

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

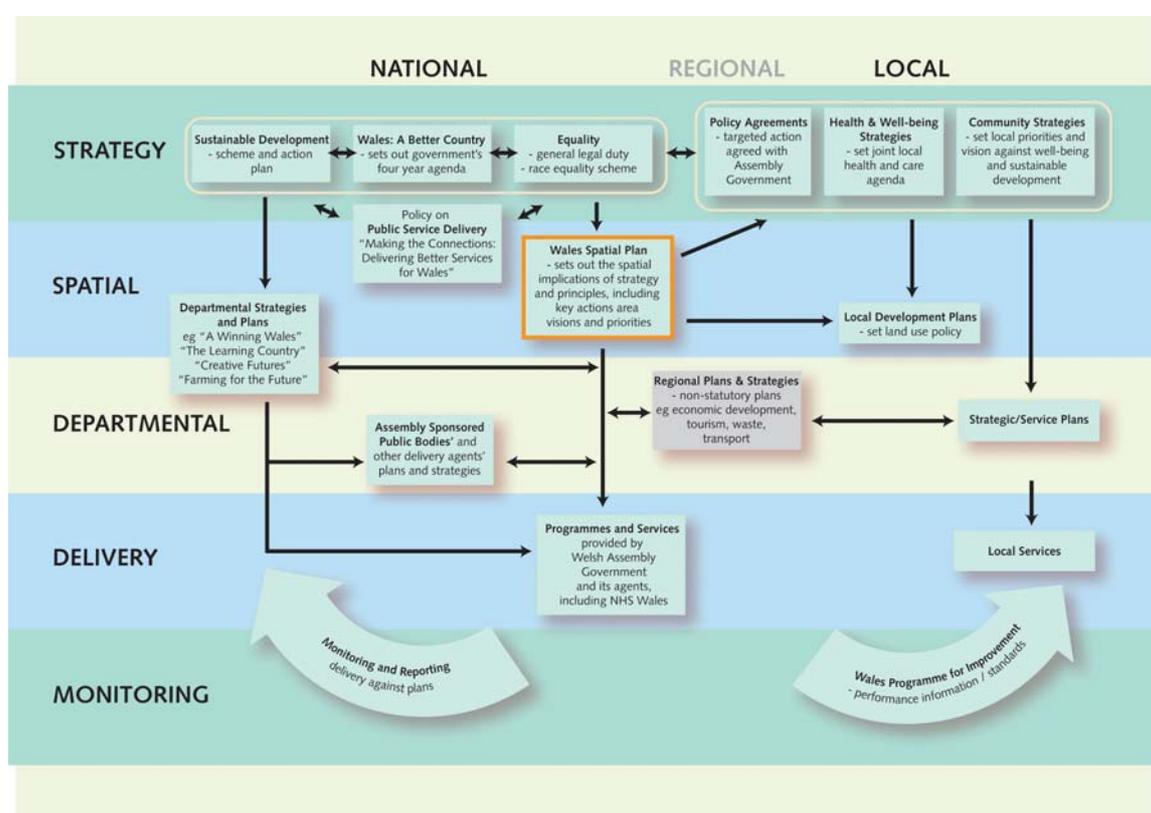


Figure 1 - How the Spatial Plan relates to other Plans, Strategies and Programmes

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.

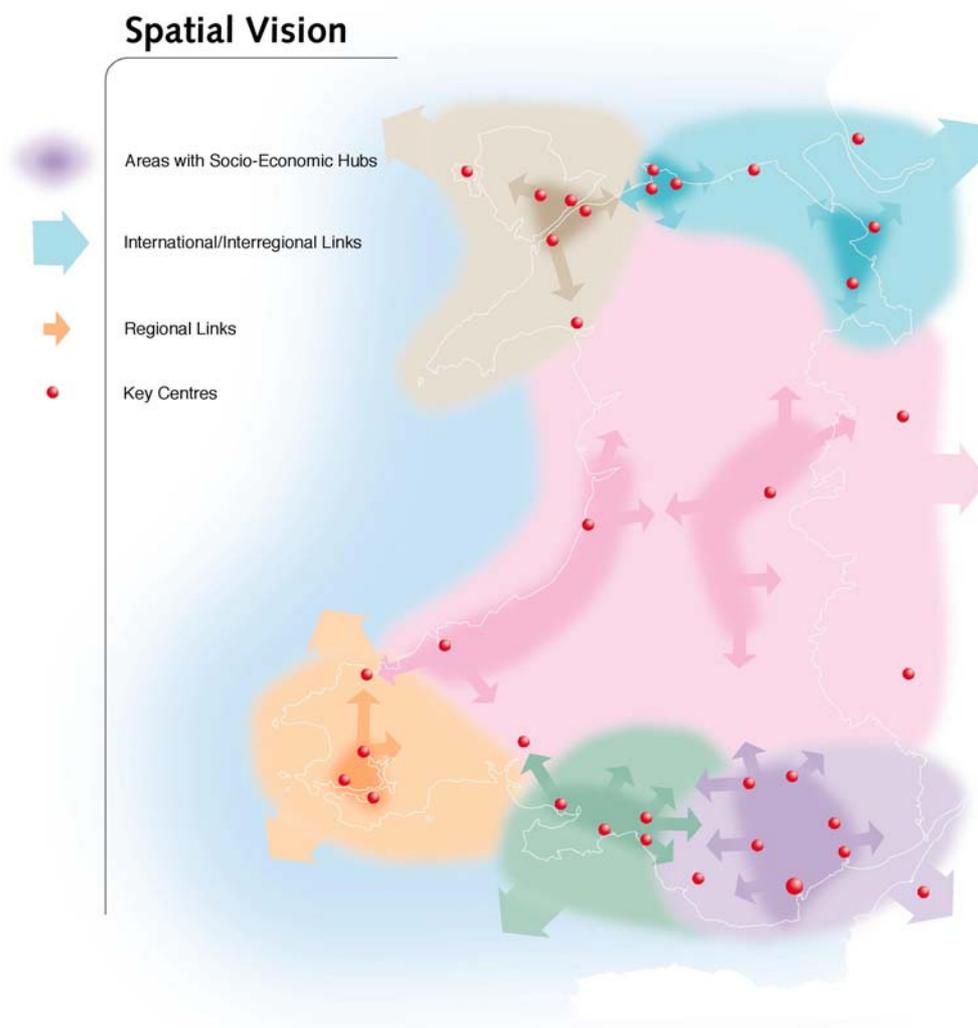


Figure 2 – Spatial Vision



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.

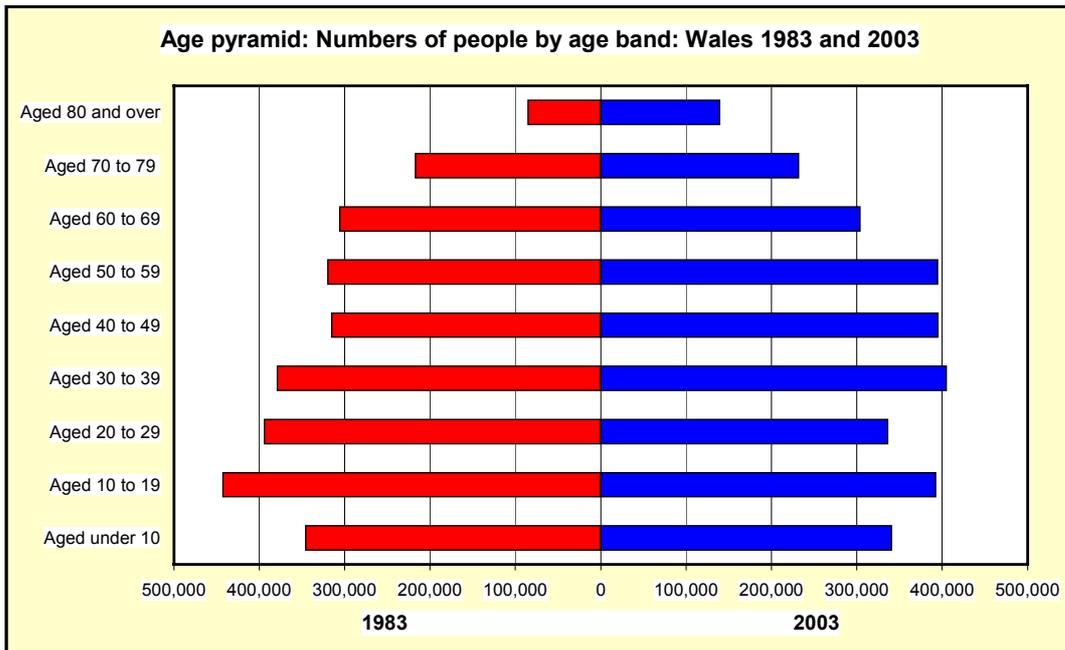


Figure 3 - Age distribution in Wales in 1983 and 2003

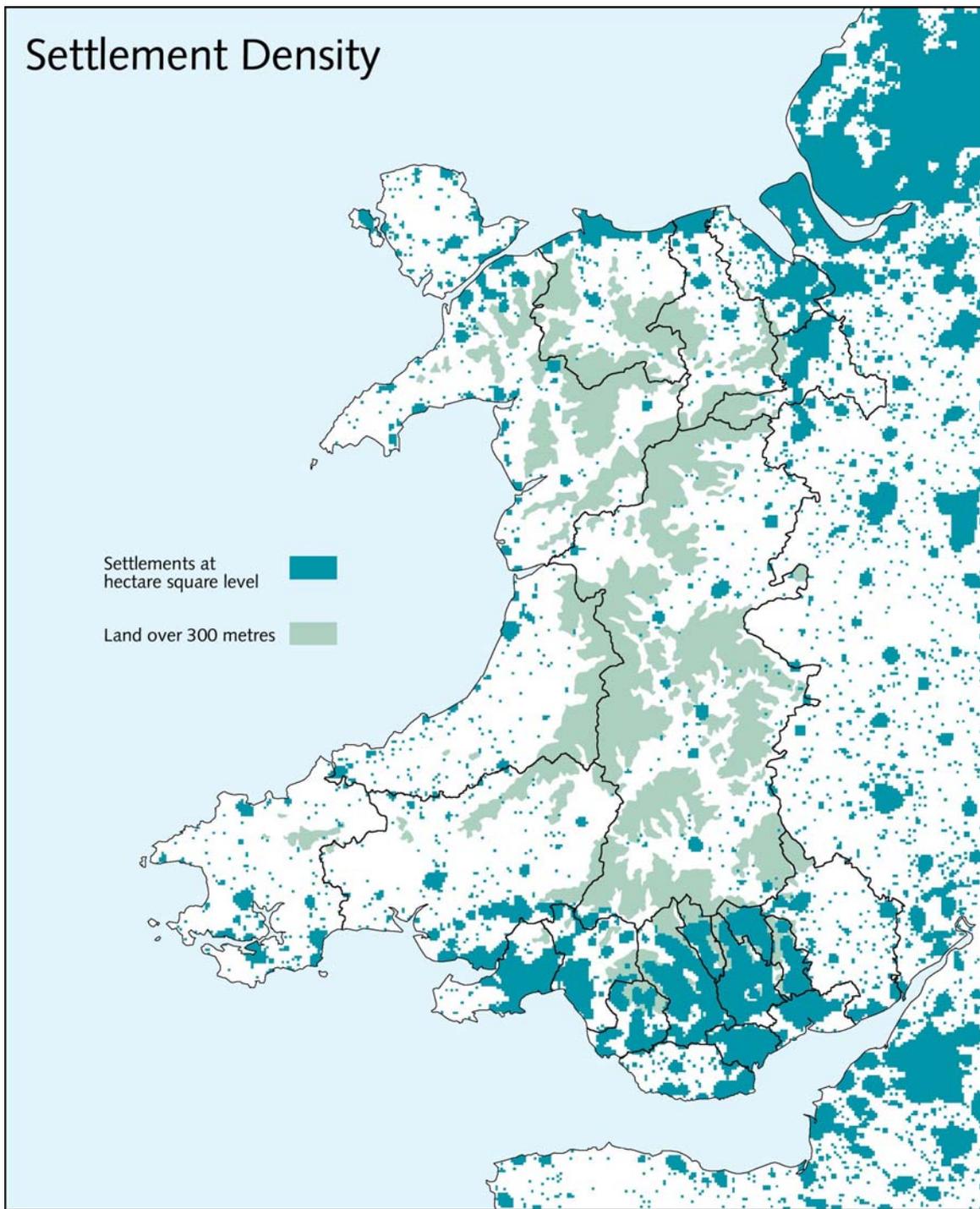


Figure 4 -Settlement Density (presence of residential dwellings by square hectare)

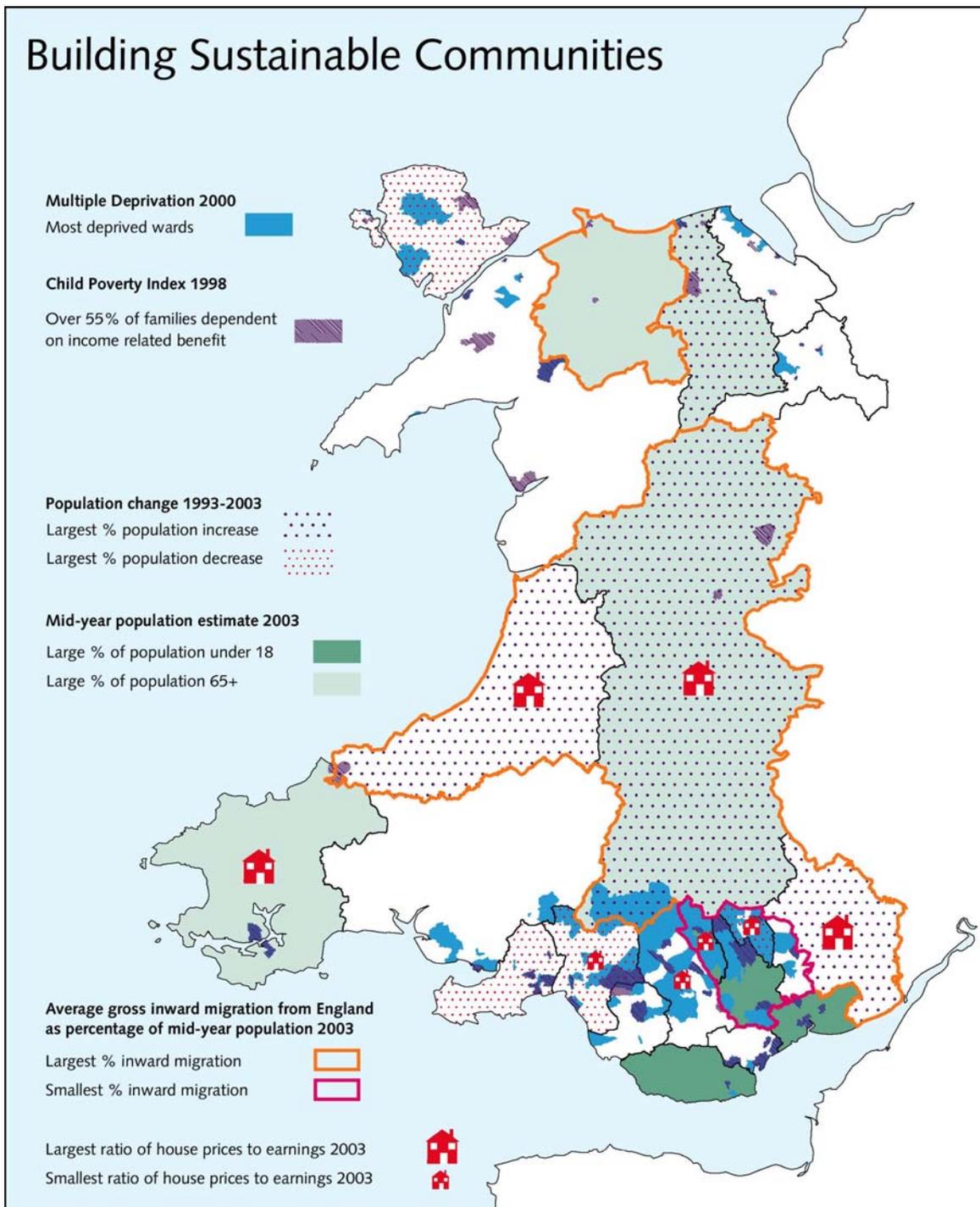


Figure 5 - Building Sustainable Communities

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

- 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.

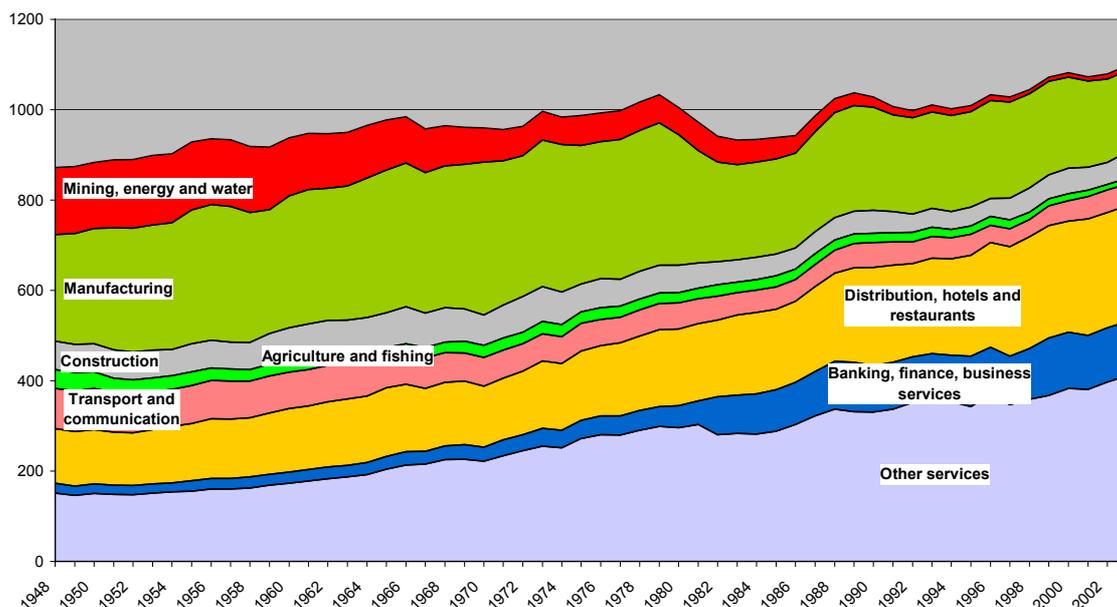


Figure 6 - Employee jobs by sector (in thousands)

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.

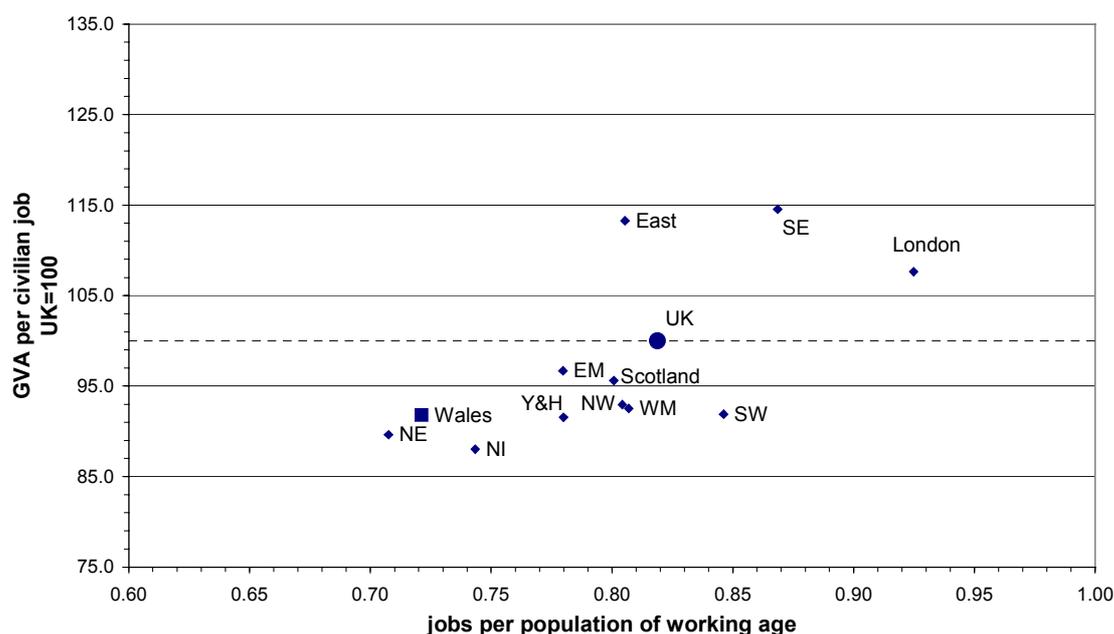


Figure 7 - Jobs and GVA by UK Region

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.

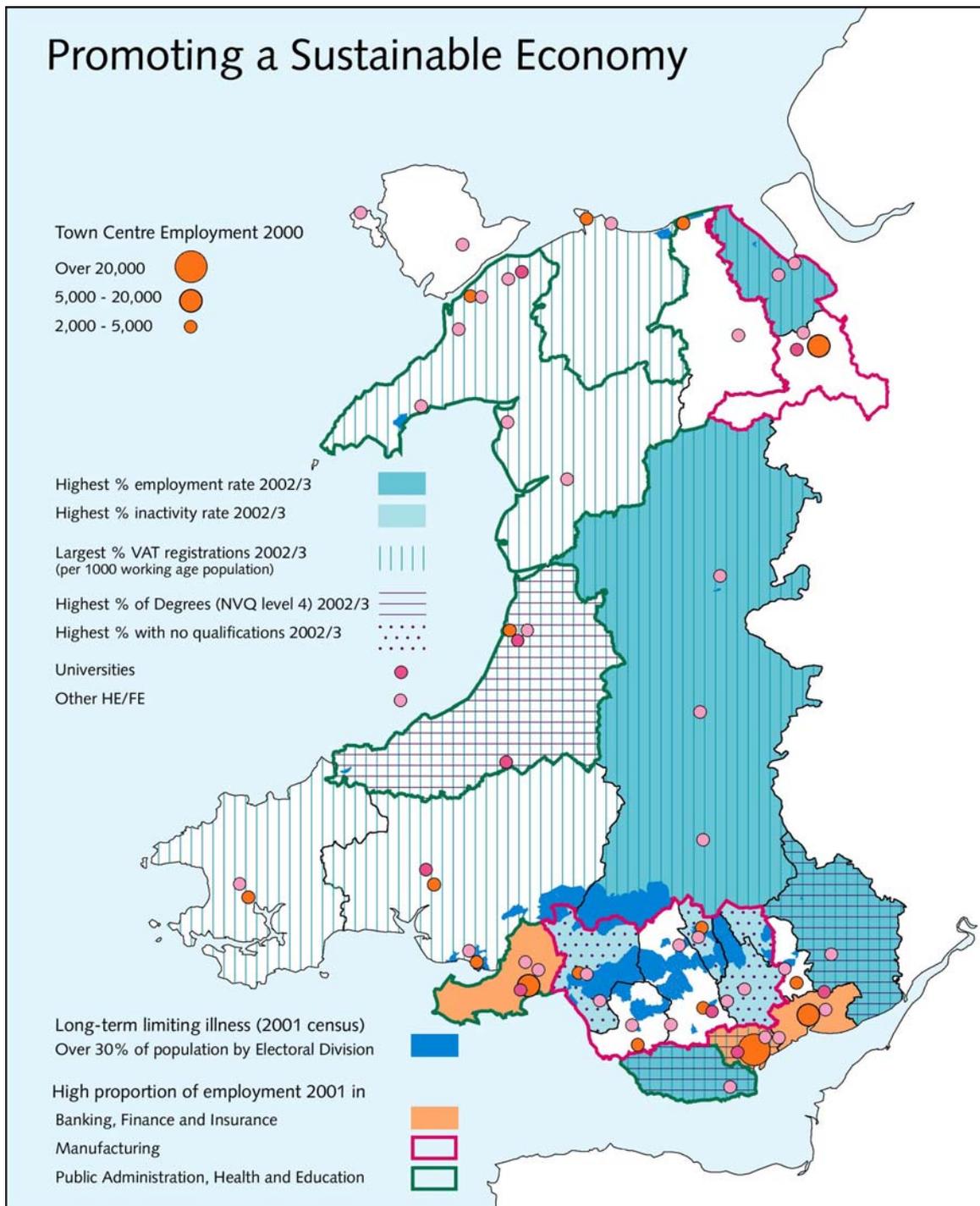


Figure 8 - Promoting a Sustainable Economy

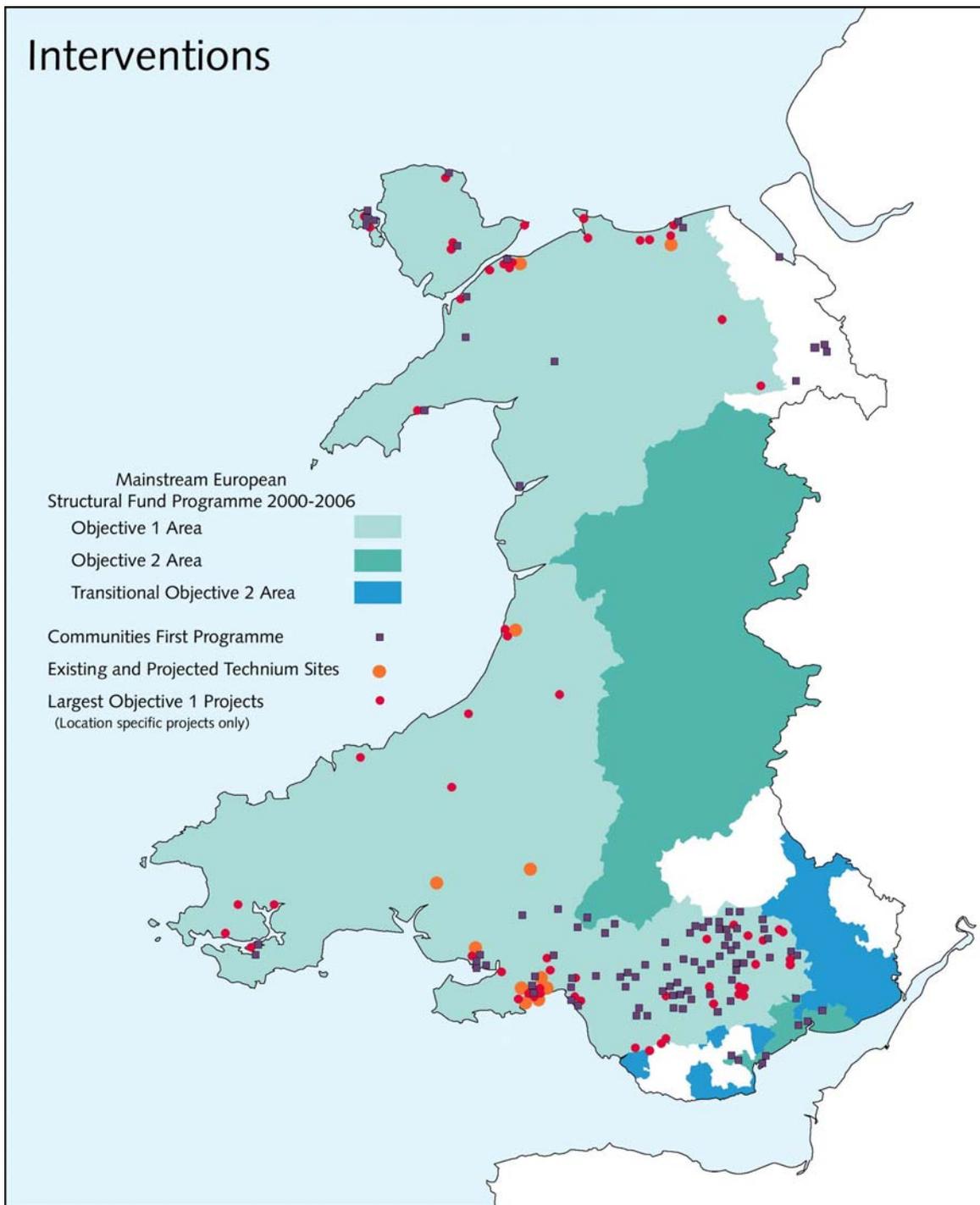


Figure 9 - Interventions

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.

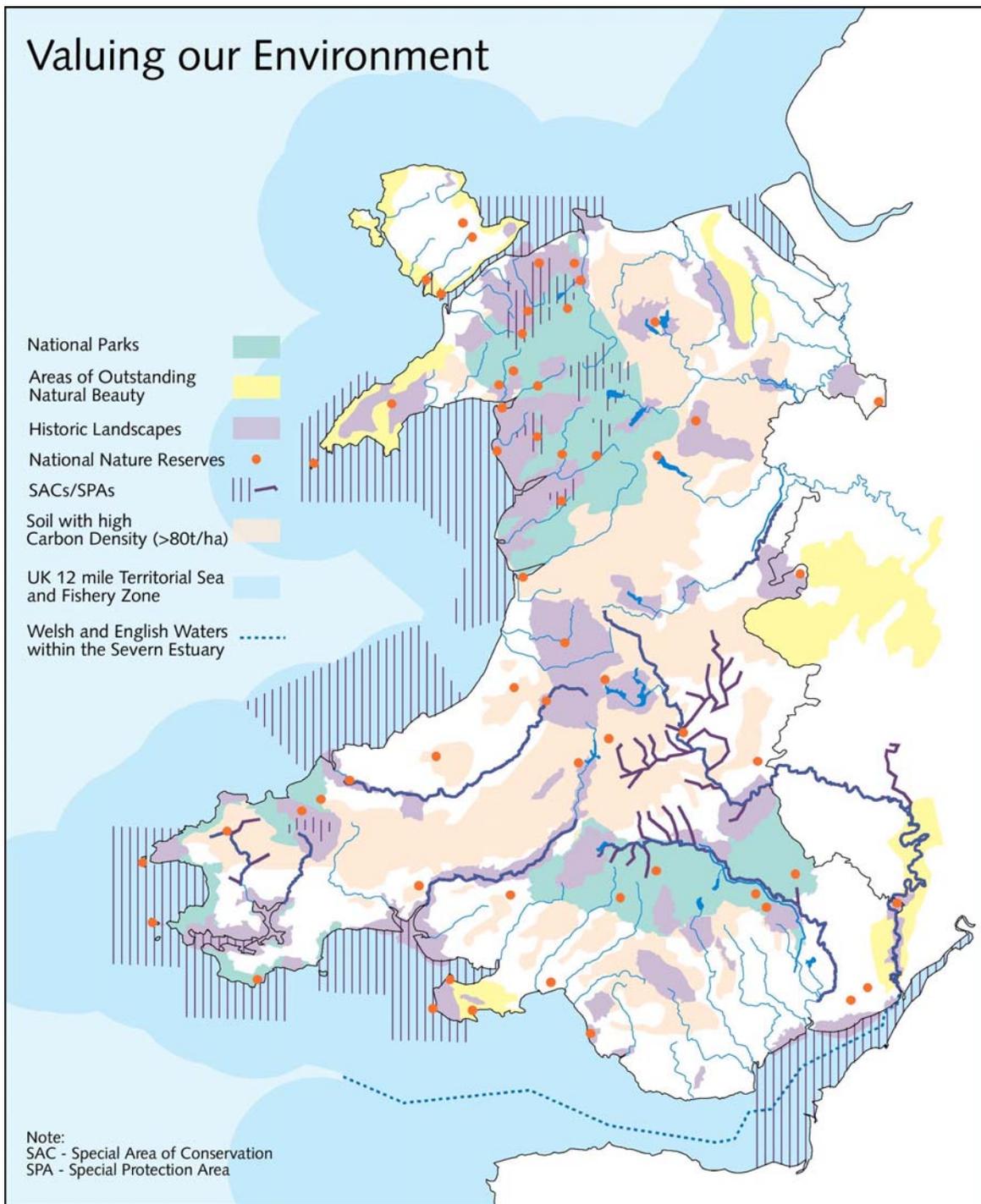


Figure 10 - Valuing our Environment

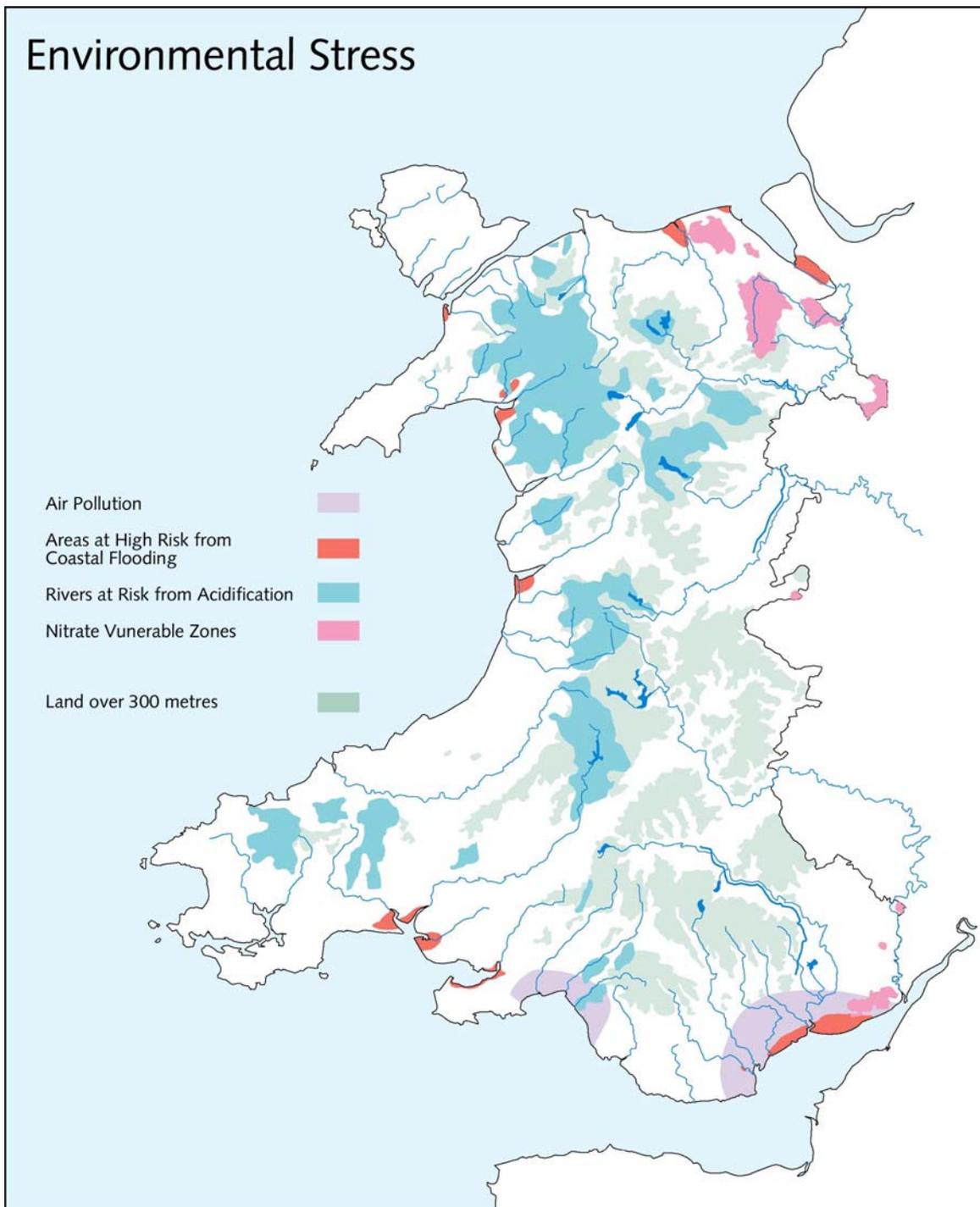


Figure 11 - Environmental Stress

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.

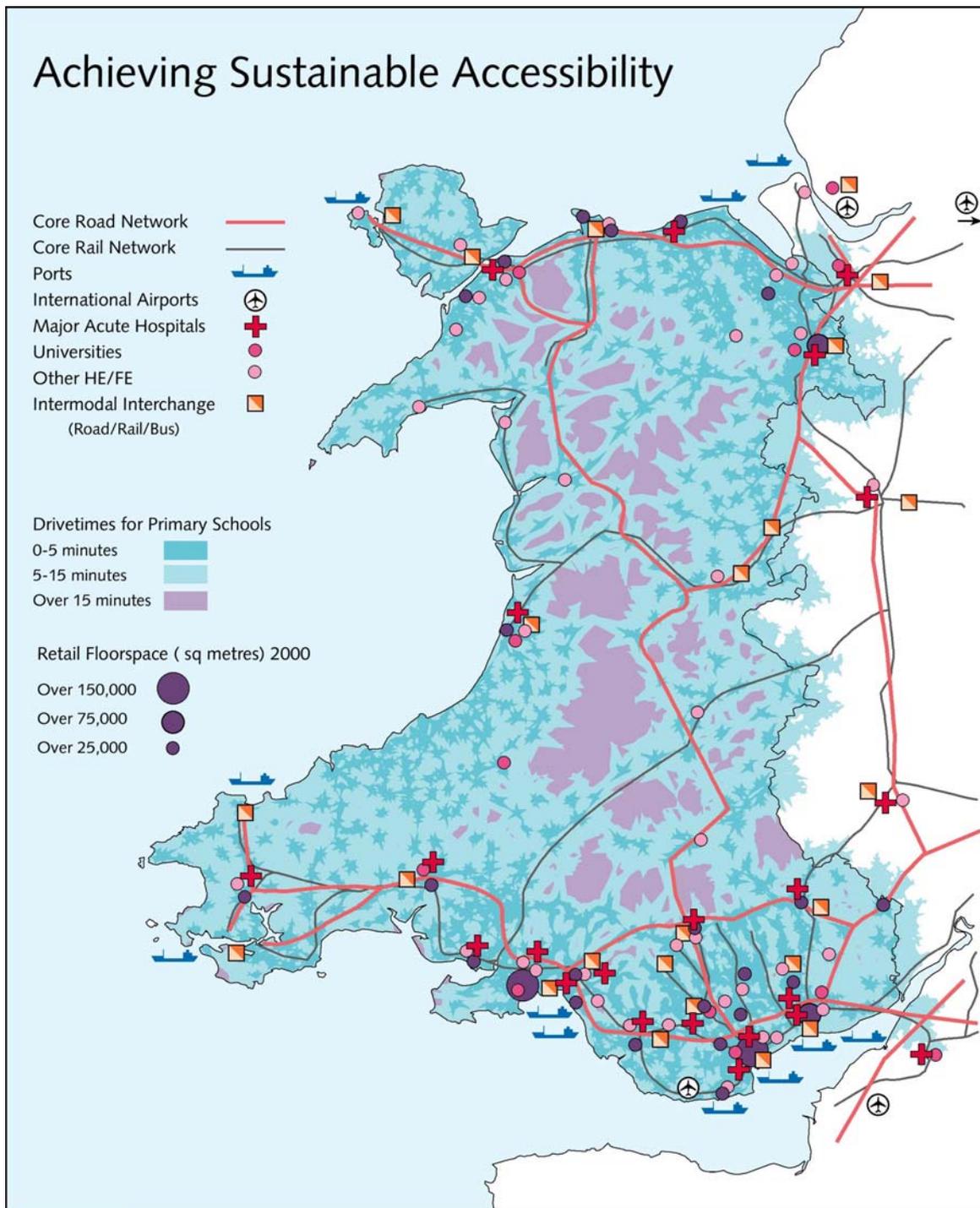


Figure 12 - Achieving Sustainable Accessibility

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.