



# People, Places, Futures

The Wales Spatial Plan Update 2008

Approved by the National Assembly for Wales 8th July 2008



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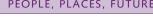
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## **Foreword**

The 2008 Wales Spatial Plan Update reflects the hard work and commitment by many organisations and individuals across Wales since its original adoption in 2004. The Cabinet of the Welsh Assembly Government recognises the importance of this investment. The spatial planning approach in Wales is a key mechanism in joining up our activities: nationally, regionally and locally. Its real value and potential is in its cross-cutting nature: across organisations and administrative boundaries. This was really brought to life in the consultation process which has informed the Update, where many diverse organisations and people of all ages and backgrounds came together. This provided a wealth of detail which will continue to inform our future work. The Update looks to the medium term in continuing our journey based on the shared learning of the last 4 years.

The 2008 Update makes clear where our joint thinking has reached and what we all now need to do to move forward. That will demand new levels of maturity to recognise that in the 20 year horizon of the Spatial Plan different organisations will inevitably have varying priorities: avoiding conflict can be as important as being joined up. In setting the broad strategic direction for the Spatial Plan Areas of Wales and influencing national policies, there will also be different approaches and levels of detail coming forward which will vary with time. We need to deal with that by keeping our eye on the prize: the sustainable development of Wales for "People, Places and their Futures".

The Wales Spatial Plan is important to the Welsh Assembly Government: it helps to deliver our priorities set out in One Wales. We will judge our investments in the Spatial Plan according to how they take forward One Wales. The Wales Spatial Plan is the overarching framework and integration tool for Wales. It provides important underpinning in a whole range of matters, for example:

- economic development and the long term goal of full employment at a rate of 80%;
- regeneration programmes in various parts of Wales;
- improving skill levels in the workforce;
- improving regional and national strategic planning for transport;
- reducing annual greenhouse gas emissions;
- understanding and meeting affordable housing needs
- making the right decisions, and getting the most benefit from specific major investment decisions, affecting public services
- helping to shape our capital investment though the Strategic Capital Investment Framework.



The Wales Spatial Plan presents a better chance of aligning the investments that all organisations make, whether in the private, public or third sectors. Understanding the broad strategic direction helps us all make decisions and investments which will contribute to delivering a shared vision. It is not realistic to expect that everything will be done in the same timeframe or that organisations' relative priorities will always match up. That is why it is important that we all work together to agree and keep up to date focused "Delivery Frameworks".

Because it represents shared strategic direction, the Wales Spatial Plan provides a canvas against which Welsh Assembly Government investment, both capital and revenue, can be considered and agreed. It is not a bidding list from which funding will automatically follow. It is about aligning investment and extracting synergies from joint working based on a common commitment to the Wales Spatial Plan. Already the Area Groups have proved their worth in agreeing spatial inputs to European Structural Funds. The Welsh European Funding Office recognises the importance of the Area Groups in providing fora for collaborative planning and ensuring the strategic fit of projects - an important assessment requirement. This will help ensure that the investments that flow from there will best tackle the agreed strategic Area challenges. We will seek to build on this when we are thinking about our core funding.

Much discussion arises around status, particularly in relation to the statutory land use planning system. The Area Strategies provide general locations within which the appropriate regulatory framework, which is likely to be local development plans, can shape final determinations. That means that inclusion in the Wales Spatial Plan is not a guarantee of something happening and viceversa ... exclusion does not mean that an activity will not happen. What we all need to be able to show is how our policies and interventions help achieve the visions of the Areas. All plans and strategies relevant to a Spatial Plan Area should be seen to sit comfortably within it. The Delivery Frameworks should steer subsequent actions.

We recognise that in promoting better decision making regionally through improved collaboration - the Ministerially led Spatial Plan Area Groups it is inevitable that approaches and levels of detail will vary. This needs to be balanced with ensuring that there are some common standards. These are outlined in our core spatial themes. The principles of social justice, equality and sustainable development are central to everything we will do in taking this work forward.



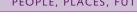
The lead Minister for the Wales Spatial Plan is the Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery. The Public Services Delivery Cabinet Committee will be monitoring progress and taking regular reports from the Spatial Plan Ministers. We will be encouraging the Spatial Plan Areas to provide joint responses to consultations on Welsh Assembly Government policies, and for policy officials to engage actively with the Area Groups. To help promote that, the Spatial Plan Area Ministers are supported by a Senior Civil Servant and the Area Manager. Increasingly the Spatial Plan Groups have a role to play in taking an overview of progress on key issues, sharing best practice and spotting where interventions may be needed. Early examples include governance of public services and local service boards.

The Cabinet of the Welsh Assembly Government look forward to continuing to work with you in this exciting and challenging work.



new Davies

Andrew Davies AM Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery





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# The Status of the Wales Spatial Plan

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (section 60) placed a duty on the National Assembly for Wales to prepare a spatial plan. The Government of Wales Act 2006 further embeds the Wales Spatial Plan as a policy the Welsh Ministers must now agree and keep under review. For the purposes of the 2004 Act, this Update constitutes the Wales Spatial Plan.

The 2004 Act (section 62) states that local planning authorities, in preparing a local development plan (LDP), must have regard to the Wales Spatial Plan. As part of the LDP preparation process the relationship between a LDP and the Wales Spatial Plan will be considered at an independent examination, which will also test the soundness of the LDP. Whilst the latter plan must have regard to the Wales Spatial Plan, the Wales Spatial Plan is not part of the statutory

development plan framework and as such a LDP does not have to 'conform' in the same way as equivalent plans in England.

In Wales, the statutory development plan comprises local development plans, unitary development plans, extant statements and local plans. Detailed guidance on planning policy is provided in Planning Policy Wales and its updates.

The Wales Spatial Plan provides the context and direction of travel for local development plans and the work of local service boards.

The Wales Spatial Plan has been subject to a sustainability appraisal, a strategic environmental assessment and a Habitats Regulations assessment but this does not exempt any associated plans or programmes from needing to undertake their own assessments.



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# People, Places, Futures

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Wales Spatial Plan People, Places, Futures - was originally adopted by the National Assembly for Wales in November 2004. This Update brings the Wales Spatial Plan into line with One Wales, and gives status to the Area work which has developed over the last two years.
- 1.2 The broad 20 year agenda and overall role, purpose and principles of the Wales Spatial Plan remain unchanged:
- Making sure that decisions are taken with regard to their impact beyond the immediate sectoral or administrative boundaries and that the core values of sustainable development govern everything we do
- Setting the context for local and community planning
- Influencing where money is spent by the Welsh Assembly Government through an understanding of the roles of and interactions between places
- Providing a clear evidence base for the public, private and third sectors to develop policy and action.
- 1.3 In Wales, spatial planning is the consideration of what can and should happen where. It investigates how policies and practice interact in specific areas as well as the role of places in a wider context. It goes well beyond traditional land use planning and sets out a strategic framework to guide future development and policy interventions.

- 1.4 It is a principle of the Wales Spatial Plan that development should be sustainable. Sustainable development is about improving wellbeing and quality of life by integrating social, economic and environmental objectives in the context of more efficient use of natural resources. The Wales Spatial Plan aims to deliver sustainable development through its Area Strategies in the context of the Welsh Assembly Government's statutory Sustainable Development Scheme. The Scheme is currently being revised to reflect the Assembly Government's One Wales agenda.
- 1.5 The purpose of the Wales Spatial Plan is to ensure that what is done in the public, private and third sectors in Wales is integrated and sustainable, and that actions within an area support each other and jointly move towards a shared vision for Wales and for the different parts of Wales. It achieves this through collaborative working and the vertical and horizontal integration of policies nationally and regionally.
- 1.6 It sets out cross-cutting national spatial priorities. These provide the context for the application of national and regional policies for specific sectors, such as health, education, housing and the economy, reflecting the distinctive characteristics of different sub-regions of Wales and their cross-border relationships. It identifies six sub-regions in Wales without defining hard boundaries,



reflecting the different linkages involved in daily activities. In each of these Areas, local authorities, the private and third sectors, and the Welsh Assembly Government and its agencies are working together in Spatial Plan Area Groups to achieve the strategic vision for that area.

1.7 These agreed visions and the actions required to achieve them set an important regional context, both for citizen-centred service delivery and land use. They inform, and will be informed by, community strategies, local development plans and the work of the local service boards.



# 2. How the Wales Spatial Plan Works

2.1 The Wales Spatial Plan encompasses the elements required to deliver sustainable development: services, land use and investment. It is a framework for developing national and regional perspectives. It contributes to better public services in a number of ways, including the shaping of policy, by promoting and facilitating engagement, and aligning investment to spatial priorities.

#### 2.2 The Wales Spatial Plan framework:

- Produces evidence uses a broad range of evidence to understand the different needs of different people and places, and to inform policy.
- Shapes policy ensures government policies are sensitive to place, and

responsive to the needs of citizens, communities and businesses in different parts of Wales.

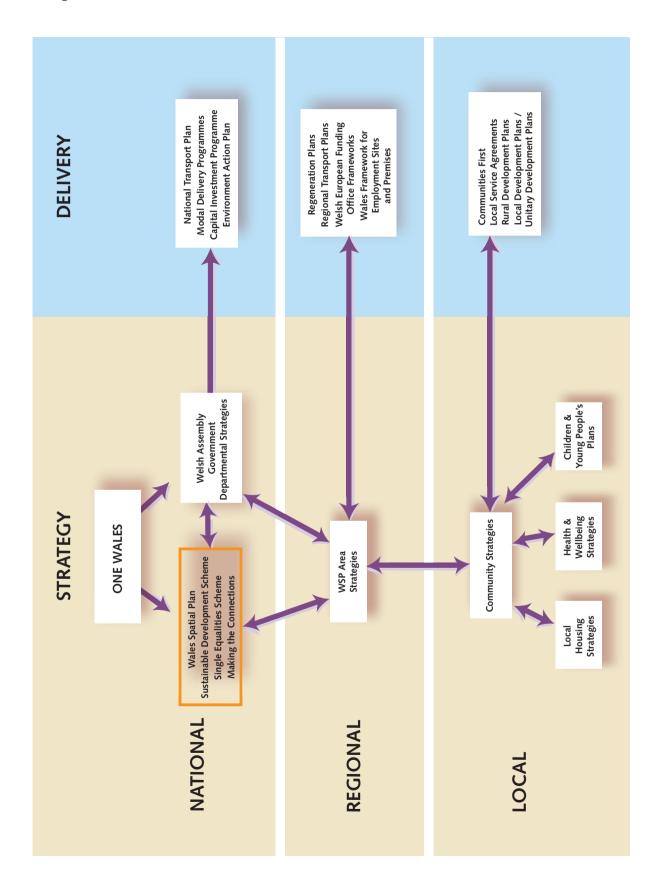
## • Ensures better engagement and governance provides a framework within which public, private and third sector service providers can work together to prioritise action and design optimum solutions.

- Informs plans ensures that the plans through which solutions are delivered have regard to regional and national spatial priorities.
- Aligns investment ensures public investment is made in the places and services where it is most needed.





Figure 1



# 3. Delivering the Wales Spatial Plan

- 3.1 The Wales Spatial Plan framework will be used for measuring progress. The following section reviews Wales Spatial Plan progress against these areas and sets out the challenges for the next 5 years.
- 3.2 The final section presents the Area Strategies for the six Wales Spatial Plan Areas. These have been developed by the Area Groups through extensive joint working and research. Each Area took a distinct approach, reflecting their agreed regional priorities. These Strategies should be read in conjunction with the Wales Spatial Plan framework which sets out principles and challenges facing all Wales and which apply to all Area Strategies. These are not repeated in the Area Strategies but are implicitly understood.
- 3.3 Inevitably, tensions exist between social, economic and environmental objectives. The challenge facing us all is to achieve sustainable economic growth and social justice whilst protecting and enhancing the environment.
- 3.4 It is now important that the Wales Spatial Plan is accompanied by a detailed delivery framework and that governance arrangements are in place to monitor and accelerate delivery. In order to achieve this:
- 3.5 By Autumn 2008 each of the Area Groups will produce an initial delivery framework setting out their priority outcomes, actions and the partnerships required to deliver them. Spatial Plan Wales will produce a similar delivery

- framework for the national priorities, as well as a monitoring framework to ensure national and regional actions are achieving the intended outcomes and remain relevant over time.
- 3.6 Critical to success at a regional level will be our ability to extend and improve the engagement between Area Groups and key delivery partners, including for instance, regional economic fora, Welsh Local Government Association regional boards and the private and third sectors.
- 3.7 The Wales Spatial Plan has been subject to a sustainability appraisal (SA) that includes a strategic environmental assessment (SEA), and, following this, a Habitats Regulations assessment (HRA). Many recommendations from the SA/SEA have been integrated into the text of the document but a number also apply to the delivery stage of the Wales Spatial Plan. A checklist will be produced to guide project delivery and this will be widely circulated and promoted for use by stakeholders. The checklist will reflect the recommendations that have been made to mitigate likely significant environmental effects that were identified in the SA/SEA and also provide additional recommendations to provide further enhancements to the Wales Spatial Plan.
- 3.8 The HRA screening process concluded that it was not possible to confirm that the Wales Spatial Plan, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would not

have a significant effect on European and international sites in Wales, its offshore waters and across the border in England. An appropriate assessment was therefore carried out under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, but the aspirational and non-locational nature of the Wales Spatial Plan meant that it was not amenable to the identification of the Wales Spatial Plan's implications for the sites with any great degree of precision. Therefore, appropriate assessment will be carried out in greater detail in relation to the lower tier plans, action plans, and/or programmes which enable the delivery of the Wales Spatial Plan: the level of detail within those plans and programmes should be sufficient to enable the assessment process to be carried out with a greater degree of particularity. An indicative, but not exhaustive, list of plans and programmes that will need to be screened to determine whether they should be subject to such assessment has been identified as part of the Wales Spatial Plan HRA process. As a result of this proposed

avoidance and mitigation action, which has been identified in the HRA, it has been possible to conclude that the Wales Spatial Plan will not adversely affect the integrity of the European and international sites described, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

- 3.9 From 2009 there will be a Wales Spatial Plan Annual Report. This will record progress on delivery frameworks and also update the priorities.
- 3.10 The delivery frameworks will be accompanied by a range of indicators so that outcomes and impacts can be monitored. These indicators will include social. economic and environmental measures, and a checklist of best practice based on common principles and recommendations from the assessments undertaken.
- 3.11 The Ministerial Area Groups have a crucial role in monitoring delivery and asking challenging questions where objectives are not being achieved.

# The Wales Spatial Plan Framework

### 4. Evidence

Use a broad range of evidence to understand the different needs of different people and places, to inform policy.

4.1 The evidence underpinning the Wales Spatial Plan consists of data on key aspects of the social, economic and environmental characteristics of the Areas. The analysis includes trends and projections which help to identify the drivers for change in different Areas.

4.2 The Wales Spatial Plan evidence base derives from three main sources:

#### Statistical information from the Welsh **Assembly Government**

Spatial Plan Wales and Statistical Directorate maintain an online data resource of official statistics consisting of detailed spreadsheets, tables and charts for each of the Areas.

The resource will be developed further and enriched using GIS mapping. It will be updated as new data becomes available. Over time, it will be possible to use the evidence base to assess the combined impact of the various policies and plans in operation across each Area.

The evidence base can be accessed via the Wales Spatial Plan website: http://www.wales.gov.uk/ walesspatialplan

The link to the Spatial Plan Data can be found under 'related links' on the right hand side of the screen.

#### Research commissioned for the Spatial Plan

In addition, research is commissioned to inform specific issues such as the establishment of the Spatial Plan Areas, and the identification of key settlements, their roles and functions. The website contains full details of all this type of research.

#### **Independent Research**

Spatial Plan working groups have gathered research for certain projects from independent sources. This has involved data from a wide range of organisations such as local authorities, the Environment Agency and Jobcentre Plus.



| Achievements  | Challenges  |  |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| <ul> <li>Wales Spatial Plan Areas defined.</li> <li>Key settlements identified in all Areas.</li> </ul>   | Improve website to make data,<br>evidence and best practice more<br>accessible.   |  |  |  |
| <ul> <li>Wales Spatial Plan data project<br/>launched and spatial data sets<br/>produced for the first time on:</li> <li>economy and labour market</li> </ul> | Develop electronic mapping tools<br>(GIS) to improve the analysis and<br>presentation of information relating<br>to Spatial Plan Areas. |  |  |  |
| demographics (including population statistics)  | Develop a research plan to improv<br>spatial intelligence in priority<br>areas eg:  |  |  |  |
| - education (including use of the Welsh language)   | - skills<br>- health  |  |  |  |
| - health and wellbeing  | - business sectors  |  |  |  |
| - natural and built environment   | - infrastructure  |  |  |  |
| <ul> <li>housing (dwelling numbers<br/>and house prices)</li> </ul>   | - the operation of housing markets  |  |  |  |
| - deprivation and access to services  | - rural Wales.  |  |  |  |
| - transport (vehicle use and road accidents).   |   |  |  |  |

# 5. Influencing Policy

Ensure government policies are sensitive to place, and responsive to the needs of citizens, communities and businesses in different parts of Wales.

- 5.1 One Wales sets out the Wales Spatial Plan's role as the overarching integration tool for many of the Welsh Assembly Government's key policies. There are three commitments which are specific to the Wales Spatial Plan:
- Put in place a strategy for the continual improvement of local services in Wales aimed at embedding the imperatives of efficiency and citizen-centred services in the context of the Wales Spatial Plan
- Adopt an all-Wales approach to economic development, guaranteeing investment in all regions within framework of the Wales Spatial Plan
- Adopt the Wales Spatial Plan as an integrating tool in the context of the Assembly Government's commitment to eradicate child poverty by 2020.

- 5.2 Future policies and strategies of the Welsh Assembly Government will be assessed against the Wales Spatial Plan to ensure alignment with the principles and priorities of the Plan.
- 5.3 These policies and strategies will be delivered through a number of partners and mechanisms at the national, regional, and local levels. In most cases, delivery will be through existing mechanisms, working towards a common strategy.
- 5.4 One Wales also has a commitment to review the governance arrangements of public service organisations in Wales to assess their alignment with the public services improvement agenda. This will be fulfilled using the set of citizen-centred governance principles that has been developed by the Governance in Wales programme. Assessments will be rolled out on the basis of Spatial Plan Areas, ensuring the assessments reflect the particular needs and aspirations of each Area.



#### **Achievements** Challenges

- EU Structural Funds. The five Sustainable Regeneration strategic frameworks are based on the Spatial Plan Areas. Wales Spatial Plan priorities are part of the evaluation criteria for the thematic strategic frameworks.
- The Wales Transport Strategy is fully aligned with the Spatial Plan Area strategies.
- The Wales Framework for **Employment Sites and Premises** is at an advanced stage of development and has based its analysis on the Spatial Plan Areas.
- Environment Strategy for Wales. In implementing the Environment Strategy, each Spatial Plan Area Group agreed their priority issues and actions.
- Welsh Coastal Tourism Strategy, developed as a result of the Wales Spatial Plan. Visit Wales has worked closely with Spatial Plan Wales to ensure alignment with the Area Strategies.
- Local housing strategies. The Wales Spatial Plan informs the alignment of local housing strategies with the Area Strategies. An affordable housing toolkit has been developed to facilitate the provision of more affordable housing in Wales and draft guidance on the preparation of affordable housing delivery plans issued.

- Ensure the spatial impact of new policies is considered at an early stage of all policy development, by integrating spatial planning considerations into the policy gateway/integration process.
- Make further progress in priority policy areas:
  - skills
  - public health
  - infrastructure
  - community regeneration
  - rural development
  - culture.
- Explore opportunities arising from the Wales Spatial Plan evidence analysis for innovative policy initiatives.
- Ensure community strategies inform, and are informed by, the Wales Spatial Plan Area Strategies.
- Develop measures to ensure Assembly Government policies address the needs of rural areas.
- **Ensure The National Waste Strategy** for Wales and regional waste plans inform, and are informed by, the Wales Spatial Plan Area Strategies.

# 6. Engagement and Governance

Provide a framework within which public, private and third sector service providers can work together to prioritise action and design optimum solutions.

6.1 One Wales gives a commitment to embed the imperatives of efficiency and citizen-centred services in the context of the Wales Spatial Plan.

6.2 Collaboration is at the heart of the Wales Spatial Plan and involves representatives from the public, private and third sectors. It enables partners to plan together towards a shared vision by considering the challenges and opportunities at the national, regional and local level. By bringing organisations together we can ensure that decisions are better informed and solutions are more sustainable. The Wales Spatial Plan also creates an environment where innovative thinking can be fostered and good practice shared. This is what we intend to build on during the delivery of the Plan.

6.3 The Wales Spatial Plan is co-ordinated by a team at the Welsh Assembly Government with governance arrangements at a number of levels.

#### **National**

6.4 The Wales Spatial Plan is the responsibility of the Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery. Progress is reported to the Cabinet Public Service Delivery Committee.

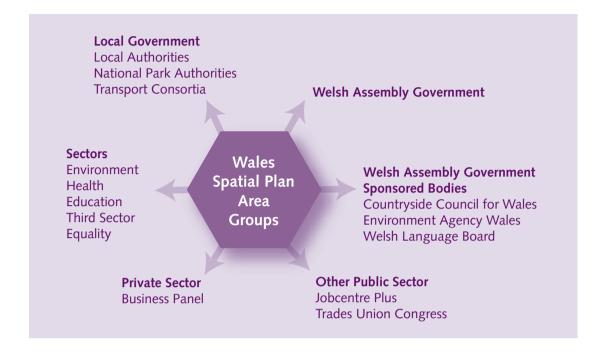
Officials from all departments within the Welsh Assembly Government work closely together to ensure policies are developed within the Wales Spatial Plan framework.

6.5 National representatives from key sectors, such as environment, equality, regeneration, health and the voluntary sector offer expertise and guidance in developing and implementing the Wales Spatial Plan on behalf of their sector and co-ordinate the sectoral representatives on the Area Groups.

#### Regional

6.6 Welsh Ministers chair a Ministerial Area Group in each Area. This provides high level government leadership and offers a direct link to Cabinet and the national policy-making process. The Ministerial Area Groups comprise political representatives and high level executive officers from partner organisations. They set the longterm vision and strategic direction for the development of the Area. The work typically involves resolving cross-boundary issues, or tackling those which need to be planned for on a regional basis. The Ministerial Groups usually meet twice a year to agree priority actions for the Area and monitor the progress of projects.





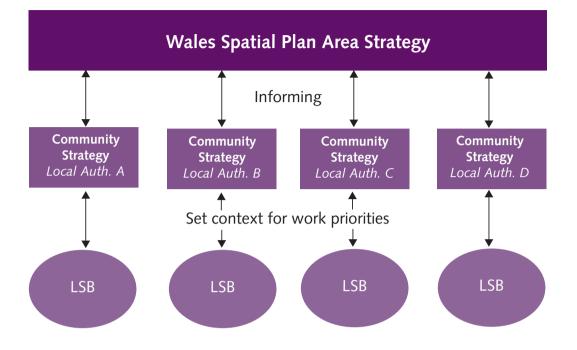
6.7 The Officials Group in each Area is chaired by a senior official from the Welsh Assembly Government and includes senior representatives from partner organisations. This Group usually meets quarterly and guides projects as they develop. Each Area may also set up task and finish groups to work on particular issues that require more in-depth analysis and action. Alternatively, the Area Group may work with expertise already provided by existing networks in their region.

6.8 The Area Groups are co-ordinated by Area Managers who are members of Spatial Plan Wales. Papers from the meetings are published on the Wales Spatial Plan website.

#### Local

6.9 The roles of the Area Groups and those of the local service boards in each local authority are distinct but complementary. The Area Strategies inform the local service board about regional issues and priorities so that local and regional action can be aligned, Likewise, the Area Groups must take account of the work of the local service boards. The community strategy, which provides the overarching local vision and strategic priorities, is the main mechanism for ensuring the link between regional strategy and local priorities is made. The Spatial Plan Ministers will be taking a close interest in the work of the local service boards in their Areas making connections between local and regional projects.





#### **Achievements**

- Area Managers appointed to co-ordinate regional activity. Area Groups convened, research undertaken, local stakeholders engaged and Area Strategies agreed.
- Cross-border working:
- The Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA), formed April 2007, has a shared vision for the development of North East Wales and the Cheshire/Wirral area. MDA won the Best Strategic Planning Document Award at the 2007 RTPI North West Regional Planning Achievement Awards.
- Memorandum of Understanding between the West Midlands Regional Assembly and the Welsh Assembly Government launched in March 2007.

#### **Challenges**

- Establish and communicate clear and effective links between the Area Groups, local service boards, community partnerships and Welsh **European Funding Office Spatial** European teams.
- Deepen engagement between the Wales Spatial Plan and Communities First.
- Improve our engagement with delivery agents, especially from the community, voluntary and private sectors.
- Actively engage more with organisations that represent the interests of groups that are marginalised or harder to reach eg. children and young people, rural communities.



| Achievements   | Challenges   |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| <ul> <li>Strong links established between the Area Groups and the regional transport consortia and tourism partnerships.</li> <li>Regular liaison and integration with Welsh Assembly Government policy departments and agencies such as the Department for Economy and Transport, the Welsh European Funding Office, the Environment Agency and Countryside Council for Wales.</li> </ul> | <ul> <li>Improve joint working between the HE-FE Sector and the Spatial Plan Area Groups to help make best use of all talents. The HE-FE sector has a crucial role in developing:         <ul> <li>the evidence base</li> <li>skills and workforce development</li> <li>the knowledge economy.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Establish cross-border links between South East Wales and South West England.</li> <li>Develop stronger international links on territorial cohesion.</li> <li>Improve awareness and understanding of the Wales Spatial Plan by implementing a communication plan.</li> </ul> |  |  |  |



Ensure that the plans through which solutions are delivered have regard to regional and national spatial priorities.

7.1 In the context of the Wales Spatial Plan, planning - in the widest sense is the essential link between strategy and action. Plans are the mechanism by which the priorities identified by Area Groups will be delivered and budgets allocated.

7.2 Plans are produced in a number of contexts.

#### **Local Development Plans**

7.3 Local authorities in Wales are required to prepare community<sup>1</sup> strategies for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their areas. Local development plans and local delivery agreements help to deliver the priorities of the community strategies.

7.4 Local development plans must have regard to the Wales Spatial Plan, while community strategies inform, and are informed by, the regional priorities agreed by the Spatial Plan Area Groups.

7.5 The Area Groups also provide the context that can influence and draw

on the development of individual health, social care and wellbeing strategies and children and young people's plans, and issues that emerge from these such as the need to develop or change ways in which hospital-based health care is provided.

## **National and Regional Transport Plans**

7.6 These are informed by the Area Strategies and are designed to deliver integrated transport policies and strategic priorities. They should be guided by the principles of sustainable development and form the basis for planned investment in the provision of transport services and infrastructure to ensure that future development, in particular employment and housing, is supported by transport infrastructure.

## Regeneration programmes

7.7 Action plans guide strategic regeneration programmes, led by the Department for the Economy and Transport but cutting across portfolios.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Section 4(1) of the Local Government Act 2000



| Achievements   | Challenges  |
|--|---|
| The Wales Transport Strategy and<br>regional transport plans are being<br>developed in the context of Spatial<br>Plan Area Strategies. | Contribute effectively to community strategy action plans, local development agreements, local development plans, local           |
| The Wales Spatial Plan has a formal<br>role in relation to local development<br>plans to ensure consistency with                       | <ul> <li>housing strategies and others.</li> <li>Monitor projects under EU strategic<br/>frameworks for spatial 'fit'.</li> </ul> |
| <ul> <li>Area work.</li> <li>Links have been established<br/>between Area Groups and major<br/>NHS change projects.</li> </ul>         | Monitor outputs of plans for spatial<br>'fit' eg. Wales Framework for<br>Employment Sites and Premises.                           |



Ensure public investment is made in the places and services where it is most needed.

8.1 Over time, as policies become more influenced by the Wales Spatial Plan, it will be possible to demonstrate that public investment - by the Welsh Assembly Government and its sponsored bodies, local government, transport consortia, and others is better aligned. Some important progress has already been made.

## **European Structural Funds Programme 2007-2013**

8.2 Strategic frameworks have been produced for each Spatial Plan Area and nationally to deliver identified priorities. The approach was described by the European Commission as a model of best practice and will ensure that the available funds are spent where they are most needed, and on projects that will have the biggest impact. Working across local authority boundaries with a range of partners will achieve a greater concentration of resources, reduce

duplication of projects and focus on the real priorities on the ground.

#### **Investment in Regeneration**

8.3 Current national regeneration programmes, Heads of the Valleys and Môn a Menai, are strongly spatially aligned. The Wales Spatial Plan will be valuable in informing the choice of locations for further priority regeneration investment.

### Strategic Capital Investment

8.4 The Welsh Assembly Government, in line with a commitment from One Wales, has established a Strategic Capital Investment Board. The Board will oversee a capital investment fund of at least £400 million over 3 years (2008/09-2010/11) to delivery strategically important projects. The Wales Spatial Plan will inform the decision-making process on maximising the spatial 'fit' of investment proposals.

## EU Structural Funds programme 2007-2013 includes spatial sustainable regeneration frameworks, and spatial consideration within thematic frameworks.

**Achievements** 

 National and regional regeneration investment aligned with the Wales Spatial Plan.

#### Challenges

- Scrutinise Strategic Capital Investment projects effectively to ensure alignment with Wales Spatial Plan priorities.
- Map public sector spending in Wales to gauge alignment with spatial priorities and to identify gaps and areas of need.
- Embed Wales Spatial Plan priorities in the business planning and project approval processes of Welsh Assembly Government departments.

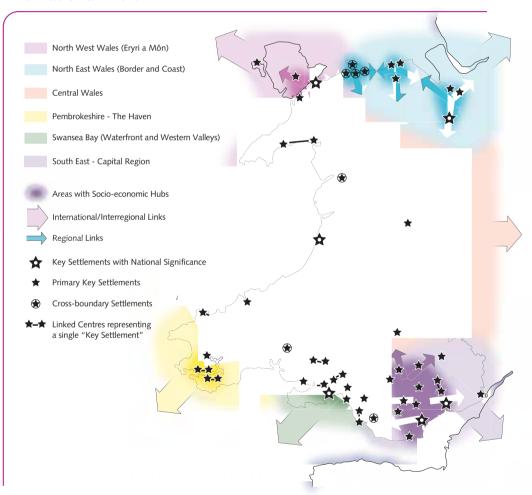


# The Wales Spatial Plan Themes

## 9. The Vision

We will sustain our communities by tackling the challenges presented by population and economic change. We will grow in ways which will increase Wales' competitiveness while assisting less well-off areas to catch up on general prosperity levels and reducing negative environmental impacts. We will enhance the natural and built environment and we will sustain our distinctive identity.

#### The National Vision



## **Key Features**

Fuzzy Boundaries - the Spatial Plan Areas are not defined by administrative boundaries. This enables partners to work together on common issues in a flexible way, and some may be involved in more than one Spatial Plan Area Group.

Key Settlements - each Spatial Plan Area Group has identified the centres likely to form the focus for the region's future development. Those of national importance are shown here and the full range is shown in the Area maps.

**Cross-boundary Settlements** some settlements are particularly important for the development of more than one Area because they look in many directions. They will feature in more than one Area strategy.

Socio-economic Hubs - these illustrate where there are greater concentrations of population and economic activity compared to the rest of the region.

International/Interregional Links/ Regional Links - the international, interregional and regional links are an indication of the need to look outwards, working together with neighbouring sub-regions within Wales and in England and Ireland.

9.1 In this section we set out the key issues and challenges facing Wales as a whole under the five Wales Spatial Plan themes. There is considerable overlap between the themes and they should be read in conjunction with each other:

- **Building Sustainable Communities**
- Promoting a Sustainable Economy
- Valuing our Environment
- Achieving Sustainable Accessibility
- Respecting Distinctiveness.

9.2 These challenges will be addressed by the Welsh Assembly Government, Spatial Plan Area Groups and our partners and will form the basis of the delivery frameworks.





## 10. Building Sustainable Communities

Our future depends on the vitality of our communities as attractive places to live and work. We need to reduce inequalities between communities whilst retaining their character and distinctiveness.

10.1 The key challenges we face in building sustainable communities are to tackle deprivation - and particularly concentrations of poverty and worklessness - and to bring about improvements in public health and the eradication of child poverty. As the Communities First programme moves into its next phase, improved engagement between Spatial Plan Area Groups and local partnerships will help develop initiatives which tackle child poverty, employability, skills deficits and economic inactivity, as well as environment, health and wellbeing and community safety. The third sector will have a crucial role in delivering these objectives.

#### Role of settlements

10.2 Identifying the diverse and complementary roles of settlements in Wales for the delivery of services, housing and job opportunities is also essential. Wales does not have a big metropolis but South Wales, as regards the M4 coastal belt and the old coalmining areas, does constitute a semidispersed metropolis with innate features and with 1.8 million people. Much of rural Wales is more sparsely populated than any rural areas in England and is more like the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. As a consequence, many places in rural Wales with populations of more than 15,000 perform roles characteristic of much larger towns

elsewhere. This poses unique challenges for the effective delivery of services.

#### Regeneration

10.3 Regeneration is an important driver for local development. This means co-ordinating activities and investment relating to transport, skills and employment, housing and inward investment. Regeneration proposals for an area must align different investment streams to secure joined-up delivery at a local level. Regionally agreed priorities will be supported by the current round of European Structural Funds (2007-2013) and this will be managed by working closely with Welsh European Funding Office Spatial European teams across Wales. The Wales Spatial Plan will also be an important consideration for our Strategic Capital Investment Programme.

#### Housing

10.4 A lack of good quality housing affects people's health and wellbeing and influences their long-term life chances. The scale of population growth that needs to be accommodated is challenging, with a projected growth of 330,000 persons across Wales between 2006 and 2031<sup>2</sup>. Equally important is the need to maintain a mix of tenure and size of housing to ensure balanced communities. To address this the Welsh

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> ONS, 2007



Assembly Government is committed to delivering 6,500 new affordable homes by 2011.

10.5 The general principles for new housing growth are: it should be linked to public transport nodes, including walking and cycling networks; it should take account of environmental constraints, including flood risk; and it should meet high standards of energy efficiency. Housing developed near public transport nodes should be at higher than current densities to promote use of public transport and to increase opportunities for combined heat and power systems. Accommodating appropriate development in smaller settlements and rural areas is vital for supporting the development of more rural communities.

#### Health

10.6 Sound and accessible health services also help to sustain communities. The aim is to create a strong and well-run network of streamlined and integrated care services. Creating and sustaining the right set of services for each area will pose challenges in balancing access, safety, and affordability, and will need careful consideration of a range of competing criteria by planners at the national, local and Spatial Plan Area level.

10.7 Future plans for healthcare reorganisation will follow the principles of locating services within or close to key settlements and in locations easily accessible by public transport. At the local level, health, social care and wellbeing strategies are placing renewed emphasis on illness prevention and

strengthening primary and communitybased services.

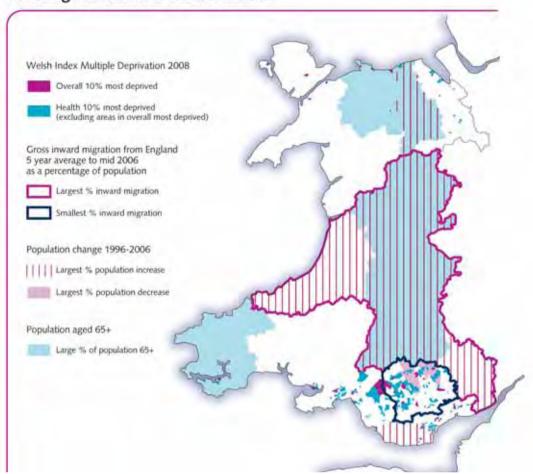
#### **Challenges**

- Focus regeneration to enhance the natural and built environment and deliver sustainable communities and a high quality of life within a healthy local economy. Regeneration must be sensitive to the historic, cultural and linguistic character of communities and factor in the key challenges posed by climate change.
- Through the Area Groups, ensure collaboration and co-operation between local planning authorities, the private and third sector on regional housing issues.
- Develop a public health strategic framework for Wales which is spatially orientated. We will develop health profiles for each Spatial Plan Area and explore how health impact assessments can be used to assess projects and plans. We will also create a rural health plan to improve services and access.





### **Building Sustainable Communities**



The map shows the local authorities in Wales with the largest percentages of population due to inward migration from England over the last five years with red outline, namely those in the rural east and centre of Wales, and those with the smallest with blue outline, namely those in the South Wales valleys. Also highlighted are those authorities with largest population increase (red vertical lines) and decrease (pink shading) over the last ten years, and those with the largest elderly populations (light blue shading). Finally, those populations which are in the overall 10 per cent most deprived areas are highlighted in dark red, with those exclusively in the 10 per cent most deprived areas from a health perspective highlighted in dark blue.

# 11. Promoting a Sustainable Economy

We need an innovative, high value-added economy for Wales which utilises and develops the skills and knowledge of our people; an economy which both creates wealth and promotes the spreading of that prosperity throughout Wales; an economy which adds to the quality of life as well as the standard of living and the working environment.

- 11.1 The economy in Wales has a spatial dimension. Some areas adjoining the English border have economic performance characteristics fairly similar to the UK average while the more western areas and the former coal-mining areas lag behind. The Valleys are characterised by levels of economic inactivity above the UK average, and a skewed population distribution with very small proportions of the population in white collar occupations. Low pay, seasonal work and lack of diverse opportunities are more of an issue in rural Wales, given its small settlement size and sparse population.
- 11.2 Wales has seen a partial resurgence of the birth rate following the sharp fall in the 1990s. Wales is a net gainer of population in every age group except for those in their 20s, which reflects the absence of a metropolis. Due to the popularity of Wales as a retirement area, Wales has a higher dependency ratio than England, Scotland, Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland.
- 11.3 One Wales makes a commitment that an all-Wales approach to economic development should be adopted, guaranteeing investment in all regions within the framework of the Wales Spatial Plan. This approach will include:

- Development of vibrant urban and networked city regions in the South East, Swansea Bay and North East Areas
- Development of key settlements with complementary roles to support a prosperous economy in rural areas.



## New employment sites

11.4 As a general principle, employment-related property development should be located near public transport and close to housing and infrastructure developments. Specific site identification and



development will be progressed in accordance with appropriate planning and other regulatory requirements. Wherever possible, development of brownfield sites should be prioritised over greenfield sites. In addition, out-of-town retail development risks undermining the regeneration and viability of town centres, as well as contributing to unsustainable traffic patterns. Appropriate planning tests need to be applied.

#### Skills

11.5 Provision of appropriate skills on a regional basis involving schools, colleges and universities working in a more collaborative configuration involves an understanding of the long-term economic and demographic trends. The Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills will ensure that Areas have a sufficiently strong and co-ordinated network of education and skills providers to match geographical and sectoral needs. The FE and HE sectors will play an everincreasing role in the economy in enterprise, in new technology and in the supply side of the labour market in Wales. There is further potential to maximise the national and regional economic impact of higher education institutions through research, its commercialisation, and in information and communication technology (ICT) development.

#### Infrastructure

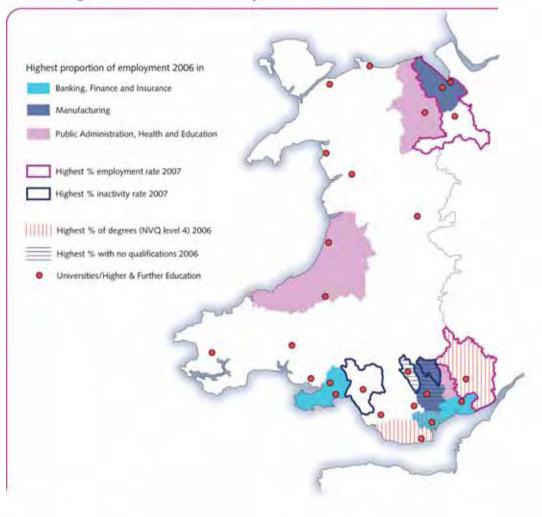
11.6 We must take a joint approach with local authorities, travel consortia, and others to tackling regional infrastructure problems on

issues of housing, transport, water, sewerage, energy, waste and ICT.

#### **Challenges**

- Collaborate across sectors and organisations to ensure job opportunities, infrastructure (including transport, ICT and other elements), skills and public health are delivered together in order to achieve our long-term aim of 80 per cent of working-age population in employment.
- Work with the Rural Development Plan for Wales local partnerships to improve our understanding of rural community needs and to help these groups develop spatial mechanisms to address those issues.
- Spatial Plan Area Groups will support the work of the Wales Employment and Skills Board by directing information and evidence on skills needs, sector potential or information gaps at a regional level to the Learning and Skills Observatory for Wales.
- Transform learning provision to improve learner outcomes, effectiveness and efficiency in response to demographic changes, skills demands and the need to modernise structures.
- Integrate and mainstream infrastructure provision into the Spatial Plan Area Strategies, including regional waste planning.

#### Promoting a Sustainable Economy



The map shows local authorities with large bases of employment in banking, finance and insurance in light blue (Cardiff, Newport and Swansea); in manufacturing in darker blue (Flintshire and South Wales valleys); and in public administration, health or education in pink (Torfaen, Denbighshire and Ceredigion). This information is overlaid with details of those local authorities with the highest employment rates (red outline) and economic inactivity rates (blue outline); the location of centres of higher and further education; and areas with highest percentages of residents with degree level qualifications (red vertical lines) and no qualifications (blue horizontal lines).



# 12. Valuing our Environment

The quality of our environment is a fundamental asset for its intrinsic value, and for our economy and quality of life. By safeguarding and enhancing both the natural and built environment we will attract people to and retain them within our communities and preserve the foundations for the future.

12.1 The land, marine and historical environment of Wales are fundamental to our cultural heritage, values and quality of life. Protecting, regenerating and enhancing these assets is essential for its own sake, for health and wellbeing, and for economic opportunities.

#### Climate Change

12.2 Climate change is an urgent and compelling issue which will have a fundamental impact on our communities and working environments, our way of life, and our health and wellbeing. We must act now to protect our communities from the unavoidable consequences. For example, most of Wales' population lives close to either rivers or the sea. Current and future changes in rainfall patterns and sea levels require us to have engaged people in flood risk issues. There will also be climate change consequences for land use, water resources, biodiversity and wildlife. All our communities - both living and working environments - need to be addressing these adaptation issues.

12.3 Equally, we need to act now to minimise the contribution that we will make to future climate change, through rethinking where and how we live, work and move around, reducing the energy and other resources that we require.

- 12.4 Spatial Plan Area Groups can take a number of actions which will help us all tackle climate change, but also promote a healthy and enjoyable environment in which to live and work, including by:
- encouraging more walking and cycling as part of people's daily lives
- providing safe and clean open spaces with more opportunities to enjoy wildlife
- improving air quality, for example through an integrated approach to traffic management
- managing waste, water and soils more sustainably, with Spatial Plan partners
- enabling the development of enhanced provision for the re-use and recycling of waste.

#### Protecting and enhancing the environment

12.5 Each Spatial Plan Area is supported by an environment working group to provide expert advice and assist in delivering the Environment Strategy for Wales at an Area level.

12.6 Building on our partnership work with the Sustainable Development Commission Wales, each Area Group will develop practical plans to move towards becoming a low-carbon region, in addition to reducing their



wider 'eco-footprint', going beyond the impact of carbon emissions alone.

#### **Challenges**

- Define the concept of low-carbon regions and how this can be achieved in each Area.
- Develop a response to climate change through each Area Group's delivery framework, by setting out how each Area will respond to its particular climate change challenges. This means identifying the key interventions to achieve agreed greenhouse gas reduction targets in each region, and adaptations to the effects of climate change.
- Develop a strategy to reduce each Area's ecological footprint across the range of its activities, and set this out in the Area's delivery framework.
- Implement coastal management in such a way as to link spatial planning on land with spatial

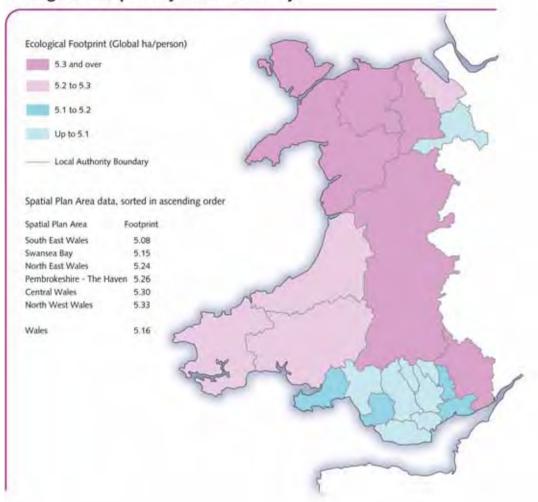
planning at sea to ensure the best protection and use of the resources, in line with the objectives of our Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy for Wales.

- Identify areas of environmental opportunity in Spatial Plan Areas to improve wellbeing and quality of life in Wales' rural areas in particular, supporting initiatives such as the Valleys Regional Park, Cambrian Mountains and Tywi Afon yr Oesoedd.
- Promote wildlife and biodiversity for intrinsic reasons and for people's enjoyment by increasing the quantity and quality of nature sites throughout all Spatial Plan Areas and particularly in urban areas.
- Address issues arising from the sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment of the Wales Spatial Plan in a way which embeds positive environmental action into regional level plans.

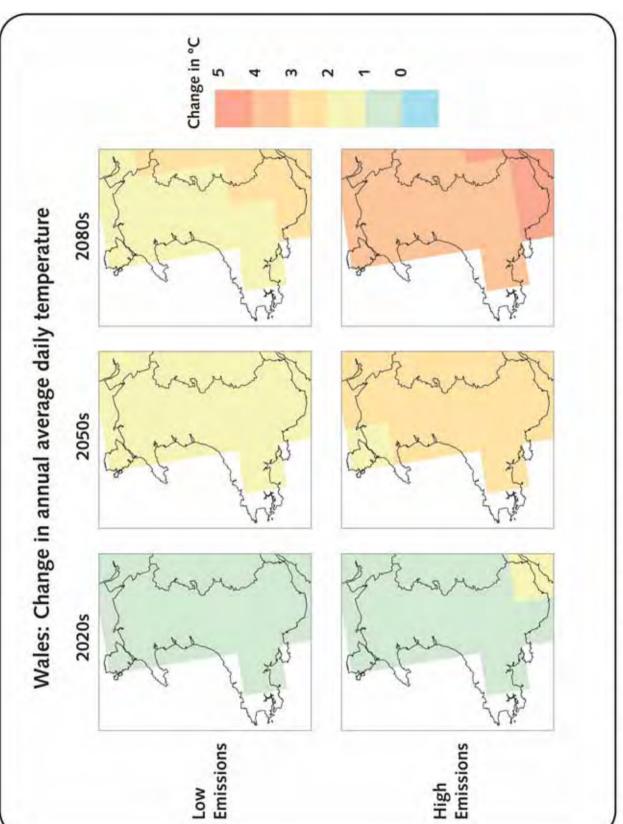


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#### **Ecological Footprint by Local Authority**



The map shows the differences in the ecological footprint for local authorities in Wales. The South Wales valleys and coastal areas exhibit lower values, highlighted in blue, with the more rural central and north-west of Wales exhibiting the higher values, highlighted in red, with figures for the Spatial Plan Areas of Wales also given in the key. It is important to note that although a geographic pattern is evident in the data, the differences between all areas across Wales are relatively small.





These maps show the predicted changes in annual average daily temperatures across Wales under a 'high-emissions' scenario and a 'low-emissions' scenario. Temperatures are shown for the 2020s, 2050s, 2080s. Under the high-emissions scenario, we can see that there are changes of more than 1°C predicted for some parts of Wales from as early as the 2020s.





# 13. Achieving Sustainable Accessibility

We will develop access in ways that encourage economic activity, widen employment opportunities, ensure quality services and balance the social, environmental and economic benefits that travel can have.

13.1 Citizens must be able to access job opportunities and public services health, social services, education, etc - if equality of opportunity is to be successfully promoted in Wales. This is of particular concern for those who face barriers to accessibility, such as people on low incomes, young and old people, disabled people and those living in rural areas. Likewise, businesses need improved access to markets to create new job opportunities and secure these in the longer term.

#### Access to services

13.2 Major public service providers such as the NHS should at an early stage in preparing redevelopment or relocation proposals engage with those responsible for transport planning. The transport implications of proposals should be fully explored before binding decisions are made.

# Travel and climate change

13.3 In the context of responding to and mitigating the effects of climate change, the Wales Spatial Plan supports the development of spatially targeted responses. These include reducing the need to travel by co-locating jobs, housing and services, for instance, and changing behaviour in favour of 'greener' modes of travel, such as car sharing, public transport, walking and cycling.

### Information and communication technology (ICT)

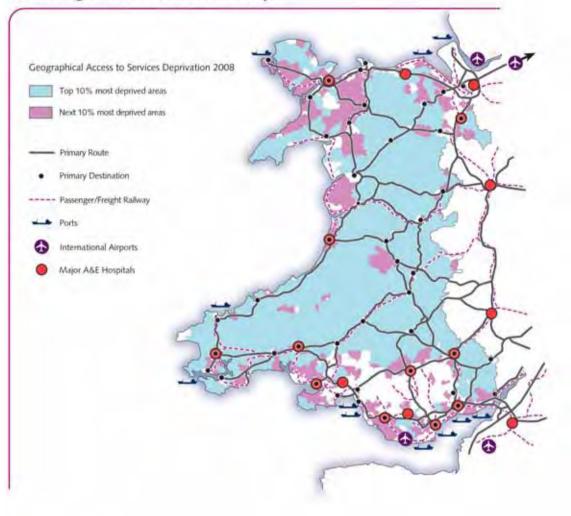
13.4 The development of improved electronic communications and improved access to information and services through electronic means (including support for local access points and faceto-face contact) can reduce the need to travel while improving service delivery at the same time.

#### Challenges

- Work within the national and regional transport planning frameworks to improve the quality and sustainability of connections between key settlements, within and between the Wales Spatial Plan Areas.
- Integrate sustainable transport solutions with community and development planning to improve access to services and facilities, recognising the role of the third sector in hard-to-reach places.
- While continuing to invest in the transport infrastructure and services, ensure that transport in Wales contributes to mitigating the effects of climate change by achieving a reduction in total greenhouse gas emissions.
- Improve the quality of ICT networks in Wales as well as reducing barriers to accessing ICT, such as skills.



#### Achieving Sustainable Accessibility



The map shows the areas of Wales which cover the top 10 per cent (blue) and next 10 per cent (purple) most access-deprived populations, overlaid with primary route and rail transport links, ports and airports, together with primary transport destinations and major accident and emergency hospitals. Vast swathes of Wales are coloured blue reflecting the fact that the most access-deprived areas are very rural, and therefore much more widespread than the least access-deprived urban areas in terms of the area occupied by the respective populations.

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# 14. Respecting Distinctiveness

A cohesive identity which sustains and celebrates what is distinctive about Wales, in an open and outward-looking way, is central to promoting Wales to the World, as well as to our future economic competitiveness and social and environmental wellbeing.

14.1 We have done a lot of good work with our partners to develop a sense of place through the Spatial Plan Area Strategies, and as we move to the delivery phase we will focus on rolling out good practice and involving new partners. This needs to be done in a manner which is sensitive to the culture, language and historic environment.

#### **Innovative Communities**

14.2 Across Wales there are many examples of how communities can flourish by creating a distinct identity and character through innovative leadership and partnership working. We need to learn how these communities have succeeded, monitor their progress and support the rollout of this good practice in more





of our settlements. This can provide a sustainable boost to local economies, enhance our environment, identify more opportunities to promote Wales and develop the wellbeing and cohesiveness of our communities.

#### The built and natural environment

14.3 Conserving and celebrating the unique heritage of each area is important. Key settlements need a high quality environment with quality buildings and spaces, nurturing a sense of identity and community.

#### The Welsh language

14.4 The Welsh language has a significant role to play in our communities and should be promoted as a positive attribute to the area. A key priority will be to develop the Spatial Plan Area in accordance with laith Pawb's vision of creating a modern bilingual society.

#### **Culture**

14.5 Culture, the arts and sport have a key role in creating cohesive communities and a sense of local identity. They also promote individual wellbeing and can be an important economic driver, either through festivals and events or by giving a unique cultural character which stimulates tourism and niche markets.

# Challenges

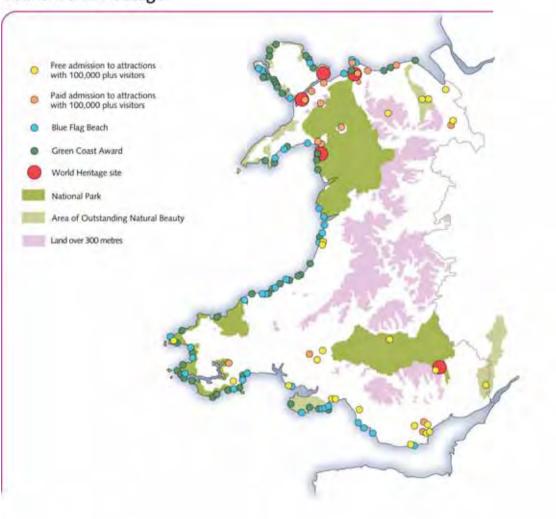
 Develop and promote distinct identities for key settlements and landscapes by encouraging sustainable design initiatives that respond to existing and anticipated climate change impact, reflect local distinctiveness, and protect the historic environment. Partners in the Spatial Plan Areas will work with the Design Commission for Wales and Cadw to encourage best practice in creating distinctive, clean, safe and sustainable development through the design process, including the use of sustainably sourced materials.

- Work with Visit Wales and the regional tourism partnerships to re-define the spatial dimension of tourism destination management areas and tourism marketing areas in Wales.
- Ensure that the delivery of the Cultural Tourism Action Plan is spatially aligned and that local sense of place and distinctiveness is reinforced.
- Encourage local authorities, the private and third sectors to promote cultural activities and work in partnership to deliver high quality cultural experiences for communities.



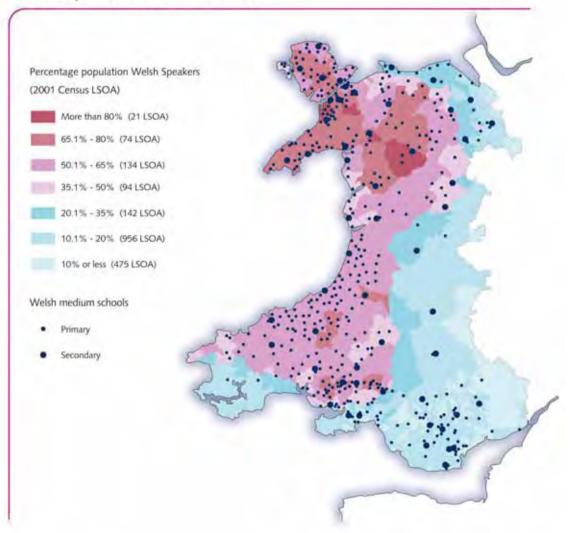


#### Tourism and Heritage



The map shows land over 300 metres, shaded in pink, overlaid with the location of free and paid tourism attractions across Wales which receive 100,000 visitors or more each year, along with the location of Blue Flag beaches, coastlines receiving the Green Coast Award and the five World Heritage sites in Wales. Also shown on the map are National Parks and Areas of Outstanding National Beauty.

#### Welsh Speakers (2001 Census)



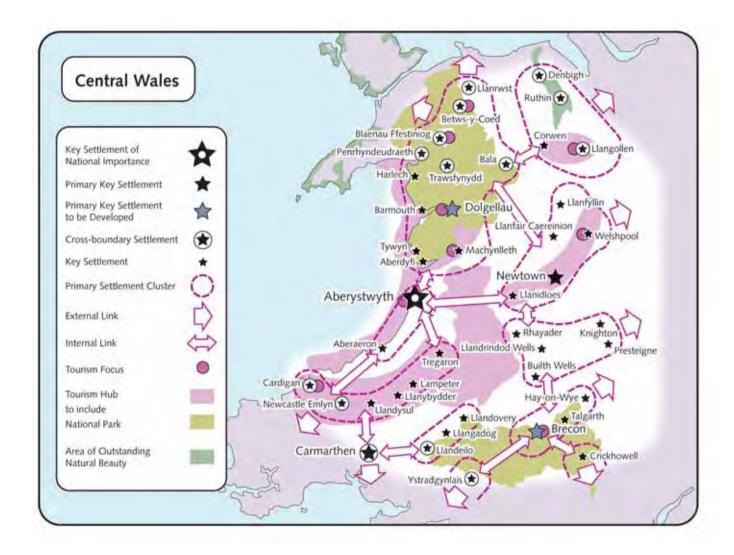
The map shows the spread across Wales in respect of the percentage of population aged 3 and above who speak Welsh, overlaid with the location of Welsh medium primary and secondary schools, using small and large dots respectively. The areas with the highest rates of Welsh speaking (those above 65 per cent) are coloured darker red, and are found in North West Wales, whilst the lowest rates (those under 20 per cent) are coloured lighter blue, and are generally found in South East Wales and the areas bordering England.



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# The Wales Spatial Plan Area Strategies

# 15. Central Wales





'High-quality living and working in smaller-scale settlements set within a superb environment, providing dynamic models of rural sustainable development, moving all sectors to higher value-added activities'

15.1 This vision recognises and defines the unique combination of Central Wales' environmental, social, cultural and economic characteristics and the intimate relationship which exists between them. Collectively these qualities identify this Spatial Plan Area as the heartland of rural life and one of the storehouses of Wales' environmental capital.

15.2 Achieving the vision for Central Wales requires collaborative action. Partners have been working together to take forward the vision and agreed priorities for the Area. These include:

- Building on the important key centres in the Area, whilst improving linkages and spreading benefit and growth to the wider hinterlands and rural communities that fall outside those immediate places, enhancing the attractiveness of the area as a place for people to live and work sustainably, both as regards retaining their own talent and attracting newcomers
- Responding to the needs of our rural communities and hinterlands by enabling appropriate and integrated growth and development, and empowering local communities to enhance their level of sustainability
- Supporting the existing rural economic sectors, including agriculture, non-food and food production to develop their potential and create higher value

- production opportunities which will provide a sustainable basis for the future of the Area's land-based economy and reinforce confidence in a rural future
- Broadening the economic base, building on the Area's higher education infrastructure and introducing new sustainable economic opportunities including those of the knowledge economy sectors across the rural area, maximising opportunities for growth in all sectors, for better paid and higher skilled jobs and raising the level of home grown enterprise and attracting creative enterprising newcomers
- Realising the full potential of the Area's diverse environment and its unique cultural identity as a means of maintaining the region's rural and natural integrity, to build higher value sustainable tourism and to enhance its role in responding to the effects of climate change

Central Wales





Maximising internal and external accessibility (including the improvement of broadband and telecommunication links), building effective cross-border collaboration within Wales and with neighbouring English and Irish regions, increasing access to a wide range and quality of services and enhancing the overall economic growth of the area whilst widening employment opportunities.

15.3 The dynamics of the rural relationships reflect themselves in different ways throughout the Area. Whilst some settlements within the Area do exhibit the urban features of deprivation as reflected in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, the Area is characterised by a number of wider factors associated with a predominantly rural area and a dispersed low-density population including peripherality, low wages, a restricted range of opportunities, distance from major economic markets and an insufficiency of population critical mass to attract providers of new infrastructure links.

15.4 Central Wales as a whole exhibits low levels of unemployment but is predominantly a low-wage economy. The Area has above average dependency in most parts on the public sector and below average private sector investment, dominated by micro and small enterprise activity with few large employers. Although a high proportion of self-employment is usually regarded as a favourable indicator for growth, the restricted range of self-employment occupations indicates to the contrary, namely

a restricted range of opportunity to build significant business growth.

15.5 Substantial parts of the Area suffer from poor access to services and jobs, possessing relatively weak internal and external links, poor public transport and limited levels of rail accessibility, with the exception of a few centres including Aberystwyth, Carmarthen, Welshpool and Newtown. This has led to high dependency on car and roadbased transport, which, combined with inflationary pressures on fuel prices has highlighted significant rural issues around fuel poverty. The lack of high speed ICT links also contributes to the marginalisation of the Area in terms of access to services and wider economic markets.

15.6 The demographics of the Area can be broadly characterised by an increasing proportion of older people. The out-migration of young people in pursuit of employment and education opportunities, and the in-migration of middle-aged and older people for a better quality of life is a common feature of many rural areas across the developed world. This trend has contributed to dispersed high levels of economic inactivity and this and the ageing population will pose significant challenges to health and social provision in the future. The lack of affordable homes provides many challenges in relation to the region's ability to retain or attract young people. Housing deprivation continues to affect many of the region's communities and recent increases in the levels of immigrants from Eastern Europe, responding to economic opportunities in agri-food, could pose challenges for housing and some services.

Central

Wales

15.7 The Central Wales Area includes a few main population settlements in Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Powys, all less than 20,000, and a mosaic of small settlements that are important providers of services. The smaller scale settlements with less than 5,000 people are important to the wider social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the area and highlight the need to establish a more sustainable pattern of settlements, ensuring appropriate linkages with their more rural hinterlands. The development of the smaller scale market town and farming settlements and centres with relatively high dependence on agriculture and tourism, will need to relate to their role and function relative to their surrounding hinterlands. Support will be needed to develop positive responses to address demographic change and changing market forces.

15.8 The main settlements are Aberystwyth, providing a range of national institutions, organisations and regional services with a pivotal role in supporting the settlements of the area; Carmarthen, playing a vital role between this area, Swansea Bay and Pembrokeshire; and Newtown, with a key role in the Severn Valley area, providing services to the surrounding settlements. These have all been identified by Wales Spatial Plan partners as primary settlements for the future development of Central Wales. Dolgellau and Brecon have been identified as being strategically placed for appropriate development into primary settlements to serve the surrounding communities, with Dolgellau providing a link

between the Central Wales Area and the North West Wales hubs.

15.9 The Wales Spatial Plan work has identified changes under way which the Area needs to respond to now. There is a need for appropriate plan-led growth to provide the necessary infrastructure to reduce the over-reliance of the Area on a few limited economic sectors. Supporting the promotion of strategic employment sectors, public and private, and existing home-grown business development and enterprise, broadening the economic base of the region, maximising the opportunities within the knowledge-based industries and new environmental technologies, and expanding the opportunities for retaining more of the region's talent is important.

15.10 Agriculture needs to be able to diversify and change to respond to both market forces and future changes in land use patterns, for example those resulting from climate change, whilst also retaining the ability to respond to the increasing demand for food production for local, national and international markets. The Sustainable Farming and Environment: Action towards 2020 report makes recommendations on how these changes may be achieved.

15.11 The voluntary and community sector provides our 'social capital'; the local activities and services organised by groups that are a vital ingredient of community regeneration and an essential part of local delivery. For many communities of Central Wales active citizenship (volunteering and self-help) are crucial in enabling



access to a range of services and opportunities, and can help determine new and innovative economic, environmental, and social solutions. This sector can therefore achieve deeper interventions by taking action at the local level within a wider strategic framework, reaching out to difficult-to-reach groups.

15.12 Investment in education and skills will need to underpin future development to enable further growth in participation in the labour market. The Area's higher education and research infrastructure is unusually large for a rural area. It provides a substantial resource and opportunity. It will also be important to ensure a strategic provision of vocational training for the workforce to respond to labour market needs across the Area as well as to develop community learning and general education. The challenge of accessibility both in terms of transport and ICT infrastructures is considerable because the overall population levels are not attractive to the private sector on a market-driven basis.

15.13 The character and integrity of life in the rural communities of Central Wales, combined with the range of natural resources, create an area where the ways of life and land uses have strong links with the diverse and high quality environment. The diversity of Central Wales' environment also offers unrealised economic potential if developed sensitively and knowledge-based industries, new environmental technologies and sustainable forms of high-quality tourism, both inland and at the coast, can be encouraged.

15.14 The natural resources and infrastructure of the area also play a significant local, national and potentially international role in providing various environmental services. The challenge facing Central Wales hinges on realising those economic opportunities which will enable small scale businesses, including the third sector, to flourish, creating better paid and higher skilled jobs, in a manner which also maintains and strengthens the acknowledged qualities of the environment and rural life, which make the Area so distinctive.

15.15 A significant challenge for the Area is its ability to play not only a local but also a national role in responding and adapting to the impact of climate change. The challenges are to use and enhance the range of the environmental infrastructure within Central Wales to enable the Area to have a crucial role in reducing the risks associated with increased flooding from rivers, sea and heavy rainfall; maintain water resources during periods of shortage; develop renewable energy technologies; and use the ecosystems and biodiversity of the area as a realistic means of conserving and managing Wales' important landscapes in terms of carbon capture.

15.16 Future flood risks and coastal erosion present a significant economic threat to some of the key economic centres of Central Wales and the capacity of utility provision continues to pose a barrier to economic growth in certain parts of the region. The sustainable plan-led growth for the Area will need to address these



barriers and reflect the finite nature of our resources.

15.17 The Spatial Plan vision for Central Wales is intrinsically linked to the other regions of Wales by virtue of its central location and will help to reflect the reality of how different communities look to a variety of places to access employment, services or leisure activities. Central Wales also has important cross-border linkages and dependencies with the West Midlands, North West England and Ireland.

#### **Building Sustainable Communities**

15.18 The Central Wales Area is categorised by a network of different types of settlements, with a large proportion of people living in relatively remote locations. A key priority for Central Wales is to build on the regional strengths of the area. The rich mosaic of towns and villages is important for employment, social and recreational activity and to access a wide range of services. In such a diverse area, it is important to recognise the interaction between places of varying sizes and their mutually supporting roles in providing access to services.

15.19 To ensure our communities are sustainable, consideration will need to be given to the likely impacts of climate change. This can include how to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of communities and also promoting carbon-neutral developments and the concepts of transition towns and carbonneutral settlements.

15.20 Ensuring good access to services across the Area, including for example health, is a key determinant of quality of life. The Area is currently served by a number of hospitals, with some parts relying on services from neighbouring English regions. Bronglais hospital in Aberystwyth, with its central coastal location within the region provides significant secondary health care services across the region although it has half the bed numbers of a classic urban main general hospital. A rural health plan in preparation will help mould the future pattern of services. Solving the problems of servicing a sparsely populated rural area with high quality hospital services that a more heavily populated rural area can sustain to 21st century standards, will always be a difficult challenge.

15.21 The individual community strategies in Central Wales, through the health, social care and wellbeing strategies, are prioritising health promotion, including prevention and early intervention; and improving the quality, integration and delivery of services and tackling the significant geographic and social inequalities of health, social care and wellbeing in the predominantly rural area of Central Wales.

15.22 Another key priority is to ensure access to affordable homes (to buy or rent) in locations which are convenient for local work and services and ensuring a range of housing types are available in a choice of high-quality environments. A set of common principles on affordable housing have been established for the Central Wales Spatial Plan Area. These include:

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- Promoting alternative or innovative means of providing affordable homes at the local level. eg. community land trusts
- Supporting the strategic housing function in each local authority and ensuring that affordable housing reflects corporate and strategic priorities, and is embedded in local housing strategies
- Continuing to promote affordable housing and other housing issues of strategic importance eg. quality and resource efficiency
- Identifying and promoting the opportunities for local authority partnership working where housing market areas cross unitary boundaries, developing joint approaches for addressing identified issues.

15.23 As a potential model for the sustainable development of Central Wales and to address the diverse range of places, Wales Spatial Plan partners have broadly identified primary settlements and hubs and clusters as focal points for appropriate plan-led growth and investment.

15.24 The hub and cluster approach seeks to encourage communities to work collaboratively, not competitively, to support their own needs and those of the smaller settlements and hinterlands which gravitate towards them, balancing the needs and aspirations of communities with appropriate plan-led growth and service provision. This approach will enable flexibility, entrepreneurship

and community involvement in the determination of the future growth of communities and will be further explored through the community strategy and local development plan process.

15.25 This designation is one of functionality and is intended to be an illustrative approach to sustainable development. It is also recognised that this approach may not be appropriate for all service provision or development activity which may, due to its nature and by necessity, cover a smaller or larger area, eg. health or higher education. It is also important to note that the future development of many of the communities within the clusters will be subject to significant influence from other settlements and clusters within Central Wales, other Spatial Plan Areas and the English regions.

15.26 The primary settlements, hubs and clusters as illustrated in the Central Wales Spatial Plan Area map are:

- Aberystwyth, identified as a primary settlement consistent with its role as a strategic centre for Central Wales, and its national significance for Wales, forming a cluster with Aberaeron
- The **Brecon Beacons** cluster
- Carmarthen, identified as a primary settlement with a strategic role in three Spatial Plan Areas
- The **Denbigh** cluster
- The **Llandrindod Wells** cluster
- The Rural Meirionnydd and **Conwy** cluster



- The **Severn Valley** cluster with Newtown identified as a primary settlement
- The **Teifi Valley** cluster
- The Tywi Valley cluster.

15.27 Ystradgynlais and Crickhowell, whilst maintaining links with the Brecon Beacons cluster, have significant influence and linkages with the Swansea Bay and South East Wales Spatial Plan Areas respectively which will necessitate strong crossboundary synergy in their future development.

### **Promoting a Sustainable Economy**

15.28 The creation of a modern economy, which utilises and develops the skills and knowledge of its people, linking economic ambition to rural areas, is vital for the sustainable future of Central Wales.

15.29 In Central Wales' agriculture is predominantly based on family farms engaged in meat and milk production. Common Agricultural Policy reform has decoupled subsidies from production and farmers are adapting to market forces. There is still a need to add value to production, actively marketing through closer working between producers, suppliers and retailers, utilising existing local skills and expertise in the agri-food and food processing sectors, as well as developing new non-food agricultural niche products. Continued support of agriculture generally to protect and develop food production and for improved food security is also important. The integration of farming, tourism and quality food represents

a significant opportunity for the Area. Another priority is to develop the strong potential growth of the service sector through, for example, new and innovative opportunities for service delivery.



15.30 The environmental and cultural assets of the Area offer the opportunity to develop specialist indigenous business clusters centred around carbon sink technologies, alternative renewable energy technologies, new natural products, creative industries and the existing skills and expertise in the earth, land, environment and marine sciences, maximising the opportunities through the higher education sector including Aberystwyth University, their partnership work with Bangor University and the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences. This combined with the emerging unmanned aerial systems, media and technology sectors, the decommissioning of Trawsfynydd nuclear power station and integrated business support services will help create high value-added business opportunities for the Area.



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15.31 In support of the primary settlement, hub and cluster approach and to reinforce the role and function of strategic locations, focused interventions will need to be implemented through integrated approaches to economic development and regeneration. The delivery of the recent and on-going regeneration studies focused on the hubs/clusters of Central Wales will be key to achieving this integrated approach, together with the development of a practical implementation model and mechanism for the distribution of growth.

15.32 To achieve the sustainable development and appropriate growth required to build resilience into the regional economy there is a need to support micro and social enterprises and to promote indigenous development and local production, including for niche markets. Similarly there is a need to retain and strengthen the competitiveness of the Area's niche manufacturing which has a strong presence in the Severn Valley. Regeneration and investment interventions will be needed to address utilities' current shortfall in capacity. This is a significant barrier to development in some parts of the Area. Issues of peripherality and accessing markets will also need to be addressed through appropriate infrastructure measures including sites and premises, transport and ICT.

15.33 Tourism, both inland and coastal, has been identified as a key growth sector for the Area which due to the exceptional quality of the landscape and natural environment together with the strong sense of culture and heritage, attracts many visitors. The Brecon Beacons and Snowdonia National Parks are worldclass attractions and the Area's stunning coastline and areas of natural beauty also add to the quality of the visitor experience.

15.34 There are two key studies recently completed which have identified the priorities for maximising the tourism potential within Central Wales. These are the Tourism Opportunities Action Plan Framework -Enhancing Inland Tourism in Central Wales which aims to build on the unique strengths and characteristics that distinguish Central Wales from other tourism destinations; and the Cardigan Bay Coastal Regeneration Action Plan, identifying projects that contribute to the sustainable regeneration of the coastal area.

#### Labour Market issues

15.35 The legacy of economic change and social deprivation means that Central Wales will face a big challenge to equip all of its people with the skills they will need to help realise the potential of the knowledge-based economy and well paid highly-skilled job opportunities. There are significant existing barriers to accessibility and take-up of skills development within Central Wales which include transport, childcare, and poor ICT infrastructure. These barriers, whilst not being exclusive to Central Wales are more acute within the rural areas due to the dispersed nature of the population. The Area has the highest level of education attainment in Wales



whilst also having pockets of poor literacy and numeracy. The key issue for the region is how to capitalise on the exceptionally high average educational attainment levels when the small urban settlement size will struggle to provide the breadth of economic opportunities to retain or attract back cohorts of young people who will have gone on to higher education opportunities outside the region.

15.36 A key challenge will be to maximise the ability of young people to make informed choices between academic and vocational options and linking these choices with current and future opportunities within the local economy. Building on initiatives such as the Llwybro-Routes programme and Gwynedd's Llwyddo'n Lleol as part of integrated interventions will help increase and promote the opportunities for local people to stay or return to the Area. Higher and further education will play a strategic role in terms of developing the required skills within the region. Central Wales needs to capitalise on the key educational establishments located in the Area and the wide ranging economic, social and cultural opportunities they offer.

15.37 Wales Spatial Plan partners have identified the following priorities for education and skills in Central Wales:

- Ensuring a sufficiently strong and innovative network of vocational skills providers, with the capacity to respond to demand from individuals and employers
- Ensuring that educational infrastructure and providers have

the flexibility to adapt to, and develop collaborative learning responses to address, changing rural demographics

- Increasing the use and availability of flexible learning methods to include, for example, e-learning and mobile units, to help address accessibility issues, rural deprivation and isolation
- Increasing the availability and takeup of learning provided through the Welsh language and bilingually, and the promotion of a Welsh language workforce
- Ensuring that the provision of learning is able to meet current and future needs of businesses and individuals, specifically in management development and leadership, basic skills and ICT
- Working with key stakeholders to identify key sectors for Central Wales and helping remove identified barriers to learning.

# **Achieving Sustainable Accessibility**

15.38 Personal mobility and accessibility are critical to social inclusion and key factors in increasing economic activity, widening employment and education opportunities, tackling inequalities in health and enabling people to access services. In Central Wales, levels of car dependency are amongst the highest in Wales. Improving accessibility to economic and commercial markets within Wales and globally and investing in the physical infrastructure to link knowledge economy opportunities,

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research and development institutions and local areas will be vital for the future economic development of Central Wales. This requires, due to the nature of the Area, a balanced and integrated approach in relation to social, environmental and economic impacts/ benefits. The aim in Central Wales is to achieve the benefits of sustainable accessibility through effective land use planning, improved ICT infrastructures and integrated transport strategies.



15.39 The extensive network of trunk and county roads serving Central Wales is of varying standard. There are lengthy, substantially single track, rail networks running through the region. However the frequency of services and accessibility to stations means that large parts of the region are dependent on road-based transport. Community transport and demand responsive passenger transport services offer the opportunity to provide feeder services to main transport routes and are often seen as providing a lifeline in the deepest rural areas.

15.40 As part of realising the aspirations for the area, regional transport plans (RTPs) will be prepared by the four regional transport consortia.

Three impact on Central Wales, namely TraCC, TAITH and SWWITCH, with TraCC wholly within the Central Wales Area. In preparing the RTPs, the priorities identified through consultation with stakeholders include:

- Improving the availability, quality and integration of passenger transport, including the role of community and demand responsive transport as feeder services
- Providing, promoting and improving sustainable, affordable and healthy forms of transport
- Improving connectivity of the settlements within the Area and to other regions of Wales and England
- Maintaining, improving and maximising the efficient use of the existing transport infrastructure for the movement of people and freight
- Reducing the need to travel and minimising the environmental, economic and social disbenefits of transport.

#### Information and Communication **Technology**

15.41 The importance of high bandwidth ICT in terms of accessibility, economic growth and in addressing rural deprivation both in the main settlements and the wider peripheral areas has been highlighted by Central Wales Spatial Plan partners. It remains the case that some rural areas of Central Wales do not yet have access to high bandwidth affordable broadband, suffer from a lack of mobile telecommunications coverage and in the future, following digital

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changeover in 2009, may not have digital television coverage. In order to achieve the potential economic and social benefits for Central Wales which high bandwidth ICT and digital services can offer and to address the growing digital divide in rural areas a number of priorities have been identified:

- Providing innovative highspeed connectivity to strategic employment sites/settlements and to the wider rural areas
- Addressing the remaining 'broadband not spots', adopting last/first mile capacity approach
- Providing support at the level of integrating systems to improve business processes
- Ensuring that mobile signal by the three major operators is made available on all major connectivity corridors in the region
- Providing ICT training to address business needs, to enable and support greater home working and to develop community exploitation of ICT.

#### Valuing our Environment

15.42 The Central Wales Area offers a diverse, distinctive and high quality natural and built environment, offering a wealth of high quality landscapes, small settlements, archaeological sites, historic monuments and rich biodiversity. The environments of the Brecon Beacons and Snowdonia National Parks, combined with the coastline of Cardigan Bay and the many inland areas of natural beauty which reflect the rich heritage of rural life in Central Wales, provide

havens for much of Wales' important biodiversity and are increasingly being recognised as having enormous significance because of their potential contribution to address the impacts of climate change.

15.43 In the development of priorities, the aim is to recognise and adapt to on-going change both in terms of the climate and future land use or land management. As such it is vital in Central Wales to acknowledge the role of the land based sectors, including agriculture, and the impact of the changing funding mechanisms in any integrated approach to addressing rural challenges and opportunities.

15.44 Conserving and enhancing the environment is increasingly important in terms of the long-term ability of Central Wales to become a place where people choose to live and work on a quality of life basis. Getting out of the urban rat-race is likely to have increasing attractions for people provided they can find employment or run a business from a rural area. Central Wales is important as a national opportunity for learning, culture and healthy living and as a resource to support the fundamentals of life (food, water and clean air). It also provides a key economic opportunity in terms of tourism, in new technologies such as renewable energy including community micro generation, in the knowledge economy and in the earth, marine, land and environmental science sectors.

15.45 The following key priorities have been identified for the Area:





- Adapting and responding to climate change both in terms of challenges and opportunities for the Area (flood risk, carbon capture/offset, coastal erosion, renewable energy)
- Achieving sustainable use of our resources, including waste, water, soils, minerals, aggregates and land for food production
- Conserving and enhancing our ecosystems and increasing the resilience of biodiversity/natural environment to the impacts of climate change
- Improving the local environment, including the built environment, and access to the coast and countryside, and prioritising the development of brownfield sites
- Promoting environmental education and skills development in the Area to maximise the emerging environmental opportunities and technologies.

# **Respecting Distinctiveness**

15.46 Distinctiveness, sense of identity and pride in place are important elements of successful and creative communities and countries.



The cultural landscape of Central Wales is generally characterised by its distinctive heritage, landscape and cultural and linguistic identity. All of these can play a key role in attracting people to the area and create opportunities for celebration and promotion. However, Central Wales covers a huge geographic area and therefore has many distinctive areas within itself, from the smaller rural villages to the larger, but still small urbanised settlements of fewer than 20,000 people. These communities exhibit many diverse and individual environmental, industrial, population and heritage characteristics with strong community cohesion, often providing a unique sense of place or community. As such, it is important to ensure that in achieving the vision for Central Wales as a whole, the uniqueness of the communities within the Area are not lost but are celebrated and promoted to retain their vibrancy and to help achieve long-term sustainability.

15.47 A key challenge will be to ensure that inward migration enhances rather than reduces the population balance and mix, ensuring sufficient opportunities for our young people to stay and for those returning whilst also maintaining and supporting the distinctive cultural, historical and linguistic attributes of the Area.

15.48 The Welsh language has a significant role to play in our communities and should be promoted as a positive attribute to the Area. A key priority will be to develop the Area in accordance with laith Pawb's vision of creating a modern bilingual society.



15.49 We will need to maintain and support the distinctive character of our Welsh historic environment, without compromising society's present and future needs. High standards of design will play a major part in protecting sense of place in relation to the natural and built environment of the Area. Conserving and celebrating the Area's heritage and development in terms of sites, buildings and people is an important aspect of this as is the redeployment of redundant buildings.

Working with our Neighbours

15.50 Central Wales whilst having the opportunity to be self sustaining cannot view itself in isolation within Wales. People access employment, services or leisure activities in other parts of Wales or the UK. The Area has significant overlaps with other Spatial Plan Areas which will be intrinsic in the development of those communities peripheral to the Area. As examples, Ystradgynlais and Crickhowell are very closely linked with adjoining settlements to the south as is Penrhyndeudraeth to Porthmadog in the North West. Carmarthen with a hub role in three Spatial Plan Areas will require alignment of priorities across all Areas and the Denbighshire area will be influenced by activity within the area covered by the Mersey Dee Alliance. For this reason and for the significant economic opportunities generated by these relationships, the strategy for the Central Wales Area will overlap with the visions of the North West, North East, Swansea Bay and South East Wales Spatial Plan Areas.

15.51 What is happening in the neighbouring English regions and Ireland impacts on Wales in many ways. Our lives and social networks, environmental assets and transport infrastructure do not stop at the Welsh border. People use health, education and training facilities in England and shop in English or Irish towns and cities and vice versa.



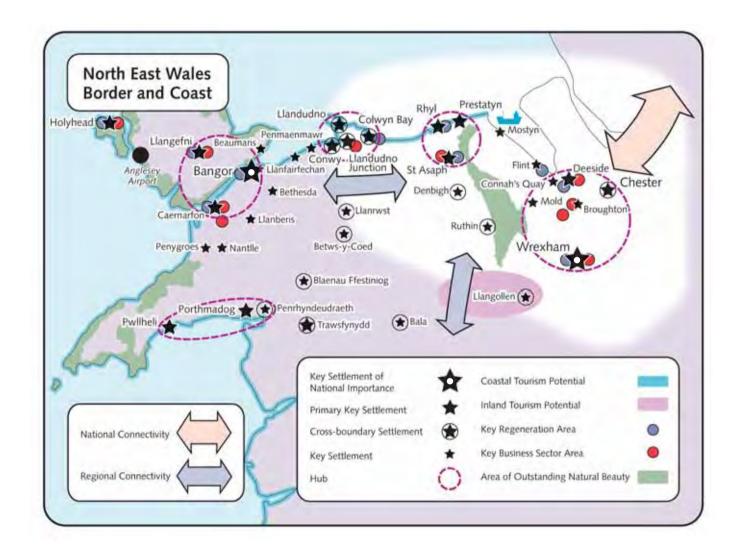
15.52 A key influence for the area, particularly in the border settlements and the eastern areas of Central Wales, is the West Midlands. The Welsh Assembly Government and the West Midlands Regional Assembly signed a memorandum of understanding outlining their commitment to promote stronger and more effective crossborder collaboration in both policy development and service delivery. A significant number of organisations and delivery agents have demonstrated commitment to the initiative by signing up to the principles within the memorandum of understanding. A number of thematic cross-border groups have been established to take forward cross-border issues identified as playing a vital role in informing the future work of the Central Wales Spatial Plan Area Group in the border areas.

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# 16. North East Wales - Border and Coast





'An area harnessing the economic drivers on both sides of the border, reducing inequalities and improving the quality of its natural and physical assets'

16.1 North East Wales makes a very important contribution to both the Welsh and UK economy. The future prosperity of this Area is closely linked with that of North West England, in particular West Cheshire, as well as the neighbouring Spatial Plan Areas of North West Wales and Central Wales. North East Wales is made up of distinct but closely linked areas - the urbanised and industrialised border including the Wrexham-Deeside-Chester hub, the coastal belt and the rural hinterlands.

16.2 Key elements in realising the vision for North East Wales are:

- Strengthening key hubs as a focus for investment in future employment, housing, retail, leisure and services. Outside the hubs, strong sustainable communities will be fostered within coastal, border and rural towns and villages to provide locally accessible jobs and services across the Area
- · Developing sustainable accessibility between hubs, coastal and border towns and rural parts of the Area. Improving accessibility on key road and rail corridors to maintain economic growth and provide development opportunities to the west
- Improving the quality and diversity of the economy, with a focus on high value manufacturing and services, including a high quality year-round tourism sector

- Developing, in a focused and strategic manner, the skills and education of the current and potential workforce. It is vital that the Area's children and young people develop the basic education, skills, wider knowledge and aspirations to enable them to access good job opportunities and meet the needs of local employers
- Promoting sustainable development, which is at the heart of the strategy, in part driven by the wealth of natural and built heritage within the area. The need to protect and enhance this is paramount along with the need to address and respond to climate change.

16.3 For Flintshire, Wrexham and Denbighshire, the cross-border linkages to the wider area of Chester and West Cheshire are crucial. The opportunity in this border area of North East Wales is about harnessing its special characteristics to benefit not only North East Wales but the wider geography, east and west. It will be a place where the strengths of prosperous areas are enhanced and the benefits of economic growth are maximised through linking areas of opportunity with areas in need of regeneration. Working towards this vision, the Mersey Dee Alliance will play a key role in delivering the spatial strategy through close collaboration and continued partnership working across North East Wales, West Cheshire, and the Wirral.

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16.4 Conwy and Denbighshire are less cross-border influenced in relation to travel to work, but their housing markets are influenced by the border area which also provides opportunities for high-value employment. There are strong links with the North West Wales and Central Wales Spatial Plan Areas. For Conwy and Denbighshire, broadening the economic base and raising the profile of the counties' environmental assets will be an important focus to provide high quality employment opportunities, building on the area's strengths and fostering a unique sense of place.

#### **Building Sustainable Communities**

16.5 The communities within North East Wales are diverse but can broadly be characterised by large industrial areas, traditional seaside resorts and rural market towns, all experiencing varying rates of growth and decline. The future development and potential of many of these communities is inter-dependent with those on the English side of the border. If Deeside does well. Chester does well and if Chester does well. Deeside does well. The strategy for North East Wales therefore aims to bring together distinct elements of the cross-border area of Flintshire, Wrexham and West Cheshire with the more self-contained parts of Conwy and Denbighshire in order to spread opportunities and reduce inequalities. Key elements of the spatial strategy include:

• Developing and supporting strategic hubs around Wrexham-Deeside-Chester, Conwy-Llandudno-Llandudno Junction-Colwyn Bay

- and Rhyl-St Asaph-Bodelwyddan-Prestatyn-Kinmel Bay
- Focusing on areas in need of regeneration including the rural hinterland
- Enhancing links between areas of opportunity and areas of need, particularly sustainable travel links



- Identifying and developing complementary future roles of settlements and centres within the region
- Protecting and enhancing sensitive areas of natural, built and historic importance.

16.6 The cross-border area contains the strategic hub of Wrexham, Deeside and Chester. It includes Broughton and extends to Ellesmere Port. Whilst these centres have quite different characteristics, they are considered to bring a combination of strengths to the cross-border sub-region. The focus for new investment and development here, in the short-term at least, would largely be on these

strategic centres to foster significant long-term benefits in economic, social and environmental terms.

16.7 Conwy and Denbighshire predominantly fall within the North East Wales Spatial Plan Area, and also overlap with Central Wales, while the western quarry villages in Conwy are located in the North West Wales Area. The strategy highlights a positive future for the communities in Conwy and Denbighshire, together with a need to be realistic about the scale of development appropriate here. It is important to develop a distinct identity and unique sense of place for the area at the heart of North Wales as an outward-looking place that has safe communities and protects and enhances the Welsh language and culture. Also key is marketing the area's assets with good accessibility to other regions and wider afield whilst developing travel solutions to improve the accessibility of the rural hinterland.

16.8 The North East Wales coastal towns currently experience varying levels of growth and decline based on the rise and fall of coastal holiday resort tourism and retirement-related housing and leisure. Strategic hubs will be supported here to foster economic and social growth and inclusiveness, address socio-economic deprivation and improve access to key services and employment. These hubs will be around Conwy-Llandudno-Llandudno Junction-Colwyn Bay and Rhyl-St Asaph-Bodelwyddan-Prestatyn-Kinmel Bay.

16.9 The strategic hubs will be supported by a strong network of key rural, coastal and border service centres. Strengthening regional towns such as Denbigh, Ruthin and Mold will be important in providing local employment, retail, services and leisure activities. Facilitating sustainable travel across the Area will be key to ensuring full access within and between hubs and key service centres for all communities including those dispersed in rural areas.

16.10 In or adjacent to the major towns of the northern coastal corridor and around Wrexham are pockets containing some of the most deprived urban areas in Wales. Here, there are problems associated with poverty, multiple deprivation, low levels of economic activity and lowquality housing and infrastructure.

16.11 A further strand of the spatial strategy focuses on improving the wellbeing of communities through social, physical and economic improvements. For North East Wales, identified regeneration settlements include communities within Wrexham County Borough (such as Plas Madoc, Queensway, Caia Park and Gwenfro), communities within Flintshire (such as Flint, Holywell, Mold, Shotton, Mostyn, Ffynnongroyw and Gronant) and in Conwy and Denbighshire, the coastal towns of Colwyn Bay and Rhyl.

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16.12 In common with the UK as a whole, the overall North East Wales population is ageing and growing, with net out-migration of people aged 16-24 and in-migration of both younger and older groups for employment or retirement. The rate of change has varied over recent years and differs across communities. Some communities in Wrexham and Flintshire are experiencing relatively high levels of economic in-migration which presents opportunities and challenges in terms of service provision but has helped to sustain the economy by filling jobs in a very tight labour market. For Conwy and Denbighshire there are issues around people moving to the area to retire, which creates different pressures for planning of housing and service provision.

16.13 Ensuring good access to services such as health, for users and workers across the Area, is a key determinant of quality of life. The Spatial Strategy for North East Wales, informed by a good understanding of regional demographic changes and its drivers, will inform decisions about how and where services should be delivered. Partners are working to analyse and share this information to support better joined-up and strategic decisionmaking in terms of land use planning, service delivery, and accessibility planning. There will also be important linkages to community strategies and health and wellbeing strategies.

16.14 Providing a full range of good quality housing and tenure choice across North East Wales with a particular emphasis on affordable housing will also be important to achieve balanced communities and a spatial distribution of economic

activities. Housing affordability is an issue throughout the sub region to varying degrees, partly as a result of the dynamics of the regional housing market.

16.15 For Conwy and Denbighshire, past residential development rates have generally been at or above the annual requirements set, but this has seemingly made no impact on affordability issues faced across the area. These are exacerbated by high levels of population, and the fact that a large proportion of the area's population live and work in the area and are in receipt of relatively low wages due principally to the structural mix of the economy. In Conwy, future planning and housing development may be somewhat constrained by physical and environmental limits on the availability of land.

16.16 The local authorities are working in partnership to ensure that land use plans and housing strategies can help support and deliver the spatial strategy.

# **Promoting a Sustainable Economy**

16.17 North East Wales is highly dependent upon the manufacturing sector, both in terms of jobs provided and gross value added to the local and national economy. This sector is highly vulnerable to changes in the global economy, both in terms of exchangerate fluctuations and of low-cost competition from new and emerging areas. Maintaining the competitiveness of this sector is of fundamental importance to the long-term prosperity of North East Wales and the wider North Wales region.

16.18 In particular, the crossborder area of North East Wales has redeveloped itself very successfully into one based on high value-added manufacturing and services. A number of these sectors are now considered to be of national or international significance: aerospace, automotive manufacturing and financial services.

16.19 The strategy for the crossborder area places emphasis on the roles that settlements and centres have, both now and in the future, particularly in terms of employment. An important distinction is drawn between the different types of market roles - ranging from international to local in geographic terms and across the various economic sectors including for example manufacturing, high level services, processing industries, tourism and leisure. The existing market roles illustrate the great importance of a small number of settlements within the cross-border area which compete in international and national markets. The key areas working in international markets are St Asaph (emerging industries), Broughton (high technology manufacturing), Deeside (high technology and mainstream manufacturing), Chester (high level services, leisure and tourism), Wrexham (mainstream manufacturing), and Llangollen (leisure and tourism).

16.20 In Conwy and Denbighshire, the emphasis needs to be on the growth of the local economy, in part through investment in products and services in the distinctive sectors of the area in order to improve the value of the economy. For example, there is evidence of very real growth potential within the opto-electronics sector, building on investments at St Asaph.

16.21 It is important that the economy of North East Wales continues to build upon its significant strengths by improving the quality and value of the existing sectors and making the most of its environmental and geographic advantages. The focus should be on developing existing key sectors such as high value manufacturing, financial and business services, public service administration, health/social care and childcare, tourism, retail and leisure. The agricultural sector has opportunities to diversify and change to respond to both market forces and future changes in land use patterns, for example those resulting from climate change. At the same time there are opportunities to diversify the economy into new and emerging industries and sectors. If the economy of this strong economic area has a structural weakness, it relates to the lack of graduate level employment, professional services and financial services, where the Chester and Cheshire cross-border area has its strength.





16.22 The investment by the Welsh Assembly Government at Llandudno Junction is a prominent example of planned growth within a key hub in the public services sector. The local area must maximise the benefits from this investment through local people accessing jobs and by local supplier development. There are also opportunities for significant employment growth in health, particularly around major hospitals in Wrexham and Bodelwyddan.

16.23 North East Wales has a relatively high number of large employers, outside which the economy is dominated by micro businesses. The establishment and growth of indigenous and incoming businesses needs encouragement. The Area must offer a high quality built and natural environment, a highly skilled and flexible workforce, a range of appropriate sites and premises, research and development and office opportunities and infrastructure such as effective transport and communications links.

16.24 The presence of adequate ICT infrastructure throughout the area is becoming an increasingly important location requirement as businesses adapt and change to modern technology. Outside the main settlements and centres, ICT infrastructure can also contribute greatly to the rural economy. It is important to maximise the opportunities from the FibreSpeed high speed broadband investment planned for North East Wales and take other steps towards competitive advantage and equality of access.

16.25 A key element of supporting sustainable economic development will be the provision of a complementary suite of strategic employment sites across North East Wales in order to retain and attract high quality employers. The Mersey Dee Alliance has also identified this as one of its priorities for joint action in the cross-border area with opportunities for both public and private sector intervention and joint working at key sites in North East Wales.

16.26 Furthermore, it is important to maintain the quality of the offer at established key employment sites in the North East Wales Area including major industrial estates in Wrexham and Deeside.

16.27 Across North East Wales there are sufficient or even surplus levels of employment land allocated in land use plans but it is recognised that the specific type and quality may not be suited to the future demands from employers which are more likely to require smaller units for service or high value manufacturing sectors as the economy develops. This is being addressed through the land use planning process.

Skills, education and labour market issues

16.28 North East Wales is aiming to grow its economy by helping more people into work who are currently economically inactive and by providing better higher paid and more secure job opportunities for those already in the workforce. Developing, in a focused and strategic manner, the skills and educational attainment levels of the Area, which are low, will be critical to future economic success and social improvement.

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16.29 The legacy of economic change and social deprivation means that the North East Wales Area will face a big challenge to equip all its people with the skills they need to be part of a successful high value economy. Despite recent improvements, economic inactivity rates remain high in pockets throughout the region, especially in coastal towns of Conwy, Denbighshire and urban Deeside. It is also an important issue in rural communities and Communities First areas in Wrexham and elsewhere.

16.30 In addition, demographic changes mean that the population is on average ageing, life expectancy is increasing, and young people who move away from the Area are being replaced by older inward migrants. There is a tight labour market with low levels of unemployment and people with high qualifications leave for more appropriate opportunities elsewhere.

16.31 These factors point to the need in North East Wales to concentrate effort on supporting a new group of people back into work and learning in order to widen participation beyond those who currently want to work. In addition it is imperative to continually update the skills of those who are currently in the workforce so that they can adapt to change, and offer a competitive advantage for the Area in attracting quality employers in key existing and emerging sectors.

16.32 Employers identify a lack of basic skills and relevant vocational skills within the workforce, and for those with higher level qualifications there is often a skills mismatch in specific

sectors, eg. high value manufacturing. The further development of the skills base of North East Wales by public and private employers and trades unions will require a focus on the key economic sectors with potential for future growth as well as those sectors which continue to provide a variety of employment opportunities. It will also be important to work with employers in the Area to ensure that they demonstrate support for raising the skills of all the workforce, for example through the Basic Skills Employer Pledge.

16.33 The Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills will work with Spatial Plan partners across North East Wales, the further and higher education providers, private and voluntary sector training providers and Jobcentre Plus to take forward the key elements. In addition to this, the following tailor-made local action will be taken:

- Ensuring that the learning infrastructure and the provision of learning is adequate to meet current and future needs of businesses and individuals involved in key sectors, including, for example, tourism and hospitality, engineering and manufacturing
- Ensuring that the provision of learning is responsive to the needs of those who are economically inactive and helps remove barriers to working
- Promoting parity of esteem between academic and vocational learning to aid local economic development



- Supporting the development of knowledge economy enterprises by the appropriate provision of learning
- Supporting the development of local private and community enterprise by securing appropriate managerial and entrepreneurship learning
- Supporting individual and enterprise development through learning to promote and develop generic skills
- Providing sustainable transport links to ensure access to learning, and employment opportunities.

16.34 Evidence-based reviews of needs, issues and the adequacy of the current learning network will be of paramount importance. A key priority for the Mersey Dee Alliance in the cross-border area is to work together to improve the planning of education and skills provision across North East Wales. West Cheshire and the Wirral.

#### **Tourism**

16.35 Tourism is identified as a key driver for the social, economic and environmental development of the region. Tourism is a volatile industry, influenced by a complex mix of external factors that have a major bearing on patterns of demand. 'Achieving our Potential' - the national Tourism Strategy for Wales, sets out an action plan to guide a co-ordinated response to the high level challenges which will face the industry up to 2013. Five strategic challenges have been identified for tourism in Wales: branding, quality, access, skills and partnership.

16.36 The focus for the region is in strengthening the unique sense of place, improving the quality of tourism facilities, and reducing seasonality. Actions are focusing on developing products, promotions and people. The areas highlighted for targeted marketing include Snowdonia Mountains and Coast, the coastal resorts of Llandudno, Colwyn Bay, Rhyl and Prestatyn, and the North Wales Borderlands. Some investment in key tourism destinations and supporting infrastructure will be required to ensure that the Area meets visitor expectations.

16.37 The coast of North East Wales includes a number of traditional seaside resorts which have suffered from changes in the market and visitor expectations. There is a need to diversify their local economies and to improve their image and leisure and tourism offer as they provide quality beaches and opportunities for marine tourism. Llandudno at the western boundary is not only a popular tourist town with a significant accommodation base. It is also a service, retail and conference centre and has the capacity to spread opportunity throughout the central North Wales area.

16.38 The region is well placed to further develop high value sectors such as business tourism (building on the opportunities offered by a very large manufacturing sector) and outdoor activities such as walking and cycling, building on existing investments in opening up access to the countryside and encouraging visitors to discover the wider natural assets of the North East Wales Area. There is also potential to develop cultural tourism and to increase leisure, retail

and catering provision in the Area's market towns, for example through developing 'place marketing', building on local assets of culture, history and landscape.

16.39 Adaptation to climate change will be crucial for the tourism industry. Warmer summers may make the North Wales coast a more attractive destination to visitors. However, sea level rise and increased storminess are serious threats. Therefore any new developments or infrastructure improvements will need to be carefully planned to cope with that threat. Also important is improving and promoting opportunities for accessing tourism facilities by sustainable modes, reducing the environmental impact of car traffic.

16.40 The delivery of the tourismrelated action plans and priorities will be co-ordinated by Visit Wales and Tourism Partnership North Wales, through the development of an updated tourism strategy for North Wales. This will include the priority actions identified for the area within the Welsh Coastal Tourism Strategy to guide the sustainable development of the tourism potential along the Welsh coastline.

#### **Achieving Sustainable** Accessibility

16.41 Developing a sustainable accessibility solution for the region that has minimal impact on the environment and protected areas will be a crucial element in delivering the spatial strategy for North East Wales. The Area forms part of a wider crossborder economy, where efficient movement of a large workforce to and from places of work, as well as moving raw materials and finished products to and from manufacturers and other freight users is vital to the Area's longterm competitiveness.

16.42 It will be important to sustainably meet the needs of freight traffic across North East Wales, including the requirements for roads, terminals, rail upgrading, transhipment facilities, the 'European Bridge' role of the northern coastal corridor, and the potential for coastal shipping.

16.43 Linking areas of need to areas of opportunity, delivering effective public services, spreading development from border and coastal hubs, fostering a high value services and manufacturing economy and providing a high quality year-round tourism destination all rely on people and goods being able to move around the area efficiently, effectively and sustainably.

16.44 Throughout North East Wales, improving accessibility will be key to spreading opportunities and reducing inequalities. Key road and rail corridors provide an opportunity to spread development to the west. Accessibility to the market towns and rural villages will help to provide north - south links from the coast to inland areas and link rural communities to services and employment and to strategic

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road and rail networks. Improved travel opportunities also need to be provided between the coastal and border towns and employment areas to ensure job and education opportunities are available across the Area.

16.45 In or adjacent to the major towns of the northern coastal corridor and around Wrexham are pockets containing some of the most deprived urban areas in Wales. Here are problems associated with poverty, outdated infrastructure and poor services. The strategy of regenerating such communities needs to be supported by transport initiatives, for example to support travel for retraining and access to job opportunities or to improve access to healthcare, shops and other services. Sometimes poor transport services such as infrequent buses contribute to the causes of deprivation; in other cases they are consequences of the low level of economic activity.

16.46 North East Wales has a high quality environment and heritage offer with considerable potential to increase the tourism based economy in a sustainable way. Transport provided to meet the needs of remoter communities should also be considered in terms of its tourist role and vice versa.

16.47 There is a strong need to transfer as much travel as possible away from cars. In the deeper rural areas, or at times when there would be very low demand for public transport, cars may be the most efficient and environmentally

acceptable travel choice. However, generally promoting modal shift in favour of non-car modes is desirable.

16.48 The role of innovative mobility solutions will be key across the North East Wales Area, including enhancement of public transport links and facilities, the use of demand responsive transport, car sharing, Park and Ride and community transport solutions. The role of the 'Smarter Choices' behavioural change programme including the development and promotion of comprehensive walking and cycling networks will also help promote change.

16.49 The transport infrastructure of North East Wales is susceptible to failure or interruption arising from a number of causes including age and condition of some infrastructure. dependence on the commercial bus market to supply essential links, continuity of revenue funding and localised congestion.

16.50 The regional transport plan being prepared by TAITH, the regional transport consortium for North Wales, is strongly linked to delivering the spatial strategies for the North West Wales and North East Wales Spatial Plan Areas.

16.51 The strategic location of North East Wales on two Trans-European Network priority axes means it is crucial to build upon the existing cross-border partnerships with key international, regional and local stakeholders to ensure a joined-up and integrated approach to transport strategy and implementation between

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England, Wales and the Republic of Ireland. The Mersey Dee Alliance has identified cross-border transport and accessibility as a key priority for joint action with an initial focus on:

- Delivering sustainable crossborder accessibility to employment opportunities across the area by the development and implementation of a joint accessibility strategy, including building on current demand responsive transport schemes and rolling out and co-ordinating the delivery of good practice in labour market mobility schemes
- Further developing the economic, social and environmental business case for improvement of the Wrexham - Bidston railway corridor, which provides a sustainable link between Wrexham and Deeside and also provides connections with the Wirral and the wider Liverpool city region.

16.52 TAITH will work closely with the partnership to develop proposals for inclusion and delivery within the regional transport plan.

#### Valuing our Environment

16.53 The natural environment and our built heritage are defining features of North East Wales and underpin its success as a place to live, visit, and work. Of note are the River Dee and particularly its estuary which is internationally important for wildlife, the wonderful coastline with its sand dunes, sandy beaches and high quality bathing waters, the stunningly attractive Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty,

our medieval castles, such as Rhuddlan and Flint and more recent industrial archaeology, particularly evident in places like Halkyn Mountain and Minera.



16.54 The overall aim is to deliver the Spatial Strategy for North East Wales in a way which protects and enhances the natural and built environment and to realise the opportunities that these assets provide in supporting the sustainable growth of the Area. A high quality natural and built environment is key to attracting visitors, promoting ongoing economic and social investment and contributing to the quality of life for the people here.

16.55 It is particularly important for North East Wales to offer a very high quality environment with a unique sense of place where people will want to live, work and play given that the



strategy focuses on attracting local and inward investing businesses in high value manufacturing and service sectors, tourists seeking high quality destinations and activity breaks throughout the year and also on encouraging young people to stay in the area because they see a good quality of life here rather than leaving to seek opportunities elsewhere.

16.56 North East Wales must play its part in mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change. This challenge provides huge opportunities environmentally but also economically and socially.

16.57 Environmental opportunities and actions for North East Wales include:

- Protecting and enhancing protected wildlife, landscape and built heritage sites
- Improving important tourist and environmental infrastructure
- Developing and improving green transport links
- Raising awareness and understanding and promoting the use of the natural and cultural environment
- Developing the agricultural industry to respond to climate change and maximise related opportunities

- Enhancing the environmental goods and services sectors
- Managing important tourist destinations, countryside and coastal environments
- · Providing and improving infrastructure for activity recreation.

16.58 A significant concern is the proportion of the Area's buildings which are located in flood risk areas. Climate change increases the risk both through rising sea levels and the likelihood of more intense patterns of rainfall and storminess. The development of more housing and industry in the Area may also put a strain on the environment particularly in relation to water resources and by isolating protected wildlife sites and species. In addition infrastructure such as energy, utilities, waste, water and sewers are already facing constraints in some places. It is therefore key that partners across North East Wales take a strategic approach to this issue to identify opportunities for creative solutions to, for example, land use and water issues, that can improve our resilience to climate change and benefit wildlife while permitting development in appropriate locations.

16.59 Waste is a significant issue constraining the Area with landfill capacity rapidly reducing. North East Wales is failing to meet recycling targets and fly tipping is spoiling our countryside. The whole hierarchy from waste minimisation through collection, recycling and residual disposal has spatial implications. Working through the regional waste planning group, action will be taken to provide appropriate infrastructure and



processes put in place to address the issues and provide opportunities for economic benefits from recycling and the development of new technologies.

16.60 The Mersey Dee Alliance is currently investigating the potential for the joint management of the River Dee and its estuary including the concept of developing a River Dee Regional Park, which would straddle the border and provide benefits to both. Building on the Dee River Management Plan, the concept could integrate economic development and tourism opportunities with environmental enhancement, protection of internationally designated sites, and the regeneration of communities along the River Dee and estuary area. A key element will include the need to balance the ecological, environmental and economic needs of the River Dee as a working river.

### **Respecting Distinctiveness**

16.61 Much of what makes North East Wales unique is the high quality of life it offers both to its existing people and as an attraction for visitors and those who choose to come to live here. Its very diverse nature, building on a rich history, allows it to look forward with confidence.

16.62 The Heather and Hillforts Landscape Partnership Scheme provides a strategic approach to restoring and maintaining the historic and natural heritage of the uplands of the Clwydian Range and Llantysilio Mountain. The Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a nationally designated landscape.

16.63 The Area also has a rich waterways heritage. The Llangollen Canal is carried over the River Dee by the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, the longest and highest aqueduct in Britain. Built in 1805, the aqueduct may receive World Heritage status by 2009. The Dee Valley and estuary have significant potential for heritage, tourism and leisure, especially in conjunction with the Llangollen International Eisteddfod and the Marcher castles on the Welsh border, including Chirk.



Welsh language issues

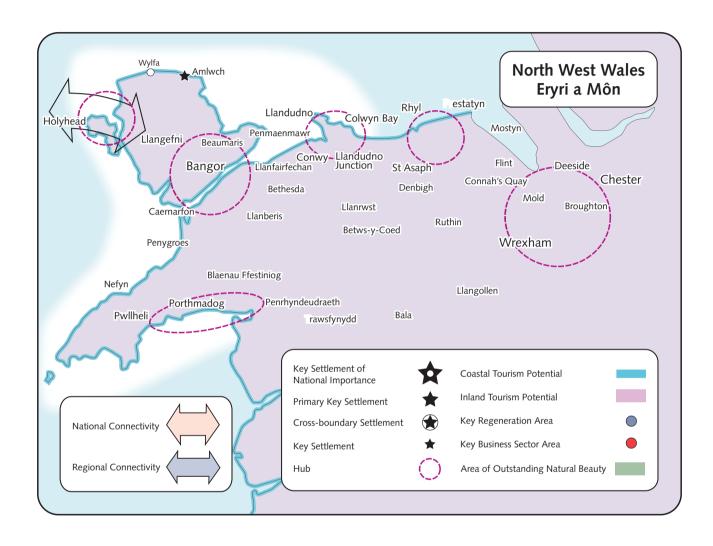
16.64 The use of the Welsh language varies across North East Wales and is currently more prominent in Conwy and Denbighshire than in Flintshire and Wrexham. Across North East Wales a new generation of Welsh learners and speakers is being fostered through the teaching of Welsh in schools and through adult education. This provides a good opportunity for the Area to capitalise on this element of its cultural heritage.

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# 17. North West Wales - Eryri a Môn





'A high-quality natural and physical environment supporting a cultural and knowledge-based economy that will help the area to maintain and enhance its distinctive character, retain and attract back young people and sustain the Welsh language'

17.1 The vision recognises that North West Wales is unique in both a Welsh and UK context due to its exceptional natural environment, built heritage and strong cultural identity. The Area's towns and villages and the surrounding countryside are home to generations of Welsh speaking communities that attach a strong importance to place intricately linked with its dramatic landscape and coastline. The economy has been restructuring for some time and faces some immediate challenges, including loss of employment in the nuclear industry at Trawsfynydd and Wylfa, continued restructuring within agriculture, finite lifespan of traditional primary industries such as quarrying, and the impact of globalisation on manufacturing industries. People from the UK and beyond have moved into the Area to take advantage of both the new opportunities and the high quality of life it has to offer. The vision seeks to ensure that these opportunities continue to be realised

and are able to benefit those living in the Area, whether it be access to jobs, homes. leisure activities or services whilst maintaining sense of place and supporting and promoting the Welsh language, culture and heritage.

17.2 In realising the vision, the Wales Spatial Plan recognises the importance of the cluster of larger towns located either side of the Menai Strait (referred to as the Menai hub) as a strong focal point for economic activity. The Area is also characterised by a diverse network of coastal and rural settlements as well as a network of quarrying and tourism centres that provide a rich tapestry of communities, all of which have an important role to play in the development of the Area as a whole. Conwy County has the unique position of being aligned to North West Wales, whilst also being integral to the North East Wales and Central Wales Spatial Plan Areas. Similarly, Gwynedd County aligns with





Central Wales. Links with the vision for other Wales Spatial Plan Areas will therefore overlap in some parts of the region and will help to reflect the reality of how different communities look to a variety of places to access employment, services or leisure activities, by building upon the hubs and key settlements identified in the North West Wales Spatial Strategy to ensure complementary rather than competitive development which underpins and supports both urban and rural communities.

17.3 The net outward migration of young people in their 20s in pursuit of education and employment opportunities, an ageing population and birth rates which have partially recovered from the sharp fall between 1990 and 2000 have implications for the future health and social service provision, as well as a diminishing workforce available to support local economic opportunities and growth. Deprivation is found in both urban and rural communities and is linked to economic inactivity and poor health.

17.4 The continued centralisation of services presents challenges across the region in relation to access to jobs and services from a largely dispersed rural population. The impending end of power generation at Wylfa in Anglesey and the end of phase one decommissioning of Trawsfynydd in Gwynedd could further widen the existing gap in economic performance as measured by gross value added (GVA) between the region and the rest of Wales. However, job creation potential could be achieved via extended and new low-carbon power generation in the Eryri a Môn

Spatial Plan Area, and support the development of the energy sector.

17.5 Achieving the vision requires collaborative action. Partners from across the Spatial Plan Area have therefore been working together to progress the agreed priorities for the Area, which can be summarised as:

- Appropriate and planned spatial development of the Area including facilitating a strong Menai area, the network of linked settlements on both sides of the Menai Strait extending to Llangefni, the Llandudno hub and developing identified secondary hubs in the north and south of the region, including the appropriate mechanisms to spread benefit and facilitate indigenous growth in key rural communities and the wider rural area responding to their development needs to create sustainable places for future generations
- Developing key sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing and their associated industries, supporting their transition from low to high value activity and broadening of the Areas's economic base through increased entrpreneurship facilitated by appropriate physical and ICT infrastructure
- Developing an outward-looking and confident knowledge based economy, with particular emphasis on bio sciences, geo science, environmental goods and services, marine science, medical technology, renewable energy, nuclear decommissioning technologies



and creative industries, recognising the key role Bangor University has in supporting this and seeking to ensure that the benefits are derived across the region

- Maximising the opportunities of Holyhead as a major international gateway and the A55 and E22 Trans European Networks route as a key transportation corridor, particularly between the prosperous economies of Ireland, North East Wales and beyond, whilst ensuring appropriate transport links between the hubs and rural areas are adequate to provide access to services, employment and leisure opportunities
- Capitalising on the region's outstanding environment, including the coast, ecological and historical heritage, and strong cultural identity to promote and develop healthier communities and build higher-value sustainable tourism. The latter includes the development of the Area as a quality destination, including improving the accommodation stock and realising the potential of marine leisure and outdoor activities.

17.6 Representatives of key sectors have been working together through the Wales Spatial Plan process to develop a set of interventions that will further help make the vision a reality and address issues facing the Area. Work on the North West Spatial Development Strategy is on-going. The final draft will be agreed with partner organisations in Summer 2008. Progress to date is summarised in the sections below, around the five themes of the Wales Spatial Plan.

# **Building Sustainable Communities**

17.7 North West Wales enjoys a strong sense of community and cultural identity in both its urban and rural areas. The long-term future of the Area depends on how places develop to enable their communities to respond to present and future challenges. To develop sustainable communities we will seek to build on the important key centres in the Area, whilst improving linkages and spreading benefit and growth to the wider hinterlands and rural communities that fall outside those immediate places, enhancing the attractiveness of the Area as a place for people to live and work.

17.8 A critical priority for North West Wales is to ensure that its two principal hubs of Menai and Llandudno, are functioning to the best of their potential. The two secondary hubs of Holyhead and Porthmadog-Pwllheli-Penrhyndeudraeth are recognised key growth settlements with the focus of providing services and employment and building on established strengths to support and spread prosperity to the wider rural hinterland.

17.9 The Menai hub is made up of the region's largest centres of population, Bangor and Caernarfon in Gwynedd and Llangefni in Anglesey. Together they form a strong network of complementary functions, which hold the potential for driving forward the region's growth. Bangor

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is the regional centre with Ysbyty Gwynedd, the Area's acute hospital and a major employer. The University supports the development of the knowledge economy, with many spinout companies located at Parc Menai on the city fringes. The Snowdonia National Park in the hinterland and the Menai Strait and Irish Sea provide a strong attraction for students and workers with an interest in outdoor and marine activity. Bangor has a strong commercial offering and should become a vibrant retail destination for residents from a wide catchment area extending to Pen Llŷn and Anglesey. Caernarfon is a key administrative and employment centre with a flourishing creative arts and tourism sector capitalising upon the castle and the town walls as part of a World Heritage site. There is a flourishing and growing social enterprise sector with strong links to the hinterland. The railway service from Caernarfon to Porthmadog is in the process of being restored improving links with the hinterland and the Porthmadog-Pwllheli hub, especially to the Llŷn Peninsula. Llangefni is Anglesey's principal market town and administrative centre whose development is seen as an important socio-economic driver for the island as a whole. Town centre regeneration is improving the offering and it is an important centre for retail and commercial employment.

17.10 The other principal hub is the Central hub encompassing Conwy, Llandudno, Llandudno Junction and Colwyn Bay. This is a strategic hub connecting North East Wales and North West Wales and is recognised as a key regional economic driver.

Both Llandudno and Conwy are regional tourism centres and also provide important retail, administrative and service functions for a large hinterland. The recent enhancement of Venue Cymru and the Conwy and Deganwy marina development, with the completion of the area's first five-star hotel will help unlock the potential from increased tourism. The relocation and concentration of the Welsh Assembly Government offices in a North Wales headquarters at Llandudno Junction, along with the masterplanning exercise to stimulate integrated and holistic economic development in the area will provide opportunities for future increase in the quality of employment opportunities. The coastal town of Colwyn Bay is the second largest urban area in North Wales. The area has experienced a lack of investment and a range of socio-economic problems due to a declining economic base. The future focus for this settlement will build on existing works already approved under the Bay Life Initiative. including improvement to the Colwyn Bay waterfront, making it more attractive, accessible and sustainable for residents and visitors and encouraging new investment.

17.11 Investment in the secondary hubs of Holyhead and Porthmadog-Pwllheli will underpin the spread of prosperity and sustainable growth from the principal hubs. Holyhead features as a key international gateway. Work is underway on a Holyhead waterfront masterplan where there are opportunities for exploiting the benefits accruing from links with Ireland with the development of Parc Cybi,

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a new mixed-use employment and residential site, the new marina/ leisure opportunities and the potential to capture the cruise ship sector. Investment in Porthmadog and Pwllheli which are key tourism and marine sector development locations will also help spread prosperity, and focus development in such a way that the integrity of rural communities is protected, with clear linkages to areas of employment and services, whilst maintaining their unique sense of place.

17.12 To support the role and function of key settlements to which smaller rural communities gravitate, focused interventions will need to be implemented through integrated approaches to socio-economic development and regeneration together with the development of a practical model and mechanism for the distribution of growth.

17.13 Outside the hubs are a number of other important centres and settlements, such as Blaenau Ffestiniog and Llanrwst, which are relevant to both the Central Wales and Eryri a Môn Areas, and perform a variety of functions relating to tourism, employment, outdoor activities, retail and services, providing important local employment opportunities. These are vital both in the context of the communities they house directly and their supporting role to the wider rural hinterlands, ensuring good and sustainable access to services across the Area.

17.14 Building sustainable communities also requires NHS organisations and other partners, for example the voluntary sector, to develop joint approaches with local

and regional government to work across traditional organisational boundaries to provide improved access to services and address health inequalities, promote healthier lifestyles and tackle other socioeconomic determinants of health such as poverty and poor quality housing and the barriers that restrict people making healthy life choices.

17.15 Some of the centres continue to suffer from the effects of economic decline. Regeneration therefore remains an important priority, linked to improving accessibility to the more prosperous parts of the region. The Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013, amongst other interventions will contribute to the delivery of these aims.

17.16 Community and social enterprises in the most rural parts of the North West Wales Spatial Plan Area have a key role to play in the overall development of the Area. Appropriate access to education and skills development is therefore needed across the whole Area to enable further growth in participation in the labour market. It will be important to ensure a strategic provision of vocational training and develop community confidence, learning and general education, including retraining and continued professional development of the existing workforce. This must take account of the increasing need for health and social care services which will result from the ageing population profile. To achieve this, evidencebased reviews of needs, issues and the adequacy of the current learning network will be of paramount importance.



17.17 To ensure we create sustainable places with vibrant bilingual communities, both for the current workforce, and to attract young skilled people back to North West Wales, amongst other interventions we must ensure that adequate, affordable and quality housing is available within both urban and rural areas. A local housing market assessment is currently being undertaken by Gwynedd, Anglesey, Conwy and Denbighshire local authorities and the Snowdonia National Park Authority in partnership with Bangor University, to help identify the housing needs across the Area as a whole. This work considers:

- Patterns of relocation within local areas by homeowners and tenants and the degree of self containment
- Travel to work patterns and analysis of the relationship between place of work and home
- Areas of high and low housing demand
- Affordable housing, for example to underpin the retention of young people and attract them back to the Area.

# Promoting a Sustainable **Economy**

17.18 The Eryri a Môn Spatial Plan Area has many positive characteristics which can be built upon to promote a sustainable economy. The Area enjoys comparatively high levels of employment and good levels of educational attainment, has a large cohort of self employed individuals, benefits from the presence of

world-class expertise at Bangor University and has a vibrant social enterprise sector. In addition the Area's outstanding natural environment and great leisure opportunities are a growing locational advantage which can attract dynamic businesses within knowledge based industries.

17.19 However, there are a number of underlying structural, infrastructure and functional weaknesses within the local economy which must be addressed if we are to achieve our goal that no part of Wales misses out on prosperity. These include the generally low economic activity levels in the Area and the prosperity gap which is growing as a result, and dependency upon a small number of large, predominantly public sector, employers.

17.20 Another imminent threat to the value of the local economy is the decommissioning of Wylfa nuclear power station and the knock-on impacts this could have on the aluminium smelter which is reliant on it for power generation. The UK Government will decide in 2008 on the future of nuclear power generation which potentially has positive implications for Wylfa.

17.21 An economic development programme - 'Môn a Menai' has been set up by the Welsh Assembly Government and will be incorporated as part of the North West Wales Area Strategy to address these implications. Môn a Menai is being developed and delivered in partnership with Ynys Môn and Gwynedd Councils and will engage private, voluntary and public sector organisations across the area. To the south, the completion of the

first phase of decommissioning at the Trawsfynydd nuclear site, will reduce the number of well paid employment opportunities and impact upon the wider local economy in the Area.

17.22 Social enterprise and community economic development is an important part of the local economy in this Area, as an income generator, employer and capacity developer. They also have the potential to assist in combating economic inactivity, alongside work already undertaken by the NHS in helping to ensure that those inactive due to chronic disease can be helped back to appropriate work. The sector has potential to assist in the regeneration of both rural and urban communities with opportunities in cultural sectors (creative/artistic industries, building on a strong cultural tradition), language-related sectors, tourism, the environmental goods and services sector, and locally based companies that could only be developed from the bottom up. It is also important to support and develop indigenous businesses in both urban and rural areas, and new and established sectors, most of which are small and medium sized, and are vital to local economies, generating jobs and incomes. The Welsh Assembly Government has developed Flexible Support for Business which is aimed



at providing support to both new and existing businesses to develop and grow and become globally competitive.

17.23 Agriculture needs to be able to adapt, diversify and change to respond to market forces, for example, by adding value to production. Closer working is also needed between producers, suppliers and retailers. By building on current skills and expertise in the agri-food and food processing sectors there is the opportunity to create sustainable development and growth as well as maximising the opportunities with future changes in land use patterns, for example those resulting from climate change.

17.24 The unique landscape and coastal areas provide the backdrop to develop and grow the outdoor sector in synergy with providing a high class tourism offer. This will extend the tourism season, provide healthy lifestyle opportunities, local employment and add valuable economic benefit to the region.

17.25 Economic inactivity remains a significant issue especially in pockets in some of the more deprived urban wards and rural communities. Integrated interventions across all organisations including the NHS and the skills sector will need to be developed to target specific groups and identify solutions to help alleviate the problem.

17.26 Holyhead Port and Anglesey Airport developments have further potential to enhance the region's status as an international gateway and communications corridor.

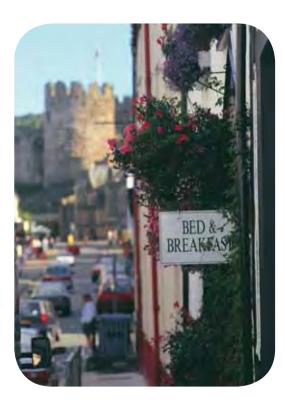
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17.27 An assessment of sites across the North West Wales Spatial Plan Area has confirmed their importance, with the need to bring forward new strategic and local sites in synergy with local development plans, with a key role to accommodate future employment growth and spread prosperity throughout the Area. The quantity and quality of premises provision within existing sites will require enhancement and provision of adequate utility infrastructure to overcome current constraints. Sustainable access and ICT provision should be considered at the outset in the planning and development of key sites. Sites currently under development are identified within the Area delivery framework.

#### Labour Market issues

17.28 The legacy of economic change and social deprivation means that North West Wales will



face a big challenge to equip all of its people with the skills they need to be part of a successful highproductivity economy. Despite recent improvements, economic inactivity rates remain high in pockets throughout the region, especially in the more remote communities. This is where the greatest potential for improved social and economic circumstances lies, and is thus a key element in reducing poverty, deprivation and exclusion, and promoting social cohesion and social capital.

17.29 A key priority for North West Wales, is to ensure that the Area has a sufficiently strong and innovative network of vocational skills provision, with the capacity to respond to demand from individuals and employers and to underpin the developing knowledge economy. The Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills will work with Wales Spatial Plan partners, the further and higher education providers, private and voluntary sector training organisations, and Jobcentre Plus to take this forward through, for example, the development of a regional approach to the assessment and commissioning of skills provision within selected key sectors. It will also be important for Wales Spatial Plan partners to work with employers and social and community enterprises in the Area to ensure that they demonstrate support for raising the skills of their employees to develop transferable skills to provide greater flexibility within the workforce - for example through the Basic Skills Employer Pledge.



17.30 The further development of the skills base of the region, by private and public employers and trades unions, will require a focus on future skills needs of the region in relation to key economic sectors with potential for growth, as well as those sectors who continue to provide numerous employment opportunities such as agriculture and indigenous small enterprises. To progress this key agenda a local skills strategy is currently being developed to ensure that the best use of resources is achieved together with the facility to respond more effectively to the ever changing needs of the labour market.

#### **Tourism**

17.31 The Area has a strong cultural identity and unique sense of place, and is an established visitor destination with a wealth of visitor facilities. The tourism industry is a key employment sector and has the potential to improve quality of life, reduce economic inactivity, and enhance regeneration and conservation. However, for the area to reach its potential it will be necessary to enhance the built environment and tourism facilities through regeneration, to bring it up to par with the exceptional and dramatic natural environment, for example to further develop outdoor activities, golf, eco-tourism and events, and the development of one or two regionally significant, quality all-weather attractions that can be accessed by sustainable modes.

17.32 The sector has direct links to other priorities in the area, one being the enhancement of Holyhead as a visitor gateway. The stakeholders will need to be encouraged to continue to address all aspects of the visitors' experience via the destination management approach. North West Wales



17.33 'Achieving our Potential' the national Tourism Strategy for Wales includes a detailed action plan that identifies five strategic challenges facing the industry branding, quality, access, skills and partnership. The associated regional tourism strategy states "The vision for tourism in North Wales is to build a viable and prosperous tourism industry attracting visitors throughout the year". Implementing the above measures along with the Welsh Coastal Tourism Strategy and subregional strategies which identify significant opportunities for coastal tourism, and improving the overall offer will raise the profile of the area and provide a better quality, higher valued tourism product.

17.34 Visit Wales, the North Wales Tourism Partnership and the Department for the Economy and Transport will co-ordinate the implementation of the tourism actions.

# **Achieving Sustainable** Accessibility

17.35 Facilitating the free movement of goods, people and information is of crucial importance to the future development of the region and to combat the risk of greater polarisation between developed and peripheral areas in Eryri a Môn.

17.36 The primary corridor for external connectivity into and out of the region is based along the North Wales coast and through the heart of Anglesey to the region's international gateway at Holyhead.

This Area benefits from the good connectivity offered on road by the A55 Expressway and the North Wales Coast mainline railway (both of which are part of the Trans European Transport Network).

17.37 Internal connectivity within the region, across its dispersed settlements, to the Central Wales region and between Eryri a Môn's primary and secondary hubs and the rural areas is more complex but crucial to ensuring the distribution of growth and access to services and leisure especially with NHS services being delivered out of hospitals and closer to home. A suitable road network must be maintained along with the further development of public transport. Opportunities to develop the region's other mainline (Conwy Valley and Cambrian Coast) and leisure railways for the transportation of people and goods, where appropriate, must also be considered.

17.38 Recent investment in the A55 corridor provides an opportunity to spread prosperity, including benefits from the buoyant economies of the North East Wales and West Cheshire sub-region. Links with Ireland through the Port of Holyhead and the Trans European Network are also important. The strategic location of North Wales on two Trans-European Network priority axes means it is crucial to build upon the existing partnerships with key international, regional and local stakeholders to ensure a joined-up and integrated approach to transport strategy and implementation between England, Wales and the Republic of Ireland.

Work to address the capacity issues on the Britannia Bridge and the A487 around Caernarfon to help improve this link further is also required as is the enhancement of the road network within the region especially in relation to the main north-south and eastwest corridors. The needs of freight transport and the potential to improve rail services for goods and people on the North Wales main rail line should be considered alongside opportunities to further develop feeder railways, such as the Conwy Valley line, for passengers and freight.

17.39 Further opportunities for growth in the air transport sector could be realised by expanding the commercial air flight in Maes Awyr Môn/Anglesey Airport from not only North to South Wales but other regions in the UK and Ireland, increasing the economic links with Ireland. The usage level of the service to Cardiff International Airport has been healthier than forecast and is a promising indicator.

17.40 In relation to public transport, as well as the further development of the region's railways, innovative mobility solutions will be key across the North West Wales Area, including the use of demand responsive transport, car sharing, Park and Ride and community transport solutions especially in the remoter rural areas. The role of the 'Smarter Choices' behavioural change programme including the development, promotion and use of walking and cycling networks, will also help promote change and better quality of life.



17.41 Regional transport plans are being prepared by TAITH and TrACC, the regional transport consortia for North and Mid Wales. These will be informed by priorities identified by the Spatial Plan Area Groups. These priorities will be delivered through collaborative partnerships as identified in the emerging Area delivery framework.

Information and Communication **Technology** 

17.42 The exploitation of ICT can help build a strong, sustainable, competitive and prosperous economy but it is only through facilitating access to a modern telecommunications infrastructure that the effective use of ICT can be made possible. Priorities for the Area include:

- Future investment in upgrading the infrastructure, which maximises accessibility to the opportunities available, including high speed ICT connections
- Building upon the success of the Anglesey Connected wireless network
- Providing infrastructure, as well as dedicated support for the take up and utilisation of ICT especially

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for development of key sites/ settlements and the wider rural areas which are not closely linked to the A55 corridor, is vital to substantially improve the competitiveness of business within the global market and to address social exclusion.

### Valuing Our Environment

17.43 The high quality of the natural environment and our built heritage are a defining feature with much of the surface area covered by statutory designations which protect both landscape and environment. The Snowdonia National Park covers a large area within Gwynedd and Conwy whilst there are also Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty along the coasts of Llŷn and Anglesey. Much of the coastline is designated as Heritage Coast. There are a number of European protected sites including two maritime Special Areas of Conservation covering much of the coastline. This requires that the location and nature of development be carefully considered. The increased risk of flooding along the coastal fringe of North West Wales and river valleys, as a likely consequence of climate change, will also constrain local development. A Colwyn Bay Coastal Defence Strategy is being developed which sets out strategic assessment and proposals for coastal defence measures to protect the landward side of the coast which contains the main Trans European Network road and rail links across North Wales along the Conwy coastal belt.

17.44 The North West Wales Spatial Plan Area Group will have a key role in developing tailor-made local action under the Environment Strategy for Wales, and have identified Area priorities that underpin the strong interdependence between the social, economic and environmental factors which influence health, wellbeing and the quality of life, all of which are vital issues in this Area. The overall aim is to protect the natural and built environment which includes areas designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and to realise the environmental opportunities that these assets provide. This will help reconnect communities with the environment, attract visitors, and promote on-going economic and social investment and development through a high quality natural and built environment.

17.45 Indicative environmental and economic opportunities and priorities for action include:

- The region's outstanding scenery which includes the Snowdonia Massif, coast, ecology, historic heritage and strong cultural identity and links to the tourism/leisure and hospitality sector
- The significance of the land-based economy, including agriculture, horticulture and forestry which need to adapt to the changing market, and to changes arising from climate change to maximise the opportunities arising from production of a diverse range of livestock and crops



- Agriculture has an important role to play in the landscape and environment management of the Area, aimed at protecting upland habitat and ensuring it can function as a significant carbon sink and water catchment management resource
- Expanding activity in waste reduction, re-use and re-cycling to meet challenging legislative and policy targets by investment in infrastructure which includes sewerage and sewage treatment plants and new technologies
- Attracting prestigious inward investment by promoting the quality environment in which to work and live
- Expanding environmentally beneficial farming and forestry and building upon Welsh and organic branded produce
- Supporting and developing the environmental goods and service sector including marine activities,

geosciences, waste management, recycling and renewable energy, with the potential to protect and enhance the environment.

17.46 Climate change poses new challenges through risk of rising sea levels and the likelihood of more intense patterns of weather conditions. Increased housing and industry may also put a strain on our environment, particularly in relation to water resources and water quality. The impact on local biodiversity is still unclear, however by supporting ecological connectivity of existing habitat blocks through a network of green highways linking green spaces and waterways, biodiversity resilience can be enhanced. Low intensity agricultural land and woodlands will be managed to underpin this need. The availability of sufficient water and its sustainable use should underpin development plans as should flood risk assessment in key settlements especially along the coastal belt, when allocating land for development.



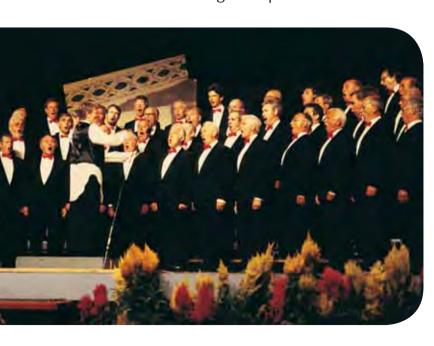


17.47 Reducing our ecological footprint should underlie policies and development initiatives, arising from this Strategy. For example initiatives to minimise travel, create energy-efficient buildings and provide ICT to enable support for businesses, agricultural diversification and landscape management, and the development of other rural/community based businesses, will contribute to this goal.

# **Respecting Distinctiveness**

17.48 Much of what makes this Area distinct is its rich cultural heritage, in all its many guises that both defines the Area and presents its own unique selling point. Like other parts of Wales, it has a high quality of life to offer both to its existing people and as an attraction for visitors and those who choose to come to live here.

17.49 A strong sense of place is evident throughout North West Wales, both in terms of its landscape and its high composition of Welsh



speaking communities. However, this cultural identity faces the challenge of global cultural pressures and demographic change, particularly as its sense of place is one of the key factors of the Area's attractiveness to both visitors and permanent settlers. In-migration is however necessary both to support tourism and to bridge some of the labour market shortages. The challenge is therefore to retain and enhance a sense of place, while embracing necessary change to sustain employment and services.

17.50 The Welsh language is core to everyday living in North West Wales. The Area has the highest percentage of the population that are Welsh speaking in the whole of Wales and is an exemplar region in relation to laith Pawb's vision of creating a modern bilingual society underpinned by the safeguarding and promotion of public services provided via the medium of Welsh and jobs where bilingual capabilities are seen as a positive advantage.

17.51 There are many very important heritage assets within North West Wales, including an abundance of medieval castles and walled towns. these form four of Wales' five World Heritage sites, namely Caernarfon, Conwy, Beaumaris and Harlech.

17.52 Actions to maximise the potential from the heritage sector within North West Wales are:

Closer partnership with key stakeholders has the potential to further enhance and promote the Area's castles, prehistoric archaeology monuments and the



- industrial heritage especially capitalising on the heritage potential of Parys Mountain on Anglesey and the slate valleys in Gwynedd
- Maximising the tourism potential of the international status of the castles and walled towns by improving public access facilities and interpretation materials
- Undertaking conservation work on the town walls in Caernarfon, to provide public access linking to the castle and promenade, would greatly enhance the visitor experience and contribute to the overall tourism footfall of the area.



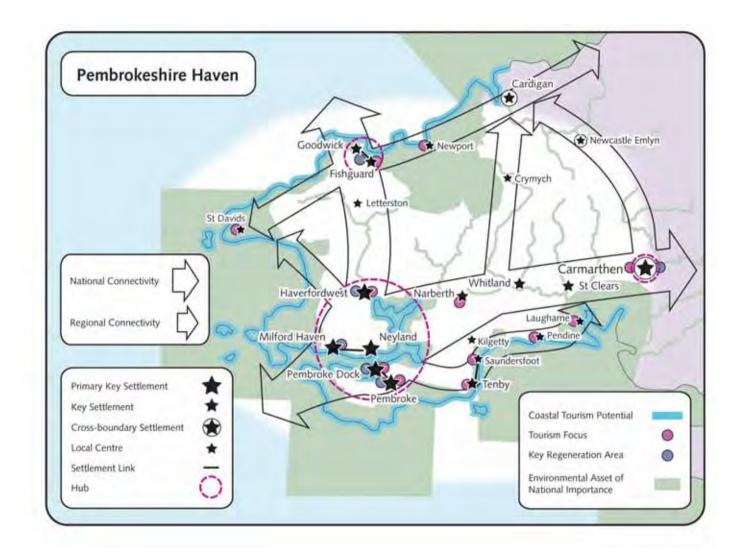


North West Wales



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# 18. Pembrokeshire - The Haven



'A network of strong communities supported by a robust, sustainable, diverse high value-adding economy underpinned by the Area's unique environment, maritime access and internationally important energy and tourism opportunities'

18.1 The key strategic priorities for achieving this vision are:

- Overcoming the Area's peripherality by improving strategic transport links and economic infrastructure including improved telecommunication links, and maximising the potential of the Area's maritime assets and proximity to Ireland
- Developing a more diverse, entrepreneurial knowledge-based economy, working closely with higher and further education institutions, indigenous businesses and multinational companies, in order to increase wage levels and create enough well-paid jobs to establish a critical mass that will both attract people with higher skills and reduce the out-migration of young skilled people. Energy and the environment will be critical to achieving success

- Increasing higher value-adding economic activities, particularly in the rural economy, by developing an allyear, high quality tourism and leisure sector
- Developing the Area's three strategic hubs. Critical to this is the renewal of town centres, the development of complementary settlement roles within and between hubs, strengthening community, economic and social outreach and spreading benefit and growth to the wider hinterlands and smaller rural communities
- Raising skill levels through effective partnership working and tailoring learning and up-skilling to better meet existing and future business needs across a range of sectors
- Sustaining and strengthening communities by taking focused action to address both rural and urban deprivation and economic inactivity and to ensure housing provision appropriate to all





Protecting and enhancing the Area's important environmental assets, maximising their potential through exemplary sustainable development.

18.2 The Wales Spatial Plan Area of Pembrokeshire and western Carmarthenshire combines exemplary coast and countryside, with a history of development based on agriculture, tourism, defence and the Milford Haven Waterway. The Area is characterised by a series of distinct, yet interdependent settlements, with a significant proportion of the population concentrated on an urban agglomeration around the Waterway (the third most populous area in South Wales) and the remainder dispersed to much more sparsely populated rural hinterlands. The unique coastal environment and strong sense of community is attractive to both residents and visitors and provides a distinctive sense of place. The Pembrokeshire ports and the Haven Waterway, a strategically important deep-water harbour on the UK's Atlantic seaboard. are national assets critical to the future wellbeing of the UK. These assets need to be managed carefully for both local and national benefit and to safeguard the unique environment.

18.3 A number of important spatial challenges need to be addressed. Despite its peripherality, which poses significant deprivational challenges for the Area's significant rural population in terms of housing, income levels, communications and access to services, the Area is a centre of national importance in terms of the energy and marine sectors based on the

Milford Haven Waterway. The local economy has grown much stronger in recent years, and it is important that the area continues to build on these strengths. Wages, however, remain amongst the lowest in the UK, with a high proportion of employees earning less than £7.00 per hour<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, whilst the Pembrokeshire local economy has benefited significantly from the construction programme related to liquefied natural gas (LNG), the completion of this programme constitutes a significant risk factor to future economic performance. The next priority for the economy is to promote diversification into sectors with growth potential, particularly those where there is potential to create more highly skilled and better paid jobs. A further priority is to develop a more stable economy by creating a stronger base and mix of medium sized enterprises. Central to this will be the provision of a range of good quality affordable sites and premises to meet a range of business needs. The Area has significant opportunity to develop new sustainable technologies as part of this.

18.4 The Area's unique environment and coastal National Park designation is a key asset, not only in terms of tourism, but more generally as a key element in its attractiveness as a place in which people will choose to live and work. However, the impacts of tourism need to be addressed. Key issues include meeting demand for affordable housing, the need to protect environmental assets from damage and the demand placed on local services by tourist numbers in the high season.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Source: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2007

# **Building Sustainable Communities**

18.5 Building sustainable communities is the central core around which the other themes in this Area Strategy for Pembrokeshire - The Haven need to circulate. This requires genuine partnership, providing the Area's citizens with the means to shape and build the communities and the futures that they want for themselves. Building effective partnerships between the public sector and with communities - with the third sector acting as a vitally important bridge is therefore critical not just to achieving sustainable communities, but to the achievement of the whole vision for the Pembrokeshire Haven Spatial Plan Area.



18.6 The Pembrokeshire Haven Spatial Plan Area has a resident population of approximately 150,000 in an area of just over 230,000 hectares. This makes it second only to the Central Wales region in its sparsity. However, the distribution of people is far from even, with the Area displaying a pattern of small market towns, none with a population in excess of 20,000, separated by rural areas populated with small villages and hamlets characteristic of rural

Wales as a whole. These small market towns differ from the extensive urban areas that characterise the North East Wales, South East Wales and Swansea Bay and Western Valleys Spatial Plan Areas in their relative isolation, their enhanced service function compared to population and their interactions with the surrounding rural areas. Because of the Area's rurality, relative peripherality and population sparsity, its most populous settlements need to fulfil roles and functions that would normally be associated with much larger towns. The key challenge, therefore, is to ensure that the Area's settlements, and in particular its urban centres, have the scale and catchment areas to sustain the level and quality of retail, leisure and services that will help improve what the Area has to offer to both residents and visitors (who can double the population of Pembrokeshire in the peak season) throughout the year. This so that, taken together, the settlements can work more effectively than they could if they were competing. Improving the Area's communications infrastructure, including facilitating better access to its town centres, is not only integral to their future success but essential if we are to enable settlements seeking to develop complementary roles and functions to work together more effectively.

18.7 To help meet these challenges, the Spatial Plan Area Group has identified three strategic hubs that perform an important regional role and should therefore be an important focus for future investment. These are:

The **Haven Towns** in the south west of the Area, which cluster



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around the Milford Haven Waterway, comprising:

- Haverfordwest. Pembrokeshire's county town and an important centre for retailing, services, health provision (including the district general hospital in Withybush) and public administration. The town centre is currently underperforming and lacks the range of quality retail, commercial and visitor facilities which are needed to realise its potential. A key focus will therefore be on town centre renewal, which will be centred upon improving the town's retail performance, its commercial premises, its accommodation and leisure offer, accessibility to and within the town, including car parking, and improving the public realm (including eg. riverside development potential) to provide for the increased population and to attract more visitors to the town
- Milford Haven and Neyland where residential, commercial and town centre property need to be upgraded in order to provide safer, more attractive neighbourhoods and retailing areas. There is potential to consolidate and upgrade much of the built fabric in the town centres, linked to development of the quayside and docks, and to marina and
- Pembroke and Pembroke Dock which are anticipated to see employment growth linked to the continued development of the Waterway, port growth

marine leisure development.

and marina development and the science and technology park. Investment in the built environment, local shopping and tourism assets is a priority to ensure that the towns are meeting their potential in terms of local service provision and tourism.

These towns need to develop roles and functions so that, collectively, they complement rather than compete with one another. Further work needs to be undertaken in order to define complementary priorities and market opportunities for the Haven Towns, the nature of their relationship with the other strategic hubs and their interaction with local centres and smaller settlements that make up the Area's significant rural hinterlands.

• Carmarthen plays a pivotal role between three Spatial Plan Areas: Pembrokeshire - The Haven, Swansea Bay and Western Valleys and Central Wales. As a gateway to West Wales, Carmarthen plays a key role reaching to the east, west and north as a regional centre for retailing, health care, administration and agriculture. Investment in the town has made it increasingly popular as an attractive place to live, work and visit. Its status as a regional retail centre has been further strengthened through recent developments with proposals such as the flagship scheme for the former mart site set to further enhance its retail and leisure offer.

Future development opportunities such as those at West Carmarthen

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are set to reinforce the town's status enhancing its appeal and its position as a residential, cultural and employment centre. The Quayside proposals seek to further develop on the asset presented by the River Tywi by providing a range of services and uses specifically aimed at further maximising leisure opportunities, developing the riverside brand as a leisure and social contributor to the town.

• Fishguard and Goodwick are important drivers of the north Pembrokeshire economy. The area needs to be regenerated to respond to economic change. The ferry port gateway to Ireland, marina development, and the brownfield development site at Trecwn, with its access to the rail network, are some of the specific opportunities in the area.

18.8 In addition to the settlements that make up the three strategic hubs, the Area also has a pattern of mediumsized settlements - Tenby, Narberth, Whitland and St Clears - which have a service centre, employment and tourism function, as well as a number of smaller settlements - Saundersfoot. St Davids, Crymych, Kilgetty, Laugharne/Pendine, Newcastle Emlyn, Newport and Letterston - which are principally local centres, with some being significant tourism centres. Coastal communities throughout the Spatial Plan Area and especially those situated in south east Pembrokeshire, in particular Tenby/Saundersfoot, together with those situated within the coastal corridor reaching to Laugharne in western Carmarthenshire, are very

important to the future development of the Area's tourism offering.

18.9 These medium- and smallersized settlements are a key part of the Area's attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit. It is critical therefore that, in parallel with concentrating future investment on the Area's three strategic hubs, linkages to these settlements, and the diverse pattern of even smaller rural centres that sit below them, are strengthened and improved so that the benefit of that investment is truly felt by, and growth spread to the wider hinterlands. Positive engagement at the level of local communities, through effective community strategy plans, and supporting a vibrant third sector is an important part of this.

18.10 Some of the 20 per cent most deprived areas in Wales<sup>4</sup> lie within the strategically important settlements mentioned above. This is largely driven by employment and income measures. Rural areas also suffer widespread deprivation in terms of access to services, with many of the more rural parts of the Area featuring in the 10 per cent most access-deprived in Wales⁴. Regenerating the Area's key town centres is crucial in order to attract a wider range of private sector services and employment opportunities, since these offer the most significant prospect of addressing problems experienced by those suffering deprivation. Tenby, Fishguard and Narberth are excellent examples of rural and coastal centres which are regenerating their local areas.

18.11 It is important that the Area also looks outwards, and develops in ways that recognise the important

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Source: Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2008



role and function of places outside its notional boundaries (eg. Cardigan, which performs an important service centre role for parts of northern Pembrokeshire) and seeks to build upon and strengthen those links, including links to the east to support the Area's economic growth.

18.12 The demographic profile of the Area has changed as a result of a high number of economic in-migrants and the long-term growth in the number of retired people, which has been well over twice the Wales average growth rate in the last two decades. Both trends have impacted upon service provision and availability of affordable housing. In addition, there has been a net out-migration of people aged 16-24. The challenge is to sustain the vitality of the Area's communities by responding and adapting positively to population change in ways which enhance the population age balance, ensure the housing mix supports that balance and do not exclude people from local housing, whilst sustaining the distinctiveness of local culture. As part of this, close attention needs to be paid to addressing the pockets of deprivation that exist within the Area's urban centres and deprivation arising from poor service provision to the Area's more remote communities.

#### Housing

18.13 Housing should be welldesigned, affordable and sustainable. New provision is likely to reflect the historical pattern of development in the area, commensurate with the settlement approach identified above, with a continued emphasis on settlements within the strategic

hubs along the urban corridor linking the M4 to the Area's ports. Notwithstanding the emphasis on key settlements, it is important that housing growth also seeks to revitalise and sustain smaller centres and communities. Housing provision in the National Park should be at a scale which aims to meet the needs of the local population in line with the Park's statutory purposes and duty.

18.14 Housing projections are being worked on under the auspices of the South West Wales Regional Planning Group. Further work by the local authorities and the National Park Authority linked to on-going assessments of local housing needs will be undertaken as a priority to ensure the future supply of affordable housing to support a local workforce and to achieve a socially inclusive and balanced population.

### Health and Wellbeing

18.15 Based on health needs assessment work, the indications are that the Pembrokeshire Haven Area has a relatively stable, albeit ageing, population which is in reasonable health compared to the rest of Wales. The Area faces many challenges common to Wales as a whole, such as increasing lifeexpectancy and the consequential increase in the number of people over retirement age - both of which put increased pressure on services; more people surviving serious illness; rising levels of obesity and other outcomes of an unhealthy lifestyle and negative aspects of dependency arising from increases in lone parent and lone pensioner households, and the correlation between poor health and economic inactivity and deprivation.

Moreover the Area also faces some specific spatial challenges, most notably those associated with areas of low population density and sparsity and the in-migration of older people, which impacts on access to services and equity and where the imperative is to find ways of developing and optimising primary, secondary and

community care services.

18.16 Priorities for future action need to be developed around two core themes of service delivery in partnership and supporting people to be as healthy as possible. Partnership is critical to both themes if the Area is to meet the big challenges, in particular forging stronger links between health and social care, across Wales Spatial Plan Area boundaries and engaging with communities more effectively in planning and designing services. This is already happening under the auspices of the Three Counties Planning Forum, which is considering how best to network secondary care services across the three counties of Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire based on the current configuration of acute hospitals within those counties.

# **Achieving Sustainable Accessibility**

18.17 The Area is strategically placed with important Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) road and rail network links, and two ferry ports at Pembroke Dock and Fishguard providing a 'southern corridor' route to Ireland that avoids the increasingly congested Dublin area. The Milford Haven Waterway is one of the UK's largest, deepest and safest harbours,

and critical to the continuing success and growth of the Area's internationally important energy sector.

18.18 Improvements to the strategic transport links and infrastructure have the potential to deliver safer and more reliable journey times on current networks, and a TEN-T east-west corridor of international importance, which is essential to the regeneration of the Area's economy and employment base and in overcoming its peripheral location. Improvements to the rail links are an important part of this, particularly improving the service frequency and journey times to and from the Area's ports, strategic employment sites and strategic hubs. Removing the pinch-point caused by the single rail track between Cockett and West Dyffryn would create opportunities for increasing services west of Carmarthen, and this is being reviewed by the South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium (SWWITCH).



18.19 In terms of roads, the A40 road link between the M4 and the Area's ports is designated in the Assembly Government's forward trunk road programme. Improvements to the A40 are being made with the current scheme of bypasses. The need for further investment will be kept under review.



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18.20 The provision of public and community transport, particularly in rural areas where car dependency to access goods and services is greatest, will always be financially challenging and therefore priorities will need to maximise the beneficial impacts on people and the environment. Key priorities for public and community transport in the Area are:

- More and better public transport options to reduce reliance on the private car, including safe cycling and walking routes for commuters, communities and visitors. Developing improved transport interchanges and transport networks to, from and within key settlements and strategic employment sites is critical to success
- Significant new employment sites should wherever practical be served by public transport. Public transport to existing sites also needs to be strengthened
- Health-care, education and leisure services need to be easily accessible by public and community transport from the local service and tourism centres and smaller settlements. Public transport services need to offer improved opportunities for concentrations of economically inactive people to gain access to jobs
- Public and innovative transport links from rural areas to the Area's key settlements need to be improved. The key settlements should become the transport hubs for smaller surrounding settlements
- Ensuring there is adequate capacity to deliver safe, reliable journey

- times on the trunk road network connecting the M4 to the Area's increasingly busy ports
- Maximising use of the Area's ports and maritime facilities.

18.21 SWWITCH is developing a regional transport plan (RTP) for South West Wales as a whole and must continue to work closely with the Pembrokeshire - The Haven Spatial Plan Area Groups to ensure this aligns with, informs, and is informed by, regional priorities and strategies.

18.22 The Area's ICT links are a key factor in its competitiveness and have the potential to reduce the need to travel. Although nearly all exchanges are now enabled for broadband, there are significant constraints on geographic coverage, capacity, effective bandwidth and cost. It is crucial to develop ubiquitous high bandwidth coverage, and to encourage competition between suppliers, so that the whole Area has access to competitively priced, high specification broadband. Wireless broadband opportunities need to be exploited as part of this. Constraints on other telecommunications coverage similarly need to be addressed. More work is needed to increase take-up of ICT applications by local business, and by the public more generally. A programme of action on ICT will be developed to take this forward.

# **Promoting a Sustainable Economy**

18.23 The Area is heavily reliant on a few major, predominantly public sector, employers, but is dominated by small and micro businesses, employing

fewer than five people, and has a high proportion of self-employed people. The nationally important oil and gas sector is hugely significant to the economic prosperity of the Area as a whole and particularly the towns of Milford Haven and Pembroke Dock. The Area has a high rate of business start-ups but these businesses tend to remain small rather than grow. Consequently, there are relatively few medium-sized high growth companies. There is an urgent need to improve business performance and profitability. Claimants of unemployment-related benefits are below national levels but the proportion of families claiming tax credits is the highest in Wales<sup>5</sup>. Unemployment rates have fallen well below national levels, reflecting the fact that a high number of workers rely on income from more than one part-time job, whilst seasonality and low levels of earning have an impact on job security. Economic activity rates are improving, albeit that about a quarter of those eligible to work in the Area are not in employment and inactivity rates remain high in some pockets of urban deprivation within, for example, the towns of Milford Haven, Neyland, Pembroke, Pembroke Dock and Haverfordwest.



more stable business economy to secure long-term prosperity, and create more opportunities for young people to stay in the Area or return to it. Developing indigenous business, and in particular supporting small and micro businesses to compete, diversify and become the bedrock from which growth businesses can succeed, as well as attracting inward investment in high value-added niche sectors will both be important. The agricultural and rural economy remains an important aspect of future growth in the Area. It supports a wide range of local economic activities, in particular related to inland as well as coastal tourism and small businesses and there is potential to increase value-adding, processing activities. Agriculture also has the potential to provide support to energy generation related opportunities, for example bio-fuel production from non-food crops, and through local sourcing initiatives, to reduce food miles.

18.25 Larger strategic employment sites will be key investment and employment locations in determining the future function and inter-relationship of settlements and will need excellent infrastructure and public transport links.



Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2007

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A range of good quality affordable sites and premises needs to be available to promote the development of small and medium size businesses, with the appropriate infrastructure, particularly communications and information technology. Sewerage infrastructure, in particular, is becoming a significant block to potential development in some areas. Specialist premises need to be available for agrifood and fish processing businesses, the latter for example in recognition of the Area's fishing industry.



18.26 Larger strategic sites may be needed to maximise the strategic potential of the Milford Haven Waterway, and sites with such potential need to be identified and reserved for such Waterwaylinked uses. Ensuring an adequate and affordable supply of sites and premises whilst at the same time reducing their environmental footprint is both a key challenge and priority for all.

18.27 The Area has seen major investment in the energy industry by multinational companies and has established a tradition of engineering excellence on the back of this. In particular, the current LNG developments are providing a major economic boost, and the development of gas-fired power stations has the potential to add to this. A priority is to develop an energy strategy for Pembrokeshire -The Haven, to provide a platform to establish opportunities for employment, skills and the environment arising from the energy sector, and in particular to make the Area a centre for innovation in the energy and environmental goods sectors, including low-carbon and renewable energy. The Pembrokeshire Technium, with its specialist research and business incubation facilities, has a key role to play in this. Work to develop action to establish the Area as a centre for renewable and low-carbon energy sources, including developing the marine renewable sector, will be taken forward as a priority.

#### **Tourism**

18.28 Tourism and leisure are already a big part of the Area's economy but have the potential to be developed further, including through the implementation of the Tourism Opportunities Action Plan, developed as part of the Wales Spatial Plan process, and guided, for example, by Priority 4 Theme 3 (Environment for Growth) of the Pembrokeshire -The Haven Sustainable Regeneration Strategic Framework for Convergence funding. The Area should be a premier all year round destination, with the emphasis on high quality provision at all levels, supporting well-paid jobs. Reinforcing the Area's distinctive character, allied to outdoor activities, marine leisure, recreation and interest

in the Area's wildlife, archaeology, history and culture, is central to offering visitors something really special. Synergy between farming, the environment and tourism needs to continue to grow stronger to support this, coupled with greater value-added processing and promotion of speciality local farm produce to strengthen the Area's reputation. Providing alternatives to the private car for visitors to the region is important, both in order to improve their overall experience of the Area's built and natural assets and to protect key areas of vulnerable habitats and wildlife.

18.29 The Area's unrivalled coastal environment contributes to a highly attractive quality of life and a strong tourist economy, which has seen significant growth in recent years. New opportunities will result from the luxury short-break Bluestone eco-village development. Similar investments in 'five star' facilities and opportunities in niche markets, including those linked to marine leisure, will help extend the attractiveness of the Area and increase per capita visitor spend throughout the year. Marina developments need to maximise the opportunities for local communities to benefit. Enhancing the facilities and services available in key visitor destinations and quality management of all aspects of the visitor's experience, including accommodation, retail and cuisine are critical factors, as is the provision of skills and training to support this. The development of tourism enterprises situated within the former Tenby tourism growth area and along the coastal corridor reaching to Laugharne in western Carmarthenshire is particularly important for the Area's tourism offering.

#### Labour market and skills

## 18.30 Key priorities are:

- Translating the Area's school attainment rates into skills needed to support a successful knowledge economy
- Changing the attitudes and mindsets of both employers and the employee population to one where the gaining of skills is seen to be the norm rather than the exception
- Developing the Area's own FE/HE sector, and strengthening its links with out of area FE/HE institutions
- Increasing economic activity rates
- Increasing wage levels
- Promoting parity of esteem between educational and vocational learning pathways for young people, and ensuring that the Area has access to a sufficiently strong and innovative network of vocational skills providers
- Developing vocational options in the 14-19 curriculum, for example by increasing opportunities (as exemplified by the PRIDE initiative) in schools to combine







- vocational learning with traditional subject areas
- Expanding Modern Apprenticeships and lifelong learning more generally
- Strengthening the supply of skills to support key growth sectors eg. energy sector, construction, tourism, catering, care and food processing
- Tailoring learning and up-skilling to meet business needs, balancing this with the realities of delivering learning in timely and cost effective ways. Recent developments in the labour market have brought business representatives and learning providers together to explore new delivery possibilities as evidenced in the energy and the hospitality sectors. For example, a tailor-made package of skills provision is being put in place to support the current LNG developments and the existing refineries. This will need to be developed further if any of the proposed gas power stations go ahead to help match skill availability to predictable demand. An Energy Sector Workforce Development Group, facilitated by the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills and led by the private sector, has developed a targeted action plan to drive forward this agenda. This initiative has the potential to serve as a model to identify and address other sector needs
- Focusing on acquisition of the key, transferable, 'skills for life' that employers, particularly in an economy dominated by small and micro businesses, value highly

- Delivering learning in a work place setting. Resources such as the new Skills Centre based at Pembroke School provide a potential resource to help benefit a wider group of learners of all ages, in particular those who wish to access community learning provision
- Finding innovative ways of securing high volumes of work placements and exposure to the world of work for pupils and students in a market place comprised of micro businesses, for example through the expansion in shared apprenticeship schemes currently being explored by the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills within the construction and engineering sectors
- Delivering improved careers education, which equips young people with knowledge and understanding of the local labour market so that they can make informed choices about jobs, careers and the associated learning required
- Responding positively to the demand for language skills arising from inmigration of workers from the wider European Union.

### Valuing Our Environment

18.31 The Area is renowned for its beautiful landscape, pristine beaches, ancient heritage and flora and fauna. It has a wealth of ecological and environmental assets of national and international importance, including the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, Wales' only marine nature reserve, numerous sites of special scientific interest which cover some 6 per cent of the total land area, eight national nature reserves; several special areas of

conservation (SACs) covering land and sea and a number of special protection areas designated under the EU Birds and Habitats and Species Directives respectively. Effective protection and enhancement of these assets is important not just for its own sake but is intrinsic to supporting the socioeconomic regeneration of the Area as a whole and critical to achieving the long-term vision for the Area. A flourishing local economy based on tourism and agriculture is dependent upon the sensitive use of these natural resources. The challenge, however, is to maximise the economic opportunities arising from the Area's unique environmental assets whilst at the same time protecting and enhancing them. This is a challenge that needs to be met by all, collaboratively.

18.32 Uniquely, the region's urban areas and its heavy industries are intimately associated with a high quality environment. The majority of the Area's industrial developments are centred on the Haven, due to its proximity to shipping channels and large natural harbour. It is essential to develop the industrial potential of the Area in ways which safeguard its environmental assets. Collaboration is critical to ensuring that economic, social and environmental objectives are achieved in harmony through sustainable development. To that end, five themes,

where there is the greatest potential for collaborative action, have been identified to take this agenda forward, together with some immediate priorities for delivery:

# 1. Maximising potential of environmental assets sustainably, by:

- Unlocking the strategic potential of the Haven Waterway in ways which are consistent with the marine SAC designation
- Utilising natural resources more efficiently
- Reducing the pressure on the availability of water supplies from local rivers by managing water consumption.

## 2. Adapting to and mitigating against climate change, by:

- Improving our understanding of the potential impacts of climate change on the Area's environment, economy and communities
- Improving the environmental performance of new and existing buildings
- Facilitating more sustainable transport options
- Managing the increasing risk of flooding
- Facilitating the linkage of wildlife habitats
- Facilitating diversification of the energy sector.
- 3. Ensuring the man-made, natural and cultural environment of the Area supports a high quality of life for its residents and visitors, by:
- Creating healthier communities by increasing access to outdoor recreational activities



**Pembroke** shire



**Encouraging local communities** and businesses to take positive action in support of the Area's vision of sustainability.

# 4. Facilitating sustainable development by effective forward planning and upfront investment in strategic infrastructure, by:

- Ensuring that investments in the Area's sewerage network are sufficient to overcome current inadequacies and are aligned to development proposals
- Developing an integrated network of facilities to improve sustainable waste management practices in the Area.

# 5. Protecting and enhancing the quality of the Area's built and natural environment, by:

- Working collaboratively to get designated sites into favourable condition
- Maximising the opportunities to enhance biodiversity through sensitive land use development planning and local biodiversity action planning.

# **Respecting Distinctiveness**

18.33 Respect for the Area's distinctiveness is central to its economic



success and to the quality of life of its people. Maintaining this distinctiveness necessitates work to enhance the Area's biodiversity and the natural and built environment, action to conserve and interpret its rich archaeology, history, and mythology, and action to foster its contemporary culture. All of these represent complementary investment in the Area's future.

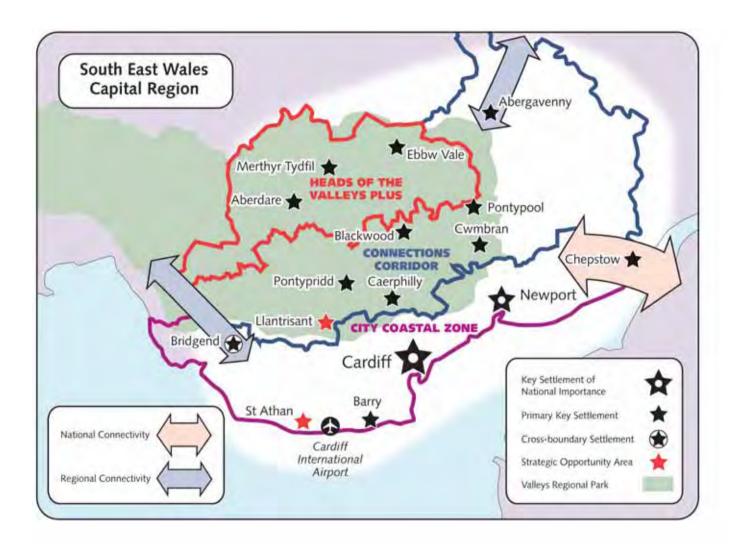
18.34 Language is a special part of the culture of the Area, for example the Welsh language in north Pembrokeshire and western Carmarthenshire. Maintaining a distinctive culture is dependent upon a dynamic, sustainable economy. The Area has had strong cultural links with Ireland since prehistoric times. Celebrating and marketing these will help attract tourists and investment from Ireland.

18.35 Attracting newcomers to the Area, whether this is returning former residents or new migrants, is critical both to its economic future and to the establishment of sustainable communities. The challenge is to support newcomers to understand the communities they have become part of and how they can play their full part, both in order to maintain cohesion and to strengthen and enrich the Area's communities and further develop their distinctiveness.

18.36 Given the Area's exceptional environment and the importance of developing higher value tourism and diversifying into the knowledgebased economy, there is a need to ensure that 'quality' is promoted as a distinct and unique selling point for the Area, and becomes a crosscutting theme in terms of infrastructure provision, product development and customer service.

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# 19. South East Wales - Capital Region



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'An innovative skilled Area offering a high quality of life - international yet distinctively Welsh. It will compete internationally by increasing its global visibility through stronger links between the Valleys and the coast and with the UK and the rest of Europe, helping to spread prosperity within the Area and benefiting other parts of Wales'

# **Priorities for the Capital Region**

- The area will function as a networked city region, on a scale to realise its international potential, its national role and to reduce inequalities
- A fully integrated high quality transport system is necessary for this to happen. Over the 20 year horizon of the Wales Spatial Plan, all the Area's key settlements should be linked to Cardiff or Newport by suitable high capacity public transport
- The success of the Area relies on Cardiff developing its capital functions, together with strong and distinctive roles of other towns and cities.

19.1 Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys are interdependent. Only if South East Wales works as a networked city region of 1.4 million people will it have the critical mass to provide the quality of life for all appropriate for the

21st century and be able to compete with comparable areas in the UK and the European Union for investment and growth. This is the challenge set by the Wales Spatial Plan.

19.2 The pattern of urban settlement set in outstanding natural scenery is much of what makes South East Wales attractive. The Area has largely had a hand and fingers pattern of urban development over the last 150 years, reflecting its major role in the industrial revolution and the rapid expansion of the iron, coal and steel industries initially in the Heads of the Valleys, then within the Valleys, then on the coastal plain. The legacy of industrial change has left stark contrasts between prosperity and deprivation. The Capital Region has to work in ways that spread prosperity and a first class quality of life to all. It needs to develop in a coherent and sustainable way, to meet the challenges of projected population growth, and pressures on transport and the environment.

19.3 The following elements of a sustainable city region will be important measures of success:

- A working city region that can adapt creatively to economic change and innovate to improve
- A learning city region that grows talent, provides lifelong opportunities and attracts talent from elsewhere





- A connected city region that aids accessibility for goods and people and encourages sustainable transport choices
- A living city region that provides a high quality natural and built environment, complemented by high quality green space, promoting healthy, strong communities and a strong civic culture. Achieving a networked environment region will be a key part of this
- A lively city region that provides a "buzz" in culture, tourism, shopping and leisure
- A low-carbon city region that reduces its resource use, energy and travel footprint and greenhouse gas emissions
- A well-governed city region with community involvement and strategic national engagement.

Three sub-areas of the Capital Region have been identified, each requiring alternative approaches:

- City Coastal Zone: An area including the two main cities of Cardiff and Newport as well as smaller distinct communities offering a high quality of life located in rural, coastal locations
- Heads of the Valleys Plus: An area set in superb natural surroundings, comprising the upper valleys of the Capital Region facing very considerable social challenges created by economic restructuring of the late 20th century
- Connections Corridor: The mid valleys and rural areas increasingly

under pressure for economic and housing development spilling out of the cities and city fringes. While some areas of deprivation remain in this sub-region, this connecting strip between coastal city growth and the restructuring area in the Heads of the Valleys Plus zone is generally increasing in prosperity.

# **Building Sustainable Communities**

19.4 At the heart of the vision is a network of strong, sustainable communities spreading prosperity from the two major centres of Cardiff and Newport to valleys across the region. Key valley settlements will have more affordable and attractive housing, a better range of local services and a variety of retail and leisure facilities. Community and voluntary sector activity in building social capital, delivering key services and supporting active and vibrant communities, complements improvements to the physical environment.

19.5 Fourteen key settlements have been agreed, and independently validated, as having a critical role to play in the success of the Capital Region. These are: Aberdare, Abergavenny, Barry, Blackwood, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Chepstow, Cwmbran/Pontypool, Ebbw Vale, Llantrisant, Merthyr Tydfil, Newport and Pontypridd. Of course these key settlements do not exist in isolation. Each has an interface and inter-relationship with its neighbours. Other important towns in the Capital Region will be identified through the local development plan process.

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19.6 The key settlements must be successful in their own right and, where appropriate, function as service and employment hubs for smaller settlements. The focus will be to create affordable and attractive places to work, live and visit. The success of the key settlements should improve life in smaller rural and valleys communities, with good access to services being a key determinant of quality of life. Key settlements will provide the central framework around which high capacity sustainable transport links will be developed. A wider range of facilities and services, which add to employment opportunities, should be delivered locally within the key settlements to reduce the overall need to travel.



19.7 The Heads of the Valleys programme is providing targeted support to regenerate the least welloff areas of the Capital Region, including the key settlements of Merthyr Tydfil and Ebbw Vale, linked to the opportunities for growth presented by the dualling of the A465 Heads of the Valleys road. Regeneration here links physical development with social and environmental action to ensure internal and external perceptions

of communities change, enabling them to play a full part in the further development of the Capital Region. A wide range of mid and upper valleys towns need modern shopping, leisure, community and cultural facilities, more attractive and affordable housing, clean, vibrant town centres, accessible open countryside and employment opportunities.

19.8 Concepts such as the Valleys Regional Park - extending across the South Wales Valleys - will promote the heritage and tourism of the Area, at the same time strengthening community pride and confidence through its collaborative approach. High quality natural and built environments, which everyone can enjoy through an emerging cycling and walking network, and spaces designed to enhance and create clean, safe environments are essential characteristics of these areas.

19.9 Acknowledging the interdependent relationship between Cardiff, one of Europe's fast growing capital cities, and the wider Capital Region is critical for the success of the Wales Spatial Plan. Cardiff's role as the key economic driver for the region, at the centre of a strong, regional economy which is internationally competitive, is essential. Cardiff will play a pivotal role as a key provider of higher level services, focusing on innovation and higher valueadded knowledge sectors.

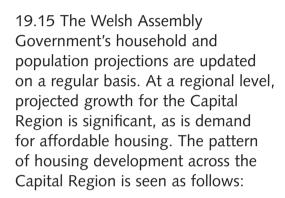
19.10 Cardiff can combine an international business offer with superb quality of life. The tourism sector within Cardiff continues to grow, complemented by large-scale development projects such as the Cardiff Bay waterfront development, the Millennium Stadium and the Wales Millennium Centre. Cardiff's profile has been raised as a major destination for domestic and international sporting and cultural events.

19.11 Newport's regeneration will strengthen its strategic role as the economic gateway to Wales, and maximise the benefits of its strong connections with the Eastern Valleys. High value developments should be a dominant feature of Cardiff and Newport's projected employment growth with quality of development befitting a regional capital area.

19.12 Bridgend has a particular role to play in linking with the Swansea Bay city region.

19.13 Achieving the Area vision is also dependent on realising the potential and managing any pressures from existing development opportunities which are not necessarily covered in the key settlements. Work is being carried out on a sub-regional basis to set out the context and define the vision, objectives and proposed outcomes for strategic opportunity areas. This will allow greater coherence to be brought to their development, as well as planning on a sub-regional basis for critical issues, such as strengthening public transport links. Development will need to be carefully managed to avoid excessive strain on infrastructure and other essential services, and to ensure environmental impact is minimised. The designation of a strategic opportunity area is not intended to confer any specific status on proposals: rather it is a vehicle to promote good cross-boundary working. Site-specific projects will need to be progressed in accordance with planning and other regulatory requirements.

19.14 An initial set of three SOAs have been identified, offering potential regional benefits from their sustainable development. These are: developments linked to the dualling of the Heads of the Valleys road (A465); the area around Llantrisant and north west Cardiff which has seen major growth over the past 30 years; and development in the Vale of Glamorgan at St Athan.



- The priority in the Heads of the Valleys and Connections Corridor is to continue to develop a greater mix and balance of types of housing, linked to public transport nodes
- The City Coastal Zone provides a superb environment in which to live. The pressure to provide more housing and employment should be managed so as to fit in compatibly with conservation of the landscape, environment and community strength of this area. Substantial growth of housing here should also be compatible with the health of housing markets in the Heads of the Valleys and Connections Corridor
- There should be targeted action to secure a supply of affordable housing, through the provision of target figures in individual local development plans.



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19.16 The South East Wales Strategic Planning Group has carried out a regional apportionment exercise of the Welsh Assembly Government's subregional household projections, based on the policy statements above and the upward population trends for the region. This will feed into the preparation of local development plans, and will be tested through the local development plan process. The apportionment process will continue as new household and population figures are issued.

## **Achieving Sustainable** Accessibility

19.17 Improved transport for all is central to making the Capital Region work, and to the regeneration of Valleys communities. The upward trend in car usage points to increasing congestion across the Area if action is not taken. Measures to alleviate congestion and investment to tackle transport bottlenecks are important elements in the Area's competitiveness. Road building in general is not a sustainable solution to the pattern of traffic growth. The overall priority is to make better use of the Area's existing transport infrastructure, to deliver more sustainable access to jobs and services.



19.18 The regional transport plan being developed by the South East Wales Transport Alliance (SEWTA) will be the main instrument for meeting these challenges. General principles guiding the priorities for the South East region include:

- Stretching targets should be set for improving journey times by bus and rail between the key settlements
- Bus priority measures should be implemented on key routes to ensure buses offer rapid travel between the key settlements
- Bus services and community transport should link other communities to these main public transport corridors
- Public transport should operate sufficiently frequently that passengers have the confidence to "turn up and go"
- Seating capacity should be sufficient to meet normal demand, reducing the need for passengers to stand
- The priority for road transport is to ensure that the existing road capacity is used with maximum efficiency. Innovative approaches to demand management will need to be part of this. For example, road charging is one feasible solution to congestion that will need to be considered. The timing of implementation will need to be judged so that improved public transport services are in place to offer car users realistic choices
- Safe cycling and walking routes should be identified for commuters and communities.

19.19 Effective external transport links are vital to the Area's competitiveness. Substantial investment is already being made in the M4. The Welsh Assembly Government, in conjunction with the Department for Transport and the rail industry, is assessing short, medium and long-term options for investment to improve rail journey times and service standards to London and Heathrow. Such investments will also improve east-west links generally to Bristol and Bath. Transport links to the Swansea Bay and Bristol areas are also important to generating a wider economic cluster and agglomeration effect. Improvements to the A465 Heads of the Valleys road will facilitate better access to West Wales, to the Brecon Beacons National Park, and improve links to Central Wales and to the West Midlands.

19.20 Cardiff International Airport makes an important contribution to providing the essential economic and tourism links that give the Capital Region international visibility. There is a need to ensure good road and public transport access to the airport. The future role and function of the airport will be a key consideration for both the Capital Region and the rest of Wales' economy.

19.21 Seaports are recognised as unique assets which can facilitate inward investment and high quality employment. The ports of Cardiff, Newport and Barry are important as gateways of trade, servicing the regional economy and supporting existing manufacturers and industry. Seaports need good surface transport connections within the South Wales region and with England, both to facilitate access for exports and to

enable onward distribution of imports. The transfer of freight from longhaul road transport to shipping and rail is a more sustainable means of transporting goods. The development of port facilities and port connectivity is an advantage for the Capital Region, which should be maximised.

## **Promoting a Sustainable Economy**

19.22 There has been much success in restructuring the economy of South East Wales, but the challenge is to continue that process and enable all to share in prosperity. Restructuring must not only help sectors move up the value chain. It must also adapt the economy to the demands and opportunities of a low-carbon marketplace. The Area needs to develop a stronger presence in higher value services and the knowledge economy, and to seize opportunities to create jobs in tourism, creative industries, renewable energy, recycling and waste.



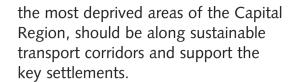
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19.23 Supporting and developing higher and further education is integral to the future of the Capital Region, and is a strong economic driver. The Welsh Assembly Government will continue to work closely with higher education and employers to foster a stronger research-based economy. Links between higher education and business will become increasingly important, as will measuring the impact of education and training on employment. The Capital Region is rich in high quality HE and FE facilities, with four universities spread across the area. These institutions are of major importance to attract and keep talent for the Area and for Wales in general.

19.24 Major private-sector employment growth is likely to be mainly in the south of the Capital Region. Public sector strategic interventions in the mid and upper valleys will complement this, strengthening the spatial fans of prosperity radiating north from Newport and Cardiff. Proposals for the location of an international business park in South East Wales will be developed as a strategic employment priority, and will be progressed in accordance with planning and other regulatory requirements.

19.25 Strategic interventions, focused on regeneration and investment in



19.26 There is scope to influence the location of public sector employment to help contribute to the sustainable pattern of development in the Area. Reconfiguration of public services, including education and health, and back office functions in local government and the public sector also offer opportunities for integrated planning.

19.27 The Capital Region accounts for a third of all tourism revenue to Wales. The Heads of the Valleys programme will support development of the economy of the mid and upper valleys, including the sustainable tourism and leisure sector, which has the potential to contribute to a much greater extent than is currently the case. Visit Wales and Capital Region Tourism are leading work to link key settlements to tourism hotspots such as Tintern, Caerleon, the Blaenavon World Heritage site and the Glamorgan Heritage Coast. In addition, canals and waterways support and generate tourism. Landscapes such as the Usk and Wye valleys have an important role to play in developing sustainable tourism and leisure opportunities.

#### Infrastructure

19.28 Given the scale of projected employment and housing growth across the Capital Region, access to sustainable forms of energy generation will be crucial to the long-term viability of the city region. Local energy generation approaches will also have an increasingly important role to play.

19.29 Priority investments in water, sewerage and other utility services



will be identified, taking account of significant development pressures in the Area. Early liaison with utility companies on potential future generating capacity will be a priority. Potentially significant sources of renewable energy will be explored.

19.30 First-class ICT links need to underpin the framework of key settlements and the location of strategic employment. ICT has a major role to play not only in competitiveness but in reducing the strain on the transport system.

#### Labour market issues

19.31 The Capital Region faces a big challenge to equip all of its people with the skills they will need to contribute effectively to the future of the Area. Economic inactivity rates remain high in the Heads of the Valleys and in some wards in Cardiff and Newport. Upgrading the skills of those in and out of work, including basic skills, will be a key priority.

19.32 Co-ordinated action to help people who are economically inactive into jobs or business is crucial. EU Convergence Programme funding should be used to ensure that employment services in the Area are integrated and meet the needs of individuals and employers alike, building on the Pathways to Work and Want2Work pilots and JobMatch, as best practice. Stakeholders are working collaboratively within the context of the Wales Spatial Plan to use EU funding in this way. Public and private sector employers should commit themselves to the Basic Skills Employer Pledge, to offer

all employees the chance to gain a level two qualification, with Welsh Assembly Government support.

19.33 The Heads of the Valleys area has been identified by the Department for Work and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus as a national pilot area for their Cities Strategy which seeks to address above average economic inactivity in city regions. This, and wider regeneration work, will promote links between agencies to provide individuals with skills and support, with initiatives that generate employment including construction work linked to housing refurbishment under the Welsh Housing Quality Standard town centre renewal, and city growth projects. It will be important to ensure that the geographic pattern of provision offers opportunities for people living in the key concentrations of economic inactivity, both within the main urban centres and in the more remote valley communities. A close focus is also being put on construction skills as part of the development of 14-19 provision and Modern Apprenticeships.

19.34 Economic activity rates are low among some ethnic minority communities, and especially among females in some ethnic minority groups. In the interests of social cohesion it is important to develop culturally sensitive tailored support for people in such communities to become economically active, and to improve their linguistic skills in English or Welsh, using EU funding.

#### Links to other areas

19.35 In recognition of its Capital Region status, improving links



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to all parts of Wales will be vital. To the west and east, effective links with the Swansea Bay city region, and collaboration with Bristol and Bath through the Spatial Strategy for South West England, will help the whole zone to perform stronger economically. To the north, joint work with the Brecon Beacons National Park will help create the right synergy with settlements in Central Wales. Tourism raises cross-border issues with England, such as the sustainable management of the Wye Valley, and the Severn Estuary.

19.36 The social, economic and environmental impact of a Severn tidal power project will be considered in a strategic context. This would have implications for housing, energy, waste, travel-to-work patterns, business supply links and transport infrastructure, which would impact on both the Capital Region and the South West of England. The Welsh Assembly Government, together with a range of other agencies from England and Wales, has commissioned a joint feasibility study into the outline project proposals.

## **Valuing Our Environment**

19.37 The Capital Region has much to offer in terms of a first-class quality of

life and this needs to be protected and enhanced by:

- Getting the best of both high quality urban living and close proximity to stunning countryside, making the most of the unique dispersed lowdensity, metropolitan development and green spaces in the Area
- Carefully managing development pressures to safeguard and enhance the Area's high quality landscape and countryside
- Reducing levels of traffic congestion, and developing effective public transport
- Sustaining and developing places that are safe for people to walk and cycle, and reducing crime
- Protecting environmentally sensitive areas, such as the Gwent Levels, identifying opportunities to restore and create other sites which will safeguard the Area's biodiversity.

19.38 Making South East Wales work as a networked environment region is central to addressing the challenges of past and future development, whilst delivering many of the Environment Strategy for Wales' objectives. The concept of the networked environment region builds on work currently being undertaken by the Countryside Council for Wales. The main elements will be:

• Identifying strategic wildlife areas to join up natural habitats, linking existing designated habitats where possible. This will enable people to enjoy and participate in the countryside and wildlife, whilst providing high quality environments within which species can develop. CCW will develop proposals for these areas, working with the Environment Agency, local authorities and voluntary sector groups



 Addressing river habitats which are important for wildlife and biodiversity. This function needs to be combined with their role in protecting against flooding and in offering opportunities for leisure and tourism.

19.39 Action to strengthen the environmental networks will enhance the quality of life and support tourism and leisure. The development of wildlife areas, public rights of way and cycle paths in the Heads of the Valleys area and the Valleys part of the Connections Corridor should be managed by all stakeholders in partnership as a Valleys Regional Park, building close associations with the Brecon Beacons National Park.

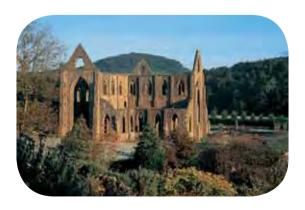
## **Respecting Distinctiveness**

19.40 With a reasonable degree of success the Capital Region is successfully making the transition to a 21st century

city region offering a high quality of life, transforming internal and external perceptions of the region as a modern and lively place to live, work and visit. This strategy should strengthen its distinctive character as a Capital Region with a specifically Welsh culture and identity, but a cosmopolitan population. The Area is at home with both Welsh, Anglo-Welsh and multi-ethnic cultures, and languages co-mingle. The presence of minority ethnic communities in South East Wales needs to be embraced for the positive part they can play in this vision.

19.41 Each town and city needs to foster its own distinct sense of identity, building on its heritage and culture to create a network of settlements with real character which complement each other and each add strength to the attractiveness of the region as a whole. Recognising the value of the Area's diversity of landscapes, built environments and distinctive communities will be key to building confidence and helping to market a regional offer for inward investment and for tourism.

19.42 The arts/creative industries and sport are already a significant part of the region's identity and both need continued support.





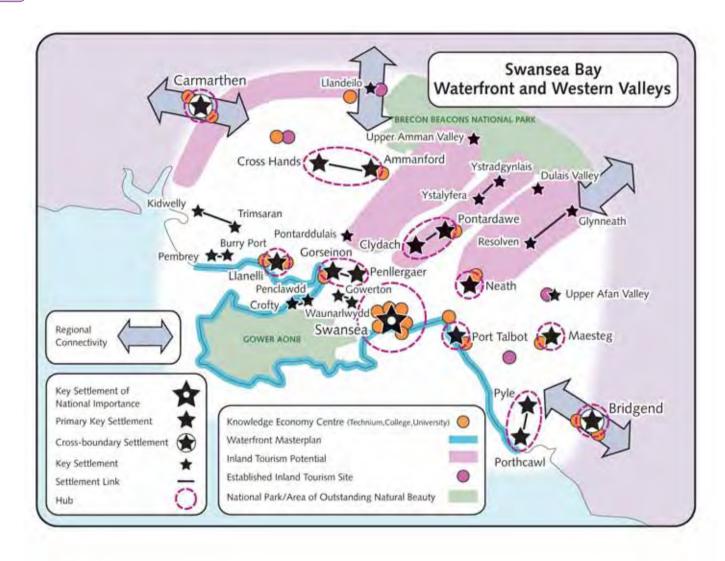


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# 20. Swansea Bay - Waterfront and Western Valleys





'A network of interdependent settlements with Swansea at its heart which pull together effectively as a city region with a modern, competitive, knowledge-based economy designed to deliver a high quality of life, a sustainable environment, a vibrant waterfront and excellent national and international connections'

## 20.1 The key priorities for the region are:

- Improving accessibility. This includes improved telecommunication links as well as developing transport connections between the key settlements
- Developing a cutting edge knowledge economy so the region is less reliant on low paid, low skilled jobs
- Reducing economic inactivity and developing an integrated skills strategy
- · Implementing the Waterfront Masterplan to maximise opportunities along the stunning coastline
- Developing a strong leisure and activity based tourism industry
- Ensuring that environmental protection and enhancement are fully integrated.

20.2 The Swansea Bay Waterfront and Western Valleys Area is made up of Neath Port Talbot and Swansea unitary authority areas, together with large parts of east Carmarthenshire and bordering parts of Bridgend and Powys.

20.3 The Area has some key advantages. It has a city on the doorstep of an outstanding waterfront against the backdrop of the Welsh valleys with one of the foremost UK research-led universities in its region which is at the forefront of developing the ideas critical to realising the region's knowledge economy ambitions.

20.4 The further development of a sustainable knowledge-based economy lies at the heart of the plan for the region. Through creation of highly skilled and better paid jobs, the benefits flow to the whole economy, creating new opportunities for all wishing to enter the workforce throughout the Area. Critical to this agenda is the creation of a vertically integrated education/skills strategy. The goal is to continually improve the skills profile, giving new and existing workers the opportunity to develop, update and refresh their skills, creating a highly skilled city region. Higher education, further education and schools must work together to deliver this agenda.

20.5 The challenge now is to take action that enables the whole of the city region to be recognised across the UK and Europe as a premier place to live and work in a modern sustainable way that spreads benefits throughout the Area. As part of this, the Area needs to become recognised as a leader in dealing creatively with the issues posed by climate change.



20.6 The critical factor will be to develop a strong network of urban centres across the region which spread prosperity to surrounding smaller settlements. While Swansea is the flourishing heart of its city region, the city cannot develop fully unless the rest of the Area functions effectively and competitively. It is important to define the different functions of the settlements, and identify their distinctiveness and how they complement each other.

20.7 Swansea is the regional capital and the main driver for economic growth in the region. It should continue to develop its role as regional centre with the surrounding hinterland benefiting from its growth. To achieve this wider growth it is important to build on its regional capital function as the regional hub for culture, leisure, commerce, health services and retailing serving South West Wales. As the leading higher education institutions in the region, both Swansea University and the Metropolitan University are critical for the region to realise its knowledge economy aspirations.

20.8 The Area's key settlements provide an important local service and employment function. Their development is a vital element of the strategy for the Area. Regeneration activity will concentrate on providing improved shopping, leisure, community and cultural facilities, more attractive and affordable housing, clean vibrant town centres, accessible open countryside and employment opportunities. Neath, Port Talbot, and Llanelli are particularly important in this respect and

Carmarthen is an important service, retail and employment centre serving a large hinterland.

20.9 The success of the key settlements should improve life in smaller rural and valleys communities, with good access to services being a key contributor to quality of life. The focus for these places will be to create affordable and attractive places to live with a choice of transport to and from jobs and services, including for example health, when they are not available locally and set within a high quality natural and built environment, which everyone can enjoy.

20.10 This will be complemented by the regeneration of the coast to create a thriving retail, leisure and business offer along the waterfront within a sustainable environment, with full regard to conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.

20.11 To capitalise on this, it is vital that the urban settlements and the waterfront are well connected by a range of sustainable transport options so people can move easily between where they live, work and access key services. In addition, the city region needs to improve its international connectivity to attract new investment.

20.12 Regeneration and infrastructure play a large part in realising this vision but there are also many social factors which need to be addressed. Relevant agencies need to focus on raising skill levels and helping people into work through a joined-up approach so that everyone has the opportunity to benefit from the Area's prosperity.



## **Building Sustainable Communities**

20.13 At the heart of the vision for Swansea Bay - Waterfront and Western Valleys, is a network of strong, sustainable communities spreading prosperity out from Swansea and the other key settlements to the smaller settlements across the region. Key settlements will have more affordable and attractive housing, a better range of local services and a variety of retail and leisure facilities. To help build sustainable communities, housing growth, new employment sites, and retail and indoor leisure development should be co-located and well served by public transport.

20.14 The Wales Spatial Plan process is exploring how the settlements in the region should develop in the future to achieve these goals. Eleven key settlements (hubs) have been identified as having a critical role to play in the success of the city region. These are:

- Ammanford/Cross Hands
- Bridgend
- Carmarthen
- Gorseinon/Penllergaer
- Llanelli
- Maesteg
- Neath
- Pontardawe/Clydach
- Porthcawl/Pyle
- Port Talbot
- Swansea.

20.15 Work will continue to define the future roles of these key settlements so that as far as possible they complement each other rather than compete. These settlements must be successful in their own right and, where appropriate, function as service and employment hubs for surrounding settlements. They must also provide the opportunity for local communities to create new jobs and also to enable the Area to attract and retain skilled workers and young people.

20.16 Work continues to define the particular role that each settlement needs to play in the region. Bridgend has a particular role to play in linking with the future of the South East Wales city region and Carmarthen to the Pembrokeshire The Haven Spatial Plan Area.

20.17 A number of other smaller settlements with a wider spread across the city region were identified as supporting communities. Many are dependent on the hubs for some key amenities. These communities are:

- Burry Port/Pembrey
- **Dulais Valley**
- Glynneath/Resolven
- Gowerton/Waunarlwydd
- Kidwelly/Trimsaran
- Llandeilo
- Penclawdd/Crofty
- Pontarddulais
- Upper Afan Valley
- Upper Amman Valley
- Ystalyfera/Ystradgynlais.



20.18 City and town regeneration will build on best practice, with a coherent programme for a settlement running over a number of years, with strong community involvement, associated training and business support, using local people, produce and suppliers wherever possible.

20.19 If the key settlements are successful, they will benefit the surrounding smaller settlements, rural and valley communities by offering increased access to job opportunities and amenities and by stimulating the local market for employment, housing and retail development. The focus for these areas will be to create high quality places to live with small-scale development of attractive and affordable housing.

20.20 The location of new housing will be a key influence on the pattern of development in the Area. The emphasis will be on the key settlements while also seeking to revitalise and sustain smaller centres

and valley communities. The proposed Coed Darcy urban village of some 4000 dwellings at Landarcy will establish new standards for regeneration, sustainable development and urban design, providing a high quality environment and safe place for people to live and work.

## **Achieving Sustainable Accessibility**

20.21 To achieve the aim of spreading prosperity throughout the region it is critical that all communities are linked to the key employment hubs by both road links and public transport provision. It is particularly important that all communities in the region are linked by a fast public transport system to Swansea City Centre given its regional capital function.

#### Internal links

20.22 Current trends in car usage show that the amount of traffic on the roads and the resulting congestion will increase within the Area if action is not taken. The overall priority is the creation of an effective and sustainable transport network within the city region. This means making better use of the Area's existing infrastructure together with delivering greater choice, more efficient and sustainable transport options. It also means looking at patterns of service provision and land use to ensure that where possible overall travel demand is reduced. The key settlements will play a key role in this as important service centres, employment locations and transport hubs to enable greater accessibility within the city region as a whole.





20.23 The accessibility objectives will be delivered in part through the system of local development plans and also the regional transport plan that is being developed by the South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium (SWWITCH). These objectives include:

- Emphasis on strengthening the Area's hubs and supporting communities, both in terms of retail, employment, town centres and housing, which should create a framework within which SWWITCH can facilitate better public transport and reduce reliance on the private car
- Improving public transport to existing strategic employment sites and locating new strategic sites in locations that can be well served by public transport
- Healthcare, education and leisure services need to be easily accessible by public transport from both the key settlements and more remote valley communities
- Innovative public transport services and opportunities such as car sharing need to offer improved opportunities for economically inactive people to access jobs throughout the city region
- Developing and promoting safer routes for walking and cycling throughout the city region but particularly for shorter journeys within settlements.

#### External links

20.24 Connectivity to Cardiff, Bristol, London and internationally is essential to attract inward investment and for the Area to appeal to a high-skilled, high-paid workforce.

20.25 Measures to alleviate congestion around Newport, and investment to tackle bottlenecks on other parts of the M4 are essential. The priority for rail will be on ensuring that the needs of the region are reflected in the forward investment plans of Network Rail, as agreed with the Department for Transport and Welsh Assembly Government.

20.26 The Area's important port facilities give the region an economic edge. Links west with Ireland should also be maintained: links to the South West of England should be supported along with the possibility of an enhanced role for the deep water harbour at Port Talbot which should be explored in partnership with the private sector.

## Information and Communication **Technology - A Digital Region**

20.27 ICT can assist in overcoming challenges of geography and time by making services more readily available online, 24 hours a day. This is already happening through numerous e-government initiatives being developed by national and local government to make public services more accessible. ICT also plays a key role in the healthcare environment. New technologies are making services more accessible, while assistive technology such as telehealth can support and





monitor people safely in their home environment. In addition, ICT is critical to improving the co-ordination of services, particularly across health and social care.

20.28 The region is making good progress towards ubiquitous availability of broadband. Free broadband access in public buildings, for example, libraries makes the Internet available to all. However, accessibility depends not only upon infrastructure, its availability and uptake, but also the scope, maturity and integration of applications which are using it. The next challenge will be to continue increasing its uptake, along with development of skills for its use and adoption of applications for its exploitation. This will support increased home and flexible working.

20.29 The penetration of IT into all sectors of the economy has made ICT skills themselves of crucial importance. Basic ICT skills have become a pre-requisite for most jobs and the emergence of the knowledge economy is making acquisition of higher level skills increasingly important. The regional Knowledge **Economy Steering Group has** stressed in its work the importance of vertically-integrating such skills provision through the education sector.

20.30 Building on the accessibility agenda, ICT is already playing a significant role in skills delivery. This is already being achieved through mechanisms such as distance learning, use of technology in the classroom, and of course the educational power of knowledge made available via the

Internet into the home, workplace and on the move.

20.31 ICT also plays a critical role in the knowledge economy, both as a tool and as a sector itself. Traditional sectors are seeing the opportunities of the online economy as we aim to move businesses across the region up the e-commerce ladder.

20.32 The region is home to a number of leading research and development centres. These include the Blue-C life science supercomputer, the Institute of Advanced Telecommunications at Swansea University, expertise in digital media at Swansea Metropolitan University and facilities such as the BT 21CN test bed at their Swansea centre. The challenge is to further develop in this sector.

20.33 ICT can play an important role in tackling economic activity through facilitating engagement with sections of the community, assisting in upskilling, provision of new opportunities and removal of barriers to becoming economically active as part of a change of culture.

20.34 An ICT strategy for the region will be developed as part of the Wales Spatial Plan process.

## Promoting a Sustainable **Economy**

20.35 The region has a diverse economic base. It is important to maintain this and build upon strengths in existing and emerging sectors. Innovation is a key driver for growth and sustainability. The region needs to be underpinned by a dynamic, diverse regional economy that provides a wide range of employment



opportunities at all skill levels. It is also important that the needs of existing employers, particularly those with high growth potential, are supported.

20.36 Key to the future of the economy as a whole will be developing and exploiting the skills of the working age population. A strong higher and further education presence will be positioned to strategically support a developing knowledge based economy. In addition to this, sustainability will be promoted by making best use of local people, produce and suppliers. Public services themselves are amongst the largest employers in local communities and have a role to lead by example in best human resource practice and stimulating employment and growth.

#### Building a Knowledge Economy

20.37 The region has recognised the importance of the knowledge economy and worked in partnership on a range of initiatives for some years. The South West Wales Knowledge Economy Steering Group, a private sector led partnership involving higher and further education institutions, local authorities and the Welsh Assembly Government will take forward the development and delivery of the strategy.

20.38 A number of fundamental issues are emerging from work already undertaken including:

 An urgent need to develop an innovation park strategy. An innovation park would co-locate higher and further education institutions and research initiatives with the role of a science park together with other knowledge-intensive activity, supported by a public and private sector knowledge infrastructure. The model preferred would include at least one major innovation park and a dispersed network of smaller satellites based around the Technium network. This would differentiate the region from other competitors and give a unique proposition to inward investors and indigenous entrepreneurs alike

 The need to build upon expertise already assembled in specific sectors, capitalising on significant investment already achieved. These include life sciences, digital media, creative industries, telecommunications, nanotechnology, energy and environmental science



 The need to recognise that the knowledge economy is not the exclusive domain of science and technology within the Area. It is critical that other skills such as law, business, finance, marketing communications, creative industries and management are seamlessly





- integrated into the knowledge economy strategy
- Building on the existing medical school and further developing the university links across all areas of health and social care delivery. This would facilitate attraction of high-calibre research, development of an international reputation and achievement of excellence in healthcare delivery and research.

## Better Skills and Learning

20.39 The legacy of industrial change and social deprivation means that the Area has faced a big challenge over recent years. Economic restructuring has seen the decline of heavy engineering, coal and steel production. The long term future of heavy industry in the Area and strategic effects of any radical change will need to be considered. In recent years new investment in infrastructure and the redevelopment of brownfield land has successfully attracted new employment opportunities. Improvements to transport infrastructure and the continued growth of the industrial and commercial markets along the M4 corridor in particular have benefited the area.

20.40 Developing an integrated skills strategy is of critical importance to the regional agenda and Swansea University will play a lead role in developing a strategic programme to develop such skills. This agenda is linking with the economic inactivity and knowledge economy projects to ensure consistency of approach.

20.41 A key priority is to ensure that the Area has a sufficiently strong and innovative network of vocational skills providers, with the capacity to respond to demand from individuals and employers and to underpin the developing knowledge economy. It will also be important for Wales Spatial Plan partners to work with employers in the Area to ensure that they demonstrate support for raising the skills of all their workforce.



20.42 The Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning & Skills (DCELLS) has undertaken a major review of its National Learning and Skills Assessment and early indications are that the priority areas for the region are:

- Working with key stakeholders to provide viable and sustainable routes into employment for the economically inactive
- Providing targeted support for training in the social care sector

 Through collaboration and joint working, developing learning responses to meet individual and community needs identified in the Wales Spatial Plan and local regeneration strategies.

20.43 These are additional to the national priorities which include supporting the skills and training needs of the built environment. Additionally, DCELLS, on behalf of partners has through its planning process worked to ascertain current supply patterns with local colleges which will be matched against identified demand to prevent duplication and ensure that the supply of more appropriately qualified leavers closely matches that demand.

#### Economic Inactivity

20.44 Despite the improving economy, many people, particularly in the more deprived and remote communities, remain economically inactive. Tackling this is a key challenge for the economy, social justice and health - unemployment is the enemy of wellbeing. Concerted action is being taken to give people who are economically inactive the chance to take part in the economy.

20.45 Within the framework of the Wales Spatial Plan, key stakeholders are working together to provide a strategic single gateway for all clients to be assessed and offered access to services (mainstream, existing and added-value new convergence projects) taking a flexible approach that best fits their needs. The strategic gateway will ensure that employment-related services in the Area, across the continuum

of exclusion from work, are demandled, client-centred and joined-up so that they work well for both the economically inactive/people seeking work and employers (private, public and voluntary sector) seeking staff.

20.46 Links with action by the Department for Work and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus will also be important. Wherever possible, links will be made between such work to provide individuals with skills and support, with initiatives that generate employment including construction work linked to housing refurbishment under the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, town centre renewal, and waterfront projects. It will be important to ensure that the geographic pattern of provision caters for people in more remote communities as well as those in the larger towns.

20.47 Action is already underway in the Area to help people back to work. This includes work with families under Flying Start and measures to tackle the deep-rooted patterns of ill health in deprived communities in the Area. Improving access to information on, and the development of facilities for public transport, car sharing, walking and cycling will also help to reduce barriers facing economically inactive people.







20.48 Economic activity rates are low among some ethnic minority communities, and especially among females in some ethnic minority groups. In the interests of social cohesion it is important to develop culturally-sensitive tailored support for people in such communities to become economically active, and to improve their linguistic skills in English or Welsh.

#### The Waterfront

20.49 A collaborative priority for the Spatial Plan Area Group is to regenerate the waterfront. A Waterfront Masterplan covers development based on land and water to create a vibrant and distinctive waterfront from Pembrey to Porthcawl. It has been developed in partnership to bring together existing proposals and identify new opportunities and enhance the links between the Western Valley communities and the coast. Key activities include:

 Developing marinas and waterways to act as catalysts for growth

- Maximising the coastal route for tourism growth creating a Swansea Bay Coastal Path
- Linking communities to the coast through sustainable transport options
- Waterfront regeneration to facilitate the growth of the knowledge economy
- Recognising opportunities offered by the unique environmental assets within the zone, whilst also addressing the need to tackle challenges arising from climate change
- Linking interventions to training and helping people who are economically inactive to get jobs
- Securing wider community involvement
- Maximising opportunities to improve the Area's health through waterfront activities.
- Supporting sub-regional working to improve the tourism offer.





#### **Tourism**

20.50 The Area is exceptional in terms of its potential for tourism and leisure. The Gower is world-famous, but the Area has other attractions that deserve to be no less widely recognised, including the wider coastline, the Black Mountain and Afan Forest. Tourism and leisure, allied to culture, have the potential to improve health and quality of life, raise economic activity, enhance regeneration and conservation and improve overall sustainable development across the wider region. Tourism has a particular role to play in providing jobs in the more remote valley communities, allied to outdoor activities and recreation. The Area also needs to draw on its link with the Breacon Beacons National Park and the Valleys Regional Park to help strengthen its image for tourism.

20.51 In the past five years there has been a significant increase in new hotel development particularly in Swansea. Tourism in the region also remains seasonal, with a clear

peak in the third quarter of the year. The challenge is to raise the quality of the product in order to attract high yielding visitors, while also increasing off-peak business.

20.52 The Welsh Coastal Tourism Strategy will guide sustainable progress along the Welsh coastline and actions will focus on maritime, activity-based and environmental tourism as well as co-ordinating a strategic events programme allied to a Waterfront branding.

20.53 A tourism study has developed an action plan with a number of projects to improve the tourism, culture and leisure offer in the region which have direct links to the other priorities for the Spatial Plan Area, especially economic inactivity, skills, transport and the Waterfront Masterplan. Tourism has the potential to link outdoor activities in the valleys with outdoor activities along the waterfront.

20.54 The study's strategic approach involves:





- Creating an all-year destination
- Concentrating on 'place making' creating attractive and distinctive urban and rural environments people will wish to visit
- Developing centres of excellence for sport, recreation and activity holidays
- Strengthening conservation and interpretation of culture and heritage in its own right while also providing a leisure and tourism resource.

20.55 Underpinning this approach is paying equal attention to the needs and opportunities presented by local people and visitors, and being aware of sustainability issues in all aspects of planning and management.

## Valuing Our Environment

20.56 The natural environment underpins the success of the Area. It is central to the quality of life of residents, visitors and employees and is vital in ensuring that we retain jobs, attract inward investment and diversify our local economy.



20.57 The Area has a large number of significant environmental assets, many of which are designated as being of national and European importance such as the special areas of conservation in Carmarthen Bay and the coal measure grasslands of Mynydd Mawr. Its landscape is also nationally recognised through such designations as the Brecon Beacons National Park, and the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It benefits from historic landscapes and parks, beautiful beaches, rolling sand dune systems, dramatic upland valleys, extensive woodlands, and vibrant waterways. The area is rich in industrial heritage, in prehistoric sites and archaeological features. The rural environment forms an important backdrop to the urban areas and tourism, recreation, forestry and farming play a significant role in the local economy.

20.58 There is a need to develop tailor-made local action under the Welsh Assembly Government's Environment Strategy for Wales. There are a number of strategic intervention opportunities for the region. Key activities are:

- Reducing the Area's carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions
- Ensuring local communities are resilient to flood risk
- Protecting and enhancing the biodiversity of the Area and managing the risks of the disconnection and isolation of habitats arising from changes in land use and climate







- Managing our important landscape and geological features sensitively
- Providing a high quality built environment with easy and sustainable access between employment centres, residential areas, local green space and the wider countryside
- Aligning strategic infrastructure investment to our spatial development aspirations in particular for waste and sewerage
- Utilising natural resources more sustainably
- Protecting and enhancing the quality of our rivers and bathing waters
- Maximising the tourism and recreation opportunities provided

- by our high quality environment without causing it damage
- Facilitating and supporting the forestry and agriculture sector to continue to become more sustainable, protecting valuable habitats, developing greater synergy with tourism and leisure, and developing local products that add to the Area's appeal
- Fostering respect for the environment and empowering local communities and businesses to become actively involved in positive actions towards achieving the Area's vision for sustainability.

## **Respecting Distinctiveness**

20.59 Each smaller settlement and town, together with the city, needs to foster its own distinct sense of identity, building on its history and culture. The aim is to create a network of settlements with real character which complement each other and add strength to the attractiveness of the city region as a whole. The Area's distinctive quality of life will be a critical factor in enabling it to compete with city regions that are closer to the UK's economic centres of gravity.

20.60 Few other places offer a worldclass waterfront and valleys of outstanding beauty combined with modern city living. Strengthening its distinctive character is therefore a priority.

20.61 Conserving and celebrating the Area's heritage and development in terms of sites, buildings and people is one aspect of this.





New development must add rather than subtract character. A regional partnership approach will add value to marketing the choice and quality of life on offer to residents and visitors to the Area as a whole.

#### Welsh language and culture

20.62 The region has much that is distinctive in cultural terms. Many of the communities in the Area are traditional heartlands of the Welsh language. The Area is rich in archaeology and history, and was an early cradle for the industrial revolution. Swansea also has a strong heritage in the arts. This is not only an integral part of what the Area has to offer in terms of tourism and leisure but also offers a base on which to foster a bilingual cultural identity that is proud of its heritage, confident and outwardlooking. The presence of minority ethnic communities in the Area needs to be embraced for the positive part it can play in this vision.



## Annex 1



# Organisations involved in the Spatial Plan Area Groups

#### **Central Wales**

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

Carmarthenshire County Council

Central Wales Economic Forum

Ceredigion County Council

Coleg Meirion Dwyfor

Conwy County Borough Council

Countryside Council for Wales

Denbighshire County Council

**Environment Agency** 

Equality and Human Rights Coalition

Gwynedd Council

Jobcentre Plus

**Powys County Council** 

Rural Housing Authorities Network

Snowdonia National Park Authority

South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium

Taith

Tourism Partnership Mid Wales

**Trades Union Congress** 

Trafnidiaeth Canolbarth Cymru (Mid Wales Transportation)

University of Wales, Aberystwyth

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Wales Environment Link

Wales Social Partners Unit

Welsh Assembly Government

Welsh Language Board

#### North East Wales - Border and Coast

Conwy and Denbighshire NHS Trust

Conwy County Borough Council

Countryside Council for Wales



Denbighshire County Council

**Environment Agency** 

Equality and Human Rights Coalition

Flintshire County Council

Flintshire Local Health Board

Jobcentre Plus

Llandrillo College

North East Wales Institute of Higher Education

North Wales Economic Forum

North West England Regional Assembly

Taith

Tourism Partnership North Wales

**Trades Union Congress** 

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Wales Environment Link

Wales Social Partners Unit

Welsh Assembly Government

Wrexham County Borough Council

## North West Wales - Eryri a Môn

**Anglesey County Council** 

Coleg Menai

Conwy County Borough Council

Countryside Council for Wales

**Environment Agency** 

Equality and Human Rights Coalition

Gwynedd Council

Jobcentre Plus

Magnox North

Mantell Gwynedd

Menter Mon (Social Enterprise representative)

National Public Health Service - North West Wales

North Wales Economic Forum

North West Wales NHS Trust

Snowdonia National Park Authority

**Snowdonia Society** 

Taith



Tourism Partnership North Wales

**Trades Union Congress** 

University of Wales, Bangor

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Wales Environment Link

Wales Social Partners Unit

Welsh Assembly Government

Welsh Local Government Association

#### Pembrokeshire - The Haven

Carmarthenshire College

Carmarthenshire County Council

Countryside Council for Wales

**Environment Agency** 

Equality and Human Rights Coalition

Jobcentre Plus

Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion Local Health Board

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

Pembrokeshire College

Pembrokeshire County Council

Pembrokeshire County Voluntary Council

South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium

Trades Union Congress

Wales Environment Link

Wales Social Partners Unit

Welsh Assembly Government

## South East Wales - Capital Region

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

Bridgend County Borough Council

Caerphilly County Borough Council

Cardiff County Council

Countryside Council for Wales

**Environment Agency** 

Equality and Human Rights Coalition

Jobcentre Plus

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council



Monmouthshire County Council

**Newport City Council** 

Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council

South East Wales Regional Housing Forum

South East Wales Strategic Planning Group

South East Wales Transport Alliance

Torfaen County Borough Council

**Trades Union Congress** 

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Valleys Regional Park Partnership

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Wales Environment Link

Wales Social Partners Unit

Welsh Assembly Government

Welsh Language Board

Welsh Local Government Association

## Swansea Bay - Waterfront & Western Valleys

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot Local Health Boards

Bridgend County Borough Council

Carmarthenshire County Council

City and County of Swansea

Countryside Council for Wales

**Environment Agency** 

Equality and Human Rights Coalition

Jobcentre Plus

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

**Powys County Council** 

South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium

Swansea University

Trades Union Congress

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Wales Environment Link

Wales Social Partners Unit

Welsh Assembly Government



## Annex 2

# Glossary

#### Affordable housing

Housing provided for those whose needs are not met by the open market. Affordability will have regard to local incomes and local house prices.

#### Affordable Housing Toolkit

A document which provides practical advice to local authorities and their partners to maximise the supply of affordable housing. It aims to raise awareness of the inter-relationship between different government policies and provides examples of good practice from around Wales.

#### Aquaculture

The farming of aquatic animals and plants (particularly fish, shellfish, and seaweed) in natural or controlled marine or freshwater environments.

#### **Biodiversity**

The number and variety of organisms found within a specified geographic region.

#### Bio-sciences

Any of several branches of science, such as biology, medicine, anthropology, or ecology, that deal with living organisms, their organisation, and their relationships to each other and their environment.

#### Brownfield site

A piece of industrial or commercial land that is abandoned or underused and often environmentally contaminated, usually one considered as a potential site for redevelopment.

#### Cadw

The service within the Welsh Assembly Government responsible for protecting, conserving, and promoting an appreciation of the historic environment of Wales.

#### Carbon capture and storage

Capturing the carbon dioxide from various industrial installations and storing it underground in natural reservoirs, such as depleted oil and gas fields or saline aquifers.

#### City region approach

An approach that involves reconnecting cities with their surrounding settlements (for example, reconnecting Cardiff to settlements in the Valleys).



#### Climate change

Sometimes referred to as global warming, climate change is the process by which human emissions of greenhouse gases are believed to be causing changes in the Earth's climate system.

#### Communities First programme

Launched in 2001, the Welsh Assembly Government's comprehensive approach to area-based regeneration, which has been embraced by Wales' most deprived communities.

#### Community plans/strategies

The Local Government Act 2000 places a duty on county/county borough councils in Wales to prepare community strategies for promoting or improving the economic, social, and environmental wellbeing of their areas, and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.

#### Convergence funds

A sub-branch of European Structural Funds (see below).

#### Cross-cutting actions

A term used to describe an action which has an impact or effect on several factors/issues. For example, a new bus route opening in rural Wales will address transport issues, as well as helping to solve employment problems and address environmental concerns.

#### Demand responsive transport

A bus or community transport service available to a user by previous arrangement that follows a flexible route between fixed end points.

#### Demographic

A statistic characterising human populations, or segments of human populations, broken down by criteria such as age, gender or income.

#### Ecological footprint

A measure of the impact we impose on the natural environment in terms of the land area equivalent required to provide for current resource consumption and waste disposal.

#### Economic inactivity

The economically inactive are a diverse group, including the early-retired, students, carers, people experiencing long-term illness, and those with a disability. It is this group, currently disengaged from the labour market, that forms a key source of potential labour to drive forward economic and social regeneration.

#### **Ecosystem**

A collection of living things and the environment in which they live. For example, a rural Welsh ecosystem may include foxes, the rabbits on which they feed, and the grasses that feed the rabbits.



#### Eco-tourism

Eco-tourism typically involves travel to destinations where flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the primary attractions, often for the purpose of volunteering to undertake a task or tasks in relation to the local environment. Responsible eco-tourism includes programmes that minimise the negative aspects of conventional tourism on the environment, and enhance the cultural integrity of local people.

#### European Structural Funds

The European Union's main instrument for supporting social and economic restructuring across the Union. It accounts for over a third of the European Union budget. During 2007-2013 Wales will benefit from around £1.8 billion of grant funding from the European Structural Funds programmes. With match funding this will mean a total investment of around £3.6 billion in Wales.

#### **FibreSpeed**

FibreSpeed is a Welsh Assembly Government-led project which will bring very high speed broadband services to North Wales at the competitive prices available in dense urban areas of the UK.

#### Fuel poverty

A household is said to be in fuel poverty if it needs to spend more than 10 per cent of its income on fuel to maintain a satisfactory heating regime (usually 21 degrees for the main living area, and 18 degrees for other occupied rooms).

#### Geosciences

Any one of the sciences that deals with the Earth, such as geology or geochemistry.

#### Geographic Information Systems

Used to input and analyse geo-coded cartographic (mapping) information. It can be used to create, view, and manipulate multiple layers of information.

#### Greenfield site

Undeveloped land, either currently used for agriculture or just left in its natural state. Most often it is semi-rural property that is undeveloped except for agricultural use, and can be considered as a site for expanding urban development.

#### Gross value added

Measures the contribution to the economy of each individual producer, industry, or sector in the United Kingdom, and is used in the 'production' approach to estimating GDP.



#### Habitat Regulations assessment (HRA)/Appropriate Assessment (AA)

The Habitat Regulations assessment is a screening process to assess the likelihood that a plan or project may have a significant adverse effect on the conservation objectives of sites of nature conservation of European or international importance. An appropriate assessment is the actual assessment of that effect, including the impact of any mitigation requirements, and CCW must be consulted about both the HRA and AA.

#### Heads of the Valleys Programme

A 15 year regeneration strategy covering five local authorities: Rhondda Cynon Taff, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, and Torfaen.

#### Key settlements

Key settlements (in Spatial Plan terms) are usually urban conurbations deemed to have strategic importance within a region. Being a public transport hub, encouraging business growth and new investment, offering good employment prospects and ample housing are all indicators of a key settlement.

#### Knowledge economy

One in which the generation and exploitation of knowledge has come to play the predominant part in the creation of wealth.

## Local development plans

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local authorities in Wales to produce new local development plans to replace unitary development plans.

#### Local service boards

Local service boards bring together key local service providers to secure concerted and collective leadership across public bodies. Their role is to resolve significant problems that cannot be dealt with other than by collaboration across service boundaries.

#### Lower Layer Super Output Area

A geographic unit, having a minimum population of 1,000 and a mean of 1,500, which is used for presenting small area statistics.

#### Marine spatial planning

The strategic, forward-looking planning for regulating, managing and protecting the marine environment, including through allocation of space, that addresses the multiple, cumulative, and potentially conflicting uses of the sea.

#### Modal shift

The adoption of alternative forms of transport as appropriate to the circumstances, particularly modes of transport other than the motor car.

#### Modern Apprenticeships

A form of vocational training where an individual learns through a combination of on- and off-the-job learning working towards nationally recognised qualifications. There are currently two levels of apprenticeship: Foundation



Modern Apprenticeships, working towards a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at Level 2; and Modern Apprenticeships, working towards a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at Level 3.

#### Môn a Menai initiative

A small programme area in North West Wales that has been set up to address the potential impacts of the cessation of power generation from Wylfa power station.

#### Nanotechnology

The science and technology of devices and materials constructed at the atomic and molecular scales, such as electronic circuits or drug delivery systems.

#### One Wales

A four year programme produced by the coalition partnership between the Welsh Labour Party and Plaid Cymru groups in the National Assembly in June 2007. It describes over 230 specific commitments which will be delivered by April 2011.

#### Public transport nodes

Settlements or areas which are deemed to be important centres/hubs of public transport network links, providing accessibility to a range of public transportation.

#### Regeneration

The upgrading of an area, taking a balanced approach to improving the wellbeing of communities through social, physical, and economic improvements.

#### Regional transport consortium

One of four organisations in Wales set up to improve regional transport. Each group is made up of representatives from local authorities in the region.

#### Renewable energy

Energy that occurs naturally and repeatedly in the environment. This can be energy from waves, wind, the sun, and geothermal heat from the ground. Renewable energy can also be produced from plant sources such as wood or crops grown specifically as a fuel.

#### Shared apprenticeships

An approach which enables employers to pool their resources and share the training of apprentices. Together they are able to offer a range of work experience which allows a trainee to meet the framework requirements for completion of a full apprenticeship, which may not be available from the individual employers alone.

#### Sites of special scientific interest

Are the key sites for the conservation of both geological features and wildlife in the UK. SSSIs can be designated on land in private ownership as well as that held by public bodies and conservation charities. Protection of the SSSI is achieved by prohibiting damaging operations, unless permission has been granted by CCW. CCW are responsible for the condition of all SSSIs in Wales.



#### Social enterprises

Social mission-led organisations which trade in goods or services for a social function. They can include: community enterprises, credit unions, trading arms of charities, employee-owned businesses, co-operatives, development trusts, housing associations, social firms, and leisure trusts.

#### Socio-economic

Issues, policies or discussions which centre on social matters combined with economic considerations.

#### Spatial Plan Wales

The team within the Welsh Assembly Government which is responsible for co-ordinating work on the Wales Spatial Plan.

#### Strategic employment sites

Key investment and employment locations in determining the future function and inter-relationships of settlements.

#### Strategic environmental appraisal

A formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment, prepared by authorities responsible for the plan or programme, identifying the likely effects. The report and the results of the consultation on the report should be taken into account before the plan or programme is adopted.

#### Strategic frameworks

A strategy developed in Wales that focuses on the types of interventions that will best deliver on the priorities detailed in Wales' Structural Funds Operational Programmes.

#### Sustainability appraisal

An appraisal undertaken during the preparation (and review) of a plan which identifies and reports on the extent to which implementation of the plan will achieve the environmental, economic, and social objectives by which sustainable development can be defined, and identifies opportunities for improving plan performance in relation to these.

#### Sustainable accessibility

Enabling citizens to access jobs and services in a way which minimises the environmental impact of doing so.

#### Sustainable Development Scheme

Welsh Ministers have a duty under section 79 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 to make a sustainable development scheme setting out how they propose, in the exercise of their functions, to promote sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Scheme acts as the overarching strategic framework for the Welsh Assembly Government, and sets out the vision of a sustainable future for all of Wales where action for social, economic, and environmental improvement work together to create positive change.



#### Transition towns

Towns or cities that are trying to minimise their carbon footprint.

#### Trans European Networks (TENs)

The European Union's plan to link its regions with modern and efficient infrastructure including transport, energy, and telecommunications.

## **Unitary Authorities**

A single tier of local government, created to be responsible for the administration of all local government functions within a given area. In Wales, unitary authorities were set up following the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994, which came into effect in 1996.

#### Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) is the official measure of deprivation at the small area level in Wales. Originally published in 2000, a revised version was published in November 2005. Publication of WIMD 2008 is expected in July 2008.



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## Annex 3

## **Abbreviations**

A&E - Accident and Emergency
AA - Appropriate Assessment

CCW - Countryside Council for Wales

DCELLS - Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills

EU - European Union
FE - Further Education

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

GIS - Geographic Information Systems

GVA - Gross Value Added HE - Higher Education

HRA - Habitats Regulations Assessment

ICT - Information and Communication Technology

IT - Information Technology
 LDP - Local Development Plan
 LNG - Liquefied Natural Gas
 LSB - Local Service Board

LSOA - Lower Layer Super Output Area

MDA - Mersey Dee AllianceNHS - National Health Service

NVQ - National Vocational Qualification

ONS - Office for National Statistics

PRIDE - Programme of Innovative Development

RTP - Regional Transport Plan

RTPI - Royal Town Planning Institute

SA - Sustainability Appraisal

SAC - Special Area of Conservation

SEA - Strategic Environmental AssessmentSEWTA - South East Wales Transport Alliance

SOA - Strategic Opportunity AreaSSSI - Site of Special Scientific Interest

SWWITCH - South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium
TAITH - Regional Transport Consortium for North Wales

TEN - Trans-European Network

TEN-T - Trans European Transport Network

TraCC - Trafnidiaeth Canolbarth Cymru (Mid Wales Transportation)

WIMD - Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

WSP - Wales Spatial Plan