

## Sustainable Development Annual Report 2004

This is the annual report required by section 121 of the Government of Wales Act on what has been done during the financial year 2003-2004 by the Assembly, including by the Welsh Assembly Government, to implement the proposals in the Assembly's Sustainable Development Scheme.

During the year 2003-2004, the Assembly's obligations to report on the effectiveness of its Scheme and to consider revising or re-making it were triggered for the first time, since both were required by the Act to be done in the year following the Assembly elections of May 2003.

The annual report for 2002-03 (published in April 2003) recognised this, in prospect. It therefore included an indicative updated Action Plan for the year 2003-2004 that focussed on meeting those obligations.

That focus means that there are fewer proposals on which to report than in previous years, for which reason this report is shorter than that of previous years. The proposals in question were of course made by Ministers of the previous Welsh Assembly Government, but they have nonetheless been acted on by present Ministers.

The table below shows what was proposed, and summarises what has been done.

Proposal	Progress
<b>Decision-making and review</b>	
The internal roll-out of the Integration Tool (or integrated appraisal methodology) to be continued and extended	The Integration Tool was revised in the light of the Government's new strategic agenda <i>Wales: A Better Country</i> , and Ministers agreed on how it would be applied. This is being taken forward in 2004-2005.
Welsh Procurement Initiative to be taken forward  WPI seeks to improve procurement across the whole public sector, achieving VFM while promoting sustainability.	Since establishment in July 2002, 21 pathfinder projects have commenced. The national procurement website was launched in November 2003. To date, £46M of tenders have been placed and 3,000 suppliers have registered. A programme of guidance and supported training on sustainable procurement is being launched during 2004.
Programme of priorities to be established for review of existing policies and programmes	A Spending Review covering all the Assembly Government's expenditure is in progress. The criteria used seek to reflect SD.
<b>Working with others</b>	
Identifying new actions to take forward under Compact with WLGA	After discussion with WLGA, this action was postponed, with a view to revising the whole Compact after the revision of

	the SD Scheme.
Working with UK Government and other devolved administrations on: new appointments to the Sustainable Development Commission; sustainable production and consumption; and review of UK SD Strategy	We have continued to work closely with the UK government. New appointments to the Sustainable Development Commission have been made, and we have worked closely on the review of the UK SD Strategy – which was launched for consultation on 21 <sup>st</sup> April 2004.
Support for conference on implementing outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development	The Assembly Government supported a conference on this topic in February 2003. The WSSD agenda also informed the international nrg4sd conference that the Assembly Government hosted in March 2004.
Wales Week in Brussels' to focus on aspects of the sustainable development agenda	Wales Week in Brussels for 2003 included a number of workshops and seminars focused on delivering Sustainable Development
Working with Sustainable Development Forum for Wales on internet portal of Welsh activity on SD	Work on the internet portal was delayed, in order that the Forum – now known as Cynnal Cymru – could assist the Assembly with reviewing the SD Scheme and formulating a new Action Plan.
Establishing constitution and work programme for the Global SD Network	A constitution and work programme were successfully adopted in San Sebastian (2 <sup>nd</sup> Conference). Working structures on the formation of policy papers and the exchange of best practice were put in place and successfully used in Cardiff (4 <sup>th</sup> conference) in March 2004. The legal statutes for official incorporation of the network are also now agreed, and incorporation under Belgian law will be completed shortly. Network representatives successfully presented the work of the network at the UN CSD meeting in April 2004.
With our Pan-European network partners, holding 2 policy seminars, undertaking up to 5 policy studies, and arranging 2 policy visits	We have held three policy seminars and exchange visits with the network. These took place in Limburg, Cardiff and Silesia. The network's policy studies on ' <i>Sustainable Tourism &amp; Natural Heritage</i> ' and ' <i>Rural Depopulation/Demographics</i> ' will be presented to the network's experts before August 2004.
Considering submitting a bid under Interreg IIIC for Regional Framework Operation in support of SD	Following careful consideration, the Welsh Assembly Government decided not to submit a regional Framework Operation on sustainable Development under the INTERREG IIIC programme.

<b>Public awareness-raising</b>	
A public awareness campaign based around Wales' ecological footprint and the steps that ordinary people can take to reduce it	Work on the project has centred on development of the web site. Further development and publicity work will be taken forward over the next year
<b>Structures</b>	
Subject Committees to be invited to incorporate SD in their scrutiny role (as agreed by Panel of Chairs)	The Subject Committees were invited to incorporate SD in their scrutiny role.
<b>Domestic issues</b>	
Assembly to seek accreditation under the 'Green Dragon' environmental management standard	NAfW was reaccredited at Level 2 in March 2004. A plan is being developed to reach Level 5 by March 2006, to be approved by Executive Board.
Take forward the draft Green Transport Plan for Crickhowell House and Cathays Park	Issues over car parking are yet to be resolved with APS. Some revisions and updating will be needed, but it is hoped to launch the plan during 2004-05.
<b>Reporting, Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</b> (as required by sub-sections 121(2), (5), (6) & (7) of the Government of Wales Act 1998)	
Annual report on progress in implementing the Scheme to be published electronically in April	The Annual Report for 2002/03 was published electronically in April 2003.
First (quadrennial) report on the effectiveness of the Scheme, incorporating stakeholders' assessments, to be published by late summer/early autumn linked to publication of proposals for revising the Scheme	CAG Consultants conducted the report on the effectiveness of the scheme, which was published in October 2003.
Review the Scheme, with partners and stakeholders, and consult on possible revisions to the Scheme by late summer/early autumn linked to publication of report on effectiveness	The review of the scheme was conducted during the autumn and consultation on the revised scheme ended in January 2004. The revised scheme was adopted unanimously by members of the National Assembly for Wales in March 2004.
<b>Specific policy commitments</b>	
Publish consultation on a Wales Spatial Plan in the summer of 2003.	The consultation on <i>People, Places, Futures</i> - the Wales Spatial Plan took place throughout the autumn and ended in January 2004.
Following consultation, finalise the Biodiversity Action Plan to conserve and enhance wildlife along the trunk road network	TREBAP was launched by the Minister for Economic Development and Transport on 22 January 2004. Preparations underway to apply plan.
Further develop policy on	Our various strategies / policies for

sustainable housing	Housing and Planning promote sustainable development in housing development. Our promotion of Rethinking Construction (now Constructing Excellence) in Wales, which aims to develop a more sustainable construction industry, embraces the whole house building industry.
Promote the ConsultWales suite of tools externally and refine the site taking account of findings of an independent evaluation	The development of Consult Wales was delayed due to technical difficulties and a change in resource allocation.

### **The Effectiveness Report and Review of the Scheme**

The table above refers to the report produced for the Assembly by CAG consultants (drawing also on other published work). This was published by the Minister for Environment Planning and Countryside in October 2003 alongside the consultation paper on revising the Scheme. The report strongly commended the commitments to SD made by the Assembly, but pointed to difficulties in driving those commitments through to delivery.

Accordingly, and after a prolonged process of consultation, Ministers:

- laid before the Assembly in March 2004 a revised Scheme that strengthened and generalised the commitments in the original Scheme; and
- undertook to produce a separate Action Plan setting out how they would put those commitments into effect.

Assembly Members considered the revised Scheme in plenary on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2004 and adopted in unanimously.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> March, the Minister launched a consultation on a draft Action Plan. This was widely welcomed by many stakeholders. Responses to the consultation are now being considered. We had intended to put a final version to Plenary on 14<sup>th</sup> July, but the quality of responses we received to our consultation was such that we were unable to complete our consideration of comments made to us in time. A final version will be published as soon as possible, and put before plenary at the first opportunity.

### **Other Highlights of the year**

- **Sustainable EU Regions**

A number of policy seminars have taken place as part of the network's activities during the year which have brought together the focal points and practitioners from the partner regions. In the initial phase of the network, the members were asked to produce a baseline map, which highlighted the main priorities, strengths, lessons to be learnt, expertise, governance arrangements

and good practices of each region. The second phase of website has also been produced which gives people the opportunity to access information on the network easily.

- **NRG4SDConference**

The Cardiff Conference was the fourth international nrg4SD conference, and took place between 22<sup>nd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March 2004. Over three hundred delegates attended the conference over the four days, including official representatives from 32 regional bodies (governments or associations of regional governments). The manner in which the conference was organised, and the level of commitment from our partners reflected very well on the Assembly Government and its commitment to SD and governance. The number of regions attending the conference (and a nrg4SD event) for the first time will enhance the work and status of the Network. There was a particularly strong representation for the first time of developing regions.

- **UK Process & Links**

The UK SD strategy A Better Quality of Life is now being reviewed. In line with the commitments in the original and the revised Scheme, the Assembly Government has played an active part in this. In particular, the Assembly has joined with the other home country administrations in publishing a consultation paper *Taking It On* about how UK SD strategy should develop. This was launched in April 2004.

- **Indicators of Sustainable Development**

There are new commitments regarding the development of SD indicators, both in the new Scheme and in the proposed Action Plan.

The most recent values of our present set of SD indicators are shown in the following table.

## Summary of Results for Wales

INDICATOR	DESCRIPTION	LATEST RESULT	YEAR
Employment*	Percentage of people of working age in work	72.6 per cent	2003
Education*	Percentage of people at age 19 with at least an NVQ level 2 qualification or equivalent	75 per cent	2001
Crime*	Crime rates per 100,000 population for:		
	(i) Theft of and from a vehicle	1,684	2002-03
	(ii) Burglary in a dwelling	515	2002-03
	(iii) Violent crime	1,948	2002-03
Housing*	Percentage of unfit dwellings	8.5 per cent	1998
Climate Change*	Emissions of greenhouse gases:		
	Basket of greenhouse gases (million tonnes carbon equivalent)	13.7	2001
Air Quality*	Days when air pollution is moderate or higher:		
	Urban- Cardiff	30	2002
	Swansea	17	2002
	Port Talbot	34	2002
	Rural- Aston Hill	28	2002
	Narberth	28	2002
River Water Quality*	The percentage of river lengths of good or fair quality:		
	Chemical quality	98.2 per cent	2002
	Biological quality	99.2 per cent	2002
Wildlife*	Population of wild birds		
	Alternative indicator: The percentage of widespread breeding bird species that have increased significantly since 1994	32 per cent	2002
Waste*	Household waste and amount recycled or composted (kg per person per year):		
	(i) Total household waste	501	2001-02
	(ii) Household waste recycled or composted	43	2001-02
Welsh Language	Percentage of people who are Welsh speakers:		
	(i) All aged 3 or over	21 per cent	2001
	(ii) Children aged 3-15	38 per cent	2001
Electricity from Renewable Sources#	Percentage of electricity produced in Wales generated from renewable sources	2.43 per cent	2002
Ecological Footprint	Wales's global ecological footprint in area units per person	5.25	2000

\* Headline indicators for the UK # Core indicator for the UK

The proportion of people of working age in Wales who were in employment in spring 2003 was 72.6 per cent, up from 68.5 per cent in spring 2002. 9

The proportion of young people aged 19-21 in Wales with at least an NVQ level 2 qualification stood at 75 per cent in 2001, compared with 72 per cent in 2000. 9

In 2002-03 the recorded rate for thefts of or from vehicles was 16 per cent higher than the rate in the previous year, seeming to reverse a long-standing downward trend. In 2002-03 there were 515 burglaries in a dwelling recorded per 100,000 population. This rate was 21 per cent higher than the rate in 2001-02. The recorded violent crime rate in 2002-03 was 46 per cent higher than the rate in 2001-02. A However, there have been changes to the recording of crimes. The National Crime Recording Standard was introduced in April 2002 in order to improve the consistency of police recording practices. Some police forces, including three of the four Welsh forces, introduced the Standard in advance of this date. Across England and Wales as a whole, this change has resulted in increases in recorded crime levels; figures for 2002-03 are also expected to be affected.

In 1998 it was estimated that 8.5 per cent of dwellings in Wales were unfit, down from 13.4 per cent in 1993. No more recent data are yet available. K

It was estimated that emissions of the basket of greenhouse gases from Wales decreased from 14.6 million tonnes carbon equivalent in 2000 to 13.7 million tonnes in 2001. 9

In 2002, the number of days when air pollution was moderate or higher was 17 in Swansea (down from 32 in 2001), 30 in Cardiff (up from 22 in 2001) and 34 in Port Talbot (down from 50 in 2001). The number of days when air pollution was moderate or higher was 28 at Aston Hill and Narberth, compared to 29 and 33 respectively in 2001. K

98.2 per cent of river lengths were of good or fair chemical quality in 2002, similar to the result for 2001 (98.4 per cent), and 99.2 per cent of river lengths in Wales were of good or fair biological quality in 2002, similar to the result for 2000 (98.8 per cent). K

In Wales, 17 widespread breeding bird species (32 per cent) increased and 8 species (15 per cent) decreased in abundance between 1994 and 2002. 9

501 kg of household waste was produced per person in Wales in 2001-02, up from 484 kg per person in 2000-01. A 43 kg of household waste was recycled or composted per person in 2001-02, up from 31kg in 2000-01. 9

The proportion of people aged 3 and over who are Welsh speakers increased from 19 per cent in 1991 to 21 per cent in 2001. By 2001 38 per cent of children aged 3-15 were able to speak some Welsh, compared to 24 per cent who spoke Welsh in 1991. 9

It is estimated that in 2002, 2.43 per cent of electricity was generated from renewable sources, compared to 2.41 per cent in 2001. K

Work is in hand to update the original (year 2000) estimate of Wales total ecological footprint of 5.25 area units per person. A revised figure is expected to be available in the autumn. K