

People, Places, Futures

The Wales Spatial Plan

November 2004

1 PURPOSE	3
2 THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK	7
VISION	7
BUILDING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES	8
PROMOTING A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY	16
VALUING OUR ENVIRONMENT	22
ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE ACCESSIBILITY	27
RESPECTING DISTINCTIVENESS	31
WORKING WITH OUR IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS	36
3 AREAS OF WALES	38
NORTH WEST WALES – ERYRI A MÔN	38
NORTH EAST WALES - BORDER & COAST	41
CENTRAL WALES	45
SOUTH EAST - THE CAPITAL NETWORK	49
SWANSEA BAY - WATERFRONT & WESTERN VALLEYS	54
PEMBROKESHIRE – THE HAVEN	57
4 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING	59
APPENDIX 1 – DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS	62
APPENDIX 2 - WALES IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT	64
APPENDIX 3 – EXISTING REGIONAL BOUNDARIES & GROUPINGS	66
APPENDIX 4 - ABBREVIATIONS	67
APPENDIX 5 - GLOSSARY	69

1 PURPOSE

In the early 21st century Wales, in common with other nations, states and regions, faces many challenges in the management of our resources and territory. These include issues of globalisation, the implications of technology and the knowledge economy on urban and rural lifestyles, and the potentially enormous impacts of climate change. Coupled with this are ever-rising personal expectations, demographic change and the ease of mobility, particularly of our most talented people. Maintaining balanced communities and countering future population decline are key challenges which this Plan addresses.

A country the size of Wales has to optimise the use of its public and private resources to create the best opportunities for its citizens in an ever modernising and expanding European Union. We have to look forward in time and outwards, co-ordinating our efforts and building on our achievements, to fulfill our unique potential.

The commitment of the Welsh Assembly Government to develop and implement an integrated Spatial Plan for Wales reflects our desire to prepare for the future based on the key principles of social justice, equality and sustainability.

Devolution has given us the opportunity to shape distinctively Welsh answers to Welsh questions, with more power to guide action, both directly or indirectly. To do this we need to co-operate across traditional boundaries and compartmentalised thinking – whether sectoral or geographic. We recognise that ‘one size’ solutions do not fit all parts of Wales. We need to identify the most suitable approach for each individual area within our overall strategy. Differing structures may also be needed as those that work in, for example, health, may not be suited to addressing another issue, like transport.

Spatial planning is an important tool and activity for reconciling these different policy and activity strands which impact upon our various geographic areas. It has been adopted progressively across the European Union, with Wales one of the leading protagonists in the British Isles.

This first Wales Spatial Plan is about reflecting honestly and clearly the way a whole range of activity and investment occurs across our particular geographic space and using our knowledge to shape the future. It aims to ensure the Welsh Assembly Government’s policies and programmes come together effectively with the workings of local government, business and other partners across Wales, to enable a truly sustainable future - one that works for all the different part of Wales. It sets a strategic, integrating agenda for the next 20 years.

The Spatial Plan sets out the issues and opportunities across different sectors and areas. It proposes how we can work together to address them with a common purpose. The Plan should also provide a framework for the implementation of any future EU Structural Funds, following on from the current (2000-06) programmes after 2006/7.

What is Spatial Planning?

Spatial planning is the consideration of what can and should happen where. It investigates the interaction of different policies and practice across regional space, and

sets 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, whether or not these relate to formal land use planning control.

The role of the Wales Spatial Plan is:

- To ensure the Welsh Assembly Government and its partners and agents develop policy in ways which take account of the different challenges and opportunities in the different parts of Wales; and
- To provide a basis and momentum for working together on a shared agenda locally, so that the different parts of Wales can establish their own distinctive approaches to meet the objectives set in the strategic plan *Wales: A Better Country* and the Assembly's Sustainable Development Scheme.

In essence, it means:

making sure that decisions are taken with regard to their impact beyond the immediate sectoral or administrative boundaries; that there is co-ordination of investment and services through understanding the roles of and interactions between places; and that we place the core values of sustainable development in everything we do.

The Spatial Plan forms one of the high-level strategic guidance 'building blocks' of the Welsh Assembly Government, alongside *Wales: A Better Country* and the Sustainable Development Scheme and Action Plan. (See Figure 1.) It will be embedded in the central policy processes of the Welsh Assembly Government. In particular, the Plan will:

- Provide a clear framework for future collaborative action involving the Welsh Assembly Government and its agencies, local authorities, the private and voluntary sectors to achieve the priorities it sets out nationally and regionally
- Influence the location of expenditure by the Assembly Government and its agencies
- Influence the mix and balance of public sector delivery agencies' programmes in different areas
- Set the context for local and community planning
- Provide a clear evidence base for the public, private and voluntary sectors develop policy and action

To ensure this will happen, we will promote the Plan by:

- Encouraging cross-boundary working and interdisciplinary working to improve decision making in Wales and working across our borders
- Commissioning a series of further actions and studies to implement specific proposals, in conjunction with our national and local partners
- Engaging the private and voluntary sectors in its delivery

People, Places, Futures - The Wales Spatial Plan

- Building it into the Assembly's budget allocation process
- Mainstreaming spatial planning in policy development and in the use of the Welsh Assembly Government's policy integration tool
- The Wales Spatial Plan will be a material consideration for Local Planning Authorities in developing their plans and making planning decisions. In the future, Local Development Plans will need to have regard to the Wales Spatial Plan.
- Linking its further development to Community Strategies, Local Authority improvement planning, management plans for National Parks and AONBs, as well as local health, social care and well-being strategies
- Putting in place new Geographical Information Systems to facilitate evidence-based decision making and help track the impact of the Spatial Plan

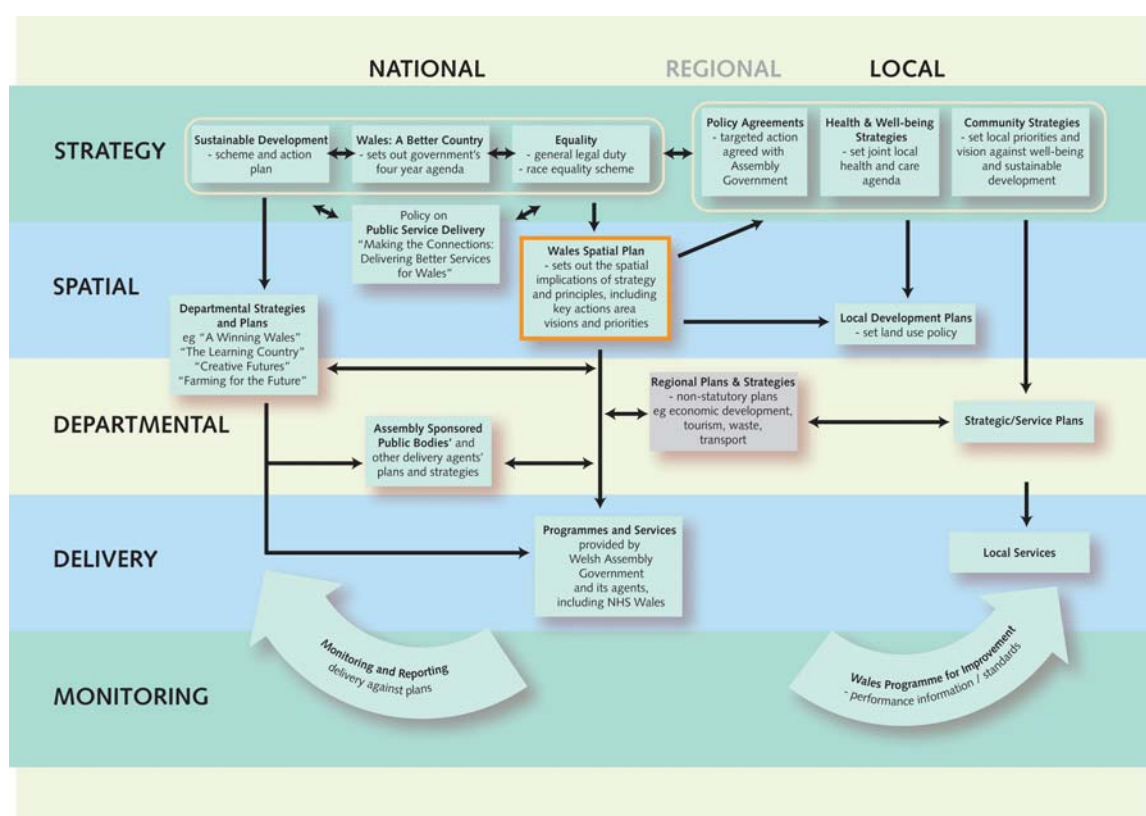


Figure 1 - How the Spatial Plan relates to other Plans, Strategies and Programmes

Section 2 sets out a National Framework for the Plan. It is structured according to five guiding themes of *Building Sustainable Communities*, *Promoting a Sustainable Economy*, *Valuing our Environment*, *Achieving Sustainable Accessibility* and *Respecting Distinctiveness*. For each of these themes the plan sets objectives, explains how they will shape existing activities and describes what additional work is needed at the national level. Key information of relevance to each theme is presented on maps throughout the section.

People, Places, Futures - The Wales Spatial Plan

At the end of section 2 the interrelationship between Wales and its immediate neighbours in the UK and Ireland is outlined. Appendix 2 describes the wider European spatial planning context. Section 3 provides a vision, a set of propositions and actions at the area and national level for each of the 6 areas that are shown on the strategy map. Section 4 describes how we will implement the Plan and monitor progress.

2 THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Vision

We will sustain our communities by tackling the challenges presented by population and economic change; we will grow in ways which will increase our competitiveness while spreading prosperity to less well-off areas and reducing negative environmental impacts; we will enhance our natural and built environment for its own sake and for what it contributes to our well-being; and we will sustain our distinctive identity.

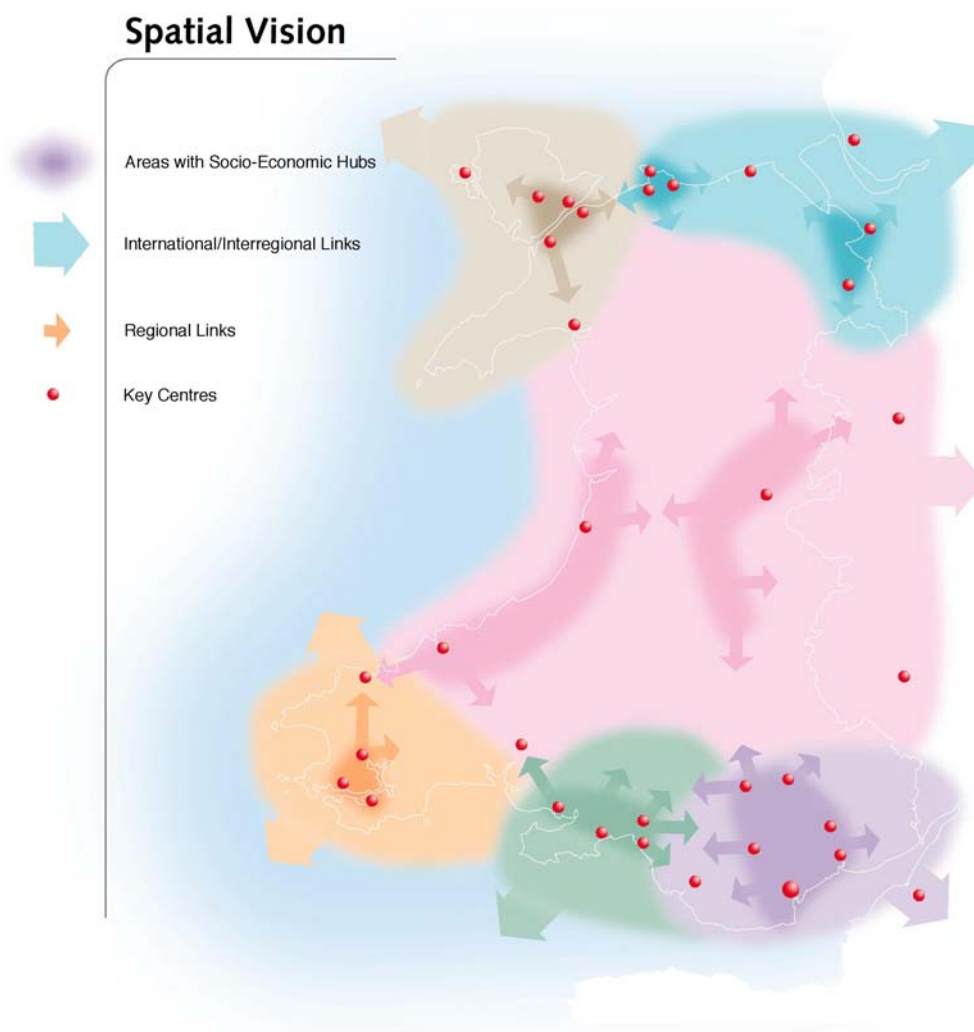


Figure 2 – Spatial Vision



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.

Wales enjoys a strong sense of community in both its urban and rural areas. But the long-term future of our communities depends on how they respond to present and future pressures.

The first challenge is tackling deprivation and particularly concentrations of poverty and worklessness. Although deprivation exists to some degree across all parts of Wales, including rural areas, the largest concentrations of deprivation are found in the upper South Wales Valleys, in parts of our major cities and towns, and in port and (former) industrial communities, as Figure 5 shows. These are areas that will need concerted, creative and focused investment if they are to make significant progress in tackling problems of poor health, worklessness, lack of commercial investment and low skills. `Communities First` has been designed to assist many of these communities to identify how they can move forward. Some 30-40% of the most deprived people live in the Communities First areas. Targeted area regeneration work is also being pursued through European funding and support for Housing Renewal Areas.

Children living in deprived communities face particular challenges as they are much more likely than children from similar social backgrounds outside these areas to underachieve in school and to suffer poor health. Targeted work with very young children in deprived areas can significantly improve their chances in life.

We need to ensure that mainstream health and education support meets the needs of less well-off communities. Poor health follows similar spatial patterns to other aspects of deprivation: there are particular concentrations of poor health, long-term illness and unhealthy lifestyles in the South Wales Valleys. The work on *Narrowing the Gap* from an education perspective and the *Health Inequalities Fund* has shown what can be achieved through applying best practice and ensuring health care provision and education policy addresses local requirements.

The second challenge to sustaining communities is population change. In the upper parts of the South Wales Valleys and Neath Port Talbot falling birth rates combined with very low inward migration results in declining population. This trend is reducing the balance of the social mix in the population which in turn increases the problems of deprivation. Anglesey, too, has been experiencing population decline.

The issue is different in rural areas. In modern society, younger people typically move out of all but the largest towns to pursue work or further education opportunities, whilst a significant number of middle-aged people move into or back to rural areas. These population trends are found in most areas. More information on the demographic issues is given in Appendix 1 and Figure 3 shows the change in age distribution in Wales between 1983 and 2003. Figure 4 shows the settlement patterns in Wales.

In 2002 there were fewer than 31,000 children born and over 33,000 deaths. In-migration is therefore needed to sustain the vitality of our communities. The challenges are: to ensure that inward migration enhances rather than reduces the population age balance and mix; to ensure that the mix of housing available supports that balance and does not exclude young people from local housing; and to sustain the distinctiveness of local culture. This is a particular concern for our more rural areas where many services would become increasingly unviable without inward migration. In-migration has the potential to contribute very positively to an area's culture and identity, but can also pose challenges to communities and their cultural and linguistic identity and needs to be managed sensitively.

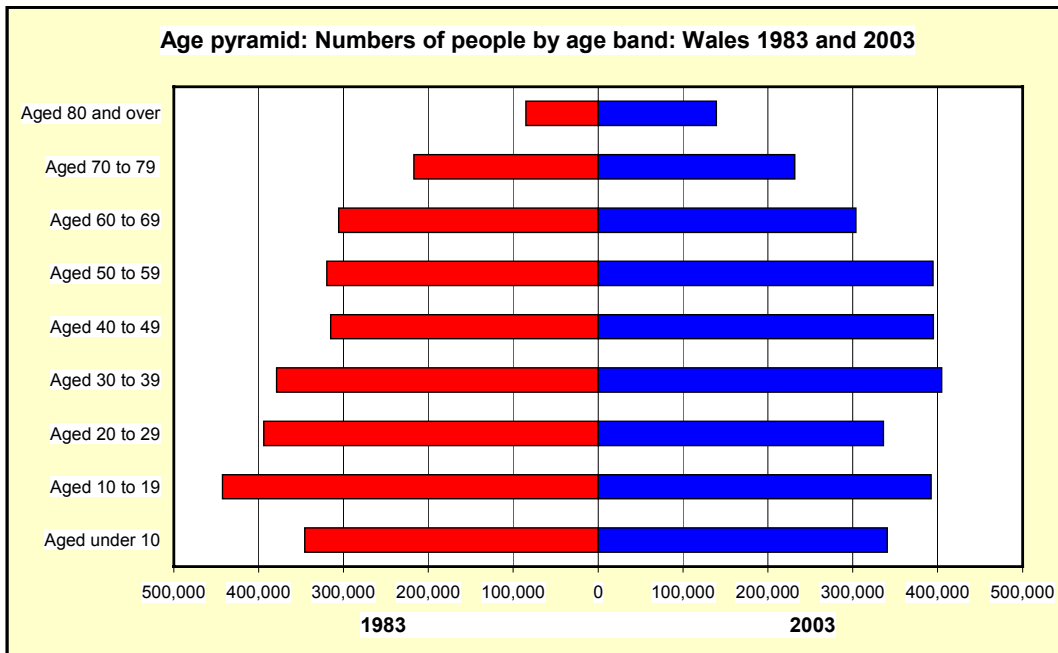


Figure 3 - Age distribution in Wales in 1983 and 2003

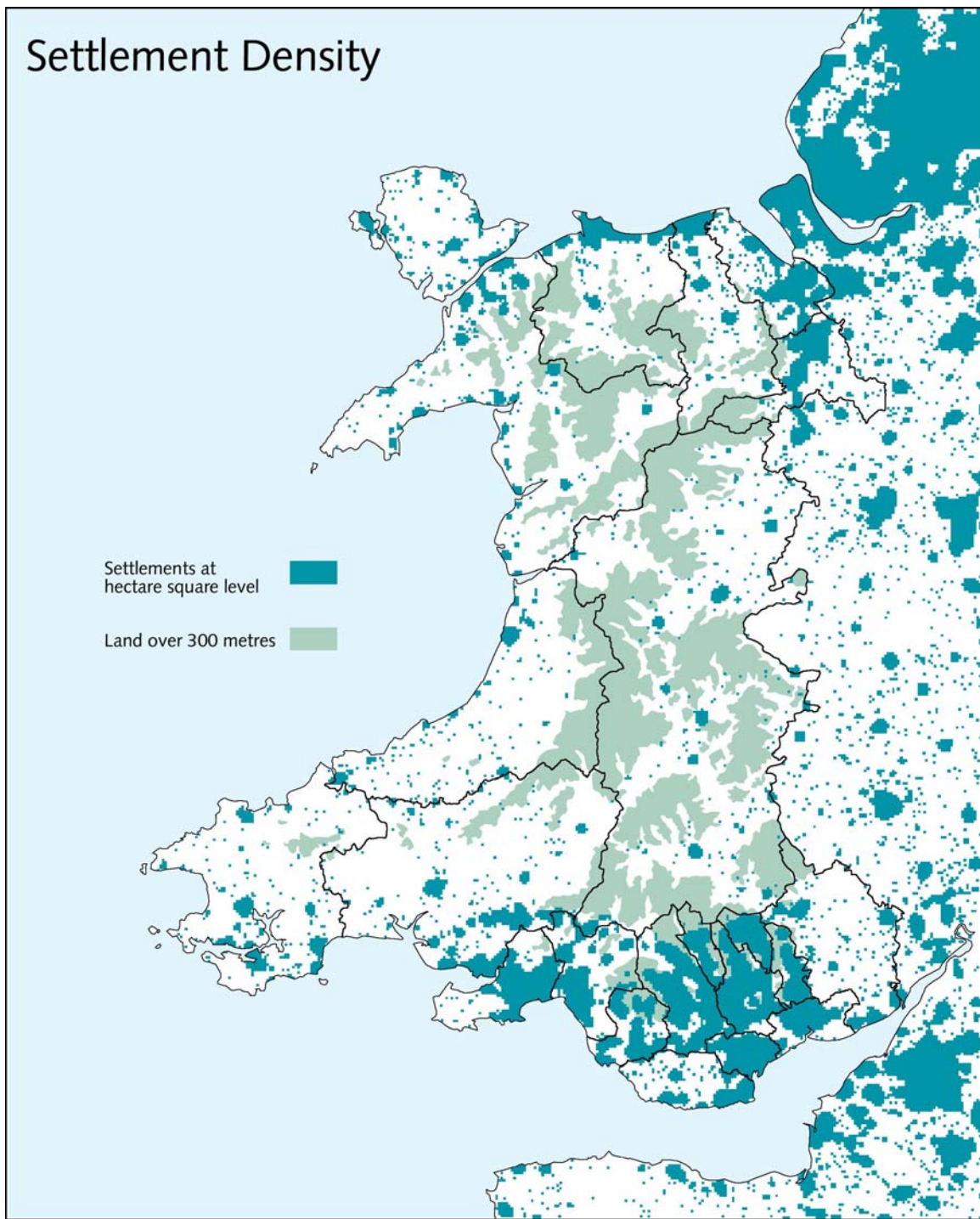


Figure 4 -Settlement Density (presence of residential dwellings by square hectare)

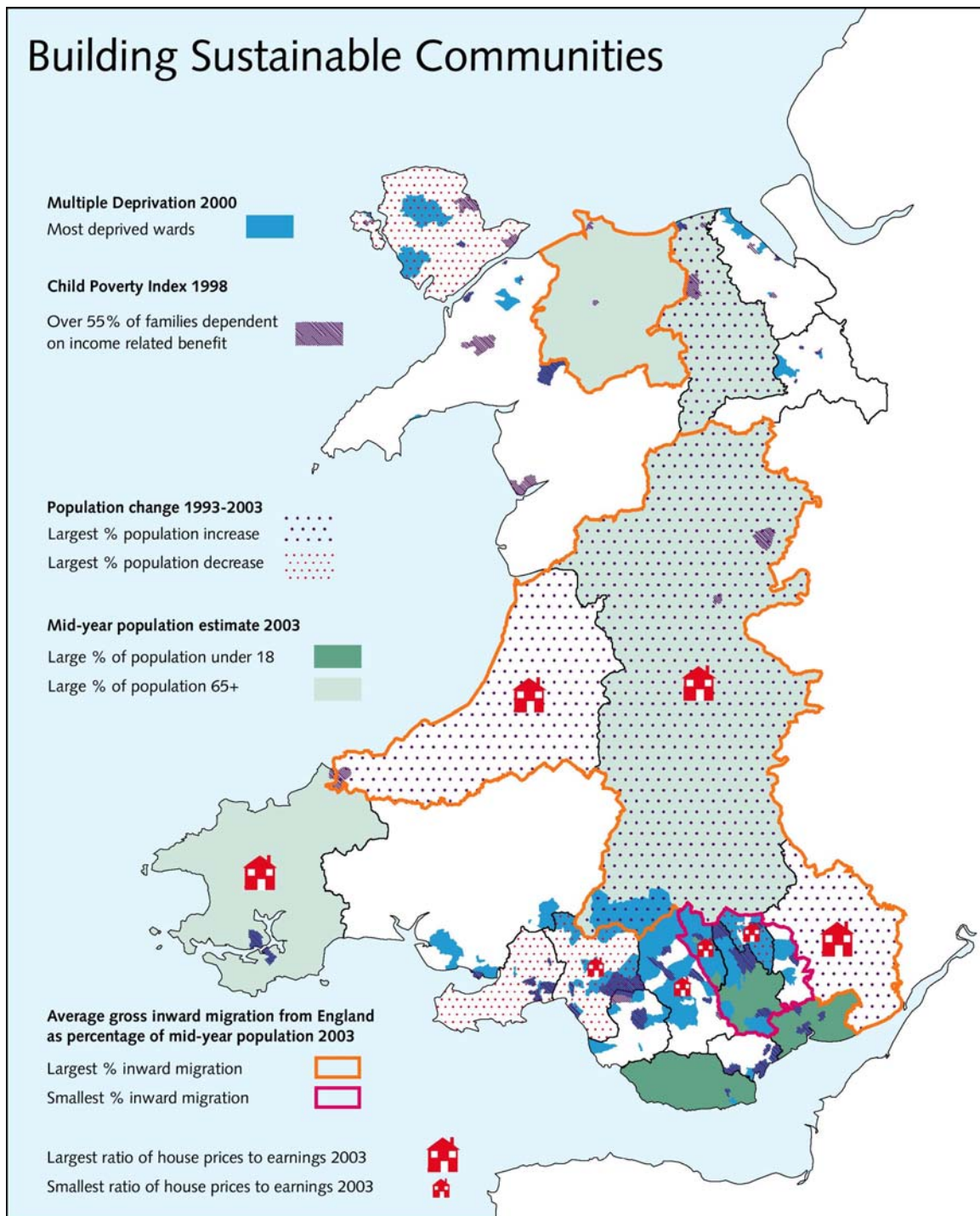


Figure 5 - Building Sustainable Communities

Objectives

- Tackle the long-term roots of deprivation by investing in both the development of children, in their early years especially, and raising levels of health and education overall

People, Places, Futures - The Wales Spatial Plan

- Address health inequalities by: helping people to look after their health through healthier lifestyles; ensuring good access to all local services and; tackling other socio-economic determinants of health, addressing the barriers to enable people to make healthy life choices. Concerted efforts are in particular needed in the most deprived communities
- Ensure all areas have access to high quality schools.
- Retain balanced communities by ensuring access to affordable housing, to buy or rent, in locations which are convenient for local work and services and by ensuring a range of housing types are available in high quality environments
- Ensure that we provide high quality services as accessibly as possible by reflecting changing demographic structure and distribution, providing community services in the main local settlements and specialist services in the area centres.
- Support local community voluntary action and volunteering, fostering social capital and seeking to improve people's personal aspirations and expectations.
- Address poor environmental quality which often affects economically and socially disadvantaged communities in particular - through degraded urban environments, as well as higher exposure to pollution.

Actions

The objectives will be reflected in the development of our work in regeneration across Wales and in taking forward programmes such as Communities First and Rural Community Action. The reform of the planning system and Planning Policy Wales are further mechanisms aimed at making communities more sustainable.

The objectives will have a particular bearing on the assessment of our spatially targeted actions, including:

- Our priorities for nursery and pre-school facilities to reflect the provision needed to support the development of socially deprived children
- The location of investment in schools, including community schools and decisions on school rationalisation as a result of falling pupil numbers
- Investment in health and other services, including the Health Inequalities Fund, the plans of Local Health Boards and decisions flowing from the Wanless review of health and social services
- Action to promote healthier lifestyles in support of Health Challenge Wales and 'Climbing Higher'
- The type and location of investment in social housing and implementation of our national housing strategy, Better Homes for People in Wales
- Priorities for investment in community facilities and the re-use of redundant or underused facilities for community purposes

In addition:

- We will consult on proposals to clarify and where necessary strengthen advice and guidance on how local authorities should ensure a supply of affordable housing in their areas based on assessed local needs, and publish conclusions in Spring 2005.
- We will support the work of Groundwork, the Design Commission for Wales and other organisations to help to tackle degraded urban environments and to improve the quality of public spaces.
- We will support action as part of the Water Price Review to clean up sewer discharges in some of Wales's most disadvantaged communities and tackling flood risks locally.
- We invite local partners in each area to work with the framework of this Plan to identify the role and functions of urban centres.

Affordable Housing

Our vision for housing¹ is that we want everyone in Wales to have the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, to be able to choose where they live and decide whether buying or renting is best for them and their families. Affordable housing encompasses both low cost market and subsidised housing that will be available to people who cannot afford to occupy houses generally available on the open market.

The scale and type of need for affordable housing varies greatly across different parts of Wales. Statutory responsibility for assessing housing needs rests with the unitary authorities in accordance with guidance issued by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2002 and many authorities have now completed assessments. The need for additional guidance on the assessment of local housing markets, in light of additional research on the assessment of housing needs and markets, will be considered later this year.

Guidance on preparing housing strategies was issued in 2002. Local housing strategies should set out a locally agreed, long term vision for housing and a statement of the authority's strategic objectives and target outcomes, based upon a robust analysis of local housing needs and demands. There is a range of tools available to authorities to help them achieve these outcomes including:

- The statutory Housing Renewal Policies which were introduced last year
- The declaration of Housing Renewal Areas
- The Social Housing Grant Programme, including the Homebuy scheme
- The use of Registered Social Landlord reserves, including recycled capital grant
- Development Plan Policy
- Planning obligations
- Disposal of publicly owned land and vacant council stock
- Local Authority financial support for low cost home ownership including Homefinder and resale covenant schemes
- The ability to place restrictions of the resale of properties sold under the Right to Buy

Planning Policy Wales (2002) sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's land use policies for the development of new build and renovated housing for both the general market and affordable housing sectors. Its housing chapter includes references to a number of documents useful in assisting local planning and housing authorities along with developers working together in the housing field.

The Welsh Assembly Government is currently reviewing the framework relating to the provision of affordable housing including the Technical Advice Notes on *Joint Housing Land Availability Studies* and *Planning and Affordable Housing* and the way in which Social Housing Grant is distributed and delivered. As part of this, we will review, and strengthen as appropriate, the 'toolkit' for affordable housing which will bring together guidance on the tools and powers available to authorities and their partners in a single reference document. In the meantime we have planned to increase substantially the level of funding for the Social Housing Grant programme in our draft Budget for 2005/6 to 2007/8.

¹ As set out in our National Housing Strategy *Better Homes for People in Wales*.

Promoting a sustainable economy

We need an innovative, high value economy for Wales which utilises and develops the skills and knowledge of our people: an economy which both creates wealth and allows that prosperity to be spread throughout Wales: an economy which adds to the quality of people's lives as well as their living and working environments.

Wales, in common with other developed countries and other parts of the UK, has experienced a continual process of economic restructuring over the last half century (see Figure 6). But the extent and speed of the changes has hit Wales particularly hard. The decline of employment, first in mining and then in key manufacturing sectors, such as metals and textiles, was often spatially concentrated, making the problems harder to deal with. However, new jobs have gradually replaced the ones that have been lost, and apart from a period in the early 1980s, total employment has grown steadily. Over recent years, many of the new jobs have been highly skilled and well paid. Nevertheless, GVA per head remains low compared to UK and European averages.

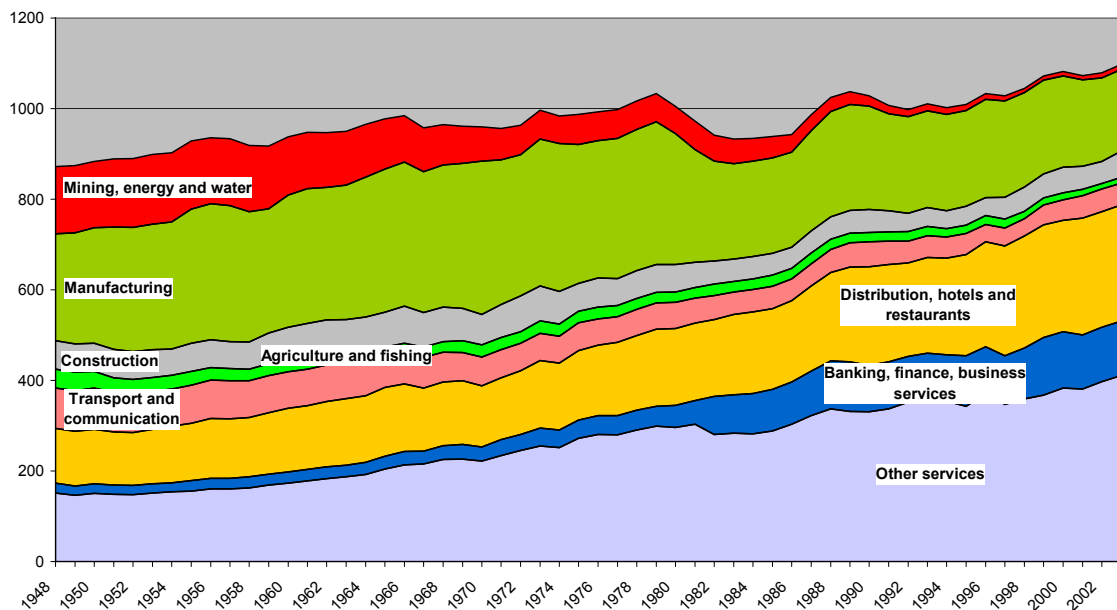


Figure 6 - Employee jobs by sector (in thousands)

The prime reason that Wales' GVA per head lags behind many otherwise comparable UK regions is an employment rate that is low in UK terms (see Figure 7). This rate of employment reflects relatively high levels of inactivity rather than unemployment.

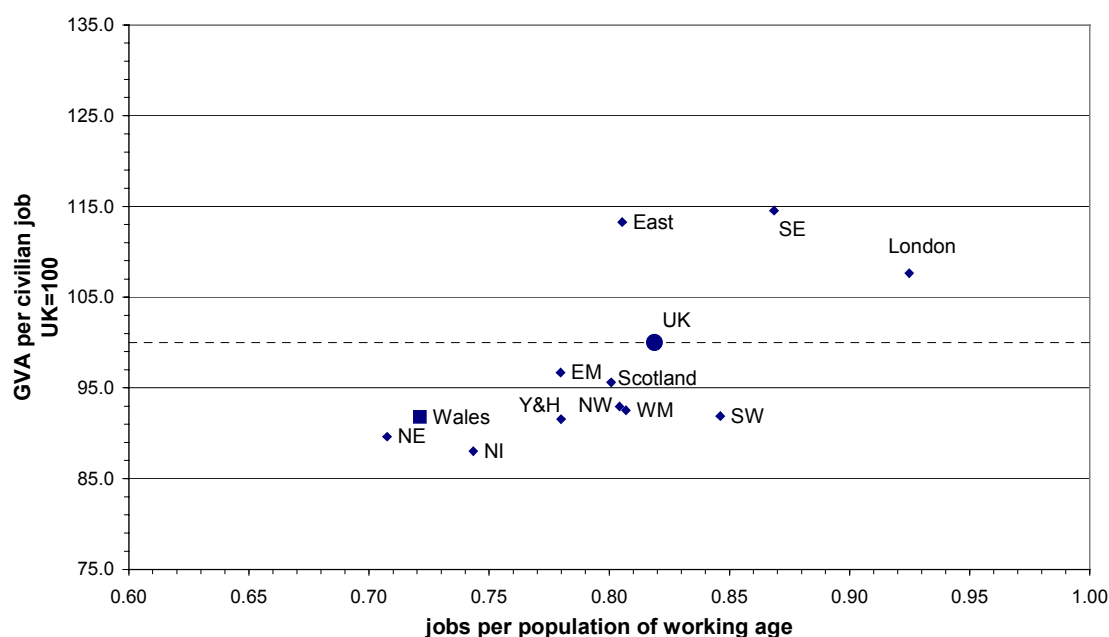


Figure 7 - Jobs and GVA by UK Region

Inactivity in Wales is concentrated amongst the low skilled, particularly those with self-reported health problems. The greater rate of inactivity in Wales compared to the UK average is predominantly accounted for by the number of working age men on incapacity benefits. An analysis of low activity rates in Wales, and proposals for addressing them, were contained in the Welsh Assembly Government's Report "Raising Economic Activity Rates".

Inactivity is especially concentrated within an arc across the upper Valleys and stretching round to Neath Port Talbot and Swansea/Llanelli (see Figure 8). However, there are also concentrations of inactivity in economically buoyant areas such as Cardiff and Newport. And because low skill levels are a primary cause of low activity rates, inactivity is not confined to particular spatial locations.

Wales, in common with the rest of the UK, has a relatively long 'tail' of people with low skills. The evidence suggests not only that this is implicated in the low employment rates for such people, but also that it may inhibit the widespread adoption of new technologies and practices – crucial to raising our productivity in the future.

Investment in the early years' development of deprived children is the most effective way of breaking the circle of inactivity and deprivation over the longer term. The concentration of such investment on the most deprived areas where expectations are low makes sense. Equally, Health Challenge Wales is a common goal around which organisations, communities and individuals in all areas of Wales can jointly develop and share new action to improve health and well-being and thus secure both social and economic benefits.

Productivity *growth* in Wales over the medium to long term has been broadly in line with that in the UK, which in turn is broadly similar to other developed countries. In addition,

since the early 1990s there has been on average a shift towards better paid jobs, and the overall movement seems to have been broadly similar in Wales and the UK as a whole. For example, over the period 2001/2 to 2003/4, the proportion of the workforce in the “top three” occupational classes¹ increased by 9% in Wales compared to 7% in the UK as a whole.

Recent economic research shows that, across developed countries, differences in people’s economic outcomes are driven most strongly by variations in their personal characteristics (especially skill levels). The next most important influence is proximity to major concentrations of population. South East Wales taken as a whole approaches the scale required, but has not so far gained the benefits commensurate with its population.

There has also been a long run tendency to counter-urbanisation, as people have moved to enjoy the higher quality of life available in the countryside and attractive smaller towns. Sometimes this has been associated with increased commuting, but often employment growth has taken place to absorb the increased supply of labour. Over recent decades, large increases in working age population have been seen in many parts of rural Wales, most notably Ceredigion and Conwy.

Successful places will, increasingly, be the ones that retain and attract well-qualified people. Furthermore, lower skilled jobs will increasingly be provided in the service sector. So the prospects for the lower skilled people are intimately connected to the ability of places to attract and retain the more highly skilled.

¹ Managers and administrators, professional occupations, and associate professional and technical occupations.

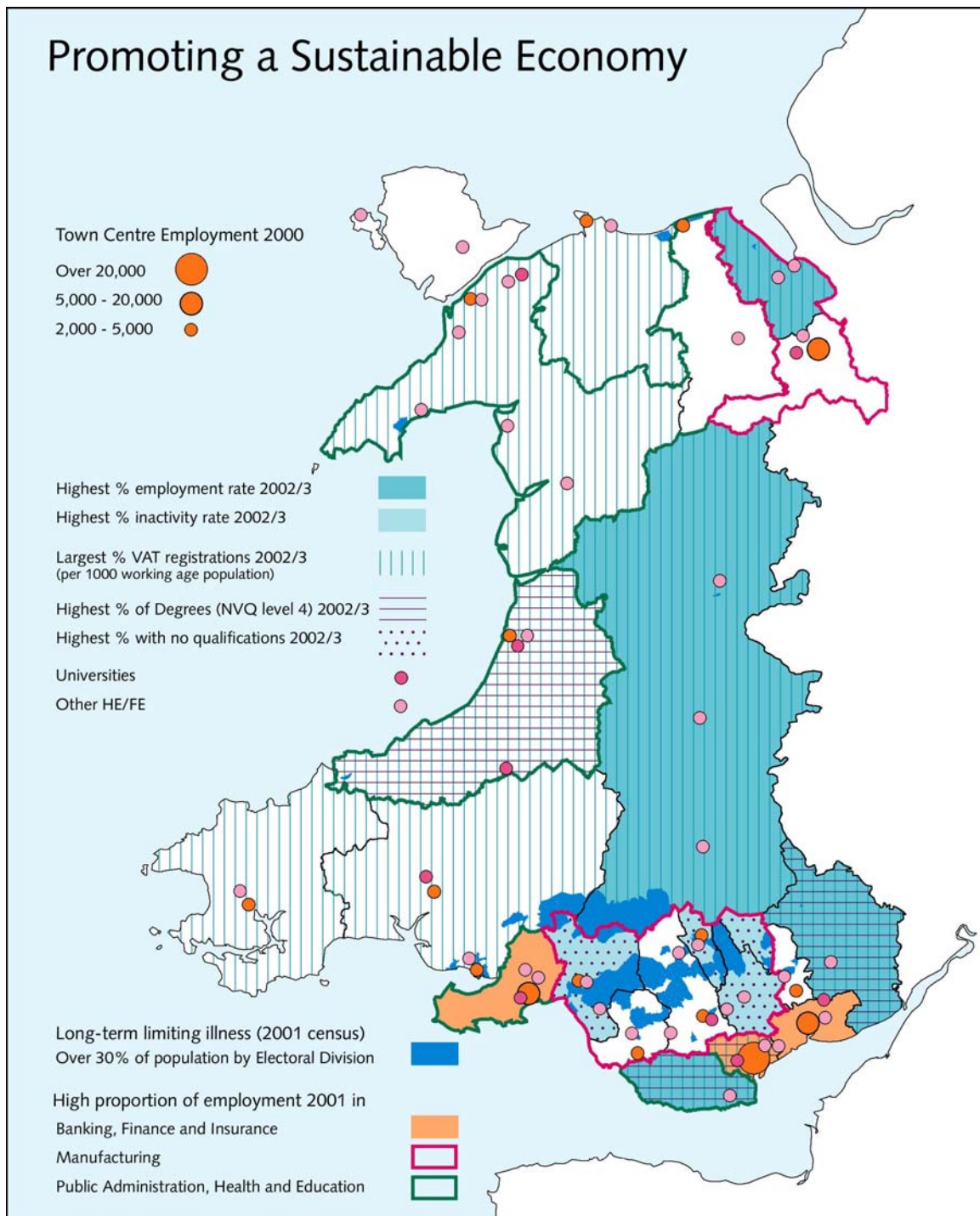


Figure 8 - Promoting a Sustainable Economy

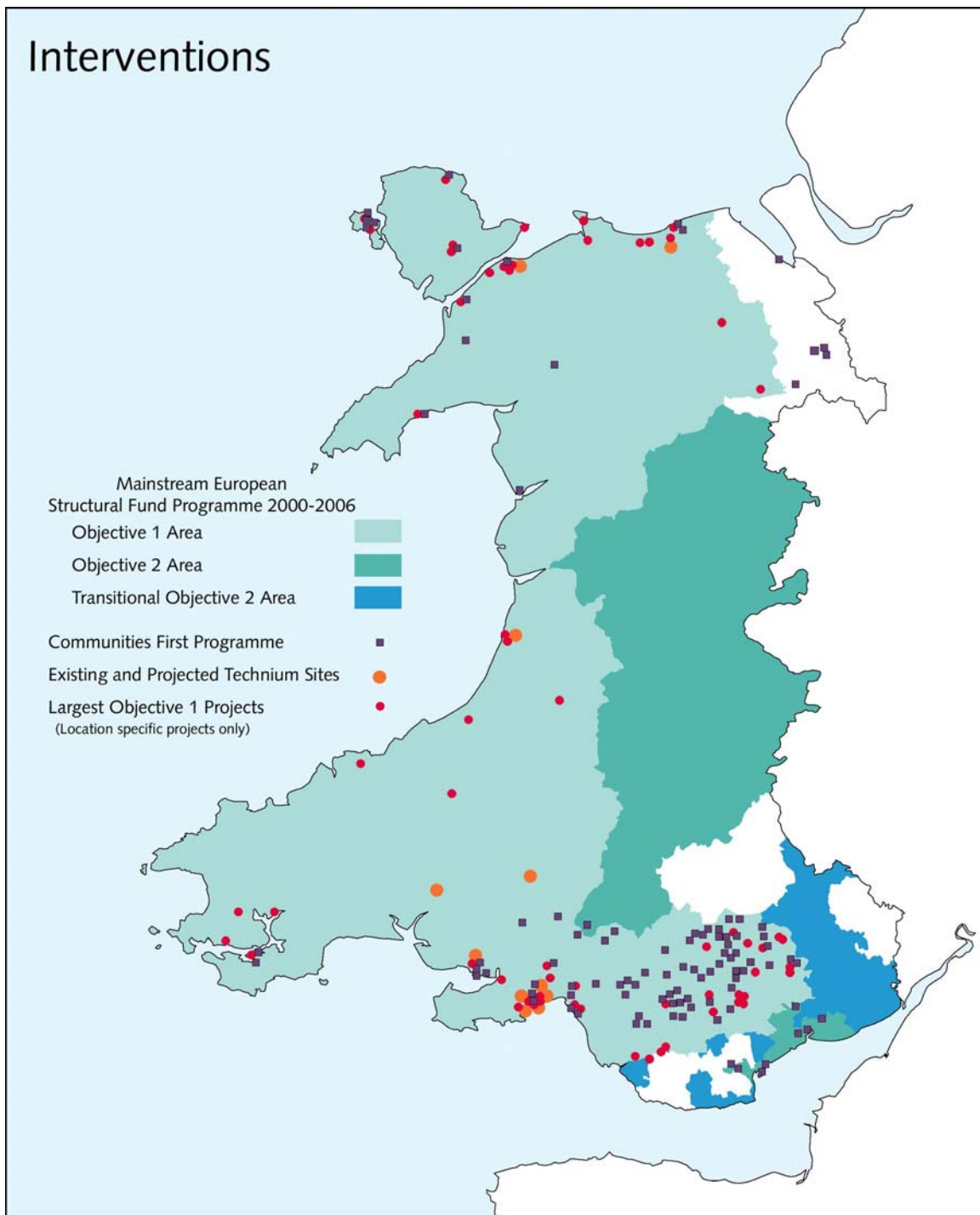


Figure 9 - Interventions

Objectives

- Reconnect people with labour markets and improve skills through focused investment in our less well-off communities. This demands action at all stages to

avoid people dropping out of education or work, but especially needs targeted investment in children's early years

- Achieve a critical mass of population and business activity in our key economic areas for our long-term competitiveness on the European and International stage
- Ensure area hubs, as important economic drivers and service providers, are attractive for private sector investment and as places where people want to live, work and visit
- Develop areas of Wales to function as broader based economic units with complementary activities in the different centres. Increase the pool of skilled people within the areas and build on local strengths of places rather than each competing to be the same
- Attract and retain well-educated and skilled migrants, as well as attracting back young people born in Wales, responding to demographic trends
- Build on our distinctive economic advantages and potential, from tourism to specialist high-tech industries
- Promote the efficient management and use of resources for the benefit of business, local communities and the environment
- Work to achieve reliable routes by land, sea and air and high speed internet, necessary for our trade with the UK, mainland Europe and internationally, whilst meeting our commitments for CO₂ reductions
- Improve regional collaboration between education and training institutions and employers to maximise the benefits for Wales' economy and society and to retain and attract skilled people
- Enhance the natural and built environment, which is an economic asset, both as a source of direct activity in tourism and leisure and as part of wider quality of life

Actions

The objectives will be implemented at the all-Wales level primarily through the development and review of *A Winning Wales*, the Assembly Government's economic strategy, and education and training strategies. The emerging regional development strategies, which we have supported through the economic fora in Wales, will provide an important link to implementing the plan, recognising the role that all sectors will have in taking the work forward.

The objectives will have a particular bearing on the assessment of our spatially targeted actions, including:

- The strategy for economic development sites, including the WDA property strategy

- Taking forward the Skills and Employment Action Plan to ensure that we provide people with training in the skills that employers need
- Regeneration activities under different programmes and carried out by a range of actors
- Regional policy within the enlarged European Union
- Programmes that support companies relocating or investing in Wales
- Investment in knowledge transfer initiatives, including the `technium` programme
- Supporting the development of a healthy and active workforce through initiatives like the Corporate Health Standard and Health Challenge Wales
- Taking forward the Creative Industries Strategy
- Investment to enhance the attractiveness and distinctiveness of town centres
- The work of the Wales Tourist Board and their review of the national tourism strategy, "Achieving our Potential"
- Informing Welsh people living outside Wales about job opportunities in Wales, by expanding the WDA's Llywbr-routes programme
- Encouraging undergraduates in Welsh higher education to look for their first jobs in Wales by providing opportunities for work experience in Welsh firms.

These objectives together with the area visions which follow will provide the framework for local activity for the economic and training bodies as they become part of the Assembly Government's direct delivery of services, and will guide our work with partners.

Valuing our Environment

The quality of our environment is a fundamental asset; for its intrinsic value, 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 in our communities and preserve the foundations for the future.

Like our people, the environment is a critical asset. Wales benefits from high quality landscapes, a wealth of archaeological sites and historic monuments, and a rich biodiversity (Figure 10). Preserving and enhancing this quality will be increasingly important to the long-term ability of Wales to be a place where people chose to live and work. However, the environment is more fundamentally our life-support system; a system which we are placing under increasing strain (Figure 11).

Climate change in particular presents an enormous challenge. Wales' CO₂ emissions are currently running at roughly double the capacity of our natural environment to absorb them. Our energy consumption is not in decline and the amount of energy we generate from non-fossil fuels is low. As the map shows, many parts of Wales are already at risk from flooding and if climate change continues at its current pace, many more areas will be at risk in the future. Severe weather events are set to increase, leading to higher insurance costs. The potential implications for water supply are significant, and Wales

will not be immune from the repercussions that climate change has on the social and economic systems in other parts of the world, which may feel harsher impacts sooner. However, there are also opportunities: Wales has the wind and tidal resources to make a major contribution to producing renewable energy and so reducing the emission of greenhouse gases.

Tighter European legislation on waste and water will also require us to take a stronger stance on managing these issues. The Wales Waste Strategy sets out stringent targets to increase recycling and energy recovery from waste and to ensure waste is handled effectively and safely. One of the principles is that waste is dealt with as near as possible to its source. The Water Framework Directive requires us to manage water as a whole, including all the diffuse sources of pollution – especially from agriculture with its effect on water quality. This will have significant impacts, even though our water quality is generally very good by European standards.

Agri-environment schemes have so far mainly dealt with individual farms, but many of the benefits of agri-environment action can only be obtained by taking action across a wider geographical area: for instance to create habitat on a scale to sustain biodiversity, managing river catchment areas to prevent flooding, or developing footpaths. Action on this broader landscape scale, coupled with the management of the Assembly's woodlands, will become increasingly important to help the Welsh landscape and wildlife to adapt to climate change. The development of the 'pyramid model' of agri-environment schemes, with Tir Cynnal and a new top-tier scheme supporting Tir Gofal, will address this challenge.

The need for coherent broad-scale management of ecology and environment is very relevant to Wales' marine and coastal environment. This is a high quality, high value resource and is subject to many different uses. Future marine and coastal development will bring economic benefits for Wales, but the resource must be managed in a sensitive and sustainable way. The seas and coasts around Wales are heavily influenced by activities that take place on land and in our inland waterways and vice versa. Land, sea and coastal management therefore needs to be carefully co-ordinated.

The way we manage land as a whole is another particular challenge to address, so that it meets all our different needs – for food, for habitat, for landscape, for environmental quality, for flood management and as a natural repository for carbon that would otherwise add to greenhouse gases.

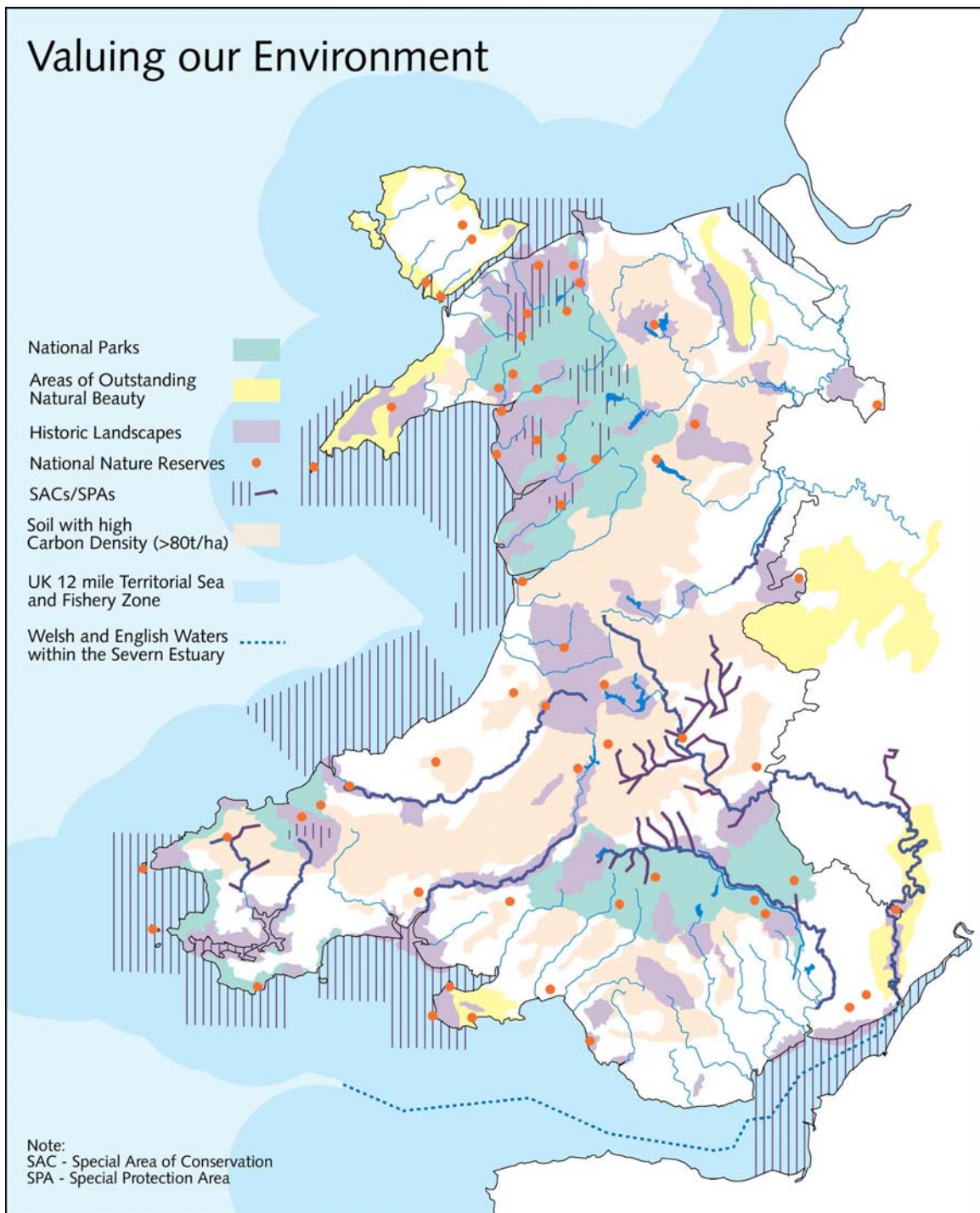


Figure 10 - Valuing our Environment

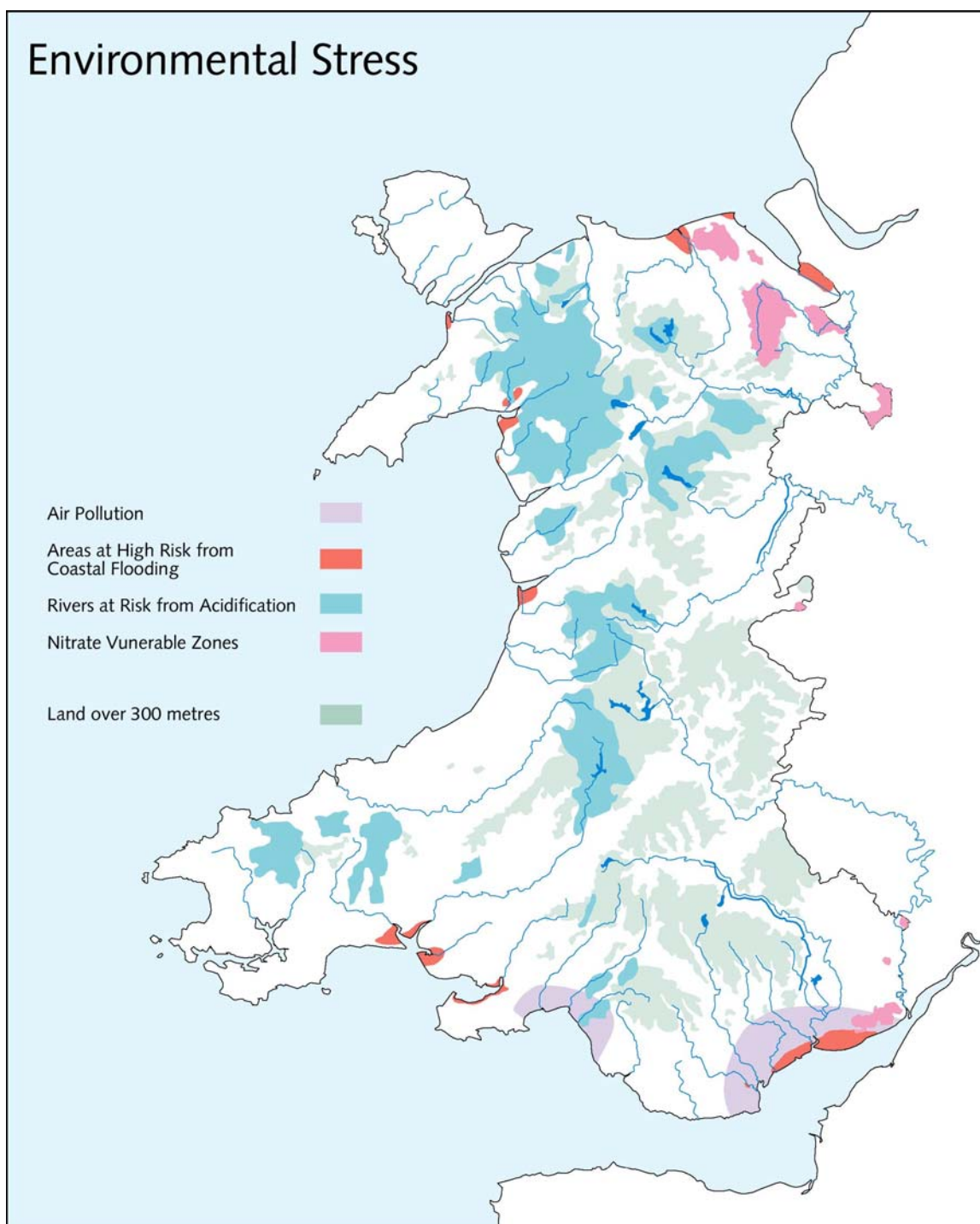


Figure 11 - Environmental Stress

Objectives

- Manage the environment comprehensively with respect to its distinctive characteristics, so that it contributes to sustainable development , including

maintaining soil carbon, reducing contamination, managing diffuse pollution sources to water, protecting landscapes and enhancing habitats

- Adapt the land-based economy to focus on high value-added products, and links with tourism and recreation; this should support the enhancement of landscape and biodiversity
- Integrate spatial management and development of the marine and coastal environment and our inland waters to make use of Wales' maritime potential in a sensitive and sustainable way
- De-couple growth of waste from economic growth. Waste management initiatives need to be developed so that waste can be dealt with as near to source as possible and to ensure the waste hierarchy is implemented as set out in our waste strategy
- Reduce Wales' contribution to climate change by, for example, increasing its share of renewable energy in those areas best suited to provide it and by increasing energy efficiency in industry, housing and transport, as well as by protecting existing carbon sinks
- Work now to help the environment, economy and society adapt to climate change's potential impacts, including flood risk
- Develop sustainable demonstration projects to promote best practice in delivering economic as well as environmental and social benefits
- Tackle existing infrastructure constraints, supporting the sustainable futures of communities by investment in our infrastructure: in water, sewerage, waste and energy for example

Actions

The objectives will have particular bearing on the assessment of our spatially targeted actions, including:

- The Welsh Assembly Government's Environment Strategy due to be published in 2005 which will further address these and other issues.
- Develop future agri-environment schemes that promote wider benefits through farming and land-based economies, linked to our environmental and social goals, and increasingly delivering results on a geographical scale to deliver maximum benefits in terms of biodiversity and other objectives. A new top-tier agri-environment scheme will be introduced to complement Tir Cynnal and Tir Gofal.
- The Welsh Assembly Government will develop and consult on visions for the future of countryside and landscape zones, contributing to sustainable development in an integrated way. In the light of the consultation we and our agents will use them to drive forward our work, for instance in the implementation of agri-environmental schemes, forestry and woodland practice, grant regimes, planning and regulation. The Welsh Assembly Government's Environment strategy due to be published in 2005 will develop how this will be taken forward.
- We will discuss with planning authorities and infrastructure providers to identify infrastructure constraints to taking forward the plan and how these might be addressed.

- We will support the development of integrated spatial strategies for our marine and inland water assets, including an Integrated Coastal Management Plan to provide a cohesive framework for Wales' coast and sea area. Action will be taken by the WTB, WDA, Local Authorities and CCW to develop a Welsh coastal tourism strategy, allied to action to protect the coastal environment.
- The renewables energy policy and planning guidance TAN 8 will set out where and how we will maximise our sustainable energy production.
- The work of the regional waste fora to determine the framework for deciding the location of waste sites will be successfully concluded.
- Our collaborative work on access to the countryside will form a new basis for enjoyment of this asset.
- Development of the Water Resources Strategy for Wales, including the important cross border interactions
- Study to identify action plan for areas prone to coastal and river flooding developing the win-win solutions encouraged by TAN 15.
- The Welsh Assembly Government will review the action that it can take to mitigate Wales contribution to global warming and to help Wales adapt to climate change
- Through its Sustainable Development Action Plan, the Welsh Assembly Government will continue to promote sustainable procurement, production and consumption

Achieving Sustainable Accessibility

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

Modern infrastructure – especially modern transport - has transformed the way we live our lives. For those with ready access to transport, it is now possible to reach a wider range of services and employment opportunities (Figure 12). This enables places to specialise and grow – drawing on wider labour markets and purchasing power - with positive economic impacts, but with significant potential social and environmental impacts, as local services close in the face of competition and more people travel further by private transport.

We need to tackle the challenge of how we can benefit from larger economic areas – networked regions - while reducing the negative impacts. This means in the first place planning regions around strong integrated transport systems that meet more people's needs for commuting to work. This has to be backed up by locating new development, especially significant new housing development, in places that are highly accessible by public transport – commuter rail in larger urban areas – so that more people have the choice to go by means other than the car.

Second, it means planning for compact urban settlements, maximising the use of existing developed land and giving people the choice to live and work locally and where walking and cycling are positive choices.

Third, it means setting out a clear planning hierarchy for the location of public facilities so that everyday services are provided locally while less frequently accessed services are provided at major centres where they can be accessed by a choice of means of transport, including centres in England for the border areas.

Lastly it means ensuring that our transport investment preserves the quality of our major international routes while avoiding creating pressures for new development or new travel patterns away from the areas which can be well served by public transport.

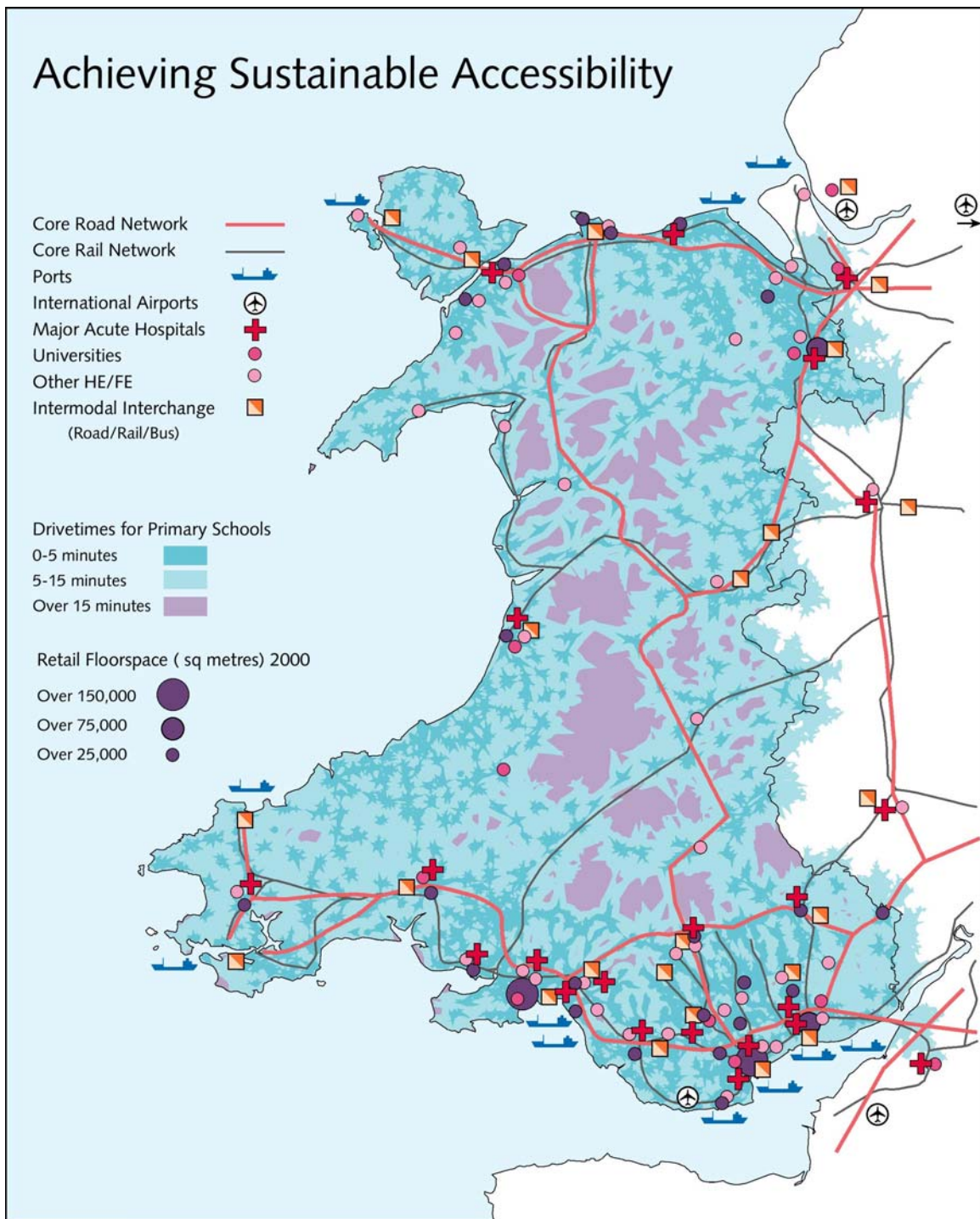


Figure 12 - Achieving Sustainable Accessibility

Objectives

- Further develop integrated public transport within the urban networks of North East Wales, Swansea Bay and South East Wales to provide more travellers with real options for how they make their journeys
- Maintain and improve the facility of strategic gateways and corridors .The majority of movements of people and goods will remain along East -West corridors. The internationally designated transport corridors (TEN) to South West and South East England and further to mainland Europe, the West Midlands and North West England and Ireland will continue to play a key role
- Make progressive improvements to North – South links within Wales and through England, which are important for connecting Wales as a country
- Focus new transport investment to improve public transport links between centres and their catchments and safeguard the effectiveness of UK and international connections
- To ensure decisions on the location of major retail development take account of the opportunities provided by integrated transport in the urban networks and consider the impact on neighbouring centres
- Improve links between settlements, their hinterlands, and with regional centres in sparsely populated areas to provide access to employment, shops and services, appropriate to the needs of the local population.
- Develop ICT to provide innovative solutions for the delivery of public services, education and training and business opportunities locally. This needs to be complemented by strategies to ensure social inclusion and capacity building.
- Increase levels of walking and cycling both through promotion and provision of facilities
- Reflect the roles of different settlements and their transport connections in planning policies and the location of major investments of public importance such as hospitals and education and waste facilities. These should seek to promote polycentric development based on sustainable means of travel.

Actions

The objectives will have particular bearing on the assessment of our spatially targeted actions, including:

- The development of the Welsh Assembly Government's Wales Transport Strategy to be published in 2005, which will include integrated transport strategies for the local authority transport consortia areas
- Use of the new powers in the proposed Railways Bill 2005 and the Transport (Wales) Bill to plan for rail services and to ensure that transport planning is done on a regional basis

- The next round of Local Transport Plans will be delivered on a regional basis and the guidance will ensure that their aims and actions take forward the Wales Spatial Plan objectives.
- Ensuring that transport funding is used to further the aims of the Wales Spatial Plan.
- The potential for broadband infrastructure to provide new links will be developed as part of Broadband Wales. New ways of delivering services will be developed as part of Cymru Ar-lein.
- Action on planning and location that will be guided by the finalised TAN18 (Transport) and will then be taken forward in area decision-making.
- Delivery of the action points identified for the Welsh Assembly Government in the Walking and Cycling Strategy for Wales and encouragement of partners to deliver their action points.

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 well-being.

A strong sense of place is evident throughout Welsh communities. However Welsh cultural identity in its different forms, like that of other small countries, faces the challenge of global cultural pressures and demographic change.

Distinctiveness, sense of identity and pride in place are important elements of successful communities and countries. Regions that have close social ties but are able to embrace newcomers are among the best performing in Europe, with a combination of short lines of communication, good social support networks, and a willingness to embrace new ideas.

Practically everything in today's rural and urban landscape is the result of centuries of human activity, of farming, quarrying, travelling, trade, of economic and spiritual need. We need to maintain and support the distinctive character of the Welsh historic environment (Figure 13), without compromising society's present and future needs.

The challenge is to retain and enhance a sense of place while embracing the change necessary to sustain those places as living, working areas. This challenge is made particularly acute in Wales due to the combination of changing employment patterns, population changes, and the special place of the Welsh language in our national identity (Figure 14).

The look of Wales is becoming more uniform. Standard building types are often failing to reflect traditional local building styles – with a strong growth in bungalows and executive estates that have no connection to local materials or style. With quality of life a major factor for long term prospects, Wales needs to stand out not to become bland.

Wales is becoming in some ways a more bilingual nation, with some 40% of Welsh speakers now living in urban areas, with an increasing proportion being under 25. At the

same time, however, the percentages speaking Welsh in the rural communities, where the language has traditionally been strong, are continuing to fall gradually.

Wales has always been a place that has welcomed new populations. It has a long history of minority ethnic settlement, concentrated mainly in South Wales' former coal ports. The population is diverse with people of an Asian background accounting for around 40 per cent of the minority ethnic population. Cardiff contains two-fifths of the minority ethnic population of Wales and has the greatest ethnic diversity. Along with Newport, Swansea, Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Vale of Glamorgan it contains nearly 70 per cent of the minority ethnic population.

Supporting newcomers to understand the communities they have become part of and how they can play their full part should help to strengthen and enrich communities and their distinctiveness.

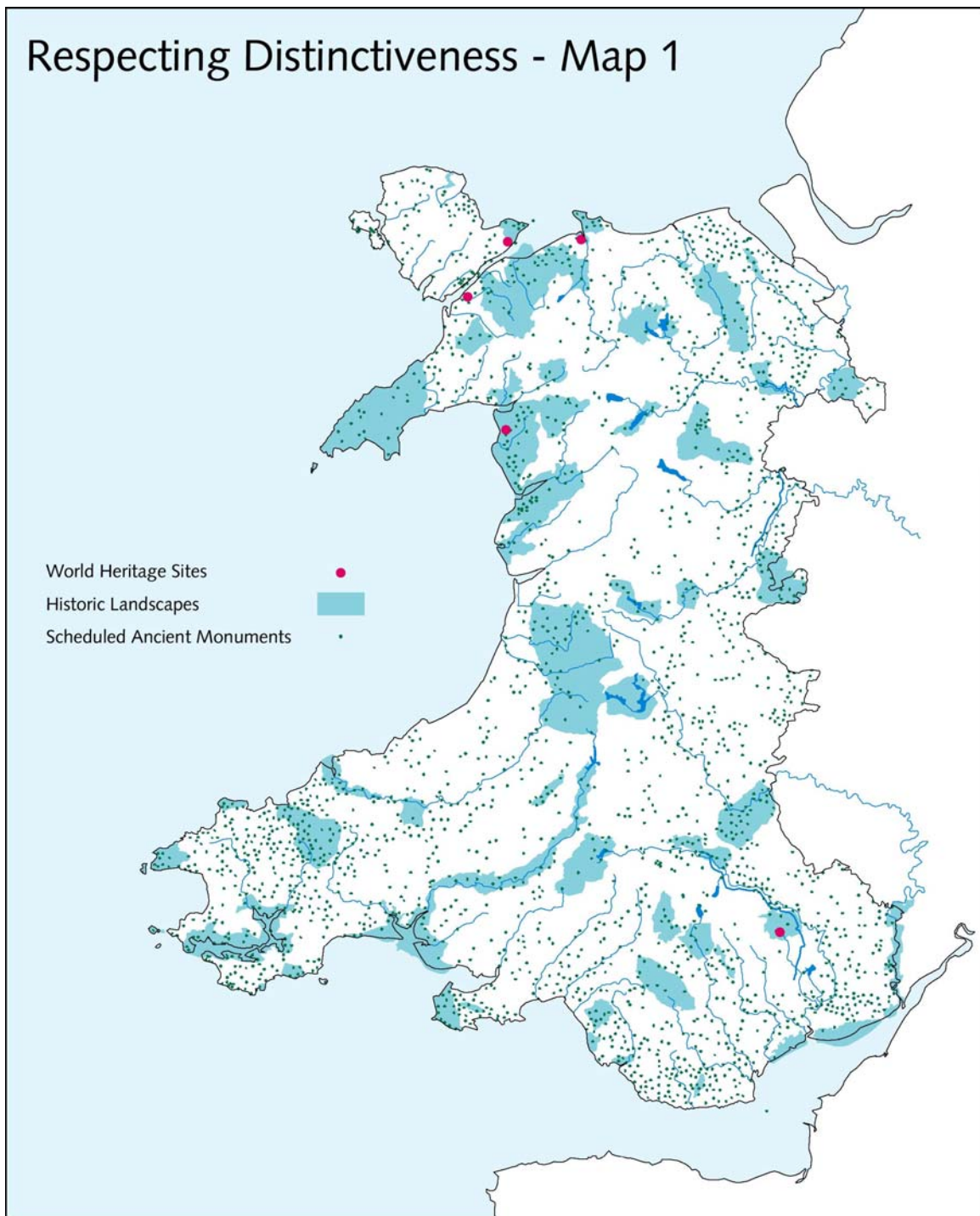


Figure 13 - Respecting Distinctiveness (Map 1)

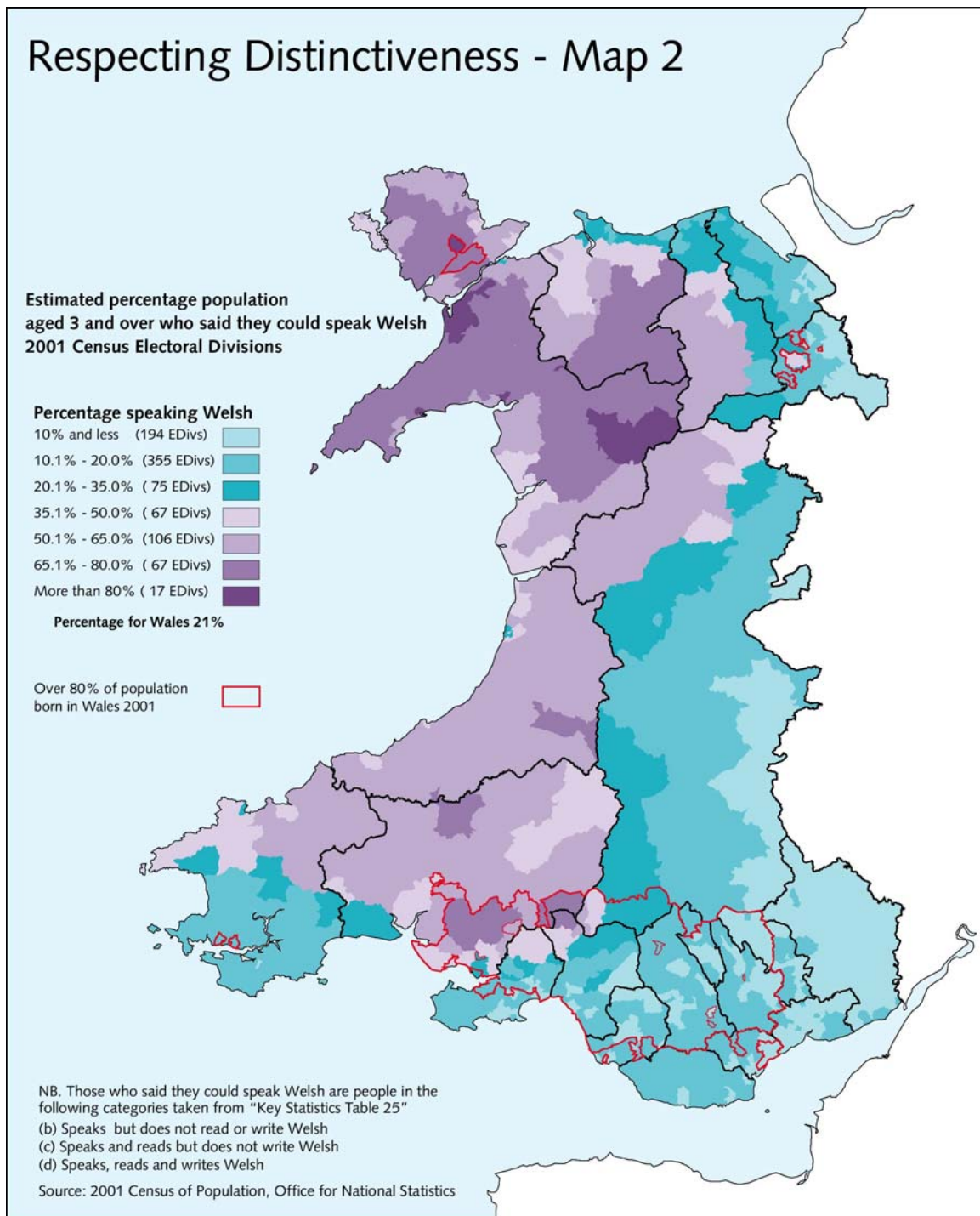


Figure 14 - Respecting Distinctiveness (Map 2)

Objectives

- Ensure that the voices of children and young people, of older people, and our minority ethnic people, are heard and valued in local decision making

- Develop Wales in line with the vision in Iaith Pawb, as a modern bilingual society with increasing opportunities for people in all areas of Wales to use Welsh in all aspects of their lives
- Reflect and sustain the differing physical character of places in planning and development
- Encourage better sustainable design initiatives and that design reflects local distinctiveness
- Support directly small scale initiatives that contribute to environmental, social and economic improvements – and to a sense of community identity – at the local level
- Ensure the preservation and promotion of Wales' rich historic environment and reflecting its wider contribution to economic and social regeneration and sustainability

Actions

The objectives will have particular bearing on the assessment of our spatially targeted actions, including:

- Iaith Pawb which provides a programme of action for the Welsh Language. This will work to develop and compile a range of statistical indicators on Welsh language ability levels and usage
- The Assembly's Race Equality Scheme which provides a strategic framework and programme of action for eliminating unlawful racial discrimination, promoting race equality and promoting good race relations
- The review of TAN20 providing guidance on the implementation of planning policy on the Welsh language
- The Welsh Procurement Initiative and its support for better design and more sustainable sourcing of products and services
- Cadw's review of the historic environment and particularly its programme to characterise the Welsh historic landscape and make the results available to a wide audience
- The work of local authorities, the WTB and Cadw to recognise and strengthen the sense of place in local areas across Wales.

Working with our immediate neighbours

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 in large parts of Wales use health, education and training facilities in England and shop in English towns and cities and vice versa, although to a smaller degree. For housing and labour markets the border is entirely irrelevant.

For Ireland, our transport corridors provide essential access to UK and European markets and we share the Irish Sea as a common resource. The plans for substantial growth in the South East of England, as part of the wider 'Sustainable Communities Plan' and the proposals for the 'Northern Way', linking major conurbations in the North of England will also impact on Wales. All these factors require an understanding of the linkages, policies and strategies that exist and emerge on our borders and beyond, as well as active engagement in their development.

Whereas the Irish National Spatial Strategy was published in 2002, English regions are in the early stages of developing Regional Spatial Strategies to replace Regional Planning Guidance. It is important that we establish a productive dialogue with all our neighbours and with colleagues elsewhere in the UK.

Key issues for collaboration with neighbouring regions include:

South West England

- Collaboration between South East Wales and the Greater Bristol area to achieve mutual benefits
- Integrated Management of the Severn Estuary
- Address transport corridor constraints: intercity rail, M4, M5, including links to Heathrow airport
- Housing demand across the travel to work area

West Midlands

- Cross border service provision in the central borders
- Transport links and water and sewerage demands
- Rural policy and the impact of CAP reform
- Management of river catchments
- Interdependence of housing market

North West England

- Interdependence of the cross-border housing market, employment and service sectors; joint management of development pressure
- Integrated management of the Dee Estuary
- Transport links
- Regeneration of post-industrial and tourism locations

Ireland

- Ports and transport corridors
- Coastal and marine management

- Short sea shipping for freight
- Economic links, e.g. tourism, employment

3 AREAS OF WALES

Each area of Wales will need its own distinctive response to delivering the national vision. This section sets out the basis for future collaborative work within each part of Wales and a framework for future public and private investment decisions.

North West Wales – Eryri a Môn

Vision

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

Strategy

North West Wales has a very strong sense of identity, linked to the Welsh language, an outstanding landscape and coastline. Attractive coastal areas in particular are experiencing inward migration which creates pressure. At the same time some remoter areas and older centres are losing population, and there is concern about outward migration of young people born in the area. There are significant pockets of deprivation.

Economically, there are opportunities to create knowledge-based jobs, making the most of the university presence in Bangor; to develop creative industries and higher-value tourism; and to continue to help the land-based economy to diversify and become more sustainable. The strategy of the North Wales Economic Forum sets out a wide range of action in these areas.

There is in addition a big opportunity to promote closer working between the towns along the Menai Strait, (Caernarfon, Bangor, Menai Bridge and extending to Llangefni) as part of a long-term strategy. This offers the greatest potential to give the region a real social and economic driver, in a way which will spread prosperity to areas including Holyhead, Porthmadog and the slate mining communities and retain people in the area, without compromising the region’s environment or cultural identity.

This approach should not only help to improve access to jobs over a wide part of the region, but also enable improved retail and leisure services to become more viable. Coupled with action on affordable housing, these developments should increase the prospects for retaining more young people in the area.

The development of more integrated transport systems will be important to help spread prosperity. Recent investment in the A55 corridor already provides an opportunity to spread prosperity across Anglesey to parts which have been experiencing population and employment loss, including the Irish gateway port of Holyhead. There is potential to capture benefits from the links with Ireland and the position of the region on a transport link of European importance, strengthening the existing strategic role of Holyhead as

one of the key gateways to Wales and an important location for investment and trade with Ireland.

The quality of the environment is a unique asset, recognised in Snowdonia and Lleyn and the Anglesey coastal areas through the National Park and AONB designations. The focus on higher-value added production from the land-based economy, and higher-value tourism, goes hand in hand with action to protect the environment and ecology.

Propositions

- The Menai area, the network of linked settlements on both sides of the Menai Strait extending to Llangefni, has the greatest potential as the key regional economic driver, spreading prosperity to the wider area including Holyhead, Porthmadog and the slate mining communities.
- The University of Wales, Bangor has a key role to play in supporting the development of an outward-looking and confident knowledge economy.
- The area will operate in a way that maintains and enhances the facility of international gateways and corridors.
- The region's outstanding scenery, including the coast, its ecology, historic heritage and strong cultural identity offer a basis for building higher-value tourism in ways that are sustainable.
- Higher-value production offers a sustainable future for the land-based economy, in ways which are compatible with the future development of tourism and the environment.

Actions

Area actions

- The Welsh Assembly Government, the WDA and Gwynedd and Isle of Anglesey local authorities to develop a coherent strategy in consultation with the North Wales Economic Forum and other partners to realise the potential of the Menai hub, for the benefit of North West Wales as a whole.
- The integrated transport strategy for the area will target the development of better links between main settlements and with their hinterlands. Improvements to transport infrastructure will be delivered through the Trunk Road Forward programme and Transport Grant programmes. Enhancements to rail and long distance coach services through direct support.
- Study to identify potential for collaborative working with Ireland on transport links and maritime issues.
- Tourism Partnership North Wales to prioritise action needed to develop higher-value tourism.
- Reducing health inequalities and promoting healthier lifestyles through Health Challenge Wales and targeted action to tackle health inequalities

People, Places, Futures - The Wales Spatial Plan

- Programmes such as 'Keep well this winter' tackling the wider determinants of health including social, environmental and economic wellbeing through Community Plans and Health, Social Care and Wellbeing strategies
- Strengthen rural communities through Rural Community Action and the wider rural activities supported by the new EU Rural Development Regulation.
- University of Wales, Bangor and FE institutions, WDA and business to work together to identify opportunities to strengthen the knowledge economy.
- The Welsh Assembly Government to commission a study with others on how the expertise in North West Wales and Mid Wales in earth, marine, environmental and land sciences can be translated into business opportunities, creating high quality jobs and strengthening Wales' reputation as an environmental leader.
- Local authorities to use the affordable housing toolkit to target local needs.
- Address sewerage infrastructure constraints
- Work with partners in the area to agree the roles and functions of places and reflect these in LDPs.
- The Llwybr-routes programme will be important to help increase the opportunities for local people to return to the area.

National actions particularly relevant to the area:

- Develop higher-value added employment, supported through the policies in "A Winning Wales", "A Learning Country" and "Reaching Higher", and by the work of the North Wales Economic Forum
- "Farming for the Future" to help the land-based economy adapt including establishing the Centre for Alternative Land Use at the University of Bangor.
- The Welsh Assembly Government to review and strengthen as appropriate the toolkit for action on affordable housing, to provide Local Authorities with ways to meet local housing needs more effectively
- Addressing social deprivation through Communities First.
- The WTB, WDA, Local Authorities and CCW to develop a Welsh coastal tourism strategy, to create a coherent network of routes, destinations and facilities. Detailed project implementation and development at the local level.
- The Welsh Assembly Government will work with others to develop visions for the future of the countryside in generic zones, contributing to sustainable development in an integrated way.
- The emerging Environment Strategy to guide our stewardship of the land and sea

North East Wales - Border & Coast

Vision

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

Strategy

North East Wales is a key driver of the Welsh economy. The fortune of this area is closely linked with that of its nearby English neighbours, in particular West Cheshire. There are three distinct but closely linked parts: the urbanised / industrialised border ("the Dee triangle"), the coast and the rural inland area. Parts of the area are beginning to suffer from their own success, experiencing skill shortages, increasing house prices and congestion. To enable the area to keep its momentum whilst mitigating any negative impacts, it will be necessary to establish closer connections between the urban industrialised parts, where the focus of development has traditionally been, and those that are in need of further regeneration. The latter includes the settlements on the Denbighshire and Flintshire Coast and the towns to the North West of Wrexham. To succeed, the area relies on close cross-border collaboration with its English neighbours.

The strategy is to consolidate the existing cross-border wider area with the core area of Deeside, Chester and Wrexham, and spread opportunities to adjoining areas in need of regeneration. This core area has witnessed strong economic and employment growth over recent years, particularly in modern manufacturing, which has been accompanied by growth in population and new housing. Development of cultural, retail, administrative and leisure functions within Wales has lagged behind employment and housing growth, with Chester providing the majority of these functions. To counterbalance this trend, Wrexham will be developed as a complementary regional centre building on existing regional assets including the North East Wales Institute, Wrexham Maelor Hospital and its shopping function.

The towns on the coast are significant population centres, with an economy largely focused around tourism. They are catering for different sectors of the tourism market, but over the lifetime of the plan, most of these traditional tourism sectors are likely to continue to shrink, so that a more diverse economic base is needed for their sustainable future. Some of the communities, in particular those towards the East, Rhyl, Prestatyn, Holywell / Mostyn and Flint have high levels of deprivation and are in need of urban regeneration. These will be able to benefit from closer integration with the Dee triangle and the economic and social opportunities available. Llandudno is an important retail and service centre for a wider hinterland and its strong position should be maintained.

Improved accessibility and raising skill and educational attainment levels, which are low in the area, are key to spreading opportunities to areas in need of regeneration. The A55, A548 and North Wales rail corridors provide an opportunity to improve accessibility and spread development to the west, increasing the opportunities in towns along the corridor. Closer links also need to be made between the coastal and border towns and the rural parts of the area.

Propositions

- An effective integrated transport system is essential to the continued good performance of the area. In particular, public transport should be improved to link areas in need of regeneration with areas of opportunity.
- The area will operate in a way that maintains and enhances the facility of international gateways and corridors.
- Constructive cross-border relationships will continue to play a fundamentally important role in the success of the area and will be fostered.
- Housing pressures should be channelled into public transport accessible locations where it supports regeneration aims
- Deeside will continue to be an important location for major employment generating investment. Sustainable land use and transport strategies need to support this role in the long term.
- Coastal resorts need to reposition themselves to adapt to changing tourism markets and to develop a broader economic and social base, establishing connections with the rural hinterlands. The wider area's tourism offer should be expanded to capture higher values, reflecting the high quality environment and its heritage.
- Wrexham should be promoted as a main regional centre with a complementary function to Chester with other centres being developed in ways which provides a network of appropriate services.
- Llandudno, Llandudno Junction and Conwy occupy a strategic position as a hub connecting North East and North West Wales and as retail, service and employment centre for a large hinterland.
- Areas of potential conflict between environmental issues and development aspirations need to be identified with the aim to develop win-win solutions.
- Areas prone to coastal and river flooding need to be identified and the most suitable responses established, including identifying alternative uses and innovative solutions.

Actions

Area actions:

- The integrated transport strategy for the area will target improved bus, rail, inter-modal and park and ride services including cross-border improvements necessary to connect areas of deprivation with employment sites and retail and service centres. They will be delivered through the Transport Grant programmes and direct support for rail services.
- Increasing the transport capacity of the corridors and gateways to Europe and beyond, including capacity enhancements on the East-West corridor in the North East will be delivered through the Trunk Road Forward Programme.

- Support for cross border collaboration to identify requirements in terms of skills, employment sites, housing etc for the continued success of the area
- Local authorities to review housing location as part of Local Development Plan preparation process
- WDA and local authorities to prepare a strategy to identify capacity for further economic development on Deeside prioritising brownfield development, linked to the transport strategy and taking account of other initiatives including the significant activity cluster around the St Asaph Business Park
- Strengthen rural communities through Rural Community Action and the wider rural activities supported by the new EU Rural Development Regulation.
- Improve collaboration between schools, HE/FE Institutions, NEWI, WDA, training providers and business to identify opportunities to strengthen the knowledge economy and address skill shortages and low levels of educational attainment.
- Avoid development in areas vulnerable to future flooding in the light of estimates of the impact of climate change following the advice in Planning Policy Wales TAN 15 Development and Flood Risk,
- Address water resource constraints in the area through infrastructure improvements and water efficiency measures and requirements.
- Project to examine new futures for coastal resorts – possibly in collaboration with North West England
- Develop an Action Plan to support regeneration of Wrexham as regional capital for North East Wales
- Reduce health inequalities and promoting healthier lifestyles through Health Challenge Wales and targeted action to tackle health inequalities.
- Programmes such as ‘Keep well this winter’ tackling the wider determinants of health including social, environmental and economic wellbeing through Community Plans and Health, Social Care and Wellbeing strategies
- Project to define necessary elements for a step-change in the area’s tourism product.

National actions particularly relevant to the area:

- Increasing skill levels, supported through the policies in “A Winning Wales”, “A Learning Country” and “Reaching Higher”
- The Welsh Assembly Government will work with Jobcentre Plus to support the Pathways to Work pilot, designed to help people on Incapacity Benefit into work, and will work with Jobcentre Plus to test out complementary action in other areas. Subject to the evaluation it will seek to persuade the Department of Work and Pensions to extend such approaches
- The Welsh Assembly Government to review and strengthen as appropriate the toolkit for action on affordable housing, to provide Local Authorities with ways to meet local housing needs more effectively.
- Addressing social deprivation through Communities First.

People, Places, Futures - The Wales Spatial Plan

- Supporting early years development under the Cymorth programme.
- Assembly Government's relocation strategy includes moving Civil Service posts to Llandudno Junction
- The WTB, WDA, Local Authorities and CCW to develop a Welsh coastal tourism strategy, to create a coherent network of routes, destinations and facilities. Detailed project implementation and development at the local level.
- "Farming for the Future" to help the land-based economy adapt.
- The emerging Environment Strategy to guide our stewardship of the land and sea
- Reviewing the Flood and Coastal Defence Strategy

Central Wales

Vision

‘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’

Strategy

People are making conscious decisions to move to this area to get a better quality of life. This is creating opportunities for the future but is putting the area’s cultural identity under stress. Economically the area has a promising future based on its environmental attractiveness and quality of life, and potential to develop high value-added work. The challenge is to reconcile this with greater opportunities for young people to stay in the area or return to it.

The area is characterised by main population settlements along the Cardigan Bay Coast and in East Powys, and a mosaic of relatively small settlements that are important providers of services. Carmarthen has a pivotal role between this area, Swansea Bay and Pembrokeshire. The area has enjoyed relatively large growth in housing provision over recent years mainly as a result of the expansion of higher education. Future housing provision should focus on consolidating the respective roles of the differing settlements, allow for modest growth and be located in areas that can be well served by public transport.

Large parts of the area away from the English border possess relatively weak external links. Levels of rail accessibility are poor, with the exception of a few centres including Carmarthen, Welshpool and Newtown, with large parts of the region being dependent on road based transport. The area’s relatively low population density makes substantial improvements to external links uneconomic. Priority should instead be given to improving internal accessibility, especially public transport accessibility between the main settlements and surrounding villages and rural areas. Access to broadband is absent in some of the more sparsely populated parts of the area. Improving access to broadband is an important priority.

Further town centre improvements should be promoted in the main centres reflecting both their established roles with the capacity and need for further development. Smaller centres need help to establish a greater mass of services, for example based on the leisure and tourism market.

This area has the highest levels of educational attainment in Wales. Additionally, schools need to work with the Careers Service to help young people make informed choices between academic and vocational options. The Lwybr-routes programme will be important to help increase the opportunities for local people to return to the area.

Young people can find it hard to compete in the housing market, but the pressure on affordable housing varies significantly. The Welsh Assembly Government will review and strengthen as appropriate the toolkit for local authorities to use to help address

affordable housing issues; it is for local authorities to assess local needs and apply the toolkit appropriately.

Containing the Brecon Beacons National Park, a stunning coastline and many areas of natural beauty, the area has a huge potential for high quality tourism. This must be managed in a sustainable way to be sensitive to the environment. Leisure development within the region should emphasise the need to improve the quality of the visitor experience and length of stay. Developments should be sensitive and low impact and build upon the strengths of the region including the quality of the countryside and coastline. Further innovative low impact developments similar to the Centre for Alternative Technology in Machynlleth should be promoted.

The policy direction set in Farming for the Future provides an opportunity to create a sustainable and diversified land management system, with the emphasis on higher-value production, and closer synergy between farming, care for the environment and tourism.

Economic development should build upon regional strengths. For example in Aberystwyth the aim of policy should be to help diversify the economic base of the town, support opportunities for spin out companies from the University and Institute for Grassland and Environmental Research (IGER), and provide additional job opportunities for the region's large graduate population. In this area, good ICT links are key enablers of future development, as is making better links with the education sector.

Propositions

- The current mosaic and scale of towns needs to be reinforced, enhancing their attractiveness as places in which to live and work creatively, whilst improving links with surrounding rural communities, building a network of complementary regional and local centres
- Build on the important key centres along the Cardigan Bay Coast, including Cardigan and Aberystwyth, as foci for the communities and economic development in West Wales and beyond.
- Action needs to improve the supply of affordable housing tailored to local circumstances
- Due to its outstanding coastal and inland environment, the entire area has very large potential for sustainable high value tourism.
- Improve accessibility to high quality services, either within Central Wales or, where more appropriate and effective, in nearby centres in Wales and England by enhancing public/community transport and ICT links together with discrete improvements to transport infrastructure to suit modern needs, and building effective cross border collaboration
- Help the localised pockets of strong manufacturing capacity in the Severn Valley retain their competitiveness by focussing on short run, niche market capability.
- There is a need to manage changes in land use linked to changing farming subsidies to stimulate new business activity, assessing the environmental and landscape impact.

- The area has an acknowledged expertise in environmental science which can be enhanced further by promoting collaborative work between institutions across Wales
- Higher-value production offers the best chance of achieving a sustainable future for the land-based economy, in ways which are compatible with the future development of tourism and the environment.

Actions

Area Actions

- Identify areas of poorest transport accessibility: improve the quality of journey experience so people are better connected by incremental improvements to transport infrastructure through the Trunk Road Forward programme and Transport Grant programmes. Enhancements to rail and long distance coach services through direct support.
- The Welsh Assembly Government will work with local authorities and the private sector to identify and tackle ICT 'black holes'.
- Develop the strong potential growth of the service sector through, for example, new and innovative opportunities for service delivery, e.g. tele-medicine, mobile services.
- Local partners will lead a study to determine future roles, development and investment needs of towns and hubs.
- Support for regeneration of Cardigan, developments at Aberporth, and support for all sectors to go up market through initiatives like the South Ceredigion Regeneration Programme
- Decentralisation of Welsh Assembly Government jobs to Aberystwyth
- Support from the WDA and ELWa to retain and strengthen competitiveness of niche manufacturing
- Local authorities to assess local needs for affordable housing and take action to meet them using the national toolkit.
- Strengthen rural communities through Rural Community Action and the wider rural activities supported by the new EU Rural Development Regulation.
- The Welsh Assembly Government to commission a study with others on how the expertise in North West Wales and Mid Wales in earth, marine, environmental and land sciences can be translated into business opportunities, creating high quality jobs and strengthening Wales' reputation as an environmental leader.
- Tourism Partnership Mid Wales lead project to identify opportunities and requirements for enhanced inland tourism
- Reducing health inequalities and promoting healthier lifestyles through Health Challenge Wales and targeted action to tackle health inequalities.
- Programmes such as 'Keep well this winter' tackling the wider determinants of health including social, environmental and economic wellbeing through Community Plans and Health, Social Care and Wellbeing strategies

- Liaison with English authorities on issues of cross border importance e.g. housing, environment, health and education.
- Identify opportunities to strengthen the knowledge economy through improved collaboration between the education, public and business sectors.

National actions particularly relevant to the area:

- The Welsh Assembly Government to review and strengthen as appropriate the toolkit for action on affordable housing, to provide Local Authorities with ways to meet local housing needs more effectively.
- The WTB, WDA, Local Authorities, and CCW to develop a Welsh coastal tourism strategy, to create coherent network of routes, destinations and facilities. Detailed project implementation and development at the local level.
- “Farming for the Future” to help the land-based economy adapt.
- The Assembly Government to work with others to develop visions for the future of the countryside in generic zones, contributing to sustainable development in an integrated way.
- The emerging Environment Strategy to guide our stewardship of the land and sea

South East - The Capital Network

Vision

'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 Europe, helping to spread prosperity within the area and benefiting other parts of Wales.'

Strategy

South East Wales is Wales' most populous area. It is characterised by major economic and social disparities. The coastal zone is now the main economic driver, and its competitiveness needs to be sustained to help raise the economic potential of Wales as a nation. The heavy commuting flows between the Valleys and the coast mean that the area functions as an interdependent but unplanned urban network. This gives rise to pressure on the transport infrastructure.

Cardiff is a relatively small capital city. It is important for Wales as a whole that Cardiff becomes significant internationally, but to do this requires a much greater 'mass' of population and activity. Already, Cardiff has a close functional relationship with its immediate neighbouring towns, particularly Barry, Pontypridd, Caerphilly and extending to Bridgend. This needs to be built on constructively, making Cardiff the focal point of a coherent and successful urban network in South East Wales, all of which is able to share in its prosperity.

The Heads of the Valleys have a high concentration of social deprivation and economic inactivity, allied to low levels of educational attainment and skills, poor health and a declining population.

The strategy therefore must be:

- To strengthen and reintegrate the existing system of towns and cities within South East Wales so that the area functions as a coherent urban network, and can compete internationally. Integrated transport is crucial to this; and
- To work with our partners to develop an ambitious programme of joined-up regeneration action along the Heads of the Valleys corridor which will complement the planned upgrading of the A465. The aim of this will be to improve quality of life, retain and attract residents, and increase the prosperity of the whole area focusing initially on the unlocking the potential of Merthyr Tydfil and Ebbw Vale.

Closer collaboration between towns and between local authorities is fundamental to the success of the strategy. This should include the identification and development of distinct and complementary roles for different towns. Cardiff will play a pivotal role as a key provider of higher level services. Newport has an important strategic role due to its advantageous position between Cardiff and Bristol. Both have the potential to be hubs for the financial and creative industries in particular. There is an opportunity to promote

the area as the “Gateway to Wales” linked to the redevelopment of Llanwern Steel works and regeneration of Newport city centre, with benefits for the Gwent valleys. Closer interaction between Cardiff, Newport and the Greater Bristol area could benefit the whole cross-border region.

The valley communities have diverse characteristics and needs. This ranges from geographically isolated valley communities to many of the lower and middle valleys which are becoming increasingly buoyant in both economic and social terms. This is partly in response to the increasing levels of prosperity along the coastal belt. Additional regeneration opportunities exist in the key centres of Pontypridd and Pontypool to promote wider community regeneration and provide essential links between the coastal belt and Heads of the Valleys corridor.

The Heads of the Valleys corridor will be strengthened as an attractive location for people to live and for development, to help secure more balanced prosperity across the area. Merthyr Tydfil and Ebbw Vale are the key centres on the corridor. They provide the population size and strategic development opportunities necessary for sustained economic development, retailing, housing and service provision (including higher order health and education provision). These centres should act as a catalyst for the regeneration of the upper valleys helping to retain and attract a socially mixed population and provide a counterweight to the coastal urban areas. The development of linkages with neighbouring settlements such as Aberdare and Hirwaun in the case of Merthyr Tydfil and Brynmawr, Tredegar and Rhymney in the case of Ebbw Vale will be essential to ensure that benefits are spread throughout the wider area.

Regeneration of socially deprived areas depends critically on breaking the cycle of poor educational attainment, low skill levels, economic inactivity and poor health. Investment in the development of children in their early years, targeted on socially-deprived communities, and allied to high quality childcare, is vital to long-term regeneration. In the short-term, the approach being piloted through “Pathways to Work” is the most promising way of helping people move from economic inactivity to work.

An effective integrated transport system is central to the effective functioning of the area. The challenge is to achieve this in ways which reduce reliance on private cars, through improved public transport links. East-west public transport along the Heads of the Valleys will need to be enhanced with links to the multimodal transport interchanges, including Merthyr Tydfil and Ebbw Vale. The re-opening of the Ebbw Vale rail line and improvements to the Merthyr valley line will provide essential public transport links between the Heads of the Valleys and the coastal belt, which will need to be integrated with local bus services. Similarly, the re-opening of the Vale of Glamorgan line will open up opportunities for much improved public transport accessibility to the West of Cardiff.

The area is rich in high quality HE and FE facilities, including Cardiff University which is recognised as a centre of excellence in research and teaching. These institutions are of major importance to attract and keep talent to the area and to Wales in general.

The area as a whole has strikingly beautiful countryside, and this runs not just through the Vale of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire, but throughout the former coalfield industrial area. Protecting and enhancing this countryside is not just important for its own sake, but for the quality of life, which is a key factor in its attractiveness to skilled workers. Better-balanced development within the area is important to reduce pressures and

maintain the quality of life. Parts of the area are vulnerable to the potential impact of climate change with potential increased flood risk from sea level rise and changes in weather patterns.

Propositions

- The area will function as a single networked city-region on a scale to realise its international potential, its national role and to reduce inequalities. A fully integrated transport system is necessary to enable this to happen. The area will, operate in a way that maintains and enhances the facility of international gateways and corridors.
- The success of the area relies on Cardiff developing its capital functions, together with strong and distinctive complementary roles of other towns and cities.
- Newport's locational advantages, its good inter-urban transport links and its strong connections with the Gwent Valleys provide it with strategic development opportunities, which have to be considered in the context of flood risks.
- The Valleys need to be strengthened as desirable places to live, work and visit; combining a wider mix of types of housing and good access to jobs and services, in distinctive communities set in an attractive environment.
- Private house building and the improvement of public sector housing stock have a key role to play in regeneration in the Valleys. Well-performing schools, leisure and retail facilities will also be important in attracting people to live in the Valleys.
- The linked challenges of low economic activity rates, skill levels and poor health need to be tackled to address social exclusion and improve economic performance in a lasting way.
- Investment in the early years development of children growing up in communities with concentrations of deprivation is a high priority, while the principle of lifelong learning needs to be embedded in communities on a larger scale.
- Development must not compromise the attractiveness of the area's towns and wider environment, which are key factors in the area's success. A better balance of development is necessary to avoid overheating in the coastal zone.
- The tourism and leisure sector has the potential to contribute to a much greater extent to the area's economy. This includes heritage, culture, events and countryside based activities and destinations.
- The area needs excellent access not only to London but to major international cities. Collaboration with the Bristol area should focus on securing first class transport links to secure this.

Actions

Area Actions:

- The integrated transport strategy for the area will:
 - Target improved bus, rail, inter-modal and park and ride services and facilities for commuting to provide real options and reduce dependency on the car.

- Provide incremental improvements to rail services in the Valleys which will double and in some areas quadruple the capacity.
 - Increase the transport capacity of the corridors and gateways to Europe and beyond. This will include capacity enhancements on the M4 and A465 corridors through the Trunk Road Forward Programme as well as development of routes from Cardiff International Airport.
 - The Welsh Assembly Government and South East Wales Transport Alliance will work with relevant local authorities in England to press for appropriate investment in road and rail links between South East Wales and London.
-
- The Welsh Assembly Government will work with local authorities and the private sector to develop a coherent joint strategy to maximise the potential of the A465 corridor. This will include targeted investment in Merthyr Tydfil and Ebbw Vale so that they can drive regeneration in the Heads of the Valleys zone. The strategy will need to focus on promoting developments in housing, retail, leisure and town centres as well as in economic development.
 - The use of undeveloped land for housing in locations with high development pressure should be minimised, in particular to the South of and along the M4. Local authorities in the area should commission research to identify availability of brownfield land and scope for re-use.
 - Local authorities should plan to provide a wider mix of housing in the Valleys, prioritising locations with easy access to sustainable modes of transport.
 - Local authorities are required to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2012. The level of committed forward investment realised through this process should act as a catalyst for local social and economic regeneration and skills/training programmes for local people.
 - Local authorities should collaborate to ensure that their housing plans reflect the interdependence of urban settlement across the area as a whole.
 - Development should be avoided in areas vulnerable to future flooding in the light of estimates of the impact of climate change following the advice in TAN 15 Development and Flood Risk
 - Employment site provision reviewed in consideration of this Plan and the WDA Property Strategy to bring forward new proposals and reallocate sites where necessary, optimise the potential of existing sites and develop proposals for the location of a Premier Business Park in South East Wales
 - Reducing health inequalities and promoting healthier lifestyles through Health Challenge Wales and targeted action to tackle health inequalities.
 - Programmes such as 'Keep well this winter' tackling the wider determinants of health including social, environmental and economic wellbeing through Community Plans and Health, Social Care and Wellbeing strategies
 - Newport Unlimited to pursue development opportunities linked to regeneration of Llanwern Steelworks and Newport city centre.

- Improved collaboration between HE and FE institutions, ELWa, the WDA and business to identify opportunities to strengthen the knowledge economy and intervention on skill development linked to economic priorities

National actions particularly relevant to the area:

- Increasing levels of economic activity, supported through the policies in “ A Winning Wales”, “A Learning Country” and “ Reaching Higher”, and the Assembly Government’s Report on Raising Economic Activity Rates (July 2004).
- Work by the Welsh Assembly Government with Jobcentre Plus to support the Pathways to Work pilot, designed to help people on Incapacity Benefit into work. The Assembly Government will work with Jobcentre Plus to test out complementary action in other areas. Subject to the evaluation it will seek to persuade the Department of Work and Pensions to extend such approaches.
- Support early years development under the Cymorth programme and action in early years education.
- The Welsh Assembly Government to review and strengthen as appropriate the toolkit for action on affordable housing, to provide Local Authorities with ways to meet local housing needs more effectively.
- Address social deprivation through Communities First.
- The WTB, WDA, Local Authorities and CCW to develop a Welsh coastal tourism strategy, to create coherent network of routes, destinations and facilities. Detailed project implementation and development at the local level.
- The emerging Environment Strategy to guide our stewardship of the land and sea
- Reviewing the Flood and Coastal Defence Strategy
- Implementation of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard

Swansea Bay - Waterfront & Western Valleys

Vision

'An area of planned sustainable growth and environmental improvement, realising its potential, supported by integrated transport within the area and externally and spreading prosperity to support the revitalisation of West Wales'

Strategy

This area has the population and facilities that will allow it to help shape Wales' future. There are many signs that Swansea is on the cusp of substantial and sustained improvement although at present the area as a whole is not benefiting from its potential. To ensure that the wider area is revitalised it is necessary to ensure that it can share in success in a sustainable way. Better links between its different parts are required to enable this to happen, be it the integration of transport, service delivery or of decision making.

The area has a world famous coastline which is both environmentally sensitive and a major attraction in its own right. It also has areas that have been environmentally degraded though previous use which can be revitalised.

The main elements of the strategy for the area are:

- Development of a modern, attractive and vibrant waterfront urban area
- Revitalisation of Swansea as Wales' second national city
- Enhanced transport links between inland communities and the coast

The waterfront urban area stretches from Port Talbot in the East through to Burry Port in the West taking in Neath, Swansea and Llanelli. It contains some of the most extensive areas of developed coastline in Wales and, alongside important port facilities, retains significant heavy manufacturing capacity, especially in the eastern part around Port Talbot and Baglan Bay.

Industrial restructuring has left a legacy of extensive brownfield sites often in attractive coastal locations. The availability of these sites provides a major opportunity to revitalise the area to create an attractive waterfront urban network where Swansea, Neath, Port Talbot and Llanelli combine their complementary strengths to provide another major focus in South Wales in addition to the city-region around Cardiff. Central to this process is the joint preparation of an integrated waterfront regeneration masterplan. Existing proposals, including the Baglan Bay Energy Park, Llandarcy Urban Village, SA1 Waterfront and Llanelli Millennium Coastal Park, should be integrated in this plan.

Swansea is at the heart of the waterfront urban area. The role of Swansea as the second city will be strengthened as a driver for growth within the area and a catalyst for development further west. Appropriate cultural, leisure and social infrastructure and regional capital functions, including retailing, will be encouraged to provide an attractive

place to live, work and visit. This will help to retain young people and attract well-qualified people from outside the area providing a stimulus for improved economic performance. The natural assets of Swansea will need to be capitalised upon, including improving the linkages between the city centre and seafront area, building upon success stories such as the SA1 waterfront and Swansea Marina.

The regeneration of Swansea will provide an economic driver for the wider area, including the Amman, Tawe, Neath and Gwendraeth Valleys. To ensure that inland towns share in the growing prosperity of the coastal urban network public transport linkages will be improved. Due to the limited extent of the rail network in the area public transport is likely to remain road based.

Propositions

- The area has the potential to become a key driver of the Welsh economy, accommodating sustainable population and employment growth.
- Development should be focussed on Port Talbot, Neath, Swansea and Llanelli, prioritising the use of the abundant supply of brownfield land.
- Carmarthen occupies a strategic position as a hub connecting the area to other parts of South West and Central Wales and as an important service, retail and employment centre for a large hinterland.
- Improved public transport needs to extend the labour market and create better accessibility to services, providing additional opportunities to inland valley communities.
- Make decisions that maintain and enhance the facility of international gateways and corridors to maximise the potential opportunities these present for the area.
- Continue to develop Swansea as the regional centre and second city with other centres benefiting from complementary development opportunities.
- The area's important port facilities provide the capacity for new port related activities, and an opportunity to explore the potential to release surplus land for other uses.
- The University, FE colleges and Technia should embed the knowledge economy within the area.
- Heritage, landscape and activity tourism and leisure use should be sustainably developed, particularly in areas in need of regeneration.

Actions

Area Actions:

- Take steps to prepare and implement a waterfront masterplan
- Release of additional land for development on brownfield sites in accessible waterfront locations to stimulate development
- Remediation of contaminated land and pollution associated with industrial legacy

- The integrated transport strategy for the area will target improved bus and rail services, inter-modal and park and ride provision including better links between the waterfront and the wider area and better access to development areas. They will be delivered through grant programmes and direct support for services.
- Joint action plan to support regeneration of Swansea building on existing initiatives such as SA1 and complementary centres
- Identification of opportunities for new port related activities and land release
- University, HE institutions and Technia to collaborate to create the virtual 'University of South West Wales'
- Reduce health inequalities and promoting healthier lifestyles through Health Challenge Wales and targeted action to tackle health inequalities.
- Programmes such as 'Keep well this winter' tackling the wider determinants of health including social, environmental and economic wellbeing through Community Plans and Health, Social Care and Wellbeing strategies
- Study to identify potential and investment required to promote tourism in the area, in particular in areas in need of regeneration
- Regeneration of Carmarthen to enable it to play a pivotal role as a service centre between the urban centres of Swansea Bay and South Pembrokeshire

National actions particularly relevant to the area:

- Increasing levels of economic activity, supported through the policies in "A Winning Wales", "A Learning Country" and "Reaching Higher"
- Addressing social deprivation through Communities First.
- The Welsh Assembly Government will invest in the development of children in their early years, and in high quality childcare, targeted on socially deprived communities.
- The WTB, WDA, Local Authorities and CCW to develop a Welsh coastal tourism strategy, to create coherent network of routes, destinations and facilities. Detailed project implementation and development at the local level.
- The Welsh Assembly Government will work with Jobcentre Plus to support the Pathways to Work pilot, designed to help people on Incapacity Benefit into work, and will work with Jobcentre Plus to test out complementary action in other areas. Subject to the evaluation it will seek to persuade the Department of Work and Pensions to extend such approaches.
- The Welsh Assembly Government to review and strengthen as appropriate the toolkit for action on affordable housing, to provide Local Authorities with ways to meet local housing needs more effectively.
- The emerging Environment Strategy to guide our stewardship of the land and sea
- Implementation of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.

Pembrokeshire – The Haven

Vision

‘Strong communities supported by a sustainable economy based on the area’s unique environment, maritime access and tourism opportunities’

Strategy

South Pembrokeshire is the third most populous area in South Wales. It is set within an exceptional coastal environment where the need to balance pressures for development and the environment come to the fore, and where the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park is a local exemplar of sustainability. Milford Haven and Fishguard are amongst the key gateways to Wales and an important location for investment and trade with Ireland

The strategy for the area is based around the promotion of a network of towns around the Haven Waterway which support each other through providing enhanced and complementary functions and service delivery, whilst protecting the environment.

Pembrokeshire provides an opportunity to revitalise the towns around Milford Haven to create a significant cohesive urban area capable of driving the development of Pembrokeshire and South West Wales in a manner which is compatible with the area’s international environmental status. This will be achieved by building on existing identity and functions of the main towns (Milford Haven, Pembroke / Pembroke Dock and Haverfordwest) to support the strengths of communities that already exist. Rather than concentrating development on one town, or duplicating activities in a number of areas, the network of towns should offer complementary functions. The strategy will also help to increase the viability of higher levels of service provision to assist in attracting and retaining residents. Elsewhere, public transport will play an important role linking towns and rural areas to Pembroke Haven.

Propositions

- Milford Haven, Pembroke and Haverfordwest are the key strategic centres, which need to make better links to support complementary roles. Other centres, including neighbouring Carmarthen, fulfil important service, retail and employment centre roles, with Fishguard as a strategic link to Ireland
- Communication links and knowledge economy infrastructure need to be upgraded.
- Strategies aimed to increase skills and retain population need to be developed.
- The area’s energy sector, including renewables, is an opportunity which should be exploited.
- Take decisions that maintain and enhance the facility of international gateways and corridors to maximise the potential opportunities these present for the area.

- There is further potential for tourism linked to the environment, coast, culture and heritage and extending the tourist season.

Actions

Area Actions:

- Complementary roles, regeneration needs, and public transport requirements to be identified for the Haven towns and support for all sectors to go up market through initiatives like the North Pembrokeshire Regeneration Programme centred around Fishguard.
- Improve road transport links to and through the area through the Trunk Road Forward Programme and Transport Grant Programmes.
- Pembrokeshire College to expand the range of courses provided locally by collaborating with other HE and FE providers
- Identify opportunities to maximise economic potential of existing and proposed energy infrastructure
- Develop the potential of tidal and wave power as an economic opportunity for the area.
- Investigate the potential for short sea shipping routes to bring benefits to the area
- Reduce health inequalities and promoting healthier lifestyles through Health Challenge Wales and targeted action to tackle health inequalities.
- Programmes such as 'Keep well this winter' tackling the wider determinants of health including social, environmental and economic wellbeing through Community Plans and Health, Social Care and Wellbeing strategies
- Plan to identify tourism opportunities to increase use of under-utilised assets, increase visitor spend and extend tourist season

National actions particularly relevant to the area:

- Increase levels of economic activity, supported through the policies in "A Winning Wales", "A Learning Country" and "Reaching Higher", and the Assembly Government's Report on Raising Economic Activity Rates (July 2004).
- The WTB, WDA, Local Authorities and CCW to develop a Welsh coastal tourism strategy, to create coherent network of routes, destinations and facilities. Detailed project implementation and development at the local level.
- The Welsh Assembly Government to review and strengthen as appropriate the toolkit for action on affordable housing, to provide Local Authorities with ways to meet local housing needs more effectively
- Strengthen rural communities through Rural Community Action and the wider rural activities supported by the new EU Rural Development Regulation.
- The emerging Environment Strategy to guide our stewardship of the land and sea

4 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The Wales Spatial Plan is a document for the next 20 years, subject to an updating 'refresh' at regular intervals. It provides a context for decisions and an agenda for action. The bulk of the implementation will be achieved through the focussing of policy interventions spatially and by the collaborative working of partners.

The Plan is an important part of the Assembly Government's new approach to public service delivery. In the future, the Assembly Government will have more direct responsibility for delivery of the major public sector programmes across issues such as education and the economy; the Plan provides the agenda for delivering this work in an integrated way nationally and locally. The plan therefore acts as a bridge between local aspirations, for example as set out in local Community Strategies or National Park action plans, and the strategic goals of the Welsh Assembly Government set out in *Wales: A Better Country*.

The Welsh Assembly Government will support activities and targeted research as identified in the national and area statements to help inform the development of the plan. Funding will be contingent on the demonstration of clear outcomes and integrated, inclusive working arrangements.

Implementation of the Plan – both as a process and a product – will take place at both national and area levels, as explained below. Monitoring and learning from the collective experience is also a key part of the process.

National Level

Wales Level Co-ordination

We will create a National Spatial Planning Group, chaired by the Minister and shadowed by an officials group. The terms of reference will be to promote collaboration across Wales and take forward the spatial planning process through monitoring progress on a national and area basis and sharing lessons. Whilst having no executive powers, this Group will advise the Government on spatial priorities. It will be composed of a core membership of stakeholders from our partners in Wales, and be able to invite attendance as necessary from beyond our own administrative boundaries.

Welsh Assembly Government

The requirements to ensure that plans and policies are integrated spatially will be an important part of our Policy Integration and Gateway tools. All policies will be required to conform to this approach. An Interdivisional Group reporting to Cabinet on progress will monitor implementation. This will include the work of our Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies and ensuring that the opportunities afforded by the merger with ASPBs are developed fully to contribute to the spatial planning process.

An accessible all Wales evidence base to inform policy making and delivery through the Welsh Public Service will be developed through a GIS resource.

Area Level

We do not intend to be prescriptive over local structures to take this work forward where these can be agreed by local consensus. Different solutions will be appropriate according to local circumstances. Structures need to be fit for purpose, flexible, adaptable to future needs and sensitive to local governance requirements. In many cases existing regional plans and strategies are already emerging and it is important to build on this work, including that of community planning partnerships, and continue to move forward. Our aim is to streamline initiatives and add value. As a minimum we are looking for integrated and inclusive groups taking integrated actions and for local authorities to assess and act upon their capacity to work collaboratively on a spatial basis. Where regional collaboration results in agreement on specific proposals on issues, like housing allocation and regional waste plans, this will be reflected in future revisions of the Wales Spatial Plan as appropriate.

On an area basis we will invite partners to work with us to review existing arrangements to establish:

- what currently exists (existing forums, partnerships etc.)
- how this can be adapted, if necessary, to deliver better regional decision making
- how the structures can work across boundaries
- recommendations for future working arrangements and resource implications

We will specify criteria and standards for this work against which proposals can be developed and judged. This will be for example: representation of all sectors, process requirements such as monitoring and review. Where necessary we will provide finance towards resource and expertise in areas to coordinate future work.

Learning together

We recognise that there are common themes that are relevant to two or more areas. The ability to share learning and experience is important. Areas will be encouraged to work together, and with European partners, through appropriate means, be this seminars, conferences or joint research. The Welsh Assembly Government will facilitate this wherever practical.

Monitoring and Indicators

We will ensure that we and our partners have adequate performance data to monitor implementation of the spatial plan. Work is already under way to refocus statutory performance indicators for local authorities so that they reflect issues of national strategic importance. Where necessary, we will commission work to review existing and emerging indicators in other areas to develop proposals which will then be finalized in collaboration with partners in local areas, including Community Planning Partnerships. These will be agreed at a national level. Over time this will be refined to become more specific on targets where these can add value and drive actions.

Table 1 - Implementation timeline

	Welsh Assembly Government	ASPBs and Executive Agencies	Local Authorities and other partners
2004	Adoption of the Wales Spatial Plan		
2005	<p>Establish indicators that collectively measure progress in spatial development, to be published annually</p> <p>Requirement to consider spatial dimension in policy making and delivery both in planning and measuring the impact of actions</p> <p>Set up national and area structures to further develop the WSP, monitor progress and advise the Government on spatial priorities</p>	<p>Promoting cross functional working, tackling barriers to practical delivery of sustainable development to provide a better basis for decisions where an integration of interests is required</p> <p>Requirement to consider spatial dimension in policy making and delivery both in planning and measuring the impact of actions, taking into account the Wales Spatial Plan</p>	<p>All planning authorities to consider the Spatial Plan when developing their own plans</p> <p>Collaboration to develop area strategies based on the sustainable development objectives outlined in the plan</p> <p>Collaboration with similar areas to share experiences</p> <p>Agree priorities and how all partners will work together to deliver them</p>
2006	<p>Publication of first set of indicators</p> <p>A publicly available Geographic Information System</p>	Ensure the merger of ASPBs with the Welsh Assembly Government maximises spatial planning benefits	Report on progress on implementation of area strategies
2007/8	Refresh of the Wales Spatial Plan alongside strategic Government documents		

APPENDIX 1 – DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Demographic trends in Wales reflect the declining birth rates and increases in life expectancy seen across the developed world. In broad terms, major trends in Wales include:

- a birth rate that is well below what is needed to maintain the population (current official long run assumptions are for 1.75 births per woman, compared to 2.1 needed to replace the population);
- increasing life expectancy;
- these factors acting in combination to produce an aging population;
- more in-migration than out-migration, with the net effect outweighing natural population decline and therefore resulting in overall population growth (for example, over the period 1991 to 2001, natural population change was negative in all rural unitary authorities, yet overall population grew in every one except Anglesey);
- population growth taking place in most parts of Wales, except the upper Valleys which have very low rates of in-migration (for example, over the period 1991 to 2001, Merthyr Tydfil and Blaenau Gwent saw population declines of 6% and 4% respectively);
- net in-migration of retired age groups, but at rates which are small, both relative to the population as a whole and in absolute terms;
- relatively higher rates of net in-migration for the older working age groups, who are typically accompanied by their families.

Despite the aging population, there is not expected to be much change in the overall dependency rate over the short to medium term (up to 15 years): rising numbers of elderly people are likely to be offset by declining numbers of children. Therefore the proportion of people of working age is likely to be broadly stable (partly as a result of the increase in the retirement age for women). Of course, over the longer term, on present trends, significant declines in the working age population could be expected.

There are several popular myths about population change in Wales that are at odds with the picture painted above.

Myth one: In-migration is mainly accounted for by retired people. In fact, the number of in-migrants who are of retirement age is small both in absolute terms and as a proportion of total in-migrants. For example, over the year mid 2001 to mid 2002, 18% of in-migrants were aged under 16, 25% were aged 16-24, 34% were aged 25-44, 16% were aged 45-64, and only 8% were aged over 64.² Across the rural unitary authorities, the proportion of older in-migrants was a little higher, but there were still almost twice as many in-migrants aged under 16 as aged over 64².

Myth two: The fall in the numbers of young people is primarily due to migration. In fact, over recent years, more people aged under 16 have entered Wales than have left. For example, over the year mid 2001 to mid 2002, gains in this age group exceeded losses in every unitary authority except Anglesey, Cardiff and Merthyr Tydfil. The fall in the

² Note that although these and subsequent figures relate to the period mid 2001 to mid 2002, they are broadly representative of the position over recent years. In-migrants aged under 16 will normally be children who enter with their families.

numbers of young people is due to a decline in the birth rate and reductions in the numbers of women of child-bearing age, not to migration. Given low fertility rates and no other unexpected factors to influence the composition of the population, a further reduction in the number of children under 16 might be expected over the next 10 to 12 years - of up to 50,000. (It is true that over recent years there has been a small net outflow for those aged 16-24, but this has typically been less than the inflow for those aged under 16). Over the next decade, the net effect of migration is projected to partially *offset* the decline in the number of children in Wales, not to *add* to it.

There is also potential for misunderstanding about the Welsh “brain drain”. Here, there is some truth in the popular perception – but the reality is more complex. It is true that a significant proportion of Welsh graduates (that is, people living in Wales before entering higher education) move into jobs outside Wales – typically around 30% over recent years. This reflects the general tendency for well-qualified young people to move to the largest cities. But graduates are mobile, and some also move in. Typically, for every three people who have recently graduated from Welsh higher education that have left Wales, two have moved in the opposite direction. And since over recent years Wales has had significant net in-migration in older working-age groups (25-44 and 45-64), this will have further offset any loss of young graduates. It is almost certainly true, however, that, in common with other parts of the UK outside London, Wales does experience a loss of graduate working capacity.

APPENDIX 2 - WALES IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

The Wales Spatial Plan has been developed in the context of the wider EU spatial planning framework:

The European Union has now 25 member states with nearly 500 million people. Within this there are huge disparities, both between different member states and within member states. These show in terms of wealth, access to markets, information and opportunities. The EU has a dominant core area, the pentagon between London, Paris, Milan, Munich and Hamburg, in which around 40% of population live and which accounts for 50% of GDP, but covers only 20% of the territory.

Since 2000, large parts of Wales have benefited from European Structural Funding under Objective 1, which aims to lift those regions whose GDP is significantly below European average. Like the rest of the structural fund programme, this supports one of the EU key objectives: greater economic and social cohesion within Europe.

This objective is also reflected in the *European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP)* 1999, which presents a policy framework for member states, their regions, local authorities and the EC in their respective spheres of responsibility and sees co-operation as key to its application. Its broad, interdependent aims are:

- Economic and social cohesion of the EU
- Conservation and management of natural resources and cultural heritage
- Balanced competitiveness of the European territory

The ESDP states three core principles that spatial development policies should pursue:

1. Polycentric development and a new urban-rural relationship:

- Polycentric and balanced spatial development (at the European scale, national scale and sub-national scale)
- Dynamic, attractive and competitive cities and urbanised regions
- Indigenous development, diverse and productive rural areas
- Urban-rural partnership

2. Parity of access to infrastructure and knowledge

3. Wise management of the natural and cultural heritage

To support the implementation of the ESDP, the European Spatial Planning Observatory Network (*ESPON*) was established to increase the understanding of spatial development, imbalances and potential in Europe and to monitor the spatial impact of European and national policies and programmes and to carry out specific research.

Taking on board the thinking behind the ESDP the Lisbon (2000) and Gothenburg (2001) summits agreed respectively a ten-year strategy to make the European Union the world's most dynamic and competitive economy and a complementary Sustainable Development Strategy.

The *INTERREG* programmes are the main mechanism to encourage and support transnational and interregional co-operation and the C Strand in particular encourages transnational co-operation on spatial development projects within large-scale geographic

co-operation areas. Wales is part of two such areas; *North West Europe* and the *Atlantic Area*.

Future EU policy

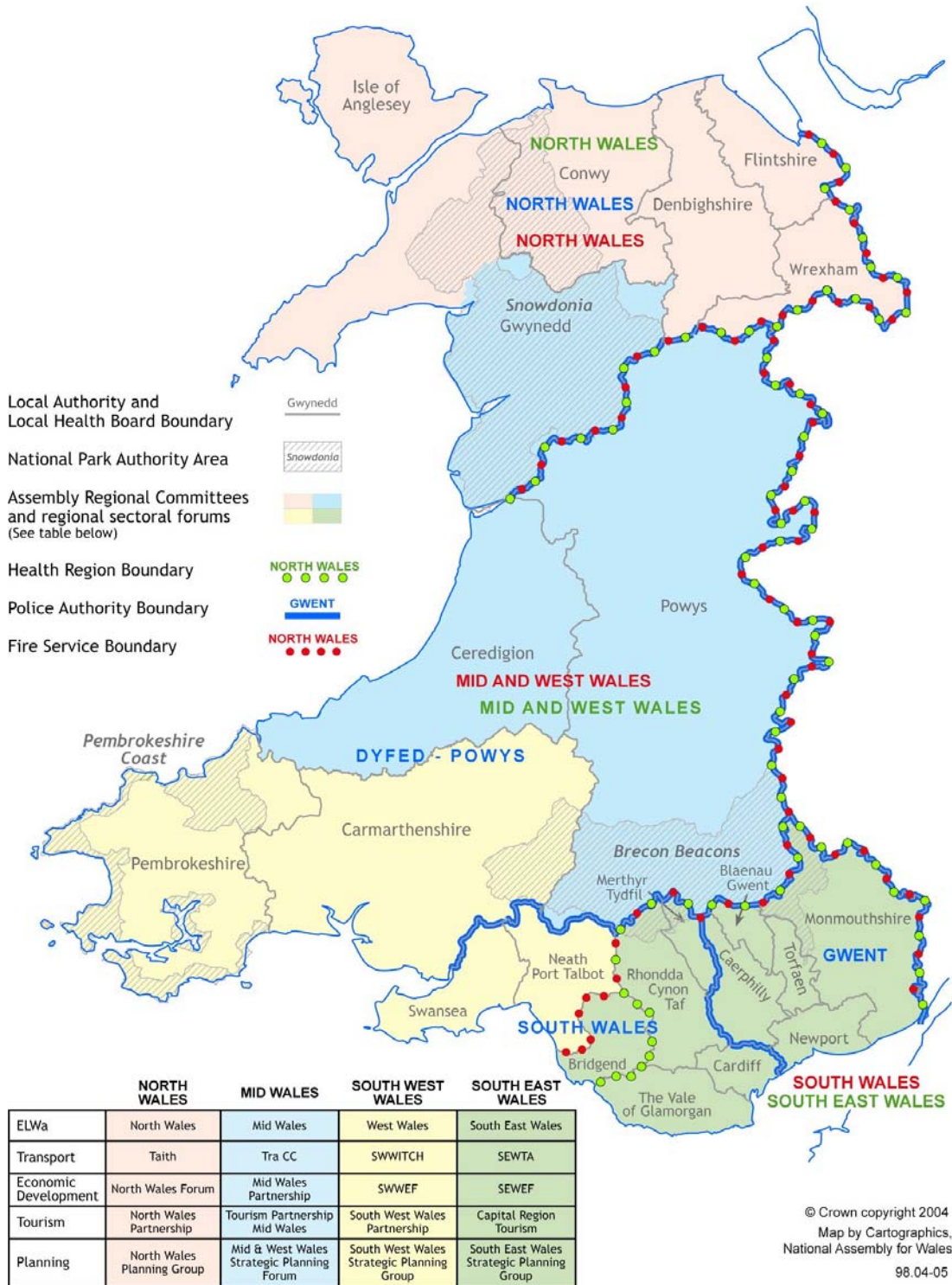
The *Third report on economic and social cohesion* in 2004 proposes a future vision for EU policy to reduce disparities and promote greater cohesion. It identifies key factors for sustaining economic development in having

- suitable levels of infrastructure (including efficient transport, telecommunications, energy networks, environmental facilities) and human capital (a labour force with appropriate levels of skills and training),
- the capacity to innovate and to use know-how and new technologies effectively, and
- an effective institutional and administrative framework.

The new architecture for EU cohesion policy after 2006 as proposed but subject to intensive negotiation between the Commission and Member States would be built around three priorities: convergence, regional competitiveness and employment, and territorial co-operation. A key objective of cohesion policy in this context would be to promote growth enhancing conditions and factors in lagging regions, leading to real convergence. Strategies in those regions should plan for the development of long-term competitiveness and employment. The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and the Single Rural Development Fund are also important future considerations.

The report also sets new priorities for *Trans European Transport Networks*. There are currently two corridors through Wales, connecting Ireland with the UK and continental Europe, via Holyhead in North Wales and via the Pembrokeshire ports in South Wales. Whereas the Northern corridor is identified as a priority for rail investment, the Southern corridor is not identified for specific improvement projects. The 'Motorway of the sea' proposals that aim to promote a shift from road based transport are of interest for Wales' ports in North and South Wales.

APPENDIX 3 – EXISTING REGIONAL BOUNDARIES & GROUPINGS



APPENDIX 4 - ABBREVIATIONS

A&E	Accident & Emergency
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
ASPB	Assembly Sponsored Public Body
CAP	Common Agriculture Policy
CCW	Country Council for Wales
CD ROM	Compact Disc Read Only Memory
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
ELWa	Education & Learning Wales
ESDP	European Spatial Development Perspective
ESPON	European Spatial Planning Observatory Network
EU	European Union
FE	Further Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GP	General Practitioner
GVA	Gross Value Added
HE	Higher Education
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
LA	Local Authority
LDP	Local Development Plan
NAW	National Assembly for Wales
NEWI	North East Wales Institute
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
ONS	Office of National Statistics
PPW	Planning Policy Wales
R&D	Research and Development
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SME	Smaller and Medium Enterprises
SPA	Special Protection Area
TAN	Technical Advice Note
TEN (- T)	Trans European Network (Transport)
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government

WDA	Welsh Development Agency
WSP	Wales Spatial Plan
WTB	Wales Tourist Board

APPENDIX 5 – GLOSSARY

The printed document will contain a glossary of all technical terms.