

Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee

Title : Draft Strategy for Wales on Integrated Coastal Zone Management

Venue : Committee Room 2

Date : Wednesday 16 February 2006

Issue

1. The draft Wales strategy on Integrated Coastal Zone Management has very recently been issued for public consultation by the Assembly Government. This paper seeks the Committee's views on the key elements of the draft strategy.

Recommendations

2. That the Committee :

a. notes the draft strategy at Annex 1 and

b. provides views on the overall content of the draft strategy and in particular in response to the questions at paragraph 7 below.

Background

3. The coast of Wales contains hugely important environmental and economic assets (60% of the population of Wales lives and works in the coastal zone and 70% of the Welsh coastline is designated for its environmental importance. Integrated coastal zone management is a process which brings together all those involved in the management and use of these coastal resources to help ensure future management takes place in an integrated and informed way. In essence ICZM is about the sustainable management of the coastal zone.

4. In May 2002 the European Union adopted a Recommendation on ICZM and this encourages Member States to develop ICZM strategies by spring 2006. In view of the importance of the coastal zone to Wales, I have agreed with Ministers in DEFRA and the other devolved administrations that country strategies will be developed for Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland and which will 'sit' within a UK framework for ICZM which DEFRA are preparing. The draft Wales strategy at Annex 1

has been prepared by my officials in conjunction with the Wales Coastal and Maritime Partnership (a partnership comprising representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors in Wales).

Draft ICZM strategy for Wales

5. The draft strategy - Making the Most of Wales' Coast - aims to facilitate more integrated working on the Welsh coast by the different interests involved – with the aim of ensuring that our coastal resources are managed in line with sustainable development principles. There are already some good examples of ICZM principles being put into practice around the Welsh coast – as is illustrated in Section 2 of the draft strategy. The draft strategy aims to secure further progress down the ICZM 'road' via the identification (in Section 7) of a number of key objectives and supporting actions. Taking forward these suggested actions should also help deliver objectives under the new Environment Strategy as well as the Wales Spatial Plan and Wales : A Vibrant Economy, the Assembly Government's strategic framework for economic development in Wales.

Cross Cutting themes

6. The management approach which underpins ICZM is cross-cutting in nature with implications for the Assembly Government's economic, social and environmental objectives. If we can successfully embed ICZM principles into relevant policies and programmes, then we should be able to secure a more joined up approach to the management of our coastal resources and secure more effective engagement of communities in decisions affecting the coastal zone.

Action for the Committee

7. I have recently agreed that the draft strategy for Wales should issue for public consultation (for a period of 8 weeks) before being finalised for submission to the European Union alongside the UK Framework on ICZM. As part of the consultation process it would be helpful to have the Committee's views on the draft strategy and in particular on :

- a. the overall content of the draft strategy;
- b. the suggested key objectives and supporting actions;
- c. whether the suggested timeframe for review of the strategy (four years) is appropriate, with annual reports on progress.

Financial implications

8. Delivery of the objectives and actions identified in Section 7 of the draft strategy will be taken forward as part of the ongoing programmes of the relevant lead organisations/ partners, including those of the Assembly Government itself. There are no additional financial implications for the Assembly

therefore as the costs involved will be accommodated within existing and future budgets.

Compliance

9. The draft strategy has been prepared under Sections 40 and 85 of the Government of Wales Act 1998 in support of the Assembly's sustainable development objectives. There are no specific compliance issues.

Carwyn Jones

Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside

February 2006-02-07

Contact point : Gerry Quarrell, ECM Division. Ext 3557