Spatial Planning in the Devolved Nations

1.0 A Vision for Britain. Planned

2.0 Planning in the Devolved Nations

3.0 Scotland

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6.0 Lessons for English spatial planning

6.1 Spatial plans are big in scale and can be local, regional or national, covering environmental, economic and social issues. This makes them unique among all other forms of planning. In their early days, spatial plans were only expected to operate in England and Wales.

We are also delighted to be supported on the technical side by some of the country’s leading experts on the transformative potential of spatial planning. The clear ‘gap’ in terms of economic planning in the UK, therefore, is at the level of integration with other strategic policy frameworks. It is well understood that countries and regions around the world have used spatial planning strategies to good effect.

It is evident that when plans are too high-level, there is too little attention to the details. This is one of the reasons why spatial planning is often disparaged for being detached and distant from localities and communities.

In Scotland, the planning framework identified several key elements which spanned economic, social, environmental, cultural and political aspects.

The Scottish parliament published the first version of the National Planning Framework in 2001 and became the first of the Home Countries to produce such a strategic document for the whole of the country.

In Wales, the Spatial Plan was published in 2000, following an extensive period of stakeholder consultation. The document described spatial planning as a ‘framework for the development of the whole of Wales for the next 20 years and beyond’.

The Welsh Government has published a range of strategic plans since 2001, including the Strategic Plan for Wales (SPW), which sets out the long-term vision and strategic priorities for the Welsh Government.

The Scottish Spatial Plan was published in 2014, following an intensive period of consultation. The Plan sets out the long-term vision and strategic priorities for the Scottish Government.

Multi-level governance is the dominant theme of spatial planning in all parts of the UK. This is reflected in the way that planning is delivered in a multi-level governance framework, with different levels of government and other stakeholders having a role in the planning process.

In Northern Ireland, the planning system has a long tradition of multi-level governance, with a range of stakeholders having a role in the planning process.

In England, the planning system is structured around a multi-level governance framework, with a range of stakeholders having a role in the planning process.

The importance of collaboration between different levels of government and other stakeholders is key to the success of spatial planning.

The lessons from these experiences can be applied to the planning system in England, with a focus on collaboration, multi-level governance and the transformative potential of spatial planning.
Scotland (adapted from Scotland’s Third National Planning Framework, 2014)

Wales (adapted from People, Places, Futures: The Wales Spatial Plan, 2008)

Northern Ireland (adapted from the Regional Development Strategy 2035, 2010)

England has no national spatial plan or regional strategy.