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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Consultation Document

Strategic Environmental Assessment: Environmental Report, ERDF European Structural Funds 2014-2020 West Wales & the Valleys

Date of issue: **26 February 2013**
Action required: Responses by **23 April 2013**

UNDEB EWROPEAIDD
EUROPEAN UNION

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Overview

This consultation invites comment on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report for the 2014 – 2020 ERDF Structural Funds Programmes in West Wales and the Valleys. The Welsh Government commissioned Bangor University to undertake the SEA. The report has been produced following full consultation with statutory bodies. The purpose of the SEA is to identify the significant environmental effects that are likely to result from the implementation of the Programme and to ensure that environmental and other sustainability aspects are considered effectively. We would like your views on the issues raised by this SEA. After the consultation closes, the Welsh Government will analyse all responses and will work with Bangor University to finalise the SEA.

How to respond

The Consultation Response form may be sent by mail or by e-mail to the address shown in "Contact Details" below to arrive by 23 April 2013 at the latest.

Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternate language versions of this document are available on request.

The consultation documents can be accessed on the Welsh Government website at **www.wales.gov.uk/consultations**.

Contact Details

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Data Protection

How the views and information you give us will be used.

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about. It may also be seen by other Welsh Government staff to help them plan future consultations.

The Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. This helps to show that the consultation was carried out properly. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then blank them out.

Names or addresses we blank out might still get published later, though we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Government. This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decided to reveal the information.

PRIFYSGOL BANGOR UNIVERSITY

oldbell 3

Research Policy Analysis
Ymchwil Polisi Dadansoddi




The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004

West Wales and Valleys ERDF Programme 2014-2020

Strategic Environmental Assessment
Draft Environmental Report

February 2013

www.oldbell3.co.uk

Ex-Ante Evaluation and Strategic Environmental Assessment for European Regional Development Fund Operational Programme 2014-2020
West Wales and Valleys

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

FEBRUARY 2013

Glossary of acronyms and their meanings
Glossary of terms

Tables

Figures (Please note accessible versions of the Figures are available at Appendix 6)

Appendices

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND THEIR MEANINGS

AA	Appropriate Assessment, a statutory assessment of the likely and significant effects of a proposal on any site that is of European conservation interest (see SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site), under the terms of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EC).
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a landscape designation under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan. Initially the UK government's response to the Convention on Biodiversity 1992 as its plan to halt biodiversity loss. Each of the UK nations now has its own BAP, as do all the local authorities (known as local biodiversity action plans or LBAPs). In Wales there are currently 24 of these. BAPs are non statutory documents.
Cadw	The name given to the Welsh Government's statutory body for the protection of Wales' built heritage, ancient monuments and sites.
CCT	Cross-cutting themes, a term used in the context of the Structural Fund programmes to denote compliance in terms of sustainable development, equal opportunities and poverty alleviation.
CCW	The Countryside Council for Wales, the Welsh Government's statutory body for the protection of biodiversity and landscape and the promotion of access to the countryside (until April 2013).
CO_2	Carbon Dioxide, a greenhouse gas emitted when burning fossil fuels.
DEFRA	The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for the United Kingdom. Defra represents the UK's agriculture, fisheries, environment and rural community interests in Europe.
DG	Directorate-General, one of 32 departments of the European Commission.
EA	The Environment Agency, a non-departmental public body whose main duty is to safeguard the quality of air and the quality and availability of water.
EAU	The Welsh Office Environmental Unit, a department of the Welsh Department prior to the establishment of the Welsh Assembly Government.
EC	The European Community
EEC	The European Economic Community

EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment (in the context of this document), a statutory assessment of the significant environmental effects of a plan or project, and the measures to avoid, mitigate or compensate, or to enhance the environment as an outcome. Operates under the terms of the EIA Directive 337/85/EEC.
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund, one of the EU's two structural funds. A financial tool designed to reduce disparities by creating sustainable jobs, economic development, research and development, environmental protection and risk management.
ESF	European Social Fund, also one of the EU's two structural funds. A financial tool designed to reduce disparities by promoting adaptability, access to employment, and social inclusion for disadvantaged people.
EU	The European Union.
gha	Global hectares, the measure of a population's ecological footprint.
GHG	Greenhouse gas or gases. As well as carbon dioxide, greenhouse gases include water vapour, methane, nitrous oxide and ozone, all of which contribute to the 'greenhouse' effect by absorbing and emitting radiation within the thermal infrared range.
GVA	Gross Added Value, an economic measure of the total value of goods and services produced in an area, sector or industry.
ICOMOS	The International Council of Monuments and Sites, a professional association that offers advice on the protection and conservation of cultural heritage sites and structures around the world.
ICT	Information and Communications Technology.
IUCN	The International Union for the Conservation of Nature, a governmental and non-governmental forum that aims to find pragmatic solutions to environment and development challenges. It is the world's oldest and largest environmental network.
kWh/d/p	Kilo-watt hours per day per person, a measure of energy use.
LDP	Local Development Plan, the statutory local authority spatial plan policy document.
LULUCF	Land use and land use change and forestry, a sector defined by the United Nations as 'a greenhouse gas inventory sector that covers the emission and removal of greenhouse gases resulting from direct human-induced land use, land change and forestry activities.'

NEA	National Ecosystem Assessment, an initial assessment of the state of a nation's ecosystems, their services to human well-being, and a description of pressures and trends likely to influence their future condition.
NGO	Non-governmental organisation.
NNR	National Nature Reserve, a statutory designation that protects the natural interest of a site from potentially damaging operations, whether directly or indirectly.
ODPM	The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
R&D	Research and Development.
RDP	Rural Development Programme or Plan.
RSPB	The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, a conservation NGO.
SAC	Special Area of Conservation, a designation for habitats and species requiring special protection as site of European conservation interest under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EC).
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SF	Structural Fund(s) are the financial tools set up to reduce regional disparities across the EU. The structural funds are the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund.
SME	Small to medium enterprise. Three categories are defined by the European Commission: 'micro', with a staff of fewer than 10 and/or a turnover/balance sheet total of less than €2m; 'small', with a staff of fewer than 50 and/or a turnover/balance sheet total of less than €10m, and 'medium' , with a staff of fewer than 250 and/or a turnover/balance sheet total of less than €50m/€43m.
SoE	State of the Environment. An assessment of the environmental condition, pressures, responses and trends of a defined area, whether local or global.
SPA	Special Protection Area, a site or area designated for the protection of birds requiring special measures. As in the case of SACs (see above) these are sites of European conservation interest, established under the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC).
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest, a statutory designation that protects the natural interest of a site from potentially damaging interventions, whether directly or indirectly.

SUDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.
TEN-T	The Trans-European Transport Network, a transport infrastructure and traffic management system that incorporates rail, road, inland waterways, sea and air transport. Its aim is to facilitate ease of transport and travel across Europe.
UK	The United Kingdom of Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) and Northern Ireland.
US	The United States of America
WAG	The Welsh Assembly Government, otherwise known as the National Assembly for Wales, is the Welsh legislature established by the Government of Wales Act in 1998.
WEFO	The Welsh European Funding Office,
WFD	The Water Framework Directive,
WG	The Welsh Government, the executive of the Welsh Assembly Government, established by the Government of Wales Act 2006.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Appropriate Assessment A process required by the Habitats Directive 92/43/EC to assess whether a proposed project or a plan, alone or in combination with other proposals or plans, is likely to have a significant impact on a designated site of European conservation interest, such as a Special Area of Conservation or a Special Protection Area.

Avoidance In the context of this report, avoidance is used to mean a decision not to proceed with a project in order to avoid an impact; to relocate a project in order to avoid an impact; or to manage a project in such a way that it avoids an impact that may be seasonal in nature.

Cumulative or synergistic In the context of this report, cumulative effects are effects which alone do not result in a significant impact, but collectively do so. For example the cumulative effect of a number of acceptable developments, or discharges that individually do not have a significant impact. Synergistic effects are those that are not simply cumulative, but result in a further effect that may be positive or negative. The effects of chemical cocktails in a river may be synergistic, as may be the economic and social effects of interventions.

Ecological footprint An indicator of the demands made on the environment by a population, measured in global hectares. The ecological footprint for Wales in 2006 was about 4.4 gha. In other words, the population is consuming the equivalent of 4.4 'planet earths'.

Environmental Assessment A method or procedure for predicting the effects on the environment of a proposal, either for an individual project or a higher-level strategy (a policy, plan or programme), with the aim of taking account of these effects in decision-making. The term “Environmental Impact Assessment” (EIA) is used, as in European Directive 337/85/EEC, for assessments of projects. In the SEA Directive, an environmental assessment means “the preparation of an environmental report, the carrying out of consultations, the taking into account of the environmental report and the results of the consultations in decision-making and the provision of information on the decision”, in accordance with the Directive’s requirements.

Environmental Report A key output of the SEA process as required by the SEA Directive. Sets out to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing a plan or programme.

Ex-Ante Evaluation The process of evaluating the overall effects of a programme prior to its adoption. Carried out in parallel with the development of a programme, in order to inform it in terms of likely outcomes in order to optimise its implementation.

Indicator A measure of variables over time, used in this case to measure the extent to which objectives are being attained.

Mitigation Used in this case to refer to measures to reduce or offset significant adverse effects on the environment.

Objective: A statement of what is intended, specifying the desired direction of change as a result of interventions..

Plan or Programme: The term “plan or programme” covers any plans or programmes to which the SEA Directive applies.

Responsible Authority: The organisation which prepares a plan or programme subject to the Directive and is responsible for the SEA. In this case WEFO is the responsible authority.

Scoping: The process of determining the extent and level of detail of an SEA, including the environmental effects and alternatives which need to be considered, the assessment methods to be used, and the structure and contents of the Environmental Report.

Screening: The process of deciding whether a plan or programme requires SEA.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): Generic term used to describe environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans and programmes. In this report, “SEA” is used to refer to the type of environmental assessment required under the SEA Directive.

SEA Directive: European Directive 2001/42/EC “on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment”.

SEA Regulations: The regulations transposing the SEA Directive into law, namely The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004.

Significant environmental effects: Effects on the environment which are significant in the context of a plan or programme. Criteria for assessing significance are set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 This Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) report of the West Wales and the Valleys European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Programme ('the Programme') has been produced by Bangor University in association with Old Bell3 on behalf of the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO). The assessment has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the European SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) and the implementing regulations for Wales, the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004 (Welsh Instrument 2004 No. 1656 (W.170)).

1.1.2 This SEA is carried out in conjunction with the development of the Programme and the Ex-Ante Evaluation. It sets out to ensure that the Programme contributes positively to a high level of environmental protection, as well as supporting the goal of the Welsh Government (WG) of working towards sustainable development. It does this:

- by setting out the environmental parameters within which the Programme will operate;
- by identifying, describing and assessing likely significant effects on the environment arising from the Programme's implementation;
- by considering reasonable alternatives.

The purpose of this SEA is therefore is to ensure that it informs the development of the Programme before its adoption and to provide an environmental context for its implementation.

1.2 SEA requirements

1.2.1 This Environmental Report complies with the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004 (Welsh Instrument 2004 No. 1656 (W.170)) (see paragraph 1.1.1 above).

Table 1 identifies those sections within the Environmental Report that relate to the specific requirements of Regulation 12 and Schedule 2 of the Regulations.

Table 1: References to the SEA Regulations

Environmental Report - Information to be included	
1. An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan, and of its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.	**Section 3; pages 30-34**
2. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.	**Section 4; pages 35-68**
3. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.	**As above; see in particular section 4.17 page 64**
4. The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.	**Appendix 1**
7. The likely significant effects on the environment, including short, medium and long-term effects, permanent and temporary effects, positive and negative effects, and secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects, on issues such as: biodiversity; population; human health; fauna; flora; soil; water; air; climatic factors; material assets; cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage; landscape; the interrelationship between the above factors.	**Section 5; pages 68-78**
8. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan.	**Section 5.2 pages 74-78**
9. An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken.	**Section 6 pages 79-83**
10. A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Regulation 17.	**Section 8 page 85**
11. A non-technical summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 9.	**Accompanying document**

1.3 SEA process prior to the Environmental Report

1.3.1 An **initial meeting** between the contractors and WEFO and Welsh Government officials was held on 10 December 2012 in Cardiff to determine the broad nature and scope of the Structural Fund (SF) programme and to establish a timetable for consultation.

1.3.2 Subsequently, a **Screening Report** was produced on 4 January 2013 for consultation with the statutory bodies (the Environment Agency, the Countryside Council for Wales and Cadw), in accordance with the

requirements of the SEA Directive, in order to determine the need for a full SEA of the West Wales and the Valleys ERDF Programme. It was confirmed that, owing to the potentially significant effects that could arise from the Programme, a full SEA was required.

1.3.3 A meeting was held with the Countryside Council for Wales to discuss our approach to the SEA in terms of biodiversity concerns.

1.3.4 A **Scoping Report** was produced on 14 January 2013. This Environmental Report is based on responses to the Scoping Report and to subsequent consultations with statutory and non-statutory interests (see Appendix 6 for a list of consultees).

1.3.5 WEFO organised a series of consultation events to engage stakeholders in the development of the 2014-2020 SF and RDP programmes. As part of these events, stakeholders were given the opportunity to comment on this Environmental Report.

2 SEA PROCESS AND ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

2.1 Approach and overall SEA tasks

2.1.1 The approach that has been adopted is based on a number of advisory documents, chiefly the guidelines of the former Office for the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) 2005[1], and the EC's guidance documents on implementing the SEA Directive[2] and Ex-Ante Evaluation (Annex 1) 2012[3]. Note was also taken of guidance provided by the Environment Agency[4], the Countryside Council for Wales[5], RSPB[6], and the Scottish Executive[7].

2.1.2 Table 2 describes the SEA stages and tasks.

Table 2 SEA stages and tasks

STAGE	TASK
Setting the context and objectives	*Establish the baseline and deciding on the scope.* *Identify/review relevant policies, plans and programmes and sustainable development objectives that will affect or influence the programme.* *Collect relevant social, environmental and economic baseline information.* *Identify key sustainability issues for the SEA to address and define objectives.* *Develop SEA framework, objectives, indicators and targets.*

[1] *"A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive". ODPM 2005.*

[2] *"Implementation of Directive 2001/42 on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment". European Commission DG Environment. Undated.*

[3] *"Guidance document on Ex-Ante Evaluation. The Programming Period 2014-2020. European Regional Development Fund. European Social Fund. Cohesion Fund". European Commission DG Regional Policy. DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, June 2012.*

[4] *"Strategic Environmental Assessment and Climate Change: guidance for practitioners". Environment Agency. August 2011.*

[5] *"Strategic Environmental Assessment. Guidance for Practitioners". Countryside Council for Wales. SEA Guidance Note series. August 2007.*

[6] *"Strategic Environmental Assessment. Learning from Practice". RSPB. Undated.*

[7] *"Strategic Environmental Assessment Toolkit". Natural Scotland. Version 1 September 2006.*

	Test the plan or programme objectives against the sustainability objectives and whether the programme objectives are consistent with one another. *Produce scoping report and undertake consultation with the consultation bodies.*
Developing and refining the options	*Carry out appraisal of the proposed programme options and make recommendations for improvement.*
Appraising the effects of the draft programme	*Predict effects and carry out assessment of the effects of the draft programme* *Propose measures to maximise benefits and mitigate adverse effects.* *Develop proposals for monitoring.* *Prepare the Environmental Report of the draft programme.*
Consulting on the Environmental Report and draft Programme	*Consult on the Environmental Report along with the draft programme.* *Carry out appraisal of significant changes made as a result of consultation.*
Implementation and monitoring	*Inform consultees that the programme has been adopted.* *Issue statement summarising information on how the SEA results and consultees' opinions were taken into account, etc.* *Make programme and final Environmental Report available for public viewing.*

2.2 Challenges in undertaking the SEA

2.2.1 The assessment was constrained by two key factors:

- By its nature the programme is not spatial, but provides generic descriptions of the kind of activities likely to be supported under each priority and theme. It was therefore difficult at times to envisage potential significant environmental effects with certainty, and therefore a precautionary approach has been taken to the assessment of effects.

- Conversely, the programme is itself constrained by the need to prioritise regional economic activity, and the timescale over which the programme will operate. Therefore, the identification of *reasonable* alternatives is constrained in terms of alternative themes or combinations of themes, alternative timescales and alternative priorities.

2.3 Development of SEA objectives

2.3.1 Whilst there is no requirement under the SEA Directive to produce objectives or indicators as part of the SEA process, their use is promoted as an appropriate tool for identifying and assessing potential environmental effects, both positive and negative.

2.3.2 The objectives were developed from a review of literature that included:

- The draft 2014-2020 programme consultation documents and WEFO Environmental Sustainability Cross Cutting Theme Matrix and Guidance[8]
- The Welsh Government: Programme for Government[9]
- Wales Environment Strategy[10]
- Wales National Ecosystem Assessment[11]
- EU 6th Environmental Action Plan & Sustainable Development Strategy[12]

[8]*The consultation documents issued 14 January 2013. The Cross Cutting Guidance comprises 14 Guidance notes listed in the bibliography*

[9] *Programme for Government. Welsh Government. 2011 (http://wales.gov.uk/docs/strategies/ 110929fullen.pdf & http://wales.gov.uk/docs/strategies/120528fullen.pdf)*

[10]*WAG Cardiff. Environment Strategy Action Plan October 2008. (http://wales. gov.uk/ desh/publications/enviroprotect/environmentstrategy/environmentactionplan/esap0811e.pdf;jsessionid=7D4C1 12D25E2CF42B4AD153E9C57CDA0?lang=en)*

[11]*National Ecosystems Assessment (2011): Chapter 20: Status and Changes in the UK's Ecosystems and their Services to Society: Wales. World Conservation Monitoring Centre Cambridge.*

[12]*Decision No 1600/2002/EC of the European Parliament and the Council laying down the sixth community environmental action programme. July 2002.(http://eur-*

- 2007-13 ERDF West Wales and the Valleys Strategic Environmental Assessment[13]
- Wales Spatial Plan[14]
- European Commission Core Indicators[15]
- EU2020 targets[16]

2.3.3 As well as the review of the above literature, the following local level documents were analysed in order to develop a comprehensive list of both high level and locally focused objectives:

- Anglesey County Council: Sustainability Appraisal of the Anglesey LDP (withdrawn December 2010)
- Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Local Development Plan. Deposit Plan Sustainability Appraisal. Main Report January 2012.

- Bridgend Borough Council. Sustainability Appraisal of the Bridgend Local Development Plan November 2008

- Caerphilly Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. SEA and Sustainability Appraisal. Revised Scoping Report October 2012.

- Carmarthenshire County Local Development Plan. SA/SEA-LDP Objectives Compatibility Assessment. (undated).
- Ceredigion Local Development Plan 2007 – 2022. Addendum to the Ceredigion LDP: Deposit Sustainability Report Submission Version
- Conwy Council Borough Council Deposit Local Development Plan. Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment. August 2012
- Denbighshire County Council Local Development Plan. Sustainability Appraisal. August 2007.
- Gwynedd County Unitary Development Plan Deposit Draft. Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment. July 2005.

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lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:242:0001:0015:EN:PDF)Summary and explanation. (http://europa.eu/legislation _summaries/ agriculture/ environment/l28027_en.htm)

[13] *DTZ/Royal Haskoning (2006): West Wales and the Valleys ERDF Convergence Programme 2007-13. Strategic Environmental Assessment Environment Report. Draft report. Royal Haskoning Exeter*

[14] *Welsh Assembly Government (2008): People, Places, Futures. The Wales Spatial Plan. 2008 update. July 2008. WAG Cardiff.*

[15] *European Commission. Programming period 2014-2020. Monitoring and evaluation of European cohesion policy - European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund. Concepts and Recommendations. Guidance document. November 2011. (http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/evaluations/guidance_en.cfm#1)*

[16] *Communication from the Commission. Europe 2020 - a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ. do?uri= COM: 2010: 2020: FIN:EN:PDF) (see also http://ec.europa.eu/ europe2020/pdf/targets_en.pdf for specific targets).*

- Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Local Development Plan. Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment. Final Report. May 2011.
- Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. Strategic Environmental Assessment Draft Consultation Document. December 2012.
- Powys County Council Unitary Development Plan[17]. Adopted Plan. Strategic Environmental Assessment. Final Report. March 2010.
- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. Strategic Environmental Assessment Volume 1. Environmental Report. October 2012.
- Swansea Local Development Plan. Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment. Scoping Report. February 2012.
- Torfaen County Borough Council Local Development Plan. Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment. Draft Scoping Report. July 2006.

2.3.4 The result of this process was the development of 48 generic questions, namely:

In its delivery, will the Programme:

- *help to protect or enhance historic buildings, areas and areas of landscape/townscape character?*
- *improve access to buildings and landscapes/townscapes of historic/ cultural value?*
- *increase the total area of land designated for its landscape/townscape quality?*
- *use architectural design to enhance and promote the local distinctiveness and the "sense of place" of development?*
- *protect and enhance landscape and seascape character?*
- *increase levels of light pollution?*
- *increase levels of noise pollution?*
- *improve the quality and increase the quantity of publicly accessible open space?*
- *deliver more sustainable location patterns?*
- *improve the management of the impacts of access and recreation?*
- *protect and enhance rare or endangered species and habitats and provide opportunities for habitat creation/restoration?*
- *protect habitats and minimise the fragmentation of nature corridors and networks in accordance with Biodiversity Action Plans?*
- *provide opportunities for people to come into contact with and appreciate wildlife and the natural environment?*
- *avoid damage to sites of geological interest?*

[17] *Although Powys is not within the West Wales and the Valleys Programme area the UDP is relevant becuae of the close interconnections between settlements and the environment in Powys and those in the area.*

- *maintain and enhance ground and surface water ecological and chemical quality?*
- *maintain levels of abstraction and recharge within the carrying capacity of the region?*
- *improve the quality of coastal waters?*
- *maintain and improve local air quality?*
- *reduce the amount of derelict, contaminated, degraded and vacant/ underused land?*
- *encourage the development of brownfield land in preference to greenfield where appropriate?*
- *avoid the loss of good quality soils to development?*
- *maintain and enhance soil quality? maintain and enhance soil quality?*
- *reduce greenhouse gas emissions?*
- *contribute to the ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change?*
- *reduce or manage flooding?*
- *ensure sustainable use of raw materials (e. g. timber, fresh water, minerals)?*
- *reduce imported materials such as minerals?*
- *promote the use of recycled and secondary materials?*
- *reduce the need for energy?*
- *increase the production and/or use of renewable energy?*
- *increase energy efficiency (e.g. energy efficiency in buildings, transport modes, etc)?*
- *reduce the use of fossil fuels?*
- *avoid dependency of new development on remotely derived energy resources?*
- *reduce car traffic?*
- *encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport?*
- *encourage development to coalesce into compact nodes?*
- *improve access to and encourage the use of ICT?*
- *reduce HGV traffic by switching to alternative transport modes?*
- *increase proportion of waste recycling and reuse?*
- *reduce the production of waste?*
- *reduce the proportion of residual waste to landfill?*
- *reduce hazardous waste?*
- *reduce waste in the construction industry?*
- *promote healthy lifestyles?*
- *reduce health inequalities among different groups in the community?*
- *provide development patterns that do not harm the linguistic character of Welsh speaking communities?*
- *encourage the mainstreaming of the Welsh language? encourage the mainstreaming of the Welsh language?*
- *ensure settlements can absorb growth without damage to character?*

2.3.5 These were distilled into 34 objectives. In order to reflect the high level of the Programme, and in keeping with previous and other SEAs at this level, these provided the basis for the 13 objectives against which the Programme was

assessed, and were retained as sub-objectives. The 13 objectives were grouped under three headings:

- The need to protect and enhance natural and cultural values for their own sake;
- The need to conserve the natural resources that humanity relies on;
- The need to protect and enhance the environment in which people live and work

2.3.6 It should be noted that in carrying out the assessment, reference is made to the 13 objectives and their sub-objectives. Table 3 contains a list of the SEA objectives and sub-objectives against which the effects of the Programme are assessed in section 5.

2.3.7 It should also be noted that the objectives are not scored or weighted, since they are interdependent and potentially mutually reinforcing. However, it is recognised that *within* some objectives there is a hierarchy of priority concerns. For example the objective to 'protect and enhance biodiversity' implies that in some circumstances, *avoidance* must be the only option (in the case of ancient woodlands, say, or of designated habitats and species), whereas in others, *mitigation* and/or *compensation* might be appropriate. In any case, all mitigation and compensation measures must ensure an *enhancement* of the status quo wherever possible, should relate to any development proposal in terms of scale, and should be local to that proposal.

Table 3 List of SEA objectives and sub-objectives

	Objective	Sub-objective
Protect and enhance natural and cultural heritage	1. Protect places, landscapes and buildings of historic, cultural and archaeological value	Deliver Cadw's conservation programme for monuments in state care, alongside the designation of further heritage assets
	2. Protect and enhance landscapes, seascapes, townscapes and the countryside	Improve the quality of the local built environment
		Develop an integrated approach to eco-system health
		Improve management of common land
		Protect and enhance access to the coastline and countryside
		Avoid significant alteration to urban landscape character
	3. Protect and enhance biodiversity	Protect internationally, nationally and locally designated nature conservation sites
		Protect Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats and species, increase area of habitat

	Objective	Sub-objective
Protect and conserve natural resources	4. Protect and improve the region's water quality	Monitor and regulate known and emerging environmental hazards
		Protect and enhance the quality of groundwater, rivers, lakes, and coastal waters
		Comply with 'good' status under the Water Framework Directive (WFD)
		Protect and enhance the salmonid and other fisheries
		Avoid physical disturbance to the water and water edge environment
		Reduce diffuse pollution from agriculture, acid precipitation and other sources
	5. Protect the water resource and ensure its sustainable use	
	6. Guard against land contamination, encourage reuse of existing buildings and of previously developed land of low ecological quality	Introduce higher construction standards in new housing
		Monitor and regulate known and emerging environmental hazards
	7. Minimise the requirement for energy generation use, promote efficient energy use and increase the use of energy from renewable resources	Generate up to twice as much renewable electricity annually by 2025 as we use today[18]
	8. Minimise waste increase re-use, recycling and recovery rates	Restrict biodegradable materials going to landfill
		Re-use materials from existing buildings
	9. Minimise the need to travel; provide alternatives to car use	Optimise opportunities to work locally
		Promote sustainable transport
		Protect and enhance public transport system
		Legislate to place a duty to provide cycle routes in key areas

[18] *This objective was taken from the Programme for Government, so 'today' may be taken as referring to 2011.*

	Objective	Sub-objective
Maintain and improve the human environment	10 Limit and adapt to climate change	Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases
		Provide measures to enable adaptation to climate change
		Work to ensure we have a sustainable food and fisheries industry
		Protect and manage soil
		Reduce the risk of flooding
		Complete flood and coastal risk plans
	11. Protect and improve air quality	Minimise the use of processes that produce toxic air pollutants, and incorporate extensive safety and capture processes for those that occur
	12. Improve physical and mental health and reduce health inequalities	Minimise environmental nuisance such as fly-tipping, littering, dog fouling, graffiti, noise pollution, and light pollution
		Monitor and regulate known and emerging environmental hazards
		Protect and enhance existing greenspace
	13. Improve public access to land	Improve opportunities to access green space

2.4 Development of SEA indicators

2.4.1 The indicators were adapted from the review of literature, as shown in Appendix 2. There is no scoring or weighting in the case of indicators.

2.4.2 The indicators and the objectives they relate to are shown in Appendix 3.

2.4.3 It should be noted that the SF programme is provided with its own indicators, based on Commission core indicators and specific programme indicators. These are separate to the indicators referred to here, and include, for example, a number of economic indicators that are not relevant to this report. The indicators for each of the four Programme priorities are listed in Appendix 4.

2.5 Assessment methodology

2.5.1 The assessment consists firstly of an analysis of each of the Programme's interventions against the objectives of the SEA, based on a range of criteria derived from the Directive and supporting guidance. The criteria are discussed in section 2.6.

2.5.2 The results of this analysis were aggregated and set out as a basic compatibility test, as illustrated in section 5.2.

2.5.3 Finally, levels of risk were assessed for proposals that appeared to produce a negative effect when matched against the SEA objectives. Negative effects were considered in terms of:

- The possibility of the effect exceeding a standard established by policy.
- The possibility of the effect exceeding a threshold established by a regulation or an EC directive.
- Acceptability of the effect by acknowledged interests most likely to be impacted on by it.

2.5.4 Risk was assessed for the *likelihood* of a negative effect occurring, and the *significance* of the effect should it occur as a result of the proposed intervention. This element therefore highlights the need for avoidance, mitigation or compensation, or a combination of them. This is shown in section 6.1.

2.6 Criteria for analysis

2.6.1 The criteria for the detailed analysis were developed on the basis of advice given in the ODPM guidance document, which refers to *'...scale and permanence and the nature and sensitivity of the receiving environment.'* (p.32) and the advice given by DG Environment[19]

2.6.2 Some indicative activities may be *irrelevant* to the SEA objective, and this is indicated where this is judged to be the case. In some cases this may be not known, in which case it will be indicated as such. Where an indicative activity may be relevant, this is indicated as having a *direct* effect, an *indirect* effect, or an effect that may be *cumulative* or *synergistic.*

2.6.3 Such effects may be *negative* or *positive*, and these may be differ in degree, so as to indicate very positive or very negative impacts.

2.6.4 Assessment also needs to be made with reference to *spatial extent*, that is whether the effect is likely to be local, regional, national or international; and to *duration*, that is whether the effect is likely to be short (1-2 years), medium (3-5 years), long (6+ years) term or permanent.

[19] *"Implementation of Directive 2001/42 on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment". DG Environment. Undated.*

2.6.5 These criteria are described below (Table 4), and were used to carry out the detailed analysis of effects.

Table 4: Criteria used for analysis of effects

Reference	Symbol	Description
Irrelevant	**O**	An indicative activity is judged not to impact on the SEA objective.
Unclear	**?**	Difficult to envisage an impact, but limited confidence that there will be no impact.
Direct	**Dir**	There will be a discernible change to an aspect of the environment directly resulting from implementing an activity.
Indirect	**Ind**	There will be a discernible 'downstream' or 'parallel' change to another aspect of the environment, as a result of implementing an activity.
Cumulative/synergistic	**CS**	There will be a discernible change to an aspect of the environment arising from a number of anticipated activities.
Negative	**x**	There will be a loss or reduction in the integrity of an aspect of the environment.
Positive	✓	There will be an increase in the integrity of an aspect of the environment.
Local	**L**	Any discernible change to an aspect of the environment is likely to be at the farm/ neighbourhood/community/habitat scale.
Regional	**R**	Any discernible change to an aspect of the environment is likely to be at a county or sub-regional level.
National	**N**	Any discernible change to an aspect of the environment is likely to be beyond the scale of the Programme but not beyond Wales.
International	**Int**	Any discernible change to an aspect of the environment is likely to have international implications.
Short term	**ST**	Any discernible change to an aspect of the environment as a result of an activity is likely to last from 1-2 years
Medium term	**MT**	Any discernible change to an aspect of the environment as a result of an activity is likely to last for 3-5 years
Long term	**LT**	Any discernible change to an aspect of the environment as a result of an activity is likely to last beyond the life of the Programme (6+ years) but will not be permanent
Permanent	**P**	Any discernible change to an aspect of the environment as a result of an activity is likely to be permanent

2.6.6 The risk analysis of potentially negative effects used was tabulated using the symbols and criteria shown here:

Definite	**Def**	The effects will be inevitable unless remediated in some way.
Probable	**Prob**	These effects are likely to occur as a result of the implementation of an indicative action.
Possible	**Poss**	These effects may occur as a result of the implementation of an indicative action.
Unlikely	**Unl**	Effects are unlikely to occur as a result of the implementation of an indicative action alone.

Low	Any effect arising from a proposed intervention is likely to be minimal. No adaptation of the Programme is anticipated.
Moderate	Any effect arising from a proposed intervention is likely to be significant. The Programme may require adaptation.
High	Any effect arising from a proposed intervention is likely to be substantial. The Programme will require adaptation.

2.7 Appropriate assessment

2.7.1 Article 6.3 of the EC Habitats Directive states that:

'*Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives*'.

2.7.2 The Directive refers to a network of 'Natura 2000' European sites of international importance for biodiversity conservation, described as Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas. Internationally important wetland sites listed under the Ramsar Convention are treated as European sites for the purpose of Appropriate Assessment. A significant number of these sites have a marine component.

2.7.3 The purpose of Appropriate Assessment is to ensure that any plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, shall not have an adverse impact on the integrity of European sites, and that competent authorities shall agree to a plan or project after ascertaining that it will not affect the site concerned.

2.7.4 Article 6.3 refers to *'plans or projects'*, and it is at these levels that Appropriate Assessment will apply, rather than at the programme level to which this SEA relates. Given that the programme does not specify any particular spaces, it is not possible to envisage how Appropriate Assessment would apply in this case.

2.7.5 However, the Scoping Report identified a number of sites of European interest within the West Wales and the Valleys Programme area, including approximately 55 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) wholly or partly within the West Wales and the Valleys Programme area; approximately 15 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) wholly or partly within this area; and 5 Ramsar sites.[20] They are discussed in more detail in section 4 of this report.

2.7.6 Discussions with the relevant officials at the Countryside Council for Wales (the body providing statutory advice on biodiversity matters) have indicated that reference to this should be made at programme level (*pers. comm.).* Whilst it is acknowledged that there are likely to be implications for European sites, it was not possible at the Scoping stage to determine effects on specific sites, given that projects and activities to be supported by the Programme had (and have) not been identified at the time of writing that report and this one.

2.7.7 This view is supported by the position taken on the SEA screening process for the Wales Spatial Plan, which concluded that

'...it was not possible to confirm that the Wales Spatial Plan, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would not have a significant effect on European and international sites in Wales, its offshore waters and across the border in England', but concluded that *'...the aspirational and non-locational nature of the Wales Spatial Plan meant that it was not amenable to the identification of the Wales Spatial Plan's implications for the sites with any great degree of precision. Therefore, appropriate assessment will be carried out in greater detail in relation to the lower tier plans, action plans, and/or programmes which enable the delivery of the Wales Spatial Plan.[21]'*

2.7.8 However, the Welsh Government's Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (June 2011) stated that its strategy

'...is a very high-level document without a spatial basis, therefore potential impacts of the strategy itself on European sites is difficult to determine. However, the strategy sets out broad policies to be implemented by subsequent lower level plans and strategies, and also sets the strategic framework to influence individual flood risk and coastal erosion works, which could potentially result in significant effects on European sites. It is therefore considered that the strategy does fit within the definitions of a 'plan' as defined by the Habitats Directive[22]'

[20] *Source - JNCC (http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4) accessed 18/01/2013. It should be noted that in some cases, a site may be designated under two or all three categories.*

[21] *Wales Spatial Plan 2008 update. Welsh Assembly Government. Pages 7-8*

[22] *Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (June 2011). Welsh Assembly Government. Page 7*

2.8 Scoping

2.8.1 The Scoping Report is a key element of the environmental assessment of the Programme, and some aspects of that report are retained here in an amended form.

2.8.2 As well as those documents listed above (section 2.3.2) which informed the development of objectives and indicators, a number of other European, UK and Wales-level plans, programmes and policies were reviewed, in order to identify linkages between the Programme and this SEA, and to provide information on priorities and environmental issues. A summary of that review can be found in Appendix 1.

2.8.3 Whilst the full list is too lengthy to provide in full, the following key Wales policy documents have informed this report:

- One Wales One Planet (2009)
- Wales Spatial Plan (2008 update)
- Environment Strategy (2010 update)
- Tourism strategy (2006/2010 update)
- Transport Strategy
- Waste Strategy
- Energy Policy Statement (2010)
- Climate Change Strategy (2010)
- Coastal Flood Erosion Strategy (2011)
- Historic Environment Strategy (2012)
- Infrastructure Investment Plan (2012)
- Sustaining a Living Wales (2012)
- Planning Policy Wales (2011)

2.8.3 In addition, a number of SEAs undertaken for Plans, Policies and Programmes were examined:

- South East England Regional Assembly: ERDF Programme 2007-13 SEA
- WEFO: West Wales and the Valleys ERDF Operational Programme 2007-13 SEA
- Environment Agency: Western Wales River Basin District Management Plan SEA. December 2008
- Welsh Government. Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management: National Strategy. Habitat Regulations Assessment. June 2011
- North Wales Regional Waste Group. Strategic Waste Management Options SEA. October 2007
- Welsh Assembly Government. National Transport Plan SEA. March 2010

- Forestry Commission Wales. Woodlands for Wales Strategy. Voluntary SEA. March 2009
- Welsh Assembly Government. Wales Spatial Plan Update. SEA Statement. March 2009

3 The PROPOSED ERDF PROGRAMME

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The Programme establishes a framework for ERDF investment in West Wales and the Valleys for the period 2014-2020 (figure 1). The current proposal provides information on the Programme's objectives in the context of European, United Kingdom (UK) and Wales policies. It also describes the Programme's selected priorities, and a list of interventions that could support activity over the next funding period.

3.1.2 The Programme is designed to deliver economic development in a sustainable manner, that is in a manner that does not diminish Wales' environmental and social values. Furthermore, the Programme *'...should be implemented in a way which ensures opportunities are not lost to exploit and strengthen economic, social and environmental outcomes.'*[23]

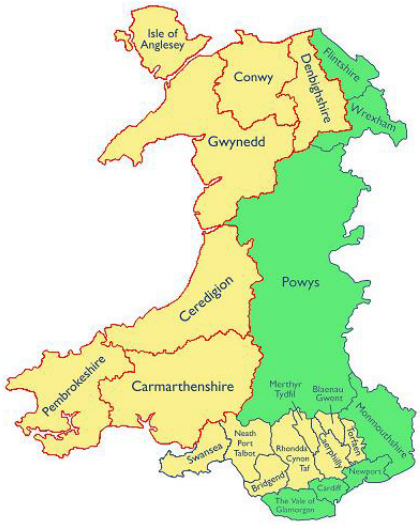

Fig.1 West Wales and the Valleys Structural Fund area

3.2 Vision and aims, priorities and proposed interventions

3.2.1 The recent consultation on the EU Structural Funds Programme set out its vision:

'Our vision is that by 2020, we will see a confident, ambitious and entrepreneurial Wales, prospering from sustainable economic growth..In line with the Welsh Government's clear commitment to sustainable development, including equality and inclusion, and tackling poverty the programme should be implemented in a way which ensures opportunities are not lost to exploit and strengthen economic, social and environmental outcomes.' [24]

3.2.2 The document has identified four priorities:

To support the creation and growth of sustainable small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Wales.

To improve access to markets and employment opportunities through improved connectivity, and to exploit economic opportunities through focussed investments in infrastructure.

[23] *Consultation on European Structural Funds Programmes for West Wales and the Valleys 2014 - 2020*

[24] *ibid.*

To improve the capacity for, and economic exploitation of, innovation and research.

To support the sustainable development of the low-carbon economy in Wales and the delivery of climate change objectives.

3.2.3 For each priority, a number of themes and interventions were identified, including complementary interventions across the ERDF and ESF funding elements. Since these have been considered in this SEA, the complementary interventions are included here:

To support the creation and growth of sustainable small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Wales.

Theme 1 - access to finance

- Access to debt, equity and mezzanine finance
- Micro-finance investment vehicle
- Tailored business finance schemes (e.g. for key sectors or specific geographic areas)

Complementary intervention

- *Limited and targeted business grant support (focussed on growth/ economically important businesses).*

Theme 2 - Entrepreneurship

- Financial support, advice and mentoring for start-ups
- Tailored support for economically important and growth businesses (e.g. to address specific barriers to growth or supply chain development)
- Capacity building to support Welsh businesses to access procurement opportunities (including internationally)
- Support for the internationalisation of businesses and increasing exports
- Supporting the exploitation of ICT and the Digital Economy

Complementary intervention

- *Customised delivery of support for social enterprises (e.g. to promote innovative business models and address barriers to growth)*

To improve access to markets and employment opportunities through improved connectivity, and to exploit economic opportunities through focussed investments in infrastructure.

Theme 1 – Transport and Network Bottlenecks to Growth

- Intermodal and sustainable transport facilities that improve access to employment and education (e.g. transport hub)
- Targeted investment in the Core or Comprehensive TEN-T road and rail network
- ICT networks and mobile communications networks
- Port infrastructure and access to ports by rail and/or road (in particular where they enable the exploitation of renewable energy)

Complementary interventions

- *Investment in the roads providing accessibility to the TEN-T network, or addressing access bottlenecks*
- *Alleviation of urban congestion (e.g. traffic management, developing low-carbon transport systems, promoting urban mobility)*

Theme 2 – Infrastructure-led Growth

- Economically important investments in Wales' physical infrastructure (built and natural/green). In particular those that are key parts of integrated regeneration and economic development schemes.

Complementary intervention

- *Targeted investment in education and training infrastructure with clear economic focus*
- *Strategically important business sites and premises*
- *Local infrastructure (e.g. training or childcare facilities) supporting broader economic development investments*

To improve the capacity for, and economic exploitation of, innovation and research.

Theme 1 - Innovation for All

- Support businesses to undertake innovation (e.g. demand-led or eco-innovation) and improve innovation supply chains between businesses and with academia
- Piloting of initiatives to test innovative approaches, products or services in areas with commercial potential

Complementary interventions

- *Development of low-cost hubs or clusters for innovative businesses and sectors (e.g. virtual hubs for ICT, Creative or Tourism sector)*
- *Development and launch of innovative new uses and adaptations for existing technology, processes or services into new markets*

Theme 2 - Research and Development

- Commercialisation, protection and exploitation of research (including applied research to improve market readiness)
- Building research capacity (both physical and people-related), with a focus on areas with potential for developing or strengthening world-class excellence (e.g. identified in *Science for Wales*)
- Access to risk-capital finance and support for the creation and growth of research-intensive and innovative businesses, such as spin-outs.

Complementary interventions

- *Capacity building directly linked to improving access to wider research funding (e.g. support to develop more competitive bids for Horizon 2020)*
- *Capital investments leading to open access and diffusion of key technology*
- *Investments in advanced manufacturing and production capabilities (e.g. first production of Key Enabling Technologies)*

To support the sustainable development of the low-carbon economy in Wales and the delivery of climate change objectives.

Theme 1 - Energy Efficiency

- Energy conservation and efficiency measures in existing housing and public buildings
- Advice, guidance and loans for businesses to improve energy efficiency and competitiveness

Complementary intervention

- *Low-carbon strategies for urban areas.*

Theme 2 - Marine energy (tidal, wave and wind)

- Targeted infrastructure investments to remove barriers, reduce risks and maximise investor confidence (e.g. site preparation, shore-based facilities, connections and access).
- Marine energy innovation and R&D with commercial potential including prototypes, demonstrators and pre-commercial devices and arrays.

Complementary intervention

- *Capacity building and innovation supply-chain development for institutes/ businesses engaged in marine energy research*

Theme 3 - Low Carbon Transition

- Smart living innovation and demonstration projects.

- Targeted development and deployment of emerging and transition technologies and renewable energy sources.
- Renewable energy generation schemes to improve business competitiveness in key areas (e.g. Enterprise Zones or regeneration areas).

Complementary intervention

- *Support for district heating, community renewable energy schemes and low-carbon strategies in urban areas (potential to use financial instruments and align with community benefit funding).*
- *Smart infrastructure (e.g. grid and digital) improvements to accelerate markets and/or address market failure where a specific opportunity is identified.*

3.3 Conclusion

3.3.1 Flexibility will be required to allow for programming choices that reflect evolving needs and changing circumstances within the period of the programme. It will be essential that the programme achieves a transformational effect on the Welsh economy and its people, and this will need to be demonstrated to the European Commission. This particular report is concerned with ensuring that at worst the Programme is delivered without detriment to the environment, at best it will ensure enhanced environmental impacts, benefiting people and the economy. In all cases transparency should be sought in the decision making process and considerations for the environment be seen as an opportunity rather than a threat.

3.3.2 It should be noted that there is commitment to integrate and align the Structural funds with the Rural Fisheries funds an important development in strategic thinking and planning compared to the current silo scenarios. Whilst appreciating that alleviation of poverty and regeneration of communities is an overarching ‘must have’ from the perspective of stakeholders, the importance of the environment in achieving these ‘people’ and ‘prosperity’ aspirations must be made clear at the outset.

4 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND BASELINE DATA

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The scoping process aimed to identify the key environmental issues that will influence the Programme development, and to scope in or out those issues that are relevant to the achievement of its objectives. This section describes the current state of the environment for the sub-region, in order to provide a context for understanding the potential for adverse (and positive) effects that may arise from the Programme's implementation.

4.1.2 Because the programme does not identify particular land allocations, the baseline is inclusive in its scope. It would be premature to assume that certain environmental aspects will not be influenced, however slightly, by the Programme.

4.2 Sourcing baseline data

4.2.1 The State of the Environment Statistical Bulletin (2012) provides an annual summary on a range of indicators reviewing the state of the environment and allocates them a status based on their long term trends[25]

4.2.2 The indicators, on which the above summary is based, cover a variety of topics including climate change, waste, flooding, water quality and biodiversity. The results for individual indicators can be found in the 'State of Environment Report' which is published alongside the bulletin. In addition to the report, data are available via the StatsWales website[26].

4.2.3 Some of the statistics in the State of the Environment report correspond to or are similar to some of the Welsh Government's Sustainable Development Indicators[27]. The status of some indicators may differ between the two publications (for example, ecological footprint). This is because the Sustainable Development Indicators look at more recent trends and present progress against an agreed set of indicators from a baseline year of 2003 (or the nearest year for which data are available), whereas the State of the Environment report considers progress over a longer term (in some cases, where data permits, from the 1990s).

[25] *http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/ theme/environment/?lang=en#*

[26] *https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Environment-and-Countryside*

[27] *http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/sustaindev/120829/?lang=en*

4.2.4 As well as these key sources, the literature review included a number of other documents and websites such as the UK National Ecosystem Assessments, Health Statistics, ERDF 2007-13 West Wales and the Valleys Environment Strategy and Action Plan, and the Wales Sustainable Development Scheme.

4.2.5 Whilst there are no significant contradictions between statistics, some anomalies were identified as a result of different baseline scopes, starting dates, criteria and indicators and perhaps different approaches to aggregating data. Where relevant, these have been indicated.

4.2.6 Much of the immediately available data is based either at local (i.e. development plan and below) levels or at Wales or UK levels. As well as the information obtained from the above sources, 24 local development plan SEAs were trawled for environmental information that reflected the distinctive nature of parts of West Wales and the Valleys. Therefore, whilst much of the data is presented here largely at Wales level, where possible, reference is made to West Wales and the Valleys, and also to the local level where it is thought to be relevant to the level of this SEA.

4.3 West Wales and the Valleys - Overview

4.3.1 West Wales and the Valleys covers an area of 1.24 million hectares (12,400 km^2) with about 1,150 km of coastline[28]. Approximately 80% of the total area of West Wales and the Valleys is designated as Less Favourable Area, which reflects the extensive nature of mountainous and upland land. West Wales and the Valleys is highly diverse topographically, ecologically, geologically and culturally, with a population of some 1.86 million, 64% of the total population of Wales, living in a highly diverse mix of urban and rural settlements.

4.3.2 Although much of the region's population lives in the industrial valleys, West Wales and the Valleys is predominantly rural[29] with agriculture being the dominant land use[30].

[28] *The length of the coast varies according to different measurement criteria. The source used here is CCW, 2006, 'Advice to the Welsh Assembly Government - Extending Access to the Coast' which gives the length as 1296km.*
EUCC: http://www.coastalguide.org/wales/ gives the total length as 1562km. The British Cartographic Society gives the length as 2740km: http://www.cartography.org.uk/default.asp?contentID=749.

[29] *For a discussion on definitions of 'rural' see Pateman, T. (2011). Rural and Urban areas: comparing lives using rural/urban classifications. Office for National Statistics.*

4.3.3 Administratively, the region contains the Isle of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, and Denbighshire in the north and north west; Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, and Carmarthenshire in the west and south west; the south valley/coastal regions of Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, and Bridgend; and the Valley regions of Rhondda, Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen (see figure 1[31]).

4.3.4 A large part of the region has a coastline, which varies from steep sea cliffs in parts of the Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Swansea coasts, to extensive beaches and dune systems in the same areas and in Carmarthenshire. The Wales Coast Path runs mainly within this sub-region.

4.3.5 The westward facing areas have many short fast flowing river systems determined by the proximity of extensive catchment areas and their geology. The rivers that flow north and south-west/south tend to be longer and their lower valleys and estuaries, flowing through softer geology, are broader and relate to arable land and more extensive settlement. The complex river system of the largely landlocked Valleys area has dictated settlement, transport networks, employment and even local climate.

4.3.6 The central mountain core of Wales, running north to south, influences most of West Wales and the Valleys, with the exceptions of Anglesey, parts of Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Swansea and Bridgend. This part of Wales contains a significant amount of the 14% of Wales' land that are forest areas.

4.3.7 The region contains two of Wales' National Parks and a part of the third; one geopark and part of a second; 4 out of 5 Welsh Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), and a high proportion of Wales' European and national biodiversity-based protected areas.

4.3.8 Important features for biodiversity in West Wales include the Atlantic oak woodlands; a significant coastal belt that is noted for several species of seabird, and a marine SAC. The uplands and valley systems with steep, rocky sides, waterfalls, pools and temperate wet environment, are important habitats for a wide variety of lower and higher plants, invertebrates, birds, reptiles and mammals. In the south of the sub-region, there is significant speleological interest. Caerphilly, for example, contains 4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) of speleological importance.

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[30] *UK 2005. The Official Yearbook of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.. London: The Stationery Office. 2004. pp. 279. ISBN 0-11-621738-3.*

[31] *On page 30 above.*

4.3.9 Most of West Wales and the Valleys is dominated by westerly weather systems, tending to have a higher than average rainfall and a fairly mild climate. There is a possibility that climate change will exaggerate this pattern and will exacerbate problems of coastal flooding. The warming of the Arctic may also cause an increase in weather systems arriving from a northerly direction as the jet stream shifts further south. This may result in areas previously in the 'rain shadow' of south westerly winds no longer benefitting from such protection with associated flood risks – particularly in North Wales[32]. The proximity of rivers to constricted settlement and density of infrastructure in the Valleys also presents flood issues.

4.3.10 Light pollution in West Wales is relatively low because of the lack of large settlements. The Valleys area has a concentration of settlement that causes higher levels of light pollution[33].

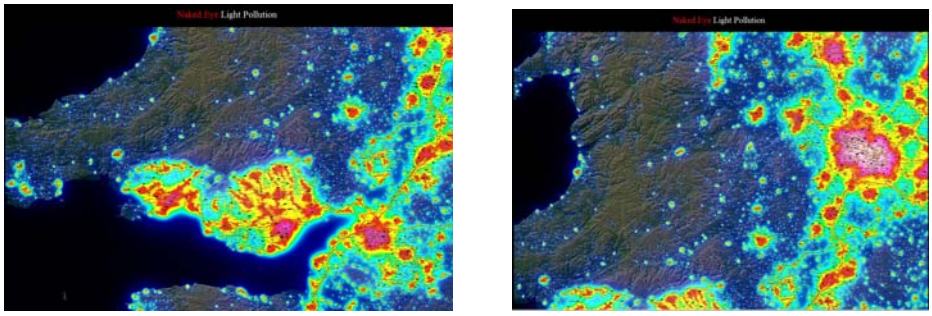

Fig 2: Light pollution in Wales. Source Stargazers Forum

4.3.13 Polluting industry is largely located in the Valleys area, including that from open cast mining. There are some major sources of air pollution arising from heavy industries located in Neath Port Talbot[34]. Other industrial, agricultural, and forestry practices are associated with polluting water courses, sensitive habitats and coastal/marine environments[35]. Redundant and abandoned coal, copper, lead and iron ore mines are a source of groundwater pollution, and with increasing flood conditions, this is a problem that may be exacerbated[36].

[32] *http://www.climatecentral.org/news/arctic-warming-is-altering-weather-patterns-study-shows*

[33] *http://stargazerslounge.com/topic/42671-uk-light-pollution-map/*

[34] *https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Environment-and-Countryside/State-of-theEnvironment/Environmental-Hazards/SensitiveHabitatsExceedingCriticalLoadsForAcidificationAndEutrophication-by-Year*

[35] *See StatsWales for example: https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Environment-and-Countryside/State-of-the-Environment/Environmental-Hazards/NumberOfDaysWithModerateOrHigherPollutionLevels-by-Area-Year*

[36] *See for example 'Industrial and Urban Groundwater Pollution'. UK Groundwater Forum. BGS NERC 'The State of Groundwater in England and Wales. Environment Agency. (undated). cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/geho0906bldb-e-e.pdf*

4.3.14 Transport systems in Wales have historically focused on west-east routes, which managed the outflow of people and goods. North-south links in the West Wales area depend on the A487 trunk road, which is being upgraded, as well as the A470. A network of trunk roads fans out eastwards from population centres, including the strategic A55, M4 and A465.

4.3.15 Recent flood events have resulted in severe disruption of road traffic and caused the whole of North West Wales to be cut off by both road and rail. The incidence of severe weather is projected to increase over the next 30 years[37]. This has clear implications for the functioning of the regions concerned, their future resilience and attractiveness to inward investors and to businesses already located within the region.

4.3.16 The rail system in West Wales links Aberystwyth and the north west coast (via Machynlleth) to Shrewsbury, whilst the Heart of Wales line links Llanelli to Craven Arms. The West Wales line from Fishguard, Milford Haven and Pembroke Dock through Carmarthen runs to Swansea and thence to Cardiff and England. The Valleys have a developed commuter rail network linked to Cardiff and Newport.

4.3.16 West Wales and the Valleys has a significant diversity of cultural character and heritage. Gwynedd, the Isle of Anglesey, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire are traditionally Welsh speaking areas and the language is an important aspect of everyday life. This is less so in the other parts of West Wales and the Valleys. In the north and on the west coast there is a significant reliance on tourism and this is linked to the value set on its landscape and cultural heritage.

4.3.17 The distinctive character of local architecture and building are mainly found in traditional farm buildings and structures associated with them, and tend to reflect the historic availability of local materials. Parts of the coastline have important historic castles including two of Wales' three Cultural World Heritage Sites and religious buildings and sites. Anglesey, Gwynedd and Pembrokeshire are distinguished by their prehistoric landscapes.

[37] *See the UK Climate Projections for Wales: http://ukclimateprojections.defra.gov.uk/21772*

4.4 Biodiversity[38]

4.4.1 Of the 21,000 km^2 land and freshwater surface area of Wales, about 30% is protected in special sites for wildlife, scenic beauty or geological value.

4.4.2 The three National Parks and five Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are categorised as 'Category V Protected Landscapes' by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and occupy 24 per cent of Wales' terrestrial space (5,078 km2). In these areas there is an enhanced consideration of environmental matters in the management of development.

4.4.3 123,058 Ha is designated under the European Birds Directive as Special Protection Area (SPA), and 628,726 is currently designated under the Habitats Directive as Special Area of Conservation (figure 3).

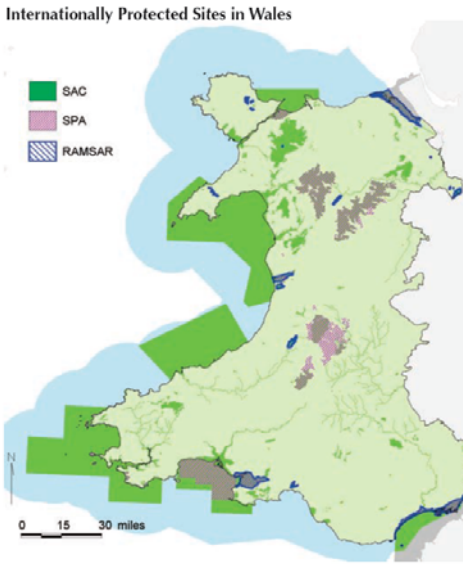

Fig 3: European and Ramsar Sites
Source: Special Sites Project.

4.4.4 The distribution of these protected sites is variable. For example, Gwynedd and Anglesey account for 25 NNRs, covering 4891 hectares, over one-third of NNRs by number and just under one-fifth in area. Gwynedd and Anglesey also account for one third of Wales' SPAs[39].

4.4.5 Conversely, the biodiversity of Neath Port Talbot is somewhat compromised by the extent of coniferous plantation which, at 35% of the area, is the highest cover of Forestry Commission plantation in England and Wales. Thus, despite the difference in area between the two councils, there are 20 SSSIs in contrast to Gwynedd's 140.[40]

[38] *Data derived from JNCC http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1399; and from CCW http://www.ccgc.gov.uk/landscape--wildlife/protecting-our-landscape.aspx; unless stated.*

[39] *Gwynedd UDP Deposit Plan SEA 2005*

[40] *Neath Port Talbot Flood Risk Management Plan SEA 2012*

Protected Areas in Wales

3 National Parks and 5 AONBs
14 Heritage Coasts
1 Biosphere Reserve
2 Geoparks
92 SACs and 20 SPAs
Over 1,000 SSSIs (about 12% of the country's' surface)
72 National Nature Reserves (NNRs) (over 25,000 ha of land)
1 Marine Nature Reserve (over 1,000 ha of sea)*
92% of NNRs by area are also sites of international importance for wildlife
11 RSPB reserves
236 Wildlife Trust reserves

**currently in the process of expansion*

4.4.6 In common with other countries in Europe, Wales missed its international biodiversity targets in 2010. In 2005, 59% of Biodiversity Action Plan habitats in Wales were in declining condition. Priority habitats classed as stable or improving increased from 30% in 2002 to 36% in 2008. Fifty-four per cent of Biodiversity Action Plan species were assessed as being in 'unfavourable condition' in 2008, but with considerable variation between species groups. For example, 80% of marine mammals and birds were in favourable or recovering condition, while 80% of amphibians, butterflies and fish were recorded as being in unfavourable condition.

Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS 2011)
Condition of habitats

Decline across 60% of marine habitats
Decline across 8% of terrestrial habitats*
Decline across 33% of freshwater habitats
Improvement or stability in 80% of terrestrial habitats*
Improvements or stability in 66% of freshwater habitats
Improvement in 83% of Woodland, upland & Enclosed Farmland habitats
Same or accelerated decline in 25% of wetlands and coastal habitats
Apparent slowing decline in lowland grassland and heathland

UK NEA 2011
'Status & Changes in the UK's Ecosystems and their Services to Society':
Chapter 20 Wales
Key Findings

** About 12% are fluctuating/reveal no clear trend*

4.4.7 In the case of SAC's, 61 per cent of habitat features and 67 per cent of species features for which they were designated are in unfavourable condition[41].

4.4.8 Coastal and marine habitats are under particular pressure, with the majority in stable or declining condition. Specifically, saltmarsh and coastal lagoons are equivocal or stable, whilst cliffs, dunes and shingle show a weak decline in condition[42] . Marine habitats are mostly stable[43], and there has been a downward trend in some polluting substances in the marine environment[44] .

4.4.9 Other indicators present a mixed picture, particularly in the case of birds, with some farmland and woodland birds showing marked declines (some species showing a 42.7% decrease in range) and others (16.9%) an increase in populations[45].

4.4.10 Drivers of change in Welsh Coastal Margin Habitats include:

- Changing tourism patterns and interests
- Land use demands
- Climate change
- Nitrogen deposition
- Sea-level rise

4.4.11 Invasive species, such as the signal crayfish (Pacifastacus leniusculus), the 'killer shrimp' (Dikerogammarus villosus)[46], Himalayan balsam (Impatiens glandulifera), Japanese knotweed (Polygonum cuspidatum), parrot's feather (Myriophyllum aqauaticum), floating pennywort (Hydrocotyle ranunculoides), and Water fern (Azolla filiculoides) are giving rise to concern since they threaten a number of native species, choke waterways and banks, and in some cases damage infrastructure. In coastal waters, Japanese wireweed (Sargassum muticum), New Zealand barnacle (Elminius/Austrominius modestus) and algae such as Heterosiphonia japonica are also becoming problematic.

[41] *Special Areas of Conservation in Wales. Current State of Knowledge report. September 2010*

[42] *UK NEA 2010 Chapter 20*

[43] *UK MAAS 2010*

[44] *State of the Environment Report 2012*

[45] *Ibid.*

[46] *http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/wildlife/31350.aspx*

4.4.12 A further cause of concern is the incidence of runoff and nutrient enrichment, which may have impacts on important species[47].

4.4.13 The National Assembly Sustainability Committee's 2010 report into biodiversity loss[48] lists 19 recommendations for addressing the challenge, including:

- Driving the ecosystem approach into policy and across all government departments in Wales
- Focusing more on biodiversity in the wider landscape rather than dependence on protected sites alone
- Involving the private sector in biodiversity management through the use of incentives and payments for ecosystem services

4.5 Population and human health

4.5.1 The population of West Wales and the Valleys varies considerably across its constituent administrations. The population of Carmarthenshire (184,000), is more than the combined size of its adjoining county of Ceredigion (75,300) and Denbighshire in the north (93,900), as a result of the concentration of its urban and post industrial areas. The populations of Gwynedd (121,500) and Pembrokeshire (122,600) are similar, with that of Conwy not significantly less at 115,300. Merthyr Tydfil contains the smallest population at 58,800. The population of Swansea unitary area is 239,000.

4.5.2 In terms of space, Gwynedd occupies 2,548 sq.km., giving it a population density of 47 people per sq.km., in contrast to that of Swansea, whose population density is 601 people per sq.km. within Swansea's 378 sq.km. authority area.

4.5.3 The Welsh Government's Sustainable Development Scheme 'One Wales: One Planet (May 2009) defines wellbeing (p19) as:

'...a positive physical, social and mental state; it is not just the absence of pain, discomfort and incapacity. It requires that basic needs are met, that individuals have a sense of purpose, that they feel able to achieve important personal goals and participate in society. It is enhanced by conditions that include supportive personal relationships, strong and inclusive communities, good health, financial and personal security, rewarding employment and a healthy and attractive environment.'

[47] *For example arctic charr (salvelinius alpinus) in Llyn Padarn and gwyniad (Coregonus lavaretus) in Llyn Tegid, both in Gwynedd*

[48] *Sustainability Committee National Assembly for Wales 'Inquiry into Biodiversity in Wales' 2011*

4.5.4 The State of the Environment Report (July 2012) sets outcomes for health and wellbeing and provides detailed information on progress, based on sets of indicators. Its main findings on the condition of health and well being in Wales are summarised here:

- In 2009/10, 50.3% of respondents found it very easy to access parks or open space and a further 35.6% found access fairly easy, a decrease from 89.9% in 2005 to 85.9% in 2009/10.

- 20% of adults reported currently being treated for high blood pressure, 14% for a respiratory illness, 12% for arthritis, 11% for a mental illness, 9% for a heart condition, and 7% for diabetes.

- 29% of adults reported being physically active on 5 or more days in the past week.

- 57% of adults were classified as overweight or obese, including 22% obese. 35% of children were classified as overweight or obese, including 19% obese.

- In 1997, 78.2% of people travelled to work by car. In 2011, this had risen to 80.7% (an increase of 2.5 percentage points). In 1997, 11.2% of people walked to work. In 2011 this had fallen to 10.3%, a fall of 0.9 of a percentage point.

- Over the same period people using public transport had fallen from 8.8% to 7.5% (a fall of 1.3 precentage points), and those travelling by bicycle had fallen from 1.9% to 1.4% (a fall of 0.5 of a percentage point).

- Having peaked at just over 5,200 per 100,000 self reported illnesses made worse by work in 2005/6, the figure currently stands at just under 4,000 per 100,000. There were 5,863 reported injuries to employees in 2011, a 4.4% decrease from the previous year.

4.5.5 In terms of housing stock, although the number of homes has steadily increased since 1986, the rate of unfitness has continued to fall (Welsh House Condition Surveys and Living in Wales Survey 2004).

4.5.6 By 2008 the number had reduced from 19.5% of the 1986 total (199,000 dwellings) to 4.1% (52,100).

4.5.7 A variety of health data sources[49] report issues surrounding lifestyle habits including smoking, alcohol use and obesity. Whilst these are not of direct relevance to the Programme, travel to work, the working environment, access to space and recreation, reductions in stress levels, living conditions and so on are undoubtedly factors that relate to the types of interventions that it envisages.

4.5.8 Of more direct relevance is the Index of Multiple Deprivation[50] data for access to the 'physical environment' (figure 4), which is defined in terms of air quality and risk of flooding. Much of West Wales is considered to be relatively free from flood risk and from exposure to low air quality, although this varies locally.

4.5.9 Access to essential services such as education and health are of concern to some remote communities. The trend towards the centralisation of public services in order to deliver financial efficiency will need to consider where new development can best be located. Services must be accessible to as many people as possible, and if a low carbon future is to be envisaged, would need to be accessible by public transport. Changes in climate leading to more adverse weather conditions may make it impossible to access centralised education/health services for those living anywhere other than in their immediate vicinity, and may also make it difficult for employees to travel to work where there are long journeys involved.

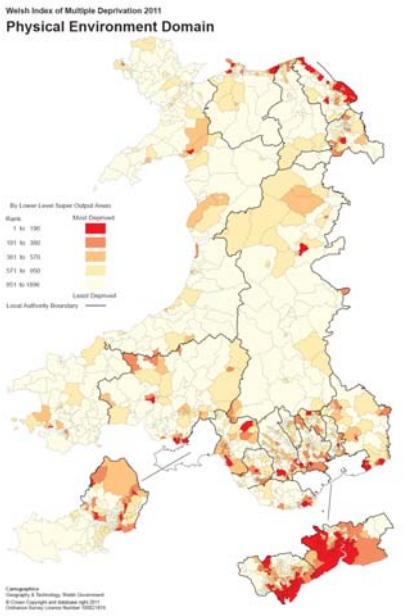

Fig 4. Index of Multiple Deprivation - physical environment

4.6 Soils and material assets

4.6.1 Globally, soil is under stress from a number of factors, including erosion, loss of organic matter, salination, compaction, contamination, loss of biodiversity, eutrophication and acidification.

[49] *see Welsh Government 'Key Health Statistics for Wales' 2012; Wales Health Survey 2011*

[50] *See wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/wimd11summary/?*

4.6.2 In Wales, development, agricultural intensification, erosion, pollution and loss of carbon are all potential challenges, with potential impacts on human health, food productivity, biodiversity, ecosystem functions and the economy.

4.6.3 Whilst other measures promoted soil protection, there was no distinctive measure within Europe that aimed specifically to protect the quality and productivity of the soil. The European Commission published a proposal for a framework directive on the protection of the soil in 2006[51], and more recently has published a report on the implementation of the Soil Thematic Strategy[52], which was an output of the Sixth European Environmental Action Programme[53].

4.6.4 Soil is a critical area of policy concern, and a number of questions are subject to research in order to be able to address challenges such as sustaining the soil's capacity to sequester carbon, to maintain its micro-organic biodiversity and to sustain its productivity.

4.6.5 Whilst soil types are well understood and have been categorised[54], there are still gaps in understanding its structure and function. Whilst some of these issues relate more to the Wales Rural Development Plan, aspects of this Programme have a bearing. Air pollution, waste, infrastructure, flood risk management and energy demand all have a direct or indirect relationship to the physical, chemical or biological quality of the soil.

4.6.6 The rate at which the soil carbon store is changing in Wales is the subject of some debate, with apparently contradictory results from two major UK surveys; the National Soil Inventory[55] and the Countryside Survey 2007[56]. Issues such as carbon storage, soil compaction[57] and erosion[58] are and have been subject to research.

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[51] *COM(2006) 232 final. Proposal for a directive establishing a framework for the protection of soil and amending Directive 2004/35/EC*

[52] *COM(2012) 46 final. Report on implementation of the Soil Thematic Strategy and ongoing activities. 2012*

[53] *EU 6th Environmental Action Programme. http://ec.europa.eu/environment/newprg/index.htm*

[54] *Avery, B.W. (1980). Soil classification for England and Wales [Higher Categories]. Survey Technical Monograph No. 14, pp67. Harpenden, UK.*

[55] *Bellamy et al 2005*

[56] *Emmett et al. 2010*

[57] *Research Study BD5001: Characterisation of Soil Structural Degradation Under Grassland and Development of Measures to Ameliorate its Impact on Biodiversity and Other Soil Functions. Newell Price and Chambers 2012.Literature Review. Critchley and Kirkham 2011.*

4.6.7 Concern also revolves around the potential impact of climate change. As the Welsh Government has put it,

'Climate change is also expected to lead to changes in soil composition. A reduction in the carbon content of soil will lead to a reduction in the capacity of the soil to absorb rainfall.[59]*'*

4.6.8 Soil and land contamination is a concern, especially in post-industrial environments where the cost of remediating polluted land is high. The total amount of contaminated land in Wales is unknown, although a baseline desk study assessment of contaminated and derelict land in Wales (EAU 1988) indicated 752 potentially contaminated sites covering 3,721 ha and 10,900 ha of derelict land.

4.6.9 As well as soils, the use of Wales' other material resources such as timber and rock are an area which should be considered.

According to the British Geological Survey/Office for National Statistics, the amount of aggregate taken in Wales was (2005):

- Land-based sand and gravel – 65 m. tonnes
- Marine dredged landings – 13m. tonnes
- Crushed rock – 102m. tonnes

4.6.10 Wales lacks a plentiful supply of terrestrial sand and gravel, and therefore relies on marine dredged sources to supply a Wales-wide demand. The implication is that Wales needs either to import supplies or to intensify its dredging activity in order to meet a significant increase in infrastructural development or that the level of infrastructure proposed is unsustainable.

4.6.11 Wales' State of the Environment Report (2012) indicates that:

- 45% of construction and demolition waste was reused and recycled in Wales in 2003 and 2005, compared with 52% in England in 2005.

- The percentage of construction and demolition waste used for landfill engineering and restoration in Wales increased from 11% in 2003 to 32% in 2005.

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[58] *See Bellamy and Rickson (2011) Monitoring Soil Erosion in England and Wales. Cranfield University.*

[59] *Welsh Government National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales. Nov 2011:14*

- The percentage of construction and demolition waste spread on exempt facilities in Wales decreased from 35% in 2003 to 17% in 2005.

- Currently no data are available regarding the total amount of aggregates used in Wales. It is estimated that 12.2 million tonnes of construction and demolition waste was produced in Wales in 2005-06. Just under half of this was aggregate waste, i.e. secondary aggregates.

- The percentage of aggregates (excluding construction and demolition waste) used from secondary and recycled sources in Wales has generally increased since 2004 though in 2010 it decreased slightly compared with the previous year.

4.6.12 Timber is a critical natural resource for Wales. The preliminary National Forest Inventory map, based on analysis of 2006 aerial photographs, identifies 304,000 hectares of woodlands in Wales. The Inventory indicates that conifer woodland covers 129,600 hectares of all woodland (43%), and broadleaved 116,000 hectares (38%). Mixed conifer and broadleaved woodland accounts for 12,000 hectares, 4% of woodland area. Other areas (15%) include felled areas, young trees, and shrub.

4.6.13 About 65% of the coniferous woodland is owned by the Welsh Government, whilst a high proportion of broadleaved woodland is privately owned. The timber resource is under-exploited owing to competitively priced imported timber (Jones 2011).

4.6.14 The issue of biomass is important in this context. Europe faces a biomass shortage with demand expected to increase by 50% over the next 10 years[60]. Within the UK alone, the total amount of biomass burnt each year will increase 10 fold from 5 million tonnes to 50 million tonnes once all of the existing and currently proposed biomass power stations come into operation. This sudden and increased demand is causing a surge in imported biomass fuels from 13% to 68% with imports being 3 times greater than the UK's current wood production alone[61].

4.6.15 Land is clearly a matter of interest, particularly the amount of previously developed land available. The general planning policy is to redevelop such 'brownfield' land where feasible rather than establishing new development on

[60] *http://www.hortweek.com/news/1060886/Woodfuel-Taskforce-warns-future-report/*

[61]*http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/WoodfuelTaskForceUpdateReport_2011.pdf/$FILE/WoodfuelTaskForceUpdateReport_2011.pdf*

'greenfield' sites, especially where such sites are agriculturally of higher grade.

4.6.16 Although there appear to be no statistics, there is likely to be considerably more brownfield land available in larger settlements in the Valleys than in the smaller communities in the West. The latest figures[62] are somewhat dated, but indicate (perhaps unsurprisingly) that the greatest period of land reclamation occurred throughout the 1990's and has since tailed off.

4.6.13 There is only one Green Belt in Wales (not within this sub-region), and the need to contain urban sprawl or locate new industries on urban fringes needs to be balanced against intensifying the already relatively dense urban environment, and to provide higher quality green infrastructure in Wales' larger settlements.

4.7 Air quality

4.7.1 Given the diversity of landscape and land cover, the geology, density of settlements, quality of housing, employment patterns, traffic flow and densities of traffic, the quality of the air is likely to be vary across West Wales and the Valleys.

4.7.2 Air quality relates to a number of variables, including carbon monoxide and dioxide, nitrous oxide, particulates, methane, ozone and radon.

4.7.3 In the previous century much of the air pollution problem was associated with the burning of fossil fuels such as coal for heating and industrial purposes, leading to smoke emissions containing high levels of sulphur dioxide. The major threat to clean air is now posed by traffic emissions. Petrol and diesel engines emit a wide variety of pollutants, principally carbon monoxide, oxides of nitrogen, volatile organic compounds and particulates, which are having an increasing impact on air quality, particularly in urban areas[63] (see figure 5).

4.7.4 Air quality in parts of the Valleys area is relatively poor in EU terms[64]. In the past, Wales' weather systems have helped to ameliorate the effects of air pollution, but with increasingly unpredictable patterns of weather there is a possibility of deteriorating quality. A few councils have declared Air Quality

[62] *https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Environment-and-Countryside/Land*

[63] *Caerphilly local development plan SEA*

[64] *http://www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/2187762/exclusive-eu-prepares-legal-action-uks-pollution*

Management Areas (AQMA) where air quality consistently exceeded thresholds[65], but West Wales in general has no AQMAs[66].

4.7.5 In contrast to the urban environment, ozone, which is a greenhouse gas, can be a health hazard at ground level, and is more likely to occur in rural environments (figure 5)[67].

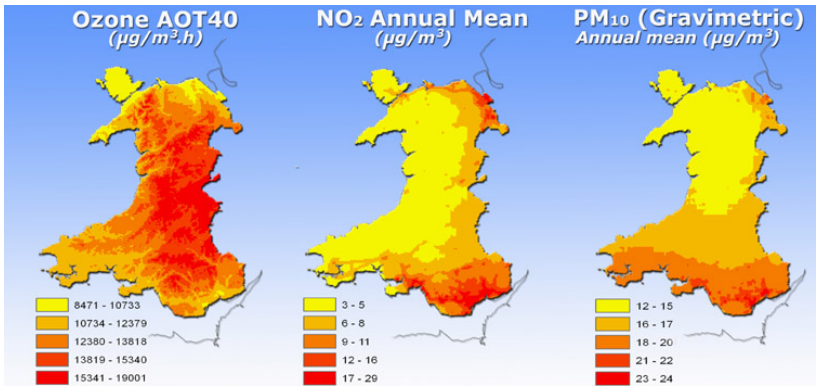

Fig 5: Air Quality in Wales

4.7.6 Some parts of West Wales and the Valleys are designated as radon affected , areas, since there are locations such as parts of Conwy[68] where it is estimated that more than 1% of homes exceed the Government Action Level for radon. In parts of north Pembrokeshire, Anglesey and Gwynedd, the number of homes exceeding the action level may be as high as 30%[69]. This will need to be considered in the design of new buildings, and particularly homes.

4.8 Water - resource and quality

4.8.1 The Welsh Government 'State of the Environment Report' (2012) sets outcomes for water resources and provides detailed information on progress that is based on sets of indicators.

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[65] *For example Caerphilly town centre, whose council anticipates an increase in AQMAs with the rise n traffic; Neath Port Talbot; Swansea.*

[66] *See Defra AQMA maps for Wales. http://aqma.defra.gov.uk/maps-wales.php?&la_id=409*

[67] *Air Quality Forum: http://www.welshairquality.co.uk/trend.php?t=4*

[68] *Conwy LDP SEA 2011*

[69] *Indicative Atlas of Radon in England and Wales. Miles JCH et al Health Protection Agency Didcot and British Geological Survey Nottingham. 2007*

4.8.2 Generally, there has been a downward trend in water leakage, from 249 megalitres per day in 200-02, to 202 megalitres per day in 2010-11. However, this represents 23.5% of total water supplied (WG SoE Report 2012; UK NEA 2011).

4.8.3 Overall, average per capita consumption in Wales has remained fairly stable: having risen from 148 litres/day in 2001 to 152 litres/day in 2008-09, in 2010-11 it was 149 litres/day. Where households were metered, consumption was significantly less.

4.8.4 Not all of the water abstracted in Wales is for home consumption, as there are considerable transfers to English regions. According to the Environment Agency (2010), abstractions in Wales were 40% greater in 2007 than in 1995. The major reasons for abstraction related to electricity supply and represented 75% of total Welsh abstractions – although it needs to be recognised that most of the waters abstracted for this purpose is returned to the environment.

4.8.5 In terms of quality, the picture appears mixed. Bathing waters have achieved a high level of compliance with EC standards since 2002. For five of the last ten years, compliance has been 100%. It is not clear to what extent this success has been weather related – because when there is heavy rainfall in summer sewage discharges to sea mean that the EC standards are not met. This raises the question as to what will be the impact of increased climate change-induced extreme weather events might be.

4.8.6 For chemical quality, the percentage of river length of good quality has been consistently high at about 95%. However, ecological and biological water quality indicates some areas of concern.

4.8.7 Whilst 67% of coastal waters have been assessed as being of 'good' or 'high' ecological quality, this implies that 33% (i.e. one third of the coastal zone) is *not* of good ecological quality. The picture for overall river length of good biological quality is positive at approximately 87%. However, the ecological status for specific water body types is mixed: 36% of transitional water bodies, 34% of rivers, 56% of canals and 21% of lakes assessed were given 'good' or 'high' ecological status in 2011.

4.8.8 In 2002, Environment Agency Wales identified 1,300 mine sites where discharges to water are known to occur (EAW 2002). This continues to be a significant source of pollution, accounting in 2012 for 130 or 10% of water

bodies failing to meet WFD standards[70]. Other major sources of WFD failures in water bodies are:

- agricultural pollution (155 failing water bodies)
- artificial barriers to fish migration (150 failing water bodies)
- impoundments (reservoirs) and regulated flows (101 failing water bodies)
- sewage discharges (82 failing water bodies).

4.8.9 The Welsh Government's green paper 'Sustaining a Living Wales' (2012) highlights some of the challenges to water resources (p8):

'Even though Wales receives more annual rainfall than many other parts of the UK this does not mean that we can take a continuous and endless supply of water for granted. In Wales rainfall travels quickly to our rivers and during dry periods our river levels can also drop quickly in response. In addition to causing stresses to the water environment and aquatic habitats and species in these rivers, this also creates challenges to ensuring security of public water supply and supporting other water abstractions. Currently the Environment Agency estimate that, in approximately 38% of river water bodies in Wales, water is no longer reliably available for new water abstractions.'

4.8.10 Freshwater ecosystems in Wales are subject to a variety of human pressures including pollution, sedimentation, extractive fisheries, invasive/non-native species, and over abstraction. Trends such as population growth, combined with climate-related trends, may significantly impact on the availability of good quality water.

4.8.11 The overall statistics conceal pockets where there may be significant problems due to over-abstraction, high levels of diffuse pollution, leakages, domestic over-consumption and low ecological/biological quality. Some areas within the region may require high demands where settlements or industry are concentrated, and pressures may increase as a result of the programme.

4.9 Flood Risk

4.9.1 According to the Wales NEA (2011), it is estimated that one in six properties in Wales (600,000 people in 357,000 properties, of which 150,000 are residential) is at risk of flooding. The economic risk from flooding to properties and contents was £200 million per annum in 2008. UK climate impact projections quoted in the NEA suggest that average annual natural river flows could reduce by 10–15% in Wales by 2050, and natural summer river flows could reduce by 50% or more, with implications for flood hazard regulation and water supply.

[70] *Living Waters for Wales, Fifth Water Framework Directive Newsletter, Spring 2012, Environment Agency Wales.*

Flooding issues

- 28% of the Welsh coastline has some form of artificial sea defence works
- Wales has approximately 2,740 km of coastline. Flood risk is highest along the low-lying zones of the North Wales coast, and at Llanelli, Port Talbot
- Erosion of natural flood defences, such as dunes and wetlands, makes Welsh coasts more susceptible to risk
- In downstream and at-risk areas uptake of the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) schemes is at a relatively early stage and has so far been patchy across local authority areas in Wales

(UK NEA 2011)

- Over 150,000 residential properties, many commercial and industrial developments, other key infrastructure like power supplies, transport links and schools and colleges, as well as important environmental and historic sites are on land at risk of flooding
- Around half a million people live and work on land designated as flood plain in Wales and the asset value invested on flood plain land is estimated at over £8 billion of assets
- Increased frequency of flooding will have an impact on livestock and could damage crops

Welsh Government:
Climate Change Adaptation Strategy -
consultation document Feb 2007

4.9.2 The Welsh Government's own estimate is that around half a million people live and work on land designated as flood plain in Wales and the asset value invested on flood plain land is estimated at over £8 billion[71].

4.9.3 Since 2005-6, 5,700 properties have benefitted from Environment Agency flood alleviation schemes[72]. The role of the planning system in considering the likely impact of climate change on development locations is obvious, and projects or developments brought forward in response to the proposed funding programme need to be assessed in this light.

[71] *Welsh Assembly Government.' Climate Change Adaptation Strategy' - consultation Feb 2007. p26*

[72] *Environment Agency response to the Scoping Report*

4.10 Climate issues

4.10.1 Climate change relates to several of the baseline discussed here, including flood risk, water resources, air quality and biodiversity. It is a critical Welsh Government policy issue:

'Tackling climate change is a fundamental part of delivering sustainable development. Climate change is one of the most important challenges facing the world and the Assembly Government has made a commitment to tackling climate change, resolving that the Government and people of Wales will play the fullest possible part in reducing its carbon footprint. Our commitment to action on climate change is based on a scientific imperative to act and to act urgently to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and deal with the consequences of climate change.' [73]

4.10.2 The same document states that:

'The Assembly Government has set out to achieve annual carbon reduction-equivalent emissions reductions of 3 per cent per year by 2011 in areas of devolved competence, which include land use planning. We are also committed to achieving at least a 40% reduction in all greenhouse gas emissions in Wales by 2020 against a 1990 baseline. This will assist in making a significant contribution to the UK Carbon Budgets'

Climate Change

- Carbon dioxide is the main contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in Wales
- Energy industries = 41%
- Manufacturing and construction industries = 24%
- Transport = 15%

Welsh Government 'State of the Environment Report' July 2012

4.10.3 The SoE Report sets outcomes for minimising the effects of climate change and provides information on progress. The main findings on the progress of climate change mitigation measures in Wales are summarised below:

- The estimated emissions in million tonnes of CO_2 equivalent from transport in Wales in 2010 was 6.1. Wales transport emissions accounted for 5% of the UK total in 2010
- The land use and land use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector can have both negative and positive impacts on greenhouse gas emissions. In

[73] *Planning Policy Wales Feb 2011 p44*

Wales the sector is generally a small net sink of carbon dioxide, and this sink has slightly increased between 1990 and 2009.

- The indication is that there has been a clear improvement in Wales' resilience to the impacts of climate change.

4.10.4 Based on the Welsh Government's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and consultation (2007, Chapter 4), it is likely that the continuing trends in climate change are likely to lead to more extreme weather events with an increase in temperatures, resulting in hotter, drier spring and summer conditions, which may impact particularly in the East of Wales and across the border in England placing significant pressure on already stressed water resources. Later research by Jennifer Francis of Rutgers University and Stephen Vavrus of the University of Wisconsin-Madison[74], suggests that rapid Arctic climate change is directly linked to amplification of the jet stream movements resulting in the high-impact, extreme weather events already experienced in the U.S. and Europe. This may result in warmer winter conditions, increases in flooding, landslip and soil erosion all having implications on areas of development.

4.10.5 Extreme cold weather may also result from the warming Arctic Ocean and all of these extremes of weather may result in disruptions to productivity, travel to work and access to public services such as schools and hospitals as well as disruptions to the transport infrastructure adversely impacting industry, which will have implications for investment and for economic sustainability.

4.11 Energy consumption

4.11.1 Climate change adaptation is closely linked to the use of energy - its generation, delivery and consumption patterns, and critically its conservation. The Welsh Government's 'Renewable Energy Route Map' (2008) provides indicative data on energy demand, supply and emissions.

4.11.2 The SoE Report (2012) considers energy use and environmental standards in new buildings in Wales. In the case of energy savings from public sector buildings, it says that there has been little overall change in energy consumption since 2005. In 2008, gas accounted for 60% of public sector energy use, electricity accounted for 36%, whilst oil and coal combined accounted for 4% of public sector energy use.

4.11.3 The report points out that estimates of public sector energy use in Wales have been back-calculated from greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) inventory

[74] *http://www.climatecentral.org/news/arctic-warming-is-altering-weather-patterns-study-shows/*

analysis and UK energy statistics. It indicates that these data are experimental estimates and very uncertain, especially as they do not take into account fluctuating conditions.

4.11.4 'A Low Carbon Revolution' - the Welsh Government's Energy Policy Statement (2010) provides some general information about energy consumption in Wales (p9):

'Currently, in the UK the average person's daily energy consumption (excluding energy related to food and imported goods) is around 125 kilowatt hours per day per person (kWh/d/p).

Of this 125 kWh/d/p, after taking into account conversion losses, we use a third for heating, a third for transport and a third for electrical power. The average electrical power consumption per person per day in Wales is approximately 22 kWh/d/p, (slightly higher than the UK average of 18 kWh/d/p. To put this into context this is equivalent to every person in Wales leaving twenty-two 40-watt light bulbs on for 24 hours every day.'

4.12 Waste management

4.12.1 The SoE Report's latest findings on waste management (July 2012) are summarised below:

- The total amount of household waste produced per person in Wales has fallen to 467kg in 2010/11
- In 2005-06, the estimated amount of construction and demolition waste produced in Wales was 12.2 million tonnes
- 191,000 tonnes of waste was produced by the public sector in Wales in 2007, of which 46% was recycled off-site or re-used off site; 41% of public sector waste was landfilled in 2007
- The percentage of local authority municipal waste (excluding abandoned vehicles) reused, recycled or composted in Wales increased to 45%
- The percentage of industrial and commercial waste recycled, composted or re-used in Wales decreased from 64% in 2002/03 to 49% in 2007
- 39% of industrial and commercial waste was sent to landfill in 2007 (3.6 million tonnes), increasing from 28% in 2002/03.
- 51% of municipal waste (excluding abandoned vehicles) was sent to landfill in 2010/11 - a decrease from 93% in 2000/01
- 338 companies are Green Dragon certified in 2012; 21 companies achieved the highest rating (Level 5), an increase from 17 in 2011

4.12.2 There is a clear upward trend in the amount of waste reused, recycled or composted, and this has boosted employment in this sector.

Waste

- 48% of local authority municipal waste was recycled March 2011-12
- The residual household waste produced per person in Wales fell to 56 kilograms per person in January to March 2012, from 65 kilograms per person in January to March 2011.

Statistics Wales:
Local Authority Municipal Waste Management, 2012 p2

- Commercial and industrial waste accounts for around 50% of the total waste ecological footprint), with municipal waste accounting for about 35% and construction and demolition waste accounting for 15%.
- In 2007-08, 10,554 tonnes were reused via Third Sector organisations in Wales – this included 9,602 tonnes of furniture.

Source: Cylch Let's Prove It Report 2008

- Cardboard boxes and containers are the largest component of business waste, making up 15%, or 100,000 tonnes of the total. Kitchen waste made up 13%, or 90,000 tonnes.

WAG - Towards Zero Waste - Consultation on a New Waste Strategy for Wales. April 2009

4.13 Transport

4.13.1 *'Rising concentrations of greenhouse gases are recognised to be causing global climate change. Transport, through the use of fossil fuels, is one of several key activities that produce greenhouse gases, and accounts for around 16% of CO_2 emissions (around 14% of greenhouse gas emissions) in Wales.'*

'One Wales - Connecting the Nation' -
The Wales Transport Strategy April 2008 (p5)

4.13.2 There has been little change in the main modes of travel to work since 1997 in both Wales and the UK. In 2011 the situation was as follows:

- 81% of the population travelled to work by car, van, minibus or works van
- 12% by walking or cycling and
- 8% used other modes of transport in Wales.
- Almost as many children travel to school by car (33.6%) as by walking (36.4%)

- the numbers travelling to school by bus or coach have reduced since 2002/3, with 23.9% travelling in this way[75]
- bus passenger numbers have fallen from about 118 million in 2009/10 to 113 million in 2010/11
- rail passenger numbers (for journeys either beginning or ending in Wales) have increased from some 25 million 2008/09 to 27 million in 2010/11
- Sixty-nine per cent of these journeys were entirely within Wales
- For 39% of these, Cardiff was the destination of rail passenger journeys[76]

4.13.3 Overall, greenhouse gas emissions relating to transport fell by over 5% between 2008 and 2010[77].

Transport issues

- On the east-west corridor buses account for 85% of public transport
- Out-commuting accounts for many journeys on the east-west network in West Wales & the Valleys
- Approx 70% of all personal journeys in Wales are made by car
- Average of 47 journeys per person per year are made by bus or coach

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- CO_2 emissions from road transport have steadily increased since 1990, and depending on the forecasting method used, look set to continue to grow. Emissions of other pollutants such as Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) and particulates (PM10) are 58% and 44% lower

'One Wales - Connecting the Nation -
The Wales Transport Strategy April 2008

[75] *SoE Report 2012*

[76] *Statistical Bulletin. Rail transport October 30 2012*

[77] *National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory: http://naei.defra.gov.uk/*

4.14 Culture, architecture and archaeology

4.14.1 The Welsh language is a member of the Brythonic branch of Celtic languages, and is the oldest spoken language in Europe. In 2001, the number of Welsh speakers was over 582,000 (21 per cent of the total population) [78]. The 2011 Census results on the Welsh language in Wales were published by the Office for National Statistics on 11 December 2012. These initial results include data at a Wales and local authority level. The number of people who speak Welsh has fallen in the past 10 years, according to the 2011 census. Despite an increase in population the number of Welsh speakers has fallen overall from 582,000 in 2001 to 562,000 in 2011 a two percentage point drop in Welsh speakers - from 21% to 19%. Gwynedd and Anglesey are the only areas where over half the population now speak Welsh.

4.14.2 The local authorities with the highest percentage of Welsh speakers have not changed but Gwynedd now has 65% (down from 69%), Isle of Anglesey 57% (down from 60%). Welsh is now a minority language in two of its traditional strongholds: Ceredigion at 43% (down from 52%) and in Carmarthenshire at 44% (down from 50%). The local authorities with the lowest percentage of Welsh speakers were in South East Wales. More detailed analysis shows:

- 19% of the Welsh population aged over three said they were able to speak the language - able to speak Welsh: 562,016; not able to speak Welsh: 2,393,825
- Gwynedd has the highest percentage of residents aged three or over who said they can speak, read and write in Welsh (65,900 people, 56%)
- In Carmarthenshire, 43.9% of the population aged over three said they could speak Welsh in 2011, down from 50.3% in 2001 and 54.9% in 1991
- In Ceredigion it was 47.3% in 2011, down from 52% in 2001
- 11.1% of the population of Cardiff said they could speak Welsh in 2011, a 0.1% increase, while there was also an increase in Monmouthshire from 9.3% to 9.9%;
- Blaenau Gwent reported the lowest percentage of people who could speak Welsh at 7.8%[79].

[78] *WAG 2010: Wale's Population – a Demographic Overview Cardiff 2010*

[79] *Census 2011/ONS*

4.14.3 It has been thought that migration trends and education might lead to an increase in speakers in less traditional Welsh-speaking areas. But the census suggests otherwise, with just two areas, Monmouthshire and Cardiff, seeing a percentage increase.

4.14.4 The results of the 2011 census data on the Welsh language were released during the writing of this report. There has been a significant decline in the number of Welsh speakers in the rural areas. Natural Resources Wales, the single body which will replace the Environment Agency, Countryside Council for Wales and the Forestry Commission on 1st April is consulting on its Draft Welsh language scheme[80]. Part of this new body's vision is to

"Promote an understanding that the Welsh language, as a part of Welsh culture, is integral to the ecosystem approach to managing the environment in Wales"

The potential impact on the Welsh language is therefore a significant consideration within the overall assessment of effects.

Cultural, Architectural & Archaeological Heritage

- In both 1996 and 2003, nearly 80% of scheduled ancient monuments were reported to be stable, and about 10% are improved or greatly improved
- There was an increase in superficial disturbance, generally from invasive vegetation and scrub encroachment, probably due to the less intensive agri-environmental schemes. This was offset by the reduction in the disturbance sometimes caused by intensive agriculture.

Cadw: Position Statement 2007

Listed buildings at risk, 2007 and 2008

- The percentage of the sample of listed buildings in Wales that were classed as 'at risk' has fallen slightly from 10.2% in 2007 to 9.6% in 2008.
- The percentage of the sample of listed buildings that were classed as 'vulnerable' has fallen slightly from 17.5% in 2007 to 17.3% in 2008.
- The percentage of the sample of listed buildings that were classed as 'not at risk' has increased slightly, from 72.4% in 2007 to 73.2% in 2008.

Handley Partnership/Cadw

[80] *http://www.ccw.gov.uk/about-ccw/consultations/draft-welsh-language-scheme.aspx*

4.14.5 West Wales and the Valleys contains a rich heritage of historic buildings, including vernacular and agricultural buildings, as well as industrial, ecclesiastical and historic military structures and sites.

4.14.6 It is important that this historic building stock and its character is maintained to a high standard, and this includes wherever possible its setting. However, retro-fitting historic buildings to an adequate standard is likely to prove highly costly, not least the need to ensure that hardware and insulation does not conflict with the integrity if such buildings.

4.14.7 In 2007, Cadw commissioned a baseline report on listed Buildings at Risk in Wales. This brought together data from most of the local authority registers. The 2009 summary report[81] estimated that of the 29,896 listed buildings in Wales, 2,882 are 'at risk', and 5,145 are 'vulnerable', owing to the rate of decline of their fabric and character. The report indicates that North West and Central Wales have a particularly high number of 'at risk' buildings. In some areas the threat of flooding is a concern. For example, of 365 listed buildings within Caerphilly council, about 260 are located within areas identified as being in locations identified as being above the Flood Risk Threshold[82].

4.14.8 Fifty-eight areas of Wales have been identified for placing on the historic landscapes register for Wales maintained by Cadw, CCW, and the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). There are also over 100,000 archaeological sites listed by the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts, some of which are impressively set[83,84]

4.14.9 Four Landscape Partnership schemes operate in Wales, in order to support the conservation and enhancement of these special landscapes: Llŷn, Tywi Valley, the Clwydian Hills and Blaenavon.

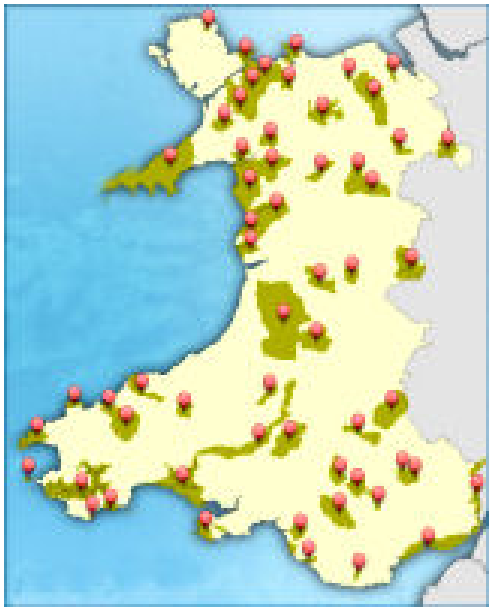

Fig 6: Historic landscapes. Source: CCW

[81] *Buildings at Risk in Wales". Handley Page partnership for Cadw. (2009)*

[82] *Caerphilly Flood Risk Management Strategy. SEA Scoping Report (2012)*

[83] *See www.archwilio.org.uk*

[84] *http://www.ccgc.gov.uk/landscape/wildlife/protecting-our-landscape/historic-landscapes/wales-historic-landscapes.aspx*

4.15 Landscape

4.15.1 The landscapes of Wales are remarkably varied for such a small nation. The underlying geology, and the variety of land use and land cover result in a number of distinctive landscapes that can be identified at both an extensive and at a local level.

4.15.2 Some areas, such as Snowdonia/Eryri, the Gower Peninsula and Pembrokeshire, are well-known for certain characteristics, and have been named, written about, appreciated and visited for centuries, and it is perhaps no surprise that each of these areas is a protected landscape. Others, such as the Dovey Valley or the Elenydd are less widely known but are nonetheless well-known and appreciated locally. Within these larger areas, distinctive landscapes can be identified and described. The wooded valley systems of south Snowdonia contrast strongly with those of the north, on account of their glacial history, their topography, the underlying geology and hydrology and their historic land uses.

4.15.3 These distinctive areas have been broadly mapped (figure 6), and are known as landscape character areas. The purpose of mapping these areas is to enable a description of each area's distinctive character, rather than to attempt to identify one landscape as being 'superior' to another.

Fig 7: Landscape character areas. Source: CCW

4.15.4 The Countryside Council's LANDMAP programme[85] has developed a system for assessing the condition and quality of Wales' landscape from five dimensions, known as 'aspect areas'. These are cultural, geological, historic, landscape habitat and visual and sensory.

4.15.5 What the LANDMAP programme reveals is the extent of outstanding landscape attributes beyond the protected landscapes of Wales (figures 7 to 11). Whilst such an assessment has a degree of subjectivity, it has been rigorously tested among landscape professionals and the public and has a high degree of consensus and quality control.

[85] *See http://www.ccgc.gov.uk/landscape--wildlife/protecting-our-landscape/landmap.aspx*

4.15.6 The red areas indicate outstanding landscape attributes, and the amber areas are of high quality.

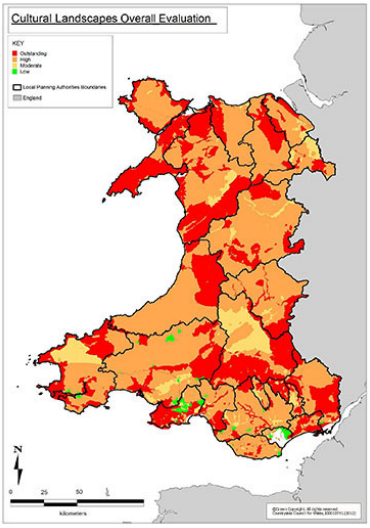

Fig 8: Cultural

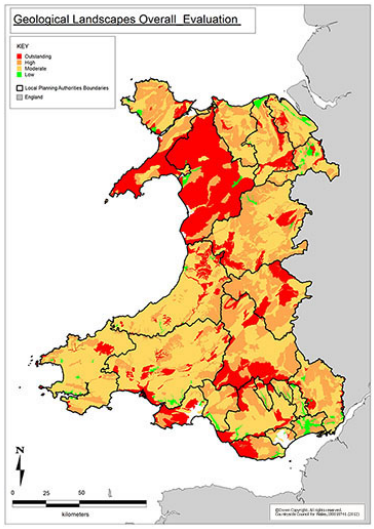

Fig 9: Geological

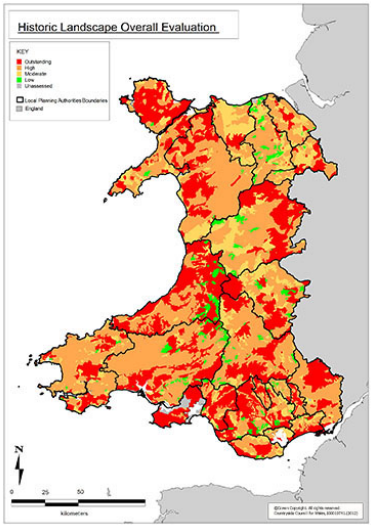

Fig 10: Historic

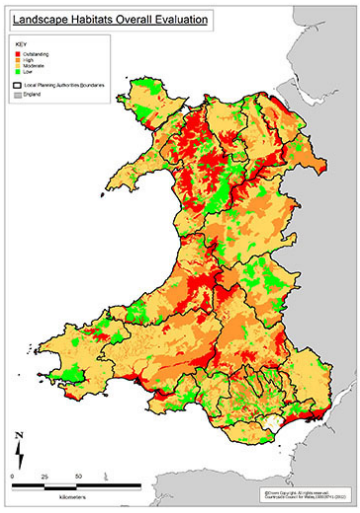

Fig 11: Landscape habitat

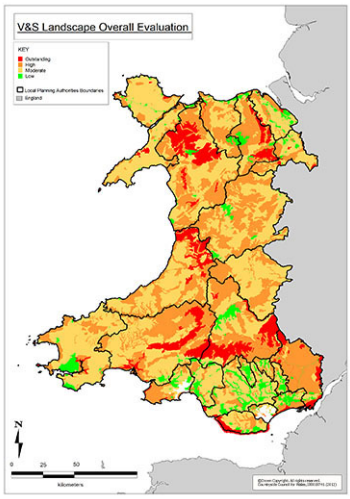

Fig 12: Visual and sensory

4.16 Interactions

4.16.1 These issues should not be considered in isolation from each other, or from wider social and economic contexts. Impacts on any of these themes will have adverse or positive effects on others to a greater or lesser extent, and such impacts are almost entirely anthropogenic. Decisions that affect the landscape, biodiversity or historic and cultural heritage of Wales will impact on its economy through losses in tourism income or a reluctance to relocate to or invest in degraded, unattractive regions. Conversely, a failure to invest in sympathetic development will result in losses in income or the inability to increase income, and a lack of funds for conservation, whilst at the same

time threatening the capacity of transport, drainage or sewage systems to deal with the effects of seasonal tourist fluctuations or increasing populations, thus impacting on biodiversity.

4.16.2 There will be changes to biodiversity, with (some would argue) gains and some losses, but this is unpredictable as is the overall net impact. Habitat and species gains and losses relate to wider ecosystems that may become stressed as a result. A change in composition of plant or tree species to ones which are more resilient to change may lead to a change in invertebrate numbers and types; new predatory or invasive bird and mammal species from the Continent or Mediterranean may impact on other more vulnerable species.

4.16.3 If current climate trends continue, there will be habitat change, with wetter habitats in some areas and perhaps drier conditions elsewhere. It is possible that changes will occur in the uplands, with some abandonment or reductions in agricultural productivity[86]. There may be changes in woodland, hedgerow and river bankside management systems to mitigate the effects of runoff.

4.16.4 Climate change may also have significant effects on settlement patterns, agricultural productivity and other activities in the longer term and the planning system will increasingly need to take this into account.

4.17 Summary of issues

4.17.1 This section summarises the key issues that relate to West Wales and the Valleys. In most cases, these issues have implications for the Programme, which are discussed in sections 5.2 and 5.3 and in Appendix 5.

Biodiversity	About **60% of SACs**, and a number of Biodiversity Action Plan species and habitats are in **unfavourable condition**, especially on the coast. Pressures can come from visitor numbers on some sites, changes in weather patterns, development, over- or undergrazing, pollution, nutrient enrichment and eutrophication, sediment deposits, invasive species, inappropriate planting, over abstraction and overfishing.
Population and human health	Some areas lack easily accessible **open space**. Stress related illnesses from **poor living and working conditions**, as well as **unemployment**; heat and **fuel poverty**; poor diets leading to **obesity**; illnesses and injuries at work; and poor

[86] *This in turn may result in a higher demand for imported food. In this document however we do not offer a detailed analysis of how much food produced in Wales is consumed in Wales – in future we may consume more indigenously grown food and export less. Lamb, for example is currently imported and exported in large quantities.*

	social/private rented **housing standards** are contributory factors in health problems in Wales. In some areas, **poor air quality** may be a contributory factor.
Soil quality and structure	Development, changes in agriculture (especially intensification) and climate change contribute to a **loss in soil carbon and structure**. There have been **changes in hydrology** and **erosion** due to changes in rainfall patterns and agriculture. The need to maintain best quality agricultural land in the face of development pressure may result in losses of less productive land which may be valuable for carbon sequestration.
Minerals and aggregates	Wales has a relatively limited range of terrestrial minerals and aggregates, sand and gravel is extracted from marine areas. About **50% of waste aggregate is currently recycled.**
Timber	About **43% of all woodland is coniferous plantation**, mainly owned by Welsh Government. There will be a **significant demand for imported biomass** fuel and also for good quality building timber.

Water quality	**Pollution from flooded mines** continues to present a challenge. **Diffuse pollution** from other sources including agriculture is exacerbated by changing weather patterns with sudden flooding. There is a **potential threat to coastal water quality** as a result of increases in storm events. Currently, **about 33% of coastal waters are not of 'good' ecological quality**, and the pattern for terrestrial water bodies is mixed.
Water availability	About **23.5% of water supply is lost to leakages**; there has been a **significant increase in abstracted water**, mainly for electricity supply. About **38% of river waters are not reliable for new abstractions** - there may be an increased demand due to population growth.
Flood risk	**28% of the Welsh coastline has sea defence infrastructure**; about **1 in 6 properties is at risk from flooding** - this will be significantly higher locally - the **economic cost of flooding** is estimated at more than **£200 million per annum.** River flows are predicted to reduce overall, but with sudden rapid flows related to turbulent weather. In some areas, **natural flood systems have been developed or artificially drained for agriculture.**

Climate	A number of changes in weather patterns are predicted, including **summer water shortages**; **increases in amounts** and **intensity** of **winter rainfall**, with **milder winters**; **hotter, drier summers**; **increases in sudden storms**. These will result in rapid **build up of river and drainage systems**; increases in storm induced **coastal erosion and subsidence**; ecosystem changes with some **species and habitat losses and gains**
Energy consumption	**Gas** accounts for **60% of public sector energy** use. About **33% of domestic energy use is for heating** and about **33% for lighting/installations**. A target has been set by Welsh Government to reduce average per person carbon emissions by 33% by 2020.
Waste	The amount of **municipal waste recycled, reused or composted has increased from 18% in 2003/4 to 48% in 2011/12**. Having peaked in 2005/6, the **total amount of waste generated has decreased since 2000 by about 95,000 tonnes per annum.**

Transport	**81% of the population travels to work by motor vehicle**, and 12% by walking or cycling. There has been a **fall of about 5 million bus passengers** (2010/11) since 2009/10, and an **increase of about 2 million rail passengers** in the same period. There are conflicting statistics on transport related emissions.
Culture, architecture and archaeology	**Over 25% of Wales' listed buildings are either 'at risk' or 'vulnerable'**. Whilst nearly all of Wales' ancient monuments are stable or improving, climate change and changes in agricultural us may create new challenges. **Historic buildings and their settings, and the wider landscape, are under pressure from development.** The number of people who can speak Welsh has **decreased slightly** since 2001, although the number who can understand but not speak Welsh has increased slightly.

4.18 Ecological footprint

4.18.1 Ecological footprint is an indicator of the total environmental demand that is made on the planet. It is presented in terms of global hectares (gHa), which represents the amount of land required both to deliver the demands of a population in terms of food, water, fibre and fuel, natural resources and

spiritual and recreational opportunities, and to absorb the impacts of that population in terms of pollution and waste. It is associated with the concept of 'ecosystem services'. Housing, travel and food are the main criteria used in the calculation, and both direct and indirect consumer impacts are assessed.

4.18.2 Wales' ecological footprint had risen at a rate of about 1.3% between 1990 and 2003, in line with a growth in Gross Added Value (GVA)[87]. Had this trend continued, it would have been likely that by 2020 Wales ecological footprint would have been 20% higher than it was in 1990. The current footprint is under review[88], but in the light of the economic downturn, this may have been reversed since 2008.

4.18.3 The most recent calculation (2006)[89] is that Wales' ecological footprint is about 4.4 gha, which is a significant reduction from the 2003 average figure of 5.16 gha.

4.18.4 West and north-west Wales would appear to have higher than average footprints, whilst the Valleys appear to have a footprint below the Welsh average. This is likely to be a reflection of energy demands, travel needs and the dispersed delivery of services[90] .

4.18.5 The intention of the Welsh Government is to reduce the national ecological footprint to 1.88 gha per person within the lifetime of a generation[91].

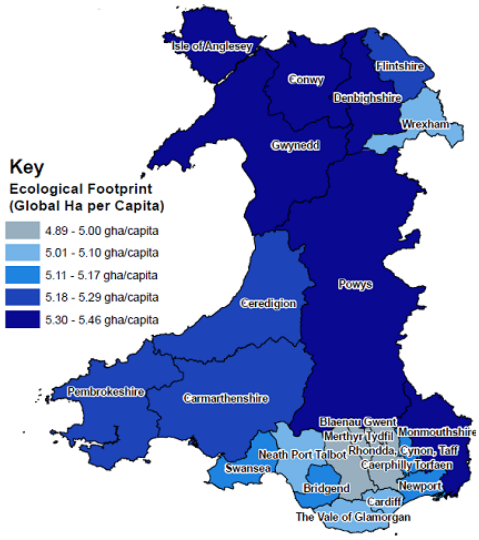

Fig 13: Wales' ecological footprint. Source Dawkins et al

[87] *E. Dawkins, A. Paul, J. Barrett, J. Minx and K. Scott (2008). Wales' Ecological Footprint: Scenarios to 2020. Stockholm Environment Institute*

[88] *http://www.government-online.net/calculating-wales-ecological-footprint/*

[89] *One Wales One Planet. Annual Sustainable Development Report 2009-10*

[90] *See http://www.resource-accounting.org.uk/downloads/wales/wales*

[91] *ibid.*

5 COMPATIBILITY - SEA AND PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

5.1 Comparing objectives - a basic matrix test

5.1.1 The matrix test set out below (table 5) is based on a more detailed analysis of each intervention set against the SEA objectives (shown in table 3) and indicators. This analysis can be seen in Appendix 5. The results of the detailed analysis have been collated and are shown in the following section.

5.1.2 The SEA objectives are set out in section 2.3.7. For ease of reference, the 13 'headline' objectives are:

1. Protect places, landscapes and buildings of historic, cultural and archaeological value

2. Protect and enhance landscapes, seascapes, townscapes and the countryside

3. Protect and enhance biodiversity

4. Protect and improve the region's water quality

5. Protect the water resource and ensure its sustainable use

6. Guard against land contamination, encourage reuse of existing buildings and of previously developed land of low ecological quality

7. Minimise the requirement for energy generation use, promote efficient energy use and increase the use of energy from renewable resources

8. Minimise waste increase re-use, recycling and recovery rates

9. Minimise the need to travel; provide alternatives to car use

10. Limit and adapt to climate change

11. Protect and improve air quality

12. Improve physical and mental health and reduce health inequalities

13. Improve public access to land

5.1.3 In table 5, we first present a summary of the test results, showing the conclusion for each theme against each of the 13 SEA objectives, and then provide more detailed information on how we arrived at each result.

Table 5: Presentation of compatibility matrices[92]

Testing compatibility between the Programme and SEA objectives									
SEA Objectives	Programme Objectives, themes and activities								
	To support the creation and growth of sustainable small and medium-sized enterprises in Wales		To improve access to markets and employment opportunities through improved connectivity; to exploit economic opportunities through focussed investments in infrastructure		To improve the capacity for, and economic exploitation of, innovation and research		To support the sustainable development of the low-carbon economy of Wales and the delivery of climate change objectives		
	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3
1	**O?**	**O?**	**×✓**	**✓O**	**O**	**O**	**O×**	**O?**	**O**
2	**O?**	**×?**	**×✓**	**✓O**	**O**	**O**	**O×**	**×**	**O×**
3	**O**	**×?**	**?×**	**✓?**	**O**	**O**	**O✓**	**×**	**O×**
4	**O**	**O**	**O?**	**✓O**	**O**	**O**	**O**	**O?**	**O**
5	**O?**	**O?**	**O**	**O**	**O**	**O**	**✓**	**✓**	**O×**
6	**✓?**	**✓**	**?**	**✓**	**✓O**	**O**	**✓**	**O**	**✓**
7	**✓**	**×?**	**×✓**	**✓**	**✓**	**✓?**	**✓✓**	**✓✓✓**	**✓✓✓**
8	**✓**	**×?**	**O**	**O**	**O**	**O**	**✓**	**✓**	**✓**
9	**✓**	**×**	**×✓**	**✓?**	**✓?**	**O**	**O**	**O**	**O**
10	**✓**	**O×**	**?×**	**✓**	**✓**	**✓?**	**✓✓**	**✓✓**	**✓✓**
11	**✓?**	**O✓**	**?×**	**✓**	**✓?**	**✓?**	**✓✓**	**✓**	**✓✓**
12	**O**	**O**	**✓?**	**✓**	**O**	**O**	**✓✓**	**O**	**✓✓**
13	**O**	**O**	**O**	**✓O**	**O**	**O**	**O**	**O**	**O**

To support the creation and growth of sustainable small and medium-sized enterprises in Wales - Theme 1		
1-1	**O?**	Likely to be neutral overall, depending on type and location of SME being targeted for financing and investment.
1-2	**O?**	Likely to be neutral overall, depending on type and location of SME being targeted for finance and investment.
1-3	**O**	Likely to be neutral overall. No explicit positives in terms of biodiversity, depending on type of SME development.
1-4	**O**	Likely to be neutral overall.
1-5	**O?**	Likely to be neutral overall, though potentially an increase in use?
1-6	**✓?**	Possibility of a small positive, depending on locations/types of SME promoted. Likely to be realised in LDP policies?
1-7	✓	Likely to be positive in terms of sustainable energy use, depending on type of SME promoted.
1-8	✓	Likely to be positive. Waste management is an issue common across

[92] *An explanation of the symbols is in Table 4 at para. 2.6.5*

		the board and is potentially a vertical as well as a horizontal theme.
1-9	✓	Potentially positive. Appropriately located SMEs/ICT availability will promote this.
1-10	✓	Potential small positive.
1-11	✓**?**	Possible positive depending on achievement of objectives 7 & 9.
1-12	**O**	No obvious link.
1-13	**O**	No obvious link.

To support the creation and growth of sustainable small and medium-sized enterprises in Wales - Theme 2		
2-1	**O?**	Not likely to be linked.
2-2	**×?**	No obvious positives – economically important/growth businesses with international supply chains could have a negative impact - depends on scale - but SME?
2-3	**×?**	As above.
2-4	**O**	No obvious link.
2-5	**O?**	No clear link – depends on the type of SME – potential for increased use of water?
2-6	✓	Potential positive – promotion of re-used land of low ecological quality through LDP policies.
2-7	**×?**	Growth/expansion of business with export potential is likely to increase energy requirement. However, potential exists for efficient use of renewables.
2-8	**×?**	Growth/expansion of business with export potential is likely to increase use of packaging, with potential increase in waste generation. Depends on the type of business.
2-9	**×**	The need to procure/expand international markets will have the effect of *increasing* the need to travel.
2-10	**O×**	At best neutral, but increased travel and energy demand will not contribute positively to this objective.
2-11	**O**	Locally likely to be neutral. Cannot contribute positively to this objective.
2-12	**O**	No obvious link.
2-13	**O**	No obvious link.

To improve access to markets and employment opportunities through improved connectivity, and to exploit economic opportunities through focussed investments in infrastructure - Theme 1		
1-1	**×✓**	Improved road/rail schemes, together with congestion alleviation could have the positive effect of improving the character of townscapes. However, such schemes are likely to impact on landscape/countryside.
1-2	**×✓**	As above. Port infrastructure might have a negative impact on coast/ seascape. Telecommunications masts may have a visual impact.
1-3	**?×**	Potential opportunities for small benefits to biodiversity may be offset by impacts unless adequate mitigation/compensation measures are applied.
1-4	**O?**	No obvious link in terms of water quality. Potential negative impact on coast?
1-5	**O**	No obvious link.
1-6	**?**	Likelihood of land take. No significant contribution to this objective.

1-7	×✓	Improvements in road networks will reduce congestion, but may increase the volume of traffic without parallel measures such as improvements in ICT and rail/bus links.
1-8	**O**	No obvious link.
1-9	×✓	Improvements in road networks may increase the volume of traffic without parallel measures such as improvements in ICT and rail/bus links. The latter will have a positive effect,
1-10	**?×**	For the above reasons, the contribution to this objective may at best be neutral.
1-11	**?×**	For the above reasons, the contribution to this objective may at best be neutral.
1-12	**✓?**	There could be a positive contribution in terms of stress reduction. No obvious contribution in terms of health inequalities/physical health.
1-13	**O**	No obvious link.

To improve access to markets and employment opportunities through improved connectivity, and to exploit economic opportunities through focussed investments in infrastructure - Theme 2		
2-1	**✓O**	Potential for locally significant enhancement to cultural sites and their settings.
2-2	**✓O**	Potential for locally significant enhancement to townscapes where they are linked to strategically significant businesses.
2-3	**✓?**	Potential to significantly contribute to ecologically sound green infrastructure. Requires parallel measures to optimise potential.
2-4	**✓O**	Has the potential to contribute to local water quality, where green infrastructure is appropriately included.
2-5	**O**	No obvious link.
2-6	✓	Positive contribution to this objective, linked to improving ecological quality.
2-7	✓	Significant opportunity to promote energy efficiency and the use of renewables.
2-8	**O**	No obvious link.
2-9	**✓?**	Improved infrastructure in regeneration areas/hubs has the potential to reduce the need to travel & provide alternatives.
2-10	✓	Potential to contribute to climate change.
2-11	✓	Reduction in travel demand, use of renewables and enhanced green infrastructure will contribute to this objective.
2-12	✓	Living and working environment has the potential to contribute to physical and mental well-being.
2-13	**✓O**	Some potential to improve/increase accessible greenspace within development.

To improve the capacity for, and economic exploitation of, innovation and research - Theme 1		
1-1	**O**	Some potential linked to tourism sector, otherwise no obvious link.
1-2	**O**	No significant impact anticipated.
1-3	**O**	No obvious link.
1-4	**O**	No obvious link.
1-5	**O**	No obvious link.

1-6	✓**O**	Some potential for re-use of redundant land.
1-7	✓	Significant opportunity to innovate in technological support for this objective.
1-8	**O**	No obvious link.
1-9	✓**?**	Potential to promote a reduction in travel.
1-10	✓	Based on 1-7, could contribute significantly to climate change issues.
1-11	✓**?**	Some potential to contribute to air quality improvements – reduction in travel/innovation in relevant technology
1-12	**O**	No obvious link.
1-13	**O**	No obvious link.

To improve the capacity for, and economic exploitation of, innovation and research - Theme 2		
2-1	**O**	No obvious link.
2-2	**O**	No obvious link.
2-3	**O**	No obvious link.
2-4	**O**	No obvious link.
2-5	**O**	No obvious link.
2-6	**O**	No obvious link.
2-7	✓**?**	Depending on the type of R&D, some potential to contribute to this objective.
2-8	**O**	No obvious link.
2-9	**O**	No obvious link.
2-10	✓**?**	Depending on the type of R&D, some potential to contribute to this objective.
2-11	✓**?**	Depending on the type of R&D, some potential to contribute to this objective.
2-12	**O**	No obvious link.
2-13	**O**	No obvious link.

To support the sustainable development of the low-carbon economy of Wales and the delivery of climate change objectives - Theme 1		
1-1	**O×**	No overall positive effect likely. There may be some visual impact linked to the use of hardware.
1-2	**O×**	Not likely to positively promote this objective without parallel measures.
1-3	**O**✓	Some small contribution to the protection of biodiversity. With parallel measures (see B2-2) there is some opportunity to use natural systems.
1-4	**O**	No obvious link.
1-5	✓	Potential to use water capture and recycling systems together with natural heating/cooling systems
1-6	✓	Some potential for encouraging the re-use of existing buildings by retrofitting. Use of ground source heating systems in otherwise redundant land?
1-7	✓✓	Significant potential to address this objective.
1-8	✓	Potential for reducing demand for carbon based fuels - reduction on waste by-products.
1-9	**O**	No obvious link.

1-10	✓✓	Potential for significant contribution to this objective.
1-11	✓✓	Achieving zero carbon energy systems will improve air quality.
1-12	✓✓	Significant potential to reduce health inequalities especially in urban contexts.
1-13	**O**	No obvious link.

To support the sustainable development of the low-carbon economy of Wales and the delivery of climate change objectives - Theme 2		
2-1	**O?**	No obvious link. However, this depends on the location and scale of e.g. shoreside facilities, connections etc.
2-2	×	Potential impacts to coastal landscape and inland (shoreside infrastructure, connections etc).
2-3	×	Potential for significant impact on marine environment, depending on scale, location and type of development.
2-4	**O?**	No obvious impact on water quality. See 2-2.
2-5	✓	Does not set out to protect the water resource, but explicitly sets out to exploit sustainable use of marine environment.
2-6	**O**	No obvious link. Depends on type and scale of development.
2-7	✓✓✓	An explicit purpose of the theme is to increase the use of renewables.
2-8	✓	Aims to reduce reliance on non-renewable resources, with resulting waste by-products.
2-9	**O**	No obvious link.
2-10	✓✓	Potential for significant contribution to this objective.
2-11	✓	Aims to exploit alternatives to carbon-based non-renewable resources.
2-12	**O**	No obvious link.
2-13	**O**	No obvious link.

To support the sustainable development of the low-carbon economy of Wales and the delivery of climate change objectives - Theme 3		
3-1	**O**	No obvious link.
3-2	**O×**	Potential for visual and landscape impacts from terrestrial schemes.
3-3	**O×**	Grid and other infrastructure may impact on habitats and/or biodiversity corridors.
3-4	**O**	No obvious link.
3-5	**O×**	The use of hydro systems for energy generation might have a negative impact. Otherwise no obvious link.
3-6	✓	Potential to re-use redundant sites for renewable energy generation, depending on type, size and location of scheme.
3-7	✓✓✓	Will contribute significantly to this objective.
3-8	✓	Aims to reduce reliance on non-renewable resources, with resulting waste by-products.
3-9	**O**	No obvious link.
3-10	✓✓	Potential for significant contribution to this objective.
3-11	✓✓	Achieving zero carbon energy systems will improve air quality.
3-12	✓✓	Significant potential to reduce health inequalities especially in urban contexts.
3-13	**O**	No obvious link.

5.2 Risk analysis – probability and significance

5.2.1 Of the 117 elements compared, 51 are thought to be likely to have a positive effect, and 46 are likely to be neutral, without taking into account any environmental cross cutting measures. Twenty of the elements are thought to have a potentially negative effect without appropriate measures, which in most cases will be statutory.

5.2.2 The analysis below (table 6) focuses only on the negative effects of interventions - in most cases these are reduced or offset by positive effects within the intervention.

5.2.3 Regulations on standards for waste and recycling, water, emissions and air quality, as well as on buildings, will apply, as will regulations linked to avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement for biodiversity effects. National and local planning policy, together with appropriate assessment and environmental impact assessment will also apply at project level.

Table 6: Potential negative effects of interventions

		Likely?	Significant?	Comment
To support the creation and growth of sustainable small and medium-sized enterprises in Wales	**Theme 2 SEA Objective 2**	**Poss**	**Low**	There is some risk that successful and economically important SMEs with a developing international market might need to grow. This may have implications in terms of site expansion, thereby have an impact on potentially sensitive settings, depending on the type of SME envisaged. In some cases this has required relocation, with implications for redundant buildings and locally-based staff. Whilst this is a matter for local planning policy, the support given to SMEs needs to take into account the implications of expansion.
	Theme 2 SEA Objective 3	**Poss**	**Low**	As above. Some risk that expanding SMEs may have some adverse impact on local biodiversity. In supporting the development of particular SMEs, consideration needs to be given to avoiding sensitive sites and corridors. In some cases the use of EIAs and Appropriate Assessment will be required, and the use of the sustainable development CCT should encourage the use of ecological systems in the design of buildings[93].

[93] *See 'Ecosystem Services Come to Town: Greening Cities by Working With Nature' . Grant G. Wiley-Blackwell 2012*

To support the creation and growth of sustainable small and medium-sized enterprises	**Theme 2 SEA Objective 7**	**Prob**	**High**	The expansion of SMEs is likely to generate an increase in energy demand, depending on the type and scale of SME. This can be mitigated by good practice and technology. The sustainable development CCT should encourage training and awareness raising. Support for individual SMEs should promote the use of renewable energy and smart technology.
	Theme 2 SEA Objective 8	**Poss**	**Mod**	Depending on the type of SME, there is some possibility that waste may be exported as packaging. Support for SMEs should be conditional on the introduction of policies and practices to ensure the reduction of waste.
	Theme 2 SEA Objective 9	**Def**	**Mod**	The growth of businesses seeking international markets into which to export will increase the demand to travel during the programme period, even with parallel measures in place such as ICT. This can be mitigated by using public transport and car sharing wherever possible, but may be unfeasible internationally. Where possible alternatives to road freight should be encouraged.
	Theme 2 SEA Objective 10	**Def**	**Mod**	For the above reasons, expanding businesses will increase both energy demand and the need to travel. Limiting and adapting to climate change will not be achieved unless other measures are introduced, including ecological design, reduced car use, energy awareness and appropriate technology, as well as an increase in renewable energy use. The CCTs should encourage these measures as far as possible.

To improve access to markets and employment opportunities through improved connectivity, and to exploit economic opportunities through focussed investments in infrastructure	**Theme 1 SEA Objective 1**	**Poss**	**Mod/High**	One element of this theme relates to support for port infrastructure. The effects of this may be significant locally, where such infrastructure is located within the setting of historic sites, landscapes and buildings. Local planning policy/Cadw advice will indicate acceptability.
	Theme 1 SEA Objective 2	**Prob**	**Mod/High**	As above, especially where such infrastructure may impact on sensitive coastline. Support should be conditional on advice on seascape/landscape and visual impacts. There may be congestion in and out of a port facility, depending on location, and impacts may include the upgrading of rail and road access. Local planning policy will indicate acceptability and design issues. Likely to be subject to EIA for mitigation.
	Theme 1 SEA Objective 3	**Poss**	**High**	As above. Potential for significant local/ regional impacts, in relation to both terrestrial and marine biodiversity. Potential for wider impacts resulting from network developments. As well as avoidance, compensatory and enhancement may need to be sought by way of mitigation. The potential for transporting invasive marine species is of particular concern.
	Theme 1 SEA Objective 7	**Def**	**High**	Port infrastructure construction will have high energy costs. Whilst there is a potential for energy savings through more efficient transportation of large cargoes to ports, there may be an increase in heavy road traffic to and from ports. Consideration will need to be given to location, linked to TEN-T network. Support will depend on local planning policies and mitigation proposals.
	Theme 1 SEA Objective 9	**Prob**	**Mod**	Depending on the type of development, there may be an increase in car use as a result of improved road network. Developing ICT networks will help to offset the use of cars. Promotion of highway design plus future car technology will mitigate some of the effects.
	Theme 1 SEA Objective 10	**Prob**	**Mod/High**	As above. Reducing the demand to travel by car by promoting alternatives such as train and bus will help to reduce emissions.

	Theme 1 SEA Objective 11	**Poss**	**Low**	Depending on highway design, location of port infrastructure and uptake of alternatives, there may be local impacts on the quality of air. The effect is likely to be low overall, where measures are applied through design and technology.

To support the sustainable development of the low-carbon economy in Wales and the delivery of climate change objectives	Theme 1 SEA Objective 1	**Unl**	**Low**	Very small effect is possible in some circumstances. Support for energy conservation measures in sensitive heritage areas will depend on local planning policy. Advice on design matters will be provided by planning authorities and Cadw on a case by case basis where appropriate.
	Theme 1 SEA Objective 2	**Poss**	**Mod**	Depending on the specific measures, it is possible that there may be some visual impact on landscapes and townscapes. Detail will be determined through local planning policies. Mitigation can be sought by careful siting, scale and design.
	Theme 2 SEA Objective 2	**Prob**	**Mod**	There is a potential for locally significant impacts on landscapes and seascapes. Depending on scale and type, it is likely that EIA will inform decisions on specific cases. Visual impacts may be mitigated through high quality design.
	Theme 2 SEA Objective3	**Prob**	**Mod**	Marine energy infrastructure may impact on marine and shoreline biodiversity. Some of the impact may be seasonal. EIA and/or AA may be applicable, and will indicate avoidance and/or mitigation as appropriate. Promotion of awareness of marine and shoreline biodiversity should be encouraged, and support should be contingent on an operational Environmental Management System.
	Theme 3 SEA Objective 2	**Poss**	**Low**	Depending on the scale and type of scheme, it is possible that there will be a local landscape impact, especially in the case of community- based renewables. This is likely to be low, and may be mitigated by careful siting. Support will be contingent on approvals via the planning system.

	Theme 3 SEA Objective 3	**Poss**	**Low**	Renewable energy schemes may have local effects on biodiversity. Careful siting, avoiding sensitive sites and incorporating biodiversity management schemes will mitigate the effects. In some cases, AA and/or EIA may apply. The planning system will screen out inappropriate proposals.
	Theme 3 SEA Objective 5	**Unl**	**Low**	Depending on the scheme, there may be a small effect on hydrology. There will be a need for careful siting, and support will depend on planning policy-based approvals. In some cases, EIA will indicate mitigation measures.

5.3 Conclusion

5.3.1 Overall, we have identified potentially negative effects in a minority of 20 of the 117 cases (relating to five of the nine themes). Close attention will be needed in developing the final programme to ensuring that these potential negative effects are considered further.

6 ALTERNATIVES

6.1 Selection and discussion of alternatives to the proposed programme

6.1.1 The SEA Directive requires a discussion of reasonable alternatives to the proposed Programme, and why they are not considered to be the best option. The Directive does not specify what is 'reasonable' but does state (in paragraph 5.12) that a discussion of alternatives should include *'...the likely evolution of the current state of the environment without the implementation of the alternative'.* The Directive does not specify whether 'alternatives' means alternative programmes, or different alternatives *within* the proposed Programme.

6.1.2 The purpose of analysing alternatives is to determine whether the proposal offers the optimal option in terms of sustainable development. The priorities and themes are not prioritised in any way, since the underlying rationale is that they are mutually reinforcing and therefore equally critical for achieving the overall programme objectives.

6.1.3 It might be possible to consider a variety of scenarios, such as an 'economic growth first' scenario as opposed to, say an 'environment first' or a 'food security first' scenario, as is common in many policy forecasting studies, but that would be inappropriate, since the EU and the Welsh Government have both indicated that the scenario they seek is a 'sustainable development' scenario in which social, environmental and economic priorities are balanced. There is thus no definitive 'first', since it is not the intention to seek 'trade-offs'.

6.1.4 Assuming this, there are a number of constraints in terms of alternative programmes, including:

- Time - the programme is subject to a seven year timescale. Whilst it may be possible to manage the pace of proposals within this time period, it is likely that most will not be realised within, say the first two years. It is therefore not reasonable to discuss timescales beyond the remaining five year window.

- Funding - this has yet to be finalised and allocated. Although negotiations have yet to be completed, the indications at the time of this report are that the budget is likely to be reduced, perhaps significantly[94,95] It would therefore not be reasonable to discuss alternatives in terms of any likely increase in funding.

[94] *http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-21377378, accessed 08/02/2013*

[95] *http://wales.gov.uk/newsroom/businessandeconomy/2013/130125eu/?lag=en&skip=1&lang=en, accessed 08/02/2013*

- Deployment of funds - discussion of alternatives on this is constrained by size of the compulsory spending element, which is 50%. Any deployment of the 50% flexible element over seven years is likely to be relatively limited in its effects.

- Policy - it would not be reasonable to consider alternatives that are not consistent with EU, UK and Wales policies.

6.1.5 It is worth considering a continuation of the previous programme as an alternative. Whilst there are broad similarities - the promotion of sustainable businesses, ICT, renewables and infrastructure for ease of access and connectivity, there is a significant emphasis in the proposed programme on climate change management and low-carbon living. There is less emphasis on environmentally-led programmes (such as flood defence) unless they are integral to business growth. There is also a marine renewables component in the proposed programme which was not highlighted in the 2007-13 programme, although it is known that research into marine-based renewable energy was funded under the current (2007-13) programme.

6.1.6 It is a requirement to consider what might be the state of the environment without programme implementation, and this 'do nothing' option is therefore one of the alternatives selected.

6.1.7 Table 7 therefore considers the likely effect on the SEA objectives of each of the options:

1 Do nothing
2 Continue the previous programme
3 Implement the proposed programme.

The results of the analysis are considered in Section 7 below.

6.1.8 It should be noted that the scoring for option 2 was taken directly from the 2006 SEA. The criteria used for that assessment differ from the criteria used in this one, and the basis for scoring may therefore have been different. Whilst most of the objectives in this SEA can be linked to those of the 2006 SEA, they do not necessarily correspond directly, in which case the score used is a 'best guess' based on a reading of the 2006 SEA.

Table 7: Options assessment

SEA Objective	1	2	3	Comment
1. Protect places, landscapes and buildings of historic, cultural and archaeological value	×?	✓?	O?	Opportunities for enhancement of historic sites and buildings through enhanced funding and advice on design.
2. Protect and enhance landscapes, seascapes, townscapes and the countryside	×	✓?	O?	Opportunities for enhancement of historic sites and buildings through enhanced funding and advice on design.
3. Protect and enhance biodiversity	×?	✓?	O?	Without funding and promotion, it is possible that the current programme will be less effective than the previous programme. Option 1 will result in continued pressures. Possibility of funding linked to RDP?
4. Protect and improve the region's water quality	×	✓?	O	There is a need to focus on water quality to remediate current challenges. Doing nothing would result in continued reductions in quality. No evidence that the previous programmes have addressed this adequately. Link to RDP funding?
5. Protect the water resource and ensure its sustainable use	×?	✓?	✓O	Whilst the Programme is limited in how far it can address this objective, appropriate design and advice will have some positive effect.
6. Guard against land contamination, encourage reuse of existing buildings and of previously developed land of low ecological quality	×	?	✓	Significant opportunity to promote this objective via targeted funding and CCT guidance; careful project selection.

7. Minimise the requirement for energy generation use, promote efficient energy use and increase the use of energy from renewable resources	×?	×✓?	✓✓	Significant opportunity to contribute to this objective. The priority to promote a low carbon economy is a key element.
8. Minimise waste increase re-use, recycling and recovery rates	×	✓?	✓?	Whilst this is a matter of social behaviour, the programme can provide opportunities to promote this objective through targeted funding/CCTs
9. Minimise the need to travel; provide alternatives to car use	×	?	×✓?	Appropriate selection of schemes to avoid increased car use and to promote alternatives. The programme is limited in influencing societal behaviour
10 Limit and adapt to climate change	×?	×✓?	✓✓	The priority to promote a low carbon economy specifically aims to address this, although the contribution it will make is limited. Depends on selection of projects.
11. Protect and improve air quality	×?	✓?	✓?	The Programme aims to reduce emissions as far as possible. Enhanced funding will ensure that projects will minimise effects.
12. Improve physical and mental health and reduce health inequalities	×	✓?	✓O	There is an opportunity to address some of the well-being issues described. Improvements to air quality, building design and travel will promote this.
13. Improve public access to land	?	?	O	Not likely to be a significant factor.

7 ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME

7.1 Summary of findings

7.1.1 The purpose of the Programme is to promote sustainable economic development, by which is meant economic development that does not compromise environmental or social priorities. In trying to ensure an appropriate balance, it is inevitable that some tensions will arise, and the Programme will need to carefully target its priorities to optimise economic opportunities and at the same time to optimise environmental and social benefits.

7.1.2 The alternatives considered above are based on a number of unknowns and assumptions, but the conclusion is that the proposed programme provides an opportunity to deliver significant environmental benefits, provided that funding is carefully considered and goes for maximum benefit not just to the economy but seeks environmental and social positive outcomes as well.

7.1.3 It should be noted that economic growth can lead to an increase in energy and material use, and potentially waste. The issue is therefore a management one rather than one of principle. However, if the envisaged interventions were not to occur at all, there would be greater uncertainty about the environmental outcomes. The Programme aims to address two of the three key indicators of Wales' ecological footprint, namely household energy demand and travel.

7.1.4 There are some potential risks, and some of the effects, both positive and negative, may not become immediately apparent. Some effects may be immediate, direct and positive, such as supporting projects that will ameliorate air pollution or minimise the demand for energy. Others may be less immediate, indirect and negative, and may include the transportation of marine-borne organisms on the hulls of vessels into new sites as a result of port development, or the impacts of demand for expansion of successful operations on sensitive sites.

7.1.5 There is considerable convergence between the themes promoted by the proposed Programme and those promoted by the Welsh Government's own programmes, based as they are on furthering sustainable development. Without the programme it is arguable that significant and urgent interventions would not take place, and some of these aim to address the Welsh Government's targets to reduce carbon emissions, to improve air quality and to reduce Wales' ecological footprint.

7.1.6 In conclusion, the proposed Programme offers an opportunity to promote positive effects on the environment, particularly on energy conservation, carbon reduction, waste management, re-use of redundant land and local health and well-being issues.

7.1.6 The environmental sustainability Cross-Cutting Themes reflect the environmental objectives of the 2007-13 Operational Programme. Since the objectives and the interventions of the proposed Programme are different in certain aspects, the scope of the guidance on CCTs may need to be revisited and revised, as will the criteria and indicators for monitoring the environmental effects of the proposed Programme (see section 8).

8 MONITORING

8.1.1 The SEA Guidance defines significant effects as positive, adverse, foreseen and unforeseen. The methods and scope for gathering information either directly or indirectly are not defined. There is no requirement, for instance, to aggregate or collate potentially relevant data from other monitoring sources under other laws or programmes[96].

8.1.2 There are three key challenges related to monitoring the environmental effects of the Programme. Firstly, the data is dispersed across a number of statutory and non-statutory bodies. The bringing together of three statutory bodies into Natural Resources Wales will facilitate the centralising of a significant amount of environmental data related to the Programme's implementation. Nonetheless, it would be helpful for WEFO to ensure some co-ordination between collating the data needed to address the Programme's objectives and that needed to address the environmental objectives in this report.

8.1.3 The second issue is that it in many cases environmental effects may be impossible to attribute solely to the Programme. The Welsh Government has a legal duty to promote sustainable development, and its Programme for Government is based on sustainable development principles. A wide range of parallel actions are likely to deliver on these objectives. It is impossible at this level to determine the synergies and tensions between the Programme and other government interventions that might determine particular environmental outcomes.

8.1.4 For example, whilst it is possible to calculate an output, such as the reduction in emissions from a particular sponsored project, the overall *outcome* in terms of a reduction in emissions in a particular area is likely to be influenced by a number of other factors. This makes it difficult to report genuine environmental gains (or losses) in a way that can be meaningfully attributed to the Programme.

8.1.5 The third challenge is a logistical one. Different measures are needed for different environmental targets, and they often require different measurement timescales incorporating different skills in capturing and analysing data. The costs entailed are significant, and therefore adequate monitoring may be subject to economic constraints.

[96] *(COWI/AS Denmark 2009 p133).*

8.1.6 Monitoring, and especially programme evaluation, should therefore be approached with these challenges in mind.

8.1.2 Table 8 summarises the key monitoring bodies for the SEA objectives identified above. WEFO itself will monitor a number of outputs and outcomes related to the objectives, as indicated. University departments are also commissioned to carry out monitoring on behalf of the agencies. Organisations such as the Health and Safety Executive are responsible for monitoring workplace safety issues. The Forestry Commission monitors the state of Wales' woodlands and the condition of tree species, including threats from diseases. Local councils undertake monitoring of the effects of their spatial planning policies as required by the Planning and Compensation Act 2004, as well as a number of environmental and health topics including air quality and waste.

Table 8: Monitoring

SEA Objectives	Monitoring implications
1. Protect places, landscapes and buildings of historic, cultural and archaeological value	Cadw - monitors condition of historic buildings; archaeological trusts - monitor condition of sites; Royal Commission on Historic and Ancient Monuments - maintains database
2. Protect and enhance landscapes, seascapes, townscapes and the countryside	Local planning authorities - monitor building standards; conservation areas; development management; maintain EIA databases
3. Protect and enhance biodiversity	Countryside Council for Wales/NRW monitor condition of sensitive sites/species; Wildlife NGOs monitor condition of BAP species and habitats; maintain databases; Appropriate Assessment case studies
4. Protect and improve the region's water quality	Environment Agency (EA) monitors ecological and chemical condition of river systems; bathing water quality; maintains databases. Water companies monitor chemical quality.
5. Protect the water resource and ensure its sustainable use	Water companies/EA monitor availability of water; losses. Flood risk databases.
6. Guard against land contamination, encourage reuse of existing buildings and of previously developed land of low ecological quality	Local planning authorities monitor land availability including 'brownfield land' and maintain databases
7. Minimise the requirement for energy generation use, promote efficient energy use and increase the use of energy from renewable resources	WEFO - Additional capacity of renewable energy production WEFO - Number of energy users connected to smart grids WEFO - Number of households with improved energy consumption classification WEFO - Decrease of primary energy consumption of public buildings WEFO - Energy saved
8. Minimise waste increase re-use, recycling and recovery rates	Local authorities monitor municipal waste including recycled waste
9. Minimise the need to travel; provide alternatives to car use	WEFO - Public transport services created or improved WEFO - Total length of new railway line

	(including TEN-T) WEFO - Total length of reconstructed or upgraded railway line (including TEN-T) WEFO - Additional households with broadband access of at least 30 Mbps
10 Limit and adapt to climate change	WEFO - Estimated decrease in GHG
11. Protect and improve air quality	EA and local authorities issue permits and monitor air quality; maintain databases
12. Improve physical and mental health and reduce health inequalities	The Public Health Observatory monitors health and wellbeing issues and maintains databases
13. Improve public access to land	WEFO - Footpath or cycleway created or reconstructed

8.1.3 The analysis above suggests some relevant data are likely to be available in respect of each of the environmental objectives but that further work may be needed to refine these before programme implementation.

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