

CHANGES TO THE PLANNING SYSTEM

Changes to the planning system are occurring throughout the UK, providing opportunities for consultation and involvement in setting policies and objectives for your local area.

England and Wales

The Government has transformed the planning system in England and Wales in a bid to make it faster, fairer and more predictable. The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act came into force in May 2004 and amends existing legislation – the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Changes have been made in several key areas:

- Regional Planning Guidance is replaced by Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS)
- County Structure Plans are abolished
- Local plans are replaced by Local Development Frameworks (England) and Local Development Plans (Wales)
- Planning must contribute to the aims of sustainable development¹

England

The Office for the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) is responsible for Planning in England². At the national level **Planning Policy Statements (PPS)** will over time replace the existing Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) notes. This review will be undertaken by the ODPM over the next three years and **Regional Spatial Strategies** and **Local Development Frameworks** will be developed by the regional and local planning authorities respectively.

Wales

Planning in Wales is a devolved matter and dealt with by the National Assembly

for Wales through their Planning Division³. Land Use Planning policies are set out in the **Planning Policy Wales** and through a series of **Technical Advice Notes (TANs)**⁴. Part 6 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act sets out the framework for planning in Wales. Each Local Planning Authority will be required to prepare a **Local Development Plan**, to review it and to revise it as necessary. Provision is also made for the National Assembly to prepare and publish a National Spatial Plan for Wales. **People, Places, Futures - The Wales Spatial Plan**⁵ was published in 2004 to which local authorities will be required to have regard for the Plan when preparing their Local Development Plans. Currently area wide consultations are being undertaken on the Wales Spatial Plan.

The provisions for the new Development Plans in Wales will be brought fully into force in autumn 2005.

Scotland

The Scottish Executive is responsible for planning in Scotland. In April 2004 they launched the **National Planning Framework for Scotland**⁶ which sets out a framework for spatial development until 2025. Until the introduction of the new planning framework the existing one will continue.

The visions and objectives outlined in this framework will be implemented through primary legislation and a Planning Bill to be developed.

³ Detailed information can be found at <http://www.wales.gov.uk/subiplanning/index.htm>

⁴ Planning Policy Wales can be found at <http://www.wales.gov.uk/subiplanning/content/planningpolicy/planningpolicy-e.htm>

⁵ Wales Spatial Plan can be found at <http://www.wales.gov.uk/themesspatialplan/content/spatial-plan-e.htm>

⁶ National Planning Framework for Scotland can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/about/Planning/framework.aspx>

¹ Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

² Detailed information can be found at <http://www.planning.odpm.gov.uk/>

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Northern Ireland

The Department of Environment (DoE) is responsible for Planning in Northern Ireland through the Planning Service⁷. The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) **Shaping Our Future**⁸ was published in 2001 and is the strategy for development of Northern Ireland up to 2025. It contains a **Spatial Development Strategy** and related **Strategic Planning Guidelines**.

Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) set out the main planning considerations the Department of Environment takes into account when assessing proposals. They are gradually replacing the policy provisions in the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland published in 1993. DoE and the Department for Regional Development is working towards the production of a full suite of PPSs by the end of 2005.

Development Plans may be in the form of area plans, local plans or subject plans and apply the regional policies of the DoE at the appropriate local level.

Regional Spatial Strategies - England

Changes to the planning system are more advanced in England and progress is outlined in this section. Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) are part of the statutory development plan process. They are prepared by the Regional Assembly, who are the designated regional planning body and are published by the Secretary of State. These plans will set out the vision for the region for the next 15-20 years, focusing on housing, transport, economy, minerals and waste and the environment, but will also include

policies on tourism and leisure development.

These plans will provide a framework for development in the longer term and as such we need to ensure they take account of the importance of recreational boating. Recreational boating plays an important role for the community, the economy as well as having an important tourism role in many areas. Many areas carry regional and national importance for boating.

We need to ensure the RSS recognises and accounts for both existing demand and makes provision for safeguarding facilities and expansion where appropriate.

RYA Regional Associations will have several opportunities to comment on the RSS as it is drafted, early opportunities will be through workshops and focus groups. Once the draft strategy is produced a formal consultation will be held, an indication of rough timetables is shown below, together with relevant websites for further information. It is vital that the importance of and demand for recreational boating and the associated infrastructure is recognised within the RSS as this will allow consideration of these needs within the local development frameworks.

Regional planning timetables

East Midlands Regional Assembly

Formal consultation expected

September 2006

www.emra.gov.uk

East of England Regional Assembly

Final plan expected to be published

spring 2006

www.eera.gov.uk

North East Regional Assembly

Draft published March 2005

www.northeastassembly.gov.uk

⁷ Detailed information can be found at <http://www.planningni.gov.uk/>

⁸ Shaping our Future can be found at http://www.drni.gov.uk/DRDwww_Strategies/current.asp?id=str16



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North West Regional Assembly

Plan expected to be submitted January 2006

www.nwra.gov.uk

South East Regional Assembly

Draft complete, final plan expected spring 2006

www.southeast-ra.gov.uk

South West Regional Assembly

Draft plan expected autumn 2005

www.southwest-ra.gov.uk

West Midlands Regional Assembly

Published June 2004

www.wmra.gov.uk

Yorkshire & Humber Regional Assembly

Strategy to be submitted September 2005

<http://www.yhassembly.gov.uk>

Mayor of London

Spatial development strategy published Feb 2004

www.london.gov.uk

Local Development Frameworks - England

The Local Development Framework (LDF) will provide a single tier of plans in place of the previous system of Structure, Local and Unitary Development Plans. The LDFs will be prepared by the local planning authority or National Park authority and provide a portfolio of local development documents which collectively deliver the spatial planning strategy for the local authority's area.

LDF will consist of:

1. **Core strategy** which will contain the core policies for delivering the spatial strategy and vision for the area, including a **Statement of Community Involvement** which will set out benchmarks for community involvement in the preparation of the LDF.

2. **Proposals section** which will cover site specific policies and proposals
3. **Area action plans for key areas of change or conservation** containing site specific policies and guidance for areas of change and conservation. This may be statutory or non-statutory such as site development briefs.
4. **Minerals and Waste Development Frameworks** will be prepared by the County Councils
5. **Local Transport Plan** will be prepared by the County Councils, Unitary Authority or Metropolitan Borough
6. **Local Development Scheme (LDS)** is the timetable and programme setting out how the LDF will be created.

The LDS and the Statement of Community Involvement will identify opportunities for communities to comment. Local Authorities will consult during the initial stages where evidence is gathered to support the plans. A formal consultation will then be undertaken for comments on proposals; all comments will be taken into consideration in drafting the formal document.

All of these plans required under the new system will be subject to a **Strategic Environmental Assessment** under the EU Directive which came into force in July 2004.

Opportunities for the RYA

The move towards greater community participation and stakeholder involvement in the planning system provide a valuable opportunity for the RYA. This should ensure that the Regional Associations, Affiliated Clubs and Recognised Training Centres are fully involved in the planning process where necessary.

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It is an opportunity to move towards more positive planning and proactive management of development, rather than simply regulation and control.

Issues for Recreational boating

The RYA and BMF's **Planning Guide for Boating**⁹ identifies a number of factors that are directly linked to planning policy that we should be aware of when responding to any of the new plans currently being developed. In summary:

- Competition for waterside sites from other uses, and loss to urban regeneration schemes especially housing that do not incorporate waterside access
- Supply of moorings not keeping pace with demand both inland and on coast
- Limited marina and mooring capacity both inland and on coast
- Policies protecting special interests (e.g. neighbours, nature conservation, landscape) cause doubt and uncertainty
- Policies for flood and coastal protection should have regard to the need for access to the water¹⁰

When responding to consultations we should ensure that plans recognise the importance of the area locally, regionally and in some areas nationally for recreational boating. Plans should safeguard any existing facilities and make provision for future growth and demand through supportive policies for access to water, provision of mooring and associated facilities needed to support boating.

Regional and local strategies, frameworks and plans will all contain policies that will ultimately affect the future development of our activity. It is up to us to ensure they support recreational boating both now and in the future.

Planning policy throughout the UK is bounded by the goals of sustainable development. The RYA's Planning and Environmental Strategy published in 2004, **Boating for Life**¹¹, identifies the guiding principles as:

- promotion of recreational opportunities for all
- promotion of sustainable use of the coast and inland waters

Recreational boating contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. It makes an important contribution to the national economy through the leisure marine sector. Socially and culturally it provides opportunities for active and healthy communities. Environmentally it can be sympathetic and carried out with little environmental impact and can actually enhance environmental awareness and appreciation amongst its participants.

What now?

Progress and changes to the planning system are happening rapidly and now. The number of plans both regionally and nationally are too numerous to follow at the National level. Equally, it is locally where the knowledge lies and at this level where we encourage you to follow the plans being developed for your region and local area and respond to consultations as they arise.

For further information and support contact your local Regional Association, Home Country office or Susie Tomson, Planning and Environmental Advisor at the RYA susie.tomson@rya.org.uk.

⁹ Planning Guide for Boating is available from RYA or download from www.rya.org.uk/environment

¹⁰ For more information see RYA Environment Briefing 05/01: Shoreline, Flood and Coastal Defence Management Plans

¹¹ Boating for Life is available from RYA or download from www.rya.org.uk/environment