

# Wales Spatial Plan workshop: Facilitator's Notes

These notes are for organisations or groups who wish to run workshops at which people can comment on the proposals in the Wales Spatial Plan. The format of the workshop described here is based on local public participation events run by the Plan development team and consultants in November and December 2003.

You can find more about the Plan, the participation process, and the events online at a web site run by the consultants.

Web site: <http://walespatialplan.typepad.com/news>

## 1 ROOM SETTING

Set out the room so that:

- the audience can see the presentation easily yet the seating creates an informal atmosphere - for example a shallow horseshoe
- there is ample room to move into workshop groups - each group should have a flipchart and a table. Keep groups to not more than seven or eight people, and mix people up (unless you want views from specific groups or organisations).

## 2 TIMETABLE

The workshops run by the development team and consultants are from 10am to 4pm, but you may wish to run a shorter event. You should in any case aim for three sessions:

- an explanation of the plan.
- a group session on 'what should be done' using a set of cards, with report back
- a further group session on 'who does it' followed by a final discussion

### **A note on facilitation**

The workshop tools and design are meant to reduce the need for facilitation. Groups should largely be able to work on their own. However, it may help to have one person in each group well-briefed on the 'mechanics' to provide guidance at the start of discussion and then act as observer. After explaining how the sheets, cards and other elements work, they should encourage the group to appoint a 'scribe', and avoid being directive. It is important that the group 'owns' the discussion. The observers may eavesdrop and make additional notes.

## 3 PRESENTATION SESSION

You may use presentation material from the web site to help explain the plan. You should emphasise that the aim of the workshop is to:

- check that the broad objectives and priorities set out in the plan are relevant to your areas or interests
- develop ideas on the local or other specific implications of the plan: what needs to be done, who might do it, and how they might be involved.

You should also stress that the cards and other materials are there to structure the conversation and that groups should not get too hung up on definitions.

## 4 FIRST GROUP SESSION - "WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?"

After participants have formed groups of not more than seven or eight people, give out to each group:

- diagrammatic sheets showing national and local objectives, drawn from the plan
- a sheet from the plan showing the attributes for the zone you are in (if this is a locality-based discussion)
- a set of cards appropriate to the area
- a planning sheet folded to show the two diagrams at the top

### **Initial discussion and diagram**

Ask the groups to consider

- Do the plan elements work – the zones, values, objectives shown on the plan diagrams?
- Are the attributes for the zone that you are in correct (if you are locality-based)?

In the light of that discussion, the group should look at the top left diagram on the planning sheet which has columns for environment, communities, prosperity and accessibility. These relate to the four main objectives in the plan, and are also used to categorise the cards that the group will use later.

Bearing in mind the discussion about attributes, the group should fill in the top left diagram ( or alter/confirm it if already filled) to show how far the objectives are realised NOW.

### **Choosing cards**

The next task is to use the set of cards to identify what should be done to achieve the four objectives - and so raise the 'stocks' in the columns of the diagram.

The group should spread the cards out so everyone can see them, and familiarise themselves with the content. This works better than, for example, one person reading out the cards.

Then ask the groups to choose or develop a relevant set of cards by:

- putting to one side cards they think are unimportant for their locality or interests
- amending cards by writing on them
- adding new cards to indicate additional local activities towards objectives

The flipchart should also be used to record particular points the group wishes to make during this stage. Ask each group to appoint a "scribe" to get content up on the chart.

The observers should eavesdrop on groups and pick up points for discussion in the debriefing session.

### **The planning sheet**

Once the groups have an agreed set of cards, ask them to unfold the Planning Sheet and allocate the cards in terms of timescale (left to right) and priority (top to bottom).

Indicate to the groups that they will be expected to prepare a presentation of their results and to ensure that they have points to present.

After allocating cards, the groups should fill in the top right diagram on the planning sheet showing how far the situation has improved because of the cards and activities they have identified or developed.

The feedback session should be given by group spokespersons. Comment by the facilitators should derive from the "eavesdrop" notes.

## **4 SUMMARISING AND PREPARING FOR THE NEXT SESSION**

The workshop organisers should draw up a matrix with groups across the top (group A, B, C etc) and card titles or numbers down the side. This can be used to record group choices of cards.

While the overall record of priorities and timing is an important resource, we suggest that for the afternoon session it is best concentrate on a limited number of issues. To do this, review the choices from the morning and choose two or three issues for each group to discuss (three groups might deal with six or nine issues in total). This can be done by clustering issues, and allocating those back to the groups that focused on those issues.

## **5 "WHO DOES WHAT" SESSION**

If the groups have worked well, leave people in the same group. If not, make some adjustments.

Allocate two or three topics or issues from the earlier session to each group.

Encourage groups to record content on flipcharts right from the start. Ask each group to appoint (or re-appoint) a "scribe" to get content up on the chart.

The task for the group is to work through the topics, and in each instance to consider (and record) what needs to be done to develop policies, reach decisions, and take action. They should work on:

- the steps that need to be taken
- who needs to be involved, and how they might be engaged
- what actions might result
- over what timescale
- what are the resource implications? (eg, staff, capital, revenue, cost savings)

Groups should be encouraged to develop some bright ideas for the process, and report back as before.

This should be followed by a debriefing session which should also give attendees an idea of what happens next. This might involve:

- sending a report of the discussion to the Wales Spatial Plan team.
- follow-through activities arising from the final session discussions