

Report to	Planning Committee
Date of meeting	14th April 2021
Lead Member / Officer	Cllr Mark Young (Lead Member for Planning, Public Protection and Safer Communities)
Report author	Karsten Brußk (Planning Officer)
Title	Future Wales - The National Plan 2040

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. This report is about the Welsh Government document 'Future Wales - The National Plan 2040'.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 (February 2021) stipulates that 'Future Wales - The National Plan 2040' is part of the statutory development plan, and, for that reason, relevant to all planning applications that are determined by Denbighshire County Council.
- 2.2. Members will need to be aware of the document's strategic priorities, spatial strategy and policies when preparing the replacement Denbighshire Local Development Plan.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. Members note the content of the report.

4. Report details

Introduction

- 4.1. 'Future Wales - The National Plan 2040' is the title of the National Development Framework (NDF) for Wales. Welsh Government presents a spatial strategy for

addressing key national priorities, such as improving the health and well-being of local communities, which are going to be supported through decision-making in the planning system. It was published on the 24th February 2021.

- 4.2. Welsh Government's intention is to have full plan coverage on all three levels of the development plan hierarchy: (1) National level – Future Wales/ NDF; (2) Regional level – Strategic Development Plans (SDPs); and (3) Local level – Local Development Plans (LDPs). There are currently no SDPs in Wales but preparation is to be commenced within the next one or two years.
- 4.3. 'Future Wales - The National Plan 2040' is subdivided into five chapters that follow an overall sequential structure. Chapter 1 contains the introductory section; focussing on document preparation and planning status, followed by explaining how the document fits with other Welsh Government policy objectives and strategies. Chapter 2 provides a statistical and cartographical overview and outlines the key challenges and opportunities for Wales in the next 19 years.
- 4.4. Building on the previous section, Chapter 3 is concerned with introducing Future Wales' 11 Outcomes which will be used to measure progress with addressing the key challenges and opportunities. This chapter also includes the monitoring framework for Future Wales, starting with the first document review in five years from the date of publication. Chapter 4 provides the principal policy framework for all-Wales issues of national importance, based on the seven 'Strategic Placemaking Principles', and outlines the main areas of change at national level to achieve the Future Wales' Outcomes. Chapter 5 concludes with introducing the four regions that will form the spatial extent for the forthcoming Strategic Development Plans.
- 4.5. The 11 Future Wales' Outcomes ('A Wales where people live...') are a statement where Wales will be in 20 years and present the overarching ambitions based on national policy and sustainable placemaking outcomes as contained in Planning Policy Wales. Welsh Government aims to review 'Future Wales' every five years.
- 4.6. The Future Wales' spatial strategy identifies and connects the key national and regional centres, and provides a basis for long term infrastructure investments,

identifies priorities for the planning system and a framework for the management of natural resources. (Copy of the Spatial Strategy can be found in Appendix 1).

- 4.7. Whilst being specific regarding growth and regeneration in urban areas, Welsh Government delegates the identification of planning measures to support rural communities and the creation of vibrant rural areas to future Strategic Development Plans and Local Development Plans, see Future Wales Policies 4 and 5.
- 4.8. Policy 7 addresses the need for Affordable Homes (AH) - Welsh Government aims to increase the delivery of AH by ensuring funding is effectively allocated and utilised. It is for planning authorities to develop strong evidence-based policies for their respective development plans, including setting development plan targets based on regional or local estimates of housing need and local assessment. The Policy justification does however expressively state '*The national and regional estimates of need do not reflect future policies or events and are not a Housing Requirement for Wales or the regions.*'
- 4.9. 'Future Wales' introduces new 'Pre-assessed areas for wind energy' (see NDF Policy 17). In these areas there is a presumption in favour of large-scale on-shore wind energy development and an acceptance of the associated landscape change, subject to detailed policy criteria in NDF policy 18. Thus, Technical Advice Note 8 'Planning for Renewable Energy' and the supplementing Strategic Search Areas (SSAs) have been cancelled on the 24th February 2021. Appendix 2 contains a map, plus two inserts, comparing the site boundary of the previous Clocaenog SSA-A with the two new 'Pre-assessed areas for wind energy' that either adjoin the County-boundary or are partly located within Denbighshire.
- 4.10. Welsh Government will introduce Strategic Development Plans in all four planning regions: 'South East', 'South West', 'Mid West', and 'North'. Strategic Development Plans must consider and respond to the Future Wales' Outcomes and the spatial framework must be in line with the NDF. Once adopted, they will be supplemented by Local Development Plans (Lite) at the local development plan level. Local Development Plans should continue to be prepared until a SDP is adopted for the region.

- 4.11. Future Wales Policy 19 is the overarching regional policy that includes a wide range of topics to be covered by SDPs and (where required) Local Development Plans. Additional or detailed policy requirements are included in a number of the all-Wales Future Wales policies.
- 4.12. The administrative areas of Denbighshire County Council and the other five local authorities in North Wales, plus Snowdonia National Park Authority, constitute the 'NORTH' region. Appendix 3 includes the regional strategic diagram. Future Wales Policy 20 designates 'Wrexham and Deeside' as the 'National Growth Area' in North Wales. This will be the primary focus of growth and investment for Welsh Government and key stakeholders in the region.
- 4.13. Complementing Wrexham and Deeside, a number of towns along the coast from Holyhead in the west to Prestatyn in the east have been designated as 'Regional Growth Areas', see Future Wales Policy 21. It will be for the SDP and Local Development Plans to recognise the role of these places for the wider surroundings and support their continued function as focal points for sub-regional growth. Acknowledging the diagrammatic nature of the regional spatial strategy, Officers are going to seek greater clarity on the spatial extent of the regional growth area from Welsh Government and hope further details on boundaries will be included in any future Strategic Development Plan. Policy 21 specifically refers to the coastal towns, including Rhyl and Prestatyn, but the diagram suggests the entire area north of the A55 to be included in the regional growth area; coinciding with the principal route network of the future North Wales Metro.
- 4.14. Welsh Government expects the Strategic Development Plan to support the delivery of the North Wales Growth Deal. 'Future Wales - The National Plan 2040' does also place emphasis on tourism as an important sector to the regional economy and highlights the importance of higher education in Bangor and Wrexham. It will be for the Strategic Development Plan to develop a regional approach to addressing the effects of climate change and the decline in biodiversity.

How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

- 4.15. Many Corporate Priorities are addressed, delivered or financially supported by Welsh Government (WG). 'Future Wales – The National Plan 2040' guides WG

and key stakeholders' actions and investment decisions on the regional and local level.

5. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

5.1. There is no cost arising from noting the content of this report.

6. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

6.1. A Well-being Impact Assessment has not been carried out because no decision is sought on Council policy, strategy, work procedure or programme. Members are only being asked to note the content of a document that has been published by Welsh Government.

7. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

7.1. Members of the Strategic Planning Group were briefed about the content of the 'Future Wales – The National Plan 2040' on the 22nd March 2021.

8. Chief Finance Officer Statement

8.1. Chief Finance Officer Statement has not been sought because the report requests Planning Committee to note the content of a Welsh Government document.

9. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

9.1. There are no risks arising from noting the content of the report.

10. Power to make the decision

10.1. This report does not seek a decision. 'Future Wales – The National Plan 2040' has been prepared and published by Welsh Government.

10.2. Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 (February 2021), paragraph 1.24, stipulates that 'Future Wales - The National Plan 2040' is part of the statutory development plan for the County.