



RTPI Cymru
Royal Town Planning Institute
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e-mail response sent to: SeneddCCERA@assembly.wales

Dear Sir/Madam,

Response to: UK common frameworks on agriculture and environment

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is the largest professional institute for planners in Europe, representing some 25,000 spatial planners. RTPI Cymru represents the RTPI in Wales, with 1,100 members. The Institute seeks to advance the science and art of spatial planning for the benefit of the public. As well as promoting spatial planning, the RTPI develops and shapes policy affecting the built environment, works to raise professional standards and supports members through continuous education, training and development.

The response has been formed drawing on the expertise of the RTPI Cymru Policy and Research Forum which includes a cross section of planning practitioners from the private and public sectors and academia from across Wales.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute views to the above consultation.

While the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Government have devolved responsibility for planning, many of the subject areas listed in the Provisional Assessment as requiring consideration of common frameworks are linked to planning, such as environmental issues etc.

The Provisional Assessment is a list of categorised subject areas. Further details of the thinking behind the categorisation and how common frameworks could be developed, decided, governed, monitored etc, would be useful to stakeholders commenting and forming positions. In particular in relation to the subject areas that have cross border implications such as environmental issues, water etc.

The RTPI has developed a number of guiding principles that we consider should be applied to the devolution of government, including how powers 'returned' from the EU will be distributed between Westminster and the devolved governments.

The principles are:

- Subsidiarity – that any new powers are vested in, and exercised, at a level that will be most effective in supporting all parties to deliver better places throughout the UK. This includes the UK, Wales, the city regions, local authorities and communities.

- Coordination – that any new powers support and complement the ability to coordinate approaches to planning across the borders within the UK.
- Appropriateness – that any new powers allow the UK Government or devolved administrations and their partners to develop specific approaches to tackle needs specific to each place where appropriate.
- Resourcing – that any new powers are properly resourced to ensure their effective implementation.
- Alignment - that any new powers complement and do not contradict or 'get in the way' of other powers that are devolved.
- Engagement – that any new powers are consulted upon and that the UK Government and devolved governments work with their delivery partners in assessing how best to make them work.
- Spatial Awareness – that any new powers are examined in terms of how they will impact on the different geographies of the whole of the UK so as to promote better integrated approaches. Too often subsequent policy approaches are programme or silo – based.

For the withdrawal from the EU to work effectively two things are required:

- Repatriation of powers to the devolved governments, followed by a convention in which Common Frameworks are agreed for various policy areas. We would suggest that the Environment could be regarded as a single policy area.
- Establishment of a body to oversee and if necessary enforce arrangements made under the Common Framework for the Environment. This body would receive and if necessary adjudicate on matters where plaintiffs considered that governments in the UK had not followed the Framework. The need for such a body has already been acknowledged by the UK Secretary of State for the Environment.

It is essential that the quality of governance, policy and practice does not decrease after leaving the EU.

These issues highlight the need for strategic spatial planning in Wales, as introduced by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015. Strategic planning enables an approach which can cover a wide range of areas of public policy and encourages effective cooperation for planning across boundaries. The general principles of strategic planning are a valuable focus at a time when there are many uncertainties, requiring us to consider environmental objectives, long term economic benefits, as well as the need for a high quality of life, which are all key contributors to economic competitiveness.

If you require further assistance, please contact RTPI Cymru on 029 2047 3923 or e-mail Roisin Willmott at walespolicy@rtpi.org.uk

Yours sincerely,



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Director
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