholders when developing spatial options, and may follow the in-depth analysis referred to above, if this is undertaken. This approach has been successfully adopted in Ireland (see Section 2), including convening a forum with more than 250 attendees. NAW also

has experience of the establishment of 'Task Groups' in relation to the development of the national housing strategy, which provided useful joint participation arrangements.

- 4.3.40 In addition, participation and involvement should be encouraged whilst developing the strategy itself. Part of the value of the spatial framework will be the process of arriving at it (see Section 2), and, to a considerable extent, the status of the spatial framework will derive from its common ownership. It is important, therefore, that there is wide ownership of the final strategy and that it does not suddenly 'appear' with a subsequent reactive consultation exercise. Planners in Berlin-Brandenburg have recognised this very strongly and are involved in the process of 'selling' both the strategy and the need for it to the general public and a range of stakeholders.

Key point:

- Participation and involvement should take place both in relation to developing spatial options and in developing the strategy itself. This may be achieved by a variety of arrangements, including the convening of a forum and task groups.

Timescale

- 4.3.41 The timescale for producing a spatial strategy varies depending upon the depth of the exercise. A simple strategic framework with limited consultation using existing data sources, and with limited spatial interpretation, can be constructed in around 9 months. In contrast, a statutory framework would take more than 3 years to produce owing to the duration of the consultations and the depth of the underlying analysis required.
- 4.3.42 To produce a robust spatial framework based upon agreed broad themes founded on rigorous spatial analysis would offer a middle road. It is envisaged that this would require some 18-24 months. This would enable a finalised framework to be in place by December 2002 if it were to be started in the near future. Such timing would enable the framework to inform the mid-term review of the Structural Fund programmes in Wales, as well as influencing other strategies and plans.

Key point:

- It is practical to produce a rigorous spatial framework in some 18-24 months

Independent Review

- 4.3.43 Regional Planning Guidance in England is subject to Examination in Public. Whilst this is an option which might be considered by the National Assembly, it is not believed to be warranted at this stage as the added value over the consultation exercise is not clearly apparent. However, other aspects of review – such as sustainability appraisal – should form a central part of the methodological approach to developing the spatial framework (see Section 2 and Paper 5 of the Progress Report).

Key point:

- Provided the strategy is produced inclusively, with extensive consultation with governmental and non-governmental agencies (to include the private sector, voluntary and community groups), and that it is subject to a sustainability appraisal, independent review is not an essential requirement

Monitoring and evaluation

- 4.3.44 From the case study work reviewed in Section 2 and the responses discussed in Section 3, the importance of monitoring and evaluation is clearly demonstrated. A spatial framework is a dynamic concept and changes in macro-economic contexts or policy priorities can influence the nature of the spatial framework. It is important that the long-term nature of a spatial framework is recognised if it is to have any influence or impact. However, it is also important that the framework has the flexibility to be amended or revised as circumstances change. Monitoring is an essential part of this policy cycle. It is suggested that a spatial statement is produced on a 3-5 year basis setting out changes and present conditions against agreed criteria.

Key point:

- Monitoring and evaluation on a continuous basis is essential, with at least a 3-5 year rolling review against agreed criteria

4.4 Options for A Welsh Spatial Planning Framework

- 4.4.1 In setting out the main considerations which apply in developing a spatial planning framework, each of the methodological steps has been set out in detail in 4.3, together with the appropriate reference to the review of case studies, NAW policies, and the views of stakeholders and interviewed respondents from key agencies.

- 4.4.2 In order to clarify the range of options which are available in developing a spatial planning framework for Wales, three broad approaches can be characterised which have emerged from the review of case studies and from the interviewed respondents:

1. Vision Statement

This approach establishes an aspirational ‘vision’, based upon key benchmark indicators for a limited number of policy areas. No mapping or other visual representation is typically provided.

2. Strategic Framework

This approach can be subdivided into two variants:

- a) an analytical focus, typically utilising a range of techniques (including GIS and computer simulation), with visual representation at a range of scales, including schematic mapping of broad issues and policies
- b) principles-based, with broad-scale visual representation of key themes in a mapped form.

3. Master Plan

This approach is essentially concerned with land-use or three-dimensional design, is prescriptive and is oriented to a fixed end-state, typically presented in detailed plan or map form.

- 4.4.3 From the analysis presented in the Progress Report and in detail in the sections of this Final Report, it is considered that only Options 2(a) and (b) pass the tests of adequate methodology, contextual relevance, widespread acceptance and practical feasibility.

Both are compatible with the broad conclusions reached in relation to appropriate methodology, set out at the end of each of the steps analysed in 4.3.

- 4.4.4 The review of current NAW policies carried out in Paper 2 of the Progress Report indicated that many, if not most, of the present policies being developed by the NAW are concerned with establishing vision statements. Some of these include specific benchmarks, but none includes any significant element of spatial representation. Both “Better Wales” and the Sustainable Development Scheme explicitly point to the need for the development of a more integrated policy framework, in which the spatial components of the generation and delivery of the Assembly’s policies can be explicitly considered. Option 1, therefore, may well be a necessary first step in devising appropriate visions for policy development in Wales, but it lacks the crucial methodological components for developing the three relationships which constitute the ‘basic competence’ of a spatial strategy (vertical; horizontal; lateral). There was widespread agreement amongst consultees that a NSPF would need to progress beyond the stage of devising vision statements.
- 4.4.5 The problems associated with the traditional Master Plan approach are well-known. The emphasis upon the achievement of a fixed-end state is incompatible with the reality of a modern society, and its reliance on statutory compliance from a single superior authority is disjoint with contemporary views of governance. Moreover, the exclusive emphasis upon mapped representations does not facilitate the fundamental processes of monitoring and review associated with contemporary policy implementation. Again, there was agreement amongst consultees that a NSPF for Wales should avoid at all costs the preparation of a ‘top-down’, prescriptive, map-based spatial plan.
- 4.4.6 The two variants outlined under (2) adopt a non-prescriptive framework. Both involve an explication of each of the methodological steps considered in this Section, and each received a strong measure of support from the consultees. Both could form a viable basis for the development of a NSPF for Wales. However, neither is mutually exclusive, and the adoption of Option 2(b) could initiate the wider analytical studies which are associated with Option 2(a). As the review of data requirements set out in Section 3 indicates, there are considerable advantages in monitoring and in the formulation and testing of alternative scenarios associated with Option 2(a). Furthermore, Option 2(a) involves an explicit identification of the main spatial components underlying the development of an appropriate strategic framework, whereas in a ‘principles-based’ approach the spatial dimension may remain implicit. Moreover, it is considered that Option 2(a) can be developed in a preliminary form on the basis of current data sets and techniques, whilst promising considerable sophistication in the treatment of a thematic rather than topic-based approach to a NSPF.
- 4.4.7 For these reasons, it is concluded that Option 2(a) provides the most robust methodology for the development of national spatial planning framework for Wales, and would be likely to secure a wide measure of support for its adoption and development.

5. TOWARDS A NATIONAL SPATIAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK FOR WALES

5.1 A preferred approach

5.1.1 The preceding section identified three options for developing the vision of the National Assembly for Wales for a National Spatial Planning Framework. The preferred option for the preparation of a National Spatial Planning Framework, and that recommended by the study, is represented by option 2a:

2a) A strategic framework that is analytically focused and utilises a range of analytical techniques (including Geographic Information Systems and computer simulation), with visual representation at a range of scales, including schematic mapping of broad issues and policies.

5.1.2 This option is consistent with the expectations of key stakeholders, conforms to emergent practices in spatial planning and, importantly, is that which is most consistent with the policy framework of the National Assembly for Wales.

5.2 Towards a National Spatial Planning Framework

5.2.1 The National Assembly for Wales is advised to adopt a dynamic and flexible approach to the preparation and content of a National Spatial Planning Framework. The review of contemporary spatial planning initiatives has indicated a trend towards such approaches in order to be able to respond to changes in socio-economic conditions within territories. Consequently, the framework must be capable of revision and permit the development of alternative futures for the development of the Welsh territory.

5.2.2 The National Spatial Planning Framework is expected to address the spatial context for Wales in relation to both the European territory and cross-border functional relations within the United Kingdom. The framework will be unique in performing this function of establishing the wider context for policy and activity in Wales and identifying important linkages between different scales of governance. The National Spatial Planning Framework should be informed by the European Spatial Development Perspective by deriving spatial concepts and principles from it, and also interpreting the various policy options presented in it.

5.2.3 The principal functions of a National Spatial Planning Framework should be to identify indicative developmental patterns for different areas of Wales and provide a framework within which other sectoral policies can be formulated and implemented. Examples of other spatial planning initiatives provide a strong precedent for this approach. These functions are also those that align with the expectations of key stakeholders and policy-makers in Wales.

5.2.4 The framework may also perform a number of subsidiary functions, for example in the preparation of unitary development plans and local transport plans, although this is not recommended as one of the principal functions of the framework. The National Spatial Planning Framework should establish a broad framework within which actors at the regional and local levels can formulate appropriate strategies for action and implementation. The National Spatial Planning Framework should operate within the scope of the principle of subsidiarity. In this context, local authorities and the regional planning forums may benefit from the provision of a more visible and effective

framework for their own strategies. The study team has, however, found little support for a statutory level of planning at a regional level in Wales.

- 5.2.5. In the context of the advised functions of a National Spatial Planning Framework, it is recommended that the framework is afforded a status equivalent to other planning policies of the National Assembly for Wales, and this position is endorsed by the majority of relevant stakeholders in Wales.
- 5.2.6 The preparation and content of the National Spatial Planning Framework should be guided closely by the stated priorities of the National Assembly for Wales in promoting sustainable development, tackling social exclusion and promoting equal opportunities. In addition to this, the framework should be responsive to a wide range of Assembly policies and strategies, including the National Economic Development Strategy, the Sustainable Development Scheme and the Transport Framework.
- 5.2.7 It is recommended that the framework relies on the programmes and budgets of existing policy areas and the formal strategies of the Assembly for its implementation and that no specific resources are allocated to the implementation of the framework.
- 5.2.8 Sufficient data exists to enable the preparation of a National Spatial Planning Framework, although it is recommended that further data is generated and analysed to ensure the production of a more robust and analytically rigorous framework. It is not necessary to defer commencement of the framework and further data needs can be satisfied as the framework progresses. In the medium term, it is recommended that data is collected and analysed on a thematic basis to better support the further development of the framework.
- 5.2.9 There is support for the preparation of a National Spatial Planning Framework among key stakeholders in Wales. The support of these stakeholders is essential to the successful implementation of the framework and Assembly priorities, and should be regarded as a positive foundation on which to develop the framework. It is essential, therefore, that there is opportunity at an early stage, and subsequently, for input by these stakeholders into the preparation of the framework.
- 5.2.10 It is not recommended that the preparation of the framework should adopt the approach of subjecting the framework to independent review by examination in public. The benefits of such an approach over alternative consultation arrangements are not clear, particularly in view of the advised principal functions of the framework.
- 5.2.11 The advised approach, being the development of a strategic document founded on analysis of relevant spatial issues, is envisaged as capable of preparation over a period of 18-24 months. This approach enables the National Assembly for Wales to satisfy its commitment in Better Wales and be in place to inform the mid-term review of the Structural Fund programmes in Wales.
- 5.2.12 The National Spatial Planning Framework, being a dynamic document capable of responding to socio-economic change and being linked closely to the priorities of the National Assembly for Wales, should be reviewed on a 3-5 year cycle. The review of the framework should be based on continued monitoring, establishing changes in conditions against a series of agreed criteria.

ANNEX

A WELSH SPATIAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

DISCUSSION PAPER FOR USE WITH CONSULTEES

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide a broad template with which to guide consultations with key actors as part of Stage 3 of the Study. This is designed to ascertain the views of a range of actors as to the potential role of a NSPF, the form it might take, its potential coverage and key issues which the study should consider.

Content

The Need

1. Is there a need for a NSPF in Wales? Yes/No

Explore the reasons why (or why not)

If NO, explore views on the most appropriate form of a NSPF if one was to be introduced, using following topics as a guide.

If YES, follow remaining structure.

Overall Aims

2. What might be the overall aims of a NSPF? (you might explore the following)
 - Assisting the development of balanced urban and rural structures
 - Assisting the distribution of functions away from gateway areas
 - Promoting networks of urban areas
 - Identifying less dynamic areas

The Role and status

3. What role might a NSPF have in Wales? (you might explore: To guide the use of land and resources to accommodate needs of Wales and its people, once initial discussion begun).

4. Might it act as:
 - A vision
 - A broad strategy
 - A detailed plan

Why is this?

5. What status should the strategy have?
 - Indicative
 - Advisory
 - Statutory

Why is this? What are the implications of this approach (eg statutory might involve a levelling down of content)

6. Should the NSPF mainly be an analytical representation of spatial structures, provide a means for developing new policy approaches or should it act as a policy goal in its own right?

Links to other strategies

7. Do you feel that a NSPF might act as a mechanism for integrating different policies?

8. Which are the key strategies or plans which the NSPF might relate to (don't prompt)
 - Trans-national: ESDP, INTERREG
 - National: NEDS, Transport, Sustainable Development Scheme etc,
 - Regional: EU Structural Funds, Regional Planning Frameworks
 - Local: UDPs

9. What form might this relationship take?

Coverage of NSPF

10. What topics might a NSPF cover?

11. Might a thematic approach such as the following be appropriate?

- Settlement structure
- Economic structure
- Open-space structure
- Transport and communications connections (Accessibility)
- Urban rural relationships
- Cross-border/European connections
- Balanced regional development
- A polycentric approach
- Protecting and valuing natural and cultural assets
- Others (please note)

12. Do we know enough about Wales to develop a NSPF at the moment?

What more knowledge is needed, if any?

Presentation

13. How might the framework be represented

- Text only
- Mainly text
- Text and maps
- Mainly maps
- Maps only

Are there any other key issues to be considered in preparing a NSPF?

Thank you