

Historic Environment (Wales) Bill

Sustainable Development Principles

The Historic Environment (Wales) Bill will form part of a suite of legislation, policy, advice and guidance that will make important improvements to the existing systems for the protection and sustainable management of the Welsh historic environment. In broad terms the Bill will give more effective protection to listed buildings and scheduled ancient monument; enhance existing mechanisms for the sustainable management of the historic environment; and introduce greater transparency and accountability into decisions taken on the historic environment.

Historic buildings and ancient monuments are a key component of sustainable development.

The re-use of such assets can be used to boost local economies, attract investment, highlight local distinctiveness and add value to neighbouring properties.

The historic environment is the key to achieving sustainable development because:

- it is a finite resource and needs to be conserved to benefit everyone now and in the future
- it contributes to our sense of national, local and community identity and can support community cohesion through providing a sense of place
- it provides character and distinctiveness
- it can support regeneration through the delivery of housing, economic growth and education and skills
- the retention and reuse of historic buildings is inherently sustainable because of their embodied energy
- our older settlements have a compact layout with a mix of employment, residential, retail and leisure uses which reduces the need for travel

Replacing a building also demands a considerable investment of energy. The re-use of heritage buildings safeguards the embodied carbon emitted during the production of the materials used in those assets. Further energy would also be expended during its demolition, disposal of waste materials and in the manufacture and transport of new materials for the replacement building. This is why re-use of existing buildings is now being prioritised wherever possible in the built environment.

Core principle 1: Involvement - people and communities are at the heart of sustainable development, so we will be inclusive in our involvement of all our stakeholders in the development of our policies and programmes, and the identification of solutions that meet their needs, promoting innovation in the way that we deliver services.

Proposals for the Bill have been developed after extensive engagement with heritage practitioners, representatives of the third sector and members of the public in Wales. During 2012, Cadw organised a series of events, including public road-shows, to gather views and ideas. Formal consultation on proposals was also undertaken and 177 responses were

received. In addition consultation events for sixth-form Welsh Baccalaureate students in north and south Wales were held. 180 students took part in an activity based on real-life application for consent to demolish a listed building, which encouraged them to consider the importance of the historic environment and to engage with some of the central issues relating to its sustainable management.

One of the aims of the Bill is to introduce greater transparency and accountability into decisions taken on the historic environment. This Bill will place a duty on Welsh Ministers to consult with owners, occupiers, the relevant local planning authority and other appropriate persons when proposing to list a building or schedule a monument.

Core principle 2: Integration - only an approach that makes the connections between, and effectively integrates economic, social and environmental challenges, will achieve sustainable development.

The historic environment represents considerable past investment of physical, natural and intellectual resources. Where archaeological and historic features already exist, it makes good sense to make the most of the resource they provide, rather than destroy them or allow them to decay with consequent cultural, environmental, social and economic costs.

The Bill will contribute towards a sustainably managed historic environment. The historic environment contributes to local distinctiveness, generating a potent sense of place that inspires community pride and confidence and gives our citizens a sense of belonging that fosters well-being.

The historic environment also delivers more concrete economic returns for Wales. Over 30,000 people are employed in the sector and it contributes around £1.8 billion in output and £840 million to Wales's national gross value added. Regeneration can bring real benefits to the historic environment, by attracting investment it can sustain the viability and utility of historic assets and by revitalising communities it can give fresh meaning and relevance to the heritage that helps to define them. If the historic environment is going to continue to deliver its rich benefits it needs to be protected and sensitively and sustainably managed.

The aim of the Bill is to introduce measures for the better protection and sustainable management of the historic environment, enhancing the part that heritage can play in improving and energising the lives of the people of Wales and the places where they live and work.

The Bill will form part of a suite of legislation, policy, advice and guidance that will make important improvements to the existing systems for the protection and sustainable management of the Welsh historic environment. This will include the revision of the historic environment chapter of Planning Policy Wales and the production of a new technical advice note for the historic environment. These documents will assist in a holistic approach being taken to the management of natural resources, land management and the historic environment.

Supporting principle 1: Reducing Wales' Ecological Footprint - all of our policies will show how we will reduce Wales' Ecological Footprint to work towards our vision, initially through showing how we will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 3% a

year, year-on-year by 2011 in those areas where we have devolved competence, and move towards a zero-waste society.

Not applicable.

Supporting principle 2: Full costs and benefits - we will identify and take account of the full range of costs and benefits, including those over the long-term, those not measured in monetary terms (such as environmental costs and benefits), and those costs that are global as well as local in our policy making. We will promote whole system thinking, taking account of risks - especially to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of communities - and uncertainties associated with action and inaction.

A full Regulatory Impact Assessment, including cost and benefits of the legislation is being prepared.

Supporting principle 3: Precautionary principle - we will use an evidence-based approach to decision-making but, where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

An evidence base approach to developing policy has been taken to develop a Bill. The evidence has informed the decision making around the most effective way of protecting our historic environment. It is recognised that the historic environment is a precious and fragile resource, and a careless or unwitting act can destroy or irreparably damage a site that has survived for centuries. The historic environment must be protected so present and future generations of Welsh citizens and visitors to our nation can continue to be inspired by it, learn from it and enjoy its many benefits. While the historic environment needs to be protected it cannot be frozen in time. Change is inevitable. The historic environment is under pressure as patterns of land use, consumer behaviour and religious observance change. The historic environment will need to be carefully and sustainably managed. Research, evidence from stakeholder and engagement has informed our approach.

Supporting principle 4: Polluter pays principle - we will ensure that social and environmental costs of development fall on those who impose them.

Not applicable

Supporting principle 5: Proximity principle - we will solve problems, especially in managing waste and pollution locally, rather than passing them onto other places or to future generations.

Not applicable

Supporting principle 6: Reflecting distinctiveness - our approach to sustainable development will reflect and respond to the particular needs and issues of communities, and the differing economic, social and environmental circumstances in different parts of Wales, as outlined in the Wales Spatial Plan update.

Historic environment contributes to local distinctiveness and community pride. It generates a sense of place and belonging that contributes to well-being. The Bill seeks to give protection to the full range of nationally important historic assets in Wales, and allow authorities to take prompt and effective action to prevent damage to assets.