



Arsyllfa **Wledig** Cymru
Wales **Rural** Observatory

AN OVERVIEW OF POLICY AND RESOURCES IMPACTING ON RURAL WALES

September 2004



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In 2004, the Wales Rural Observatory undertook an overview of policies, programmes and resources impacting on rural Wales to inform the future work of the Welsh Assembly Government's Rural Policy Division.

The overview had the following key objectives:

- To identify the key policies, programmes and resources impacting on rural Wales
- To explore the sectoral balance and geographical coverage of policies, programmes and resources
- To situate policies, programmes and resources impacting on rural Wales within their wider context

Research for this report involved an examination of key policy documents and a survey of the local authorities covering rural Wales, the National Park Authorities in Wales and a number of Assembly-Sponsored Public Bodies.

Key findings

Welsh rural policy: made in Wales, for Wales?

The creation of the National Assembly for Wales has created considerable scope for policies, programmes and resources to reflect the needs and priorities of rural Wales. The Assembly Government includes a Rural Policy Division with responsibility for developing and delivering non-agricultural rural policy. The creation of the Assembly saw the Welsh Development Agency take on responsibility for the economic development of all rural Wales. The second term of the Assembly has seen the creation of the Department for Environment, Planning and Countryside, replacing the previous Department for Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

Despite devolution, opportunities for the self-determination of rural policies by the Assembly remain limited. The development of policy and resources for rural Wales is informed and structured by a range of factors external to the immediate challenges and opportunities posed by the Welsh countryside and the drive towards Welsh self-determination. These factors are, principally, the core themes and values that guide all Assembly work, the Assembly's priorities and strategy for all Wales, the UK policy environment and the influence of European Union policy and funding.

Policies, programmes and funding from the EU have assumed a dominant role in the development and regeneration of rural Wales. The majority of money available for the development and regeneration of rural areas of Wales comes through European funding streams. The most comprehensive programme document for rural Wales, the *Rural Development Plan for Wales 2000-2006*, was created under the Rural Development Regulation of the EU.

Recognising the rural dimension

Recognition of the rural dimension of the economy, society, culture and environment of Wales is inconsistent across different scales of policy and between different government bodies in Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government recognises that there is a need to consider rural Wales as a distinct policy arena. In its strategic plans for the development of Wales it has stated its commitment to a sustainable rural economy, a sustainable rural environment and sustainable rural communities. It has created a dedicated Rural Policy Division within the Department for Environment, Planning and Countryside. Beyond this broad commitment, however, there is little evidence of a coherent set of endogenously-developed policies for the Welsh countryside.

There is relatively little commitment to ensuring that ‘mainstream’ policies and programmes take account of the rural dimension. Responsibility for this task lies entirely with the Rural Policy Division of the Department for Environment, Planning and Countryside; there is no duty on other departments within WAG to consult with the RPD. This contrasts unfavourably with the arrangements in England and Scotland, where there are specific commitments to and mechanisms for so-called ‘rural proofing’.

There is little recognition of rural Wales as a distinct policy and programme arena amongst the key non-elected public bodies charged with Welsh development. Only ELWa dedicates resources to rural areas or issues, although the Wales Tourist Board has recently formulated an action plan for the future of tourism in rural areas. Other Assembly-Sponsored Public Bodies largely lack a clear or explicit focus on rural Wales other than in the delivery of EU and WAG rural programmes. The Welsh Development Agency focuses on the local delivery of national programmes and argues a case for downplaying rural-urban distinctions. In several cases it is apparent that ASPBs do not consider rural areas to be distinct from urban areas. In many cases it is unclear on what evidence – if any – this assessment is based.

There is no consensus across unitary authorities regarding the need for dedicated resources and programmes to support rural areas. Some unitary authorities take the view that all their policies and activities support rural areas; others identify a need to distinguish between the needs and interests of their rural and urban areas. In part, this reflects variation in the territorial remits of local authorities covering rural areas. A number of authorities consider their remits to be wholly rural, in which case all their resources are in effect committed to rural areas. Others consider that they cover both rural and urban areas, but across such authorities there is little evidence of a concerted recognition of distinct rural needs and priorities.

The lack of specific rural policy in Wales is in part a factor of the ambiguity and fluidity regarding definitions of ‘rural Wales’. There is no commonly-agreed definition; rural Wales is defined differently according for what purposes it is being defined. This complicates the development and implementation of policies, programmes and resources for rural areas in Wales.

Farming and economy at the heart of rural policy

Agriculture has a strong influence on policy for rural Wales. It frames the two major rural policy documents: the *Rural Development Plan for Wales* and *Farming for the Future*. All of these emphasise the interdependence between agriculture and the rural economy, society and environment and seek to outline a shift for Welsh farming which will result in positive benefits for rural Wales more generally.

In principle, there is a commitment to ‘integrated rural development’ in Wales. This involves appreciating and seeking to take account of the requirements, and values of different sectoral

interests and the interaction between them. It moves away from the notion that farming can be considered independently of other rural issues, and looks towards co-ordinating policies for agriculture, the wider economy, environment and society. Some of the impetus for this commitment has come from policy shifts at the EU level; some of it has come from the Welsh Assembly Government's duty to pursue sustainable development in all its work.

Despite this, rural policy in Wales is still heavily weighted in favour of farming. The dominant emphasis on agriculture and the diversification of agriculture neglects other actors and sectors in rural Wales. There is far less support, in terms of dedicated policy and funding, for wider rural development and regeneration beyond farming.

Diverse policies and programmes for a diverse Welsh countryside

There is a complex mosaic of programmes impacting on rural Wales. This mosaic includes programmes covering all Wales, programmes available throughout rural Wales, programmes that target specific rural areas, and sectoral initiatives that include rural areas. There are also regional development programmes that include both rural and urban areas but have particular impact on rural areas. This results in an uneven distribution of support across rural areas of Wales. Some areas are covered by a wide range of programmes; others are eligible only for more limited support.

Targeting rural areas is complemented – and to some extent, complicated – by the increasing emphasis on spatial development in Wales. Spatial development concentrates less on the distinctions between rural and urban areas and more on the needs and opportunities shared by different places and the connections between them. The spatial methodology is most evident in the *Wales Spatial Plan*, which will increasingly guide development policy.

There is also a move towards programmes which focus on community-scale regeneration, targeting locally-defined needs and priorities. Some of these, such as Communities First, are restricted to the most deprived communities in Wales. Others, such as Rural Community Action, the WDA's Community Regeneration Tool Kit and LEADER+ prioritise the quality of bids as much as relative deprivation.

Sowing seeds at the grassroots

Responsibility for local development and regeneration in Wales is increasingly being decentralised. Local authorities are required to take a leading role in delivering national policies and addressing local needs and priorities. They have a statutory duty to prepare local area strategies in partnership with community stakeholders. Local authorities covering rural areas are also encouraged to prepare integrated rural development strategies.

There is growing emphasis on the potential for non-statutory organisations to contribute to rural community regeneration. Increasingly, regeneration initiatives require the inclusion of a range of local stakeholders. Partnership between the public, private and voluntary sectors is seen as integral to sustainable rural development.

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to a 'bottom-up' approach to rural community regeneration in Wales. This continues the tone set by the 1996 White Paper for rural Wales, transferring the responsibility for service provision, economic development and environmental

conservation in rural communities away from the state and onto communities themselves. In principle, the 'endogenous' approach is a flexible and efficient way of addressing the needs of rural areas. In practice, this model of regeneration is open to criticism. In particular, there are accusations that regeneration is still heavily 'top-down' because of the funding rules set by central government and the leading role played by local authorities. There are also reservations over the extent to which local partnerships are representative and democratically accountable.

Sustaining rural policies and programmes

Many of the community regeneration programmes available across Wales focus on one-off projects that are limited in scope and short-term in focus. Increasingly, the Welsh Assembly Government is moving away from such programmes, arguing that they do not sustain long-term regeneration. It emphasises the need for policies and programmes to commit to continuity of support over time. This approach is exemplified in its Communities First initiative.

In terms of rural community regeneration, however, this commitment is in part undermined by the dependence of policy and programmes on funding from outside Wales. It is likely that after 2006 the areas of rural Wales currently entitled to EU structural funding will no longer be eligible. LEADER+ also concludes in 2006, and the precise form of any subsequent European rural community development initiative is not yet clear. This has consequences for the long-term future of domestic programmes.

Ensuring that policies and programmes contribute to long-term regeneration in rural Wales requires that their impact is monitored and evaluated. At present, however, there are inadequate baseline indicators for and commitment to this task.

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report is one of a series of reports on the society, economy, culture and environment of contemporary rural Wales produced by the Wales Rural Observatory.

1.2 Rural Wales is an area about which relatively little is known. Since the Second World War there have been numerous descriptions and analyses of Wales overall, particularly its changing society, economy, culture and environment, while the census has provided a broad overview of certain demographic and socio-economic trends and patterns. There have also been a number of in-depth studies of localities in rural parts of Wales that have sought to address similar issues and to provide a richer and more holistic picture of life in particular parts of the Welsh countryside. None of these, however, whether considered separately or together, provide a comprehensive set of baseline data on the current state of the Welsh countryside.

1.3 Since devolution, the Welsh Assembly Government has commissioned two key reviews of policies and programmes impacting on rural Wales. The first, carried out by the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee and published in June 2001, was concerned with the policies and programmes that might support greater diversification of the economy of rural Wales. The second, carried out by external consultants and published in August 2002, was also concerned with support for greater economic diversification, but focused on the role of the planning system in Wales. There has been no review that has considered the rural policy environment in more holistic terms – considering not just the economy but also society, culture and environment – and set the policies, programmes and resources targeted at rural areas in the context of wider policies and strategies.

1.4 In 2004, the Wales Rural Observatory undertook such an overview, providing a statement which would inform the future work of the Welsh Assembly Government's Rural Policy Division.

The Wales Rural Observatory

1.5 The Wales Rural Observatory undertakes independent research and analysis on rural Wales. It is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and supports evidence-based policy-making. Its work commenced in September 2003 and is scheduled to be completed in March 2006.

1.6 The Observatory consists of a team of specialist rural researchers based at the School for City and Regional Planning, Cardiff University and the Institute of Geography and Earth Sciences, University of Wales, Aberystwyth. The team for this project has been led by Dr Bill Edwards and Dr Michael Woods, both senior lecturers in human geography at the University of Wales Aberystwyth, with Catherine Walkley and Dr Graham Gardner as research associates.

1.7 The Observatory's activities are focused on four main areas:

- Collecting and analysing a wide range of social and economic data on rural Wales
- Presenting these data within a Geographical Information System (GIS)
- Producing a series of evaluative research reports
- Reviewing other research and policy evidence relating to rural Wales

1.8 A website providing information about the Observatory and its major activities and outputs can be accessed at www.walesruralobservatory.org.uk.

Methodology and programme of work

1.9 Primary research for this report was undertaken over a five month period, from February to June 2004. It involved two main data collection methods.

1.10 First, an examination of key policy documents published by the Welsh Assembly Government, its Executive Agencies, Assembly-Sponsored Public Bodies (ASPBs) and Local Authorities in rural Wales.

1.11 Second, three questionnaire surveys, administered both by post and email, covering:

- The twelve Unitary Authorities covering rural Wales, from which responses were received from nine.
- The three National Park Authorities in Wales, from which responses were received from all.
- Eleven ASPBs, from which responses were received from seven.

1.12 In addition, a face-to-face interview with the Chief Executive and Head of Rural Policy Unit of the Welsh Development Agency was carried out.

1.13 The appendices include further details about the research methods employed, including a sample copy of the questionnaire (Appendix 1), a full list of the organisations targeted (Appendix 2) and a summary of the questionnaire responses (Appendix 3).

Overview of policies, programmes and resources impacting on rural Wales: terms of reference

1.14 This report provides an overview of the key policies, programmes and resources impacting on rural areas in Wales, including those of the Welsh Assembly Government, non-elected Assembly-sponsored public bodies, local authorities in Wales, the UK government and the European Union. It has the following key objectives:

- To identify the key policies, programmes and resources impacting on rural Wales
- To map the sectoral balance and geographical coverage of policies, programmes and resources
- To situate policies, programmes and resources for rural Wales within their wider context

1.15 There is no unequivocal definition of ‘rural Wales’. This report primarily uses the definition of rural Wales used by the Welsh Assembly Government. This comprises nine ‘predominantly rural’ local authority areas and rural wards within three ‘predominantly urban’ local authority areas.

1.16 The policies, programmes and resources impacting on rural Wales include sectoral initiatives that cover all Wales, measures specifically targeted at rural Wales, and a number of area-based (regional and local) initiatives that cover parts of rural Wales. This report concentrates on policies and programmes specifically targeted at rural Wales, and on measures taken to ensure that mainstream policies and programme recognise the specific needs and priorities of rural areas. The main focus of the report is community regeneration and economic development.

1.17 The report provides baseline data on the policy, programme and resource environment impacting on rural Wales. It does not examine the relationship between that environment, those responsible for delivering policies and programmes and the recipients of policies and programmes.

Report structure

1.18 The report has seven sections, including the introduction and methodology (**Section 1**). **Section 2** outlines the constitutional and legislative framework within which Welsh rural policy is developed. **Section 3** considers how and to what extent current policies and programmes address the rural dimension of economy, society, culture and the environment in Wales. **Section 4** examines the sectoral balance of rural policies and programmes. **Section 5** discusses the uneven territorial coverage of policies and programmes impacting on rural Wales. **Section 6** outlines the shift towards the empowerment of local actors in rural community development and regeneration. **Section 7** considers the long-term sustainability of policies and programmes for rural Wales.

Notes on terminology

1.19 Throughout this report we distinguish between the Welsh Assembly Government and the National Assembly for Wales. The former refers to the executive body of the devolved Welsh government; the latter refers to the elected body of the Assembly.

1.20 A list of abbreviations used throughout the report is provided in Appendix 4.

SECTION 2

WELSH RURAL POLICY: MADE IN WALES, FOR WALES?

This chapter outlines the constitutional and legislative framework within which Welsh rural policy is developed. It includes discussion of the relationships between the various bodies responsible for the development and delivery of rural policy. In particular, the chapter considers:

- The consequence of devolution for rural policy
- The role of the Welsh Assembly Government's Rural Policy Division
- The Rural Partnership for Wales
- The responsibilities of Assembly-Sponsored Public Bodies regarding rural policy
- The responsibilities of local authorities regarding rural policy
- EU priorities for rural development

A summary of the discussion is provided at the end of the chapter (p.21).

Made in Wales, for Wales: devolution and Welsh development

2.1 Devolution has led to the creation of significant opportunities for the development of distinct policies and programmes addressing the needs and interests of rural Wales. The Government of Wales Act 1998 transferred most of the powers and functions of the Welsh Office to the National Assembly for Wales.

2.2 The Assembly is responsible for formulating and developing secondary legislation in a wide range of key policy arenas for Wales, including agriculture, the environment, economic development, tourism, town and country planning and education and training. In addition, it is responsible for implementing primary legislation from the UK government on devolved matters and is able to request primary legislation. Representatives of the Assembly contribute to regular policy discussions at the EU level as members of the UK negotiating team.

2.3 The Assembly has considerable spending powers: expenditure in the financial year 2002-2003 was £9.4 billion; this will rise to £12.7 billion in 2005–2006, according to the 2005–2006 Final Budget¹. It is responsible and wholly accountable for the allocation of resources between devolved expenditure programmes. This includes funding for rural issues, where these are devolved.

2.4 The Assembly recognises that it can play a significant role in shaping Wales, and is actively taking steps to do so. Much of the first term of the Assembly (from 1999 to 2003) was taken up with reviewing and modifying policies and programmes inherited from the Welsh Office formerly responsible for setting the trajectory of Welsh development. The stated focus of the second term, from 2003 to 2007, is to build on this foundation through the creation of new policies and programmes that establish a *'fresh direction'* for Wales.

2.5 The Assembly recognises that previous European and UK regeneration programmes have helped improve the economic, social and environmental position of Wales. It also points out,

¹ Statement of Assembly Funding for 2005 – 2006 (www.wales.gov.uk/assemblydata)

however, that there has been no common strategic framework, targets or progress indicators and little co-ordination of policy for Wales. One of the key goals of the Assembly in its second term is to decide the development trajectory for Wales as far as possible from within Wales rather than from outside – through policies and programmes ‘made *in Wales for Wales*’².

Made in rural Wales, for rural Wales: devolution and rural policy

2.6 The Welsh Assembly Government includes a Minister, Committee and Department with key responsibility for rural policy in Wales. In the first term of the Assembly, rural affairs were part of a portfolio restricted to Agriculture and Rural Development. In the second term, they have become part of a wider portfolio covering Environment, Planning and Countryside.

2.7 The Department for Environment, Planning and Countryside is charged with responsibility for developing policy at the all Wales scale. They have a broad remit which includes the environment and sustainable development, town and country planning, countryside and conservation issues, agriculture and rural development including forestry, and food production. They also advise on budget allocations for rural issues.

2.8 Within the Department for Environment, Planning and Countryside, the Rural Policy Division (RPD) has been given responsibility for developing and delivering non-agricultural rural policy at the national scale (see box 2.1). The RPD is responsible for ensuring that the Welsh Assembly Government and its agencies take account of the specific needs of rural areas; for promoting the development of rural policy both within the Welsh Assembly Government and with other bodies outside; and for ensuring that wider policies and schemes ‘adequately reflect the rural dimension.’

Box 2.1

The current duties of the Rural Policy Division include:

- Dealing with all aspects of the non-agricultural rural economy
- Supporting the Rural Partnership for Wales
- Developing the EU-funded LEADER+ programme 2000-2006
- Delivering *A Winning Wales* in rural areas
- Implementing rural community regeneration programmes
- Coordinating the Rural Recovery Plan

The Rural Partnership for Wales

2.9 In November 1998 the then Minister for Wales formed the Rural Partnership for Wales (RPW), a rural task force charged with tackling the diverse issues affecting rural Wales. The Partnership brings together a wide range of organisations and interest groups to contribute to the development of policies and programmes for rural Wales. Its remit embraces economic, social, environmental and cultural issues.

² Departmental Report to the Wales Office, May 2003

2.10 The original Partnership had representatives from 26 organisations and groups. Following a review of its terms of reference and membership in 2002, representation has almost doubled to forty-one organisations and groups. (A list of members can be found in Appendix 5.) The Partnership is chaired by the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside.

2.11 In 1999, the Rural Partnership presented to the Assembly a Comprehensive Statement on rural Wales. The Comprehensive Statement included a vision of ‘a sustainable future for rural Wales’ and outline seven action priorities for achieving this:

1. Promoting business development
2. Spreading economic prosperity
3. Developing skills to match business needs
4. Strengthening communities
5. Improving access to rural services
6. Investing in the rural infrastructure
7. Enhancing the rural environment

2.12 These priorities have played a key role in the formulation of rural development policies and programmes in Wales. They have informed the preparation of the rural components in the National Economic Development Strategy, and are incorporated in the Single Programming Documents for Objective 1, Objective 2 and LEADER+ and the Operational Programming Document for Objective 3 in Wales. The ‘Strategic Overview for Rural Wales’ in the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2000-2006 is in effect a summary of the Comprehensive Statement, and the Rural Development Plan explicitly endorses the statement’s seven action priorities.

2.13 The Partnership has also been involved with several Task and Finish Groups set up by the Assembly. These include groups established to: consider the economic impact of the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in rural Wales; review the Rural Partnership’s terms of reference and membership; up-date and revise the 1999 Partnership document *Rural Wales: A statement by the Rural Partnership*; and to consider the implications of the findings of a study into *Age-Balanced Communities* in rural Wales.

Non-elected public bodies

2.14 The delivery of policy, including the development of programmes, for rural Wales at the all Wales level is largely the responsibility of non-elected public bodies. These can be grouped under the loose term ‘quango’ (quasi-autonomous non-governmental bodies), although different bodies differ in their governance and accountability to the Assembly. The Welsh Assembly Government can enter into agreements with non-elected bodies in the public sector to carry out functions on its behalf. These functions include providing specific services, advising the Assembly and serving a judicial role.

2.15 The most significant non-elected public bodies in terms of the rural dimension are Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies (ASPBs). These receive direct funding from the Assembly but are not part of the Assembly; they operate at ‘arm’s length’ from it under their own legal powers and with their own constitutions. There are currently thirty-three ASPBs, fifteen of which carry out executive

functions of the Assembly, eighteen of which are advisory bodies³.

2.16 Executive ASPBs play a major role in delivering Assembly Government policies. The Assembly Government provides the bulk of their funding and also appoints many ASPB board members. The chief executives of ASPBs are directly accountable to the Assembly Government. The Assembly Government monitors and influences the activities of ASPBs through a number of mechanisms. These mechanisms include ‘remit letters’ setting out the Assembly’s current and future priorities and targets for an ASPB, exercising powers of veto over corporate and business plans, requiring ASPBs to make annual reports on progress towards meeting targets, and requiring proposals for certain types of expenditure or expenditure above a certain limit to be submitted to the Assembly Government for approval or rejection. Responsibility for developing the overall policies that provide the context for the objectives and activities of ASPBs lies with the Welsh Assembly Government.

2.17 The Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) is the only ASPB with a remit dedicated to rural Wales. CCW is the statutory advisor to the Welsh Assembly Government on countryside and wildlife issues in Wales, and has responsibility for developing and administering policy on landscape conservation and wildlife conservation on land and at sea. It also promotes public use, enjoyment and understanding of the countryside.

2.18 CCW’s remit does not specifically include wider economic development or community regeneration – unlike England’s Countryside Agency. CCW is, however, currently supporting and administering, in conjunction with the Wales Tourist Board, the Adfywio initiative aimed at stimulating tourism in rural Wales. It is also has responsibility, with other agencies, for delivering agri-environmental schemes such as Tir Gofal.

2.19 Lord Haskins considered that of the nine European countries he visited to inform his *Report on the delivery of government policies in rural England* (2003), that *‘the best example of rural delivery...is Wales’*. This assessment was made with particular reference to the delivery of policy in the environmental and agriculture sectors. Providing evidence to the Select Committee on Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in June 2003, Lord Haskins commented that Wales had:

nice separation between the policy side, the Assembly side and the Countryside Council for Wales. It has a very co-ordinated approach towards the environmental, the agricultural and the rural issues. It is very much listening to what is going on in the rural constituencies...It is a small country and size comes into the thing.

2.20 Until 1999, the Development Board for Rural Wales (DBRW) had responsibility for rural economic development and community regeneration – although its name was rather misleading, since it only covered the rural areas of mid-Wales (the counties of Powys and Ceredigion and the old district of Meirionnydd in the county of Gwynedd). The Government of Wales Act 1998 and the Development Board for Rural Wales (Abolition) Order 1999 transferred the functions of DBRW to the Welsh Development Agency, which is charged with developing the Welsh economy, improving the Welsh environment and promoting industrial efficiency and competitiveness throughout Wales.

2.21 The Welsh Development Agency (WDA) operates a dedicated Rural Policy Unit, which has responsibility for developing an integrated programme of measures for developing the whole rural

³ Report of the Richard Commission on the Powers and Electoral Arrangements of the National Assembly for Wales, Spring 2004

economy of Wales and for ensuring that the all-Wales programmes delivered by the WDA adequately reflect the rural dimension. It is also responsible for delivering the flagship programmes of the Welsh Assembly Government's Rural Policy Division, including Rural Community Action, and the rural programmes associated with the EU structural funds, notably LEADER+ and Article 33 of the Rural Development Plan.

2.22 In July 2004 the First Minister announced that three of the largest ASPBs, the Welsh Development Agency, Wales Tourist Board and ELWa, will be disbanded by April 2006 and their functions incorporated into WAG. The rationale given for this move is that their work should become directly accountable to the appropriate minister, in contrast to these organisations' non-elected executive boards. The role of ASPBs has been frequently criticised, for creating an unnecessary tier within the policy-delivery process, adding bureaucracy, reducing transparency and accountability and using resources that could be better-deployed elsewhere. According to First Minister Rhodri Morgan, this restructuring will give the Assembly Government "*more firepower, more critical mass, more ability to generate distinct Wales-oriented policies*" as well as "*less of a distinction between making policy and implementing it.*" Its significance – if any – regarding policy and resources for rural Wales remains to be seen.

Local authorities

2.23 At present there are fifteen local authorities which officially cover rural areas in Wales. These can be sub-divided into: nine unitary authorities classified as predominantly rural; three unitary authorities classified as predominantly urban but with significant rural areas; and three National Park authorities. (See Figure 1.)

2.34 Local authorities deliver a range of rural programmes at the local scale. In some cases local authorities operate as sole agents, but in the majority of cases they work in partnership with other bodies, including WAG and ASPBs. Local authorities are also responsible for developing and implementing their own distinct policies and programmes.

2.35 The 2000 Local Government Act (England and Wales) specifically requires local authorities to promote the well-being of their areas. The Act also gives authorities broad new powers to improve and promote local well-being as a means of helping them implement those strategies. Section 4(1) of this act places a duty on every local authority to prepare a strategy (referred to as a community strategy or community plan) for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom.

2.36 All local authorities in Wales were obliged by the Welsh Assembly Government to produce a community strategy by Spring 2004. These plans should focus on priorities for action arising from the needs of an authority's area as a whole and the different communities within them. Each plan should provide a means of coordinating the provision of services and initiatives and tackling cross-cutting issues in a coherent and integrated way. They should outline what should happen to services in the county over the next 10 to 15 years, covering services provided not only by the County Council, but also those delivered by partner agencies such as the Police, the Local Health Board and the Welsh Development Agency. They should also provide the overarching strategic framework for all the other plans and strategies for the local authority area, so that people can see the relevance of those plans to the improvement of an area's overall quality of life.

2.37 A key function of the strategies is to “identify how the Assembly’s priorities relate to local priorities and how they can be implemented at local government level” (Preparing Community Strategies, 2001). They therefore have an important role in strengthening the connection between local and national policies and resources. “Community strategies...can help to show how those national policies are being implemented at local level, how effective they are, and how they sit with local priorities.” (Preparing Community Strategies, 2001). Implicitly, this includes the rural dimension.

2.38 There is no statutory requirement for local authorities to explicitly distinguish between rural and urban areas in their policies and programmes. The latest land use planning policy of the Welsh Assembly Government, *Planning Policy Wales 2002*, however, recommends that authorities ‘set out an integrated rural development strategy for new development based on sustainable development principles and tailored to the area’s specific assets and needs’ (para.7.5.1).

2.39 The Welsh Local Government Association, a non-statutory body representing the interests of local authorities in Wales, also advocates a leading role for local authorities in the preparation of local rural development strategies. It encourages local authorities to have the flexibility to develop policies which reflect the needs of rural communities within their area within the agreed national framework.

UK priorities for rural Wales

2.40 The Assembly is committed to creating policies and programmes made in Wales, for Wales. At the same time, however, it is also guided and structured by, or must otherwise take account of, wider national and European priorities and legislative frameworks.

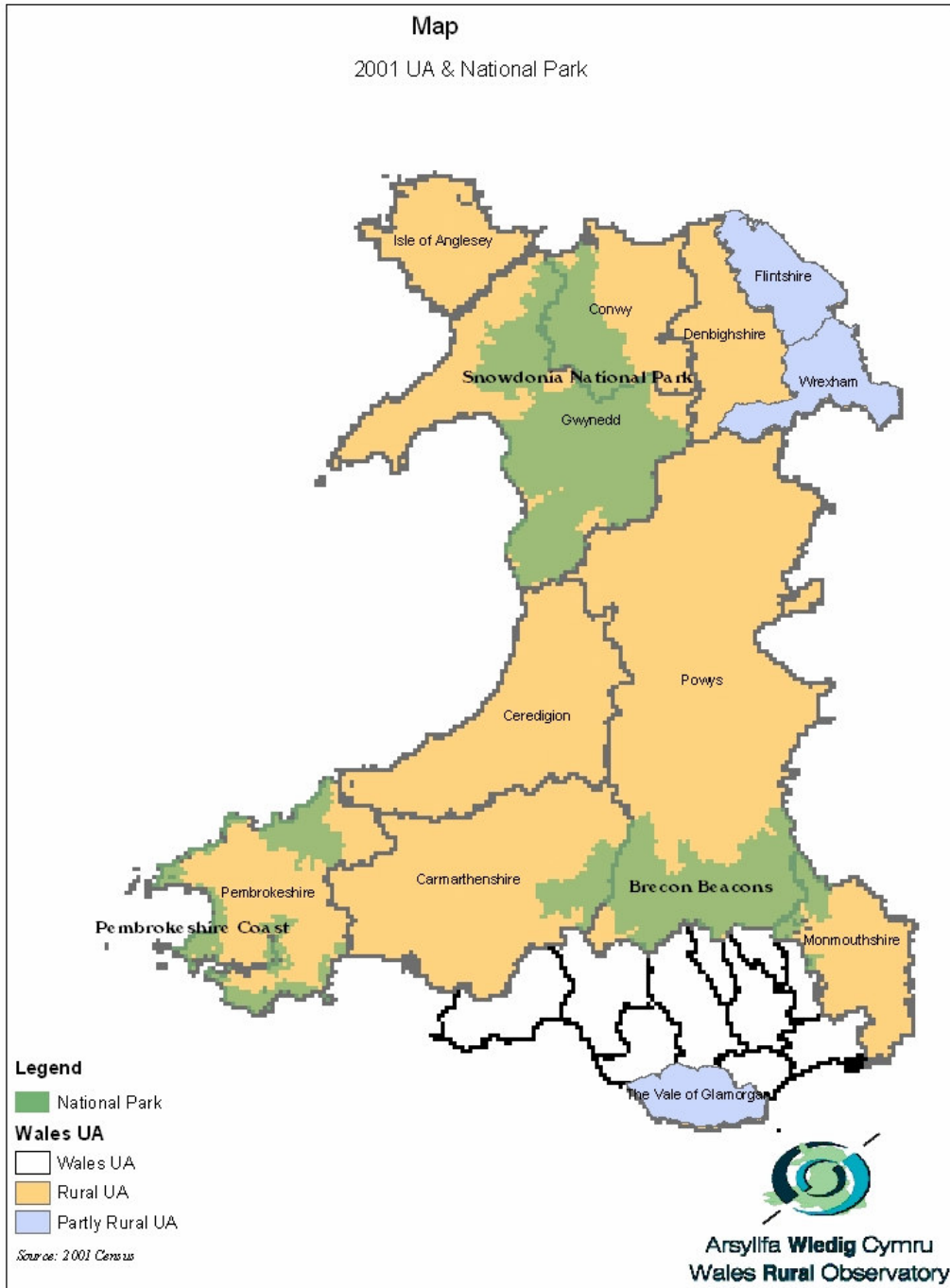
2.41 While the Assembly has considerable autonomy in terms of secondary legislation, the power to enact primary legislation remains with the UK government, as does the power to levy taxation. Primary legislation includes the areas of economic policy, employment legislation, home affairs, social security, the legal system, broadcasting and the National Lottery.

2.42 The Assembly is not responsible for spending or the allocation of resources on non-devolved programmes. It has only limited self-financing powers, through its power to determine the central grant in support of local authority spending and to vary charges for goods and services it provides; the bulk of its funding is provided by the UK Treasury.

2.43 While the Assembly requested four pieces of primary legislation in the 2001-2002 session of Parliament, none were forthcoming. The interests of Wales are represented in the UK parliament by the Secretary of State for Wales, a position created at the same time as the devolution of power. Any rules, regulations and decisions made by the Assembly with regard to its devolved powers must accord with Westminster legislation.

2.44 There are concordats regarding shared working and consultation on devolved issues between all the major departments of the UK Government and those of the National Assembly for Wales. The concordat relating to rural issues was originally agreed between the now disbanded Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) and the Agriculture and Rural Development Department. It defines the relationship between the current Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Department for Environment, Planning and Countryside.

Figure 1 Map of unitary authorities and national park authorities in rural Wales



2.45 The concordat has limited reference to rural development and regeneration outside agriculture, fisheries and food. It expresses a ‘mutual commitment to work together on the application of agricultural, fisheries and food policy within their respective responsibilities’ and an agreement to ‘as necessary, liaise closely concerning non-devolved matters, especially where any issues could impact on devolved areas’.

2.46 The concordat ‘in no way constrains ‘the National Assembly for Wales’ right to operate or to legislate as it sees fit in relation to devolved matters in Wales’. The National Assembly for Wales will be ‘fully involved’ in discussions ‘about the formulation of the UK policy position on all issues which touch on devolved matters’.

EU priorities for rural development

2.47 As part of the European Union, the Assembly must also take account of European Commission legislation in the work it carries out. The 1996 Cork Declaration by European member states defines key priorities to stimulate rural development and outlines a number of broad guidelines to diversify economic and social activity in rural areas and sustain the quality and amenity of Europe's rural landscape. It also states the need for rural issues to be integrated and multi-sectoral and to apply to all rural areas of the Union, asserting that: ‘the need to preserve and improve the quality of the rural environment must be integrated into all Community policies that relate to rural development.’ (The principles of the Cork declaration are included in Appendix 6.)

2.48 These conclusions were broadly taken account of by the action programme Agenda 2000, launched in 1999. The main objectives of Agenda 2000 are to strengthen EC policies and to give the European Union a new financial framework for the period 2000-6 with a view to enlargement. It is designed to increase the effectiveness of the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund and to continue agricultural reform. Agenda 2000 prioritised the implementation of a sustainable rural development policy; it emphasised the limitations of rural policy being divided between agricultural market policy, structural policy and environmental policy.

2.49 All European programmes for rural development fall under the remit of the Rural Development Regulation (RDR), an outcome of Agenda 2000 reforms. The RDR, commonly known as the second pillar of CAP, reflects a movement at the macro-level towards a more integrated ‘Regional’ policy for the EU. Its vision is of a post-productivist and diverse rural economy, and it places a significant value on the environment and the sustainable economy, as well as agriculture. In terms of policy and funding, this has resulted in a shift away from production subsidies and towards greater inclusion of social, environmental and cultural considerations in rural policy.

2.50 The RDR accounts for approximately 10% of CAP spending and is based on four principles:

1. The ‘multifunctionality’ of agriculture: recognising that farmers have a varied role, over and above production.
2. A multi-sectoral and integrated approach to the rural economy: diversifying activities, creating new sources of income and employment, and protecting rural heritage.
3. Flexible aids for rural development, based on the principles of subsidiarity and decentralisation.

4. Transparency in drawing up and managing programmes, including simplified and more accessible legislation.

2.51 Under the Rural Development Regulation, all EC member states were required to produce seven-year Rural Development Plans, at the 'appropriate geographical level' which had to be submitted for approval to the EC before their implementation. The UK has Plans for Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. These describe the geographical areas covered, the measures to be implemented, the proposed expenditure and the economic, environmental and social justification for the plans.

2.52 The Rural Development Plan for Wales 2000 - 2006 is the most comprehensive recent policy document on rural Wales, claiming to provide an integrated approach to rural development in Wales. It is intended to complement and support, as far as practicable, other EU and Welsh Assembly Government programmes covering rural Wales.

EU structural funds

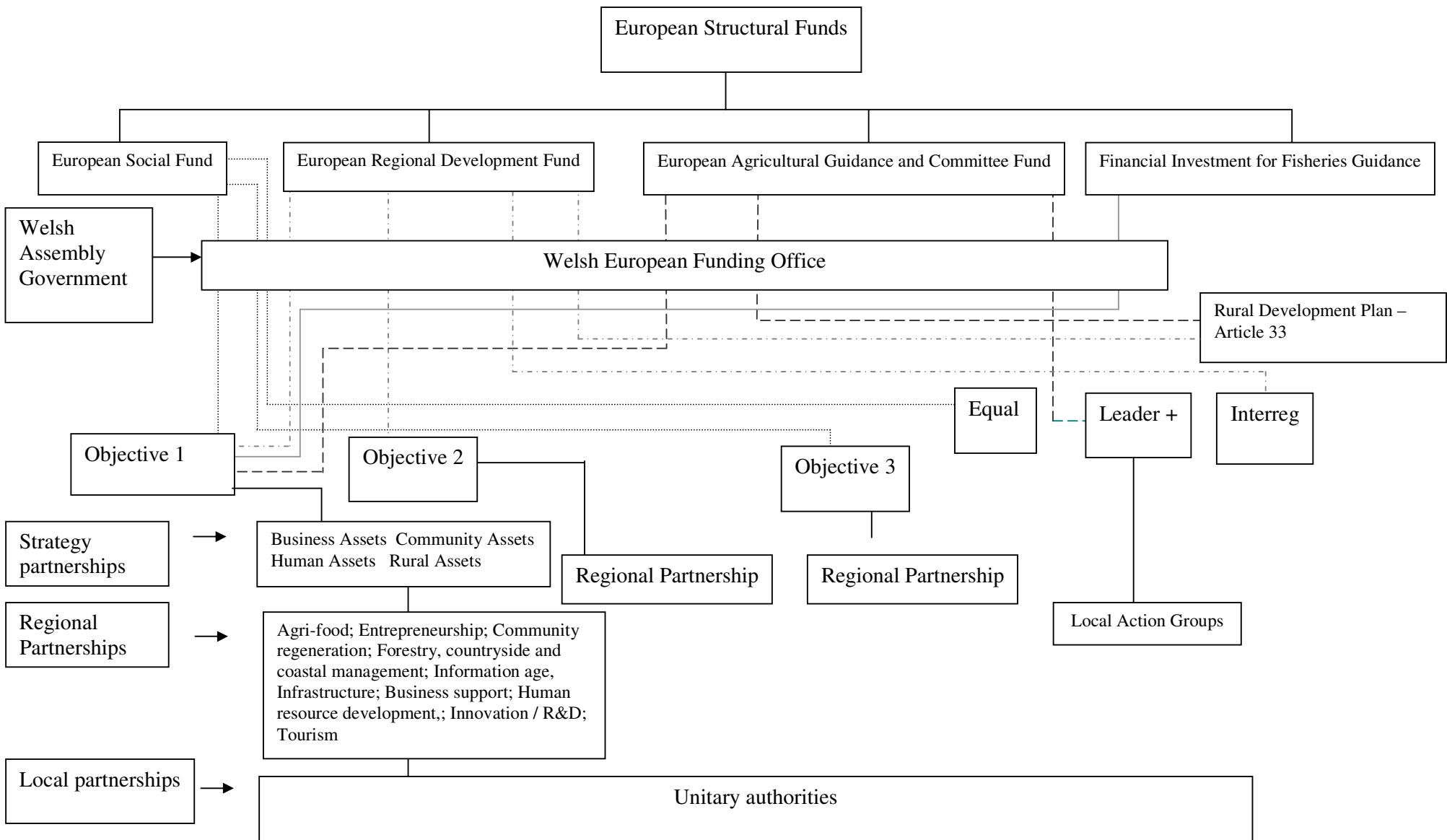
2.53 At present a significant proportion of rural development funding in Wales is from the EU Structural Funds, the European Union's main instruments for supporting social and economic restructuring across the Union. (See figure 2, over page.)

2.54 There are four Structural Funds available to areas within rural Wales. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funds programmes to improve economic prosperity and social inclusion. It promotes development and encourages the diversification of industry in economically 'lagging' areas. The European Social Fund (ESF) funds training, human resources and equal opportunities schemes to promote employability. It may also be used to complement activities supported by ERDF funding in certain areas. The European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) encourages the restructuring and diversification of rural areas. It promotes economic prosperity and social inclusion, and seeks to protect and maintain the environment and rural heritage. The Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG) funds projects to modernise the structure of the fisheries sector and related industries and to encourage diversification of the workforce and fisheries industry. It also aims to ensure the future of the industry through achieving a balance between fisheries resources and their exploitation.

2.55 UK Government policy on the EU Structural Funds is co-ordinated by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The Department for Work and Pensions is responsible for the European Social Fund. The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs is the lead agency for the Guidance section of the EAGGF, and is responsible for the FIFG.

2.56 The Welsh Assembly Government, as the 'designated competent body', is responsible for allocating and administering EU funding for Wales within the framework laid down by the EU. In 1998 the Welsh Office established the European Structural Funds Task Force (ESTF) a public, private and voluntary sector partnership, to provide the National Assembly with a comprehensive set of proposals for the utilisation of the European Structural Funds. The ESTF includes a Rural Sector Group.

Figure 2: European Funding Streams



2.57 The Welsh European Programme Executive Ltd (WEPE) was established in 1996 to administer most EU structural fund programmes in Wales, following pressure for transparency, independence and partnership in managing European funding. It operated as a company owned, managed and part funded by all local authorities and other partners. Individual authorities were members of the company. WEPE was replaced by the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO), as an executive agency of the Assembly, which has run all structural programmes from 2001. Initially WEFO operated at ‘arm’s length’ from the Assembly. In 2003 it was brought under the direct control of the Assembly’s Economic Development Minister and civil servants.

2.58 EU Structural Funds are linked to a number of programmes intended to assist EU regions suffering from the problems caused or exacerbated by the decline of once prominent industries, inadequate infrastructures and other obstacles to economic development. In Wales, only one of these programmes – LEADER+ - is targeted specifically at rural development and rural community regeneration; others, while they are not specifically ‘rural’ programmes, have significant rural dimensions and impact heavily on rural areas of Wales. Each programme is accompanied by a Single Programming Document (SPD), which outlines a region’s priorities and objectives and provides the strategic framework for allocating funding. Single Programming Documents are drawn up at the Wales level, but must be approved by the European Commission.

Chapter summary

Welsh rural policy: made in Wales, for Wales?

The creation of the National Assembly for Wales has created considerable scope for policies, programmes and resources to reflect the needs and priorities of rural Wales. The Assembly Government includes a Rural Policy Division with responsibility for developing and delivering non-agricultural rural policy. The creation of the Assembly saw the Welsh Development Agency take on responsibility for the economic development of all rural Wales. The second term of the Assembly has seen the creation of the Department for Environment, Planning and Countryside, replacing the previous Department for Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

Despite devolution, opportunities for the self-determination of rural policies by the Assembly remain limited. The development of policy and resources for rural Wales is informed and structured by a range of factors external to the immediate challenges and opportunities posed by the Welsh countryside and the drive towards Welsh self-determination. These factors are, principally, the core themes and values that guide all Assembly work, the Assembly’s priorities and strategy for all Wales, the UK policy environment and the influence of European Union policy and funding.

Policies, programmes and funding from the EU have assumed a dominant role in the development and regeneration of rural Wales. The majority of money available for the development and regeneration of rural areas of Wales comes through European funding streams. The most comprehensive programme document for rural Wales, the *Rural Development Plan for Wales 2000-2006*, was created under the Rural Development Regulation of the EU.

SECTION 3

RECOGNISING THE RURAL DIMENSION

This chapter outlines how and to what extent current policies and programmes address the rural dimension of economy, society, culture and the environment in Wales. It focuses on the Welsh Assembly Government, Assembly-Sponsored Public Bodies, and local authorities. In particular, the chapter considers:

- The impact of policies for all-Wales on rural policies
- Rural proofing
- Key rural policy documents
- The extent to which unelected public bodies distinguish between rural and urban policy
- The extent to which local authorities distinguish between rural and urban policy
- Defining rural Wales

A summary of the discussion is provided at the end of the chapter (p.39)

Recognising the rural in “mainstream” policies and programmes

3.1 Emphasis on policies and programmes that address the rural dimension of the economy, society, culture and environment of Wales is variable across different scales of policy and between different government bodies in Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government provides a clear distinction between the needs and interests of rural and urban areas. There is also substantial recognition in the various programmes distributing EU structural funds in Wales. Amongst local authorities – other than National Park authorities – there is more ambiguity and ambivalence. There is particularly limited focus on the rural dimension amongst Assembly-Sponsored Public Bodies – or, at least, amongst those ASPBs that responded to the survey carried out as part of this research.

The National Assembly and Assembly Government

3.2 The Assembly’s policy and resources for rural Wales are guided and structured by its strategy and priorities for all Wales. The Assembly’s Rural Development Plan for Wales 2000-2006 (RDP), published in 2000, makes it clear that **wider domestic agendas and programmes**, rather than specific rural agendas and programmes, are central to guiding and structuring rural development. While the measures outlined in the RDP are seen to have ‘*a distinctive contribution to make to achieving the key objectives for rural development in Wales*’, this contribution should not ‘*be seen as more than one component of the programme of national and co-financed [with the EU] actions which are planned for Wales over the next seven years*’ (p.182).

3.3 Strategy and priorities for all Wales are set out in two key documents: A Winning Wales: The National Economic Development Strategy of the Welsh Assembly Government, published in 2002, and Wales: A Better Country, The Strategic Agenda of the Welsh Assembly Government, published

in 2003. These are intended to guide both the Assembly and all other agencies responsible for or otherwise involved in the development of Wales.

3.4 *A Winning Wales* sets out the Assembly's vision, objectives, targets and strategy for the development of the Wales economy from 2002 to 2012. It identifies economic development as key to the success of Wales overall and places it at the centre of overall development strategy. It sets two goals: raising average GDP per capita in Wales closer to the UK and EU levels from its current level of 80% of the UK average, and improving the economic performance of the two thirds of Wales defined as 'lagging' in terms of economic development.. The four priorities of *A Winning Wales* are: to create a further 135,000 jobs in Wales by 2012; to improve business enterprise and innovation; to raise skill levels and learning; and to exploit the economic potential of information and communications technology (ICT).

3.5 *Wales: A Better Country* identifies the Assembly's vision for its second term, from 2003 to 2007. It sets out four priorities for action: helping more people into jobs; improving health; developing strong and safe communities; creating better jobs and skills.

3.6 Both documents outline priorities for rural Wales. *Wales: A Better Country* states that these are:

- to 'broaden the economic base of rural areas';
- to 'promote rural areas';
- to 'develop skills training suitable for rural settings';
- to 'ensure that 'local people are not priced out of rural housing markets'.

3.7 *A Winning Wales* identifies priorities for rural Wales as:

- 'developing income and employment in rural Wales in sectors other than agriculture, especially for young people'.
- 'recognising the importance which rural towns and villages play in rural regeneration';
- 'enhanc[ing] the attractiveness of the Welsh countryside, its bio-diversity and celebrat[ing] its heritage, for the enjoyment of our people and as a basis for tourism';
- promoting environmentally sustainable farming practice, through agri-environmental schemes, conservation of nature, wildlife, archaeology and heritage.

3.8 All policies, programmes and initiatives in rural Wales, whether national, local or individual, must operate within current **planning regulations and guidelines** framing the development and utilization of land in Wales.⁴ The most recent planning statement, *Planning Policy Wales 2002*, is formulated around the principles of sustainable development, one of the Assembly's core guiding themes and values (pp.10-12), and integrated rural development (p.17).

⁴ Planning differs from other development measures by being a principally *negative* policy instrument; its primary purpose is to control, not stimulate, development.

3.9 *Planning Policy Wales 2002* identifies three priorities for rural Wales. These are:

- securing **sustainable rural communities** with access to high quality public services
- creating a **thriving and diverse local economy** where agriculture and related activities are complemented by sustainable tourism and other forms of employment in a working countryside
- maintaining an **attractive and ecologically rich and accessible countryside** in which the environment and biodiversity are conserved and enhanced.

3.10 The publication of the *Draft Wales Spatial Plan* in 2003 has added an explicit spatial perspective to the Welsh Assembly Government's vision for the development of Wales. This is in line with the spatial strategies currently being developed in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Spatial development and planning has gained momentum in Europe since the production of the European Spatial Development Perspective in 1999, which provides a framework for spatial planning at national and regional scales within the EU. The implications of the Wales Spatial Plan in terms of rural policy are discussed in the next chapter of this report.

3.11 Any rural policies and programmes emanating from the Welsh Assembly Government are, like all its policies and programmes, framed and guided by the three core themes and values it has adopted and pledged to put at the centre of its work. The Assembly has a legal duty to pursue the goal of **sustainable development**, is committed to tackling **social disadvantage** and has a statutory obligation to promote and work towards **equality of opportunity**. These cross-cutting themes frame and guide all Assembly and Assembly Government activities.

Assembly sectoral policy

3.12 Most public policy in Wales can be said to have a rural dimension, in that most public policy in Wales is likely to impact on rural areas of Wales. The sectors for which the Assembly Government has statutory responsibility for developing and implementing policy include: transport, health, housing, education, agriculture, economic development, the Welsh language, social services, local government, planning, culture, sport, and the environment. The varying territorial impact of Assembly policy across Wales and, in particular, across rural Wales is reflected to varying degrees in the Assembly's policy documents.

3.13 Within sectoral policy there is limited and varied recognition of the distinct needs and opportunities of rural Wales. By its nature sectoral policy seeks to address the needs of people irrespective of their geographical location. For example, the overarching aim of the Assembly's *Health, Social Care and Well-being Agenda* is "to promote the health and well being of everyone living in Wales and provide effective and efficient health services" (www.wales.gov.uk/subihealth/index.htm).

3.14 At the same time, sectoral policies routinely rhetorically acknowledge the need for policy to address the needs of people and communities in different places across Wales. *A Healthier Future for Wales* (2000) specifically recognises the need to allocate resources on the basis of areas' need, whilst *A Creative Future: A Culture Strategy for Wales* (2002) stresses the need to "reflect fully local circumstances in every part of Wales".

3.15 Beyond this rhetoric however, most sectoral policy is *aspatial*; it does not distinguish between the characteristics and needs of different areas of Wales. For the most part, sectoral policies are intended to guide local delivery agents to develop and deliver programmes that address local needs and circumstances, within the framework of wider national strategic objectives and priorities.

3.16 At the same time, some sectoral policies do distinguish between ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ areas. This is strongly evident in the *Transport Framework for Wales* (2002), which stresses the “*need to acknowledge the differences between rural and urban areas*” in encouraging people to use public transport and in improving public transport infrastructure and services. It makes reference to the relatively poor public transport provision and higher reliance on cars in rural areas, noting that “*It is widely perceived that public transport, if any, in rural areas is limited; this tends to result in those without access to a car being more isolated, socially excluded and being limited in their work, health, education and social options.*” It also notes the relatively low volume of traffic in rural areas.

3.17 The Transport Framework also incorporates a more targeted spatial perspective that goes beyond rural / urban distinctions. This seeks to ensure that any policies and programmes do not exacerbate geographical inequalities in Wales and recognises the interconnections between different areas. “*The Framework needs to inform decisions that reflect the needs of the separate regions within Wales, how they relate to each other, the rest of the UK, Europe and beyond.*” (See box 3.1 for details of the Rural Community Transport Initiative)

3.18 Compared to the 1998 *Transport White Paper* this Framework makes far less of a distinction between rural areas in terms of actual *policy*. It acknowledges that “*we may have to find a different set of solutions to the problems in rural areas compared to those we develop in urban areas*” (para.4.4.3) and that “*If we are to increase the accessibility for those living in rural areas we have to consider more flexible solutions [to public transport shortages]*”. Distinct rural transport policy, however, is limited to ensuring that elements of the transport strategy are compatible with the *Rural Development Plan for Wales 2000-2006* and the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee’s recommendations on policies for economic diversification in rural areas.

3.19 Similarly, policy documents for housing, education, older people and ICT refer to an urban-rural distinction, but contain little distinct rural (or urban) policy.

Box 3.1 Rural Community Transport Initiative

From 1998 Wales has been allocated an additional £2.5 million each year to support public transport in rural areas. £2.25 million of this money is ring-fenced for subsidising local bus services; the remaining £250,000 funds the Rural Community Transport Initiative encouraging informal community schemes and better co-ordination of voluntary services, including dial-a-ride and taxi-buses.

The Welsh Assembly Government has combined its Rural Bus Grant and Community Transport Grant into a single Local Transport Services Grant. This is intended to enable a flexible approach by local authorities in meeting the distinctive public transport needs of rural areas.

The Assembly Government has also implemented a Rural Town and Village Trunk Road Initiative, which is intended to improve road safety in rural communities.

Rural proofing

3.20 The Welsh Assembly Government has limited commitment to ensuring that ‘mainstream’ policies for *all* Wales are sensitive to specific *rural* needs and priorities. The Rural Policy Division of the Department of Environment, Planning and Countryside has been given sole responsibility for ‘*the rural proofing of policies and schemes developed under other Ministers’ remit to ensure that they adequately reflect the rural dimension*’.

3.21 There are no mechanisms, however, that enable the RPD to systematically rural proof policies or help other departments mainstream the needs of rural Wales in the design, development and delivery of policies, programmes and initiatives. There are no structures that enable monitoring of and reporting on progress in rural proofing across the Welsh Assembly Government. It is not mandatory that the main divisions and departments of the Welsh Assembly government take into account the particular needs, priorities and interests of rural areas and develop domestic policies accordingly. Neither is there any apparent encouragement for them to do so.

3.22 This limited commitment contrasts to the situations in both England and Scotland. In England, it has been mandatory since 2000 that all policies are ‘rural proofed’. When designing, developing and delivering policies, policy-makers must systematically:

- Consider the impact of a specific policy on rural areas
- Make a proper assessment of those impacts if they are likely to be significant
- Adjust the policy where appropriate to meet rural needs and circumstances.⁵

3.23 To assist policy-makers, the Countryside Agency has produced a fifteen-point checklist, intended to be applied from the early stages of policy-making.⁶ Government departments and Offices for the Regions must report annually on how their policies have been rural proofed, and the Countryside Agency publishes annual assessments on the overall progress of rural proofing across government.

3.24 In Scotland, the Scottish Executive has committed itself to ‘mainstreaming’ the particular needs of rural Scotland within all its policies, although it has not made mainstreaming a mandatory part of the policy process. *‘Rather than setting rural Scotland aside as something different or a special case, it has encouraged all policy makers to take the needs of rural areas seriously and to adapt their policies to meet local needs and circumstances wherever possible.’*⁷

3.25 Several bodies are responsible for the implementation of rural mainstreaming in Scotland:

- The Executive’s Rural Policy Team works within and across mainstream policy areas to consider the likely impact of proposed policies on rural areas, how rural issues should be reflected in the development of policies and how information on rural policy should be disseminated to external organizations.
- The Executive has established a ‘rural core network’, bringing together Executive officials representing key rural development priority areas, including economic development, service, transport and social justice, to further facilitate rural mainstreaming.

⁵ DEFRA (2000) *Our Countryside: The Future*, Rural White Paper, London

⁶ Countryside Agency (2003) *Rural Proofing – policy maker’s checklist*, The Countryside Agency, Cheltenham

⁷ Scottish Executive Website, www.scotland.gov.uk

- The remit of the Executive’s Cabinet Sub-Committee on Rural Development includes ‘ensuring that policy developments take account of rural circumstances’.

3.26 To a certain extent, rural proofing is provided by the Welsh Assembly Government’s **Policy Integration Tool**. This has been designed as a top-level appraisal mechanism to be used by officials when developing policies and evaluating projects at the strategic level. The tool is intended to encourage policy-makers to consider the contribution of their work to broader goals, and to encourage thinking and working beyond departmental boundaries.

3.27 The tool presents seventeen open ended questions and subsequently lists thirty six statements which are to be completed by an Appraisal Group. Two statements specifically refer to rural Wales:

- What contribution does this activity make to developing a diverse rural economy which provides a broad base of employment?
- What contribution does this activity make to enabling agriculture to deliver economic, environmental and social benefits?

3.28 In a Report by Cardiff University, the Integration Tool was generally considered to have been well received. Several interviewees considered it to be one of the Assembly’s major achievements for its first term, although others criticised it for basing its goals on *A Better Wales* which itself adopts a ‘pepperpot approach to policy’ and for the limited involvement of stakeholders in the tool’s formation⁸.

3.29 The Integration Tool does provide for some recognition of specific rural needs and priorities. However, it limits rural proofing or rural mainstreaming to asking policy-makers and developers to consider the impact of policy on diversifying the employment base of the rural economy and enabling agriculture to deliver economic, environmental and social benefits.

3.30 The 2003-4 remit letter sent to ASPBs by the Assembly emphasised that ASPBs are expected to play a full and active part in delivering Assembly Government initiatives regarding rural Wales where appropriate. It appears, however, that some ASPBs face less stringent requirements in this respect than others.

3.31 The letter to the Sports Council, for example, states that ASPBs “make an essential contribution to rural areas, but this contribution needs to be quantified and monitored”. The Sports Council is “expected to demonstrate a pro-active approach to developing an awareness of, and participation in sport and physical activity in Wales’ natural environment” and, in relation to this, asked to “consider a benchmarking exercise, together with a set of appropriate and ambitious targets for future years”. The letter also states that the Assembly would shortly be issuing guidance and information regarding the ‘rural proofing’ of ASPB policies and programmes.

3.32 In contrast, the letter to the WDA limited such proofing requirements to ensuring that “adequate measures exist for monitoring and evaluating the performance” of the meat promotion body Hybu Cig Cymru. Otherwise the WDA was merely expected to “continue to play a full and active part in taking forward the Assembly Government’s policies for the economic development of the whole of rural Wales” without any stipulations regarding quantification and monitoring of such activities. The Wales Tourist Board and

⁸ Flynn, A (2003) Living Differently? An assessment of the first four years of the Welsh Assembly Government’s sustainable development duty’ BRASS, Cardiff University

ELWAs were given no stipulations regarding rural issues. The impact of any requirements has yet to be felt.

Rural policies

3.33 The National Assembly for Wales has not produced its own clear statement of vision, intent and purpose for the future of rural Wales as it has done so for the future of Wales overall. The most recent comprehensive statement of government policy for rural Wales is the UK government's 1996 White Paper, *A Working Countryside for Wales*. The Rural White Paper, published alongside similar White Papers for England and Scotland, was the first attempt to formulate a vision for the future of rural Wales that integrated social, cultural, economic and environmental development.

3.34 Five documents published by the Welsh Assembly Government focus on current priorities for rural Wales. These are *The Rural Development Plan for Wales 2000-2006*, published in 2000; *Farming for the Future: A new direction for farming in Wales*, published in 2001; and the *Rural Recovery Plan*, published following the outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease in 2001.

3.35 The *Rural Development Plan for Wales 2000-2006*, published in 2000 is intended to serve as a key mechanism for rural development in Wales. It is a response to EU's Rural Development Regulation in 1999 which aims to provide a more integrated and sustainable approach to managing Europe's rural areas and seeks to integrate, as far as practicable, the various Programmes for Wales operating under EU Structural Funding. The RDP identifies three priorities for rural Wales:

- To create stronger agriculture and forestry sectors
- To improve the economic competitiveness of rural communities and areas
- To maintain and protect the environment and heritage

3.36 *Farming for the Future*, published in November 2001, is a vision of the future of farming in Wales. It is designed to serve as a framework facilitating and supporting agricultural change, providing a philosophy for farming based on the Welsh Assembly Government's cross-cutting theme of sustainable development. The overall objective of this report is to secure a basis for family farming in Wales that is economically viable, sustains the environment and provides greater social cohesion within rural communities. *Farming for the Future* promotes a movement towards adding value, quality, branding and local processing, and recognition that rural Wales is not, and will not be, competitive in a conventional commodity-based agri-food market. More than 50 action points are presented which outline specific strategies and identify appropriate organisations to deliver this vision.

3.37 *The Rural Recovery Plan* was the Welsh Assembly Government's response to the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease in Wales. It was produced by a limited-life working-party set up by the National Assembly for Wales and the Wales Rural Partnership to assess the economic impact of FMD and to make recommendations on economic recovery measures following the end of the outbreak. The Plan sets out a number of immediate measures to help businesses in rural areas, and suggests medium term proposals to help both rural communities and rural businesses, focusing on farming and the tourism industry. It also outlines measures to help alleviate stress amongst rural residents.

Assembly-Sponsored Public Bodies

3.38 The WDA has core responsibility for the economic development of rural areas in Wales. It does not, however, consider that there is a need – or that it is necessarily desirable – for the WDA to rigidly distinguish a ‘rural’ as opposed to an ‘urban’ dimension in their core activities. In a 2001 report carried out by the then Agriculture and Rural Development Committee, *Diversifying The Rural Economy*, it was noted that the WDA ‘*argues that it does not have a specific rural strategy because the needs of rural areas are woven into its more general economic policies*’ (unpaged).

3.39 In an interview carried out in relation to this report, the chief executive and head of rural policy stated that whilst they recognised that rural areas may have distinct needs and opportunities, they are not convinced that these are either sufficiently uniform across rural Wales, or sufficiently different from many of the needs and opportunities of parts of urban Wales, to merit the development of policies and programmes with a purely rural focus.

What really concerns me is making this absolute distinction between rural and urban when it comes to policy and funding. ... We have to have flexible – you know, flexibility, to be able to respond to particular circumstances. ... The Agency [WDA] is an all-Wales organisation which is very keen on local delivery. (Gareth Hall, Chief Executive, WDA)

[G]enerally, all the services and products the Agency [WDA] has to offer are done on a Wales-wide basis. We do not make the distinction between urban and rural. So they’re available throughout Wales. What determines the mix, if you like, of those products is the needs and opportunities of the local. (Ann Watkin, Head of Rural Policy, WDA)

3.40 It has been difficult to construct any sort of comprehensive picture regarding rural policy amongst other ASPBs given that only seven out of the thirteen approached in relation to this report responded to the survey. (For a complete list of ASPBs approached, see Appendix 2.) It is apparent, however, from the responses received, and from other publicly-available information – such as corporate and business plans – that across Assembly-Sponsored Public Bodies there is very limited, and highly variable, recognition of a distinct rural dimension to the development and delivery of policies and programmes, whether that entails specific policies and programmes targeting rural areas or rural proofing mainstream policies and programmes. This echoes the earlier findings of *Diversifying the Rural Economy*, which expressed concern that some of the ‘*key players*’ in rural economic development ‘*lack an explicit rural focus*’ (unpaged).

3.41 Three ASPBs identify distinct ‘rural issues’ or distinct challenges facing rural areas. The National Council for Education and Training for Wales (ELWa), sees the rural context as presenting a definite challenge to the delivery of learning opportunities, in terms of rural areas having “*relatively few learners [i.e. low population density] (limiting opportunities for economies of scale), and few providers (potentially limiting opportunities of scope), against a financial backdrop of scarce resources.*”

3.42 The Wales Tourist Board has recently emphasised the distinct challenges and opportunities for the tourism industry in rural Wales. In July 2004, the WTb produced a report, *The Countryside Experience*, containing the findings of a Working Party on Countryside Tourism. The working party consisted of a range of experts from the public and private sector, with this research supplemented by a series of focus groups. The report is intended to inform those with a remit for an interest in the development and promotion of rural Wales.

3.43 CCW sees ‘change’ as a distinct challenge facing rural as opposed to urban Wales, although it did not elaborate on what sort of change and why it was a challenge.

3.44 The Welsh Language Board emphasises that the Welsh language is integral to the sustainability of rural communities. It is, however, cautious not to overemphasise the importance of rural areas to the Welsh language; instead it seeks to promote the language across Wales. It does not distinguish between the key challenges facing rural areas in Wales in contrast to those affecting urban areas or the whole of Wales. Rather, it considers that: “priorities...vary according to the circumstances of context and area, whether they are urban or rural.” It thus targets areas on their context and circumstances, regardless of their urban / rural classification.

3.35 On the whole it would appear that other ASPBs consider that rural areas of Wales face much the same challenges as urban areas of Wales – if they actively consider the matter at all. The Forestry Commission consider that the challenges it faces in urban and rural Wales are “similar”. ELWa, which does note distinct rural challenges, still considers that “The great majority of issues are the same in rural as in urban areas”. The Sports Council for Wales produced a discussion document, *Sports and Rural Wales* (updating an earlier document of the same title), in February 2003, looking at issues surrounding sport and other recreation in rural areas and the Sports Council’s approach to them. It concluded that “Broadly speaking, the problems of sport and recreation in rural areas are similar to those found in towns” (p.11). Other ASPBs appear to echo these sentiments in relation to their own remits, in that their corporate plans do not distinguish between rural and urban Wales.

3.36 This is reflected in the priorities set out by ASPBs. ELWa, and the Wales Tourist Board are the only two bodies to provide evidence of distinct priorities for rural Wales. ELWa sees “Ensuring that rural learners are not significantly disadvantaged and have the opportunity to access quality learning experiences (whether in the [rural] locality or outside of it)” as a distinct priority for rural areas. The WTB report into *The Countryside Experience* identifies five key areas of work which will “play a vital part in achieving the vision of making Wales a destination of choice for visitors seeking a varied and quality countryside experience”; four cross cutting themes are also identified.

3.37 Other ASPBs appear to consider that there is no need for distinct priorities for rural areas. The Welsh Language Board, for example, has four main priorities for Wales, all of which are seen to apply to both rural and urban areas. The Sports Council for Wales sees its overall strategic priorities as adequate for addressing the needs of all areas in Wales, rural and urban; in *Sports and Rural Wales* it called on the Assembly Government and local authorities to deliver the improvements in transport infrastructure, social inclusion and employment opportunities that it considered were important for increasing participation in sports in rural – as well as urban – areas (p.11). Documentation from other ASPBs does not distinguish between ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ priorities.

3.38 The WDA is the only ASPB with a department with a core remit for rural issues or areas. ELWa, while it does not have a rural department, does have one member of staff with “direct responsibility” for considering rural areas of Wales “from a policy perspective”.

3.39 The staff of most ASPBs work on a national basis. Several indicate that they have regional staff largely concerned with rural areas. They emphasise, however, that this does not equate to those staff having a predominantly rural focus.

No staff have core responsibility for rural issues, but around 8 staff in our local development services section have some responsibility for rural areas. (Sports Council for Wales)

Areas such as Mid Wales are predominantly rural. As such, officers in the region are largely working within a rural context, however it would be inaccurate to claim that they are working on 'rural issues'. (ELWa)

3.40 Lack of a rural focus at the strategic level tends to translate to a lack of focus at the operational level. While ASPBs fund a variety of initiatives that impact on rural areas, these are generally not specifically focused on either particular rural 'issues' or on rural areas alone. Several suggest that their mainstream programmes by default addressed rural issues and areas.

Many of our projects are not specifically targeted at rural areas but by default are concerned with social, environmental and economic rural issues. (Forestry Commission Wales)

ELWa fund a variety of projects and activities which impact on rural areas, however these are not specifically focused at addressing rurality issues per se. (ELWa)

All our action programmes and initiatives are equally applicable to urban and rural areas. (Sports Council for Wales)

3.41 The Wales Tourist Board administers several programmes targeted specifically at rural areas. These include the Farm Tourism Diversification Scheme, run in partnership with Farming Connect, and a Farm Holidays marketing scheme. During 2003-4, WTB, with the aid of additional resources provided by WAG, undertook a range of activities intended to stimulate the 'recovery' tourism in rural areas following the end of the outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease in Wales. Key initiatives included the Adfywio scheme, run jointly with CCW, which is now closed. It has ceased funding a Welsh Countryside Holidays initiative, led by the SPARC/PLANED Leader+ group 'because of low outputs'.

3.42 ELWa also funds initiatives that it considers 'impact predominantly on rural areas' – although these are sectoral rather than spatial initiatives, notably "training activities in the Landbased Sector through projects put forward by the Sector Skills Council (Lantra)". The Recurrent Funding Mechanism provides specific support for further education in Wales by making additional payments to certain FE institutions in rural Wales in order to help compensate for costs relating to operating in sparsely-populated areas.

3.43 ASPBs appear to have no internal mechanisms in place that ensure their 'mainstream' programmes recognise any distinct needs of rural areas. The strongest evidence of a distinct rural focus in terms of policies and programmes comes, perhaps unsurprisingly, given its identification of distinct rural challenges, from ELWa.

There is a rural dimension to the great majority of all [sic] ELWa's activities, even if it is not labelled as [such] explicitly. ELWa's regional structure encompasses issues of rurality.

While ELWa has no rural policy statement as such, it states that "ELWa is committed to ensuring that the needs of learners in rural areas are understood and reflected in the range of provision and programmes funded by the organisation"⁹

⁹ In 2001, the report *Diversifying The Rural Economy* noted that: ELWa 'has always included an element of rural focus...and is not planning to develop a clear policy approach toward rural issues. ELWa has also agreed with WDA on the development of a co-ordinated approach towards rural issues, recognising the common ground and integrated nature of rural needs (unpaged).

3.44 Other ASPBs demonstrate no active commitment to ensuring the needs of rural areas are systematically recognised and met.

3.45 In its 2001 report on *Diversifying the Rural Economy*, the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee expressed its concern that some of the “*key players in economic development...lack an explicit rural focus*” (unpaged). This lack of rural focus has continued, and is also true of the ASPBs responsible for wider development, such as community regeneration. The majority of national initiatives lack a clear ‘rural’ component and/or are not ‘rural proofed’, and lack clear, measurable goals for rural areas. There are no mechanisms in place for measuring the progress of either specific rural development measures or the impact of national initiatives on rural Wales.

3.46 It is not the intention of this report to suggest that the lack of a clear rural focus is necessarily evidence that the needs of rural areas are being inadequately recognised and addressed. In the case of the Sports Council, for example, this conclusion was based on a definite evidence base: *Sports and Rural Wales* set sports policies in the context of the out-migration of young people, below average incomes, the in-migration of groups with high social status, and also compared relative rates of participation in sports activities in rural and urban localities. The WDA makes an argument that its focus is on the *local* delivery of national programmes rather than a broader rural / urban distinction. In other cases, however, it is not clear on what evidence such conclusions are based.

The role of local authorities

3.47 Local authorities differ significantly in how and to what extent they recognise the rural dimension in their activities. The majority of unitary authorities identify distinct challenges facing rural areas. Most frequently these relate to the changing socio-demographic profiles and economic restructuring of rural areas. Access to services, deprivation and social cohesion are also identified as issues with particular implications for rural society, economy, culture and environment. There is, however, considerable variation as to how systematically and comprehensively these challenges are addressed.

3.48 Two unitary authorities and two of the three National Park authorities do not distinguish between rural and urban activities, on the grounds that they do not administer any urban areas. In effect, these authorities see all their activities as targeted at rural areas and issues, whether or not they explicitly identify areas and issues as ‘rural’.

[W]e are a rural authority so all workings of the authority impact on rural issues. (Ceredigion)

[T]here are no urban areas (as conventionally defined) within SNP...[although] the Authority defines two settlements, Bala and Dolgellau, as “Local Centres”. (Snowdonia National Park Authority)

3.49 A similar stance is taken by the other National Park Authority. While it recognises urban areas within its remit, it does not consider that any rural / urban distinction impacts on its activities.

The communities of Tenby, Saundersfoot, St. Davids and Newport are generally regarded as urban areas, but in practice there is no overall distinction in our area between rural and urban areas. (Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority)

3.50 All others - including both predominantly rural and predominantly urban authorities - made a clear distinction between the rural and urban areas within their territories. This is reflected in the allocation of resources for rural areas and activities. (See Box 3.2 for case-studies)

3.51 The majority of UAs have divisions, teams or individuals with responsibility for the rural dimensions of policies and programmes.

Box 3.2 Responsibility for the rural dimension in unitary authorities

- Anglesey has a Tourism and Rural Development Division within their Economic Development Department, which includes the strategic overview and programme delivery team of the Northern Marches Cymru Leader+ Local Action Group. Responsibility for other rural is distributed across the various departments of the UA, “although many of the responsibilities...e.g. AONB, countryside wardens, biodiversity, fall under the responsibility of the director of planning and environmental services”.
- Flintshire has a Rural Development Officer within the council’s Economic Development and Tourism Division, with core responsibility for the county’s rural issues including advising rural businesses of the nature of business support and assistance available, encouraging rural tourism ventures and helping to administer the various EU, WAG and WDA rural programmes impacting on rural areas of Flintshire. In addition, “a number” of council officers have responsibilities that “cover rural areas and rural matters”. Wrexham has a Tourism and Rural Development division within its Economic Development Department, which includes a programme delivery team for the Leader+ Local Action Group Northern Marches Cymru. Carmarthenshire’s Economic Development Department currently has one of its three teams dedicated to the “predominantly rural” area of Taf Myrddin Teifi. One of the three teams in its Community Development Department works with the “predominantly rural” Taf Myrddin, Teifi and Tywi area.
- Carmarthenshire’s Economic Development Department currently has one of its three teams dedicated to the “predominantly rural” area of Taf Myrddin Teifi. One of the three teams in its Community Development Department works with the “predominantly rural” Taf Myrddin, Teifi and Tywi area.
- Monmouthshire has a full-time Rural Project Officer and a part-time Regeneration Office with responsibility for assisting community regeneration in rural areas. It also has a “Mobile Movies Officer” with responsibility for its Mobile Movies programme bringing cinema screenings to rural communities in the county.
- Denbighshire has a rural development officer along with two officers with responsibility for administering the WDA Small Towns and Villages Initiative in Wrexham and an officer charged with co-ordinating the LEADER+ Local Action Group.
- Conwy has a “Countryside Team” as part of its planning department, which includes three mobile wardens, with core responsibility for conserving and enhancing the natural environment of Conwy.

3.52 Only four unitary authorities provided data on whether or not they divided budgets between rural and urban areas or rural issues. Wrexham – a predominantly urban authority – allocated 15% of its economic development budget to rural areas or issues in the financial year 2003-4 and was increasing this allocation to 25% in 2004-5. Monmouthshire – a predominantly rural county – allocated 30% of its budget to rural areas or issues during 2003-4 and was similarly increasing this allocation to 45% in 2004-5. Ceredigion and Powys – predominantly rural authorities – considered that their entire budget was allocated to rural areas in both 2003-4 and 2004-5.

Box 3.3 Unitary authority rural development strategies

- Wrexham produced a Rural Development Strategy in February 2000, “*designed to address the needs of 12 wards in the County Borough’s rural area over the 2000-2005 period*” (paragraph 1.2). The strategy is intended to be “*an **integrated response** to the economic, environmental and community issues confronting the Rural Wrexham area*” (paragraph 1.1). It is noted that “*The Rural Strategy must **complement** - and reinforce where appropriate - the aims and objectives of other **policies** that have a bearing on the socio-economic conditions within the Wrexham rural area*” (paragraph 1.5).
- Carmarthenshire produced a five year rural regeneration programme in 2003, drawn up by Carmarthenshire County Council with the support of the Welsh Development Agency. The plan is intended to stimulate the local economy; revitalise towns and villages; create new jobs; maximise economic development opportunities; help existing businesses expand and encourage start-ups. It draws on funding from Objective One, Carmarthenshire County Council, WDA, WAG Local Regeneration Fund, WTB, Heritage Lottery Fund and the private sector.

3.53 Despite the recommendation of *Planning Policy Wales 2002* and the WLGA that unitary authorities prepare rural development strategies, only two unitary authorities have done so (see Box 3.3, above).

3.54 All the unitary authorities surveyed are involved with administering the delivery of European, WAG and WDA rural programmes in eligible areas.

Recognising the rural dimension: what is ‘rural Wales?’

3.55 Recognition of the rural dimension is complicated by the fact that while there exist definite rural *policies* and *programmes* there is **no commonly-agreed definition of rural Wales (Welsh Assembly Government Statistics Division)**. At the EU, UK and Wales levels, population structure and density, income and employment variables, other socio-economic indicators and environmental and territorial issues are variously used, according for what purpose ‘rural’ is being defined. No single index is recognised as a standard measure.

3.56 In 1997 the Welsh Office issued a consultation paper on the definition of rural areas in Wales. This proposed that communities with a population of less than 3000 which contained no overspill from larger settlements would be defined as ‘wholly rural’, with other communities being defined as either ‘wholly non-rural’ or ‘partly rural’. In 1999 this definition was revised, on the basis that these measures were too crude. It was replaced by a far more subjective definition of rural Wales that considers the whole of Wales to be rural, except for a small list of communities in towns and cities with populations over 10,000.

3.57 The most commonly-used – or at least, referred to – definition of rural Wales is based on population density and organised around unitary authority boundaries. Areas with a population density of fewer than 150 residents per square kilometre (a definition specified by the OECD) are classified as rural. The nine Welsh unitary authorities that fall into this category are taken to represent rural Wales. This is the definition used by the Welsh Assembly Government Statistical Directorate.

3.58 In addition, a number of wards within three otherwise ‘urban’ unitary authorities have been termed ‘rural’ on the basis of low population density within an otherwise high population density area. This is often referred to as the ‘9+3’ definition of rural Wales.

3.59 In practice, however, the ‘rural Wales’ referred to in policy and programme documentation is far more fluid and ambiguous. The most recent National Economic Development Strategy and Strategic Plan for Wales, *A Winning Wales* and *Wales: A Better Country* identify ‘rural Wales’ as facing particular challenges and needing specific attention compared to ‘Wales’, but do not define it. The *Rural Development Plan for Wales 2000-2006* does not clearly define rural Wales, other than to identify it as those areas of Wales which are not ‘urban’ while not defining ‘urban’. *‘Wales is a predominantly rural country. The plan is therefore intended to apply to the whole of Wales, except for those parts which are clearly urban and developed’* (p.13). It goes on to stress that rural Wales includes not only the nine predominantly rural counties based on population density, but also any areas where ‘rural’ activities occur. *‘All the administrative areas in Wales include some parts that exhibit rural characteristics and problems, and where rural activities are undertaken’* (p. 13). The same phrase appears in the LEADER+ Single Programming Document for Wales. Neither documents, however, details what they define as ‘rural’ activities.

3.60 The RDP goes on to stress the difficulty of making a clear distinction between urban and rural Wales in terms of existing administrative boundaries. It argues that:

It is important to recognise that, while the concept of ‘rural Wales’ is readily recognisable, and indeed evocative...there is no distinct boundary separating the urban and rural areas of Wales... the boundaries are blurred by commuting and shopping patterns and by leisure and recreation choices...rural Wales is not an unambiguously identifiable economic region. (p.13)

3.61 This blurring emphasises characteristics, needs and priorities shared by rural and urban areas.

The problems associated with, for example, high unemployment rates and low GDP levels are common to both urban and rural communities and the Assembly’s aim for a better, stronger economy applies equally to the two areas. (Objective 2 SPD, p.4)

3.62 At the same time there is an emphasis on the increasing interconnections and interdependencies between rural and urban Wales: *“There is a natural and increasing interdependence between countryside and town”* (RDP, p.13; Leader+ SPD, p.19).

3.63 The ‘subjective’ nature of ‘rural’ definitions is the subject of debate by academics, policy-makers and practitioners. Increasingly it is asserted that there **cannot be any definitive, ‘objective’ definition of rural** given the diverse social, economic and environmental characteristics of the different areas nominally classified as ‘rural’ within Wales, the wider UK and Europe.¹⁰ CCW, for example, while it has adopted a Land Use Consultants typology that identifies ‘near urban’,

¹⁰ DETR/MAFF (2000), *Our Countryside: The Future. A Fair Deal for Rural England*, The Stationery Office, Norwich

‘accessible’ rural and ‘remote rural’ categories, considers that *‘The urban/rural distinction is eroding in Wales as elsewhere’*.

3.64 Some commentators have used this assertion as a basis to argue that seeking to define and target ‘rural areas’ distinct from ‘non-rural areas’ is not only impractical but also unhelpful, and that other area definitions should be used. The WDA have adopted this way of thinking, arguing that attempts to make rigid – and, as they see it, artificial – distinctions between rural and urban issues are actively unhelpful in terms of developing policies addressing the needs of rural Wales, given the diverse characteristics of different areas given the label ‘rural’.

What really concerns me is making this absolute distinction between rural and urban when it comes to policy and funding ...different parts of rural Wales are very different in terms of their needs and opportunities, so coming up with a too-thick prescription is absolutely wrong in my view. ... And I think therefore this sometimes artificial divide between urban and rural we need to get away from in some respects.
(Ann Watkin, Head of Rural Policy, WDA)

3.65 At one point the Rural Development Plan for Wales also appears, perhaps rather counter-intuitively, to favour a similar approach:

More important than an unambiguous definition of rural Wales – whose achievement would be neither practical nor desirable – is the need to draw on a broad span of data sources that reflect the current state of the rural economy and the quality of life of those living and working in the countryside, in market towns or in rural villages.

3.66 In the broader EU and Welsh rural policy context, however, it is evident that the rural-urban distinction – however difficult to make, and however blurred and imprecise – is still seen by many as vital to the effective development and implementation of successful policies and programmes. Having emphasized the ambiguity of rural definitions, and having given caveats regarding use of the term ‘rural’, both the RDP and the structural funding Single Programming Documents conclude that there is sufficient distinction between rural and urban areas of Wales to necessitate differing approaches to them.

There are significant economic, social and cultural differences between rural and urban areas, and consequently differing needs and priorities. (RDP, p.13 and LEADER+ SPD, p.19)

[T]he underlying economic structure, social and cultural way of life in rural Wales is different from urban areas and the Assembly recognises that its policies and programmes must reflect differing local needs and priorities... (Objective 2 SPD, p.4)

[W]ilst they are in many ways interdependent, many of the challenges facing Wales’ rural communities are distinct from their urban counterparts. (Objective 3 ODP, p.85)

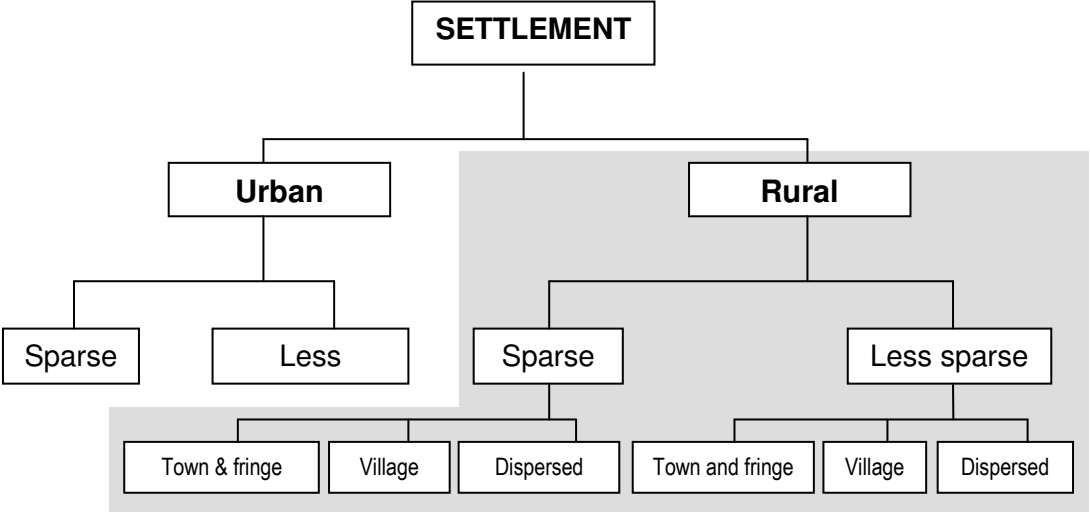
Figure 4 (over page) depicts a categorisation of rural-urban distinctions produced by the Statistics Directorate of the Welsh Assembly Government.

3.67 Recognition of the tensions and inadequacies of existing rural-urban classification schemes across the UK has resulted in the Rural and Urban Definitions Project (see www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/nrudp.asp). This joint project, funded by the Office for National Statistics, DEFRA, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Countryside Agency and the National Assembly for Wales, is intended to establish a harmonised and standardised classification of urban and rural areas for England and Wales.

3.68 The project has mainly focused on the classification of rural areas. It has adopted a ‘settlement approach’ based on the identification of rural towns, villages and scattered dwellings within a grid framework containing cells of 1 hectare. This ‘settlement framework grid’ is then used as the basis for the classification of Output Areas and Census Area Statistics wards in terms of settlement context and settlement form.

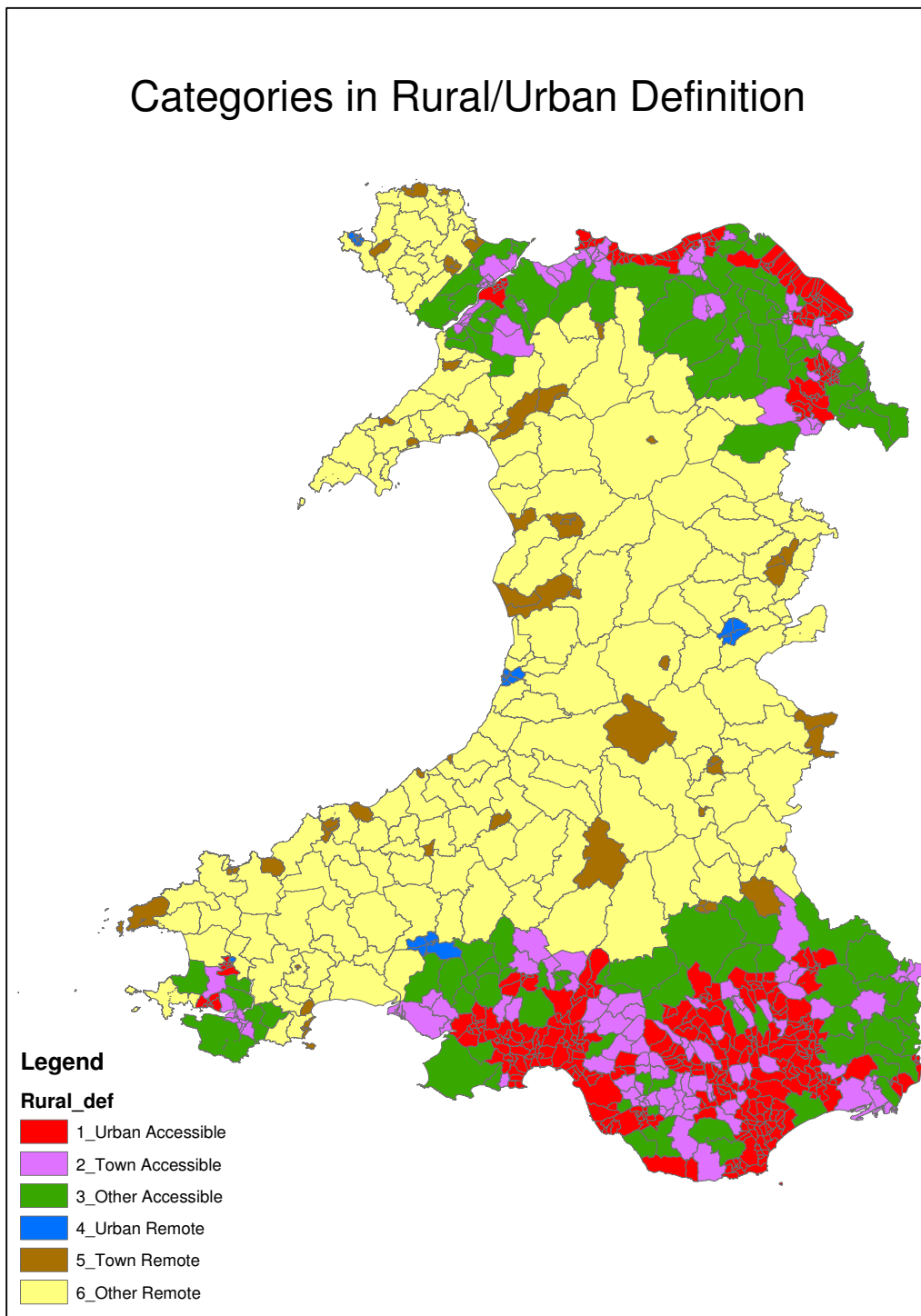
3.69 Areas are defined as ‘rural’ when the majority of the population does not live in a settlement of 10,000 or more. Rural areas are divided into one of six categories, as outlined in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Rural and urban classifications, defined by the Rural and Urban Definitions Project (2004)



3.70 The project aims to encourage common standards of data presentation and statistical analysis, mainly in understanding socio-economic issues affecting people living in different types of urban and rural areas. It is yet to be seen what implications the new classification will have in terms of both developing and delivering policy.

Figure 4 Map of rural and urban classification of Wales, defined by StatsWales (2004)



Chapter summary

Recognising the rural dimension

Recognition of the rural dimension of the economy, society, culture and environment of Wales is variable across different scales of policy and between different government bodies in Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government recognises that there is a need to consider rural Wales as a distinct policy arena. In its strategic plans for the development of Wales it has stated its commitment to a sustainable rural economy, a sustainable rural environment and sustainable rural communities. It has created a dedicated Rural Policy Division within the Department for Environment, Planning and Countryside. Beyond this broad commitment, however, there is little evidence of a coherent set of endogenously-developed policies for the Welsh countryside.

There is little commitment to ensuring that ‘mainstream’ policies and programmes take account of the rural dimension. Responsibility for this task lies entirely with the Rural Policy Division of the Department for Environment, Planning and Countryside; there is no duty on other departments within WAG to consult with the RPD. This contrasts unfavourably with the arrangements in England and Scotland, where there are specific commitments to and mechanisms for so-called ‘rural proofing’.

There is little recognition of rural Wales as a distinct policy and programme arena amongst the key non-elected public bodies charged with Welsh development. Only ELWa dedicates resources to rural areas or issues, although the Wales Tourist Board has recently formulated an action plan for the future of tourism in rural areas. Other Assembly-Sponsored Public Bodies largely lack a clear or explicit focus on rural Wales other than in the delivery of EU and WAG rural programmes. The Welsh Development Agency focuses on the local delivery of national programmes and argues a case for downplaying rural-urban distinctions. In several cases it is apparent that ASPBs do not consider rural areas to be distinct from urban areas. In many cases it is unclear on what evidence – if any – this assessment is based.

There is no consensus across unitary authorities regarding the need for dedicated resources and programmes to support rural areas. Some unitary authorities take the view that all their policies and activities support rural areas; others identify a need to distinguish between the needs and interests of their rural and urban areas. In part, this reflects variation in the territorial remits of local authorities covering rural areas. A number of authorities consider their remits to be wholly rural, in which case all their resources are in effect committed to rural areas. Others consider that they cover both rural and urban areas, but across such authorities there is little evidence of a concerted recognition of distinct rural needs and priorities.

The lack of specific rural policy in Wales is in part a factor of the ambiguity and fluidity regarding definitions of ‘rural Wales’. There is no commonly-agreed definition; rural Wales is defined differently according for what purposes it is being defined. This complicates the development and implementation of policies, programmes and resources for rural areas in Wales.

SECTION 4

FARMING AND ECONOMY AT THE HEART OF RURAL POLICY

This chapter considers the sectoral balance of rural policies and programmes in Wales. In particular, the chapter considers:

- The shift from ‘agrarian development’ to ‘rural development’
- Integrated rural development
- The balance of funding between different rural support measures
- Key programmes for rural community development and regeneration

A summary of the discussion is provided at the end of the chapter (p.50).

From agricultural fundamentalism to integrated rural development

4.1 Rural policy has traditionally considered agriculture to be fundamental to the Welsh countryside. Accordingly, measures to support rural areas have predominantly focused on the support of agriculture, particularly incentives to manage production and regulate markets. This approach which assumes that the interests of farmers and the interests of the wider countryside are largely identical, has been termed ‘agricultural fundamentalism’.

4.2 This is not to say that wider rural development was completely neglected. Job creation outside the agriculture sector, rural depopulation and community regeneration were also concerns of government. Measures were taken to encourage craft and small-scale manufacturing in selected rural areas and to support village halls and key services. In Wales, these issues led to the creation of the Mid-Wales Industrial Development Board in 1957, which later became the Development Board for Rural Wales. For the most part, however, the social and wider economic development of rural areas were kept separate from agricultural policy.

4.3 In recent years, this emphasis has changed. Increasingly, rural policy recognises that although agriculture is still highly significant in terms of its environmental, social and cultural contributions to rural areas, and the percentage of land it occupies¹¹, its economic contribution and employment base is dwindling¹². At the same time, there has been increasing emphasis on the inter-relatedness and mutual dependence of agriculture and wider rural economies, societies and cultures.

4.4 At the UK level, this shift was made clear in the 1995-6 White Papers for Rural England, Scotland and Wales, and in the 2000 Rural White Paper for England. There has also been a movement at the European level, away from market-orientated support mechanisms in favour of broader rural development measures¹³.

¹¹ 70% of land in Wales is agricultural (source: Draft Wales Spatial Plan 2003)

¹² In 2000, agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing accounted for 1.5% of Wales’ total GDP and 1.9% of all employment in Wales.

¹³ However, rural development measures throughout the EU between 2000 – 2006 only account for 11% of the total CAP budget.

4.5 According to one estimate, the 2001 outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease in the UK, cost the economy of rural Wales £120m in the tourism sector, £62m in agriculture and £19m in other sectors¹⁴. The outbreak dramatically heightened awareness of the interrelated nature of different rural issues, serving as a reminder that agriculture and the wider rural economy, environment and society are interdependent.

Integrated rural development in Wales

4.6 This shift in thinking has increasingly led to solutions being framed by the notion of integrated rural development. Integrated rural development (IRD) considers rural areas as multi-functional spaces, acknowledging the wide range of different interests operating, or at least potentially operating, within them. As well as agriculture, these interests include, but are not limited to: community development, non-agricultural business enterprises, tourism, environmental protection, conservation of the built environment, fishing and aquaculture, field sports, and forestry. IRD appreciates and seeks to take account of the complexities of and interactions between these different functions and interests, adopting a ‘network’ rather than a sectoral approach to link diverse actors.

4.7 There is some evidence of a move towards a more integrated approach to rural issues in Wales. Most apparent is the creation of a Ministerial portfolio for Environment, Planning and Countryside, with an accompanying committee and department, for the second term of the Assembly, which replaced the Agriculture and Rural Affairs portfolio of the first term.

4.8 The portfolio brings together the different elements of the Welsh Assembly Government’s responsibilities for the sustainable development of the countryside and wider and is intended to foster a more ‘joined up’ approach to government. It embraces planning, environmental policy including countryside issues, the National Parks Authorities and agricultural and rural affairs.

4.9 In July 2004 Welsh Conservatives called for a dedicated Rural Affairs Minister in the National Assembly, arguing that combining the post with planning and the environment results in many rural issues – in particular, agriculture - being neglected. They substantiate this by claiming that currently rural affairs receive as little as one hour every three weeks in the Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee. In response to this call, Labour defend the current arrangement claiming that to separate agriculture and rural issues from environment and planning would be “isolationist” and outdated”:

Agriculture plays an important role in the success of rural Wales, but to say that it needs to be separated from our strategy on tourism and the environment is ridiculous. (Labour Pembrokeshire Preseli AM Tamsin Dunwoody-Kneafsey)

¹⁴ Midmore, P. (2001) *The economic impact of Foot and Mouth Disease on the rural economy of Wales: updated analysis and forecasts.* (Briefing paper prepared for the Welsh Development Agency) IRS, Aberystwyth

4.10 In principle, the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2000-2006, aims to provide an integrated policy framework for the development of rural Wales. The plan follows the principles of the EU Rural Development Regulation (RDR), which emphasises the inter-relationships between and mutual inter-dependence of agriculture, environment and wider economy. While the plan stresses that agriculture remains of critical importance to the Welsh countryside, it attempts to establish a coherent framework for farm, agri-environmental and wider rural development (see box 4.1. for examples of such initiatives). Its priorities are strengthening the agricultural and forestry sectors, improving the competitiveness of rural areas and preserving the environment and rural heritage.

Box 4.1. Agri-environmental and farm diversification schemes in Wales

Tir Gofal is an agri-environmental scheme which has been available across Wales since 1999, offering payment to farmers for the sustainable management of their land. It aims to integrate whole farm environmental and agricultural management under a single agreement. Farmers are offered financial incentives to protect wildlife and existing habitats, create new habitats, encourage more public access and protect the landscape including historical/archaeological features. It is part-funded by the EU through the CAP's agri-environment measures; the scheme is administered by the Countryside Council for Wales on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government.

Farming Connect offers a service for farming families in Wales to innovate and adapt their farm business. It aims to encourage agricultural practices which protect and enhance the cultural and environmental landscapes of Wales and contains four main elements:

1. Land management
2. Creating new access
3. Capital to protect and manage habitats and features and to support new access provision
4. Training for farmers

A network of Farming Connect facilitators deliver the scheme, acting as a link between this service and the Welsh farming community. They provide farmers with local access to services to assist with enquiries. Projects include the creation of farm business development plans, advice on training, environmental management advice and signposting to potential grants.

4.11 A Winning Wales, while it stresses “the contribution of the farming industry to Welsh rural communities and the countryside” and emphasizes the importance of achieving “*a sustainable long-term future for agriculture for Wales*” (p.17), also focuses on the need to diversify the structural base of the Welsh rural economy. “[E]mployment in farming is in long-term decline...there is a crucial need to develop new employment and business opportunities” (p.18). There is a commitment to “*strengthen the contribution of tourism to the rural economy*” as well as to implement *Farming for the Future* (p.18).

4.12 Likewise, the comprehensive statement on rural Wales produced by the Rural Partnership for Wales – which the RDP took note of – states that “*a successful rural economy does not revolve around agriculture alone*”, and called for agriculture to be more integrated within the wider rural economy. The

statement's seven priorities for action, detailed earlier in this document, are similarly catholic in relation to rural development more generally.

4.13 An integrated approach to rural development was also the nominal basis and rationale of both *Farming for the Future* and the Assembly's *Rural Recovery Plan* launched in 2001 in the aftermath of Foot and Mouth disease.

4.14 Planning Policy Wales assumes similar principles and specifically calls for the integration of policy for rural Wales.

the countryside is a dynamic and multi-purpose resource. In line with sustainability principles, it must be conserved and, where possible, enhanced for the sake of its ecological, geological, physiographic, historical, archaeological and agricultural value and for its landscape and natural resources, balancing the need to conserve these attributes against the economic, social and recreational needs of local communities and visitors. For these aims and priorities to be realised it will be essential that social, economic and environmental policies are fully integrated. (p.17)

4.15 Other Welsh rural policy makes little mention of 'integrated rural development' or 'integrated rural policy'. Instead, there is a strong emphasis on 'sustainable development' and 'sustainable development policy', in line with the Welsh Assembly's cross-cutting theme of pursuing the goal of sustainable development in all its activities. At the wider strategic level in Wales, 'sustainable development' is effectively a surrogate term for 'integrated development', since it involves integrating social, economic and environmental objectives.

Farming at the heart of Welsh rural policy

4.16 Beyond the broad rhetoric of integrated rural development, it is clear that agriculture remains the key focus of rural development measures in Wales. The Rural Partnership's comprehensive statement on rural Wales describes family farms as the "backbone of Welsh rural communities", an oft-quoted sentiment. Likewise, *Farming for the Future* recognises family farming as critical to the economy, society and environment of rural Wales.

Agriculture and food processing make a significant contribution to the economy in rural Wales... Farming is, in addition, responsible for shaping the quality of the rural environment, and...makes a crucial indirect contribution to tourism. Beyond that, the family farm is integral to the character of rural Wales and to the social fabric of rural communities.

4.17 In the financial year 2003 to 2004, the Assembly Government allocated £409,213,000 of its budget specifically for rural issues, via the Department of Environment, Planning and Countryside. The Assembly's 2005-2006 Final Budget indicates that this allocation will be increased to £482,200,000 for 2005 to 2006. The majority of this funding is allocated to market support schemes, other subsidies supporting farm production and environmental protection. Less than 1% is allocated to the Rural Policy Division (which employs only 7 of the c.700 staff working in the Department of Environment Planning and Countryside), which is responsible for non-agricultural rural development programmes. Current draft budget proposals indicate that this balance will continue at least until 2006-7.

4.18 Although the RDP, the most recent coherent policy statement on rural Wales, includes a ‘strategic overview’ covering all sectors in rural Wales, the plan itself is focused almost exclusively on agricultural and agriculture-related development measures.

4.19 Its sectoral priorities are Agriculture and Forestry. Two of its three strategic priorities are predominantly agricultural or agriculture-related: Priority 1 is ‘To create stronger agricultural and forestry sectors’. While Priority 2, ‘To improve the economic competitiveness of rural communities and areas’, is in principle more general than the first priority, its objectives are primarily targeted at supporting agricultural production and the processing and marketing of agricultural produce.

4.20 Only Priority 3, ‘To maintain and protect the environment and rural heritage’, has a broader remit, and this priority receives the least funding. Of the eleven measures for implementing the plan’s three priorities, the majority are directly related to agriculture and land management, for example, good farming practice, agri-environment and forestry.

4.21 As a result, the balance of funding indicated in the RDP is heavily weighted in favour of agriculture and agriculture-related activities (see table 1). “*The need to retain a credible level of funding for support to Less Favoured Areas, and to continue to provide resources for the development of the Tir Gofal and Organic Farming schemes in order to deliver the key components of the strategy...has had the inevitable consequence of directing the majority of resources to the accompanying measures*” (RDP, p. 373). Over 90% of funding is concentrated on such activities, with a further 2.5% given to forestry measures.

4.22 Of greatest significance to wider rural development in Wales is Measure 11 of the Plan: ‘Promoting the adaptation and development of rural areas’, which relates to Article 33 of Council Regulation 1257/1999. In Wales, this receives less than 5% of funding available through the RDP. Support is focused on five of its potential seventeen measures:

- Basic services for the rural economy and population
- Renovation and development of villages and protection and conservation of the rural heritage
- Diversification of agricultural activities and activities close to agriculture to provide multiple activities or alternative incomes
- Encouragement for tourist and craft activities
- Protection of the environment in connection with agriculture, forestry and landscape conservation and the improvement of animal welfare

4.23 The measures of and targets for rural development are agriculture-related even for non-agrarian issues. For example, the two criteria against which economic competitiveness of rural communities and areas will be evaluated relate to creating jobs in the dairy and lamb and beef processing industries and creating ‘*integrated training and advisory services, including a network of demonstration farms...and to have made a measurable impact on the level of business and IT skills and innovation.*’ Of the eleven measures for implementation of the RDP, only one, ‘*Promoting the adaptation and development of rural areas*’, considers broader rural development.

4.24 This sectoral bias is in large part due to the **constraints under which the plan was developed**. As discussed in Section 2 of this document, agricultural development is the key priority of the EU policy framework under which the Plan was created. At the same time, the relatively low level of EAGGF funding available for Article 33 measures under the RDP led the Assembly to restrict support to only five of those measures.

4.25 The limited support for Article 33 measures is in large part due to limited resources for implementing the Plan as a whole. This, in turn, is primarily a consequence of the legacy of previous UK spending decisions under European programmes. The funding for the RDR, under which the RDP was created, is based on criteria that are largely based on members' previous spending on the environment, countryside management and rural development. As a result of the UK Treasury's previously low levels of spending on non-compulsory measures of the EAGGF, the UK has been allocated only 3.5% of the EU's RDR budget for 2000 – 2006 (France, for example has been allocated 17.6% of the budget)¹⁵. This is supplemented in Objective 1 areas by the guidance portion of the EAGGF.

Table 1: Breakdown of Indicative Financial Expenditure associated with the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2000-2006, € millions (Source: *Rural Development Plan for Wales 2000-2006*, p.184)

| | Public Cost | EU Contribution | National Top-up | Total € m Expenditure | Total % Expenditure |
|---|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Priority 1 | | | | | |
| Investment in agricultural holdings | 4.34 | 1.09 | 0.00 | 5.43 | 0.68 |
| Afforestation of agricultural land | 10.12 | 5.06 | 0.00 | 15.18 | 1.90 |
| Other forestry measures | 1.74 | 0.87 | 1.74 | 4.35 | 0.55 |
| Diversification | 1.26 | 0.62 | 2.06 | 3.94 | 0.49 |
| Tourist and craft activities | 2.32 | 1.17 | 3.89 | 7.38 | 0.93 |
| Priority 2 | | | | | |
| Training | 3.44 | 1.72 | 5.30 | 10.46 | 1.31 |
| Processing and marketing of agricultural products | 8.12 | 4.03 | 11.86 | 24.01 | 3.01 |
| Priority 3 | | | | | |
| Agri-environment: Objective 1 | 28.72 | 21.53 | 40.61 | 90.86 | 11.39 |
| Agri-environment: non-Objective 1 | 28.68 | 14.35 | 40.61 | 83.64 | 10.49 |
| Less Favoured Areas | 363.81 | 59.95 | 0.00 | 423.76 | 53.13 |
| Basic Services | 2.32 | 1.16 | 3.89 | 7.37 | 0.92 |
| Renovation of villages | 2.32 | 1.16 | 3.89 | 7.37 | 0.92 |
| Protection of environment | 6.75 | 1.71 | 0.00 | 8.46 | 1.06 |
| Total | 463.94 | 114.42 | 113.85 | 692.21 | 86.78 |
| Evaluation | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Ongoing contracts: Agri-env | 65.86 | 32.93 | 0.00 | 98.79 | 12.38 |
| Forestry | 4.44 | 2.22 | 0.00 | 6.66 | 0.83 |
| Total ongoing contracts | 70.30 | 35.15 | 0.00 | 105.45 | 13.22 |
| Total programme | 534.24 | 149.57 | 113.85 | 797.66 | 100.00 |

¹⁵ Lowe, P. et al. (2002) *Setting the next agenda? British and French approaches to the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy*. Journal of Rural Studies, 18 1-17

4.26 The Assembly itself considers that this imbalance, while justified, is far from an ideal state of affairs.

[T]he acute shortage of resources requires a concentration on key social, economic and environmental levers...[but the] effect [of this prioritisation] is that the resources able to be devoted to the non-accompanying measures ...are insufficient to achieve a balance between the different support measures with which the Assembly is wholly satisfied. (RDP, p.373).

4.27 The need to strengthen EU financial support for rural development has been an important element of CAP reform discussions. In the June 2003 mid-term review a new system of compulsory modulation was introduced, which allows member states to use funding previously allocated to agri-environmental measures to finance either new rural development measures introduced in CAP reform, or to reinforce existing measures. Amendments to EC Council regulation 1257/1999 in September 2003, introduced four new measures, all of which shift the emphasis of support for rural areas away from pure production and towards more integrated rural development:

- Support to producers for quality food production
- Provide time limited aid to farmers facing new legislative requirements
- Provide income support for farmers who use production methods that are over and above standard practice
- Provide aid for the management of integrated rural development strategies by local partnerships under Article 33

Other programmes for rural development and rural community regeneration

4.28 In addition to agricultural support there are a number of key programmes which support wider rural development and rural community regeneration across Wales.

4.29 The EU **Objective 1** programme is aimed at promoting the development and structural adjustment of the EU regions which are ‘most lagging’ in terms of economic development. Although it is a regional rather than a rural development programme, it includes substantial rural areas. The West Wales and the Valleys region has Objective 1 status from 2000 -2006 as a result of its GDP being less than 75% of EU average (see figure 5). The Objective 1 Single Programming Document (SPD) for West Wales and the Valleys identifies seven key priorities, of which one is “*rural development and the sustainable use of natural resources*”.

4.30 The Objective 1 programme in Wales is designed to achieve:

- A high quality, job-creating, diversified, innovative and knowledge-driven economy
- A skilled, enterprising and adaptable workforce
- Prosperity and a high quality of life for communities across all parts of West Wales and the Valleys, both urban and rural

4.31 The EU Objective 2 programme is aimed at supporting the economic and social regeneration of areas with underlying structural weaknesses. Like Objective 1, it is a regional development programme which covers substantial areas of rural Wales. In Wales eligible areas include Powys and Newport, most of Monmouthshire, wards in Cardiff and wards in Wrexham and the Vale of Glamorgan. The Objective 2 SPD identifies four priorities, one of which is “*sustainable rural development*”.

4.32 The programme’s key objectives are:

- To increase employment growth
- To promote economic diversification
- To develop sustainable communities

4.33 LEADER+ is the key EU funded programme for promoting the development and regeneration of rural areas. It is the latest of a series of LEADER initiatives starting with LEADER I during the period of 1991-1993, LEADER II during the period 1994-1999 and finally LEADER + from 2000-2006. It differs from earlier programmes in that it has a more thematic approach that narrows the range and types of initiatives that can be funded under it.

4.34 LEADER + encourages the development and implementation of “innovative” approaches towards rural community development. Emphasis is placed on the sustainability of pilot projects. The aim of LEADER+ in Wales is “*To pilot innovative approaches to rural development which will contribute to a more sustainable society, economy and environment for rural Wales.*” It is intended to mesh with the strategic framework established by the Rural Development Plan and to complement activities supported under Objectives 1, 2 and 3.

4.35 The objectives of the programme are:

- To test new approaches to rural development
- To build the capacity of target groups, communities and businesses and encourage their involvement in the development of their localities
- To secure the sustainability of successful pilot projects by integrating into mainstream programmes
- To learn from other rural areas and participate in joint activities where appropriate

4.36 The Welsh Assembly Government has introduced several programmes to support rural community regeneration (see box 4.2 for one such example). Its flagship programme is Rural Community Action (RCA), launched in 2003. RCA seeks to meet one of the Assembly’s main priorities for rural areas:

to develop communities where people want to live, work and visit, where there is access to economic opportunity and reward, a pleasant and safe environment and active and inclusive social community networks.

4.37 The Rural Community Action Programme is very similar to the LEADER approach. It requires that development strategies are innovative and integrative; programmes are community-led, and; they complement other mainstream initiatives. RCA does target a slightly broader range of target groups, including retail services and elderly people in addition to groups covered by LEADER+. The mid-term evaluation of LEADER+ reflects that the Rural Community Action Plan:

can be regarded as the 'mainstreamed' or 'nationalised' LEADER II Programme in Wales, differentiating itself from LEADER+ primarily by the required thematic focus of the latter...its complementarity to LEADER+ can be established, supporting community-based, innovative, rural development 'outside' the thematic focus of a Local Action Group

Box 4.2 Rural Stress Scheme

The Rural Stress Scheme was launched in 2001 as part of the Assembly's *Rural Recovery Plan*. The scheme supported a range of limited-life initiatives providing advice and other assistance to people with problems and distress in rural communities caused or exacerbated by the Foot and Mouth outbreak.

The scheme was administered by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) and facilitated by the Rural Stress Information Network.

In recognition of ongoing needs, the Welsh Assembly Government allocated a further £550k to the scheme in March 2003. This scheme closed in March 2004.

4.38 Rhetorically, Assembly Government policy distinguishes between and emphasises the equal importance of economic, social and environmental objectives regarding rural Wales. It also recognises the need to integrate these three spheres in order to achieve sustainable rural development.

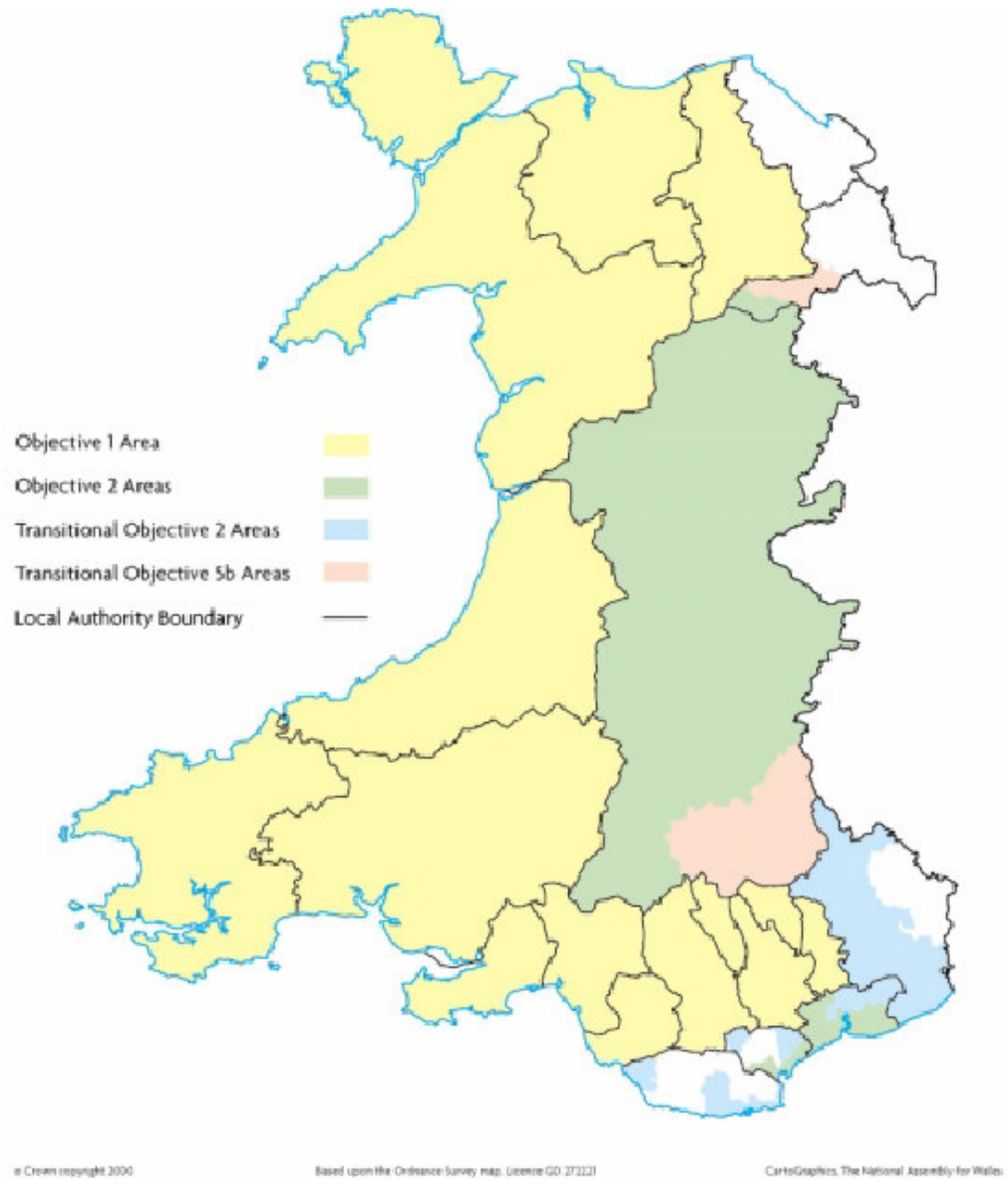
4.39 In practice there is a clear priority given to economic measures. The *Rural Development Plan* outlines three strategic priorities – the creation of “*stronger agricultural and forestry sectors*”, improving “*the economic competitiveness of rural communities and areas*” and protecting “*the environment and rural heritage*” (pp. 156-157) – of which two are predominantly concerned with economic development.

4.40 The non-economic priorities of the RDP are environmental protection and conservation and biodiversity, reflecting the shifting emphasis of EU policy away from intensive agricultural production towards more environmentally-sustainable farming.

4.41 The arenas of society and culture receive no attention outside of the ‘strategic overview’ and ‘supporting basic services’. At the same time, support for service provision and the conservation of rural heritage are situated in the context of economic development.

- “*Support will be provided...for the cost effective enhancement of basic services...in East Wales*” because “*A lack of basic service provision limits the scope for the rural economy to develop fully*”
- “[S]upport should be provided...for the renovation and development of villages and protection and conservation of rural heritage in East Wales” because “*the built environment of rural Wales and the area’s natural resources have the potential to provide a significant contribution to the area’s prosperity*” (RDP, p.163).

Figure 5 Mainstream structural fund programme areas in Wales, 2000 -2006



4.42 More support and emphasis is given to social issues through LEADER+ and Rural Community Action. These programmes, however, do not amount or contribute to a coherent policy framework that integrates social, economic and environmental interests.

Chapter summary

Farming and economy at the heart of rural policy

Agriculture has a strong influence on policy for rural Wales. It frames the three major rural policy documents: the *Rural Development Plan for Wales*, the *Rural Recovery Plan* and *Farming for the Future*. All of these emphasise the interdependence between agriculture and the rural economy, society and environment and seek to outline a shift for Welsh farming which will result in positive benefits for rural Wales more generally.

In principle, there is a commitment to 'integrated rural development' in Wales. This involves appreciating and seeking to take account of the requirements, and values of different sectoral interests and the interaction between them. It moves away from the notion that farming can be considered independently of other rural issues, and looks towards co-ordinating policies for agriculture, the wider economy, environment and society. Some of the impetus for this commitment has come from policy shifts at the EU level; some of it has come from the Welsh Assembly Government's duty to pursue sustainable development in all its work.

Despite this, rural policy in Wales is still heavily weighted in favour of farming. The dominant emphasis on agriculture and the diversification of agriculture neglects other actors and sectors in rural Wales. There is far less support, in terms of dedicated policy and funding, for wider rural development and regeneration beyond farming.

SECTION 5

DIVERSE POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES FOR A DIVERSE WELSH COUNTRYSIDE

This chapter discusses the geographical coverage of policies and programmes impacting on rural Wales. In particular, the chapter considers:

- The uneven support for different rural areas across Wales
- The shift from ‘rural development’ to ‘regional development’
- The implications of the Wales Spatial Plan for rural policy
- Local programmes for rural community regeneration

A summary of the discussion is provided at the end of the chapter (p.61).

5.1 To some extent, the existence of distinct policies and programmes for rural areas depends on the notion that rural Wales is a uniform space that can be targeted as a coherent, unified entity. At both the policy and the programme level, however, there is evidence of a move away from this approach.

5.2 As noted in Section 3, there is an increasing emphasis on the shared challenges faced by rural and urban areas, which to some extent blurs the distinction between them. At the same time, there is growing recognition that rural Wales is itself differentiated, and that different areas face distinct challenges and have differing needs and priorities.¹⁶ The debate over definitions of ‘rural’ and ‘rural Wales’, noted in Section 3, in part reflects this shift.

5.3 *Planning Policy Wales 2002*, which outlines the land-use planning policies of the Welsh Assembly Government, comments that rural Wales is differentiated and outlines priorities for regulating activity in rural areas according to that differentiation:

- Limiting new development in the countryside, particularly the “open countryside” and areas now allocated for development in Unitary Development Plans. Any new development should “respect and support local distinctiveness” (p.19).
- Conserving the “best and most versatile agricultural land”, unless other contingencies, such as the special designation of lower grade land in cases where there is particular development pressure, necessitate overriding this principle (p.25).
- Supporting the diversification of “traditional rural industries” while facilitating the development of “small-scale enterprises” by making land available within or around small settlements (p. 79).

5.4 Several policy and programme documents note the differing needs and interests of different parts of rural Wales. The Rural Development Plan for Wales notes that while some measures included in the plan will apply to ‘*the totality of rural Wales*’,

¹⁶ This shift in policy emphasis is discussed further in Section 6.

there is absolutely no presumption that the issues identified in this plan...are uniformly relevant across rural areas. The inevitable consequence is that some of the priorities and measures identified in this plan must be tailored to the differing needs of different rural areas within Wales. (p.13).

5.5 The Objective 1 Single Programming Document for Wales – which targets many nominally rural areas although it is not wholly rural in focus – does not adopt a simple rural–urban distinction. It argues that such a bifurcation is too crude to enable the effective targeting of initiatives, given the differences both between and within the different administrative areas within Wales and the shared characteristics of many urban and rural communities.

5.6 Instead, it defines in its own terms two types of sub-area within the Objective 1 area in Wales: ‘**Deprived communities** in rural, urban and valleys environments who will receive specific targeted support based on need’ and ‘**Rural communities** who may benefit from most of the general interventions but require specific support to tackle the particular problems of peripherality and to ensure that they are able to access these general programmes’ (Objective 1 SPD, p.9).

5.7 Reflecting this, funding under Measure 4, Priority 5 of Objective 1, aimed at the promotion, adaptation and development of rural areas, has been awarded to two projects in ‘urban’ unitary authorities (Caerphilly and Torfaen).

Uneven territorial support

5.8 While there is some consensus on the need for support specifically targeted at rural areas of Wales as they are currently defined – as evidenced by *Rural Wales: A statement by the Rural Partnership (1999)* - the support currently available is unevenly distributed. Out of three main programmes targeted at rural community regeneration, LEADER+, Rural Community Action and Article 33 of the Rural Development Plan for Wales, only RCA covers the whole of rural Wales (see Figure 6). A limited number of wards are eligible for all three of these schemes (14 rural wards in Wrexham and 6 in Monmouthshire), whilst Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and the rural parts of the Vale of Glamorgan are eligible for only one scheme.

5.9 LEADER+, the main EU programme for supporting rural development, was not available to all of rural Wales as officially defined by the Welsh Assembly Government Statistical Directorate. Applications for LEADER+ status were invited from groups representing areas with a population density of less than 120 inhabitants per square kilometre, excluding those areas with a population density of between 120 and 150 inhabitants per square kilometre.¹⁷ The LEADER+ Single Programming Document acknowledges the inconsistency and narrowness of this definition compared to the definition of rural used in the Objective 1 and 2 programmes but argues that it is *‘justifiable given the innovative nature of the programme and the limited amount of resources available’*(LEADER + SPD, p.19).

¹⁷ Areas defined by the groups had to be geographically, socially and economically ‘coherent’. The LEADER+ guidelines state that areas may be defined “which do not coincide with a national administrative area or with zones established for the purpose of eligibility under Objectives 1 and 2 of the structural funds”. The Single Programming Document for LEADER+ in Wales, however, cautions that groups which are trans-boundary are likely to encounter greater bureaucracy.

Figure 6 Rural Community Action partnership areas

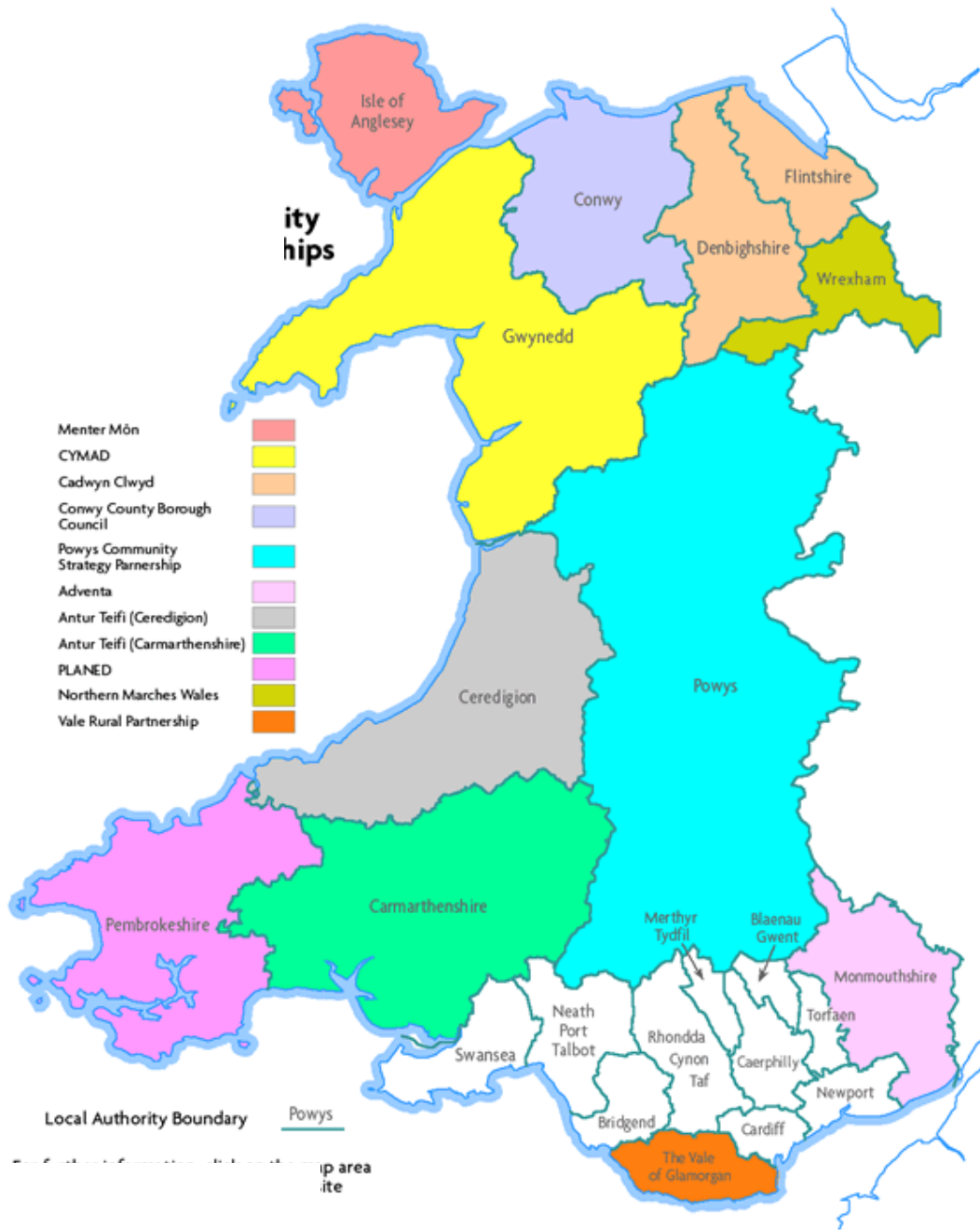


Figure 7 LEADER II areas in Wales



5.10 LEADER+, which runs from 2000-2006, also covers far less of rural Wales than the preceding two LEADER programmes, even though far more areas were in principle eligible for the current programme (the previous programmes were restricted to Objective 1 and 5b areas). Of the fourteen groups that bid for LEADER+ status, only seven were successful. Three groups – based in Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Gwynedd – which had had LEADER II status did not achieve LEADER+ status. One group, based in Conwy, achieved LEADER+ status without having previously had LEADER II status; however, it covers only one ward that was not previously represented by a LEADER II group. This leaves Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Gwynedd and the rural Vale of Glamorgan without access to the community regeneration funding that LEADER+ provides. Figures 7 and 8 depict the areas covered by the LEADER II and LEADER+ programmes.

5.11 The Assembly notified unsuccessful LEADER+ applicants that activities that would have been funded by LEADER+ money could be funded from other ‘mainstream’ sources such as the Local Regeneration Fund. It is not at all apparent, however, that such funding, if it is available, would make up for the failure to gain LEADER+.

5.12 A report (undated) by the chief executive to the Economic Development Scrutiny Committee of Carmarthenshire unitary authority concluded that “*the loss of EU funding...presents both organisations [Antur Teifi and ACTT, previously Leader II groups] with financial difficulties in terms of their ability to support rural regeneration. In Gwynedd, “Concerns were raised by local groups regarding the lack of definite leadership and administrative and financial support following the loss of LEADER+ funding”* (Gwynedd Economic Partnership Annual General Meeting, 12th September 2001).

5.13 The very limited support available under Article 33 of the Rural Development Plan for the provision of basic services in rural areas is currently available only to the rural areas of east Wales that do not have Objective 2 status – Flintshire, Monmouthshire, the Vale of Glamorgan and Wrexham. It will be extended to include the transitional areas of Powys from 2006. Its narrow spatial remit is an attempt to redress the uneven territorial support across rural Wales resulting from the allocation of the EU structural funds.

From rural development to regional development?

5.14 The support provided by programmes targeted specifically at rural areas is only one element of the total support available for economic development and community regeneration in rural Wales. As noted in the introduction, it is important to recognise that the majority of public funding for rural Wales comes through programmes in sectors such as health, transport, education and wider economic development, delivered at both national and local authority scales.

5.15 At the same time, as mentioned in the preceding chapter, substantial parts of rural Wales are targeted by area-based support that is not specifically rural in its focus. While the majority of rural Wales has achieved Objective 1 or 2 status, this is due to below-average GDP – a characteristic it shares with many deprived urban areas in Wales – rather than because it is ‘rural’. Again, this emphasises the shared characteristics of rural and urban areas - although, as discussed above and in the preceding section, regional development programmes do recognise particular challenges and priorities regarding the development of rural areas within the regions targeted.

5.16 Policies and programmes of support for rural areas of Wales in the future are increasingly likely to be based on area characteristics other than nominal ‘rural’ status. The *Wales Spatial Plan*, published in 2004, signals the Welsh Assembly Government’s intention to pursue a spatial development strategy for Wales. At a strategic level the Wales Spatial Plan identifies the different needs and potential of places throughout Wales. It envisages that future national strategy will take greater account of the distinctiveness of different areas and apply a stronger spatial dimension to policies and actions.

5.17 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) places a statutory duty on the Assembly to both prepare the Spatial Plan and keep it under review. This ensures that spatial planning will be integral to the work of the Assembly Government and incorporates a legal duty for local authorities to follow the Spatial Plan. The Welsh Assembly Government’s 2004-5 remit letter to ASPBs identifies the Spatial Plan, along with local authority community strategies, as “*key vehicles*” through which the all-Wales vision set out in *Wales: A Better Country* “*will be translated into specific actions which reflect the differing circumstances of different parts of Wales, urban and rural.*”

5.18 The Spatial Plan identifies six ‘zones’ for Wales that contain areas with comparable attributes, that face common challenges and that have similar opportunities (presented in Figure 9). The plan stresses that the potential of the zones as a whole is more important than individual places within them. The zones have no fixed boundaries, and it is intended that there is a gradual transition between zones.

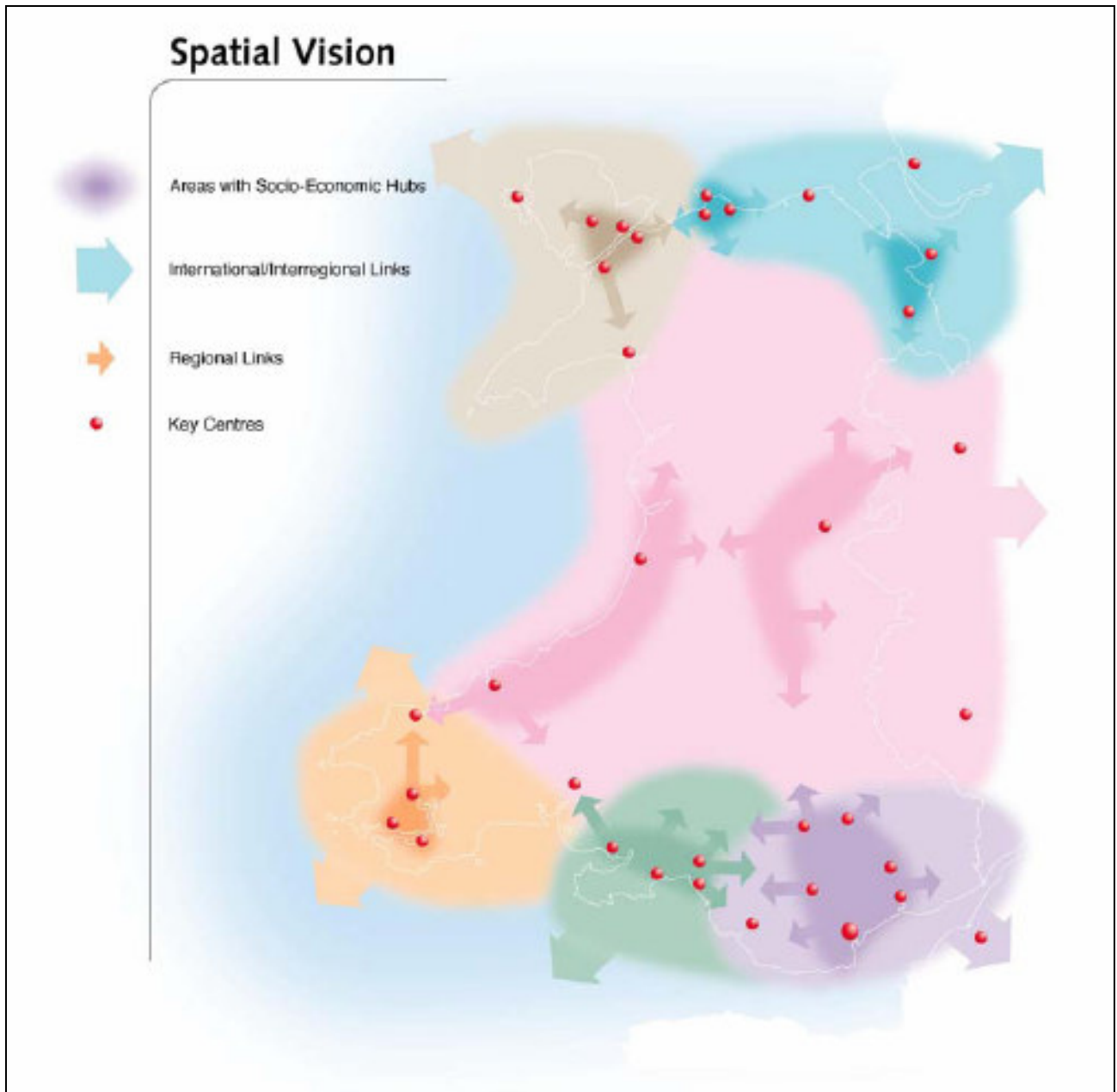
5.19 The Spatial Plan has implications for future rural policy and programmes. In at least two zones, strengthening linkages between towns and rural areas is seen as a priority. In the Consultation Draft Spatial Plan (2003) market towns are seen as critical to this linkage, and identified as potential targets for particular support: “*A network of villages and rural communities look towards these market towns to provide basic service needs with other key services, such as hospitals, being provided in adjoining areas*”. In the final plan, however, this reference has been omitted.

5.20 Likewise, the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) initiative, from which spatial planning in Wales gained much of its momentum, advocates strengthening the partnership and exploiting the potential ‘synergies’ and interdependencies between urban and rural areas. The ESDP endorses ‘polycentric’ development, rather than the core-periphery dichotomy which has traditionally characterised much European regional policy. The spatial methodology seeks to achieve sustainable development and a more even spread of growth across a territory. This approach does not seek to standardise local and regional identities, recognising that different places have different needs and potential. Rather, it attempts to ‘customise’ approaches on a geographical basis in order to fulfil common objectives whilst taking account of local diversity. This enables decisions and policies to co-ordinate sectoral and spatial issues, such as social, economic, environmental and transport concerns.

5.21 Many ASPBs structure their geographical operations on a regional basis. The WDA, CCW and ELWa have regional offices which work across rural and urban areas. The Wales Tourist Board has supported the establishment of four Regional Tourism Partnerships based on the four economic regions of Wales already demarcated by the four economic development fora – the Mid-Wales Partnership, the North Wales Economic Forum, the South-East Wales Economic Forum and the South-West Wales Economic Forum. (Box 5.1 provides details about the WTIB’s Tourism Growth Areas which operate at the local scale.)

5.22 The 'integrated' spatial approach recognises that rural pressures, actions and solutions are embedded within a wider network of sectors, actors and spaces, and the need to act across what may be arbitrary sectoral and functional boundaries. The suggestion, at least by inference, is that it is difficult - and perhaps undesirable – for policy and programmes to consider rural Wales as a static 'spatial container' isolated from the wider social, cultural and economic landscapes in which it is situated.

Figure 9 The National Spatial Perspective outlined in the Wales Spatial Plan (2004)



Box 5.1 Tourism Growth Areas

The WTB has also adopted a local rather than a rural-urban approach in its Tourism Growth Areas (TGA) initiative. While 10 of the 15 TGAs designated encompass predominantly rural localities, none of them are rural areas *per se*. The programme is intended to contribute to realising visions set out in Wales' national tourism strategy *Achieving Our Potential* (published in 2000) and the four regional tourism strategies.

Local regeneration

5.23 Alongside the regional approach to development, policy-makers in Wales are placing increasing emphasis on targeting specific local areas for regeneration.

5.24 Most commonly, areas are targeted on the basis of relative deprivation. The implication is that the social and economic landscape of rural Wales is as diverse as the rest of Wales rather than a homogenous unified space. There is emphasis on the needs and priorities of particular localities and communities, rather than a blanket assumption of need – or lack of need – on the basis of places being in either 'urban' or 'rural' areas.

5.25 This principle is most evident in the Assembly's flagship community regeneration programme, Communities First. The programme is targeted at the hundred most deprived wards of Wales, defined according to the Multiple Index of Deprivation. In addition, bids from communities at sub-ward level are invited from local authority areas which have no wards within the one hundred most deprived within their boundaries. Eligibility for the programme is not contingent on 'rural' or 'urban' status, and both rural and urban communities have been targeted.

5.26 At the same time, some of the development and regeneration funding available specifically for rural areas is being targeted at those areas that do not qualify for Objective 1 and 2 status but that still face acute difficulties. For example, the support available under Article 33 of the Rural Development Plan, is available to rural communities in East Wales only, and support is limited to projects that it is judged will "*support community led projects that widen access to mainstream services for the rural economy and population or marginalised communities*", particularly those that "*can address aspects of social exclusion within remoter rural areas or provide services that encourage entrepreneurship*". Support for the provision or enhancement of services elsewhere in rural Wales is largely provided through wider community development and regeneration initiatives.

5.27 Similarly, the Rural Retail Programme, administered by the WDA, is intended to assist those areas or communities facing the most acute problems in terms of either a lack of basic retail services or a threat to existing basic retail services. This programme aims to improve the sustainability of existing businesses, to encourage the reintroduction of retail facilities into areas from where they have been lost, and to maintain or enhance the services that such businesses provide. It is confined to communities where there is either only one remaining service or no service at all, or where a small number of services are all threatened with closure, and supports the provision of only '*basic and vital services*'. Priority is given to smaller towns and villages, where it is perceived that the need for basic

services will be most acute and where businesses are least likely to receive support from other sources.

5.28 The WDA is increasingly adopting a ‘tool kit’ approach to community regeneration across Wales. It offers a range of support measures, including both capital and revenue funding, which can be tailored towards the needs of particular communities. This will replace the Small Towns and Villages Enterprise Initiative (STVEI) – which itself replaced the DBRW’s ‘Market Towns Initiative’ - which the Agency developed in 2000 to target rural community regeneration.

The Agency [WDA] is an all-Wales organisation which is very keen on local delivery. So, we have got a set of policies, programmes and tools both in support of businesses and in support of businesses, and individuals, which we use in a tool-kit approach, to mix and match in the most appropriate way to deliver against the plans for our priority locations. (Gareth Hall, Chief Executive, WDA)

5.29 A shift from targeting either rural or urban Wales to more strategically targeting specific local areas irrespective of their rural/urban classification is evident in wider WDA policy. Its Business Plan for 2004-7 notes that: “In arriving at our allocations of budget for urban and rural regeneration activities for Year 1 of the Plan, we recognised that a more strategic approach was required for the following years.” The WDA is preparing an all Wales Regeneration Strategy which will identify “prioritised locations for future investment” (p.60).

5.30 LEADER+ does not specifically target need. Applications for LEADER and LEADER II were restricted to groups representing ‘deprived’ rural areas (with Objective 1 or 5b status), applications for Local Action Groups for the 2000-2006 LEADER+ programme in Wales were invited from all areas with a population density of less than 120 inhabitants per square kilometre, regardless of Objective 1 and Objective 2 status. Seven groups were awarded LEADER+ status on the basis of the relative innovativeness, quality and content of applications (which took the form of local area development strategies), rather than according to the relative deprivation of the area they represented (see Fig. 8).

5.31 Similarly, the Assembly’s flagship programme for rural community regeneration, Rural Community Action is available throughout rural Wales. Awards are made on the same basis as LEADER+ - innovativeness and quality of applications.

5.32 The ability of local groups to bid for funding has become increasingly important in shaping the landscape of support for rural community development in Wales, as the next section discusses.

Chapter summary

Diverse policies and programmes for a differentiated Welsh countryside

There is a complex mosaic of programmes impacting on rural Wales. This mosaic includes programmes covering all Wales, programmes available throughout rural Wales, programmes that target specific rural areas, and sectoral initiatives that include rural areas. There are also regional development programmes that include both rural and urban areas but have particular impact on rural areas. This results in an uneven distribution of support across rural areas of Wales. Some areas are covered by a wide range of programmes; others are eligible only for more limited support.

Targeting rural areas is complemented – and to some extent, complicated – by the increasing emphasis on spatial development in Wales. Spatial development concentrates less on the distinctions between rural and urban areas and more on the needs and opportunities shared by different places and the connections between them. The spatial methodology is most evident in the *Wales Spatial Plan*, which will increasingly guide development policy.

There is also a move towards programmes which focus on community-scale regeneration, targeting locally-defined needs and priorities. Some of these, such as Communities First, are restricted to the most deprived communities in Wales. Others, such as Rural Community Action, the WDA's Community Regeneration Tool Kit and LEADER+ prioritise the quality of bids rather than relative deprivation.

SECTION 6

SOWING SEEDS AT THE GRASS-ROOTS

This chapter outlines the decentralisation of power and responsibility for community development and regeneration in rural Wales. In particular, the chapter considers:

- The devolution of power from national to local government
- The role of the non-statutory sector in rural Wales
- Partnerships at the local level
- Community empowerment and capacity-building

A summary of the discussion is provided at the end of the chapter (p.76).

6.1 In Wales, as elsewhere in Europe, central government is relinquishing the idea that it can comprehensively govern the national territory. It is pulling back from the principle and practice of universal welfare delivery that was the basis of the post-war consensus. Instead, there is an emphasis on the diversity of the social, economic, cultural and environmental landscape in Wales, and the need to address this diversity by focusing on needs and priorities defined at the local level¹⁸.

6.2 Over the last ten years, this has become as evident in rural policy as it has elsewhere. As Murdoch writes, in response to the first rural White Papers for England, Wales and Scotland:

*In sum, it appears as though central government is seeking to pull back from a managerial role; it no longer seeks to steer the rural economy (agricultural and non-agricultural) in line with national priorities (such as increased domestic food production) and it now takes a much reduced responsibility for service and welfare provision in the social sphere.*¹⁹

6.3 A key element of this approach is an emphasis on joint working between different scales, sectors and interests. The Welsh Assembly Government has made this clear in its strategic agenda for the second term, *Wales: A Better Country*.

Achieving our vision demands active participation from all parts of society... We cannot achieve anything working alone. (p.11)

Local authorities: power to promote well-being

6.4 Initiatives within Wales are increasingly being devolved from national government to the local level. The twenty-two unitary authorities in Wales account for well over a third of Wales' public expenditure (WLGA, 2004). Total budgeted gross revenue expenditure for local authorities for 2004-05 is £5.7 billion, representing an increase of 11.8% from 2003-2004. As the Welsh Assembly Government has recognised in *Wales: A Better Country*, the authorities are therefore key actors in improving social, economic and environmental well-being of Wales at a local and national scale:

¹⁸ See *Wales: A Better Country: The Strategic Agenda of the Welsh Assembly Government*, September 2003; Blair, T. & Schroder, G. (1999) *Europe: The Third Way/Die Neue Mitte* (www.eurozoneadvisors.com/reports4/schroeder-blair0609.pdf)

¹⁹ Murdoch, J. (1997) The shifting territory of government: some insights from the rural White Paper, *Area*, 29, pp.109-118

We will work together with local government not only to deliver national priorities and local solutions, but also to embed these values [of partnership] in all levels of government in Wales. (p.11)

6.5 Unitary authorities are funded through a combination of local taxation, Non-Domestic Rates²⁰ and Revenue Support from the Assembly. In 2003-2004, revenue earned through local taxation accounted for 19% of all local government revenue across Wales²¹. The value of Revenue Support Grants (RSG) allocated by the Assembly to each local authority is determined by the amount required by authorities to provide a basic level of services. This is calculated by the Standard Spending Assessment (SSA).

6.6 The Standard Spending Assessment for each authority is influenced by seventy-two indicators reflecting the demographic, physical, economic and social characteristics of each area. These are based on need, population and measures of deprivation and rurality. The aim is to achieve a common standard of service delivery across all authorities.

6.7 In 1999, the National Assembly for Wales commissioned an independent review of Standard Spending Assessments. This investigated to what extent the indicators used to measure population sparsity accurately reflected 'the cost pressures associated with service delivery in rural areas'. The review recognised that in some cases there was 'unavoidable' variation in the cost-per-unit of service delivery. Two measures were considered to be particularly relevant:

- **Dispersion threshold** – designed to account for costs incurred as a result of the added time and distance associated with service delivery to dispersed communities
- **Settlement threshold** – the population *outside* settlements of 1,000; 7,500; 12,500; 30,000; and 40,000 and the population *within* settlements of 50,000.

6.8 As illustrated by Figure 10 (over page), the nine 'predominantly rural' unitary authorities in Wales have a higher than average Revenue Support Grant per head than the mean levels for the whole of Wales. At the same time, rural Wales receives less support per capita than the Valleys, reflecting the Valleys' higher scores on deprivation indices.

6.9 Following the Local Government Act 2000, every local authority has the power to promote or improve well-being in their local area. 'Well-being' refers to economic, social and environmental well-being. This power may be exercised in relation to the whole of the local authority area, parts of that area, all persons within the area or specific persons within the area. The Act also obliges local authorities to prepare a Community Strategy for promoting well-being in their local area and contributing to the sustainable development of the UK.

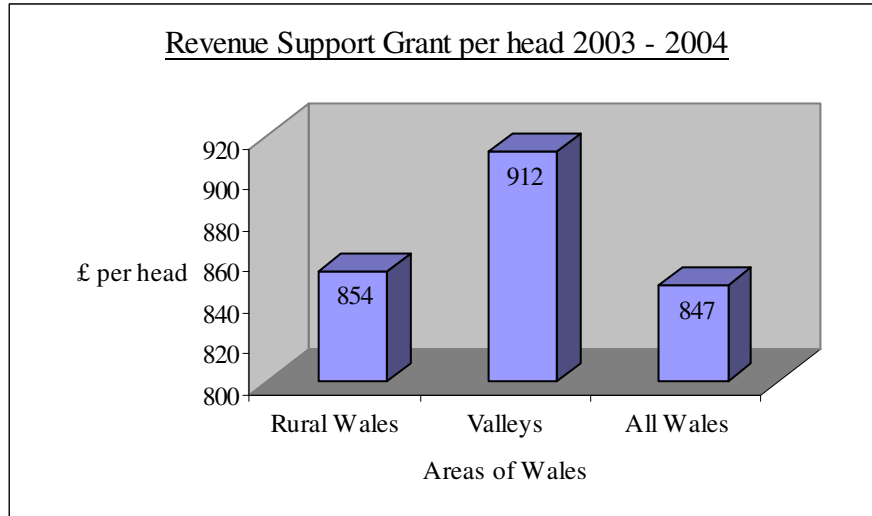
²⁰ **Non-Domestic Rates (NDR)** are paid by all businesses. Rates are paid into a central pool, administered by the National Assembly and subsequently redistributed to councils and police authorities. The amounts received by authorities are calculated according to UAs' resident population aged 18 and over, as a proportion of the population of Wales aged 18+. In Wales, the distributable amount of NDR for 2003-2004 was £660 million, of which 90% was allocated for councils (594m).

²¹ *Welsh Local Government Statistics 2003*, National Assembly for Wales, 2003

6.10 *Planning Policy Wales 2002* places the onus of producing integrated rural development strategies on unitary authorities rather than either WAG or ASPBs.

In rural areas the local authorities should prepare an integrated rural development strategy to facilitate diversification of the rural economy...Part 1 of the UDP must...for rural areas, set out an integrated rural development strategy for new development based on sustainable development principles and tailored to the area's specific assets and needs. (pp. 80-81)

Figure 10: Revenue Support Grant per capita



6.11 The WLGA has also noted the “*pivotal and strategic role*” of local authorities in meeting the needs of rural areas in Wales.

*Local authorities are central to sustainable rural development...They have a major role to play in setting the strategic agenda by assessing rural needs and by helping rural communities to participate in making decisions so that they genuinely reflect local concerns.*²²

6.12 In 2001, Gwynedd unitary authority organised a conference attended by a broad cross-section of individuals living and/or working in rural communities to “*take a closer look at our rural communities and to develop practical suggestions for improvement*”. The conference report, *Living in the Countryside*, includes a set of proposals for local authorities, WAG and ASPBs regarding rural development and regeneration and notes that during the conference “*All public bodies operating in rural Wales were called upon to work together to create one strong strategy that can bring confidence and prosperity back to rural communities*” (unpaged).

6.13 As noted in Section 3, only two unitary authorities have produced integrated rural development plans. A number of authorities have, however, supported local initiatives focused specifically on the

²² *The Future for Rural Wales*, WLGA, 1998

support of interests in rural areas. These include business support and wider community development, some of which are detailed in Box 6.1 (overleaf).

6.14 There is a consensus amongst local government that in order to effectively respond to local need and to influence wider governance, greater financial responsibility and freedom needs to be provided to Unitary Authorities. The Welsh Assembly Government is providing more discretion and flexibility at the local level. No part of the £2,422 million Revenue Support Grant (RSG) provided to local authorities is ‘ring-fenced’.

6.15 Edwina Hart, in her former position as Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities, endorsed this flexibility for individual authorities in January 2001:

[M]y role is not to tell councils or police authorities what they must do with their money: I am paving the way for them to take these decisions for themselves by providing appropriate support from the Assembly for this to happen...I want to make it clear that revenue settlement resources are not earmarked by the Assembly for any particular purpose²³.

6.16 Devolution to the local authority scale is also evident within health policy. In April 2003, twenty-two Local Health Boards in Wales were established, replacing the five health authorities that previously covered Wales. These receive approximately three quarters of the NHS budget in Wales. They coincide with local authority areas and were established on the basis that different areas of Wales have different needs and priorities. Jane Hutt, in her former position as Minister for Health and Social Services, foresaw the Local Health Boards as a means to provide local solutions to local problems. It is intended that the Boards enable closer working between the NHS and local councils - there is a statutory duty for them to work together – as well as creating stronger partnerships with other local organisations for improving health and social care.

6.17 A report in 2001, however noted some disquiet at the local level regarding funding allocations:

They [unitary authorities] were less happy...that some Ministers had written to their local government partners to give an idea of the Assembly’s expectations on increased expenditure from the general settlement on specific services. The Plaid Cymru spokesperson on local government, Janet Ryder, stated that ‘the effect on local authorities was profound, with many of them feeling that they had been told, once again, how to allocate their budgets. It seemed to them to be yet another form of hypothecation.’²⁴

6.18 In practice, some programmes operating at a local level are still strongly influenced by the Assembly’s priorities as a result of local authority’s statutory responsibilities and the funding streams upon which they are dependent. Local authorities have a duty to deliver not only broad WAG policy goals but also deliver, facilitate or administer specific WAG, ASPB and EU programmes. Box 6.2 (over page) provides an example of a national programme which varies across Wales according to unitary authority’s priorities.

²³ Osmond, J. (ed.) *The Economy takes centre stage: monitoring the National Assembly for Wales December 2000 to March 2001* Institute of Welsh Affairs, March 2001, p.54

²⁴ Ibid

Box 6.1 Unitary authority community and business support initiatives

Carmarthenshire County Council, as part of its wider rural regeneration programme, launched in July 2003, operate a Rural Business Development Centre and a Rural Business Support Scheme. The Rural Business Development Centre, which is open to both new and established businesses in the local area, offers both generic advice on grant aid and other support available to businesses in the county and specific advice tailored to the needs of particular individual businesses. It operates as part of the more general Business Eye service in Carmarthenshire, and is in addition to the business development support offered by the council's Economic Development Division. The Centre received £860,000 of Objective 1 and Local Regeneration Funding. The Rural Business Support Scheme, also funded by Objective 1 money, offers grant aid for business start-up, business promotion and product marketing, with specific support targeted at certain business sectors, notably agri-food and tourism. A total of £450,000 of grant money is available over the period 2003-2008.

Carmarthenshire County Council have also developed the Promotion of Rural Community Businesses initiative, which is aimed at supporting so-called 'social enterprises' – organisations that operate competitively in the economic marketplace but which uses any profit to benefit its employees, consumers or the wider community in which it is located. The council offers grant aid for feasibility studies into the potential for setting up a new community business and for expanding or altering an existing community business (up to 100%, to a maximum cost of £3,000) and capital grants for site clearance, construction / conversion / expansion costs and landscaping (up to 75%, to a maximum cost of £10,000). Businesses must employ or plan to employ less than 50 staff. The aim of the initiative is to *'assist disadvantaged communities by creating employment and training opportunities and providing services to meet local needs'* (Carmarthenshire County Council, undated).

Wrexham has initiated a grant-aid scheme to assist projects in rural areas that can demonstrate they will benefit the economy, environment and / or community development. Projects must be located *"outside the town"*. Between £1,000 and £6,000 will be awarded – on a discretionary basis – to support capital expenditure but not running costs; up to 100% of costs can be awarded, but match-funding is encouraged. The scheme is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government's Local Regeneration Fund. It runs from April 2002 to April 2005.

Monmouthshire runs a touring cinema for rural communities *"with state-of-the-art cinema equipment that provides digital pictures and surround sound which matches the experiences offered at traditional cinemas"*. Communities are invited to register their village hall for the scheme. Hall committees decide dates for cinema nights and Monmouthshire County Council issues film lists for the community to choose films via ballot forms in community areas (shops and pubs are cited). All profits go directly to village halls.

In 2003 Conwy unitary authority commissioned a scoping study, joint-funded by the council and the WDA, to determine demand and need for a rural resource centre in Conwy that would focus specifically on the needs of businesses that arose from their rural location. It is supporting, as a member of the Conwy rural partnership, the construction of rural development centre that would provide business support services, a general information service and exhibition and performance space for local communities. Since 2000 it has funded a small grants scheme for the purpose of farm IT equipment.

Anglesey unitary authority, as part of the North Wales Economic Forum, has funded research into the training needs of rural businesses. In collaboration with Gwynedd unitary authority and University of Wales, Bangor, it has also funded research into rural out-migration.

6.19 The 1998 Statutory Partnership Council, which was created under the Government of Wales Act 1998, promotes joint working and co-operation between the national Assembly and local government. WAG and WLGA has created a joint set of policy priorities which outline shared priorities to achieve change at the local level. These reflect a joint commitment and interaction between local and national government. They are:

1. Better opportunities for learning
2. A better stronger economy
3. Better health and wellbeing
4. Better quality of life
5. Better simpler government

There has, however, been criticism that the priorities are vague and all-encompassing.

Box 6.2 Rate Relief

Since April 1998 there has been a programme of mandatory rate relief for small businesses in small Welsh rural communities. This has replaced the previous discretionary rural rate relief that unitary authorities could offer to general stores and post offices. In some areas, a form of discretionary rate relief has continued, with mandatory rate relief supplemented by unitary authorities offering additional rate relief for rural businesses that provide valued local services.

Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion unitary authorities, for example invite applications for discretionary rate relief worth up to 50% for 'businesses which provide an important facility to the local community and are the only one of that type in the settlement', either to top up a reduction awarded under the mandatory relief scheme or to assist businesses which do not qualify under that scheme. This additional support, however, is far from universal, with the result that there are likely to be considerable discrepancies between local authority areas regarding the attractiveness of smaller rural communities for the establishment of small businesses – including those providing core services – and the likelihood of established rural businesses in those communities continuing to be viable.

Businesses that are the sole post office or general store (a general store is defined in this context as a premises whose main business is the sale of food and household products) in rural settlements of less than 3000 population are exempted from rates altogether. Since April 2002, filling stations, public houses and pharmacies with a rateable value not exceeding £9,000 and other non-domestic premises with a rateable value not exceeding £6,000 have been eligible for mandatory rate relief of 50%. Other businesses with a rateable value of less than £12,000 in settlements of under 3000 may also be eligible for a 50% reduction in rates.

Recognising the role of the non-statutory sector in Wales

6.20 It is increasingly considered that the state, central or local, is not necessarily the sole or most appropriate agent for meeting the needs of Wales. Rather, it is argued, good government is achieved through an active interaction between public sector administration, private businesses and the wider community (including both individuals and voluntary organisations). In the words of the Welsh Assembly Government: “*We cannot achieve anything working alone...We value the links we have forged with local government, business, trade unions and the voluntary sector.*”²⁵

6.21 The Assembly has committed itself to ‘*recognising, valuing and promoting*’ the voluntary sector in Wales. This includes ‘*ensuing that the voluntary sector is ‘at the heart of National Assembly policy*’, identifying opportunities for the voluntary sector to contribute to policy delivery, and allowing and encouraging the voluntary sector to take a leading role at the level of practice where it is appropriate and desirable for it to do so.

*The Assembly will ensure that it takes into consideration at a formative stage the implications for the voluntary sector of new policies, or changes in policy. The Assembly will seek as far as possible to avoid or to ameliorate any undesirable impact on the voluntary sector and to identify and encourage opportunities for voluntary sector organisations*²⁶.

6.22 Under Section 114 of the Government of Wales Act 1998, the National Assembly for Wales is legally required to set out how it will support and promote the interests of voluntary organisations with remits relevant to the Assembly’s functions. It has done this through the *National Assembly’s Voluntary Sector Scheme*, published in September 2000. This was the first such scheme in the UK, and is distinct from the Compacts between the statutory and voluntary sectors produced by the UK government and the Scottish Executive.

6.23 The Assembly has committed itself to ‘*working in partnership*’ with the voluntary sector. Partnership is defined in the Assembly’s Voluntary Sector Scheme as “*working together towards a common set of goals and recognition of each party’s distinctive contribution*” (para.3.1). Partnership “*means that the voluntary sector:*

- Has an equal say with the Assembly about the arrangements by which the Assembly and the voluntary sector will work together;
- Will contribute at a formative stage in informing the development of policy and programmes across the Assembly and has its proposals assessed against the same criteria as the public sector;
- Contributes its views on the procedures for the administration of resources and priorities for the distribution of resources for the voluntary sector;
- Has access to its own information, training ,and capacity building services and resources;
- Has opportunities to lead in those areas where it is best placed to do so”

(National Assembly’s Voluntary Sector Scheme, para.3.4).

6.24 Issues relating to the functions and responsibilities of the National Assembly for Wales that impact on, or are of concern to, the voluntary sector and that are wider than the responsibilities of a

²⁵ *Wales: A Better Country* Welsh Assembly Government, September 2003, p.11

²⁶ *National Assembly’s Voluntary Sector Scheme* Welsh Assembly Government, 2000, para.3.18

single subject committee, are considered and reported to the Assembly by The Voluntary Sector Partnership Council. The Council also advises on and facilitates the implementation, monitoring and review of the Voluntary Sector Scheme. The Council consists of Assembly Members and representatives appointed from the voluntary sector.

6.25 The Assembly and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) jointly identify the relevant voluntary sector organizations, networks and umbrella bodies with an interest in contributing to particular arenas of policy and practice, and agree practical arrangements for dialogue and co-operation at the operational level.

6.26 The National Assembly's Voluntary Sector Scheme does not inform the Assembly's relationship with non-statutory organisations that operate outside the voluntary sector. Relationships with the rest of the non-statutory sector are negotiated on an organisation by organisation basis rather than governed by a set of general principles as is the case with the voluntary sector.

6.27 All Assembly-Sponsored Public Bodies, unitary authorities and National Parks in Wales have produced or are in the process of producing local level agreements setting out the shared values and expectations regarding their relationship with the voluntary sector. Partly as the result of joint initiatives on the part of local authorities and the voluntary sector stemming from the 1996 re-organisation of Welsh local government, the development of local level Compacts in Wales is far more advanced, widespread and systematic than in either England or Scotland.

6.28 The Welsh Assembly Government has outlined its commitment to the voluntary sector at the unitary authority level by endorsing the compacts and committing itself to *'ensuring local government support by promoting local compacts and agreeing levels of financial contributions to voluntary sector regeneration projects'*²⁷. The Wales Council for Voluntary Action has also endorsed the principle of joint-working between local authorities and the voluntary sector: *'A strong relationship between local government and the voluntary sector is the basis for a vibrant local democracy and active, inclusive communities.'*²⁸

6.29 Voluntary sector activity in every local authority area across Wales is represented and supported by County Voluntary Councils (CVCs). CVCs are required to meet an agreed minimum standard which includes developing a structured relationship with the local authority. Local authority Community Strategies must be prepared in partnership with relevant voluntary and other non-statutory organisations in the local authority area.

Recognising the role of the non-statutory sector for rural Wales

6.30 The National Assembly's Voluntary Sector Scheme requires that the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside, meets representatives of relevant voluntary sector networks at least twice per calendar year to discuss issues pertinent to the interests of the organisations represented on those networks with regard to the remit of the Department for Environment, Planning and Countryside.

6.31 The wider non-statutory sector, including both voluntary and non-voluntary organisations, is represented in the case of rural Wales by the Rural Partnership for Wales (RPW). The Partnership

²⁷ *National Assembly's Voluntary Sector Scheme*, Welsh Assembly Government, 2000

²⁸ *A Future Together? A guide to local government & the voluntary & community sector working together in Wales* Wales Council for Voluntary Action, 2003

advises the Assembly on the development of policies and programmes for rural Wales. In principle, it serves as both a key source of ideas and expertise for tackling the many diverse issues affecting rural Wales and as a forum for airing and discussing the varied perspectives and priorities of the various organisations that constitute the partnership. Its remit embraces economic, social, environmental and cultural issues.

6.32 The nine predominantly rural unitary authorities in Wales contain a total of 11,735 voluntary organisations²⁹, a figure which is calculated on the basis of their contact address. This provides a good indication of where organisations have their strongest presence and impact, although many organisations that are responsible for rural issues and operate in rural areas are based in urban centres, particularly Cardiff.

6.33 The *Wales Voluntary Sector Almanac 2003* contains calculations which outline the number of voluntary organisations in local authority areas per thousand population. This reveals that rural areas of Wales have a greater proportion of voluntary organisations per capita than unitary authorities with higher population densities (see Table 2). These figures reveal that the average number of voluntary sector organisations in Wales is 8.6 per 1000 population, whilst in the nine rural counties of this figure is 12.2, compared to the remainder of Wales where it is significantly lower at 6.9.

Table 2: Voluntary organisations per 1000 population by local authority area; rural authorities indicated in bold (Source: WCVA 2003)

| LOCAL AUTHORITY | NO. PER 1000 POPULATION |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Ceredigion | 19.0 |
| Powys | 17.0 |
| Gwynedd | 12.8 |
| Carmarthenshire | 11.7 |
| Monmouthshire | 10.7 |
| Denbighshire | 10.4 |
| Blaenau Gwent | 10.2 |
| Isle of Anglesey | 9.8 |
| Conwy | 9.6 |
| Pembrokeshire | 9.2 |
| Vale of Glamorgan | 8.6 |
| Neath Port Talbot | 8.3 |
| Cardiff | 7.9 |
| Wrexham | 7.4 |
| Rhondda Cynon Taff | 6.9 |
| Merthyr Tydfil | 6.8 |
| Flintshire | 6.1 |
| Swansea | 5.8 |
| Torfaen | 5.7 |
| Caerphilly | 5.6 |
| Bridgend | 5.3 |
| Newport | 4.5 |

²⁹ Collis, B. (2003) *Wales Voluntary Sector Almanac 2003: A new era?* WCVA

6.34 These findings correspond with research undertaken by the National Council of Voluntary Organisations, which reports that rural areas of England tend to have a larger number of local voluntary groups relative to their population than urban areas, reflecting the community focus of many groups and the larger number of separate communities in rural areas³⁰.

Partnership at the local scale

6.35 At the community scale, emphasis is on ‘partnerships’ between the various stakeholders in communities. As the Welsh Assembly Government notes, *“Partnership is a key concept in many Assembly policies. However the word is used to describe a variety of relationships and is frequently ill defined.”* Examples of different types of partnerships defined by the Assembly Government are provided in Appendix 8.

6.36 The Objective 1 programme in Wales is administered by Partnership Management Boards in each local authority. These consist of 18 elected people representing aspects of local business and communities based on the three thirds principle set by the National Assembly: public sector, private business and community groups. These undertake tasks in order to maximise local benefit from Objective 1.

6.37 Partnerships also oversee the writing of a local regeneration strategy which provides a framework and outlines the priorities for implementing Objective 1 within these local areas. These contain a local economic analysis, specific objectives and targets, details how the programme will be delivered locally, and identifies specific areas where actions are required. Partnerships have full responsibility for developing and implementing the regeneration strategy and the boards’ members have a duty to ensure suitable projects are developed (both at a local and regional level) to meet local requirements.

Community empowerment

6.38 There is a strong emphasis on community empowerment in Wales. The Assembly Government and its sponsored bodies have committed themselves to providing the opportunities and support for communities to participate more fully in their own development and regeneration. At the same time, communities are urged to take responsibility for identifying and addressing their own needs, problems and challenges.

6.39 The majority of community regeneration programmes in Wales reflect the increasing tendency for initiatives, from both the European Commission and Welsh Assembly Government, to be devolved to local organisations and the community scale.

6.40 The LEADER approach is specifically targeted at assisting local capacity building in rural areas (see box 3.6, overleaf, for examples of projects across Wales). The establishment and support of organisations and structures to implement and sustain local development is considered fundamental. One of the four objectives of the Wales programme is to *“To build the capacity of target groups,*

³⁰ *Supporting Rural Voluntary Action* National Council for Voluntary Organisations / Countryside Agency, 2004

communities and businesses and encourage their involvement in the development of their localities” (LEADER+ SPD).

6.41 The National Assembly’s flagship initiative for community development and regeneration in rural Wales is Rural Community Action, established in 2003. Targeted at the whole of rural Wales, Rural Community Action makes available over £2 million each year for encouraging rural community regeneration. The largest part of the Rural Community Action budget is allocated to projects run by local organisations, with a significant portion of initial funding being allocated to the formation and training of groups and the promotion of partnerships. The key objective of RCA is to develop regeneration capacity in these rural areas. Partnerships are required to annually submit an Action Plan to the WDA detailing activities for the coming year, outlining activities for a further two years and demonstrating that a broad cross section of people within local areas are actively engaged with the development activities of the partnerships.

Box 6.3 Examples of LEADER+ projects

Plugging the Leaks (Planed)

‘Plugging the Leaks’ seeks to ‘retain value’ within the Pembrokeshire LEADER area. Projects include:

- Community energy projects
- Local produce marketing and distribution initiatives
- Festivals celebrating local pride in heritage, culture, farming and sport
- Making better use of village halls to provide local services

Monmouthshire – A Living History (Adventa)

‘A Living History’ identifies villages/communities with heritage potential that can contribute to Monmouthshire’s tourism sector. The initiative includes:

- Using circular trails to recount each village/community history
- Production of interpretation panels/leaflets for each trail
- Undertaking a promotional campaign in order to raise awareness of the trails

Ffisig Nain (Rural Conwy)

Ffisig Nain focuses on the alternate health sector in rural Conwy. It seeks to develop a business cluster within the field of complementary health, with emphasis on homeopaths, herbalists, material arts and aromatherapists.

6.42 Article 33 provides up to £8.7m of funding from 2000 until 2006-7 to partnerships in rural areas of East Wales where other EU programmes do not apply. The WDA manages provision of funding to Community Partnerships, led by the Unitary Authorities, to implement projects which address 3 measures:

- Basic services for the rural economy and population
- Renovation and development of villages and protection and conservation of the rural heritage
- Encouragement for tourist and craft activities

These measures have been selected on the basis that they will be most likely to increase participation in community life, assist in establishing and expanding community-led initiatives and maximise the contribution to the economic, social, environmental and cultural regeneration of rural Wales.

6.43 The Assembly places key emphasis on developing local community transport initiatives as a means of addressing issues of remoteness and problems of accessibility to services in rural Wales. From 1998, its Rural Community Transport Initiative has made available £250,000 per year for funding public transport projects in rural areas that are locally organised in response to the specific needs and challenges of individual communities.

6.44 The Forestry Commission's Cydcoed programme encourages local people to make the best possible use of woodland for jobs, economic growth, conservation and recreation whilst concurrently making trees and woods a valuable part of community life in rural Wales. A pre-requisite for support is that it must be channelled through constituted community groups. The programme is designed in this way so that grants will be given directly to communities in order that they will have control of both decisions and funds at a local level. Cydcoed Project Officers provide help in setting up community groups in areas where they do not exist.

6.45 The Small Towns and Villages Enterprise Initiative (STVEI), launched by the WDA in 1999 and replacing the DBRW's 'Market Towns Initiative', is intended to support businesses within small towns, villages or an otherwise 'well-defined rural area'. Grant assistance and specialist advice is available for individual small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), local business coalitions and community groups. Eligible projects designed to assist marketing, improve competitiveness and enhance the attractiveness of an area through visual improvements to the built environment. Community transport schemes are also eligible for funding. Applications must be made by a forum of business representatives from a particular area. If an application is successful, the forum must actively participate in taking forward the local initiative by producing and implementing a local action plan and monitoring development progress.

6.46 The Rural Retail Programme, administered by the WDA as part of the RCA programme, offers a combination of advice and grant aid to retail businesses in rural communities. This assistance is intended to complement the more generic business support services provided by wider initiatives such as the Business Eye Gateway. Assistance is available to aid marketing of the business, improve customer access to the business and, more generically, to *'improve the long-term sustainability of a business'*. Both individual companies and community or business groups can take advantage of the scheme. In both cases they must be able to demonstrate that there is community support for any proposed project, by creating an action plan which makes reference to the regeneration of the community in which the business is, or is to be, located.

6.47 Several unitary authorities have developed or helped to develop community regeneration programmes for their local rural areas (see Box 6.4). These generally channel and combine direct funding from the local authority with funding from other sources. Most of these are open to both rural and urban communities.

Box 6.4 Examples of local authority small grants schemes

Gwynedd unitary authority operates the Cwlwm Gwledig Grants Scheme, designed to build capacity and self-reliance in rural communities. Projects must demonstrate that they will benefit the local economy and that they have the support and participation of the community concerned. The level of contribution depends on the nature of the project, but applicants are usually expected to contribute 10% of the funding themselves. Approximately £1m was made available for the scheme in the 2002-2003 financial year. The grants scheme is assisted by seven community officers working in different areas of the county. The officers assist communities to identify and develop projects and advise local groups on additional sources of grant-funding.

Conwy unitary authority operates a Rural Commercial Grant Scheme which aims to encourage the improvement and upgrading of certain types of commercial property in rural settlements, specifically, shops, public houses, post offices and garages. It covers the whole county, including the area within the Snowdonia National Park, but excludes Llanrwst and Betws y Coed and the main towns along the coast.

Carmarthenshire Council's Strategic Towns and Villages Programme aims to "assist in the creation of sustainable and prosperous rural communities" by retaining existing businesses and attracting inward investment. It includes identifying and creating local business opportunities, carrying out environmental improvements to industrial areas within 'strategic towns' and contributing towards the production of an integrated community development plan. The Town Improvement Grant provides up to 50% of funding for improvements to commercial premises in the 'central cores' of 'strategic towns', and the Rural Conversion Grant provides up to 50% of funding for the conversion of redundant rural buildings into business use, with £5.8 million over the 2003-2008 period available under the scheme. The programme is financed by the unitary authority, the WDA, the WAG Local Regeneration Fund and Objective 1 money, and is part of Carmarthenshire's five year rural regeneration programme.

Monmouthshire operates a Community and Economic Development Scheme supporting local projects that assist and promote economic, social and environmental well-being. The scheme grants aids groups in the public, private and voluntary sectors, including town and community councils and partnerships. It is specifically geared towards projects that create or safeguard jobs, build local community capacity and support sustainable development. Grants are available for both capital and revenue projects. At present, there is little support for new projects, with c.£390,000 of its £400,000 capital monies for 2003-2004 committed to existing core-funded projects. The council states that the scheme is a key competent of its community strategy for Monmouthshire.

Local development for local people?

6.48 The decentralisation of support from established statutory groups is considered to maximise regions' regeneration capacity, reflecting the role of both formal and informal networks in enhancing

social capital and subsequent development potential. Ray (2001)³¹ refers to this approach as a neo-endogenous approach to rural development which reflects the balance between extra-local funding, resources and policy frameworks with local endogenous decision-making and responsibility. In Wales, the emergence of these groups has resulted in a complex mosaic of support for rural areas.

6.49 There is a clear distinction between programmes and projects that have been initiated and delivered at the local level and those that are operating at the local scale but where local actors function primarily as agents of delivery. Many programmes in Wales are dependent on grass-roots delivery, but the structure of programmes and conditions of funding are often imposed from top-down. Arguably, this undermines the endogenous nature of these schemes. The criteria that local partnerships must meet even to be eligible to bid for regeneration funding are centrally defined, as are the audit paths groups must follow if they do receive funding.

6.50 In this respect, there has been some criticism of programmes such as Communities First, which aims to build leadership capacity and encourage empowerment within the most deprived communities in Wales³². There has been particular criticism of what some see as the overly strong role of local authorities, who are responsible for facilitating the delivery of the programme and recruiting the teams who manage the programme for individual communities³³. Similar criticism could be levelled at the programmes operating under Article 33 of the Rural Development Plan, which are also administered and facilitated at the community scale by local authorities. Local authorities are often distrusted because of their history of poor service provision in deprived areas. Accordingly, the authorities' involvement in schemes such as these may limit programmes' effectiveness and alienate the communities they are seeking to represent.

6.51 At the same time, others have suggested that in some cases unitary authorities provide insufficient leadership in such initiatives. Responding to a 2003 review of Communities First, Liberal Democrat MP for Wales West Peter Black commented:

*In some areas a top down approach has been adopted, and consequently, communities are not as involved and empowered as they deserve to be. In other areas, communities have been left to flounder too much. Getting the balance right is always a problem.*³⁴

6.52 There has also been concern more generally that much 'community' development work actively engages only a very few local actors, with the majority of the local populace indifferent to, or in some cases even unaware of, local activities. The rhetoric associated with the launch of new and emerging programmes emphasises the importance of local capacity building that is more democratic and inclusive and that will enable communities to envision, develop, deliver and sustain local projects over the long-term.

³¹ Ray, C. (2001) Transnational co-operation between rural areas: elements of a political economy of EU rural development. *Sociologia Ruralis*. 41 (3) pp. 279 - 295

³² *Communities First Review 2003* National Assembly for Wales, 2003 (available at www.wales.gov.uk/assemblydata)

³³ Osmond, J. and Mugaseth, J. (2004) Community Approaches to Poverty in Wales, in *Overcoming Disadvantage: An agenda for the next 20 years*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation; Lewis, H. (2004) *Communities First Review 2003* National Assembly for Wales, 2003 (available at www.wales.gov.uk/assemblydata); *Communities First: The Way Forward* National Assembly for Wales, 2003

³⁴ Speech given 23rd June 2004 (available at www.cix.co.uk/~ldswaleswest/speeches)

Chapter summary

Sowing seeds at the grassroots

Responsibility for local development and regeneration in Wales is increasingly being decentralised. Local authorities are required to take a leading role in delivering national policies and addressing local needs and priorities. They have a statutory duty to prepare local area strategies in partnership with community stakeholders. Local authorities covering rural areas are also encouraged to prepare integrated rural development strategies.

There is growing emphasis on the potential for non-statutory organisations to contribute to rural community regeneration. Increasingly, regeneration initiatives require the inclusion of a range of local stakeholders. Partnership between the public, private and voluntary sectors is seen as integral to sustainable rural development.

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to a 'bottom-up' approach to rural community regeneration in Wales. This continues the tone set by the 1996 White Paper for rural Wales, transferring the responsibility for service provision, economic development and environmental conservation in rural communities away from the state and onto communities themselves. In principle, the 'endogenous' approach is a flexible and efficient way of addressing the needs of rural areas. In practice, this model of regeneration is open to criticism. In particular, there are accusations that regeneration is still heavily 'top-down' because of the funding rules set by central government and the leading role played by local authorities. There are also reservations over the extent to which local partnerships are representative and democratically accountable.

SECTION 7

SUSTAINING RURAL POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

This chapter consider the sustainability of policies and programmes for rural Wales. In particular, the chapter considers:

- The need for long-term commitments to rural Wales
- The uncertainty of future EU funding
- Monitoring the impact of policies and programmes on rural Wales

A summary of the discussion is provided at the end of the chapter (p.81).

7.1 Welsh rural policy emphasises ‘sustainable development’ and ‘sustainable policy’, in line with the Welsh Assembly’s cross-cutting theme of pursuing the goal of sustainable development in all its activities.

7.2 The most comprehensive rural policy document, the 2000 – 2006 Rural Development Plan for Wales, in principle “provides a vision for the development of the whole of rural Wales, identifying problems and assessing priorities and proposed actions on a holistic basis”(p.145). The RDP was informed by, and specifically endorses, the Rural Partnership for Wales’ comprehensive statement on rural Wales, published in 1999, which delivers the message of ‘sustainable’ thinking and working. The statement includes a ‘vision of a sustainable future for rural Wales’ made up of ‘a sustainable society’, ‘a sustainable economy’, ‘a sustainable environment’ and ‘a sustainable policy framework’. It notes that “[a]ll four of these strands are interdependent”, and “the importance of adopting an integrated approach to rural development is recognised” (p.6).

7.3 The plan stresses that achieving the fourth element, a sustainable policy framework “*that ensures the integrated development and coherent implementation of policies and programmes that affect rural Wales?*” (p.145), is fundamental to achieving the overall vision of a sustainable rural Wales. It notes that this will be realised by recognising and reconciling the different interests, demands and priorities of economy, society and environment and by setting measures at a national level which complement European and local initiatives.

A long-term for vision for rural Wales?

7.4 Achieving sustainable rural development is as much dependent on the continuity of support over *time* as it is on the type and level of support within a locality. This can be seen in the case of Pembrokeshire, which has been cited as an excellent example of a region which has had a long-standing commitment to building community capacity.

7.5 Pembrokeshire initiated a progressive approach to community development in the 1970s, when a newly-created local group assumed responsibility from the district council for day-care, child care, information technology and some aspects of sports provision. The continuity of this organisation

has been significant in creating strong institutional foundations in Pembrokeshire, facilitating the area's capacity to benefit from new programmes³⁵.

7.6 In the 1980s, the group, SPARC (South Pembrokeshire Action for Rural Communities), achieved LEADER status in the first round of the programme. It maintained this status through LEADER II and LEADER+, becoming the only Local Action Group in Wales to be involved in all three rounds of LEADER.

7.7 Now renamed PLANED (Pembrokeshire Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development), it has also been awarded 12 projects funded by Objective 1, totalling over £700,000 of European funding. Of the seven rural unitary authorities covered by the programme, Pembrokeshire has been awarded the highest number of projects (90) and the second highest amount of grants (over £25 million).

Table 3: Objective 1 awards to rural unitary authorities (July 2004)

| | No. of projects | Total Obj. 1 grants (£) | Average grant per project (£) | Obj. 1 grant per capita |
|------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Anglesey | 31 | 24,427,727 | 877,991 | 365.5 |
| Carmarthenshire | 52 | 22,741,681 | 437,340 | 131.6 |
| Ceredigion | 43 | 15,252,322 | 354,705 | 203.5 |
| Conwy | 35 | 17,520,701 | 500,591 | 159.9 |
| Denbighshire | 44 | 20,677,207 | 469,936 | 222.2 |
| Gwynedd | 62 | 42,370,181 | 683,390 | 362.6 |
| Pembrokeshire | 90 | 25,360,209 | 281,780 | 222.2 |

7.8 There is increasing recognition that programmes targeted at the sustainable development and regeneration of communities in Wales must themselves be sustained. Many of the early community regeneration programmes targeted at communities in Wales often funded 'one-off' projects that were limited in scope, short-term in focus and frequently unsustainable once funding from external sources was withdrawn. The voluntary sector, in particular, is critical of the current trend for project funding and *ad hoc*, short-term grants, and is calling for more secure arrangements³⁶.

7.9 Many WAG documents make reference to this failing and, as a result, there is increasing emphasis on the need for policy and programmes to be based on a longer-term approach.

7.10 This philosophy is exemplified by the Assembly's Communities First programme. Communities First emphasises the need for a '*long-term, perhaps very long-term*' funding commitment (*Communities First Consultation Document 2000*). The Assembly is committed to funding Communities First for a minimum of ten years, it requires that all participating communities outline a long-term vision for their area and targets funding at community empowerment and capacity building – "helping communities to help themselves".

³⁵ Asby J. and Midmore P. (1995) Human Capacity-Building and Planning: Old Ideas with a Future for Marginal Regions? In Byron R (ed.) *Economic Futures on the North Atlantic Margin*, Aldershot, pp.329-346

³⁶ Collis, B. (2003) *Wales Voluntary Sector Almanac 2003: A new era?* WCVA

7.11 There is far less evidence of this long-term commitment regarding rural community regeneration. Rural Community Action emphasises long-term and sustainable regeneration and development rather than limited-life projects; it makes three-quarters (£1.5m per year) of the total money available through RCA funds partnerships to undertake local community ‘capacity building’. The remaining £500,000 per year is reserved for the capital funding of projects initiated through capacity-building work. The programme’s initial duration, however, was only three years – 2003-2006 – although it has been subsequently been extended to 2008.

7.12 The time-scale of many development initiatives in rural Wales is outside the control of the Welsh Assembly Government. The current EU funding framework covers the period 2000 – 2006. Resultantly, many programmes extend only as far as 2006, including Objectives 1, 2 and 3 and LEADER+. This results in uncertainty regarding funding and programmes for rural Wales.

Measuring and monitoring the impact of policies and programmes in rural Wales

7.13 Ensuring that policies and programmes contribute to long-term development and regeneration in rural Wales requires that their impact is measured and evaluated.

7.14 Mechanisms for monitoring all the major programmes impacting on rural areas are either in place or in the process of being established. Monitoring Rural Community Action, Article 33 of the Rural Development Plan and LEADER+ is the responsibility of the Rural Policy Unit of the WDA. Monitoring of the remainder of the RDP is the responsibility of the Rural Development Plan Monitoring Committee. The committee is chaired by Carwyn James and is comprised of a balance of members from the public sector, ‘private / social sector’ and ‘voluntary / community sector’. Objective 1 and 2 are monitored by WEFO and the monitoring committees of local partnerships. Communities First is monitored by local committees and partnerships.

7.15 At present, however, monitoring is currently limited by the lack of baseline data available for both rural Wales and local areas.

7.16 In March 2002, the Assembly produced a statistical digest on rural Wales as part of its ‘Statistical Focus’ series. The digest presents a range of statistics which give data on social and economic circumstances in rural Wales and also compare social and economic circumstances in rural areas with the rest of Wales. In the digest, ‘rural Wales’ is defined as the nine local authorities defined as ‘rural’ by the Assembly. It therefore excludes other areas which are ‘rural’ but do not fall under this definition. However, the digest has not been updated to take account of the 2001 Census and does not reflect the situation of rural Wales post-FMD.

7.17 According to a note in the Rural Development Plan, published before the compilation of the digest, the digest particularly focuses *“on those indicators against which the impact of the overall rural development strategy adopted in all regions of Wales can be measured”* (p.354). In practice, the baseline indicators listed in the RDP reflect the Plan’s agri-centric focus.

7.18 A recent report on rural statistics and rural development by the International Working Group on Agriculture includes a number of comments regarding statistics for monitoring rural development in the UK. Some of these relate to the UK as a whole, others refer directly to Wales. It

concludes that current statistical indicators are insufficient to meet the challenges posed by emerging policies regarding rural areas.

7.19 In particular it asserts that there needs to be a more holistic approach to data collection in rural areas that looks beyond agriculture and considers broader social, economic and environmental issues.

A strong contrast exists between the statistical provision for, on the one hand, agriculture as an economic activity and user of resources and, on the other, rural policy. In the UK there is a strong and long-established system of agricultural statistics, with the agricultural departments acting as both the supplier and main user. ... In contrast, until very recently rural statistics have been weaker and highly fragmented...Before 2001 no single department had responsibility, so that commentators on the state of the countryside (such as the Countryside Agency in England and those charged [with] providing a statistical digest of rural Wales for the newly-devolved government (NAW 2001) found themselves gathering from a wide range of sources, many of them not on a compatible basis.³⁷

7.20 This has been recognised by the Assembly and its sponsored bodies in the Rural Development Plan for Wales:

[T]he Assembly has recognised the need to collate a more comprehensive set of baseline indicators for rural Wales (where available), based on 1999-2000 data, against which the overall impact of its rural development policies – and in particular the efficacy of the strategies and priorities set out in this plan – can be measured. (p.353)

7.21 In the same document, the Assembly asserts the “need to draw on a broad span of data sources that reflect the current state of the rural economy and the quality of life of those living and working in the countryside, in market towns or rural villages” (p.354). This, however, rather contradicts the Assembly’s assertion, on the same page and in the preceding line, that “an unambiguous definition of rural Wales...would be neither practical nor desirable”. It is hard to see how the state of the rural economy and the quality of life of those living and working in rural areas can be measured if there is no agreement on what counts as rural Wales.

7.22 There are also challenges in measuring the impact of wider community regeneration initiatives that may impact on rural areas. Communities First includes both high-level and baseline performance indicators. High-level indicators – set out in *Mapping Social Exclusion in Wales* and in the Welsh Assembly Government’s *Index of Multiple Deprivation 2005* – cover aspects of the economy, health, education, housing, children and families, and income. Further indicators should be set out in Local Authority Community Plans, Best Value appraisals and other partnership agency performance indicators.

7.23 The programme also encourages communities to establish their own indicators and processes of review. It is proposed that a series of benchmark indicators, grouped in six domains (economic activity, education and training, environment, health, civil society and community safety), should be used for an annual review of each participating community.

³⁷ Hill, B. (2003) *Rural data and rural statistics (Note 2)*, Statistics on rural development and agricultural household income, IWG.Agri Task Force, Imperial College, Wye Campus

7.24 The second consultation document for the Assembly's Communities First programme³⁸ notes the problems involving in monitoring and assessing change, due to the limitations of current statistical measurements and the difficulty of measuring certain indicators of change. It noted two dimensions of the process that created specific difficulties:

[1] The unavailability of statistical evidence at appropriate spatial levels. Whilst the new Index of Multiple Deprivation will improve the situation, accurate sub-ward data remains elusive, although it is now being developed;

[2] The achievement of a balance between statistical evidence and more qualitative evidence. Successful intervention will make its mark on the headline statistics and clear evidence of that must be available, but in addition, much of the positive change will occur in the attitudes, values and beliefs of those who live in deprived communities and those who provide them with services. Measurements of improvement in matters such as stigma, low aspiration, self-esteem and community identity, and prejudice by service providers are necessarily subjective and require more qualitative evidence.

7.25 The uneven spatial coverage of rural community regeneration programmes across Wales provides a valuable opportunity to evaluate the comparative value and effectiveness of those programmes. The currently limited monitoring of such programmes due to a lack of robust local level baseline data, however, restricts how far this potential might be exploited.

Chapter summary

Sustaining rural policies and programmes

Many of the community regeneration programmes available across Wales focus on one-off projects that are limited in scope and short-term in focus. Increasingly, the Welsh Assembly Government is moving away from such programmes, arguing that they do not sustain long-term regeneration. It emphasises the need for policies and programmes to commit to continuity of support over time. This approach is exemplified in its Communities First initiative.

In terms of rural community regeneration, however, this commitment is in part undermined by the dependence of policy and programmes on funding from outside Wales. It is likely that after 2006 the areas of rural Wales currently entitled to EU structural funding will no longer be eligible. LEADER+ also concludes in 2006, and it is not yet clear whether there will be a European rural community development initiative to follow it. This has consequences for the long-term future of domestic programmes, such as Rural Community Action which is also scheduled to end in 2006.

Ensuring that policies and programmes contribute to long-term regeneration in rural Wales requires that their impact is monitored and evaluated. At present, however, there are inadequate baseline indicators for and commitment to this task.

³⁸ *Communities First: The Way Forward* National Assembly for Wales, 2001

Appendix 1

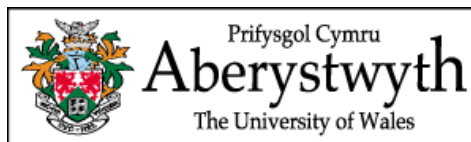
Survey of Unitary Authorities

WALES RURAL OBSERVATORY

Research study into policy and resources impacting on rural Wales

SURVEY OF UNITARY AUTHORITIES

| |
|---------------------------------|
| Unitary Authority _____ |
| Contact name _____ |
| Position within Authority _____ |
| Contact telephone number _____ |



If you have any queries or comments regarding this questionnaire, please contact Dr. Graham Gardner at the Wales Rural Observatory, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3DB.

Phone: 01970 622369; E-mail: walesruralobservatory@aber.ac.uk

1. Unitary Authority Area

1a. Please indicate which of the following best describes the area covered by your Unitary Authority. Tick one box only.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Primarily rural | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Primarily urban | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mainly rural with a few urban areas | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mainly urban with a few rural areas | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A mixture of urban and rural areas | <input type="checkbox"/> |

1b. Please indicate the rural areas covered by your Unitary Authority by providing either a list of rural communities / wards or a map showing those areas.

1c. On what basis does your Unitary Authority classify these areas as rural? Please tick all boxes that apply.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Population density | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Land use | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Employment type | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Official rural / urban classification | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other (please state) _____

2. Activities targeted at rural areas

2a. Does your Unitary Authority have departments, committees or individuals with core responsibility for rural issues or rural areas?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide details.

2b. Please indicate your approximate annual budgets for 2003–4 and 2004–5.

Budget 2003-4

Budget 2004-5

2c. Please indicate the approximate amount or percentage of your budgets allocated to rural areas for 2003–4 and 2004–5. If your entire budget is allocated to rural areas, please write 'all'.

Amount / % of budget
allocated to rural
areas 2003-4

Amount / % of budget
allocated to rural
areas 2004-5

2d. Does your organisation undertake / commission research relating to rural areas of Wales?

Yes

No

2e. If yes, please give details of research commissioned or undertaken within the last two years. Please include titles, dates and funding sources of research projects.

2f. Is your Unitary Authority currently operating and funding any programmes of action **targeted specifically** at rural areas **which it has initiated**?

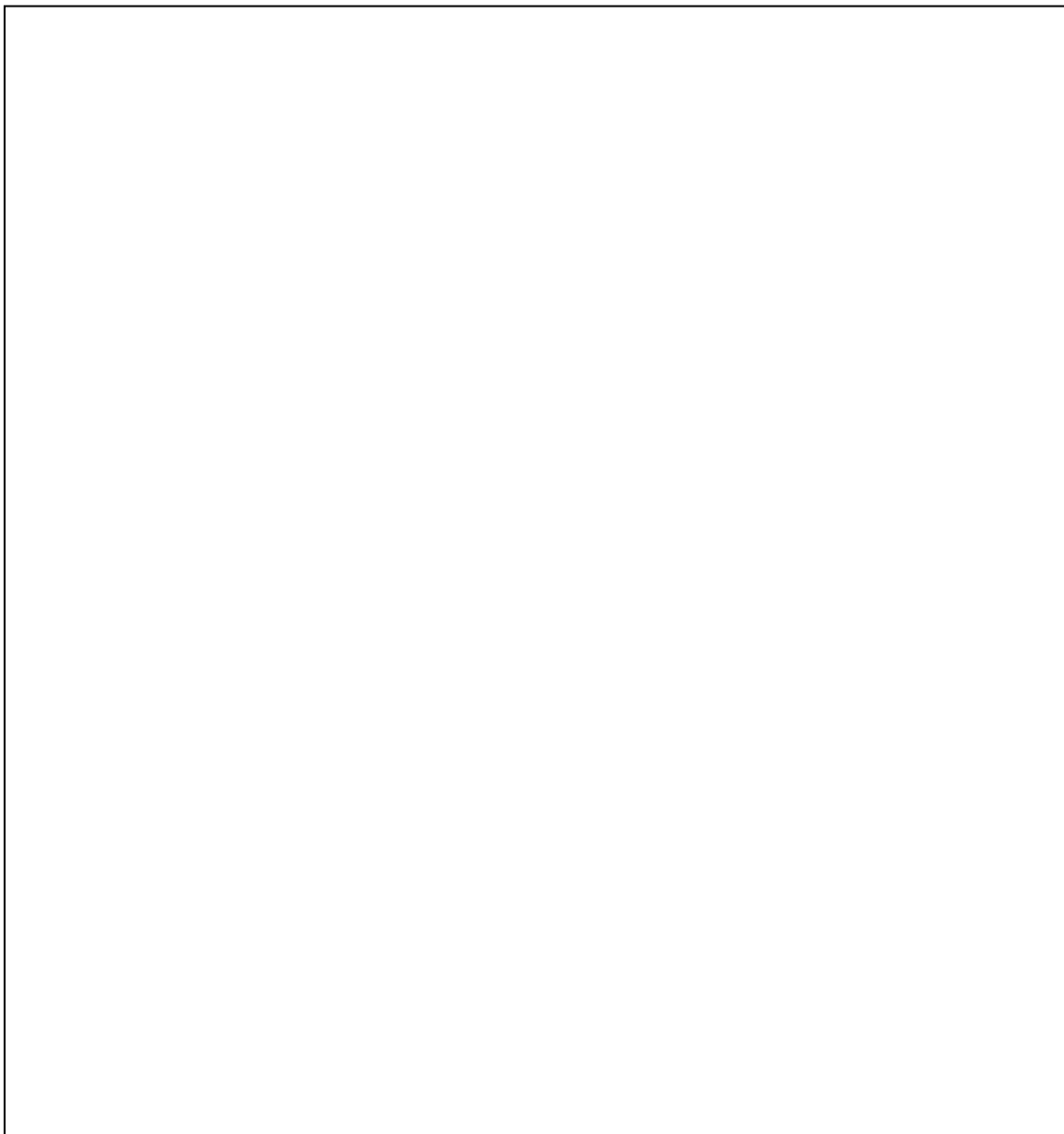
Yes

No

2g. If yes, please briefly outline key programmes, including the following information for each initiative.

- Name of initiative
- Brief description of initiative
- Aims of initiative
- Funding for initiative
- Start and end dates of initiative
- Main recipient(s) of initiative
- Your role in the initiative
- Any other partners involved in the initiative

Use the space provided below and continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the respondent to provide details about key programmes as requested in the text above.

2h. Is your Unitary Authority currently involved with any programmes of action **targeted specifically** at rural areas that **other partners have initiated**?

Yes

No

2i. If yes, please briefly outline key programmes, including the following information for each initiative.

- Name of initiative
- Brief description of initiative
- Aims of initiative
- Funding for initiative
- Start and end dates of initiative
- Main recipient(s) of initiative
- Your role in the initiative
- Any other partners involved in the initiative

Use the space provided below and continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

2j. Is your Unitary Authority currently involved with any programmes of action that **include rural areas but are not targeted specifically at them?**

Yes

No

2k. If yes, please briefly outline key programmes, including the following information for each initiative.

- Name of initiative
- Brief description of initiative
- Aims of initiative
- Funding for initiative
- Start and end dates of initiative
- Main recipient(s) of initiative
- Your role in the initiative
- Any other partners involved in the initiative

Use the space provided below and continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

2l. What are the key challenges facing **rural areas** within your Unitary Authority?

2m. Does your Unitary Authority see these challenges as **different from or similar to** urban areas in your Unitary Authority?

2n. What are your **priorities** in addressing the challenges faced by rural areas within your Unitary Authority?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please return it in the enclosed Freepost envelope to:

**Wales Rural Observatory, FREEPOST NWW8993A, Institute of Geography & Earth Sciences,
University of Wales, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3DB**

Appendix 2

Questionnaire responses

We are grateful for responses to questionnaires from the following organisations:

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| ASPBs Countryside Council for Wales ELWa Forestry Commission Wales Sports Council Wales Wales Tourist Board Welsh Development Agency Welsh Language Board | Unitary Authorities Isle of Anglesey Carmarthenshire Ceredigion Conwy Denbighshire Flintshire Monmouthshire Powys Wrexham | National Park Authorities Brecon Beacons Snowdonia Pembrokeshire Coast |
|---|---|--|

We are also grateful to the WDA for providing an interview in lieu of a questionnaire response and to Forestry Commission Wales for their offer of an interview.

The following organisations were sent questionnaires but did not respond:

| | |
|--|---|
| ASPBs Arts Council Wales Cadw Environment Agency Wales | Unitary Authorities Gwynedd Pembrokeshire Vale of Glamorgan |
|--|---|

Appendix 3

Summary of selected questionnaire responses

1a. Please indicate which of the following best describes the area covered by your organisation.

| | Primarily rural | A mixture of urban and rural areas |
|---|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| CCW | ✓ | |
| Forestry Commission Wales | | ✓ |
| National Council for Education and Training Wales (ELWa) | | ✓ |
| Sports Council for Wales | | ✓ |
| Wales Tourist Board | | ✓ |
| Welsh Language Board | | ✓ |

1c. On what basis does your organisation classify areas as rural? Please tick all boxes that apply.

| | Population density | Land use | Employment type | Official urban/rural classification |
|---|--------------------|----------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| CCW | | | | |
| Forestry Commission Wales | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| National Council for Education and Training Wales (ELWa) | ✓ | | | |
| Sports Council for Wales | | | | ✓ |
| Wales Tourist Board | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Welsh Language Board | | | | ✓ |

2a. Approximately how many people work for your organisation and

2b. Approximately how many or what proportion of employees have core responsibility for rural issues or rural areas?

| | Total | Responsibility for rural issues / areas |
|---|-------|--|
| CCW | 630 | 100% |
| Forestry Commission Wales | 369 | 80% |
| National Council for Education and Training Wales (ELWa) | 400 | 1 has direct responsibility on rural issues from a policy perspective |
| Sports Council for Wales | 180 | none for rural areas but around 8 staff in local development services section have some responsibility for rural areas |
| Wales Tourist Board | 170 | |
| Welsh Language Board | 65 | irrelevant |

2c. Does your organisation have departments / committees with core responsibility for rural issues or rural areas?

| | Yes | No |
|--|--------------|----|
| CCW | ✓ | |
| Forestry Commission Wales | | ✓ |
| National Council for Education and Training Wales (ELWa) | ✓ (areas) | |
| Sports Council for Wales | | ✓ |
| Wales Tourist Board | | ✓ |
| Welsh Language Board | ✓ | |

2b. Please indicate your approximate annual budgets for 2003-04 and 2004-05 and

2c. Please indicate the approximate amount or percentage of your budgets allocated to rural areas for 2003-04 and 2004-05.

| | Budget 2003-04 | Budget 2004-05 | Allocated to rural areas 2003-04 | Allocated to rural areas 2004-05 |
|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| CCW | £50m | £52m | 100% | 100% |
| Forestry Commission Wales | £25m net | | | |
| ELWa | £468m | £495m | | |
| Sports Council for Wales | £10.34m | £10.90m | | |
| Wales Tourist Board | £46m | £43m | 70% | 70% |
| Welsh Language Board | £11.5m | £12.2m | | |

2f. Does your organisation undertake / commission research relating to rural areas?

| | Yes | No |
|---------------------------|-----|----|
| CCW | | |
| Forestry Commission Wales | ✓ | |
| ELWa | ✓ | |
| Sports Council for Wales | ✓ | |
| Wales Tourist Board | ✓ | |
| Welsh Language Board | ✓ | |

3a. Is your organisation currently operating and funding any programmes of action targeted specifically at rural areas which it has initiated? and

3d. Is your organisation currently involved with any programmes of action targeted specifically at rural areas that other partners have initiated? and

3f. Is your organisation currently involved with any programmes of action that include rural areas but are not targeted specifically at them?

| | Programmes targeted at rural areas which it has initiated? | | Programmes targeted at rural areas which other partners have initiated? | | Programmes that include but are not specifically targeted at rural areas? | |
|----------------------------------|--|----|---|----|---|----|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| CCW | ✓ | | ✓ | | | |
| Forestry Commission Wales | ✓ | | ✓ | | | |
| ELWa | ✓ | | | | ✓ | |
| Sports Council for Wales | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Wales Tourist Board | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Welsh Language Board | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |

3b. What is the total budget allocated to programmes targeted specifically at rural areas that the organisation has initiated?

| | 2003-04 | 2004-05 |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| CCW | £30m | £34m |
| Forestry Commission Wales | | |
| National Council for Education and Training Wales (ELWa) | c. £1,5m | unconfirmed |
| Sports Council for Wales | | |
| Wales Tourist Board | £7.3m | £4m |
| Welsh Language Board | | |

1a. Do you distinguish between rural and urban areas within your national park authority?

| | Yes | No |
|-----------------------|-----|----|
| Brecon Beacons | ✓ | |
| Pemb. Coast | | ✓ |
| Snowdonia | ✓ | ✓ |

1c. On what basis does your unitary authority / national park authority classify areas as rural? Please tick all boxes that apply.

| | Population density | Land use | Employment type | Official urban/rural classification | Other |
|------------------------|--------------------|----------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Anglesey | | | | ✓ | |
| Carmarthenshire | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Ceredigion | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Conwy | | | | ✓ | |
| Denbighshire | | | | | |
| Flintshire | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| Monmouthshire | | | | | LEADER+ classification |
| Powys | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Wrexham | | | | | Wrexham's rural development strategy |
| Brecon Beacons | | ✓ | | | |
| Pemb. Coast | | ✓ | | | |
| Snowdonia | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |

2a. Does your Unitary Authority have departments, committees or individuals with core responsibility for rural issues or rural areas?

| | Yes | No |
|------------------------|-----|----|
| Anglesey | | ✓ |
| Carmarthenshire | ✓ | |
| Ceredigion | ✓ | |
| Conwy | ✓ | |
| Denbighshire | ✓ | |
| Flintshire | ✓ | |
| Monmouthshire | ✓ | |
| Powys | | ✓ |
| Wrexham | ✓ | |

2d. Does your organisation undertake / commission research relating to rural areas?

| | Yes | No |
|------------------------|-----|----|
| Anglesey | | ✓ |
| Carmarthenshire | ✓ | |
| Ceredigion | ✓ | |
| Conwy | | |
| Denbighshire | | ✓ |
| Flintshire | ✓ | |
| Monmouthshire | | ✓ |
| Powys | | |
| Wrexham | ✓ | |
| Brecon Beacons | ✓ | |
| Pemb. Coast | ✓ | |
| Snowdonia | ✓ | |

2f. Is your UA / NPA currently operating and funding any programmes of action targeted specifically at rural areas which it has initiated? and

2b. Is your UA / NPA currently involved with any programmes of action targeted specifically at rural areas that other partners have initiated? and

2j. Is your UA /NPA currently involved with any programmes of action that include rural areas but are not targeted specifically at them?

| | Programmes targeted at rural areas which it has initiated? | | Programmes targeted at rural areas which other partners have initiated? | | Programmes that include but are not specifically targeted at rural areas? | |
|-----------------|--|----|---|----|---|----|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Anglesey | ✓ | | ✓ | | | |
| Carmarthenshire | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Ceredigion | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Conwy | ✓ | | ✓ | | | |
| Denbighshire | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Flintshire | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Monmouthshire | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Powys | ✓ | | | | | |
| Wrexham | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Brecon Beacons | ✓ | | ✓ | | | |
| Pemb. Coast | ✓ | | ✓ | | | |
| Snowdonia | ✓ | | ✓ | | | |

Is your organisation currently operating and funding any programmes of action targeted specifically at rural areas that it has initiated?

| ASPBs | Response (“ ” indicates original wording) |
|--------------------------|---|
| Sports Council for Wales | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tir Cymen • Tir Gofal • £4.5m grants to partners • £3-4m SSSI management agreements • Walking Way to Health |
| ELWa | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recurrent Funding Mechanism • “It is not possible to elaborate in any depth here on the range of other programmes which relate closely to rural areas (e.g. ICT and Management Development for Farmers programme).” |
| Welsh Language Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Board’s Language Implementation Schemes focus on rural areas.” • “The Board’s marketing campaign “Welsh First” targets towns in rural areas.” • “A number of the Board’s youth projects are taking place in rural areas...The Board is also investing £18,00 in a project which promotes co-operation between the Board and the Young Farmers’ Movement in Wales.” |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Board is working with <i>Mentrau Iaith</i> and others to produce a “Welcome Pack”...for people who are moving to live in areas of north and west Wales in order to provide them with information about the state of the Welsh language in those areas.” |
| Forestry Commission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Many of our projects are not specifically targeted at rural areas but by default are concerned with social, environmental and economic rural issues. I found it difficult to say whether projects were initiated by ourselves or by another body with us being a partner” |
| Wales Tourist Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism growth area programme • Adfywio • Farm Tourism Diversification Scheme • Activity Products Marketing • Farm Holidays |
| | |
| Unitary Authorities | |
| Ceredigion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tregaron Uplands Communities First • Ceredigion Tourism Growth Area - £1m of funding from WTB • Various Objective 1 projects which promote development of specific rural areas including Voluntary Sector Regeneration Funds • Ceredigion Visitor Questionnaire Surveys – to provide information on visitor perceptions of the local areas and as part of Integrated Quality Management project run by Aberystwyth University. • Cardigan and South Ceredigion Regeneration Plan with £5.9m additional funds provided by WAG |
| Flintshire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flintshire Rural Partnership |
| Conwy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural development Centre • Conwy Key Fund • Farm Computer Grant • Business Development Grants |
| Carmarthenshire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Rural Services and Thematics Programme-Lead Body” • “Partnership For Community Action (PACT)-Lead Body (grant fund for rural and urban Carmarthenshire)” • “Strategic Towns and Villages including a Rural Conversion Grant, Town Improvement-Lead body. Grant and a Townscape Heritage Scheme-Lead Body” • “Carmarthenshire Learning Network-Lead Body” • “Ymlaen Dyffryn Tywi and Tywi Regional Growth Area-Lead Body” • “Retaining and Attracting a Young Workforce” focus group (lead body) • “LLWYBRO-partner” |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Agri-Food Initiative-Officer employed” • Dinefwr Intermediate Care Scheme (lead body) • Teifi Strategic Walks and Trail • “Redeveloping tourism packages in partnership with the private and public sector e.g. Woollen Museum at Drefach Felindre, GB RAC Rally” • CHRT (Carmarthenshire Heritage Regeneration Trust) • Ymlaen Dyffryn Tywi • TYWYS (Tourism) |
| Monmouthshire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile Movies – providing a cinema service to rural communities |
| Anglesey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape improvement grant • Tree, woodland and hedgerow strategy. • AONB management plan • Biodiversity Action Plan • Green Schools Initiative • Lengthmen |
| Wrexham | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Scheme – “grant-aid scheme to assist rural projects with an economic, environmental and/or community development benefit” • Village Hall Investment Fund |
| Powys | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “everything we do relates to rural areas” |
| | |
| National Park Authorities | |
| Brecon Beacons | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Development Dund • Sustainable events programme |
| Snowdonia | Gwynedd Rural Housing Enabler |
| Pembrokeshire Coast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Conserving the coastal slopes, 1999 – 2003” • “Conserving the national park, 2004 – 2007” • Town Schemes – programmes of grant aid for essential repairs/ rehabilitation of listed buildings in Tenby, Saundersfoot and St David’s conservation areas • Sustainable development fund 2000 – 2006 • Pembrokeshire Grazing Network 2000 -2006 |

Is your organisation currently operating and funding any programmes of action targeted specifically at rural areas that others have initiated?

| ASPBs | Response (“ ” indicates original wording) |
|----------------------------------|---|
| ELWa | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I do not know sufficient about all the projects being supported by ELWa to comment.” |
| Welsh Language Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Board has representation on <i>Llwybro</i>” – a programme tracking migration trends of young people in central Wales and encouraging those who have left to return • “The Board is a member of the Assembly’s Rural Partnership” |
| Forestry Commission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Many of our projects are not specifically targeted at rural areas but by default are concerned with social, environmental and economic rural issues. I found it difficult to say whether projects were initiated by ourselves or by another body with us being a partner” |
| Wales Tourist Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Countryside Holidays |
| | |
| Unitary Authorities | |
| Ceredigion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Rate Relief Scheme |
| Flintshire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Development Plan for Wales – Article 33 • LEADER+ Programme (Cadwyn Clwyd) • Rural Community Action |
| Conwy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Towns and Villages Enterprise Initiative • Rural Tourism Growth Area • Rural Community Action |
| Carmarthenshire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rural Community Action</i> |
| Anglesey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Business Action • Anglesey Coastal Path – “£1.4m project to improve the existing and develop new sections of a path around the island’s coast” • Dingle – “council worked with ref Llangefni to secure funding for improvement in the Dingle area of Llangefni” |
| Wrexham | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 33 of Rural Development Plan • Rural Community Action • LEADER+ |
| Powys | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “there are many areas of work we are involved in...The vast majority of these programmes cover all areas.” |
| | |
| National Park Authorities | |
| Brecon Beacons | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Glasu (Powys) and Adventa (Monmouthshire) LEADER+ rural |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| | development Local Action Groups. ... BBNPA participate, as LAG members, on the management of the programmes and in assessing applications for LEADER+ funding. Further assistance is given to specific projects in the national parks area contributing to the national park aims.” |
| Snowdonia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tir Gofal land management scheme • Tir Rhaglen land management scheme |
| Pembrokeshire Coast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To Gwynedd – “community based group centred on Newport seeking to address affordable housing needs of youngsters in a truly sustainable way” • Planed LEADER+ Local Action Group |

Is your organisation currently operating and funding any programmes of action that include rural areas but are not targeted specifically at them?

| ASPBs | Response (“ ” indicates original wording) |
|----------------------------|---|
| Sports Council for Wales | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “All our action programmes and initiatives are equally applicable to urban and rural areas.” |
| ELWa | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “ELWA’s target groups are individuals, businesses and communities. There is a rural dimension to the great majority of all ELWa’s activities, even if it is not labelled as [such] explicitly. ELWa’s regional structure encompasses issues of rurality” |
| Welsh Language Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding of various partners active in rural areas, including Mentrau Iaith • “The Board funds other national and local organisations which stage activities in rural areas, including <i>Urdd Gobaith Cymru</i>, <i>Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin</i>, <i>Papurau Bro</i> and Eryi Young Farmers” |
| Forestry Commission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Many of our projects are not specifically targeted at rural areas but by default are concerned with social, environmental and economic rural issues. I found it difficult to say whether projects were initiated by ourselves or by another body with us being a partner” |
| Wales Tourist Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Most of our programmes would fall into this category” |
| | |
| Unitary Authorities | |
| | |
| Flintshire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “There are numerous programmes which the CC is involved in but which are not exclusive to rural areas. Some of these include: Flintshire community strategy F’shire ec dev strat F’shire tourism strat Communities First Hoywell townscape heritage initiative / town improvement grant Mold town improvement grant Town centre managers Local regeneration fund Business support and assistance Environmental improvements Educational programmes Community and youth inits Countryside projects” |
| Conwy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business start-up and development grants • Heritage Lottery Fund Townscape heritage schemes – Llanrwst, Penmaenmawr, Colwyn Bay • Strategic Tourism Growth Area |
| Carmarthenshire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentrau Iaith Myrddin • Pride In Our Communities |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Wrexham | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism Growth Area (WTB) |
| Denbighshire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEADER+ (Cadwyn Clwyd) • Small Towns and Villages Initiative. • Tourism Growth Area (WTB) |
| Powys | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The most significant project to raise here is the work the Council has been involved with, since late 2002, in leading the development of the county’s community strategy.” |
| | |
| National Park Authorities | |
| Pembrokeshire Coast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenway Partnership - promoting non-car access to the countryside and coast • Pembrokeshire Knotweed Partnership • Green Seas Obj 1 Beach Infrastructure Programme • Integrated land management plans for the MOD training estate |

Appendix 4

Abbreviations

| | |
|--------------|--|
| AONB | Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty |
| ASPB | Assembly-Sponsored Public Body |
| CAP | Common Agricultural Policy |
| CCW | Countryside Council for Wales |
| CVC | County Voluntary Council |
| DEFRA | Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs |
| DTI | Department of Trade and Industry |
| DBRW | Development Board for Rural Wales |
| ELWa | Education and Learning Wales |
| EAGGF | European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund |
| ERDF | European Regional Development Fund |
| ESF | European Social Fund |
| ESTF | European Structural Funds Task Force |
| EU | European Union |
| FIFG | Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance |
| FMD | Foot and Mouth Disease |
| GIS | Geographical Information System |
| ICT | Information and Communications Technology |
| IRD | Integrated Rural Development |
| MAFF | Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food |
| NAW | National Assembly for Wales |
| NCVO | National Council of Voluntary Organisations |
| NPA | National Park Authority |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| RCA | Rural Community Action |
| RDP | Rural Development Plan |
| RDR | Rural Development Regulation |
| RPW | Rural Partnership for Wales |
| RPD | Rural Policy Division of the Welsh Assembly Government |
| RPU | Rural Policy Unit of the Welsh Development Agency |
| SPD | Single Programming Document |
| SME | Small to Medium-Sized Enterprise |
| STVEI | Small Towns and Villages Enterprise Initiative |
| TGA | Tourism Growth Area |
| UA | Unitary Authority |
| WCVA | Wales Council for Voluntary Action |

WAG Welsh Assembly Government
WDA Welsh Development Agency
WEFO Welsh European Funding Office
WLGA Welsh Local Government Association
WTB Wales Tourist Board

Appendix 5

Members of Rural Partnership for Wales

| Organisation | Interest / representation | Exclusively rural remit | Exclusively Welsh remit |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| CADW | Heritage conservation | | ✓ |
| Careers Wales* | Employment | | ✓ |
| Confederation of British Industry* | Businesses | | |
| Countryside Council for Wales* | Environmental conservation | ✓ | ✓ |
| CLA* | Businesses and landowners | ✓ | |
| Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales | Environmental conservation | ✓ | ✓ |
| Countryside Alliance | Range of rural interests | ✓ | |
| Cytun (Churches Together) | Christian religion | | ✓ |
| Department for Work and Pensions | Employment | | |
| Environment Agency Wales* | Environmental protection | | ✓ |
| Fforwm (FE)* | Further education | | ✓ |
| Forestry Commission Wales* | Forestry and woodland | ✓ | ✓ |
| Federation of Small Businesses* | Small businesses | | |
| Funky dragon | Young people | | ✓ |
| Farmers' Union of Wales* | Farmers | ✓ | ✓ |
| Institute of Rural Health* | Health | ✓ | |
| LEADER network* | LEADER | ✓ | ✓ |
| Mid Wales Partnership* | Regional dev. partnership | | ✓ |
| National Parks* | Protected landscapes | ✓ | ✓ |
| National Trust | Heritage conservation | ✓ | |
| National Farmers' Union, Wales* | Farmers | ✓ | |
| NHS confederation | Health | | |
| North Wales Economic Forum* | Regional economic forum | ✓ | ✓ |
| Rural Stress Info Network | Local rural support groups | ✓ | |
| South-East Wales Econ Forum * | Regional economic forum | | ✓ |
| South-West Wales Econ Forum* | Regional economic forum | | ✓ |
| TUC Wales | Trades unions | | ✓ |
| Urdd | Young people / Welsh lang | | ✓ |
| Wales Enterprise* | Businesses | | ✓ |
| Wales Environment Link* | Env. conservation | | ✓ |

| | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Wales Rural Dev Network | <i>European funding?</i> | ✓ | ✓ |
| Wales Rural Forum* | ? | ✓ | ✓ |
| Wales Tourism Alliance | Tourism | | ✓ |
| Wales Tourist Board* | Tourism | | ✓ |
| | | | |
| Organisation | Interest / representation | Exclusively rural remit | Exclusively Welsh remit |
| Wales Council for Voluntary Action* | Voluntary groups and orgs | | ✓ |
| Welsh Development Agency (2 representatives)* | Businesses / Economic Development | | ✓ |
| Welsh Academic Network | Higher education | | ✓ |
| Welsh Consumer Council | Consumers | | ✓ |
| Welsh Fed Housing Assn | Social landlords | | ✓ |
| Welsh Language Board | Welsh language | | ✓ |
| Welsh Local Government Association (5 representatives)* | Welsh local government | | ✓ |

* indicates organisation has been a member since 1999

Appendix 6

Key points of the Cork Declaration

1. **Rural preference:** rural development must be put at the top of the agenda of the European Union (...);
2. **Integrated Approach:** Rural development policy must be multi-disciplinary in concept, and multi-sectoral in application, with a clear territorial dimension. It must apply to all rural areas in the Union, respecting the concentration principle through the differentiation of co-financing for those areas which are more in need (...);
3. **Diversification :** Support for diversification of economic and social activity must focus on providing the framework for self-sustaining private and community-based initiatives (...);
4. **Sustainability:** Policies should promote rural development which sustains the quality and amenity of Europe's rural landscapes (natural resources, biodiversity and cultural identity), so that their use by today's generation does not prejudice the options for future generation (...);
5. **Subsidiarity:** Given the diversity of the Union's rural areas, rural development policy must follow the principle of subsidiarity (...);
6. **Simplification:** Rural development policy, notably in its agricultural component, needs to undergo radical simplification in legislation (...);
7. **Programming:** The application of rural development programmes must be based on coherent and transparent procedures, and integrated into one single programme for rural development for each region, and a single mechanism for sustainable and rural development;
8. **Finance:** The use of local financial resources must be encouraged to promote local rural development projects. More encouragement must be given to using financial engineering in rural credit techniques in order to mobilise better the synergies between public and private funding, reduce financial constraints on small and medium size enterprises, promote productive investment, and diversify rural economies (...);
9. **Management:** The administrative capacity and effectiveness of regional and local governments and community-based groups must be enhanced, where necessary, through the provision of technical assistance, training, better communications, partnership and the sharing of research, information and exchange of experience through networking between regions and between rural communities throughout Europe (...);
10. **Evaluation and research:** Monitoring, evaluation and beneficiary assessment will need to be reinforced in order to ensure transparency of procedures, guarantee the good use of public money, stimulate research and innovation, and enable an informed public debate (...).

Appendix 7

The Welsh Assembly Government's three cross-cutting themes

The Assembly has three cross-cutting themes to which it is committed in all of its policy-making. These are sustainable development, equal opportunities and tackling social disadvantage.

The Assembly defines **sustainable development** as '*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*'. This duty is built into its constitution through section 121 of the 1998 Government of Wales Act. The Act requires the Assembly, following consultation with other bodies, to produce a scheme setting out how it intends to implement the duty, and then to monitor the scheme, publish an annual report on progress and every four years evaluate its effectiveness. The Scheme should then help facilitate, guide and standardize sustainable development practice across the work of the Assembly. The present scheme, set out in the document *Learning to Live Differently*, was adopted by the Assembly in November 2000.

The Assembly defines **social disadvantage** as when '*people, groups or communities suffer multiple deprivation multiple deprivation...where low incomes, unemployment, low educational attainment and attendance, poor health, poor housing and physical isolation come together*. Its aim is '*the development of an inclusive society where everyone has the chance to fulfil their potential*' through a focus on the realisation of lasting and sustainable change in the economic and social structures, patterns and processes which influence social well-being in Wales, rather than on finding short-term solutions that are likely to have little sustainable impact on problems. In particular it is concerned that funding and other resources are targeted appropriately, effectively and efficiently in order to realise the maximum benefit for the most deprived and disadvantaged groups and areas in Wales.

The Assembly defines **equal opportunities** as a culture in which diversity is valued and equality of opportunity is a reality. The Government of Wales act 1998 obliges the Assembly to proactively consider issues of equality when carrying out all its functions – a legal duty which goes beyond the statutory requirements placed upon other UK legislatures. These issues include: employment, pay and conditions for the disabled and gay and lesbian groups, and sexual and racial discrimination both in terms of the Assembly Civil service and any new primary and secondary legislation covering Wales. The Assembly has stated that it is committed to implementing and promoting the principles of equal opportunities set out in its constitution, and a recent report commissioned by the Assembly into its statutory equality duty concluded that 'The initial actions of the Welsh executive and opposition parties suggest a clear intention to be proactive and, in some areas, go beyond the equality measures thus far seen at Westminster.'³⁹

³⁹ Chaney, P. and Fevre, R. (2002), *An Absolute Duty: Equal Opportunities and the National Assembly for Wales - A Study of the Equality Policies of the Welsh Assembly Government and their Implementation: July 1999 to March 2002*, Institute of Welsh Affairs, p.5

Appendix 8

Welsh Assembly Government levels and definitions of partnership

The Welsh Assembly Government defines seven different levels of partnership. These are:

1 **Supporter**

In this case, the organisation is asked to be a partner, but what is really meant is, will you support this initiative /project /application with your name or a letter, and come along to occasional meetings?

2 **Agent**

In this case, the organisation is asked to be a partner in delivery, but what is really required is an agent. Here the task is pre-determined, with or without discussion, and payment is made to deliver the task. The power remains with the commissioner.

3 **Adviser**

Many organisations are asked to sit on advisory committees. These are often second tier non-executive structures to involve a wider range of players. Advisory committees rarely have much influence, and may serve the interests of the main players (in demonstrating inclusiveness) rather than the participants. The power remains with the main committee.

4 **Junior membership**

In this case, the organisation is on the main decision making structure, but has inferior status either in numbers or influence. It may be over dependent on other members for its existence or funds or policy. Power remains with other actors, and is used to keep the organisation in its secondary place.

5 **Joint ownership**

In this case, the organisation is an equal partner, and is seen and treated as such. It is there as of right and from inception. It has an equal say over terms of reference, criteria, policy and distribution of resources. It has access to its own constituency, research, information, and its resources are not determined by other members.

6 **Community ownership**

As above, except that the community representatives must have at least 50%of the members.

(National Assembly for Wales Voluntary Sector Scheme, 2000)

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