From Planning Control to Growth Management
Evolution of the National Spatial Planning Framework in Denmark

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Denmark at a glance

- 43,000 sq km
- 5.6 mill inhabitants
- One third lives in the capital area of Copenhagen
- Flat country
- 65% agriculture
- 25% forest, nature
- 10% urban
- 7,500 km coastline
Wonderful Copenhagen
Aalborg – my home town
Administrative Reforms

1960s: 25 counties, 1388 local authorities

1970: 14 counties, 275 municipalities

2007: 5 adm. regions, 98 municipalities
Framework Control in DK
- a decentralised approach

**National planning**
The Minister establishes the overall framework through guidelines and directives.

**Regional plans**
The 12 regions revise their regional plans every 4th. year.

**Local plans**
Local/neighbourhood planning for land use and development. Legally binding for the land owner.

**Municipal plans**
The 275 municipalities revise their plans every 4th. year.
Three core principles

- Decentralisation of planning responsibilities
  - Local representative democracy responsible for local needs
  - Combining responsibility for decision making with accountability for economic, social and environmental consequences.
  - Providing monitoring and enforcement procedures

- Comprehensive planning
  - Combining aims and objectives, land-use structure planning, and land use regulations into one comprehensive planning document covering the total jurisdiction

- Public participation
  - Providing awareness and understanding of the need for planning regulations in response to local needs.
  - Legitimising local political decision making:
    **Planning is politics**
### Administrative Reform and Planning Responsibilities

**1970s - 2006**

- **National planning**
- **12 Regional plans**
- **271 Municipal plans**
- **1200 Local plans per year**

**From 2007**

- **Enforced national planning**
- **5 Regional development plans** (repealed 2014)
- **98 Municipal plans**
- **1200 Local plans per year**
## Policy Institutions and Instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Policy institutions</th>
<th>Number of inhabitants</th>
<th>Type of plans</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Legal effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>Ministry of Business and Growth, Denmark, the Danish Business Authority</td>
<td>5.63 million</td>
<td>National planning reports</td>
<td>National visions regarding functional physical development</td>
<td>Advisory guidelines and recommendations</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>National planning directives</td>
<td>Maps and legal provisions /circulars</td>
<td>Binding for local authorities</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Overview of national interests regarding municipal plans</td>
<td>National interests arising from legislation, action plans, sector plans and agreements between national authorities</td>
<td>Binding for local authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>5 administrative regions</td>
<td>1,000,000 on average (wide deviations)</td>
<td>Regional spatial development plans (from 2007 until February 2014)</td>
<td>Advisory and visionary plans</td>
<td>Repealed from the Planning Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>98 municipal councils</td>
<td>50,000 on average (wide deviations)</td>
<td>Municipal plans</td>
<td>Policies, maps and land-use regulations</td>
<td>Binding for the local authorities</td>
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<td>Local / neighbourhood plans</td>
<td>Maps and detailed legal land-use regulations</td>
<td>Binding for the landowners</td>
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</table>
Planning Instruments

- **National planning**
  - National planning reports – thematic policies and visions
  - National directives – legally binding regulations
  - Overview of national Interests in municipal planning steering local authorities to prevent veto

- **Municipal planning**
  - Revision every four years
  - Objectives for the main structure and land use regulation
  - Framework for the local plans
  - Public participation

- **Local/neighbourhood planning**
  - Implementing objectives of municipal plans
  - Mandatory prior to implementation of major projects or projects having a substantial impact on the existing environment and surroundings
  - Public participation
  - Binding for the land owners
Development Control
Urban - Rural Zoning

**Urban zones**
Development is allowed in accordance with adopted planning regulations.

**Rural zones**
No development is allowed without a special rural zone permit.

- **Urban zones**
- **Coastal zones**
- **Naturel reserves**
Integrated Land-Use Management and development control

**Land Policies**
- Overall Land Policies
- Sectoral Land Laws and Policies
  - Agriculture
  - Environment
  - Water Supply
  - Housing
  - Heritage
  - Natural Resources
- Sectoral Programmes

**Land-Use Management**
- Regional and Local Spatial Planning
- Construction Planning
- Implementation through
  - Planning permissions
  - Building permits
  - Sectoral land use permits

**Land Information**
- Land Data Registers
  - Land Tenure
  - Land Value
  - Land Use
- Cadastral mapping
- Topographic mapping
- Natural resource maps
- Utility mapping
- Coordinated Land Information Systems

**Implementation for Sustainable Development**
The Current Debate

The government proposal “Growth and Development throughout Denmark

- **Coastal zone development**
  Any development is in principle prohibited within 300 metres from the shoreline – and a further 3 km protection zone. Government proposes that peripheral municipalities be allowed ad hoc development projects within the protected coastal zone.

- **Retail development**
  The Planning Act has special rules for planning of retail trade to protect city centre business from retail trade outlets built in the outskirts. Government proposes to relax such regulations and allow every municipality (regardless of size and location) to build large retail facilities.

- **Rural development**
  The Planning Act includes regulations to prevent uncontrolled development and installations in the countryside and to protect valuable landscapes. Government proposes to enable extension of existing business and housing without such a rural zone permit.

- **Other incentives**
  Government proposes a range further initiatives towards liberalisation such as easing the planning process and the regulations for public participation, and improving access to dispensation.
New Professional Approaches to Planning

- **More flexible planning process**
  Moving towards an initial informal pre-process planning phase to accelerate the normal time-consuming formal planning process.

- **Municipal policy reports**
  A framing policy document to ‘kickstart’ the planning process and attain political acceptance of the local plan’s main content.

  The municipal policy report is amended by the city council while involving citizens in hearing processes.

  A chief concern still remains in terms of the report’s legal status

- **Innovation**
  In practice, these innovative tools show that the planning process has recently developed far beyond the formal planning process per se.

  Tools such as this resemble the quest for more flexible procedures at the municipal level to be included by revising the Planning Law.
Concluding Remarks

- Over the past two decades the Danish spatial planning framework has been considerably transformed in terms of its governance structures and policy instruments.

- In this regard, it could be argued that spatial planning in Denmark currently faces a state of crisis ... compared with the domain’s former clout and capacities. However, the legacy of planning is still embedded at the local level – albeit under challenging conditions.

- Recent neoliberal-minded governments have evidently favoured the growth agenda ... in contrast to the former social welfarist objectives.

- This has indirectly caused that spatial planning currently be regarded more as a cost than an asset over the past two decades.