

15 November 2019  
Our Ref: HP/NDF

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## By email only

Dear Sir /Madam

### Welsh Government – Draft National Development Framework Consultation Representation by Boyer Planning

This representation is made by Boyer Planning in response to the Welsh Government's current consultation on the Draft National Development Framework (NDF). Boyer is a multi-skilled national planning consultancy that provides a range and depth of expertise in planning, design and development economics. Boyer currently has over 70 members of staff in six offices across the UK.

Boyer's has had a Cardiff office since 2002, and in 2016, Boyer acquired independent planning consultancy Harmers, bringing even more years of project experience and expertise in house.

Boyer has a diverse client base which ranges from landowners and developers to local authorities and educational institutions. In Wales, Boyer typically acts on behalf of a range of developers, housebuilders and housing associations, as well as a number of smaller commercial and retail clients. We are therefore exposed to the sharp end of the planning system through the promotion of land in development plans and the preparation and management of planning applications, working closely with local authorities throughout both processes.

Changes in national planning policy impact on our day to day work and we are therefore in a good position to provide meaningful views on the Draft NDF. Like many planning consultancies, we provide advice to clients across the UK and therefore have a strong understanding of how different policy mechanisms take effect on both local planning authorities and developers. Local planning authorities and developers do not always agree when it comes to the planning system, however we are aware that various local authorities in Wales have objected strongly to the Draft NDF on the basis of a lack of evidence to support its policies and a lack of focus on economic growth.

Our comments on specific policies contained within the Draft NDF are set out in the enclosed response form. It is our view that the evidence base falls a long way short of what would be expected of a document forming part of the development plan. While forming part of the development plan, we note that the NDF will not be subject to independent examination. This should not be a reason to bypass the preparation of a robust evidence base to support and justify the NDF's policies.



In short, we strongly object to the NDF as drafted given the lack of evidence supporting the proposed policies.

Yours sincerely

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Elliot Jones.

**Elliot Jones**  
Director, Head of Boyer Cardiff

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## **Consultation Response Form**

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<u>Organisation (if applicable)</u>	Boyer Planning

## 1. NDF Outcomes (chapter 3)

The NDF has proposed 11 Outcomes as an ambition of where we want to be in 20 years' time.

- Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree the 11 Outcomes are a realistic vision for the NDF?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>No opinion</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- To what extent do you agree with the 11 Outcomes as ambitions for the NDF?

Agree with all of them	Agree with most of them	Agree with some of them	Agree with none of them	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>No opinion</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- If you disagree with any of the 11 Outcomes, please tell us why:

Through the 11 Outcomes there is an immediate emphasis on managing the impacts of development. While this is obviously important, directing and facilitating development is key to underpinning the Welsh economy and ensuring the growing housing, economic and social needs of the population are met.

Boyer would have expected there to have been an which recognises the growing pressure on housing need in towns and cities, aspiring to provide sufficient open market and affordable housing to meet the needs of the growing population.

## 2. Spatial Strategy (policies 1 - 4)

The NDF **spatial strategy** is a guiding framework for where large-scale change and nationally important developments will be focused over the next 20 years.

- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the spatial strategy and key principles for development in...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	No opinion
Urban areas (Policies 1, 2 & 3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural areas (Policy 4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- If you have any comments on the spatial strategy or key principles for development in urban and rural areas, please tell us:

The “spatial strategy” put forward in Policies 1-4 can be summarised as follows:

- Compact growth around urban centres and public / active travel networks.
- Sequential approach to locating public service facilities of a significant scale.
- Redevelopment of publically owned sites, including for mixed use and affordable housing development.
- Appropriate proportionate growth in rural areas.

The spatial strategy therefore relies on urban / brownfield land and publically owned land for development to come forward. Sites falling into either of these categories typically take a long time to come forward for development. While it should be an aspiration for these sites to be delivered, they cannot be relied upon to accommodate all of Wales’ development needs.

While it is positive that the NDF advocates the development of publically owned land, the NDF is a planning document and appropriate guidelines/procedures for public bodies in disposing of land would need to be brought into place alongside the NDF for Policy 3 to have any real ‘teeth’. In addition, it is unclear as to why the only uses explicitly supported in Policy 3 are mixed use and affordable housing developments. There is also a need for market housing, as well as employment land, retail and

other uses that should be supported.

While we have no objection to introducing a sequential approach to public services of a significant scale, we question how often development of this nature comes forward and whether this policy belongs at the heart of the NDF's spatial strategy, or whether it would be more appropriate within Planning Policy Wales (PPW).

We support Policy 4 as it recognises that SDPs and LDPs should plan positively to meet the needs of rural communities with regard to housing, transport, businesses, services. However Policies 1-3 are much more limited in the way they seek to support urban areas. Given that bringing a site forward for development is a significant challenge in its own right, limiting sites to urban areas and publically owned land makes this challenge even harder. Without acknowledging a role for greenfield sites where appropriate, the NDF will underpin a planning system which cannot deliver the housing, employment and infrastructure needs of Wales.

The spatial strategy is therefore not flexible enough to enable development. Consideration has not been given to the constraints urban sites have, such as contamination, noise and air pollution etc. In terms of housing, a focus on such sites would involve a sharp rise in the number of apartments constructed as the NDF supports high density development. Little attention has been paid to whether this is actually what the market demands, which could cause further viability problems. This also poses challenges in relation to access to outdoor amenity space and the health and well-being implications this has.

Finally, the "spatial strategy" as presented is not inherently spatial enough. It presents ideas about where development should go in a theoretical sense. Building close to urban centres, transport links and making use of publically owned land are all good principles that should be maximised. But it is not until later in the document that the NDF proposes policies in relation to places.

### 3. Affordable Housing (policy 5)

The NDF sets out the approach for providing affordable housing, encouraging local authorities, social landlords, and small and medium-sized construction and building enterprises to build more homes.

- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the approach to increasing affordable housing?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>No opinion</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- If you disagree, in what other ways can the NDF approach the delivery of affordable housing?

The delivery of affordable housing to meet identified need is a crucial part of the planning system. However, there is also an enormous need for open market housing and the NDF does very little to emphasise the importance delivering of both market *and* affordable housing. The chart on page 30 of the NDF highlights the failure in delivery of housing in the last 10 years – delivery is at a 50 year low, which will further increase the affordability crisis in many of Wales' towns and cities. Through the lack of emphasis on the delivery of housing of all tenures in the NDF, and in combination with other changes proposed to national planning policy by the Welsh Government, the wider picture is very concerning. We rely on local, regional and national developers for the delivery of housing (the chart on page 30 demonstrates how much we rely on private enterprise new dwellings as part of supply). There is a serious concern amongst the development industry that identifying appropriate sites will become too difficult and that planning risk will be too high. This could leave a huge gap in the delivery of housing.

In addition, market-led schemes typically include a proportion of affordable housing, so supporting open market housing indirectly supports affordable housing as well.

The central estimates within Welsh Government's range of 'Estimates of housing need in wales' is consistently referred to through the Draft NDF. While it is appreciated that the framework needs to be based on a broad understanding of national housing need, the NDF should make it clear that housing requirements are determined at a regional / local level and the estimates are a starting point. They should not be construed as the housing requirement.

The NDF also refers to 47% of housing need being affordable throughout 2018/19 to 2022/23. The use of figures such as this within the NDF need careful consideration; affordable housing need is determined regionally/locally and SDPs/LDPs must contain policies which are viable and deliverable. Authorities will struggle to achieve viable Plans if pursuing an affordable housing target of 47%; the NDF should make it

clear that this is not an overarching target.

#### 4. Mobile Action Zones (policy 6)

- To what extent do you agree or disagree the identification of mobile action zones will be effective in encouraging better mobile coverage?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>No opinion</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- If you disagree, in what other ways can the NDF improve mobile phone coverage in the areas which currently have limited access?

## 5. Low Emission Vehicles (policy 7)

- To what extent do you agree or disagree that policy 7 will enable and encourage the roll-out of charging infrastructure for ultra-low emission vehicles?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>No opinion</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- If you disagree, in what other ways can the NDF enable and encourage the roll-out of charging infrastructure for ultra-low emission vehicles?

## 6. Green Infrastructure (policies 8 & 9)

- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the approach to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and ecological networks?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>No opinion</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## 7. Renewable Energy and District Heat Networks (policies 10-15)

- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the NDF's policies to lower carbon emissions in Wales using...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>No opinion</i>
Large scale wind and solar developments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
District heat networks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- If you disagree with the NDF's approaches to green infrastructure, renewable energy or district heat networks, what alternative approaches should we consider to help Wales to enhance its biodiversity and transition to a low carbon economy?

## 8. The Regions (policy 16)

- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the principle of developing Strategic Development Plans prepared at a regional scale?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>No opinion</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The NDF identifies three overall regions of Wales, each with their own distinct opportunities and challenges. These are North Wales, Mid and South West Wales, and South East Wales.

## 9. North Wales (policies 17-22)

We have identified Wrexham and Deeside as the main focus of development in North Wales. A new green belt will be created to manage the form of growth. A number of coastal towns are identified as having key regional roles, while we support growth and development at Holyhead Port. We will support improved transport infrastructure in the region, including a North Wales Metro, and support better connectivity with England. North West Wales is recognised as having potential to supply low-carbon energy on a strategic scale.

- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed policies and approach for the North Region?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>No opinion</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## 10. Mid and South West Wales (policies 23-26)

Swansea Bay and Llanelli is the main urban area within the region and is our preferred location for growth. We also identify a number of rural and market towns, and the four Haven Towns in Pembrokeshire, as being regionally important. The haven Waterway is nationally important and its development is supported. We support proposals for a Swansea Bay Metro.

- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed policies and approach for the Mid and South West Region?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>No opinion</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 11. South East Wales (policies 27-33)

In South East Wales we are proposing to enhance Cardiff's role as the capital and secure more sustainable growth in Newport and the Valleys. A green belt around Newport and eastern parts of the region will support the spatial strategy and focus development on existing cities and towns. Transport Orientated Development, using locations benefitting from mainline railway and Metro stations, will shape the approach to development across the region. There is support for the growth and development of Cardiff Airport.

- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed policies and approach for the South East Region?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	No opinion
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you have any comments about the NDF's approach or policies to the three regions, please tell us. If you have any alternatives, please explain them and tell us why you think they would be better.

### Mid and South West Wales

We have concerns over the identification of this area as a region. The Draft NDF acknowledges that its size and diversity means it does not have the interconnectedness of other regions, but argues that there will be common strategic issues. However we have serious concern over whether these common issues would amount to a meaningful requirement for a SDP, which would need to be prepared for the region in accordance with Policy 16 of the NDF.

The level coordination, cooperation and resources that would be required to prepare an SDP for such a wide region (or even sub-regions) has to be considered by the Welsh Government. We are working within an era of strain on local government resources and we have serious doubts as to whether the requirement for SDP(s) in this region is justified. The preparation of local development plans and the timely determination of planning applications ought to be the focus. Overall, we consider that more evidence is needed to demonstrate that regional planning in Mid and South West Wales is required.

### South East Wales

The Draft NDF states that the focus for growth in the South East Region "*should primarily be focussed in Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys.*" Cardiff and Newport are the two main urban centres in the region, while "the Valleys" covers an extremely broad area. While it is acknowledged that the SDP will be more specific, the NDF is extremely vague.

Policy 27 relates to Cardiff and supports its role as the primary national centre for culture, sport, leisure, media, the night time economy and finance. However, no reference is made to the need for housing in Cardiff (unlike Policy 28 for Newport, which specifically supports strategic housing growth).

Cardiff's current LDP covers the period 2006-2026. While it provides for the development of 45,415 dwellings over this period, including a number of large scale strategic site allocations, the NDF will cover the period 2020-2040. Cardiff's role as a location for strategic housing growth beyond 2026 therefore needs to be included in the NDF; Cardiff's buoyant housing market and the opportunities for development that this brings should be reflected in the NDF.

### Green Belts in South East Wales

Policy 30 relates to Green Belts in South East Wales. It states:

*"The Welsh Government **requires the identification of green belts** through a Strategic Development Plan to manage urban form and growth in South East Wales, particularly around Newport and the eastern part of the region. Regional plans should consider the relationship of any new green belts with the green belt around Bristol."* [Our emphasis].

The supporting text to Policy 30 goes on to state:

*"The Welsh Government supports the use of green belts in the South East region in managing and planning urban growth. Planning Policy Wales sets out the policy context for them. The Strategic Development Plan **must identify a green belt** that includes the area to the north of the M4 from the Severn Crossings to North Cardiff."* [Our emphasis].

We strongly object to Policy 30 and the 'requirement' for the SDP to identify a green belt in South East Wales for several reasons, as set out below.

Firstly and most pertinently, PPW states that *"Proposals for both Green Belts and green wedges must be soundly based and should only be employed where there is a demonstrable need to protect the urban form and alternative policy mechanisms, such as settlement boundaries, would not be sufficiently robust."* Therefore, for the NDF to require the imposition of a green belt, there must be demonstrable need to protect the urban form in the area which it is required, being 'north of the M4 from the Severn Crossings to North Cardiff.' The Draft NDF offers no commentary on why green belts are required to protect the urban form in South East Wales, just that their use is supported by the Welsh Government. Similarly, the evidence base published as part of the consultation includes assessment of a series of alternatives to green belts as a policy mechanism (within the Integrated sustainability appraisal report), but does not provide any evidence of a demonstrable need to protect the urban form in the south east of the region in the first place. Proposals for green belts must be soundly based and there is simply no evidence put forward to suggest that a policy requirement for identification of green belts would be justified.

Given the lack of evidence supporting the policy requirement for green belts, it is

considered that at the very least, Policy 30 should be amended to require the SDP to consider the use of green belts in managing urban form, should there be a demonstrable need to do so having considered alternative policy mechanisms. Frankly however, if there is to be policy support for green belts in the NDF then much more evidence should be gathered at this stage to ensure the policy is justified.

In comparing green belts and green wedges, PPW states *“The essential difference between them is that land within a Green Belt should be protected for a longer period than the relevant current development plan period, whereas green wedge policies should be reviewed as part of the development plan review process.”* It goes on to states that *“...the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their **permanence**.”* [Our emphasis]. To require green belts with no supporting evidence would place an undue and artificial constraint on development in the affected areas north of the M4 for a number of decades. Green belts were introduced across England from the 1950s and they still remain in place today, save for minor alterations to accommodate planned development. We question whether the Welsh Government have seriously considered the permanence of green belts and the long term impact they will have on planning (particularly for housing) in South East Wales.

Viable development land is genuinely a scarce resource in South Wales and the Welsh Government needs to carefully consider whether extensive areas of green belt (as indicatively shown on page 63 of the Draft NDF) to meet today's political objectives is worth hindering access to housing for the next generation. The Well-being of Future Generations Act (WBFGA) places a duty on public bodies (including the Welsh Government) to carry out sustainable development. Not only would a non-evidenced requirement for green belts be in contravention with the WBFGA, it would be reckless, damaging to the development industry in the short term, and damaging to the affordability of housing in the long term.

Policy 30 requires the SDP to consider the relationship of any new green belts with the green belt around Bristol. Notwithstanding the comments above, it is unclear how this policy requirement could in fact be implemented given the relationship of any English and Welsh green belts would be severed by the River Severn and Bristol Channel.

We would also point out that green belts have been propose by local planning authorities in South East Wales through LDPs. For example, in Cardiff north of the M4 and in Monmouthshire at Chepstow. Upon examination of these respective LDPs, it was found that green belts were not justified and green wedge designations were instead proposed. There is an existing green belt located between the cities of Cardiff and Newport, but given this prevents the coalescence of the two cities within South East Wales, it is considered appropriate and contributes to the purposes of including land within the green belt.

#### Green Belts in relation to NDF's other policies

Supporting rural areas through appropriate growth, the delivery of affordable housing and the focus on Newport for regional growth are three key policy objectives in the Draft NDF through Policies 4, 5 and 28 respectively. The requirement for Green Belts hinders the deliverability of all three of these policies, as set out below.

Policy 4 – “Appropriate proportionate growth” to support the housing, business and other needs in rural areas will simply have to involve greenfield development. The availability of brownfield sites in small market towns and rural villages is generally limited. However, through the requirement for green belts there will be various settlements in North East Wales and South East Wales which are either washed over or constrained by the designation. As national policy requires green belts to endure beyond plan periods, there will be no method in which Local Plan reviews can adapt and respond to rural development needs.

Policy 5 – This policy is dedicated to the delivery of affordable homes; clearly this is a key objective in the NDF and to the Welsh Government. PPW recognises that there are challenges facing the delivery of affordable homes and provides for the use of rural / affordable housing exception policies to facilitate the development of small sites for affordable housing where there is local need. These sites are generally adjoin settlement boundaries and have been an effective way of meeting localised need, particularly in rural communities. However, Edition 10 of PPW includes a revised list of developments which may not be inappropriate in a green belt or wedge. Affordable housing to meet local need is no longer listed, meaning affordable housing exception sites are no longer supported by national planning policy within green belts or wedges. The introduction of green belts in Wales will therefore hinder the ability of housing associations and local authorities from delivering affordable homes in rural areas.

Policy 28 – Newport is identified as a focus for regional growth and investment, including strategic housing and economic growth. However, the NDF requires green belts to be identified north of the M4 from the Severn crossings to Cardiff, which will significantly constrain Newport in terms of its potential to grow and act as that focus for investment. Opportunities for expansion will be limited to area south of the M4, regardless of whether they are the most sustainable or appropriate locations for growth.

## 12. Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

As part of the consultation process, an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) was conducted to assess the social, economic and environmental impacts of a plan. The report identified a number of monitoring indicators, including health, equalities, Welsh language, the impact on rural communities, children's rights, climate change and economic development.

- Do you have any comments on the findings of the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Report? Please outline any further alternative monitoring indicators you consider would strengthen the ISA.

The evidence base put forward as part of this consultation falls a long way short of what would be expected of a document that will form part of the statutory development plan. As national policy produced by the Welsh Government, it will not be subject to examination in public and therefore its 'soundness' will not be tested by an independent Inspector. We do not consider that the Welsh Government should take advantage of the process that NDF goes through and the evidence base should be bolstered to support any policies proposed. This would ensure the document has more 'teeth' in plan-making and decision-taking and does not face the same problems the Wales Spatial Plan suffered.

The ISA attempts to score proposed policies and reasonable alternatives against the ISA's objectives. The ISA's objectives relate to goals within the WBFGA – something which the Draft NDF itself does not holistically achieve.

In relation to green belts and the alternative policy approaches considered in the ISA, we feel that the scoring needs to be reviewed in respect of assessment against ISA objectives 3, 4, 7 and 12. Each is discussed below.

*3. To create opportunities for an increase in employment across the country and promote economic inclusion.*

Policy 30 and the reasonable alternatives score neutrally. However, green belts will limit land available for development, including mixed-use and employment-generating developments, and therefore must be considered to negatively impact on this objective, at least in the long term.

*4. To create opportunities for sustainable economic growth, diversity and business competitiveness.*

Policy 30 and the reasonable alternatives score neutrally. However, green belts will limit land available for development, including mixed-use and employment-generating developments, and therefore must be considered to negatively impact on this objective, at least in the long term.

*7. To contribute to the reduction and management of flood risk.*

Policy 30 and 30 RA1 (which both involve the use of green belts) are scored positively in the medium and long term due to potential to *“enhance the local extent of above ground vegetation and GI, which provides a natural flood risk alleviation Service.”* It is unclear how this conclusion could possibly be reached. The essential characteristics of a green belt include openness, but this would have no discernible impact on the level of vegetation and GI beyond what is currently existing. For example, if land is currently open farmland, the introduction of a green belt in planning policy is not going to encourage more planting and vegetation on the land.

We would argue that, given the extensive areas of land at risk of flooding south of the M4 between Cardiff, Newport and the Severn crossings, to introduce a green belt north of the M4 could result in more growth being directed south of the M4 into flood risk areas.

*12. To create opportunities for the provision of good quality, safe, affordable housing that meets identified needs.*

The ISA scores Policy 30 and the reasonable alternatives neutrally in response to this objective. It is unclear how this conclusion could possibly be reached when the introduction of green belts would limit the land available for new housing development for the foreseeable future. Green belts endure beyond plan periods in line with PPW; the SDP’s plan period is likely to run from 2020 to 2040 in line with the NDF, and green belts would therefore indicatively be in place until at least circa 2060. There is simply no reasonable scenario in which restricting new development in South East Wales for such a long period would not impact upon the number of new homes delivered (depending of course on the extent of the green belts), which would lead to a worsening of the affordability crisis. As experienced across plan preparation in English authorities with green belts, green belt locations are regularly seen as some of the most sustainably located. English authorities are now having to regularly review green belt boundaries for these reasons, despite their role being to span plan periods.

### **13. Habitats Regulations Assessment**

As part of the development of the NDF, a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) was undertaken. The purpose of the HRA process is to identify, assess and address any ‘significant effects’ of the plan on sites such as Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas for birds.

- Do you have any comments on the Habitats Regulations Assessment report?

The evidence base put forward as part of this consultation falls a long way short of what would be expected of a document that will form part of the statutory

development plan. As national policy produced by the Welsh Government, it will not be subject to examination in public and therefore its 'soundness' will not be tested by an independent Inspector. We do not consider that the Welsh Government should take advantage of the process that NDF goes through and the evidence base should be bolstered to support policies proposed. This would ensure the document has more 'teeth' in plan-making and decision-taking and does not face the same problems the Wales Spatial Plan suffered.

## 14. Welsh Language

We would like to know your views on the effects that the NDF would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

- What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

No comments.

Please also explain how you believe the proposed NDF could be formulated or changed so as to have:

- I. positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and
- II. no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

No comments.

## 15. Further comments

- Are there any further comments that you would like to make on the NDF, or any alternative proposals you feel we should consider?

None.

**16. Are you...?**

Providing your own personal response	<input type="checkbox"/>
Submitting a response on behalf of an organisation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>Responses to the consultation will be shared with the National Assembly for Wales and are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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