# A development strategy for the Hiraethog area

October 2014

# Acknowledgements

We would like to offer our thanks to all those interviewed as part of the development of this strategy who gave their time so willingly and answered our questions in such detail. This report would not have been possible without their contributions.

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# Synopsis

## Introduction

This report sets out a development strategy for the economic and community regeneration of Hiraethog, a large rural, upland area straddling the borders of Conwy and Denbighshire in North Wales.

The development of the strategy was commissioned by Cadwyn Clwyd and the Conwy Rural Local Action Group, acting on behalf of a consortium of local organisations. It was funded by the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013 which is financed by the Welsh Government and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) with additional funding being provided by Conwy County Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council. The work was undertaken by the research and evaluation company Wavehill during July, August and September 2014.

## Needs of the area: SWOT analysis

The needs of the area were assessed using a SWOT analysis framework, the key findings of which are noted in the table below. The analysis drew upon a review of the statistics for the area (Section 2), previous research and with interviews with 79 local stakeholders from the area (Section 3).

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| **Things over which the strategy / action plan can have some influence** ||
| <u>A place to live</u><br>• A safe place<br>• Community spirit / participation<br>• Welsh language<br>• Lifestyle / peace and tranquillity<br>• Location / transport links<br><br><u>Economy</u><br>• Varied economy (for a rural area)<br>• A few major / key employers<br>• Quality tourism product<br>• Strong agricultural sector<br><br><u>Environment & landscape</u><br>• Quality natural environment<br>• Leisure activities - a variety of potential uses (walking, cycling, fishing, etc.)<br><br><u>Culture & heritage</u><br>• High proportion of Welsh speakers / Welsh identity | <u>A place to live</u><br>• Rurality – distance from key services and poor transport infrastructure (affecting some groups in particular)<br>• Lack of affordable housing<br>• General high cost of living<br>• Poor digital infrastructure<br><br><u>Economy</u><br>• Dependency on agriculture, tourism and public sector<br>• Lack of clear identity (branding)<br><br><u>Environment & landscape</u><br>• Lack of access to / utilisation<br><br><u>Culture & heritage</u><br>• Cultural divides (impact on community participation) |
| Opportunities | Threats |
| **Things that the strategy / action-plan may seek to mitigate or take advantage of** ||
| <u>A place to live</u><br>• Availability of support that will 'empower' the local community<br><br><u>Economy</u><br>• Availability of funding for business collaboration<br>• Availability of funding for farm diversification<br><br><u>Environment & landscape</u><br>• Increasing demand for outdoor pursuits<br>• Potential to produce renewable energy<br><br><u>Culture & heritage</u><br>• Increasing interest in / awareness of culture and heritage as tourism products | <u>A place to live</u><br>• Aging population<br>• Public sector cuts<br>• Housing shortage<br><br><u>Economy</u><br>• Public sector cuts<br>• Decline in town centre retail<br><br><u>Environment & landscape</u><br>• Wind-farms<br><br><u>Culture & heritage</u><br>• Declining number of Welsh speakers |

## Aim & objectives

A strategy is basically a high level plan which has been devised to achieve a specified goal. In this instance, the strategy has three levels as described below:

- The **aim** is the ultimate ambition of the strategy (sometimes called a vision); this is what we are seeking to achieve – the impact that we want to have;
- The **objectives** sit beneath the vision and describe what needs to be achieved in order to achieve the vision;
- The **actions** then describe what will be done in order that each of those aims are achieved – the activities that will be undertaken.

```
        Aim

      Objectives

       Actions
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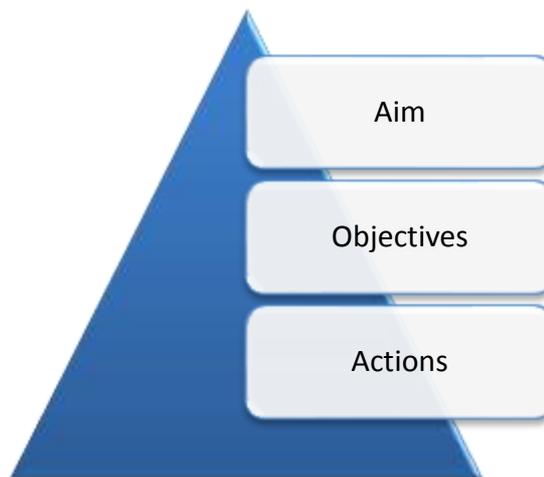
The **aim** of this strategy is to:

**Sustain and developed Hiraethog as a place where people want to and are able to live, work and play utilising and sustaining the areas unique natural environment, landscape, heritage and culture.**

The **objectives** of the strategy are:

| Objective 1 | To sustain and develop Hiraethog as a place where people want to and are able to live |
| --- | --- |
| Objective 2 | To sustain, develop and increase the value of Hiraethog as a place where economic activity takes place |
| Objective 3 | To utilise, sustain and develop the high quality natural environment and landscape of the area |
| Objective 4 | To sustain and utilise the culture and heritage of the Hiraethog area |
| Objective 5 | To develop Hiraethog as a place where people undertake leisure and recreational activities |

This is an 'integrated strategy'. Each of the objectives overlap and are dependent to a large extent on the other. For example, developing Hiraethog as a location where leisure and recreational activities is a critical part of sustaining the area as a place where economic activity takes place. And, sustaining and developing the high quality natural environment is critical if Hiraethog is to develop as a location where recreational activities can take place. These objectives should not, therefore, be seen in isolation from each other – *they are mutually supportive and all need to be achieved for this strategy to be successful*.

## Actions

Fourteen strategic actions (20 years) are proposed to implement this strategy. Each of these is then broken down into more specific and shorter term (10 years) actions as summarised in the table that follows. In each instance, the shorter term actions are designed to deliver the longer term actions although it is anticipated that further actions will be added as the implementation of the strategy progresses.

With a view to illustrating the 'logic' within the strategy (i.e. the links between actions and objectives), the final column notes the objective which the proposed actions will contribute towards achieving. In keeping with the integrated approach described above, in most instances, each action will contribute towards achieving a number of the objectives.

| Strategic actions (20 years) | Shorter term actions (10 years) | | Objective to be achieved |
|---|---|---|---|
| SA1. Encourage and maintain community spirit & engagement in the area. | ST1. | Establish a Hiraethog action group / partnership | OB1: A place where people can and want to live |
| | ST2. | Facilitate the development of and then fund 'community level' projects that contribute to achieving the objectives of this strategy | OB4: A place where the Culture & Heritage are sustained and utilised |
| | ST3. | Facilitate the development of and then fund small-scale activities designed to encourage community participation | |
| SA2. Encourage and support community transport / access to key services | ST4. | Work with local retailers and suppliers to develop a 'home delivery' scheme for the area | OB1: A place where people can and want to live |
| | ST5. | Develop a community transport scheme targeted at those in most need in the area | |
| SA3. Improve the standard of local housing and property | ST6. | Provide advice and financial support to improve the standard of local housing and other property including actions to improve energy efficiency | OB1: A place where people can and want to live |
| SA4. Increase the affordability of local housing for local young people | ST7. | Explore the potential for a 'help to buy' scheme for local young people | OB1: A place where people can and want to live |
| SA5. Enable people to work from home | ST8. | Explore the potential for a 'help to work from home' scheme for the area | OB1: A place where people can and want to live <br> OB2: A place where people are economically active |
| SA6. Allow access to and make best possible use of digital technology | ST9. <br> ST10. | Address broadband and mobile phone (3G and 4G) black spots <br> Consultation on training and grants, to purchase technology for use of latest technology in homes and businesses in the area (business and domestic) | OB1: A place where people can and want to live <br> OB2: A place where people are economically active |
| SA7. Support and develop the agriculture and food sector in the area | ST11. | Establish an agri-food cluster group for businesses based in or who are active in the area and then support that cluster | OB2: A place where people are economically active |
| | ST12. | Encourage farms in the area to access the support available to them via the RDP including support for farm diversification | |
| | ST13. | Encourage and support the development of links between the area agri-food and tourism businesses | |

| Strategic actions (20 years) | Shorter term actions (10 years) | | Objective to be achieved |
|---|---|---|---|
| SA8. Support and develop the local tourism / recreation sector | ST14. | Develop a 'destination management' plan for the area (within any broader plans for Conwy, Denbighshire and the region) | OB2: A place where people are economically active |
| | ST15. | Establish a tourism / recreation cluster group for businesses based in or who are active in the area and then support that cluster | OB5: A place where people spend their leisure time |
| | ST16. | Business advice and support for the cluster and individual businesses | |
| | ST17. | Encourage and support the development of links between the area agri-food and tourism businesses | |
| SA9. Develop and maintain anchor businesses / employers | ST18. | Develop and maintain a relationship with anchor businesses / employers | OB2: A place where people are economically active |
| SA10. Develop the next generation of local businesses | ST19. | Work with local schools / colleges to help local young people explore and test business opportunities in the local area | OB2: A place where people are economically active |
| | ST20. | Bursaries for local young people | |
| SA11. Maintain and improve the quality of the area's natural environment, landscape and biodiversity | ST21. | Encourage local farmers to engage with the Glastir scheme | OB3: A place where the landscape & environment are sustained and utilised |
| | ST22. | Fund environment, landscape and biodiversity activities that cannot be supported by Glastir | |
| SA12. Develop and promote Hiraethog as an area known for the ecosystem services that it provides | ST23. | Map out in detail opportunities to maintain / enhance ecosystem services provided in the area | OB3: A place where the landscape & environment are sustained and utilised |
| | ST24. | Develop and then support the implementation of projects designed to enhance the ecosystem services provided by the area | |
| SA13. Enable people to access the area's natural environment and landscape | ST25. | Map and review the quality of current 'access points' in the area (including walks, etc.) | OB5: A place where people spend their leisure time |
| | ST26. | Fund the development of current and new access points in consultation with the tourism / recreation business cluster group | |
| SA14. Maintain and improve the quality of the area's built environment (including heritage) | ST27. | Work with the local community to identify potential improvements to the built environment | OB4: A place where the culture & heritage are sustained and utilised |
| | ST28. | Fund works to implement those improvements identified | |

| Strategic actions (20 years) | Shorter term actions (10 years) | | Objective to be achieved |
|---|---|---|---|
| SA15.   Utilise (in an appropriate way) the opportunities presented to generate renewable energy in the area | ST29. | Map out renewable energy opportunities in Hiraethog, especially community based opportunities | OB1: A place where people can and want to live |
| | ST30. | Utilise the support available via the European funding to support the implementation of those appropriate opportunities identified | OB3: A place where the landscape & environment are sustained and utilised |

## Delivering the strategy

Any strategy or action-plan is only as effective as its delivery. As noted above, it is proposed that a local group / partnership be established in order to oversee and lead the implantation of this strategy (ref. SA1, ST1); this should be the first action to be implemented. It is also proposed that 'cluster groups' be established for the agri-food sectors / supply chain (SA6, ST10) and tourism / recreation sector (SA7, ST13) which could 'lead' activities in those sub-sectors, as sub groups of the main group.

It is however anticipated that those groups, together with the actions within the strategy will need to be supported and facilitated. This is a role which has been identified for the LEADER Local Action Groups in Conwy and Denbighshire to undertake on a joint basis.

## Investing funding to generate an income stream

The development of this strategy has been based on assessing needs in the Hiraethog area and potential actions that could be undertaken to address those needs. In the background however has been the prospect of substantial funding being made available by the development of a wind-farm in the local area. This funding could obviously be used to fund the actions that are set out in this strategy. However, there is also the option of investing at least some of the funding that is provided with a view to generating an on-going income stream to fund community development activities in Hiraethog over the longer-term.

# 1.  Introduction

This document sets out a development strategy for the economic and community regeneration of Hiraethog, a large rural, upland area straddling the borders of Conwy and Denbighshire in North Wales.

Developing a strategy involves the following stages:

a) Analysing the current situation and making a diagnosis - identifying the rationale for the strategy and the 'needs' to be addressed;
b) Formulating the aims and objectives – what we want the strategy to achieve; and
c) Developing the interventions or actions that will be undertaken to achieve those aims and objectives.

This report covers all three of those stages. The remainder of the document is set out as follows:

- Section 2 uses statistics to describe the current situation in the Hiraethog area. There is also a review of the landscape and biodiversity profile of the area;
- Section 3 draws upon the interviews with 79 stakeholders and desk research undertaken as part of the research for this strategy to describe the needs of the area using SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats);
- Section 4 considers the strategic context within which the strategy has been developed with a focus on the issues being identified by other strategies and policies which cover the Hiraethog area;
- Section 5 then sets out the proposed strategy and action plan; and
- Finally, Section 6 provides an outline monitoring and evaluation framework for the strategy.

The development of the strategy was commissioned by Cadwyn Clwyd and the Conwy Rural Local Action Group, acting on behalf of a consortium of local organisations. It was funded by the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013 which is financed by the Welsh Government and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) with match-funding being provided by Conwy County Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council. The work was undertaken by the research and evaluation company Wavehill during July, August and September 2014.

# 2.  The area and the current situation

**Key points**

- The population of Hiraethog is approximately 17,500.
- The age structure is not dissimilar to that for the region as a whole although a slightly higher proportion are aged 45 to 64.
- As in the region as a whole, the population has aged since 2001.
- A higher proportion of the Hiraethog population understands, speaks or can write in Welsh compared to the region as a whole.
- Economic inactivity and unemployment is comparatively low and is clustered in the 'Denbigh Upper/Henllan' ward.
- A higher proportion of the population are economically active compared to the region as a whole.
- The most common occupation by sector of residents of the area is 'education' (16%) and by level of occupation is 'skilled trades occupations' (23%).
- A higher proportion of those living in Hiraethog are self-employed.
- The area cannot generally be considered as being deprived although it is comparatively deprived when looking specifically at access to services.
- Only 13% of households in the area have no access to a car or van compared to 20% or above in the region as a whole, demonstrating the dependence in the area on private transport.
- The distance travelled to work is on average far higher for those living in Hiraethog and a far higher proportion of residents work from home.
- A higher proportion of residents in Hiraethog describe themselves as being in very good health compared to the region and Wales as a whole.
- The landscape and biodiversity review identifies Hiraethog as an area which is strong in terms of the 'ecosystem services' that it provides.

## 2.1.  Overview

Hiraethog is an upland region in Conwy and Denbighshire in North Wales. The main roads that pass through the region are the A5 and the A494. It includes the large reservoirs Llyn Brenig and Llyn Alwen, and the Clocaenog Forest. Its highest point is Mwdwl-eithin, at 532 metres (1,745 ft) above sea level, making it higher than Exmoor. Moel Seisiog is another 468m (1535ft) summit, which is also the source of the River Elwy. On its western edge, overlooking the Conwy Valley lays the Moel Maelogan wind farm. Three other summits reach over 500 metres - Craig Bron-banog (502 metres),Gorsedd Bran (518 metres), and Foel Goch (519 metres). Hiraethog is surrounded by small urban settlements which include Denbigh, Corwen, Ruthin, Llanrwst and Betws y Coed which act as service centres for the area.

The Visit Hiraethog website[1] describes the area as follows:

*In Hiraethog you can have the best of both worlds and be as lazy or as active as you like – either way, you'll find the wild, ancient landscape and the Hiraethog villages an inspiring location to recharge weary batteries…*

*Explore the stunning countryside and discover peaceful villages with fascinating tales to tell, sample the local Welsh hospitality in a country pub or indulge in a Welsh cream tea, maybe spot some wildlife on the moors or in Clocaenog Forest or even try some fly fishing at Llyn Aled…*

*Or if it's something more active you're looking for, how about sailing, windsurfing, canoeing or getting on your bike and following one of the many cycle trails around Llyn Brenig; or downhill racing at Foel Gasnach - one of the most challenging mountain biking trails around; walking along the Alwen Trail or following one of the routes starting from the Llyn Brenig Visitor Centre; or even karting at Glan y Gors? The choice is wide and all yours.*

For the purpose of the analysis in this section, the area is defined as covering the following wards (as shown in the map to the right). In Denbighshire, the electoral wards of Efenechtyd, Llanrhaeadr yng Nghinmeirch, Upper Denbigh, Corwen and Llanfair DC/Gwyddelwern, and in Conwy the electoral wards of Llansannan, Uwchaled, Llangernyw, and Uwch Conwy.

The Hiraethog area possesses and is surrounded by small urban settlements which include Denbigh, Corwen, Ruthin, Llanrwst and Betws y Coed which act as service centres for the Hiraethog area.



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[1] www.hiraethog.org.uk

## 2.2. Socio economic profile

### 2.2.1. Demography

The 2011 Census shows that the population in Hiraethog is approximately 17,483; with an average population density of 0.4 persons per hectare. When compared with the 2001 Census we can see that the population was 17,373 and showing the Hiraethog population has remained relatively stable over the past decade.

The population is 50.7% males and 49.3% females. Figure 2.1 below illustrates the age breakdown of the population as identified by the 2011 Census; most noticeably, Hiraethog has a higher proportion of people aged between 45 and 64 and lower aged over 75 compared to Conwy as a whole, Denbighshire, North Wales and Wales.

*Figure 2.1: Age structure of all usual residents, 2011 Census*
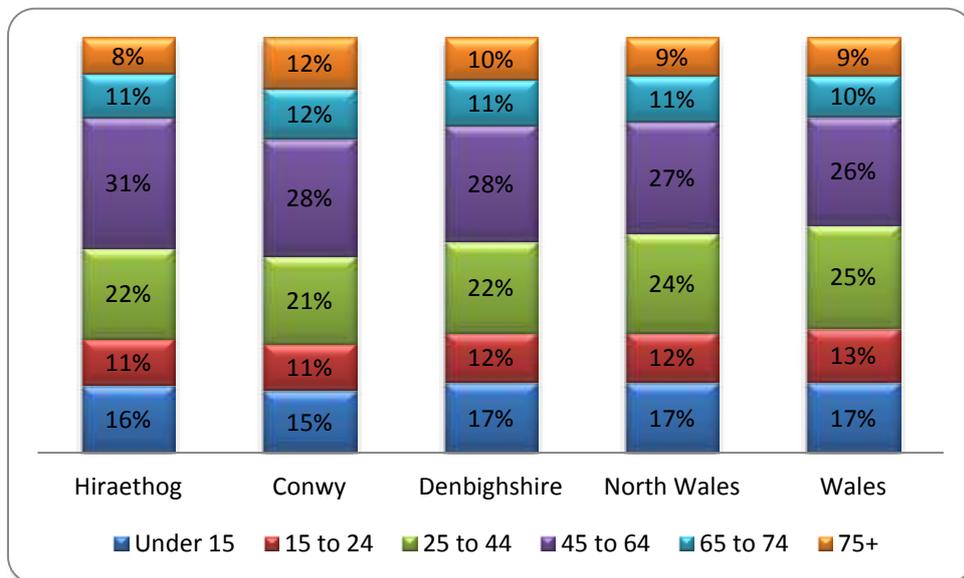


N= Hiraethog 17,483, Conwy 115,228, Denbighshire 93,734, North Wales 687,937, Wales 3,063,456

Comparing the age profile of the Hiraethog between the 2001 and 2011 Census shows that the population has aged in the ten years.

*Figure 2.2: Age profile of Hiraethog between 2001 and 2011[2]*
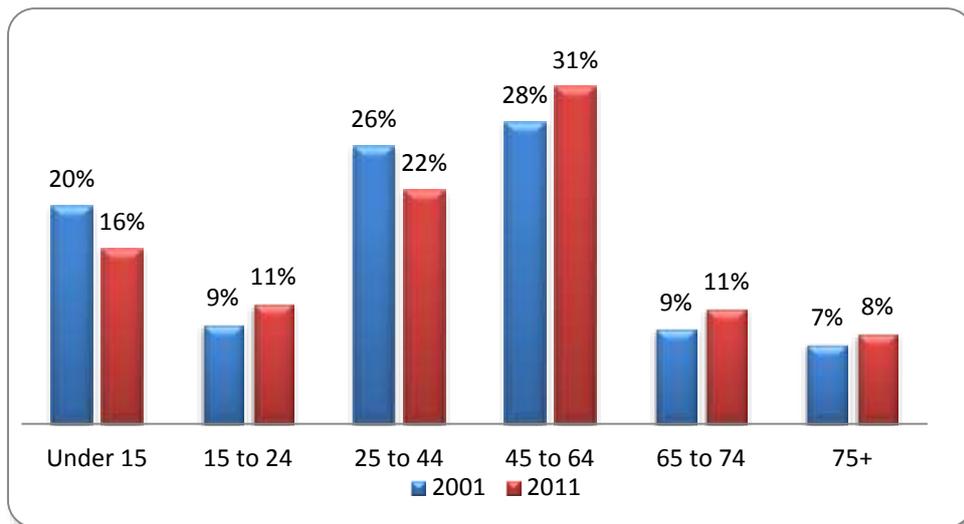


N = 2001 - 17,373, 2011 - 17,483

There is a slightly higher proportion of people of white ethnicity in Hiraethog (99%) compared to Wales more widely (96%)[3].

## 2.2.2. Welsh language profile

The proportion of the population[4] with one or more skill in Welsh in Hiraethog is substantially higher at 62.6%, compared to Conwy (39.4%), Denbighshire (35.4%), North Wales (43.3%) and Wales (26.7%). This suggests that the area could be described as a 'stronghold' for the language in the region.

*Figure 2.3: the proportion of the population in each area with one or more skills in Welsh, age three and above, 2011 Census*
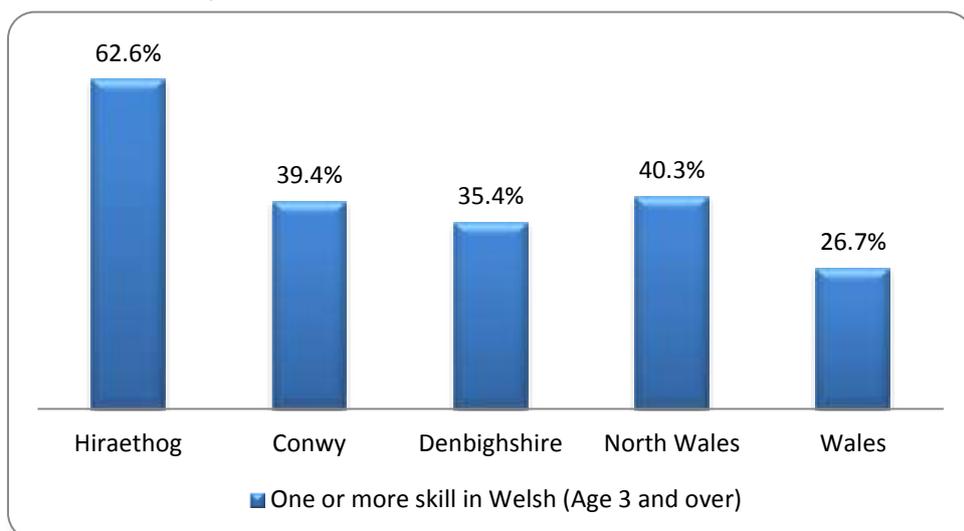


*N (3+ years) = Hiraethog 16,947, Conwy 111,724, Denbighshire 90,527, North Wales 663,808, Wales 2,955,841*

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[2] Census data, 2001, 2011

[3] 2011 Census

[4] Ibid

The table below shows the proportion within each of the rural wards that have at least one skill in Welsh[5]. The map that follows shows the proportion spatially; the higher proportion of Welsh speakers in the West of the area is clear.

*Table 2.1: Proportion of residents in the Hiraethog area aged over three years, with one or more skills in Welsh, 2011 Census*

|  | One or more skills in Welsh age 3 and over |
|---|---|
| Uwchaled | 76.4% |
| Uwch Conwy | 69.5% |
| Llansannan | 70.4% |
| Llanrhaeadr-yng-Nghinmeirch | 59.0% |
| Llangernyw | 72.0% |
| Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd/Gwyddelwern | 59.4% |
| Efenechtyd | 63.3% |
| Denbigh Upper/Henllan | 48.6% |
| Corwen | 62.1% |

*Map 2.1: The proportion of the population, aged over three years, with one or more skill in the Welsh language*



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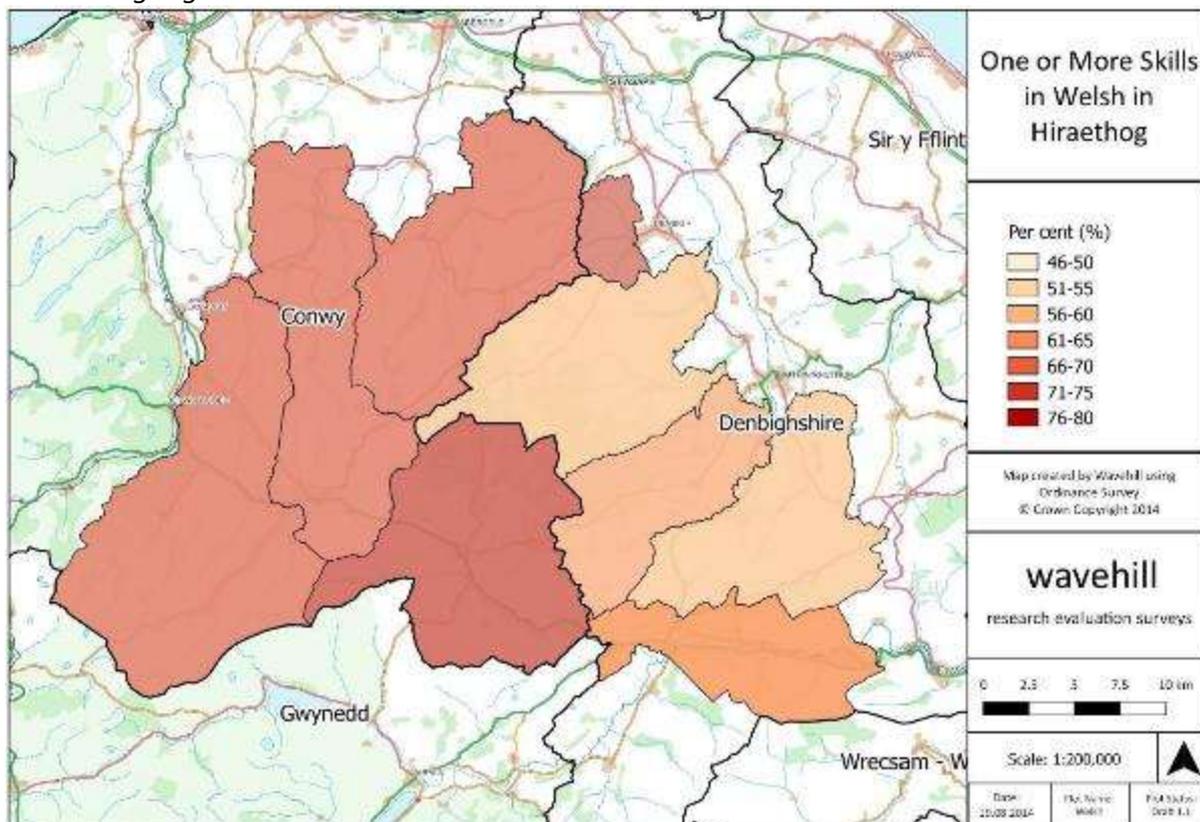
[5] 2011 Census

## 2.2.3. Economic activity and occupation

The 2011 Census[6] identified that 9,304 residents in the Hiraethog (aged 16-74) area were economically active, 72% of the population. This is a higher proportion than seen for Wales (66%). Table 2.2 shows the proportion of employees by sector. There are a much higher proportion of people employed in construction[7] than the Welsh average of 4%. Also, there is a higher proportion employed in the manufacturing sector in Hiraethog compared to Conwy and Denbighshire although the percentage is lower than for North Wales as a whole.

Table 2.2 then breaks the proportion of employees down by sector for the individual wards in Hiraethog. It shows that there are substantial differences in the proportion of employees in each ward although the smaller number of residents per ward does need to be taken into account. For example, agriculture, forestry and fishing are more prominent in some wards with manufacturing being particularly high in Corwen due to the presence of one major employer within that ward.

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[6] Census data due is used here due to reliability, whereas Annual Population Survey data uses administrative data and survey data and therefore is not as robust as the Census.
[7] This classification includes 'construction of buildings', 'civil engineering' and 'specialised construction activities'.

*Table 2.2: Breakdown of Employees by Sector by Area, 2011 Census*

| Sector 2007 SIC Codes[8] | Hiraethog | Conwy | Denbighshire | North Wales | Wales |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A : Agriculture, forestry and fishing | 1% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 1% |
| B : Mining and quarrying | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| C : Manufacturing | 10% | 3% | 8% | 15% | 11% |
| D : Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply | 1% | 0% | 0% | 1% | 1% |
| E : Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities | 2% | 0% | 0% | 1% | 1% |
| F : Construction | 12% | 5% | 5% | 5% | 4% |
| G : Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles | 14% | 19% | 14% | 16% | 16% |
| H : Transportation and storage | 5% | 3% | 3% | 4% | 3% |
| I : Accommodation and food service activities | 7% | 13% | 8% | 8% | 7% |
| J : Information and communication | 1% | 2% | 1% | 2% | 2% |
| K : Financial and insurance activities | 1% | 1% | 2% | 1% | 2% |
| L : Real estate activities | 1% | 1% | 2% | 1% | 1% |
| M : Professional, scientific and technical activities | 2% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 4% |
| N : Administrative and support service activities | 5% | 3% | 4% | 5% | 6% |
| O : Public administration and defence; compulsory social security | 4% | 7% | 8% | 6% | 8% |
| P : Education | 16% | 13% | 9% | 10% | 11% |
| Q : Human health and social work activities | 12% | 18% | 28% | 17% | 16% |
| R : Arts, entertainment and recreation | 2% | 4% | 2% | 2% | 3% |
| S : Other service activities | 4% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% |
| T : Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| U : Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Column Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

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[8] A breakdown of the SIC code hierarchy can be found here:
http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/HTMLDocs/SIC/ONS_SIC_hierarchy_view.html

*Table 2.3: Breakdown of Employees by Sector by Area, 2011 Census*

| | Llangernyw | Llansannan | Uwch Conwy | Uwchaled | Corwen | Denbigh Upper/Henllan | Efenechtyd | Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd/Gwyddelwern | Llanrhaeadr-yng-Nghinmeirch |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A Agriculture, forestry and fishing | 16% | 16% | 13% | 14% | 5% | 3% | 9% | 11% | 12% |
| B Mining and quarrying | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| C Manufacturing | 7% | 6% | 4% | 6% | 18% | 8% | 8% | 8% | 6% |
| D Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply | 1% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 1% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 1% |
| E Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 0% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| F Construction | 11% | 11% | 9% | 10% | 9% | 9% | 9% | 10% | 8% |
| G Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles | 11% | 9% | 11% | 11% | 12% | 14% | 10% | 10% | 12% |
| H Transport and storage | 3% | 2% | 2% | 6% | 4% | 4% | 3% | 4% | 3% |
| I Accommodation and food service activities | 7% | 5% | 8% | 6% | 5% | 6% | 4% | 7% | 4% |
| J Information and communication | 2% | 2% | 2% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 2% | 3% | 2% |
| K Financial and insurance activities | 1% | 1% | 2% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| L Real estate activities | 1% | 2% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 2% | 2% | 1% |
| M Professional, scientific and technical activities | 4% | 4% | 5% | 4% | 3% | 3% | 8% | 5% | 5% |
| N Administrative and support service activities | 2% | 3% | 4% | 3% | 5% | 4% | 3% | 4% | 3% |
| O Public administration and defence; compulsory social security | 5% | 6% | 7% | 6% | 6% | 6% | 6% | 5% | 7% |
| P Education | 13% | 13% | 14% | 15% | 10% | 11% | 11% | 12% | 14% |
| Q Human health and social work activities | 11% | 17% | 10% | 10% | 15% | 24% | 14% | 13% | 15% |
| R, S, T, U Other | 3% | 4% | 5% | 5% | 4% | 4% | 6% | 4% | 5% |

The 2011 Census looked at individual occupations by asking those aged 16-74 and in employment; about their occupation the week before the Census was undertaken. The breakdown of occupations across Hiraethog (see Table 2.4 below) shows that 23% were employed in 'skilled trades' occupations, compared to 14% for Conwy and 15% for Denbighshire more widely.

*Table 2.4: Breakdown of Occupation by Area, 2011 Census*

| Occupation | Hiraethog | Conwy | Denbighshire | North Wales | Wales |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Managers, directors and senior officials | 10% | 12% | 10% | 10% | 9% |
| 2. Professional occupations | 17% | 16% | 16% | 15% | 16% |
| 3. Associate professional and technical occupations | 9% | 10% | 10% | 10% | 11% |
| 4. Administrative and secretarial occupations | 8% | 10% | 10% | 10% | 11% |
| 5. Skilled trades occupations | 23% | 14% | 15% | 15% | 13% |
| 6. Caring, leisure and other service occupations | 11% | 12% | 13% | 11% | 11% |
| 7. Sales and customer service occupations | 4% | 9% | 8% | 8% | 9% |
| 8. Process plant and machine operatives | 7% | 6% | 7% | 9% | 8% |
| 9. Elementary occupations | 10% | 11% | 11% | 12% | 12% |

To look closer at occupation at ward level[9] shows that there is again variation across geographies at this level. For example 23% of people employed in Efenechtyd were employed in professional occupations compared to 12% Denbigh Upper/ Henllan and 18% of employees in Denbigh Upper/Henllan are employed in Elementary occupations, compared to 7% in Llansannan and Uwchaled.

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[9] Use figures with caution – "In order to protect against disclosure of personal information, records have been swapped between different geographic areas. Some counts will be affected, particularly small counts at the lowest geographies."

*Table 2.5: Breakdown of Occupation by Area, 2011 Census*

| | Llangernyw | Llansannan | Uwch Conwy | Uwchaled | Corwen | Denbigh Upper/Henllan | Efenechtyd | Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd/ Gwyddelwern | Llanrhaeadr-yng-Nghinmeirch |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Managers, directors and senior officials | 9% | 8% | 12% | 9% | 8% | 6% | 10% | 14% | 11% |
| 2. Professional occupations | 16% | 18% | 16% | 16% | 13% | 12% | 23% | 18% | 22% |
| 3. Associate professional and technical occupations | 8% | 9% | 10% | 9% | 9% | 8% | 12% | 8% | 10% |
| 4. Administrative and secretarial occupations | 7% | 9% | 7% | 10% | 7% | 6% | 11% | 8% | 8% |
| 5. Skilled trades occupations | 29% | 29% | 26% | 29% | 21% | 16% | 19% | 23% | 24% |
| 6. Caring, leisure and other service occupations | 10% | 11% | 10% | 10% | 13% | 19% | 8% | 9% | 9% |
| 7. Sales and customer service occupations | 5% | 3% | 5% | 2% | 5% | 7% | 4% | 4% | 3% |
| 8. Process plant and machine operatives | 7% | 6% | 6% | 8% | 12% | 7% | 6% | 7% | 5% |
| 9. Elementary occupations | 9% | 7% | 9% | 7% | 13% | 18% | 8% | 9% | 8% |

## 2.2.4. Full-time, part-time and self-employed working

As shown in the table that follows, Hiraethog has a lower proportion of employees who are economically active part time, and full time but a higher proportion of employees who are economically active self-employed. This suggests that self–employment is particularly important in the Hiraethog area.

*Figure 2.6: breakdown of economically active employees from 2011 Census*

|  | Part-time | Full-time | Self-employed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hiraethog | 21% | 50% | 29% |
| Conwy | 26% | 55% | 19% |
| Denbighshire | 24% | 58% | 18% |
| North Wales | 24% | 60% | 16% |
| Wales | 24% | 61% | 15% |

## 2.2.5. Economic inactivity

The economic inactivity rate[10] reported in the 2011 Census is lower in Hiraethog (28.0%) compared to Conwy (34.3%), Denbighshire (34.4%), North Wales (33.2%) and Wales (34.2%). Denbigh Upper/Henllan had the highest rate of economic inactivity at 36.4%, and Uwchaled had the lowest rate of economic inactivity (22.9%) suggesting that inactivity is, to an extent, clustered in certain areas.

*Table 2.7:  Area against Economic Inactivity Rate, 2011 Census*

| Area | Economic Inactivity Rate |
|---|---|
| Denbigh Upper/Henllan | 36.4% |
| Corwen | 31.9% |
| Llanrhaeadr-yng-Nghinmeirch | 27.3% |
| Llansannan | 25.9% |
| Efenechtyd | 25.7% |
| Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd/Gwyddelwern | 25.5% |
| Uwch Conwy | 24.1% |
| Llangernyw | 23.2% |
| Uwchaled | 22.9% |

[10] All usual residents aged 16 to 74

*Map 2.2: Proportion of economic inactivity in Hiraethog*
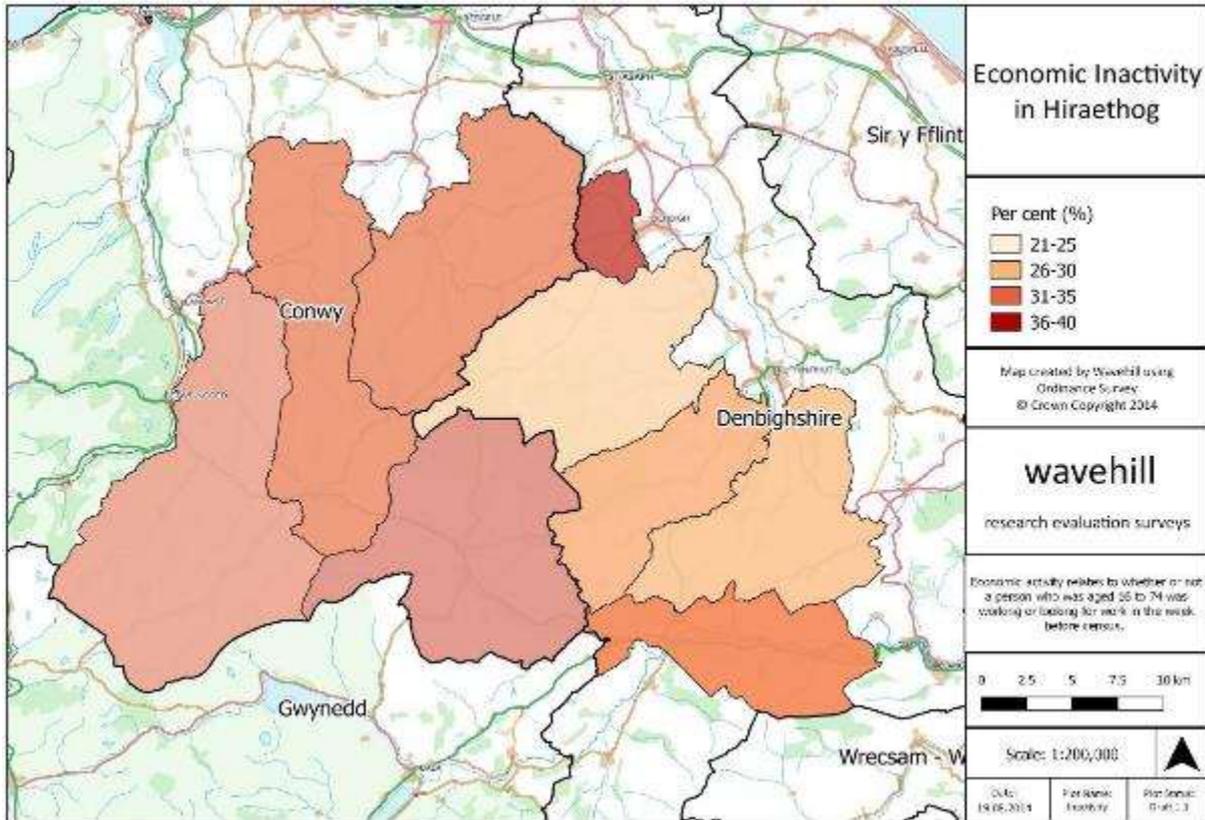


Looking closer at the economic inactivity data from the 2011 Census for Hiraethog, shows that the majority (56.1%) of those economically inactive were retired. This rate is slightly lower than Conwy (57.5%) but higher than Denbighshire (53.7%), North Wales (52.6%) and Wales (47.0%).

*Figure 2.4: Economically inactive breakdown for Hiraethog, 2011 Census*
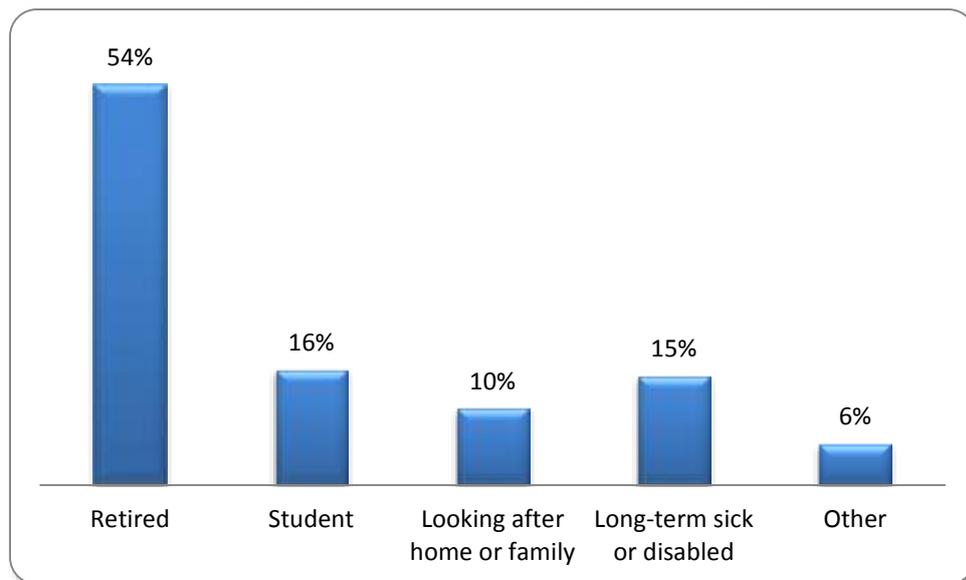
To break this down by ward shows that Llanrhaeadr-yng-Nghinmeirch has the highest proportion of retired individuals. A quarter of economically inactive individuals in Denbigh Upper / Henllan consider themselves to be long term sick or disabled.

*Table 2.8: Area against Economic Inactivity Rate from 2011 Census*

|  | Retired | Student | Looking after home or family | Long-term sick or disabled | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corwen | 55% | 15% | 10% | 15% | 6% |
| Denbigh Upper/Henllan | 39% | 15% | 13% | 25% | 7% |
| Efenechtyd | 61% | 19% | 7% | 9% | 4% |
| Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd/Gwyddelwern | 60% | 17% | 10% | 10% | 4% |
| Llangernyw | 58% | 17% | 9% | 10% | 6% |
| Llanrhaeadr-yng-Nghinmeirch | 65% | 12% | 10% | 7% | 6% |
| Llansannan | 54% | 17% | 8% | 17% | 4% |
| Uwch Conwy | 54% | 16% | 12% | 12% | 6% |
| Uwchaled | 58% | 15% | 11% | 12% | 5% |

## 2.2.6. Education

Residents in Hiraethog are generally better qualified than those in Conwy, Denbighshire, North Wales and Wales as a whole. As shown in the table below, Hiraethog has a lower proportion of residents aged 16 and over with no qualifications and a higher proportion of residents with a level four qualification and above.

*Table 2.9: Highest level of qualification by area from 2011 Census*

|  | Hiraethog | Conwy | Denbighshire | North Wales | Wales |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No qualifications | 22.5% | 25.6% | 25.4% | 24.7% | 25.9% |
| Level 1 qualifications | 13.5% | 13.1% | 14.0% | 13.6% | 13.3% |
| Level 2 qualifications | 16.9% | 16.1% | 16.8% | 16.5% | 15.7% |
| Apprenticeship | 3.3% | 3.9% | 3.8% | 4.2% | 3.9% |
| Level 3 qualifications | 11.5% | 11.3% | 11.4% | 12.2% | 12.3% |
| Level 4 and above | 28.1% | 25.5% | 24.2% | 24.4% | 24.5% |
| Other qualifications | 4.2% | 4.6% | 4.3% | 4.5% | 4.3% |

## 2.2.7.  Out of work benefits: job seekers

The claimant count provides a proxy measure of unemployment at the local (sub-local authority) level by measuring the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). This data gives an idea of the proportion of the local population looking for work, though it is essentially an under estimation of the unemployment rate as it only counts people claiming JSA.

The average claimant rate (the proportion of the working age population claiming JSA) in Hiraethog over the most recent data available (July 2014) is 1.8%, lower than Conwy (3.0), Denbighshire (2.9), North Wales (2.9) and Wales (3.1). The rate of claimants is in fact very low for the majority of the Hiraethog area with one ward standing out to be highest, this is Upper Denbigh with a rate of 4.5% suggesting that unemployment in a particular issue in that part of the Hiraethog area.

*Map 2.3: Claimant rate per working age population July 2014*
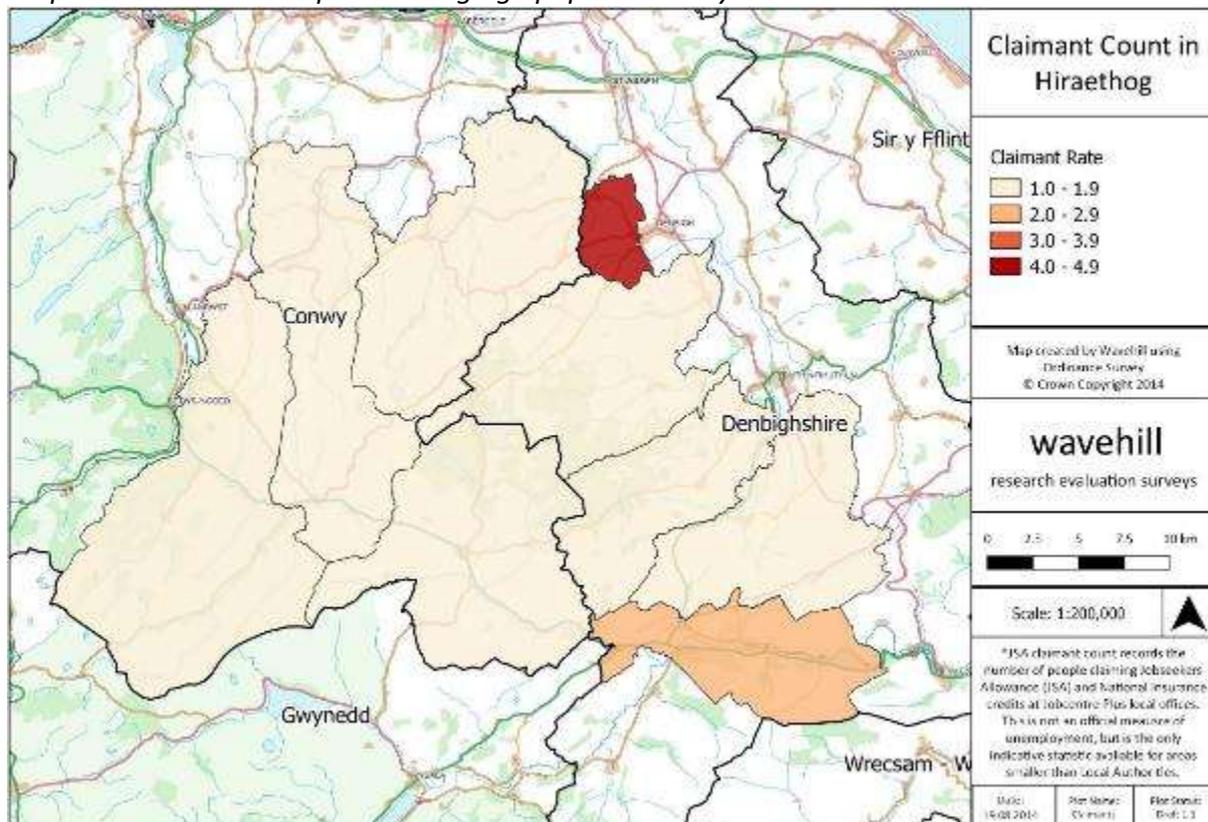


In July 2014, 42.7% of claimants in Hiraethog had been claiming job seekers benefits for over 6 months. This proportion is slightly lower than for Conwy and Denbighshire (48.7% and 48.1%), and lower than North Wales (48.4%) and Wales (49.4%).

Figure 2.5 shows the rate of claimants each month from June 2009 to July 2014. Two things are particularly clear to see; firstly the seasonal influence on the rate of claimants and secondly, that all three areas follow the same distinctive pattern.

*Figure 2.5: Claimant rate per working age population*
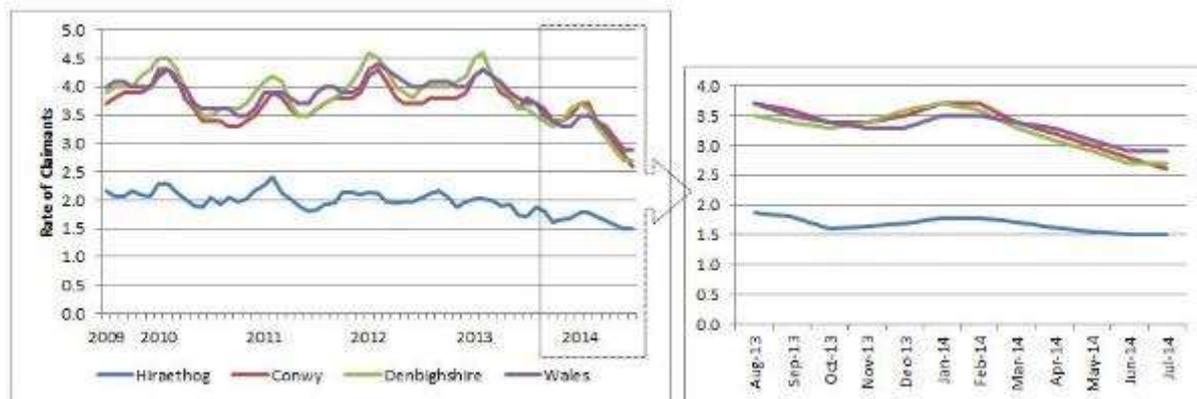


## 2.2.8. Deprivation

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales. The Index is produced as a set of ranks, with a rank of 1 assigned to the most deprived area, rank 1,896 assigned to the least deprived area. Ranks are a relative system of measurement; we can know which areas are more (or less) deprived than others, but not by how much. This is because of the way that the Index needs to be constructed.

The table below shows the individual wards in the Hiraethog area, and their rank, out of a total of 1896. The most deprived (ranked 782) in the Hiraethog area is Denbigh Upper/Henllan 2. If we think about the ranking as a league table, only two of the wards would be in the top half. Comparatively, the Hiraethog area is therefore not very deprived.

*Table 2.10: WIMD rank and proportion for Hiraethog area*

| LSOA | Rank |
|---|---|
| Denbigh Upper/Henllan 2 | 782 |
| Corwen 2 | 940 |
| Uwch Conwy | 1,068 |
| Llansannan | 1,081 |
| Corwen 1 | 1,161 |
| Llangernyw | 1,213 |
| Uwchaled | 1,240 |
| Llanrhaeadr-yng-Nghinmeirch | 1,422 |
| Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd/Gwyddelwern | 1,435 |
| Efenechtyd | 1,482 |

Splitting the level of deprivation down by the factors that make up the WIMD shows that access to services is the area where many of the LSOAs in Hiraethog fall within the 10% most deprived across Wales. Much of the area is therefore comparatively 'deprived' in respects of that factor.

*Table 2.11: full breakdown of WIMD by area*

| LSOA | WIMD | Employment | Income | Health | Education | Housing | Physical Environment | Access to Services | Community Safety |
|------|------|------------|--------|--------|-----------|---------|----------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Llangernyw | 1213 | 1673 | 1267 | 1248 | 1429 | 425 | 994 | 99 | 1858 |
| Llansannan | 1081 | 1327 | 1352 | 1551 | 1333 | 340 | 1529 | 42 | 1719 |
| Uwch Conwy | 1068 | 1327 | 1402 | 1563 | 1029 | 209 | 1695 | 68 | 1820 |
| Uwchaled | 1240 | 1560 | 1330 | 1682 | 1559 | 460 | 1674 | 50 | 1524 |
| Corwen 1 | 1161 | 1111 | 1262 | 1450 | 1256 | 624 | 781 | 203 | 1493 |
| Corwen 2 | 940 | 941 | 783 | 1488 | 885 | 374 | 1335 | 445 | 1029 |
| Denbigh Upper/Henllan 2 | 782 | 782 | 779 | 1145 | 795 | 365 | 1426 | 339 | 773 |
| Efenechtyd | 1482 | 1673 | 1494 | 1667 | 1696 | 925 | 1567 | 88 | 1827 |
| Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd/Gwyddelwern | 1435 | 1560 | 1648 | 1797 | 1561 | 1110 | 1501 | 61 | 1578 |
| Llanrhaeadr-yng-Nghinmeirch | 1422 | 1560 | 1525 | 1507 | 1724 | 786 | 1080 | 118 | 1760 |

## 2.2.9. Vehicle ownership

Perhaps due to the rural nature of Hiraethog and the poor access to services within the area, Hiraethog has a far lower proportion of households with no cars or vans[11]. It also has a higher proportion of over two cars per household. Most of the residents in the area are therefore likely to have access to a car or van.

*Table 2.12: number of cars or vans in household from 2011 Census*

| | No cars or vans in household | 1 car or van in household | 2 cars or vans in household | 3 cars or vans in household | 4 or more cars or vans in household |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hiraethog | 13% | 37% | 34% | 11% | 5% |
| Conwy | 22% | 44% | 26% | 6% | 2% |
| Denbighshire | 21% | 44% | 26% | 6% | 2% |
| North Wales | 20% | 43% | 28% | 7% | 3% |
| Wales | 23% | 43% | 26% | 6% | 2% |

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[11] This applies to the number of cars or vans that are owned, or available for use, by one or more members of a household. This includes company cars and vans that are available for private use. It does not include motorbikes or scooters, or any cars or vans belonging to visitors. The count of cars or vans in an area relates only to households. Cars or vans used by residents of communal establishments are not counted.

## 2.2.10. Distance to work and method of travel

Again, probably due to the rural nature of the area, the average distance travelled to work[12] is higher for residents of Hiraethog than the average for the local authority areas and the region as a whole; the average is in fact 7km further than the average for Wales. This also explains the high proportion of households in the area with access to a vehicle.

*Table 2.13:  average distance to work (km) from 2011 Census*

|  | **Average distance (km)** |
|---|---|
| Hiraethog | 23.7 |
| Conwy | 18.6 |
| Denbighshire | 17.2 |
| North Wales | 18.6 |
| Wales | 16.7 |

Turning our attention to the method of travel to work[13], it is interesting to note that a higher proportion (14%) of usual residents aged 16-74 work mainly at or from home in the Hiraethog area, more than double the proportion in the areas being used for comparison. This probably reflects the long distance that residents need to travel to their 'normal' place of work although it will also be influenced by the strength of land-based industries in the area (e.g. farms).

*Table 2.14: method of travel to work from 2011 Census*

|  | Hiraethog | Conwy | Denbighshire | North Wales | Wales |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Work mainly at or from home | 14% | 7% | 6% | 6% | 5% |
| Train | 0% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 2% |
| Bus, minibus or coach | 2% | 4% | 3% | 4% | 5% |
| Taxi | 0% | 0% | 1% | 0% | 0% |
| Motorcycle, scooter or moped | 0% | 1% | 0% | 1% | 1% |
| Driving a car or van | 67% | 67% | 67% | 68% | 67% |
| Passenger in a car or van | 5% | 6% | 7% | 7% | 7% |
| Bicycle | 1% | 1% | 2% | 1% | 1% |
| On foot | 9% | 11% | 12% | 10% | 11% |
| Other method of travel to work | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |

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[12] This applies to the distance in kilometres between a person's residential postcode and their workplace postcode, measured in a straight line. Derived distances that result in a distance travelled that exceeds 1200km are treated as invalid and a value is imputed. A distance travelled of 0.1km indicates that the workplace postcode is the same as the residential postcode.

[13] The method of travel used for the longest part, by distance, of the usual journey to work. This topic is only applicable to people who were in employment in the week before the census.

## 2.2.11. Dwellings

As shown by the table below, Hiraethog has, as you would expect given its rural nature, a higher proportion of houses that are detached and a lower proportion of purpose built flats when compared to the local authority areas and region as a whole.

*Table 2.15: dwelling type from 2011 Census*

|  | Hiraethog | Conwy | Denbs | N. Wales | Wales |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unshared dwelling | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Shared dwelling: Two household spaces[14] | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Shared dwelling: Three or more household spaces | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Household spaces with at least one usual resident | 91% | 91% | 95% | 93% | 94% |
| Household spaces with no usual residents | 9% | 9% | 5% | 7% | 6% |
| Whole house or bungalow: Detached | 55% | 35% | 44% | 37% | 28% |
| Whole house or bungalow: Semi-detached | 24% | 31% | 31% | 32% | 31% |
| Whole house or bungalow: Terraced (including end-terrace) | 17% | 15% | 13% | 19% | 28% |
| Flat, maisonette or apartment: Purpose-built block of flats or tenement | 2% | 11% | 7% | 8% | 10% |
| Flat, maisonette or apartment: Part of a converted or shared house (including bed-sits) | 1% | 6% | 3% | 2% | 2% |
| Flat, maisonette or apartment: In a commercial building | 1% | 2% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| Caravan or other mobile or temporary structure | 1% | 1% | 0% | 1% | 0% |

*Source: 2011Census*

In terms of tenure, 2011 census data does not show any major differences in the Hiraethog area with most residents living in owned properties. The proportion living in private rented accommodation is however slightly lower in Hiraethog compared to Conwy and Denbighshire as a whole although, again, this is probably not unexpected in a rural area.

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[14] A household space is the accommodation used or available for use by an individual household.

*Table 2.16: Tenure from 2011 Census*

|  | Owned | Shared ownership (part owned and part rented) | Social rented | Private rented | Living rent free |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hiraethog | 67% | 0% | 17% | 13% | 3% |
| Conwy | 69% | 1% | 12% | 17% | 2% |
| Denbighshire | 69% | 1% | 13% | 16% | 2% |
| North Wales | 68% | 0% | 16% | 14% | 2% |
| Wales | 67% | 0% | 16% | 14% | 2% |

Turning our attention to the household size and number of rooms per dwelling, Hiraethog has a very slightly higher average household size of 2.5 persons per house. It also has a slightly lower proportion of rooms and bedrooms per household.

*Table 2.17: number of rooms per household from 2011 Census*

|  | Average household size | Average number of rooms per household | Average number of bedrooms per household |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hiraethog | 2.5 | 5.5 | 2.6 |
| Conwy | 2.2 | 5.6 | 2.8 |
| Denbighshire | 2.3 | 5.7 | 2.8 |
| North Wales | 2.3 | 5.7 | 2.9 |
| Wales | 2.3 | 5.7 | 2.9 |

## 2.2.12. Perceived health

At the time of the 2011 census, just over half of the population[15] in Hiraethog considered themselves to be of very good health, higher than local authority areas and the region as a whole.

*Table 2.18: health as self-categorised in 2011 Census*

|  | Hiraethog | Conwy | Denbighshire | North Wales | Wales |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very good health | 51% | 45% | 47% | 48% | 47% |
| Good health | 31% | 32% | 31% | 32% | 31% |
| Fair health | 13% | 16% | 15% | 14% | 15% |
| Bad health | 4% | 5% | 6% | 5% | 6% |
| Very bad health | 1% | 2% | 2% | 1% | 2% |

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[15] All usual residents

## 2.2.13. Hiraethog Service Centres

Although the town centres listed below do not fall into the Hiraethog area itself, they have been included here given their role as 'service centres' for the area. The towns in question are: Betws y Coed, Denbigh, Corwen, Llanrwst and Ruthin as illustrated by the map below. Key statistics for each of the service centres can be seen in table 2.19[16].

*Table 2.19: summary of statistics for the 'service centres' from 2011 Census*

|  | Betws y Coed | Corwen | Denbigh | Llanrwst | Ruthin |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Population | 255 | 477 | 8,514 | 3,323 | 5,461 |
| Population Density (persons/hectare) | 11.1 | 19.3 | 35.7 | 30.6 | 27.9 |
| Mean Age (years) | 46 | 39 | 40 | 42.3 | 42 |
| One or more skill in Welsh | 49.8% | 67.5% | 52.1% | 75.8% | 56.5% |
| No Qualifications | 14.2% | 20.8% | 23.3% | 21.6% | 20.8% |
| Economically active - in employment | 73.6% | 67.8% | 61.4% | 62.0% | 64.2% |
| Economically active - unemployed | 0.5% | 4.1% | 4.0% | 3.7% | 3.3% |

The table below shows that in Betws y Coed 46.6% of the working age population were employed in Accommodation and food service activities. In Corwen, the highest proportion of employees were employed in manufacturing. In Denbigh and Ruthin in Human health and social work activities and in Wholesale and retail trade in Llanrwst.

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[16] Figures calculated from 2011 Census built-up areas data. Built-up areas in England and Wales, previously known as urban areas. Built-up areas are defined as land which is 'irreversibly urban in character', meaning that they are characteristic of a village, town or city. They include areas of built-up land with a minimum of 20 hectares (200,000m2). Any areas with less than 200 metres between them are linked to become a single built-up area. http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_316219.pdf

*Table 2.20: Breakdown of Employees by Sector by Area, 2011 Census*

| | Betws-Y-Coed | Corwen | Denbigh | Llanrwst | Ruthin |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A Agriculture, forestry and fishing | 0.7 | 1.6 | 1.0 | 2.2 | 1.9 |
| B Mining and quarrying | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.0 |
| C Manufacturing | 2.7 | 21.4 | 9.1 | 7.0 | 8.3 |
| D Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply | 0.0 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.4 |
| E Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.7 |
| F Construction | 4.7 | 11.9 | 8.4 | 12.3 | 10.3 |
| G Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles | 10.8 | 12.7 | 13.2 | 14.9 | 13.1 |
| H Transport and storage | 0.7 | 4.0 | 3.6 | 4.2 | 3.1 |
| I Accommodation and food service activities | 46.6 | 4.8 | 4.6 | 11.5 | 8.6 |
| J Information and communication | 2.7 | 0.4 | 0.9 | 1.4 | 1.4 |
| K Financial and insurance activities | 0.0 | 0.8 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.8 |
| L Real estate activities | 1.4 | 0.4 | 1.2 | 1.6 | 1.3 |
| M Professional, scientific and technical activities | 0.0 | 2.8 | 4.0 | 3.8 | 4.8 |
| N Administrative and support service activities | 4.1 | 2.4 | 3.1 | 3.0 | 3.3 |
| O Public administration and defence; compulsory social security | 8.1 | 8.3 | 7.0 | 5.6 | 6.8 |
| P Education | 7.4 | 8.3 | 12.4 | 12.0 | 13.8 |
| Q Human health and social work activities | 4.7 | 14.7 | 24.8 | 12.7 | 15.4 |
| R, S, T, U Other | 5.4 | 5.2 | 4.2 | 5.5 | 4.9 |

## 2.3. Landscape and biodiversity baseline and issues analysis

### 2.3.1. Overview

The purpose of landscape character assessment is to try to describe what gives a landscape its distinctive character. It also sets out to try to understand the condition of a given area, based on agreed criteria, and what are the factors that influence its condition. Landscape character assessment recognises that these factors are highly interdependent and interact in complex ways. It provides a valuable baseline in helping to decide how to prioritise actions to reduce pressures, to remediate damage, to conserve and to enhance features in a landscape.

The main tool in use in Wales is LANDMAP[17], which considers a given area from five overarching perspectives: geological, habitat, historical, cultural and visual/sensory. For each of these perspectives, the area in question is analysed, categorised, mapped and evaluated. Each mapped area is called an 'aspect area', and therefore a given landscape may comprise a number of geological, historical, habitat, cultural and visual aspect areas. This baseline has increasingly been used as a basis for developing landscape character assessments similar to those used in England and Scotland, and in fact there is now a draft landscape character map of Wales.
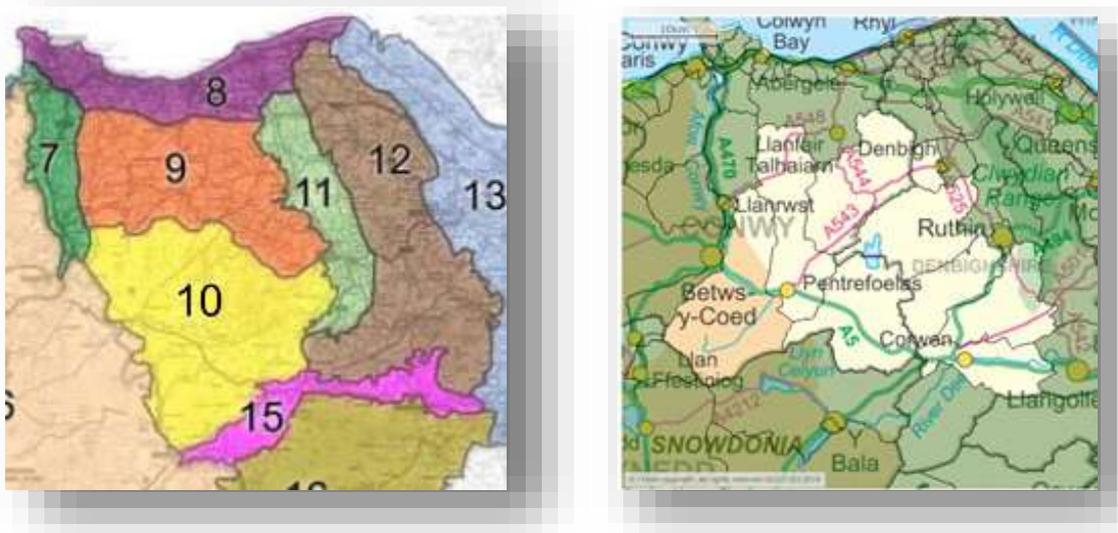


The aspect areas that cover the Hiraethog area (although they do not completely match) are illustrated in the map above, placed next to a map of the Hiraethog area for ease of reference. Those areas are:

- Area 9: Rhos Hills
- Area 10: Mynydd Hiraethog / Denbigh Moors
- Area 11: Vale of Clwyd (part)
- Area 15: Llangollen and Dee Valley (part)

An outline of the analysis for each of these each area can be found in Appendix 1.

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[17] http://www.ccw.gov.uk/landmap

## 2.3.2.  Ecosystems and their services

Decisions about options for alternative land uses are increasingly driven by a sense that a landscape provides a wide range of benefits to people, and that focusing on single land use objectives at the cost of other objectives is unsustainable.  In future it is likely that different models of economic support will emerge, based on payments for ecosystem services such as flood management, carbon sequestration and the reduction of risks from coastal erosion, using natural systems rather than infrastructure.

At present the evidence is still in the process of development, and the approach is in its infancy, but research has confirmed what in many ways is a simple concept, namely that the way in which nature contributes significantly to human well-being, and that damaged ecosystems do not only reduce their contribution, but can negatively impact on humans through flooding, drought, destruction to coastal communities, disease and famine.

Various studies have tried to analyse how the different habitats in an ecosystem might promote some or all of the four key services - provisioning, regulating, cultural and supporting services. For example, it should be apparent that banks and hedgerows along a contour are more likely to prevent rapid runoff of water than post and rail fencing along the same contour.

The table on the following page considers the services provided by the habitats associated with the Hiraethog area. The larger icons reflect the robustness with which a habitat / feature contributes to a particular service. It should be noted that whilst this table is based on various generic studies, it is not scientific. As is apparent, a wide range of habitats / features exist within the Hiraethog area and the contribution to the provision of ecosystem services can be considered as being strong.

*Table 2.21: Hiraethog Ecosystem Services*

| | Habitat/feature | Provisioning | | | | | Regulating | | | | | | | | | Cultural | | | | | Supporting | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Food | Fibre | Fuel | Genetics | Water | Air quality | Climate | W'r regulation | Erosion | W'r quality | Disease | Pest control | Pollination | Hazards | Recreation | Heritage | Education | Aesthetics | Sense of place | Soil making | Photosynthesis | Primary prod | Biodiversity |
| **Boundaries** | Hedgerows (basic) | o | o | o | | | o | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | o | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| | Hedgerows (enhanced) | ● | o | o | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| | Ditches | o | | | | | | ● | | ● | ● | ● | o | | | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| | Stone walls | | | | | | | ● | ● | ● | | | | | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | o |
| **Woodland and trees** | Boundary trees | o | o | o | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| | Woodland edges | o | | o | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | | ● | o | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| | Coniferous woodland | | ● | ● | | | ● | ● | | o | | | | | o | ● | o | ● | o | | | o | | o |
| | Deciduous woodland | o | ● | ● | o | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | o | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| | Scrub | o | | o | | | ● | o | ● | ● | ● | | ● | o | ● | ● | | o | | | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| | Wood pasture | ● | ● | o | | | | ● | o | ● | ● | | | o | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| | Orchards | ● | | | ● | | | o | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| **Wetland** | Lakes | ● | | | | ● | o | ● | ● | | ● | | | | o | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | o |
| | Rivers | ● | | | | ● | o | o | o | | ● | | | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | ● |
| | Marsh | o | | | | | o | ● | ● | o | ● | | | o | o | | | ● | | | | o | o | ● |
| | Ponds | o | | | | o | | o | | | o | | | | o | o | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | ● |
| **Moor** | Heather | o | | | | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | o | ● | ● |
| | Grass | ● | o | | o | | | o | o | o | o | | | o | | ● | o | o | | | o | | o | o |

### 2.3.3. Biodiversity issues and potential actions identified

The review has identified the following issues and potential in relation to the biodiversity in the Hiraethog area:

a)  There are limited records of reptiles in the area. Creating new scrapes, and other wet features, is a way of enhancing damp grassland for wildlife and encouraging repopulation, which could potentially be funded via the Welsh Government's sustainable land management scheme, Glastir[18].

b)  Promote otter habitats by managing watercourses in the area.

c)  Promote hedgehog habitat around settlements.

d)  Promote regeneration of Black Poplar – floodplain woodland management.

e)  Use Glastir to promote Black Grouse where relevant.

f)  Promote nesting sites for Barn Owls by taking measures to maintain populations of prey species, reductions in the use of chemicals and promoting rough grass as hunting ground.

g)  Upgrade records for dormouse – manage hedges/ woodlands – improve corridors – exclude livestock to increase understory – identify target areas for dormouse conservation – dormouse nest boxes where necessary.

h)  Manage for butterfly species – grizzled skipper/pearl bordered fritillary.

i)  Manage red squirrel population in Clocaenog Forest – monitor against wind farm development – remove grey squirrel populations.

j)  Manage invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam.

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[18] http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/farming/schemes/glastir/?lang=en

# 3. Needs in the area: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

**Key points**

- The most common strengths identified by stakeholders were the area's "*natural beauty*," and its "*community spirit,*" as well as its "*peaceful*," surroundings.
- The weaknesses of the Hiraethog area are common to many rural areas across Wales. They include a narrow economy, lack of access to certain services or leisure facilities, lack of affordable housing, public funding cuts and an increase in living costs.
- A range of opportunities are apparent including the potential to 'empower' the local community, support businesses to collaborate and support farms to diversify.
- Threats identified included public sector cuts, declining town centre retail and a further decline in the number of Welsh speakers.

## 3.1. Introduction

This section builds on the analysis in the previous section by identifying the 'needs' in the Hiraethog area. It does this using a SWOT analysis structure (strengths, weaknesses opportunities and threats) to identify the 'needs' which the strategy should focus on – positive and negative:

- *Strengths & Weaknesses*: things over which the strategy / action plan can have some influence (sometimes referred to as 'internal factors'); and
- *Opportunities & Threats*: things that the strategy / action-plan may seek to mitigate or take advantage of (sometimes called 'external factors').

The discussion draws upon the interviews with local stakeholders undertaken as part of the research for this strategy as well as a review of previous relevant research and strategies. A total of 79 interviews were conducted over a period of six weeks, during August and September 2014. Of those consulted:

- 24/79 (30%) worked for the public sector across Conwy and Denbighshire;
- 28/79 (35%) were from the private sector including accommodation providers, adventure tourism centres, shops and places to eat;
- 12/79 (15%) were local residents and farmers; and
- 15/79 (20%) were involved in local community or third sector groups.

The discussion under each main heading is split into the following categories in order to link the analysis to the strategy which is presented later in the report.

- A place where people can live;
- Economic activity;
- The natural environment & landscape;
- The culture and heritage of the area; and
- Leisure activities in the area.

First however, a summary table has been included for ease of reference which summarises the main points that are identified within the analysis.

## 3.2.   SWOT analysis summary table

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| **Things over which the strategy / action plan can have some influence** ||
| <u>A place to live</u><br>• A safe place<br>• Community spirit / participation<br>• Welsh language<br>• Lifestyle / peace and tranquillity<br>• Location / transport links<br><br><u>Economy</u><br>• Varied economy (for a rural area)<br>• A few major /key employers<br>• Quality tourism product<br>• Strong agricultural sector<br><br><u>Environment & landscape</u><br>• Quality natural environment<br>• Leisure activities - a variety of potential uses (walking, cycling, fishing, etc.)<br><br><u>Culture & heritage</u><br>• High proportion of Welsh speakers / Welsh identity | <u>A place to live</u><br>• Rurality – distance from key services and poor transport infrastructure (affecting some groups in particular)<br>• Lack of affordable housing<br>• General high cost of living<br>• Poor digital infrastructure<br><br><u>Economy</u><br>• Dependency on agriculture, tourism and public sector<br>• Lack of clear identity (branding)<br><br><u>Environment & landscape</u><br>• Lack of access to / utilisation<br><br><u>Culture & heritage</u><br>• Cultural divides (impact on community participation) |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| **Things that the strategy / action-plan may seek to mitigate or take advantage of** ||
| <u>A place to live</u><br>• Availability of support that will 'empower' the local community<br><br><u>Economy</u><br>• Availability of funding for business collaboration<br>• Availability of funding for farm diversification<br><br><u>Environment & landscape</u><br>• Increasing demand for outdoor pursuits<br>• Potential to produce renewable energy<br><br><u>Culture & heritage</u><br>• Increasing interest in / awareness of culture and heritage as tourism products | <u>A place to live</u><br>• Aging population<br>• Public sector cuts<br>• Housing shortage<br><br><u>Economy</u><br>• Public sector cuts<br>• Decline in town centre retail<br><br><u>Environment & landscape</u><br>• Wind-farms<br><br><u>Culture & heritage</u><br>• Declining number of Welsh speakers |

## 3.3. Strengths

Though the responses from those interviewed varied according to sector and area, the most common strengths expressed were its "*natural beauty*," and its "*community spirit,*" as well as its "*peaceful*," surroundings.

### 3.3.1. A place where people can live

As already noted, all participants interviewed expressed that as a place to live, the area is "*beautiful,*" and has "*natural beauty*," which makes it a "*nice place to live*." The unique scenery and natural landscape is a strength for participants as they feel it is a "*lifestyle choice*," to live in the area and that it provides them with a "*good quality of life.*" Its rural setting also has a direct effect on the strengths recorded below:

- **Community Participation**

Of the participants interviewed, 45/79 suggested that the "*community spirit*," is a strength to the Hiraethog area, defined as a high percentage of people volunteering or participating in community events or community institutions such as the local school; people within the communities "*helping each other out*," and generally "*belonging to the community*." As expressed by one participant:

> "*A strong community, despite the low population, a peaceful way of life, the healing abilities natural beauty has on both the body and mind.*"

An area which is "*community orientated*," and with a "*lively community spirit*," is evidently an important strength for those interviewed.

The above findings are also commonly reported in the Deep Rural Report published October 2009. In 2008, the Welsh Government (WG) commissioned the Wales Rural Observatory (WRO) to research particular issues affecting 'deep rural areas,' in Wales. For the purpose of the research, 'Deep Rural areas,' were defined as "*communities with fewer than 1,000 households, located at least 30 minutes' drive time from a centre with a population of more than 10,000.*" (Deep Rural Report, 10/09: 9). The study found that 94 per cent of the respondents (those living in 'deep' rural areas) rated their quality of life as either 'very good,' or 'fairly good.' Respondents tended to express that "*peace and quiet*," "*feelings of community*," "*a slower pace of life,*" and "*landscape and scenery*," as things they liked in their area.

- **The Welsh Language**

The Welsh language is also connected to "*belonging*," to the community according to those interviewed, with 26/79 expressing that the Welsh language is an important factor when living within the communities of the Hiraethog area. This is a finding also reflected in the

Rural Households Survey 2013. This report presents findings from a survey of households in rural Wales undertaken by the WRO in 2013[19], the fourth in a series of household surveys[20].

The results from the 2013 survey provide a longitudinal data allowing further in-depth comparative work, which brings to light the various trends and processes impacting on rural households in Wales over time. Survey fieldwork was carried out between April and July 2013, and a total of over 4,000 interviews were completed[21].

One of the key findings was that Welsh identity and welsh language skills were key factors in influencing the extent of family networks. Sixty-five per cent of those who defined themselves as Welsh and 61% who spoke Welsh fluently or quite well, lived less than five miles from a family member. Eighty-one per cent considered themselves members of the local community. Respondents who defined themselves as Welsh were also more likely to consider themselves part of the local community.

- **Safety**

Being a part of the community is also linked to the perception that an area feels "*safe,*" for 53/79 of the participants. This is also reflected in the area's low crime rate. "*Feeling safe,*" as well as community safety also affected the area's ability to attract families, as 12/79 interviewed suggested that it was "*a good place to raise a family*." Similarly community safety was also a key finding for the Rural Households Survey 2013, where research showed that 96% felt safe living in their communities.

- **Lifestyle**

Living in the rural areas is a lifestyle choice as participants feel that though the countryside does have its drawbacks (that will be discussed further in this chapter) it also provides them with "*peace and quiet,*" "*access to walks and cycle paths,*" and a "*detachment from modern living*".

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[19] A copy of the report is available here:
http://www.walesruralobservatory.org.uk/sites/default/files/Householdper_cent20Surveyper_cent202010per_cent20FINALper cent20AUG2012_1.pdf
[20] The previous surveys having been undertaken in 2004, 2007 and 2010.
[21] Rural Household Survey 2013: 2

Lifestyle as a strength of rural areas is also a common theme in the Rural Business Survey 2014[22]. The research objectives of that survey are to examine the state of non-farm rural businesses in Wales, to explore and quantify the attitudes of rural business owners in Wales, to provide qualitative data on the attitudes of rural business owners in Wales and to identify and explore any social, economic or policy changes that might have affected businesses in rural wales. With regards to environmental considerations, the survey found that many respondents argued that the principle advantages conferred by a rural location were lifestyle and environment. These advantages included: "*the natural beauty of rural wales; peace and quiet; a more relaxed way of life; better traveling and commuting conditions and closer communities.*[23]"

- **Transport Links**

Though it can be argued that a perceived weakness to living in a rural area is a lack of good transport links, 10/79 of those interviewed suggested that Hiraethog is "*central to most places.*" For example, it is close to the A55, has "*good road and rail links,*" and "*the airport is less than two hours away.*" It can be argued that the towns of Denbigh and Ruthin are smaller but central to the area and that the larger towns of Wrexham and Llandudno are also in close proximity.

Coping with access to services is a topic which will be discussed further in the chapter; however the Coping with Access to Services 2007[24] report suggests that use of private transport is an important factor in determining the levels of access to particular services in rural areas. The analysis of the survey results shows that car-based trips are the primary means of accessing many services, for example 75 per cent use a car to access GP services. The use of private transport is therefore perhaps the key means of coping with access to services in rural areas. This is not a surprising finding but it does confirm the recognised thinking on the importance of mobility in rural areas and the consequent disadvantage of those without private transport. It also found that it is more common for residents in rural Wales to combine clothes shopping with other activities than to make a dedicated trip to buy clothes. The issue of distance, or location, is not as important for clothes shopping. Here, factors such as choice, value and preference are more important and many rural residents are prepared to travel to find the right balance of these factors.

## 3.3.2. Economic activity

Participants were asked how they would describe the economy in Hiraethog and 62/79 of those interviewed noted that "*it is mostly dominated by farms and the agricultural sector.*" This is described as a strength, weakness, opportunity or threat according to the participant who was being interviewed, and what sector they worked in.

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[22] The Rural Business Survey is undertaken by the WRO and the most recent was conducted in 2013 as a fourth in the series. The 2013 survey had a target response rate of 1,000 and as with previous surveys this target was exceeded with 1,583 responses.

[23] Rural Business Survey 2014: 48

[24] The theme of this 2007 report[24] is access to key rural services and how people employ coping mechanisms to counter poor access levels to such services.

- **Varied Economy**

Having a "*varied economy*," is suggested as a strength for the area. This means that it doesn't depend on one sector to provide a basis for its economy. For example, it is argued that having a "*thriving tourist industry*," as well as the "*strong*," agricultural community being a "*stronghold and back-bone*," to Hiraethog, are integral to its economy. In addition, there are larger businesses, for example *Llaeth y Llan*, that have stemmed from the agricultural sector, and are major employers for the area. As expressed by one participant:

> *"There are lots of different options here. You have agriculture and tourism and the local authority."*

- **Tourism**

Tourism is seen as an important strength to the economy, especially amongst those businesses interviewed who are involved in the tourist trade. These include Bed and Breakfast providers, self-catering accommodation, local shops and adventure tourism. As expressed by one participant:

> *"The quality of goods produced by small local businesses are becoming well known much further afield than in north Wales and getting the area a great reputation. This brings in people to visit the area and understand the qualities that makes it a great place to live and work."*

Tourism is also varied within the area with towns such as Ruthin providing a different experience to that of more rural Hiraethog. As noted in the Ruthin Town and Area Plan (2013-2020), Ruthin Craft attracts around 90,000 visitors annually, whilst Ruthin Gaol has around 10,000 and Nantclwyd y Dre around 4,000.

Many of its surrounding communities are located within areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The area is becoming increasingly popular for holding high quality, high profile events such as the Etape Cymru cycle event, the mountain bike and cycling event, the Wales GB rally. The area offers a variety of outdoor activities such as walking, horse-riding, cycling, orienteering as well as educational opportunities such as the Duke of Edinburgh awards.

There is also further vision for the Town of Corwen as noted in its Town and Area Plan for 2013-2020. The construction of an extension to the Llangollen railway and a new temporary four car platform east of the town centre is scheduled for completion in 2014. This is expected to attract an increase in footfall of up to 90,000 people.

An aspiration amongst local organisations is to develop and operate visitor facilities which would complement the extension of the railway including a new railway museum and an attraction in the adjacent former chapel.

A further extension would bring the railway closer to the town centre and this would encourage passengers to spend more time in Corwen.

One of the main visions for Corwen is to be able to:

*"Have the range of community facilities and transport services required to address the town's relative isolation from larger centers of population."[25]*

- **Agriculture**

Agriculture is in itself regarded as extremely important though this does not reflect the economic profile for the area which shows that there are a much higher proportion of people employed in construction than the Welsh average of 4%, as well as a higher proportion employed in the manufacturing sector in Hiraethog compared to Conwy and Denbighshire. However, the farming community is regarded as a stronghold and is integral to the local community as well as the local economy. As expressed by one participant:

*"Strength in Power. A lot of farmers help each other."*

- **Support from Tourism and Local Sources**

Of those interviewed 30/79 suggested that having both local support as well as support from tourism ensures that the economy remains "*strong.*" Community support is evidently important which also reflects the strength of community spirit of Hiraethog as a place to live:
*"Local businesses and micro businesses keep the money and employment local."*

*"It depends on both tourism and local people not just one or the other. They are both as important as each other."*

### 3.3.3. Environment & landscape

As is already apparent from the discussion above, the environment and landscape of the area is increasingly important to both local people and local businesses. Its strengths have been highlighted above through its "*beauty,*" and "*dramatic and romantic,*" scenery. Other strengths include:

- **Varied Environment and Landscape**

The variety of the landscape according to participants is a strength to the area. For example, it can be used for a diverse range of activities including walking, cycling, fishing and kayaking. It also provides "*rich land,*" to farmers as well as being an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Clwydian Range) which in turn attracts tourists and local people alike:

*"It can attract all kinds of different tourists and people from people who want to walk, to fish, to visit historical sights and so on. It's rich when you really think about it."*

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[25] Corwen Merged Town and Area Plan: 9

- **Opportunities for Further Development**

As a result of its natural diversity, 10/79 of the participants interviewed suggest that there was opportunity to develop the area with a "healthy tourism," status and through marketing and branding.  This is linked with the concept of "*healthy tourism*," which means that any developments would first consider the local community and that they would be the correct type of developments for the area.  As suggested by one participant:

> "*I think the local development thing I was talking about earlier.  It's got to be at a level that's healthy for the local area and that it doesn't get too big and start wreaking havoc.*"

### 3.3.4.  Culture & heritage

- **The Welsh Language**

The most important strength for the culture and heritage of the area is the Welsh language.  This is also described as a threat for some participants and an opportunity for others.  As expressed by one participant:

> "*It's strong Welsh identity, its traditional character and sense of authenticity could be marketed very effectively. Welsh language thrives.  Culture is strengthened by strong sense of community cohesion and participation.  Less so for non-Welsh speaking people.*"

> "*Local people are proud of their culture and will defend it as best they can. Culture and heritage is a draw to others from outside the area who appreciate it.*"

This is also linked closely with the strengths of the Hiraethog area as a place to live.

The history of the area is also considered to be a defining factor for 10/79 of those interviewed, with the towns Denbigh and Ruthin and the strong tradition of agriculture being central to this history.

### 3.3.5.  Leisure activities

The proximity of leisure facilities in the Hiraethog area was seen as a strength by 24/79 of those interviewed.  This includes "*that there is the place and space to do things here*," which refers to having walks and outdoor activity facilities in the area and "*That there are lots of options for people and that it's available.*"  As mentioned previously, having service hubs like Wrexham, Llandudno and Colwyn Bay, in close proximity is also important as these provide the facilities and services needed that may be otherwise lacking in Hiraethog itself.   As expressed by one participant:

> "*Having pretty good transport links if you can drive means that you can get to pretty central leisure facilities.*"

## 3.4. Weaknesses

It can be argued that the weaknesses of the Hiraethog area are common to many rural areas across Wales. These could include access to certain services or leisure facilities, lack of affordable housing, public funding restrictions and cuts and an increase in living costs. As above, the weaknesses of the area, as suggested by the participant interviews are recoded below under the same headings.

### 3.4.1. A place where people can live

- **Transportation**

Though the rurality of the area is seen as a strength by many of the participants, it is suggested that having access to transportation and services and being "*far away from everything*," goes hand in hand with living in Hiraethog. This includes having to travel to shops, petrol stations, local leisure facilities and general services. However, though this is suggested as a weakness, it is conceded that you "*couldn't have it all*." As expressed by one participant:

> "*A general lack of public transport which makes it expensive to get around. You have to drive everywhere. It's not the easiest place.*"

> "*I think that it's rural but you can't have it all. If you want to live in a rural area then the price you pay is to be quite far from everything.*"

In 2013, an assessment into the Transport Needs and Travel Patterns in Conwy was conducted by STC Ltd. The main aims of the report were to provide evidence based analysis of travel needs and patterns for Conwy, to provide an understanding of transport needs and barriers to using existing services, to identify practical suggestions and to contribute to local and regional transport strategies[26]. The study draws on previous research undertaken locally and nationally and it utilises available data from the 2011 census. For the report, the research also included an online survey to identify gaps in the service provision, but its main focus was a detailed consultation with the stakeholders representing the users and transport providers across the Conwy area.

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[26] Conwy Unmet Needs 2013: 6

Overall, the Conwy authority provides an estimated £9 million expenditure to local public passenger transport and feedback from operators and residents recognized that generally public transport provision across the authority was good. More than 60% of the overall revenue support provided for local buses by the authority is accounted for by the services in the rural areas, and the vast majority of home to school transport is delivered in rural areas.[27] However, the services available tended to be focused along main corridors of the coast, the Conwy Valley and to a lesser extent, the A55 corridor. The individual data analysis and stakeholder meetings and surveys highlighted consistent, county-wide transport issues and provided an indication of the scale and nature of travel needs and gaps in the network. Twenty-eight per cent who participated in the survey reported that they had "quite a few," or "a lot of difficulties," getting around.[28]

The main type of journeys respondents requested and where difficulty was experienced were for shopping (37%) and health (29%) with leisure, work and education trips also featuring. Ideally, transport was needed for journeys to be made a couple of times a week.

However, more detailed consultation with face-to-face groups and individuals exposed the complexity of the types of journeys and destinations sought. Unmet needs were identified for both very local journeys to market towns such as Llanrwst, but also local towns in neighboring authorities such as Ruthin, Corwen, Denbigh and Rhyl. There was also a need for longer distance journeys from across the authority to regional health facilities such as Ysbyty Gwynedd in Bangor, Ysbyty Glan Clwyd and Wrexham Maelor hospitals.

The study recommended that transport links be affordable, acceptable, accessible and that people are made aware of them. These changes include[29]:

- Coordinating services between Blaenau Ffestiniog and Llandudno should be improved.
- Adequate parking for an interchange in Betws y Coed and Llanrwst.
- Improve infrastructure including better shelters.
- A direct/express link from Llanrwst and Betws y Coed to places like Wrexham which would improve employment journeys.
- Encourage operators to sell a discount ticket for families and job seekers.
- Improve connections and times at key destination.
- Promote car sharing and accessibility to transport.
- Simplify marketing information and the use of social media.

Key findings from the Rural Households survey also mirrors some of the above findings:

- Low income households are more likely to experience difficulties in accessing key services.
- Respondents who lived in a village or in a property in open countryside were more likely to report difficulties in accessing services rather than those located in larger rural settlements.

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[27] Conwy Unmet Needs 2013: 7
[28] Conwy Unmet Needs 2013: 7
[29] Conwy Unmet Needs 2013: 10

- The highest proportions of respondents that reported difficulties in accessing hospital services were in Powys (42%) Gwynedd (28%) and Ceredigion (20%). While these were the same areas as in 2010, the proportions that reported difficulties were considerably higher apart from Gwynedd, which had improved by one percentage point.
- Overall public transport and policing caused the most concern.
- Overall access to leisure and recreational facilities had improved.

The Hiraethog consultation also identified the same concerns for transport in the area.

- **Housing**

One of the most quoted weaknesses is a lack of affordable housing for local people and young local people in general. 20/79 of those interviewed suggested that having some form of "*affordable,*" and "*sustainable,*" housing in the area would have many benefits. The situation as it stands means that Hiraethog has an increasing aging population because "*younger people are having to move out because of a lack of affordable housing.*"

Being able to provide housing so that young people can stay within their communities is key to sustaining the communities within Hiraethog:

> "*Local housing for local people so that they can stay in the area.*"

This will also affect Welsh language retention and will influence local service use as well as the number of children going to local schools. The Deep rural Report 2009 suggests that 75 per cent of respondents considered a school to be "essential," in their local area, 21 per cent considered it to be "*desirable.*" Keeping the rural area populated is therefore an important consideration for the Hiraethog Development strategy.

- **Ageing population**

The ageing of the rural population is evident from the figures for the Hiraethog area and discussed as a finding of the Rural Business Survey 2014. With regards to age, the report shows that business owners were tending to be older, with fewer in the youngest age group (up to 39). The proportion of those owners age 65 plus had increased by 6 per cent.[30]

- **General living costs**

Having higher living costs is seen to be a weakness to living in Hiraethog; 12/79 of those interviewed suggest that having to pay more for fuel as well as food costs and having to pay extra to access leisure services, is affecting them:

> "*It can cost quite a lot to live here. You have to take into account travel to places as well as fuel. It seems that if you want to live the dream you have to pay for it.*"

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[30] Rural Business Survey 2014: 45

- **The Digital Infrastructure/Broadband**

Broadband and a lack of a decent broadband service in general was identified as a weakness to living in Hiraethog for 12/79 participants:

> *"Probably having a poor digital infrastructure.  That can be tough sometimes as a business."*

> *"Poor broadband service.  It drives me mad."*

The key findings of the Deep Rural report (2009) also reflect the views of those participants above. Fifty-eight per cent of respondents considered broadband to be *"essential,"* and 33 per cent stated that it was *"desirable,"* however only 51 per cent of total respondents received broadband services.

## 3.4.2.  Economic activity

The main weaknesses regarding the economic activity in the area according to the participants interviewed are as follows:

- **Dependency on Agriculture and Public Sector Funding**

In contrast to those that identified the diversity of the local economy as a strength, the areas dependency on agriculture and public sector funding is of concern to 18/79 of those interviewed.  Though some participants have expressed this point to be a strength, many are worried how public sector funding cuts as well as changes to things like single farm payments, will affect the local economy and the communities. Some of those interviewed describe the economy as *"problematic,"* and *"fragmented,"* and that there is a lack of *"collaboration,"* and *"joined up approaches,"* towards strengthening the economy:

> *"It's changeable.  Changes to farming grants as well as to public sector funding will make a difference."*

> *"It's a fine line.  Agriculture is in decline and changes to public funding will affect those working in the public sector."*

> *"Availability of a ready pool of skills, especially if attracting specialised industries from elsewhere.  High cost of town centre retail spaces in Denbigh and Ruthin. The inability of small farms to be economically viable leading to closure of individual farms and their absorption into larger entities. Farmers of small to medium farms have to find additional jobs to survive."*

- **Lack of Identity/Branding**

Having a lack of "*brand awareness,*" for the Hiraethog areas was seen as a weakness for those interviewed within the tourist industry. It is argued by 15/79 of the participants that having a local brand which would encompass all of the Hiraethog's local businesses, activities and a "*joined up approach,*" towards local projects would benefit the community and allow the area to develop its economy around this brand.

The Destination Hiraethog report was written to implement a number of key actions that were suggested as a result of the 2008 Hiraethog study which conclude in the production of the 'Hiraethog Area Sustainable Tourism Development Plan.' In order to implement these key actions, Conwy County Borough Council received funding from the Rural Development Plan (RDP) 2007-2013. The Hiraethog project was led by the Conwy Rural Local Action Group under Axis 3 of the RDP. A rural Tourism officer was also responsible for overseeing the project on behalf of the RDP. In October 2012, NCompass consultants were appointed through a tender process to take forward the project actions and key tasks under the management of the RDP and the Rural Tourism Officer.

A total of 43 Conwy Hiraethog businesses were consulted through a mapping process which showed that there were at least 56 tourism operated businesses in the area. Out of the 13 who did not participate, three declined and the other 10 were accommodation providers who use the services of well-known booking agencies and therefore could not be contacted directly.

The Hiraethog project is one of three projects being managed my NCompass consultants across Conwy which also include Conwy Pilgrim's Poem and Sacred Doorways. According to the report:

> "*Each of these projects requires the development of interpretive facilities for visitors, trail linkage and improvements, and two are focused on cultural heritage.*"[31]

It was felt that it was important to link these projects to ensure that community interpretation plans were integrated in ways that provided the visitor with a streamlined experience which avoids duplication.

It was argued that the Hiraethog "brand," lacked strength and is not sufficiently robust to market or to promote the region. Any marketing strategy should focus on grouped features such as "*Historic treasures, extreme biking or hiking, and specific markets,*"[32] rather than the attempt to invest in a Hiraethog brand.

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[31] Destination Hiraethog: 6
[32] Destination Hiraethog: 61

Cross marketing and promotion of local businesses, attractions and features could be further maximised with the improved distribution of tourist leaflets across Hiraethog. Sixty-five per cent of the businesses interviewed for this study suggested that they informally signpost and provide information to visitors about local attractions, places to eat and places to stay.

The online and digital media presence of Hiraethog's business attractions and communities presents a "mixed bag," and information about communities in particular is often disjointed, incomplete, out of date or inaccurate. Business communities across Hiraethog have highlighted inadequate or poor quality signage as a major issue which needs to be addressed if the tourism infrastructure and landscape across the region is to be improved.

- **Dependency on tourism**

Though tourism is an important aspect of the economy in Hiraethog, 24/79 of the participants suggest that there is an "*over-dependency*," on this sector. This is a weakness for the participants as they feel that many of the jobs associated with the tourism sector are seasonal and mainly low-paid. Also Hiraethog is considered as a place "*where people have to want to go to,*" that is, it does not possess a brand that attracts people:

> "That it [the economy] isn't thinking cleverly. It depends too much on tourism or farming, there needs to be something more dependable too."

It is not regarded as a sustainable source of income for those living in the Hiraethog area.

### 3.4.3. Environment & landscape

A large proportion of the participants interviewed do not believe that there are any weaknesses to the environment and landscape of Hiraethog. 12/79 of those interviewed suggest that they "*weren't sure*," what the main weaknesses of the area were. Other weaknesses included:

- **Utilising the Environment**

As in the economy of the area, participants (23/79) believe that a lack of good advertising and branding of the natural environment is also a weakness. Also, participants believe that "*not enough is being made,*" of the environment and natural landscape of the area:

> "That it isn't being used in the best way possible. It has a wealth of natural resources that could be used for energy or sustainable energy sources. I'm not completely convinced by wind, I think that there are other options rather than wind farms, but the area does have scope to be developed."

This point will be discussed further in the opportunities section of the chapter.

- **Transport**

Transport is also a weakness for the landscape and environment as participants (27/79) feel that its rural setting has an effect on local services:

> *"It requires transport to reach it, something that is lacking in rural Conwy."*

### 3.4.4. Culture & heritage

The weaknesses of the culture and heritage is again based on a lack of marketing and branding. For example, one participant suggested:

> *"I'm not sure that it's been thought about enough in relation to how the culture and heritage is displayed to local people and tourists."*

It's suggested by some of those interviewed (10/79) that having a brand to the area which also includes the Welsh language would ensure that tourists would be aware of its importance.

- **Cultural Divides**

The language is a political topic when discussing Hiraethog communities. Three out of 79 participants suggested that there are "*divides*," between predominantly Welsh speaking and English speaking communities. This includes references to "*incomers,*" and how there is a general lack of awareness as far as the importance of the language.

### 3.4.5. Leisure activities

Having access to leisure services is also linked to a lack of affordable and accessible transport to people in the area. Participants do not suggest that there is a lack of services and leisure facilities in the area, rather that only some people within the communities can access them, depending on whether they have private transport or not. As expressed by one participant:

> *"Though they are available to people, they are only available to those who can drive or who have access to some kind of transport. This can leave people behind."*

This point is also made in the Rural Households survey 2013, where Low income households are more likely to experience difficulties in accessing key services. Respondents who lived in a village or in a property in open countryside were more likely to report difficulties in accessing services rather than those located in larger rural settlements.

The Rural Services survey also reflects these findings. This report provides an overview of results from a survey of rural services in Wales, which was conducted by the Wales WRO in 2013[33]. The 2013 survey explored service provision within each community; changes in the levels of provision; perceptions of service levels; quality and accessibility of services; and problems experienced by different groups. More broadly, the project provides evidence to allow the Welsh Government to monitor the impact of its policies and inform the implementation of the RDP.

An enduring theme throughout the four WRO surveys is public transport. Whatever the rationale for low levels of public transport provision, it must result in additional challenges for those not able to drive and those who live in service deprived communities, particularly the less affluent, the young the elderly and those with certain disabilities.

## 3.5.    Opportunities

### 3.5.1.   A place where people can live

- **Opportunities for the Community**

Ensuring a "*community voice,*" was identified as an opportunity by 22/79 of those interviewed. This means that empowering communities to have a say in the development of their area, as well as giving them the opportunity to express ideas and suggest "*sustainable projects,*" which would benefit their communities:

> "*Supporting the community in different ways. This could be through community projects or through supporting local businesses and getting people to buy local.*"

> "*Ensuring that the voice of the population/community is heard, respected and listened to.*"

> "*Think about how the community could take more responsibilities for their community. You could argue that because it is so rural that people need to take more control of the services available in their communities.*"

As a result being able to provide support that will empower the community and that will be readily available to them is seen as an opportunity for Hiraethog.

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[33] A copy of the report is available here:
http://www.walesruralobservatory.org.uk/sites/default/files/Servicesper cent20Reportper cent202010per cent20FINALper cent20AUG2012.pdf

### 3.5.2. Economic activity

- **Business Collaboration**

Better collaboration between local businesses, the local community and community groups and organisations is considered to be an opportunity in the area. This is especially true when interviewing those businesses in the tourism sector (32/79) as they believe that working closely with the tourist board, both local authorities and community groups, will further attract visitors to the area:

> *"Improve trails around the area and advertise them more! North Wales is more beautiful than the Lake District and has more to offer but we get fewer visitors as we do not market ourselves as well as we should."*

Better collaboration also comes hand in hand with business support, and the availability of funding for this, especially with those farms wishing to diversify their businesses. This will be discussed further in the point below.

- **Availability of Funding for Farm Diversification**

Changes to public sector funding as well as changes to farming payments are seen as opportunities for farms to consider farm diversification. As expressed by some of the participants:

> *"Support young people and young people from farming families to create new opportunities on the farm or think about farm diversification."*

> *"There is scope to develop more on the tourism side as well as helping farmers to diversify."*

This is interlinked with the provision of local business support and opportunities for tourism as some participants (10/79) suggest that the area could be an important platform on which to display and market local food and craft products.

### 3.5.3. Environment & landscape

The opportunities for the environment and landscape are also linked with the economy and supporting and promoting local tourism. This includes greater support for outdoor tourism and promoting the Hiraethog brand to include outdoor pursuits and *"adventure tourism."*

- **Outdoor Pursuits Sector**

The increasing demand for outdoor pursuits was regarded as an opportunity for Hiraethog, this was also linked to the branding of the area. Hiraethog has already attracted businesses such as Tree Top Adventures in Betws y Coed, and Down Below caving that promote adventure tourism. Branding Hiraethog as an adventure tourism and outdoor pursuits destination would further benefit the economy as well as "*utilise the environment and landscape,*" according to 13/79 of the participants.

- **Renewable Energy**

The potential to produce renewable energy across Hiraethog was suggested as an important factor for the area and especially amongst the farmers and residents interviewed. Though renewable energy is an emotive subject for the communities of Hiraethog due to the development of the Clocaennog wind farm, 19/79 of the participants interviewed suggest that it is an opportunity for the environment of the area. It is suggested that using hydro and energy from wood could be sources of renewable and sustainable energy. However, the threat of wind farms and the pylons from wind farms in general are not seen as opportunities.

## 3.5.4. Culture & heritage

- **Awareness of Culture and Heritage**

Participants were eager to suggest that the opportunities for the Culture and Heritage for the area should include the Welsh language and the investment in the language in Hiraethog and its service hubs:

> *"More investment, more capacity building, more strategic and integrated approach to marketing the area as a destination."*

> *"Make more of the historical background of the area e.g. Llewellyn's resting place in St Crwst Church. Could be linked to guided historical walks, marketed to bus tour companies."*

> *"Make sure that the language is a priority but without marginalising people in communities."*

This also included an increasing interest and awareness of the culture and heritage of the area as tourism products.

## 3.5.5. Leisure activities

Marketing and branding are also associated with the leisure activity opportunities, this includes *"better signage,"* for local walks and *"accessible maps and footpaths*."

> *"The whole network of footpaths and bridleways could be better promoted to visitors to the area. Some are seldom used despite being wonderful walks. It would benefit the area by encouraging more tourists to stay longer in Hiraethog instead of losing them to the more well-known areas of Snowdonia/West Wales."*

## 3.6. Threats

The threats to the Hiraethog area identified were mainly based on wider national cuts and developments, but also developments at a local level.

### 3.6.1. A place where people can live

The main threats to the area as a place to live are as follows:

- **Public Funding Cuts**

Changes to local authority funding and further cuts within the public sector are seen as a threat to participants (17/79). The worry is that inevitable cuts will further effect access to services in Hiraethog as well as employment opportunities for the people living there:

> *"Lack of investment, not making the best of its natural assets. Reduced local authority support for communities."*

Cuts will also affect farming subsidies which is seen as a threat to the culture and tradition of farming as well as threats as a place to live.

- **Housing Shortages**

As previously mentioned, housing is an important consideration for the area as well as a shortage of affordable housing becoming a threat to local communities as a result of outmigration of young people. An aging population is also considered to be a threat to the housing shortage.

This is also reflected in the study of The Experiences and Aspirations of Young people in Rural Wales 2013. This study examines rural youth (15-25) migration patterns and trends in rural Wales, focussing on six rural communities. These include:

- Botwnnog, Llyn Peninsula
- Talybont, Ceredigion
- Crickhowell, Powys
- Pwllglas, Denbighshire
- Fishguard and Goodwick, Pembrokeshire
- Bodedern, Anglesey

The study used a mixed methods approach involving an analysis of population data, a desk review of existing data and policy and a case study research in the six rural communities listed above.  The key findings of the approach include[34]:

- That several strong motivators for young people to stay in rural areas were identified.  Examples would be a sense of connection associated with the family, the Welsh language, social networks and local culture.
- A key motivation for staying or returning to rural Wales later in life was the high quality of rural life identified.
- The high cost of living, a lack of services, the lack of higher education facilities (and subsequent opportunities) and high potential of unemployment were identified as drivers of young people's decisions to leave rural Wales.
- Research suggests, on balance, that Wales will suffer a net loss of young people in the future.
- There is a perceived lack of affordable housing on a potentially low income base

## 3.6.2.  Economic activity

Public funding cuts are also considered as threats to economic activity in the area:

> *"Public cuts.  People have less money and I think it's only now that we're beginning to feel the real credit crunch in Wales."*

It is suggested that funding cuts will affect those working in the public sector as well as those benefitting from grants and funding opportunities:

> *"We haven't yet felt the full force of the recession and that it will hit us worse. Anything that affects farming will have a huge effect on the area."*

- **Wind-farms**

Participants (34/79) express that wind farms in Hiraethog will be a threat to the area as it will "*Ruin the beauty and stop tourists from wanting to come here.*"

> *"More wind-farms. More electricity poles and pylons. More caravan & camping sites."*

It is felt that wind farms pose a potential threat to both the environment and natural landscape of the area.

Other threats include a lack of businesses investing in larger towns such as Denbigh and Ruthin and a "*dying high street,*" with more empty shops which deter both tourists and local people alike.

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[34] http://wefo.wales.gov.uk/publications/publications/monitoringevaluation/programmeevaluations/youngpeopler-uralwales/?lang=en

### 3.6.3.  Environment & landscape

The largest threat to the environment and landscape in the area is considered to be the development of wind farms and pylons (35/79):

*"The wind farms.  No one really knows how it's going to work.  I don't think that it's necessarily a bad thing, I'm just not sure how it's going to work."*

Though there is evident opposition to the wind farms amongst participants, there is also a lack of understanding about how the wind farms would benefit or effect the local area.  This could also be considered a threat.

### 3.6.4.  Culture & heritage

Threats to the culture and heritage primarily included threats to the Welsh language:

*"Further decline in the Welsh language."*

Participants also believed that public funding cuts would also have a negative effect:

*"Lack of funding and volunteer support, insufficient marketing and promotion means inadequate funding to sustain heritage attractions such as Sir Henry Jones Museum. Further losses in funding available and increased competition for the same funding."*

### 3.6.5.  Leisure activities

Further cuts to public funding poses a further threat to the communities of Hiraethog according to participants (31/79).  Further cuts will effect both transportation and leisure facilities and will affect the disposable income that people have to spend on leisure facilities:

*"Poor transport so that people can't access them and they have to close."*

# 4. Strategic context

**Key points**

Common issues identified by strategies and action plans include:

- Developing people – education and skills.
- Maintaining the areas culture and heritage including addressing the decline in the number of Welsh speakers.
- Promote and develop the use of the areas heritage and outstanding natural environment.
- Supporting the economy and specifically local enterprises.
- Coordinate tourism / visitor activities.
- Encouraging people to live healthy lives.
- Addressing issues arising from the aging population.
- Communicating and engaging with people and communities.
- Capitalising on the opportunities created by digital technology.

## 4.1. Introduction

A strategy and action plan for relatively small areas such as Hiraethog needs to 'fit' with those for the local authority areas and region as a whole all of which will have analysed the needs of the local area and region. This section summarises some of those key strategies and policies with a view to understanding which elements actions in Hiraethog could help to deliver.

## 4.2. Local Authority Single Integrated Plans

The purpose of the Single Integrated Plans (SIP), a requirement for each Local Authority in Wales and prepared by the County's Local Service Board (LSB), is to present a clear picture of how the public, private and voluntary sectors can work together to improve the quality of life of an area. They are based on detailed needs analysis of the areas. Reviewing them is therefore useful in terms of providing an indication of the 'big picture' for the Hiraethog area.

## 4.2.1. Joint Conwy and Denbighshire Local Service Board

The Conwy and Denbighshire LSB is a joint board operating across the two Counties, which was set up in September 2011 as a result of merging both Conwy's and Denbighshire's Local Service Boards. The Conwy and Denbighshire LSB is a non-statutory partnership made up of representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors and is responsible for overseeing strategic partnerships in both counties.

The Conwy and Denbighshire LSB is responsible for two SIPs - 'One Conwy' which covers Conwy and 'The BIG Plan' which covers Denbighshire. Each of the SIPs are underpinned by a strategic needs assessment (SNA) and an extensive consultation process with the public. These approaches are carried out to better understand the issues across both Counties while allowing the Joint LSB to become more evidence driven and more responsive to the changing needs and priorities in the community.

## 4.2.2. One Conwy

Published in April 2012, the SIP for Conwy ('One Conwy') is the area's Local Service Board's vision for the future of Conwy County Borough[35]. The document sets out the direction for all Public Service agencies, with the aim of improving the lives of the people of Conwy. There are also suggestions on what you can do to help make Conwy County Borough a better place to live, work and visit.

The Plan sets out eight outcomes that it will seek to achieve during the period 2012-2025 which are that people in Conwy:

1. Are educated and skilled;
2. Are safe and feel safe;
3. Live in safe and appropriate housing;
4. Are healthy and independent;
5. Live in a county which has a thriving economy;
6. Live in a sustainable environment;
7. Live in a county where heritage, culture and the Welsh language thrive; and
8. Are informed, included and listened to.

As part of the development of the SIP, a strategic needs assessment was undertaken and published in September 2013[36]. The assessment draws upon a variety of information sources, including ONS statistics, the needs assessments of partner organisations and various local authority documents. Eight principle needs in Conwy are identified:

1. Developing and delivering cohesive strategies to reengage young people and long term unemployed adults in work;
2. Addressing domestic abuse and the long term impact on the adult and child victims;

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[35] A copy of the Conwy SIP is available here: http://www.conwy.gov.uk/doc.asp?cat=7197&doc=31093
[36] A copy of the assessment is available here:
http://www.conwy.gov.uk/upload/public/attachments/580/Strategic_Needs_Assessment.pdf

3. Responding to the welfare reform and its impact on housing, specifically the impact of the bedroom tax and the shortage of appropriate social housing;
4. Tackling alcohol misuse, particularly women's attitudes to drinking;
5. Continued support for the numerous micro, small and medium enterprises in Conwy throughout the challenging economic climate;
6. Protecting citizens from flooding by improving defences and raising awareness;
7. Halting the decline in the use of the Welsh language and promoting a Welsh speaking workforce; and
8. Capitalising on digital technologies to harness the citizen voice, and ensuring inclusive, accessible, and meaningful engagement is available for all citizens in Conwy.

### 4.2.3.  The Big Plan

The BIG Plan was launched in July 2011 and sets out the plan for Denbighshire for 2011-2014, and has eight outcomes:

1. Older people lead independent and fulfilled lives.
2. People and places in Rhyl benefit from regeneration activity.
3. Children and young people achieve, and have skills for life.
4. Vulnerable families are supported to live a life free from poverty, where they can be independent and flourish.
5. The needs of our rural communities are recognised and met.
6. People in Denbighshire have healthy lifestyles.
7. Children, young people and vulnerable adults are safe.
8. Denbighshire has a thriving and sustainable economy, and a skilled workforce.

The BIG Plan is due to end in 2014 with its successor 'The Denbighshire Well-being Plan' to take its place from December 2014. The Well-being Plan (2014 – 2017) addresses the overall heading theme of 'Supporting Independence and Resilience in Denbighshire' which is supported by the following three outcomes:

- Outcome 1: People are enabled by those around them to be active, connected and contribute to their community.
- Outcome 2: People are able to take notice of what is going on around them and, in doing so, people keep learning about their world.
- Outcome 3: People are able to prioritise their wellbeing and actively plan to maintain their independence.

The Well-being Plan will demonstrate benefits of increased stakeholder involvement and community engagement that will contribute to the strategic integrated needs assessment and identification of priorities to be implemented from 2015 onwards.

### 4.2.4.  Focus Areas 2014

In February 2014 a review session was held to discuss the working practices of the Joint Conwy & Denbighshire LSB with a view to ensuring continuous improvement of the joint board. It was decided that, for the purposes of concentrating effort and focusing the work of the Joint LSB, that the board adopt one priority outcome – Healthy and Independent. Under this Outcome, themes based from evidence would be adopted by the Joint LSB to concentrate efforts and resources into achieving tangible results.

The Strategic Needs Assessment has indicated that there are three focus areas the LSB need to concentrate on in 2014:

- Alcohol Misuse
- Childhood Obesity
- Ageing Population

## 4.3.  Destination management plans

Destination Management is a process of coordinating all the aspects of a destination that contribute to a visitor's experience, taking account of the needs of visitors, local residents, businesses and the environment. A Destination Management Plan (DMP) is a shared statement of intent to manage a destination over a stated period of time, articulating the roles of the different stakeholders and identifying clear actions that they will take.

### 4.3.1.  Destination Conwy

The following Vision Statement is noted as a reflection of the main strengths of the County Borough: *"Conwy County an area of outstanding natural environment and dramatic scenery, that has a wealth of heritage, arts and culture, food, sports, business tourism and adventure activities that provide visitors with a dynamic and lively experience."* Destination Conwy's development is described as a key feature of the county's tourism industry and its evolution, structure, operation, image and economy as well as 'a key building block for developing both domestic and international tourism through its function of providing a focus for visitors and investment in tourism-related activities'.

The main aims of Destination Development are to:

- Encourage effective consultation and collaboration with all stakeholders;
- Focus on attracting investment and infrastructure projects; and
- Aid increased local employment and ensure that there are adequate workers to service demand.

An action-plan was developed which although now out of date (it was for 2011-2014) provides a useful review of the actions perceived by the industry and stakeholders involved as being necessary in order to achieve the vision noted above. Some of the key actions identified are noted below:

*Destination management: coordinating activities and services that impact on the visitor e.g. integrated transport, public conveniences, car parking.*

- Identify key problematic sites that under-mine the visitor experience and work with partners to support the appropriate development plans.
- Support the managed development of 'town centres' to under-pin 'Purple Flag' application in support of evening economy.
- Support the managed development of our parks, nature reserves and coastline which under-pin 'Green Flag' and 'Blue Flag/ Sea-side Awards' applications.
- To promote a Destination Conwy ethos towards Customer Service through training and on-going personal development of staff and partner organisations.

*Destination Development: maximising opportunities to celebrate Conwy's unique heritage and outstanding natural environment.*

- Rural development - Stables, Church Tourism, North Wales Cycling Centre of Excellence.
- Heritage Tourism - Support the development and promotion of Conwy County's unique heritage offer.
- Support Strategic Events.

*Destination marketing: ensuring that Conwy's existing brands of Llandudno, Conwy Town and Betws-y-Coed maintain their popularity with visitors. In addition, working with partners to further develop the emerging tourism in the rest of the Conwy area.*

- Provide marketing support to promote Mountain Biking in Rural Conwy Project.
- Develop a strategy to ensure maximum impact and co-ordination of web-sites, branding opportunities, etc.
- Develop a network of interactive tourism kiosks, tourism information points & tourism information guides.

## 4.4.   Denbighshire Destination Management Plan

The DMP for Denbighshire sets the parameters for tourism development within the county for the 2014-17 period. The following priorities are identified:

(1) Create an effective model to ensure a coordinated approach to destination management
- Establish a Denbighshire Destination Management Steering Group.
- Strengthen Denbighshire Tourism Forum.

(2) Ensure Town and Area Plans connect with the Destination Management Plan
- Ensure engagement takes place between stakeholders to produce a coordinated approach between the town plans and the Destination Management Plan.

(3) Make destination management relevant to the business community.
- Ensure tourism skills are being tackled through business engagement.
- Improve sign-posting for training and business support.

(4) Audit our tourism product to set baseline data.

(5) Promote Denbighshire through the North East Wales brand to the business community.

(6) Develop a coordinated approach to events that feeds into Denbighshire County Council's Events Strategy 2014-2020.
- Provide additional opportunities for businesses to engage with events and offer them opportunities for additional business.
- Identify and attract events which extend the tourism season.
- Identify and attract events that increase the length of visitor stay and spend.

## 4.5.   North Wales economic ambition: a strategy for change

Prepared by the North Wales Economic Ambition Board which brings together the Local Authorities for the region, the vision set out in this strategy is for *'A confident and outward looking region with a diverse and high value economy providing a range of quality employment opportunities for its people'*.

The principal outcome required is described as an increase in productivity, competitiveness and growth. This will be measured by (reducing) the gap between (a) the regional and national annual growth rate in regional GVA; and (b) the gap between those areas which are lagging behind the regional average growth rate and those performing more strongly. It is recognised that delivering this outcome will require improvements across a range of indicators, including:

I.     Increase the number of jobs in key sectors such as advanced manufacturing, knowledge based and local carbon sectors.
II.    Increase investment from domestic and international companies.
III.   A stronger support sector to underpin the attractiveness of the region to new and expanding businesses.
IV.    Increase innovation and business start-ups, provide effective support to growing companies and support improved productivity more generally.
V.     Greater connectivity supporting business and employment growth and labour market efficiency.
VI.    Improve skills levels throughout the workforce particularly in those sectors where skill deficits are acute.
VII.   Reduce the level of youth unemployment to below the UK average and increase economic activity of people currently outside the labour market.
VIII.  Create a vibrant business base where companies can innovate and flourish and the region becomes a recognised place to do business.

Four 'strategic issues' are described:

**Economic leadership:** The lack of co-ordination and strong leadership on key strategic issues facing the region. The local authorities have come together with a view to addressing the strategic priorities identified and realising their enhanced leadership potential from acting together and providing a stronger voice for North Wales.

**Rebalancing the economy to increase growth and productivity:** The public sector is in many parts of the region a larger employer compared to the UK. There is a need to rebalance the economy through support for the growth of the private sector with a view to improving the range and quality of employment opportunities. This has wider ramifications in terms of increasing new firm formation rates and levels of entrepreneurialism, support for (high growth, low carbon technology and advanced manufacturing) businesses as well as addressing wider supply side constraints (finance, infrastructure, skills).

**Address peripherality & improve our infrastructure:** This is a factor affecting much of rural North Wales, the north west of the region but especially Anglesey. The latter continues to exhibit many of the classic characteristics of a peripheral region, including a very narrow industrial base, low levels of entrepreneurship and low job density. Addressing the very poor performance of Anglesey is also important to the wider region. There is a case for enhanced collaboration providing greater critical mass and a stronger voice for North Wales on key strategic infrastructure investments that will benefit the wider regional economy.

**Upgrade the skills base, reduce inactivity & tackle youth unemployment:** The issue of quality of employment as well as the more limited presence of higher level skills are noted together. This is because measures to tackle this (and hence of course the relatively low level of GVA per head), need to address both supply and demand components in order to ensure regional benefits are maximised. Effective measures need to address the supply, demand and effective use of higher level of skills. This is likely to imply a strong role for both further and higher education colleges in the region as well as analysis of future supply of - and demand for - skills bearing in mind both demographic change and current curriculum provision. It also emphasises the need to grow high value added industries including notably advanced manufacturing and low carbon technology sectors. Moreover, these are issues that can only be tackled at a wider strategic level reflecting the scale of labour market and commuting areas. Finally, a further area where the region appears to face some common issues concerns that of high incapacity benefit levels generally and high levels of youth unemployment across the region. This further suggests some engagement with the health and education sectors in tackling these issues.

## 4.6. Rural Development Programme for Wales 2014-2020

At the time of writing this report, the Rural Development Programme for Wales (RDP) for 2014-2020 had not been finalised, a draft of the operational programme having been submitted to the European Commission by the Welsh Government in July 2014. It is anticipated that the new programme will be operational from January 2015 and, if approved, it will provide £953m of European and Welsh Government funding over its lifetime.

The proposed RDP is based on an analysis of the current situation in the rural parts of Wales as well as a SWOT review. Hiraethog is, obviously, a rural area so a review of that analysis, and the priorities that have been accordingly identified, is useful for the development of this strategy. Three objectives have been proposed for the Wales RDP based on that analysis[37]:

1. Increase the productivity, diversity and efficiency of farming and forestry businesses, improving their competitiveness and resilience, reducing their reliance on subsidies;
2. Improve the environment, encouraging sustainable land management practices, the sustainable management of our natural resources and climate action; and
3. Promote strong, sustainable rural economic growth and encourage community-led local development.

The RDP will be delivered via a number of schemes, summarised in Appendix 3. These are included in order to provide an indication of potential support and sources of funding for the actions set out later in the report.

## 4.7. Structural Funds 2014-2020

For the period 2014-2020 West Wales and the Valleys has qualified again as a 'lesser developed' region and will benefit from the highest level of EU grant aid of approximately £1.4bn for the third successive programme period.  As with the RDP, it is useful to briefly look at the proposed programme with a view to informing the priorities that are being identified within the Strategy for Hiraethog.

The proposed 2014-20 Welsh Programmes, summarised in the table that follows, will (subject to European Commission approval) put balanced sustainable development as a central organising principle and will support the overall Welsh Government aim of improving the lives of people in Wales.

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[37] Source: Wales Rural Development Programme 2014-2020: Final Proposals. Available here: http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/environmentandcountryside/wales-rdp-2014-2020-final-proposals/?lang=en

The Economic Prioritisation Framework (EPF) is an evolving document, serving as a guide for the utility of EU funds during the period of 2014-2020. There are seven thematic economic opportunities identified:

- Energy;
- Food security and farming;
- Resource efficiency and environmental goods and services;
- Exploitation of ICT assets and opportunities of the digital market place;
- Advanced manufacturing;
- Life sciences and health; and
- Tourism, recreation and leisure.

| Fund | Priority | Changes sought |
|---|---|---|
| **ERDF** | Research and innovation | • Increase capacity of Research Institutions to attract competitive and private RD&I investment<br>• Increase numbers of businesses carrying out innovation<br>• Increase commercialisation of RD&I within the programme area<br>• Increase R&I capability and exploitation for low-carbon technologies, processes and services |
| | SME competiveness | • Increase number and survival of SMEs (including Social Enterprises)<br>• Increase productivity in SMEs (primary micro-SMEs), in particular through greater ICT exploitation and involvement in the digital economy<br>• Increase size (in terms of employment growth) of businesses (may include investments in productivity growth) by addressing barriers to growth at key stages)<br>• More high growth businesses |
| | Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency | • Increasing use of small scale renewable energy<br>• Contribute to development of marine energy sector<br>• Improve energy efficiency in housing, whilst helping tackle fuel poverty and develop supply chains |
| | Connectivity and Sustainable Urban Development | • Improve connectivity by addressing specific congestion bottlenecks in poor quality parts of transport network (TEN-T)<br>• Greater urban and labour mobility through sustainable transport and improved access to employment opportunities<br>• Improving access to strategic sites for jobs and growth<br>• Completion of ICT and mobile networks<br>• Increased sustainable and quality employment though targeted and integrated urban development |
| **ESF** | Tackling Poverty through Sustainable Employment | • Reducing unemployment amongst those at risk of poverty and discrimination<br>• Reducing economic inactivity, worklessness and number of workless households<br>• Increase Social Inclusion through sustainable employment<br>• Reduction in barriers to sustaining employment and fulltime working |
| | Skills for Growth | • Increase the skills levels of the employed workforce and progression to intermediate level skills and above<br>• Increase higher level skills with a focus on Research and Innovation<br>• Increase Leadership and management skills, organisational flexibility and workforce diversity<br>• Reduce Gender pay gap and increased number of females at senior management |
| | Youth Employment and Attainment | • Increase youth employment and employability of young people<br>• Reduction of young people who are Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET) or who are at risk of NEET<br>• Increased attainment levels amongst 11-16 year olds<br>• Increased quality of the early years and childcare workforce |

# 5. Strategy & action plan

**Key points**

- The proposed aim of the Strategy is *to sustain and developed Hiraethog as a place where people want to and are able to live, work and play utilising and sustaining the areas unique natural environment, landscape, heritage and culture*.
- This is an integrated strategy. Each of the objectives overlap and are dependent to a large extent on the other. For example, developing Hiraethog as a location where leisure and recreational activities is a critical part of sustaining the area as a place where economic activity takes place, and sustaining and developing the high quality natural environment is critical if Hiraethog is to develop as a location where recreational activities can take place.  These objectives should not, therefore be been seen in isolation from each other – they all need to be achieved for this strategy to be successful.
- Priority actions include establishing an action group / partnership in the local area which will oversee the further development and implementation of this strategy.
- The strategy and the delivery of its actions will need to be facilitated; a role which it is anticipated will be undertaken jointly by the LEADER Local Actions Groups in Conwy and Denghbishire.

## 5.1. Introduction

A strategy is basically a high level plan which has been devised to achieve a specified goal. In this instance, the strategy has three levels as described below:

- The **aim** is the ultimate ambition of the strategy (sometimes called a vision); this is what we are seeking to achieve – the impact that we want to have;
- The **objectives** sit beneath the vision and describe what needs to be achieved in order to achieve the vision – the results or outcomes we want to see achieved by actions; and
- The **actions** then describe what will be done in order that each of those aims are achieved – the activities that will be undertaken (as usually measured by 'outputs').
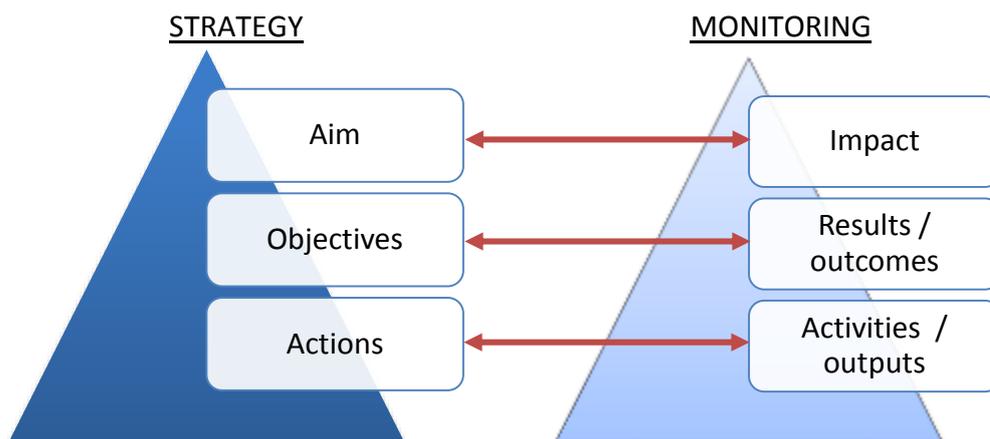
Recognising that this is a long term (20 year) strategy, two types of actions are set out, long term (20 years) and short term (10 years), the latter being more specific that the former for the obvious reason that long term actions are more difficult to define.

## 5.2. Aim

The aim of this strategy is to:

**Sustain and develop Hiraethog as a place where people want to *and* are able to live, work and play utilising and sustaining the areas unique natural environment, landscape, heritage and culture.**

## 5.3. Objectives

The objectives of the strategy are set out below:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Objective 1** | To sustain and develop Hiraethog as a place where people want to and are able to live |
| **Objective 2** | To sustain, develop and increase the value of Hiraethog as a place where economic activity takes place |
| **Objective 3** | To utilise, sustain and develop the high quality natural environment and landscape of the area |
| **Objective 4** | To sustain and utilise the culture and heritage of the Hiraethog area |
| **Objective 5** | To develop Hiraethog as a place where people undertake leisure and recreational activities |

This is an 'integrated strategy'. Each of the objectives overlap and are dependent to a large extent on the other. For example, developing Hiraethog as a location where leisure and recreational activities is a critical part of sustaining the area as a place where economic activity takes place. And, sustaining and developing the high quality natural environment is critical if Hiraethog is to develop as a location where recreational activities can take place.

These objectives should not, therefore be been seen in isolation from each other – *they are mutually supportive and all need to be achieved for this strategy to be successful*.

## 5.4. Actions

Fourteen strategic actions (20 years) actions are proposed to implement this strategy. Each of these is then broken down into more specific and shorter term actions (10 years) as summarised in the table that follows. In each instance, the shorter term actions are designed to deliver the longer term actions although it is anticipated that further actions will be added as the implementation of the strategy progresses.

With a view to illustrating the 'logic' within the strategy (i.e. the links between actions and objectives), the final column notes the objective which the proposed actions will contribute towards achieving. In keeping with the integrated approach described above, in most instances, each action will contribute towards achieving a number of the objectives.

| Strategic actions (20 years) | Shorter term actions (10 years) | | Objective to be achieved |
|---|---|---|---|
| SA1. Encourage and maintain community spirit & engagement in the area. | ST1. | Establish a Hiraethog action group / partnership | OB1: A place where people can and want to live |
| | ST2. | Facilitate the development of and then fund 'community level' projects that contribute to achieving the objectives of this strategy | OB4: A place where the Culture & Heritage are sustained and utilised |
| | ST3. | Facilitate the development of and then fund small-scale activities designed to encourage community participation | |
| SA2. Encourage and support community transport / access to key services | ST4. | Work with local retailers and suppliers to develop a 'home delivery' scheme for the area | OB1: A place where people can and want to live |
| | ST5. | Develop a community transport scheme targeted at those in most need in the area | |
| SA3. Improve the standard of local housing and property | ST6. | Provide advice and financial support to improve the standard of local housing and other property including actions to improve energy efficiency | OB1: A place where people can and want to live |
| SA4. Increase the affordability of local housing for local young people | ST7. | Explore the potential for a 'help to buy' scheme for local young people | OB1: A place where people can and want to live |
| SA5. Enable people to work from home | ST8. | Explore the potential for a 'help to work from home' scheme for the area | OB1: A place where people can and want to live<br>OB2: A place where people are economically active |
| SA6. Allow access to and make best possible use of digital technology | ST9.<br>ST10. | Address broadband and mobile phone (3G and 4G) black spots<br>Consultation on, training and grants to purchase technology for use of latest technology in homes and businesses in the area (business and domestic) | OB1: A place where people can and want to live<br>OB2: A place where people are economically active |
| SA7. Support and develop the agriculture and food sector in the area | ST11. | Establish an agri-food cluster group for businesses based in or who are active in the area and then support that cluster | OB2: A place where people are economically active |
| | ST12. | Encourage farms in the area to access the support available to them via the RDP including support for farm diversification | |
| | ST13. | Encourage and support the development of links between the area agri-food and tourism businesses | |

| Strategic actions (20 years) | Shorter term actions (10 years) | | Objective to be achieved |
|---|---|---|---|
| SA8. Support and develop he local tourism / recreation sector | ST14. | Develop a 'destination management' plan for the area (within any broader plans for Conwy, Denbighshire and the region) | OB2: A place where people are economically active<br><br>OB5: A place where people spend their leisure time |
| | ST15. | Establish a tourism / recreation cluster group for businesses based in or who are active in the area and then support that cluster | |
| | ST16. | Business advice and support for the cluster and individual businesses | |
| | ST17. | Encourage and support the development of links between the area agri-food and tourism businesses | |
| SA9. Develop and maintain anchor businesses / employers | ST18. | Develop and maintain a relationship with anchor businesses / employers | OB2: A place where people are economically active |
| SA10. Develop the next generation of local businesses | ST19. | Work with local schools / colleges to help local young people explore and test business opportunities in the local area | OB2: A place where people are economically active |
| | ST20. | Bursaries for local young people | |
| SA11. Maintain and improve the quality of the area's natural environment, landscape and biodiversity | ST21. | Encourage local farmers to engage with the Glastir scheme | OB3: A place where the landscape & environment are sustained and utilised |
| | ST22. | Fund environment, landscape and biodiversity activities that cannot be supported by Glastir | |
| SA12. Develop and promote Hiraethog as an area known for the ecosystem services that it provides | ST23. | Map out in detail opportunities to maintain / enhance ecosystem services provided in the area | OB3: A place where the landscape & environment are sustained and utilised |
| | ST24. | Develop and then support the implementation of projects designed to enhance the ecosystem services provided by the area | |
| SA13. Enable people to access the area's natural environment and landscape | ST25. | Map and review the quality of current 'access points' in the area (including walks, etc.) | OB5: A place where people spend their leisure time |
| | ST26. | Fund the development of current and new access points in consultation with the tourism / recreation business cluster group | |
| SA14. Maintain and improve the quality of the area's built environment (including heritage) | ST27. | Work with the local community to identify potential improvements to the built environment | OB4: A place where the culture & heritage are sustained and utilised |
| | ST28. | Fund works to implement those improvements identified | |

| Strategic actions (20 years) | Shorter term actions (10 years) | | Objective to be achieved |
|---|---|---|---|
| SA15.  Utilise (in an appropriate way) the opportunities presented to generate renewable energy in the area | ST29. | Map out renewable energy opportunities in Hiraethog, especially community based opportunities | OB1: A place where people can and want to live |
| | ST30. | Utilise the support available via European funding to support the implementation of those appropriate opportunities identified | OB3: A place where the landscape & environment are sustained and utilised |

Further detail regarding the actions noted is provided below together with some case studies of where similar activities have or are being undertaken.

## 5.4.1. Encourage and maintain community spirit & engagement in the area (SA1)

- **ST1. Establish a Hiraethog action group / partnership**

The SWOT analysis has identified community spirit as a key strength of the Hiraethog area. Engaging the community in the implementation of any strategy or action plan of this nature is also very important. An action group / local partnership will therefore be developed which it is proposed should draw together representatives from the local area including local residents, the private sector, the public sector and the third sector (including community groups and social enterprises). The creation of this group / partnership will be an outcome in itself due to the fact that it creates a forum for local stakeholders to participate in discussion and actions in relation to the future of the area. However, it is proposed that the group will also become the steering group for the implementation of this strategy and action plan set out in this document.

- **ST2. Facilitate the development of and then fund 'community level' projects that contribute to achieving the objectives of this strategy**

It is recognised that there will be many actions that can help to achieve the ambitions of this strategy which are not set out within it. It is also important to allow and encourage the development of further and new & innovative actions from within the local community. It is therefore proposed that a fund be established (managed by the action group described above) which local stakeholders (from the public, private and third sector) be allowed to apply for, for the implementation of projects that help to achieve one or more of the objectives of this strategy. Resource will be committed to facilitating this fund (on behalf of the action group) including working with local stakeholders and groups to develop their ideas and applications for funding.

- **ST3. Facilitate the development of and then fund small-scale activities designed to encourage community participation**

It is not proposed that the action group / partnership described above be the only action undertaken in order to support the engagement of the local community and to encourage 'community spirit' within the area. A fund will also be established which local stakeholders and groups will be able to apply for to implement projects and/or activities which are designed to further encourage community engagement in the local area. The fund will again be facilitated on behalf of the action group but managed by them (i.e. they will decide which activities are funded).

## 5.4.2. Encourage and support community transport / access to key services (SA2)

One of the issues identified in the development of this strategy was that, as it is a rural area, households in rural Hiraethog have poor transport infrastructure and access to services. The fact that this is a particular issue for some groups within the community (especially the elderly) was also identified. A number of actions are therefore proposed to seek to address this.

- <u>ST4: Work with local retailers and suppliers to develop a 'home delivery' scheme for the area</u>

The potential development of a 'home delivery scheme' for the Hiraethog area should be explored with local retailers. It is anticipated that the focus will be, in the first instance at least, on the provision of groceries (as per the case studies below). The potential to expand the service to other products and services will however also be explored from both a supply and demand perspective.

**Case study: Woodlands Farm**
Woodlands farm is based in the Lincolnshire Fens. They produce and deliver organic vegetable boxes, fresh meat, flowers, chocolate, spices, biodynamic, wholesale and more throughout Lincolnshire and the East Midlands. Produce can be ordered online and then delivered locally. They also have educational tours and courses and have good links with local schools and groups.

http://www.woodlandsfarm.co.uk

**Case study: Herbie Fruit and Veg Van**

This initiative was set up by MERCi[38] to provide affordable, fresh fruit and vegetables to residents living in areas of East Manchester (Miles Platting, Ancoats, Collyhurst, Ardwick, Clayton and Gorton) with poor access to fresh foods. Herbie operates like a mobile greengrocer. Customers can walk on board and choose from a good range of affordable fresh produce. The food co-op also supplies boxes of fruit to schools and works closely with local schools, sheltered housing, churches, health clinics and resident groups to ensure that it reaches as many people in the local community as possible.

http://www.herbie.org.uk/vegvan

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[38] An independent charity working to turn ideas into action for a sustainable future. http://www.merci.org.uk/

- **ST5: Develop a community transport scheme targeted at those in most need in the area**

Transport can be challenging in Hiraethog as it is in many rural areas, but in particular for some groups within the community. It is therefore proposed that a community transport scheme is developed and introduced. That scheme should however be targeted at those groups identified as being particularly in need – young people and (even more so), older people.

**Case study: Grass Routes Community Transport, Monmouthshire**

The Grass Routes transport scheme is a responsive flexible bus service that makes trips on request. It operates low floor, fully accessible vehicles with volunteer drivers. The scheme is operated on a membership basis and is open to all members of the community.

http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/home/streets-parking-and-transport/transport-and-travel/grass-routes-community-transport/

**Case study: Car Linc Mon**

'Car Linc Môn' is the name of the voluntary community transport scheme on the island based at Medrwn Môn. The scheme provides transport for people who are otherwise unable to make essential journeys e.g. Hospital, Doctor and Dentist appointments. The scheme provides an essential service to people who are elderly, disabled or unable to use public transport and should be able to get in and out of a car unaided. At least three working days' notice is required to arrange transport. There is a minimum cost of £3.50 for up to six miles, and 45p per mile for each additional mile.

**Case study: Hour Car**

Hour Car is a not-for-profit community Car Share scheme in the North of England and the first in the country to run its vehicles on environmentally friendlier bio-diesel. The vehicles belong to its members and can be hired as required. The scheme will also support rideshare where members can also share rides to common destinations and share the costs.

http://www.hourcar.org.uk/

### 5.4.3. Improve the standard of local housing and property (SA3)

Housing is a key element of standard of living. Whist the perception of standards of living in Hiraethog are high, it is important that those standards are maintained and, where possible, further improved. Improving the standard of housing and property can help to do that. Improvements to housing and property can also have a positive impact on the cost of living by using energy efficiency actions to reduce energy consumption and, hence, costs.

- ST6: Provide advice and financial support to improve the standard of local housing and other property including actions to improve energy efficiency

It is proposed that advice is provided to residents in the Hiraethog area on potential improvements that could be made to their property in respects of energy efficiency. Financial support would then be available to implement the recommendations that had been made. For example, insulation, heating, windows and products that generate energy.

**Case study: Green Deal Home Improvement Scheme**

The Green Deal, launched at the start of 2013, was billed as heralding a "revolution" in upgrading Britain's old and draughty housing stock. The scheme aimed to encourage households to take out loans to fund the cost of work such as installing insulation or new boilers, with the loans paid back in instalments on their energy bills over 10 to 25 years. The Green Deal Home Improvement Scheme provides assistance to claim up to £1,000 to install two energy saving improvements, with an additional £100 towards the assessment cost and an extra £500 for people who have bought their home in the past year. This could cover the entire cost of some measures, such as £500 for cavity wall insulation and £1,000 for two energy-efficient doors.

https://www.gov.uk/green-deal-energy-saving-measures/get-money-back-from-the-green-deal-home-improvement-fund

### 5.4.4. Increase the affordability of local housing for local young people (SA4)

A lack of affordable housing within the Hiraethog area, specifically for young people, has been identified as a weakness. The strategy will seek to explore this by taking action to try and make local housing more affordable for local young people.

- ST5: Explore the potential for a 'help to buy' scheme for local young people

It is proposed that the potential for a help to buy scheme specifically for young people from the Hiraethog area who cannot afford to buy a house in the area be explored. Options to be explored would include:

- *Equity loans:* a 'top-up' to the amount a home owner/purchaser can borrow from a main mortgage provider.

- *Shared ownership schemes*: Shared ownership schemes are provided through housing associations. You buy a share of your home (between 25% and 75% of the home's value) and pay rent on the remaining share.

**Bristol Community Land Trust**

Bristol Community Land Trust seeks to open up opportunities for acquiring and developing land for its members and strives to promote the cause of self-organised housing across the Bristol city region. It also aims to nurture and support locally focussed community land trusts whilst leading by example by developing environmentally sustainable, affordable housing and community based amenities. Bristol Community Land Trust is open to anyone aged 16 or over who live or work in its area of benefit (defined as the "West of England comprising the four local authority areas around Bristol which comprise the former county of Avon") with Bristol City Council area as the primary focus. The payment of £1 entitles each person to a single vote in the company.

http://bristolclt.wordpress.com/about/

**Help-to-buy Wales**

The *Homebuy scheme* is a Welsh Government scheme that offers support to households by providing an equity loan (normally 30% of the approved purchase price, but this can be increased to 50%) to assist in purchasing a property. *Homes Within Reach* is a low cost home ownership scheme that provides assistance to eligible first-time buyers trying to get on the housing ladder. The scheme is administered by a group of housing associations spread across South Wales.

http://helptobuywales.co.uk/?lang=en

## 5.4.5. Enable people to work from home (SA5)

Advances in information and communication technology is making it increasingly possible for people to work from home, something which a greater proportion of residents in Hiraethog are doing already when compared to the region as a whole. This creates an opportunity for increasing the amount and range of economic activity being undertaken in a rural area which will have knock-on benefits within the local economy in terms of the increase in demand it creates for other local services. Benefits could include[39]:

- Less need to build new workspace to accommodate employment growth;
- Reduction in commuting travel;
- Village and town centre renaissance; and
- An enhanced role for market towns providing 'hub' facilities.

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[39] Source: http://www.flexibility.co.uk/issues/policy/radar.htm

- ST8: Explore the potential for a 'help to work from home' scheme for the area

It is proposed that the potential to introduce a scheme in the Hiraethog area to facilitate and support working from home is explored. This could include:

- Funding (via a grant or a loan) the upgrading of property in the area in order to enable working from home (e.g. creating new office space or upgrading connectivity to / within a property)
- Discounted or free use of cloud based internet technology[40] for local households and/or businesses.

## 5.4.6. Allow access to and make best possible use of digital technology (SA6)

Advances in digital technology offer obvious opportunities for rural areas to address some of their key weaknesses and challenges, in particular those concerning communication and isolation, issues which the SWOT analysis identified as being issues in Hiraethog. There is however also a risk that rural areas could fall further behind their urban counterparts if they do not keep up with the pace of development meaning that local businesses, residents and visitors cannot access or make use of the technology which is a key part of modern life.

Two shorter terms actions are proposed:

- ST9: Address broadband and mobile phone (3G and 4G) black spots

- ST10: Consultation on, training and grants to purchase technology for use of latest technology in homes and businesses in the area (business and domestic)

Superfast Cymru[41], a partnership between Welsh Government and BT, builds on commercial roll-outs of fibre broadband in the country with the Welsh Government's aim being that 96 per cent of homes and businesses will have access to fibre broadband by 2016. The map that follows shows the availability and planned future coverage of superfast fibre broadband in Wales as it stood at the time of writing this strategy (September 2014). The dark purple shading means that roll-out in that exchange area is due to start in June 2015 whist the pink areas are expected to see roll-out start in March 2015. As can be seen, a large proportion of the Hiraethog area is however shaded grey which means that potential solutions are being explored and there is currently no timetable for superfast fibre broadband to be available in the area.

Mobile phone coverage in the Hiraethog area is anecdotally described as being 'patchy'[42]. This needs to be addressed especially as people and businesses make increasing use of 3G and 4G mobile telecommunications technology and mobile (wireless) internet access.

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[40] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cloud_computing
[41] http://www.superfast-cymru.com/home
[42] Information on mobile phone coverage for all the major providers is available here: http://ask.ofcom.org.uk/help/telephone/mobilecoverage and here: http://maps.ofcom.org.uk/

This action will initially explore options for addressing these 'black-spot' issues in Hiraethog and subsequently take action to help ensure that the issues being identified are overcome.

*Map 5.1: showing the roll-out timetable for superfast, fibre broadband in Wales under the Superfast Cymru Scheme*
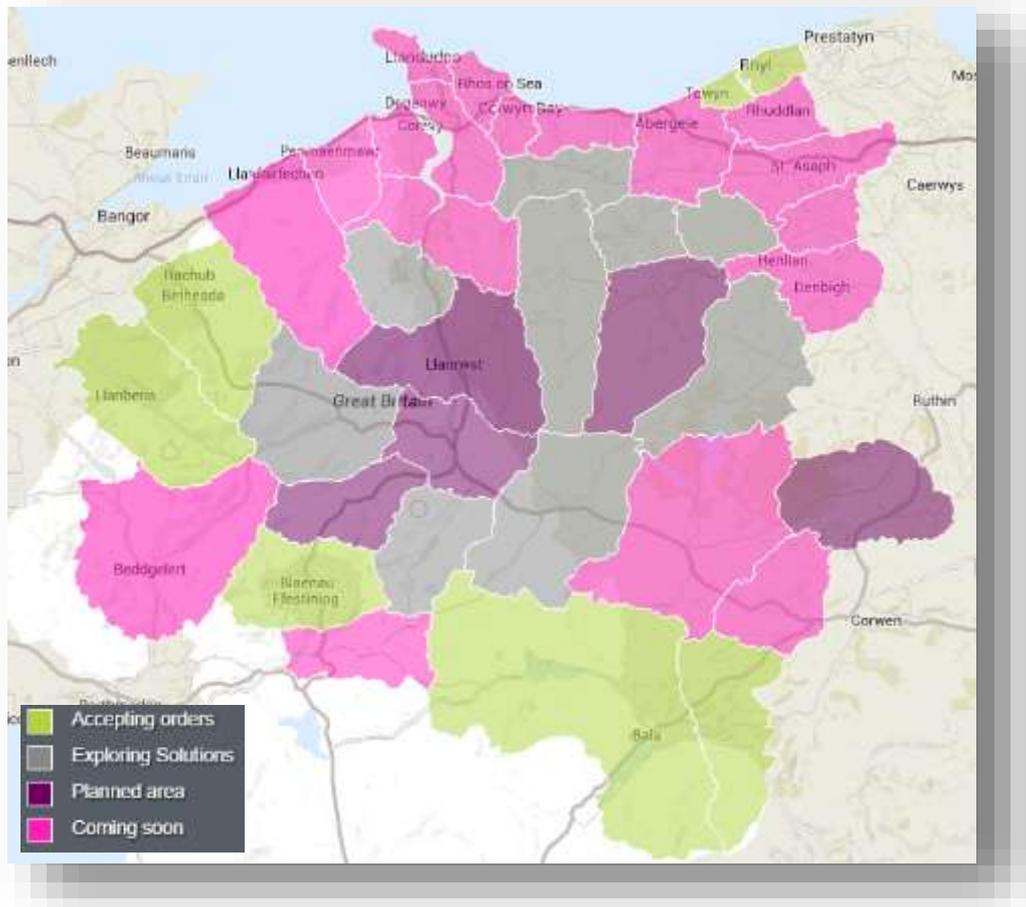


Source: http://www.superfast-cymru.com/where-and-when.
As on 29th September 2014

The strategy recognises that making the broadband technology available to homes and businesses in Hiraethog is however only part of the solution; support is also necessary to help ensure that individuals and businesses are able to make the best possible use of that technology once it is available. This could include:

- Grants / loans to purchase new technology for a home or business in the Hiraethog area (hardware and software)
- Training course: for example, on how to use new hardware / software or cloud based technology

**Case study: B4RN**

B4RN is a community-led broadband project, bringing hyperfast broadband to the rural communities in North Lancashire and South Cumbria. B4RN is the wider parent project, under which B4YS is working as a sub-project. B4YS aims to bring broadband to the villages of Yealand, Silverdale & Storth specifically.

http://b4rn.org.uk/

**Case study: Cybermoor Networks Limited**

Cybermoor Networks has been formed to provide wholesale internet services to local residents and businesses using new technologies. A range of services will be developed in the future as a result of faster internet access on Alston Moor. Cybermoor Networks Ltd has launched a community share offer to part fund the development of a fibre optic network.

http://www.cybermoornetworks.org/

## 5.4.7. Support and develop the agriculture and food sector (supply chain) in the area (SA7)

The agri-food sector continues to be an important factor in the Hiraethog area both as an employer and in terms of land management – sustaining one of the key assets of the area; its natural environment. Supporting that sector (and the supply chain as a whole) is therefore an important element of this strategy.

- ST11: Establish an agri-food cluster group for businesses based in or who are active in the area and then support that cluster

A business cluster is a geographic concentration of interconnected businesses, suppliers, and associated institutions in a particular field and are a structure commonly considered to be a method of increasing the productiveness and competitiveness of businesses[43]. It is proposed that a cluster of agri-food supply chain businesses (not just farmers) is established with a view to safeguarding and developing the sector in Hiraethog. It is also proposed that an action-learning[44] approach be used to facilitate the cluster building on the success of this type of activity in other parts of Wales.

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[43] Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_cluster
[44] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action_learning

**Case study: Agrisgôp**

Agrisgôp is a fully funded management development programme provided by Farming Connect for those involved in farm and forestry businesses. It brings together individuals and families at a local level to discuss and take forward business ideas. Meetings are facilitated by a trained Agrisgôp leader. Working together as a group, Agrisgôp members can learn new management skills, access specialist information and explore and develop viable futures for themselves, their families and their businesses. Based on the concept of Action Learning, Agrisgôp provides the opportunity to progress skills and confidence, which will in turn assist group members to identify ideas and opportunities for their businesses.

http://www.menterabusnes.co.uk/farmingconnect/agrisgop
Evaluation: http://wales.gov.uk/docs/drah/publications/140220fcagrisgopsummaryen.pdf

**Case study: Cambrian Mountains Lamb**

Cambrian Mountains Lamb is produced by a group of 22 farms in mid-Wales, who supply Cambrian Lamb to the Co-operative Food supermarket group across the UK. Cambrian Mountains Lamb is produced from native breeds, which are smaller and sweeter. The hefted flocks are kept on Farm Assured farms which still use traditional farming methods that originate from the Middle Ages, and have been passed down through generations. Old traditions die hard in the Cambrian Mountains, where farmers and shepherds often still use horses to access the steep terrain and vast wetland bogs on hill tops.

http://cambrianmountains.co.uk/produce/cambrian-mountains-lamb/

**Case study: Innovating Agriculture - "Fresh and Ready to eat" Produce in Umbria**

Cooperation between the research sector and farmers to tackle challenges for the agricultural sector led to innovation, diversification and knowledge transfer in Umbria, encapsulated in the rollout of "fresh and ready-to-eat" fruits and vegetables.

A consortium composed of the University of Tuscia, Novamont – Research and innovation centre in agriculture – and three farms (Azienda Agricola Luca Treppaoli, Azienda Agraria Il Poggiolo, Azienda Agraria Pizzi Giorgiomaria) was formed to address the need for innovative solutions to the regional farms' struggle to survive in a more and more competitive market environment.

Specific objectives of the project were to: i) diversify the main farms' activities to start producing "fresh and ready-to-eat" fruits and vegetables; ii) create new market opportunities, mainly targeting big supermarkets; iii) introduce innovative and "environmentally friendly" packaging solutions. Improving farms' viability was the main general objective of the project. Thanks to the project the farmers diversified their outputs, introduced new quality products, found new market opportunities and increased the profits of farm activities. They also became part of the regional short supply-chain, enhanced their skills, improved their farming practises, and contributed to spreading innovation. The cooperation between the entrepreneurs, the university and the technological district set up a platform for interactive and innovative entrepreneurial behaviours.

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-static/policy-in-action/rdp_view/en/view_project_8380_en.html

- **ST12: Encourage farms in the area to access the support available to them via the Rural Development Programme including support for farm diversification**

A wide range of support will continue to be available to farmers in Wales as part of the Rural Development Programme for Wales 2014-2020. Although the detail of the programme had yet to be confirmed at the time of writing this strategy, the support is likely to include:

- *Glastir* - support for land managers to undertake environmentally beneficial activities on their farms
- *Co-operation Fund* - including grants to co-operative groups (see previous action)
- *Processing and Marketing Grants Scheme* - financial assistance for capital investments, adding value to agricultural products
- *Sustainable Production Grant Scheme* - a capital grant scheme is designed to help farmers modernise their on-farm facilities with the aim of enhancing profitability and environmental outcomes.

This action would be to encourage farmers to utilise this support and the opportunities that it provides by, for example, making them aware of the support and facilitating their access to it.

- ST13: Encourage and support the development of links between the area agri-food and tourism businesses

Food is regarded as an essential part of the tourism offer in Wales[45]. Improving the linkages between the Agri-Food Sector and Tourism offer could bring significant opportunities for the development of both sectors within the area.

**Case study: Ffres**

Ffres is a food tourism initiative showcasing the best 'tastes of South West Wales'. We connect people who love local produce with those who make and serve it. Ffres makes a promise to consumers that all their members make or sell the very best locally sourced produce which ensures that the region is increasingly well respected for its wonderful food and cuisine.

http://ffres.org/en/

**Case study: Smart Solution for Small Farm Diversification into Tourism**

A small farmer in the village of Méréaucourt decided to diversify into tourism activities by joining the "A bed in the meadow" association. "A bed in the meadow" (Un Lit au Pré) is a unique concept in France which allows tourists to stay directly in nature while at the same time learn and participate in farming activities. Since its kick-off in 2008 near the Regional Natural Park of Cotentin and later near Omaha Beach, the concept has extended its offer. Nowadays, there are five destinations located in small family farms selected on the basis of their location and involvement in environment protection and enhancement. The main objective of the project was to diversify the farm business into tourism. The specific objective was to adapt the farm to be part of the "A bed in the meadow". According to this concept the main aim is to offer small farmers an option to diversify their activities, as well as to support people living in rural areas and preserve rural heritage. As a result of the project implementation, six tents became available for accommodating tourists on the farm. The destination became very popular among foreign tourists and urban residents, coming for short stays, during the weekend, or few weeks. Undertaking tourist activities enabled the farmer to increase his income and create job opportunities for other members of the family.

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-static/policy-in-action/rdp_view/en/view_project_10988_en.html

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[45] Source: http://wales.gov.uk/topics/tourism/developmentl1/food/?lang=en

### 5.4.8. Support and develop the local tourism / recreation sector (SA8)

The SWOT analysis has also shown that tourism (or the visitor / recreational economy) is also an important sector in the Hiraethog area. Developing the sector is therefore an important part of the strategy. It is also important in terms of enabling people to spend their recreational time in Hiraethog, another important element of this strategy. The emphasis here is therefore on recreation in the Hiraethog area rather than just tourism.

- <u>ST15: Develop a 'destination management plan' for the area (within any broader plans for Conwy, Denbighshire and the region)</u>

For a destination to work it needs buy-in from all stakeholders involved, working in partnership to make sure there are no gaps or failures in the provision. Knowing how all these fit together is key to achieving effective destination management[46]. The destination management plans for both Conwy and Denbighshire have been introduced already in this report. Given the importance of tourism in Hiraethog, it is proposed that a plan be developed for the area, fitting within the wider plans for both Conwy and Denbighshire. Setting up the group noted below, will be a key part of the process.

- <u>ST16: Establish a tourism / recreation cluster group for businesses based in or who are active in the area and then support that cluster</u>

It is envisaged that this group will take the lead in the previous action. As with the agri-food cluster group, it is envisaged that the group will be facilitated using an action-learning approach designed to help the participants identify and address problems and opportunities for the development of their own businesses and the group / sector as a whole in Hiraethog. These groups would operate side-by-side with the agri-food group with a view to encouraging cooperation between the two.

**Case study: Carmarthenshire Tourist Association's Rural Tourism Clusters Project**

This project encouraged people living in rural Carmarthenshire to have a positive impact on their community, by working together to boost tourism to the local area. The project was part of Carmarthenshire's Rural Development Plan project 'Innovative Hubs'. Support offered included bringing people together in meetings, arranging training courses and best practise visits, commissioning feasibility studies, accessing industry expertise, and - where relevant - signposting to a range of grant support available from other projects and sources.

http://www.tourismclusters.co.uk/

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[46] Source: http://business.wales.gov.uk/dmwales/destination-management

- ST17: Business advice and support for the cluster and individual businesses

Hiraethog is typical of a rural area in that it is dependent on relatively few businesses for its economic activity. Those businesses therefore need to be supported and developed. Business support in Wales is provided via Business Wales[47]. We would not propose to duplicate any of the wide range of support that is available via that service. The proposal is that a 'facilitation service' is introduced in Hiraethog which works with Business Wales to ensure that they are aware of and access the support that is available to them.

- ST16: Encourage and support the development of links between the area agri-food and tourism businesses

[See ST13]

## 5.4.9. Develop and maintain a relationship with 'anchor' businesses / employers (SA9)

- ST18: Develop and maintain a relationship with anchor businesses / employers

Working with 'anchor' or 'regionally important' companies is a key part of the Welsh Government's economic development strategy[48] and we would propose a similar approach, although at a different scale, in Hiraethog. These are businesses / employers which are responsible for a relatively large proportion of employment in the area and which are, therefore, very important to the local economy - something which we believe is important to recognise within the strategy. For example, Llaeth-y-Llan was identified as one such company during stakeholder interviews.

Again, it is not proposed that we provide support to any businesses / employers as part of this action. Rather, we would propose to build a relationship with those organisations and engage them in the broader delivery of this strategy as, for example, members of the action group / partnership previously outlined.

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[47] http://business.wales.gov.uk/
[48] Source: http://wales.gov.uk/topics/businessandeconomy/sector/anchor/?lang=en

## 5.4.10. Develop the next generation of local businesses (SA10)

Maintaining economic activity in Hiraethog over the longer term will require the development of future generations of local entrepreneurs and businesses. Actions are therefore proposed to facilitate that development.

- <u>ST19: Work with local schools / colleges to help local young people explore and test business opportunities in the local area</u>

It is envisaged that this action will work alongside the Welsh Government's *Youth Entrepreneurial Service* (YES)[49]. In particular, the potential to adapt the scheme to provide a more 'local' approach will be explored, including:

- Identifying and getting local entrepreneurs from the Hiraethog area involved as Role Models to share their experiences with local young people;
- Competitions to encourage young people within the Hiraethog area to think in entrepreneurial ways and pilot business ideas in the area;
- Identify and build a network of young people interested in business in the area;
- Provide opportunities for young people (and graduates from the nearby Universities) to experience business in the local area and develop the skills needed to start new businesses; and
- Provide a range of activities for young people to develop ideas and share experiences with local business people.

- <u>ST20: Bursaries for local young people</u>

It is proposed that a bursary be established alongside the action described above targeted at young people (18-30) from the Hiraethog area which would support them to:

a) Pilot or test a business idea that would be active in / use the resources of the Hiraethog area;
b) Start up a new business operating in the Hiraethog area; and/or
c) Study a business degree at University with a commitment to the above.

**Case study: Southwark Education Business Alliance**

Southwark Education Business Alliance brings together schools, businesses and community organisations across Southwark.

http://www.southwarkeba.org.uk/about-southwark-education-business-alliance.html

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[49]More information is available here: http://business.wales.gov.uk/bigideas/youth-entrepreneurship-service

**Case study: Llwyddo'n Lleol**

Llwyddo'n Lleol is a scheme to help young people between 11 to 19 years old living in north-west Wales move up the career ladder and succeed within their communities. The project aims to:

- Increase the confidence of young people in their communities and the future they can offer
- Increase the awareness of young people regarding the growth sectors in their areas, and the opportunities for employment and self-employment that those sectors offer
- Nurture a can-do attitude mindset among young people, and encourage the young generation to see self-employment and venture creation as a viable, exciting career choice
- Develop enterprising skills among young people

The Llwyddo'n Lleol project helps ensure that young people can secure an exciting future in North Wales - rather than the old perception that getting on means getting out.
One of the activities of the project is to provide young people with an opportunity to set-up and trial their own enterprise. Advice and support is available to identify business ideas, develop the ideas and produce a business plan. A bursary of up to £1,000 is available to turn ideas into reality.

http://www.menterabusnes.co.uk/en/llwyddo

**Case study: Young Entrepreneur's Bursary**

If you are a young person (between the ages of 16 – 24) and looking to start up a business, you may qualify for the Young Entrepreneur's Bursary. This is a taxable sum of £6,000 paid over a four-month period and is supported by business advice. You may qualify if:

- You are between the ages of 16-24 at the time of applying for the award and are not in education, employment or training
- You have not started trading and are due to start your business within two months of the award being approved
- You are registered and receiving 1-2-1 business advice through the Welsh Government's Business Start-Up service
- You have a business plan and show that the business is sustainable
- You must be under 25 on the day the business starts

http://business.wales.gov.uk/thinking-starting-business-startup

## 5.4.11. Maintain and improve the quality of the area's natural environment, landscape and biodiversity (SA11)

Hiraethog's natural environment, landscape and biodiversity is a major asset that needs to be utilised for the benefit of the area. This will however require that the asset be maintained and, where possible, improved and actions will be taken to ensure that is the case

- ST21: Encourage local farmers to engage with the Glastir scheme

As previously noted, Glastir is the Welsh Government's sustainable land management scheme offering financial support to farmers and land managers. Glastir pays for the delivery of specific environmental goods and services aimed at combating climate change, improving water management and maintaining and enhancing biodiversity. As part of this, local farmers will be encouraged and supported to participate in this scheme both as a means of sustaining their business and protecting and enhancing the area's natural environment.

- ST22: Fund environment, landscape and biodiversity activities that cannot be supported by Glastir

There will however be areas or activities which Glastir may not be able to support; for example, off farm sustainable land management activities. It is therefore proposed that a separate fund be created as part of this strategy to fund that type of work and complement the actions that Glastir will fund on local farms.

**Case study: Pontbren Farmers Group**

The Pontbren Group consists of ten neighbouring families who farm a thousand hectare contiguous block in the catchment of Nant Pontbren near Llanfair Caereinion in North Powys. Their objectives include: Sustainable farm management (now and for the future); Improved livestock shelter; Farm business diversification; More effective integration of agriculture and woodland management; Creation of wildlife habitats; Production of timber for on farm use and for added value processing; Enhancement of the upland landscape

This report presents the findings of a study examining the outcomes of the Pontbren project from the perspective of the farmers involved:
http://wefo.wales.gov.uk/publications/publications/monitoringevaluation/programmeevaluations/pontbrenproject/?skip=1&lang=en

## 5.4.12. Develop and promote Hiraethog as an area known for the ecosystem services that it provides (SA12)

The initial research for this strategy has identified Hiraethog as an area that provides a significant range and quality of 'ecosystem services' that may be undervalued. We want to build upon them and then market the area as one which is recognised for delivering these substantial services.

Two specific actions are proposed:

* <u>ST23: Map out in detail opportunities to maintain / enhance ecosystem services provided in the area</u>

* <u>ST24: Develop and then support the implementation of projects designed to enhance the ecosystem services provided by the area</u>

The first step will be to map and assess in detail the ecosystem services in the Hiraethog area, building upon the initial analysis undertaken for this report. This analysis will provide a foundation for the second proposed action which is to develop and then fund projects or activities designed to enhance the area's ecosystem and, hence, the value of its ecosystem services.

**Case study: Ecosystem services case studies, Environment Agency**

The two case studies in this report, one undertaken at catchment scale and the other at site scale, provide learning for the Environment Agency about the applicability of an ecosystems approach to its policies and other activities. The catchment selected was the River Tamar on the Devon/Cornwall border, and the site-scale study was undertaken on the Alkborough Flats managed realignment scheme on the Humber Estuary. These case studies cover historical projects, and seek to evaluate benefits across the suite of ecosystem services. The case studies enable generic learning to be taken forwards and, as importantly, help the Environment Agency learn about the benefits of using ecosystem services in its work.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/291631/scho0409bpvm-e-e.pdf

## 5.4.13. Enable people to access the area's natural environment and landscape (SA13)

The benefit of having an outstanding local environment is limited if people cannot 'access' or make use of that environment. For example, people need footpaths to go walking, interpretation panels so that they can understand the environment and heritage that they are accessing and so on.

As above, two detailed actions are proposed:

- ST25: Map and review the quality of current 'access points' in the area

- ST26: Fund the development of current and new access points in consultation with the tourism / recreation business cluster group

The first is to, work with the local community via the local group / partnership and clusters discussed above, to map out and review the locations or points where the public (locals and visitors alike) can currently access the landscape and natural environment in Hiraethog. The review will look at gaps in the current provision as well as the quality of current access; is it, for example, fit for purpose? The second action would be to support and fund the development of current and new access points which would improve the access people have to the outstanding environment in Hiraethog.

**Case study: Fagaras Mountains**

This project, initiated by S.O.S. Fagarasului Country Association, aimed to preserve the natural heritage of the North-Eastern side of Fagaras Mountains and to capitalise on the tourism potential of the area. The Association was set up in 2005 by a group of locals to contribute to the development of tourism in the area. The decline of industry in Fagarasului Country led to a severe economic and social decline of the villages at the base of the mountains, with most of the young people leaving to work abroad. The exceptional tourism potential of Fagarasului Mountain offered a genuine chance to revive the area, by valorising its traditions and crafts. Eight mountain retreats have been created in the following locations: Comisul Peak, Berevoiescu Peak, Bratilei Corner, Urlea Lake, Amiaza Peak, Piciorul Batran, Langa Peak and on the route between Trasnita and Cataveicu peaks. Through informational materials (brochures, flyers) tourists as well as local population became more and more aware of the natural and historical heritage of the area.

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-static/policy-in-action/rdp_view/en/view_project_11470_en.html

## 5.4.14. Maintain and improve the quality of the area's built environment (including heritage) (SA14)

The strategy recognises that an area's built environment is an important part of its 'image' and heritage, alongside its natural environment and landscape. It is also recognised that the quality of the built environment (new and old) is critical to how an area is perceived by locals and visitors alike. It is therefore proposed that actions be taken to maintain that built environment and (as with the natural environment) exploit it as an asset for the area.

Two specific actions are suggested:

- ST27: Work with the local community to identify potential improvements to the built environment

- ST28: Fund works to implement those improvements identified

The first action will be to work with the local community (including businesses) to identify potential improvements and enhancements. The second would be to fund the improvements or enhancements that have been identified. It is envisaged that this could include works to improve or enhance the built environment in local villages or actions to maintain / enhance local heritage sites.

## 5.4.15. Utilise (in an appropriate way) the opportunities presented to generate renewable energy in the area (SA15)

The shorter term actions proposed are:

- ST29: Map out renewable energy opportunities in Hiraethog, especially community based opportunities

- ST30: Utilise the support available via the European Funding to support the implementation of those appropriate opportunities identified

The analysis for this strategy has identified the potential opportunities to generate renewable energy within the Hiraethog area. It is therefore proposed that this opportunity be further explored (with a particular emphasis on community based opportunities) and, where appropriate opportunities are identified, support (including both advice and funding) be provided to realise those benefits. As already noted, there are potential opportunities within the round of European Funding programmes (both the Rural Development Programme for Wales and the ERDF programme) to support renewable energy projects which the strategy can look to utlise.

**Case study: Ynni'r Fro Programme**
The Welsh Government's Ynni'r Fro programme uses European Structural Funds to offer social enterprises grant aid, loans and free, independent, hands-on advice and information to help social enterprises develop their own community scale renewable energy schemes across Wales. Technical Development Officers help groups develop their projects with up to £30,000 available to fund early stage activities to help projects get off the ground, such as environmental surveys, planning applications and community engagement activity. A grant of up to £300,000 is then available towards the capital costs of a renewable energy project.

http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/wales/Communities/Finding-funding/Ynni-r-Fro-programme

**Case study: Gloucestershire Community Energy**
The Gloucestershire Community Energy Coop was formed from a combination of Five Valleys Energy Coop, a number of Transition Towns in the county and the Solar Coop to enable local communities and individuals to take part in exciting renewable energy schemes across the county, and to encourage energy saving initiatives. Where community buildings have suitable roofs to install solar energy panels, or public spaces have water or wind energy that could be harnessed, everyone will have the chance to invest in the projects and benefit from the generous Feed-In-Tariff for small scale, low carbon energy generation.

http://gloscommunityenergy.coop/who-we-are/

## 5.5. Delivering the strategy

Any strategy or action-plan is obviously only as effective as its delivery. As noted above, it is proposed that a local group or partnership be established in order to oversee and lead the implantation of this strategy (ref. SA1, ST1). It is also proposed that 'cluster groups' be established for the agri-food sectors / supply chain (SA6, ST10) and tourism / recreation sector (SA7, ST13) which could 'lead' activities in those sub-sectors, as sub groups of the main group.

It is however anticipated that those groups, together with the actions within the strategy will need to be supported and facilitated. This is a role which has been identified for the LEADER Local Action Groups in Conwy and Denbighshire to undertake on a joint basis.

### 5.5.1. Investing funding to generate an income stream

The development of this strategy has been based on assessing needs in the Hiraethog area and potential actions that could be undertaken to address those needs. In the background however has been the prospect of substantial funding being made available by the development of a wind-farm in the local area. This funding could obviously be used to fund the actions that are set out in this strategy. However, there is also the option of investing at least some of the funding that is provided with a view to generating an on-going income stream to fund community development activities in Hiraethog over the longer-term.

**Case study: Shetland Charitable Trust**

Money was paid by the Oil Industry to Shetland as a way of compensating the people for the inconvenience of having the terminal based in Shetland. It was decided to establish a Charitable Trust to receive and disburse this money. As well as providing grants for local activities, Shetland Charitable Trust invests in the world's market and also in subsidiary companies designed to generate an income for the trust.

http://www.shetlandcharitabletrust.co.uk/

# 6. Outline monitoring framework

**Key points**

A range of indicators can be used to monitor the progress that is being made in terms of delivering and achieving the aims and objectives of the strategy.

This section of the report outlines how the strategy and action plan set out in the previous section will be monitored. As shown in the graphic below, this should include:

- Outputs – as an indication of the activities being undertaken (actions);
- Results (or outcomes) – as an indication of whether the objectives were being achieved; and
- Impact – as an indication of whether the aim of the strategy is being achieved.

STRATEGY TERMINOLOGY                MONITORING TERMINOLOGY

| Aim | Impact |
| Objectives | Results / outcomes |
| Actions | Activities / outputs |
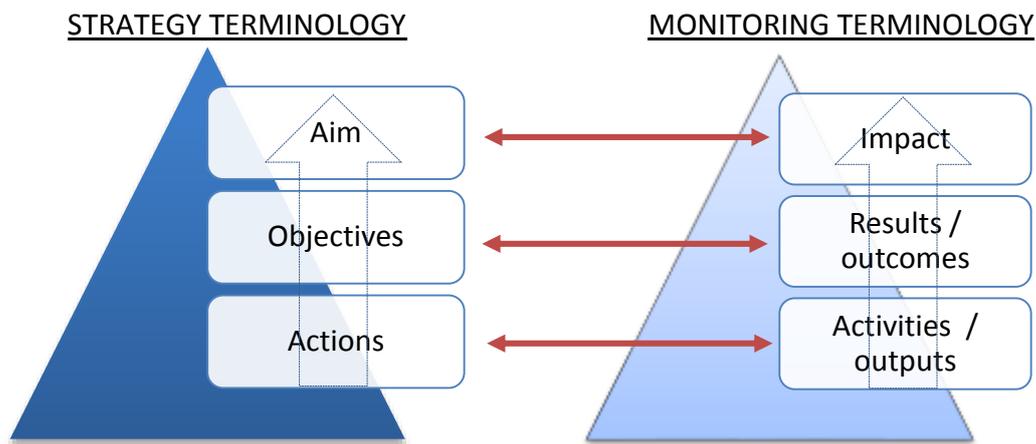
The table that follows outlines indicators that can be used within the above structure to monitor the progress that is being made. In some instances, it will be necessary to collect baseline data in order to allow changes to be identified. In others however, existing data (or data that will be collected in the future) can be used.

| Actions | Outputs (activities) | Results / outcomes (objectives) |
|---|---|---|
| SA1. Encourage and maintain community spirit & engagement in the area | • Number of community partnership meetings<br>• Number of members of the partnership regularly attending<br>• Average number of attendees<br>• Number of community engagement events<br>• Number of attendees at those events | • Participants report that they feel engaged in local regeneration activities |
| SA2. Encourage and support community transport / access to key services | • Number of project supported<br>• Number of users of the projects supported | • Users report that they have access to new, additional or improved services |
| SA3. Increase the affordability of local housing for local young people | • Number of people supported | • Number of local young people purchasing local houses |
| SA4. Enable people to work from home | • Number of households supported<br>• Number of people supported | • Number of households where people are working from home<br>• Number of people working from home<br>• Number of days working from home |
| SA5. Allow access to and make best possible use of digital technology | • Number of local residents / households / businesses participating in supported activities | • Number of local residents / households / businesses accessing digital technology |
| SA6. Support and develop the agriculture and food sector in the area | • Number of farms supported / participating | • Number of farms in the area<br>• Performance of the farms in the area |
| SA7. Support and develop the local tourism / recreation sector | • Number of tourism / recreational businesses supported / participating<br>• Number of tourism / recreational sites supported | • Number of visitors / participants in recreational activities<br>• Number of tourism / recreational businesses<br>• Performance of tourism / recreational businesses |
| SA8. Develop and maintain anchor businesses / employers | • Number of businesses engaged | • Number of 'anchor' businesses in the local area |
| SA9. Develop the next generation of local businesses | • Number of individuals / businesses engaged | • Number of new businesses starting in the area<br>• Number of local young people employed by local businesses (tracking) |

| Actions | Outputs (activities) | Results / outcomes (objectives) |
|---|---|---|
| SA10.    Maintain and improve the quality of the area's natural environment, landscape and biodiversity | • Number of actions supported | TBA |
| SA11.    Develop Hiraethog into an area known for the ecosystem services that it provides | • Number of actions supported | • Number of visitors / users of recreational facilities<br>• Perception of visitors / residents |
| SA12.    Enable people to access the area's natural environment and landscape | • Number of points of access / information supported (new and existing) | • Number of people using those points of access / information<br>• Visitor numbers to the area<br>• Performance of local tourism / recreational businesses |
| SA13.    Maintain and improve the quality of the area's built environment (including heritage) | • Number of towns / villages where actions have been undertaken<br>• Number of actions undertaken | • Local people and visitor's perception of the towns and villages where actions have been undertaken |
| SA14.    Utilise (in an appropriate way) the opportunities presented to generate renewable energy in the area | • Number of projects supported<br>• Number of communities supported | • Amount of renewable energy generated<br>• £ generated for local communities |

Impact indicators:

• Change in the number of local residents
• Changes in the age profile of local residents
• Changes in the number and proportion of Welsh speakers

# Appendix 1: Landscape and biodiversity baseline issues analysis



## Landscape Character

Areas 9, 10, 11 (part), 15 (part)
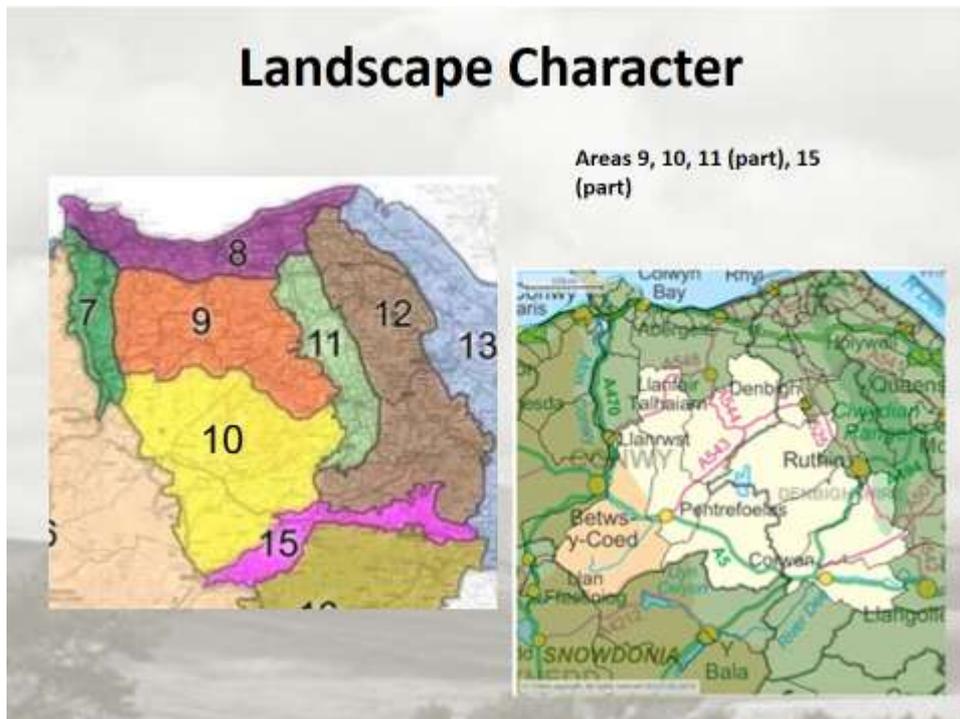


## Area 9 – Bruniau Rhos/Rhos Hills

- An undulating landform with the highest point at 420 metres AOD

- Intersected by a number of river valleys including the Cledwen and Aled

- A series of ridges and valleys associated with the river catchments, with slopes encompassing a range of grades from gentle to steep

9. Bryniau Rhos/Rhos Hills
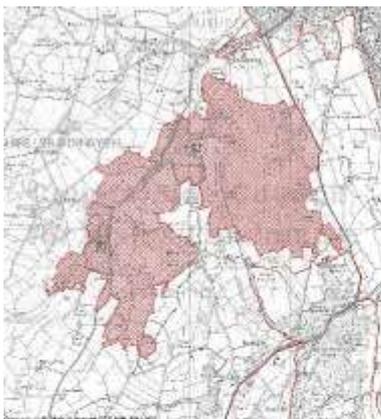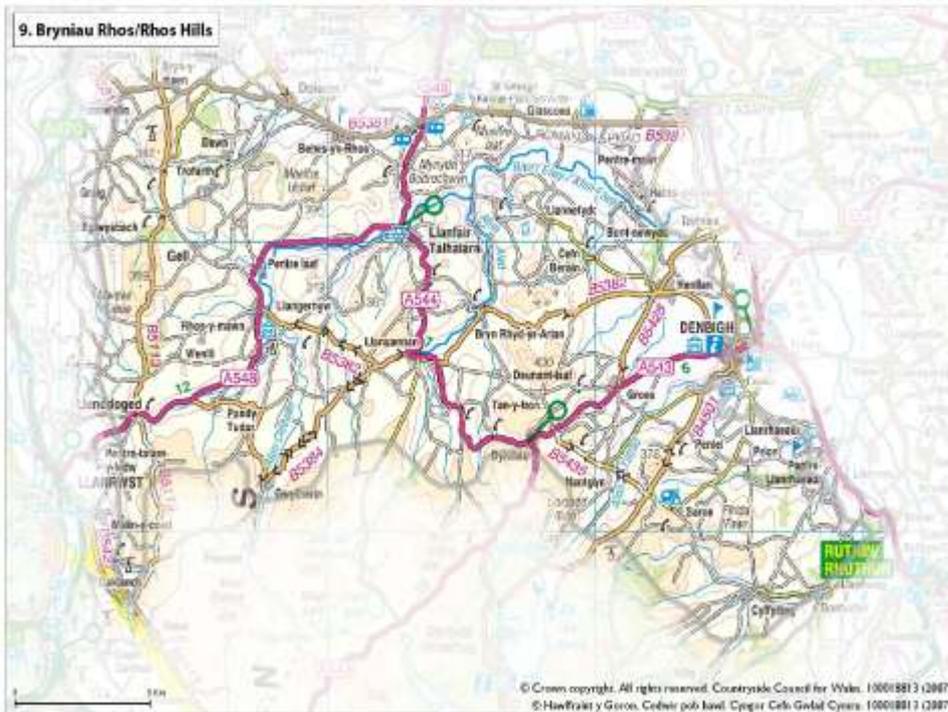


**Castle Wood**

### Description
Conifer dominated hillside – well-wooded/ well defined small irregular field patterns. Steep undulating slopes overlooking Ruthin and River Clwyd. Open pasture with tree lined hedgerows. Scattered farms.

### Issues
Single species coniferous plantation

### Opportunities
Diversify woodland species
Enhance field margins – laying and coppicing/hedgerow composition
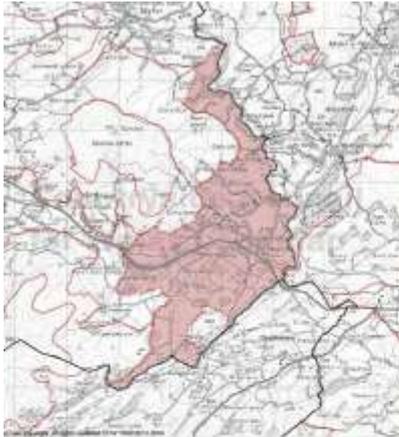
### Ceirw and Alwen valleys east

**Description**
V shaped valley – moderate to steep slopes 175m – 300m AOD. Deciduous woodland on slopes with parkland, linear strips of woodland with small irregular fields enclosed by hedges. A5 runs close to the valley bottom. Clwydian Way runs through Alwen Valley.

**Issues**
Proximity of A5 reduces tranquillity

**Opportunities**
Manage woodlands to ensure continuity
Manage and enhance field boundaries
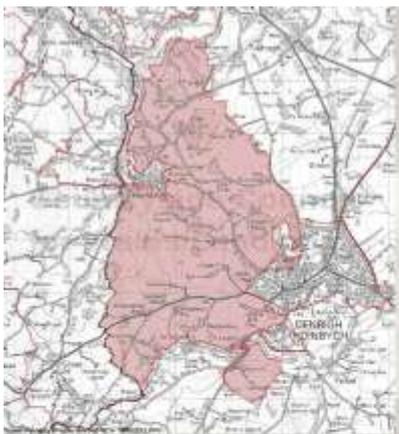
### Limestone Plateau – Denbigh/Henllan

**Description**
Undulating pastoral farmland dominated by wooded estate. Mostly improved grassland enclosed by managed hedgerows with scattered trees.
Scattered farms centred around the town of Henllan.

**Issues**
Aging woodlands/field boundary management

**Opportunities**
Phased replacement tree cover in hedgerows. Diversify plantation/woodland species
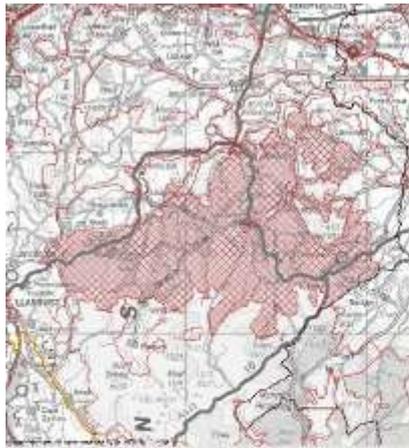
**Central Ridges
and Valleys**

**Description**
Rolling ridges with steep valleys running southwards from Denbigh Moors. Regular usually improved pasture on the ridges, smaller irregular fields on slopes, enclosed by thick hedges and trees. Mainly deciduous woodland on steeper slopes, isolated blocks of conifers. Scattered areas of bracken, scrub and wetland.

**Issues**
Need to protect and enhance field boundary hedgerows especially in irregular field.

**Opportunities**
As above

**Description**
Open hills rising to 350m AOD and wooded river valleys. Traditional farmed land with arable, pasture and livestock. Irregular mature hedgerows with variety of trees and small wooded copses.

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Manage hedgerows using traditional styles; additional woodland planting.
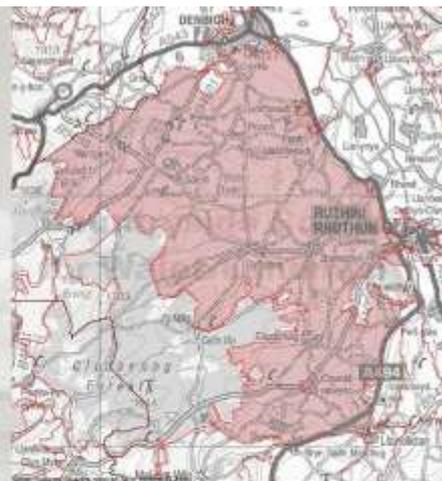


**Denbigh and
Derwen Hills**
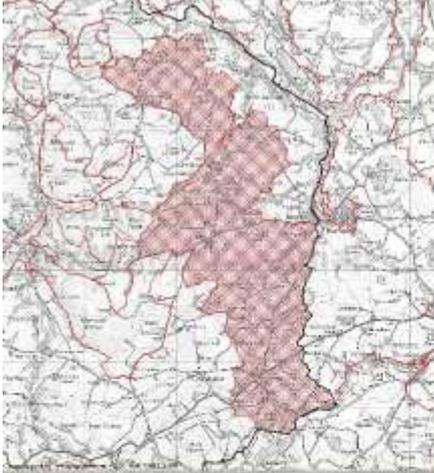
**Description**
Gently sloping with irregular medium sized pastoral field with low cut hedges. Woodland strips along watercourses, occasional small copses. Estate at Eriviat Park – estate fencing, lime avenue and holly hedges.

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Enhance woodland

## Llanefydd Lowlands

**Description**
V-shaped steep sided upland valley. Bounded by Clocaenog Forest to the east with deciduous woodland on steeper slopes. Small fields, rough land and wetland on slopes. Stone walls and post/rail fencing. Picnic site in valley floor.

**Issues**
Increased silage/intensive grassland
Walls in disrepair

**Opportunities**
Promote continued haymaking
Repair stone walls
Fence out woodlands
Enhance hedge boundaries

## Alwen Valley

**Description**
Often steep valley slopes, with mixed woodland. Small-medium irregular shaped pastures. Open fields with long views towards the top. Parkland on lower slopes including Bodnant. Occasional rock outcrops on valley sides.

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Maintain woodland character
Maintain and enhance field boundaries
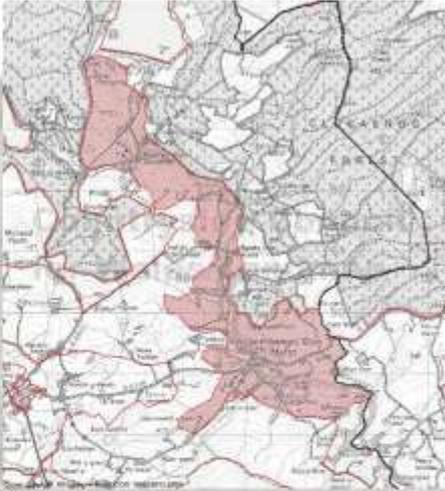
**Conwy Valley
Sides and Hills**

**Description**
Simple undulating landscape, with some distinctive rounded hills at north end. Open simple landcover with regular filed patterns mainly enclosed by fences with some walls. Some wet flushes, scrub on steeper slopes and deciduous trees in valley bottoms.

**Issues**
Condition of stone walls?
Coniferous plantations?

**Opportunities**
Improve wetland management
Repair walls
Replace conifers with mixed/deciduous woodland

**Denbigh Moors
Western Fringes**

## Area 10 – Mynydd Hiraethog/Denbigh Moors

- Upland topography above 350m - isolated
- Peat based soils influence landcover – mainly heather moorland – former grouse moors
- Coniferous plantation and lakes/reservoirs
- Minor rivers

**Description**
Extensive undulating upland plateau at 400m AOD reaching 532m AOD at Mwdwl Eithin. Open exposed semi-natural moorland. Heather with wet flushes and small basins of water. Few improved fenced fields to the east. Ruined hunting lodge at Gwylfa Hiraethog. Long views west to Snowdonia.

**Issues**
Once a grouse moor.

**Opportunities**
Heather management/regeneration. Manage and enhance wet areas – improve water retention.
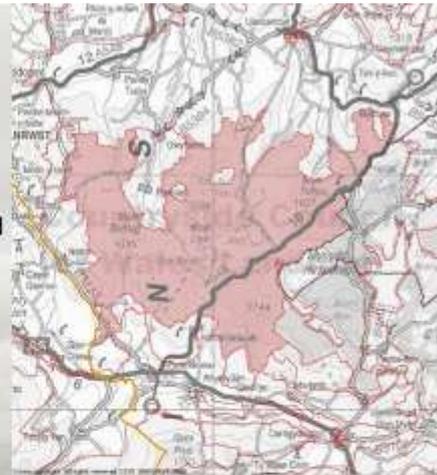
**Denbigh Moors**
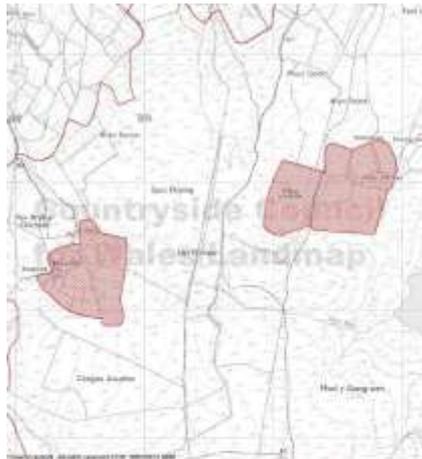
## Denbigh Moors Enclosures

**Description**
Isolated patches of enclosed land on the Denbigh Moors plateau. Some wet flushes, small isolated patches of conifers in east.

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Manage dry stone walls.
Manage wet flushes.
Remove coniferous blocks, increase deciduous tree cover where appropriate.

## Llyn Brenig
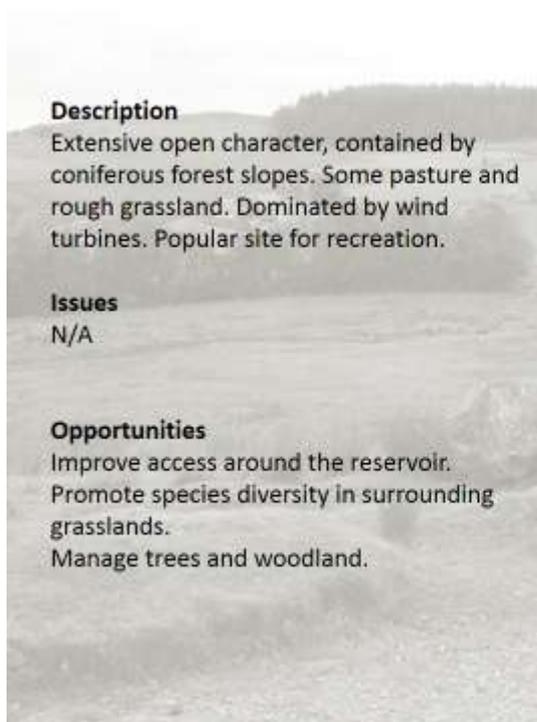
**Description**
Extensive open character, contained by coniferous forest slopes. Some pasture and rough grassland. Dominated by wind turbines. Popular site for recreation.

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Improve access around the reservoir.
Promote species diversity in surrounding grasslands.
Manage trees and woodland.
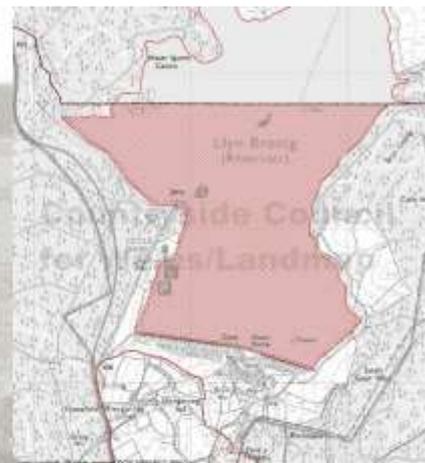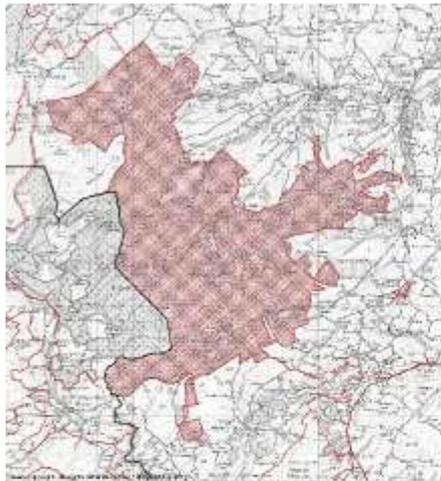
## Cloceanog Forest

**Description**
Extensive afforestation, numerous tracks, paths, streams , mainly under dense tree cover. Public access.

**Issues**
Dominated by coniferous plantation. Important area for red squirrels.

**Opportunities**
Increase woodland diversity especially along rides , edges and clearings. Block ditches to increase wetland where appropriate. Manage forest edges for black grouse.
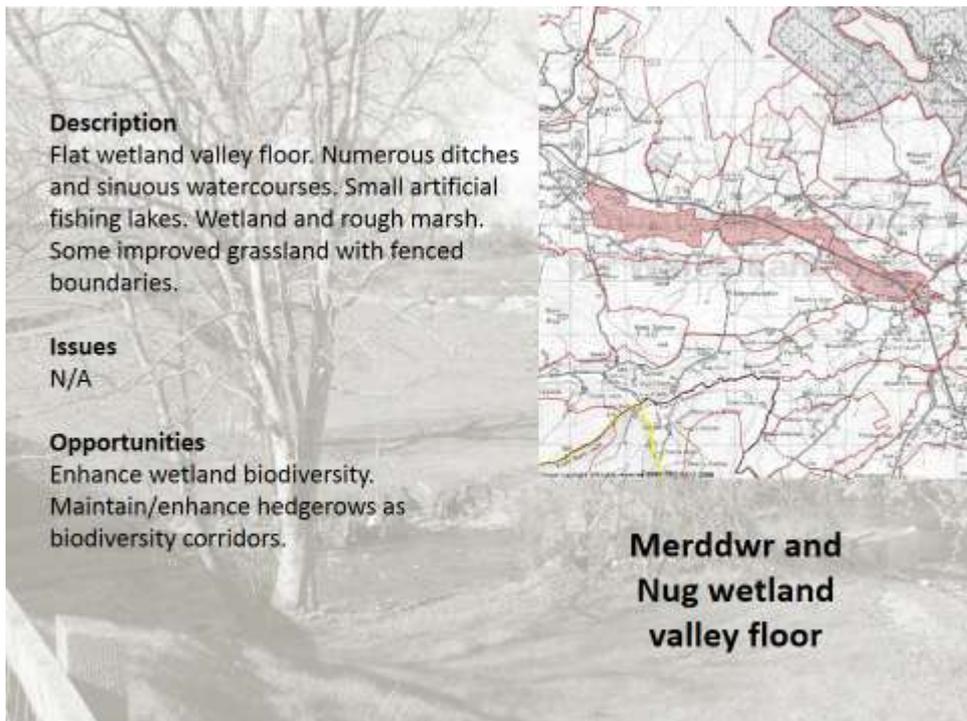


**Description**
Flat wetland valley floor. Numerous ditches and sinuous watercourses. Small artificial fishing lakes. Wetland and rough marsh. Some improved grassland with fenced boundaries.

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Enhance wetland biodiversity. Maintain/enhance hedgerows as biodiversity corridors.

## Merddwr and Nug wetland valley floor
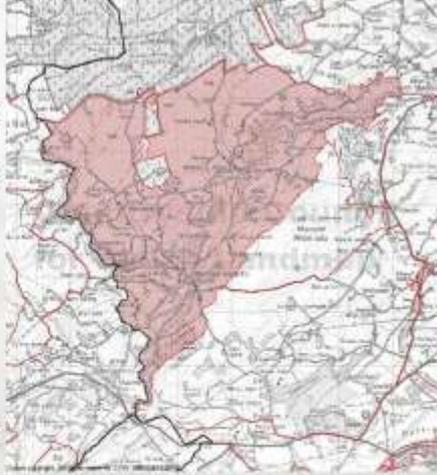
**Description**
Wooded valleys, outcrops and open hillside pastures. Lower slopes enclosed by well defined hedgerows with trees. Linear strips of wood land, some blocks, irregular field patterns. Sparse settlement.

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Manage trees, woodland and hedgerows to improve diversity.
Promote traditional land management.

**Maerdy Hills**

**Description**
Strongly undulating enclosed hilly area. Overgrown hedgerows. Open medium to large fields on the upper slopes. High incidence of hedgerow trees on lower slopes.

**Issues**
Many overgrown hedgerows.

**Opportunities**
Hedge laying to improve corridors and hedgerow diversity.

**Hills South of Llanelidan**
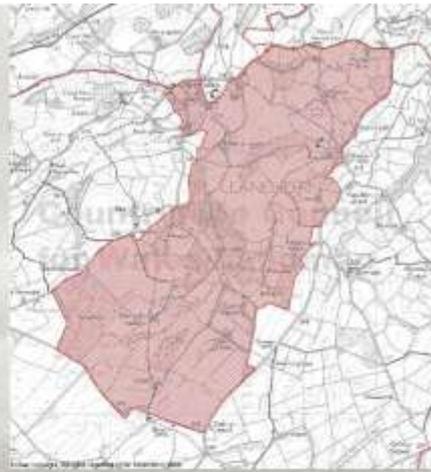
**Description**
Strongly wooded undulating landscape
with wooded dells. Numerous streams.
Scattered settlements of isolated farms.
Relatively large scale filed pattern with
isolated, mature trees.

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Diversification of field margins.
Manage for biodiversity corridors.

**Woods South
of Llanelidan**
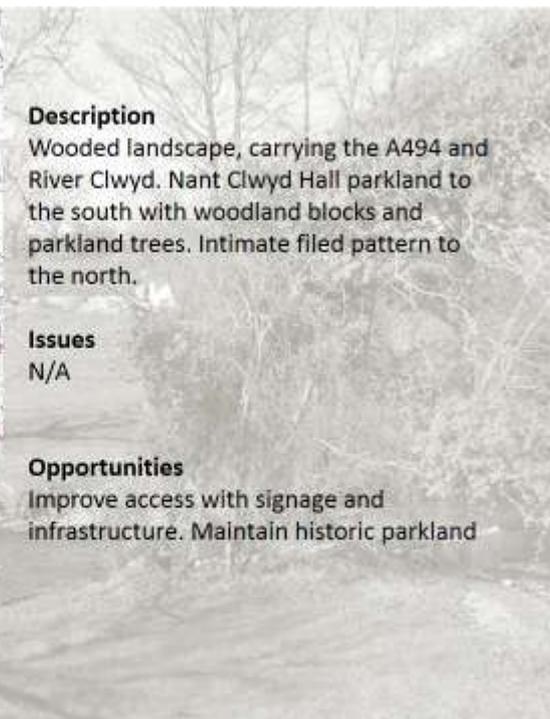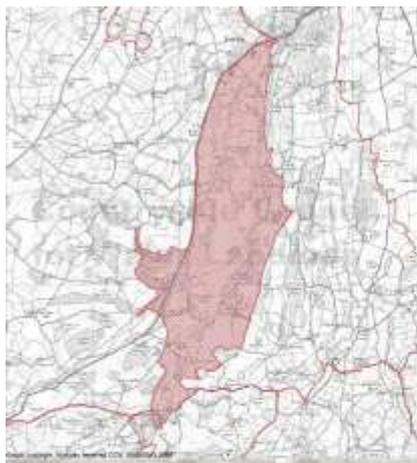
**Description**
Wooded landscape, carrying the A494 and
River Clwyd. Nant Clwyd Hall parkland to
the south with woodland blocks and
parkland trees. Intimate filed pattern to
the north.

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Improve access with signage and
infrastructure. Maintain historic parkland

**Nantclwyd
Valley**
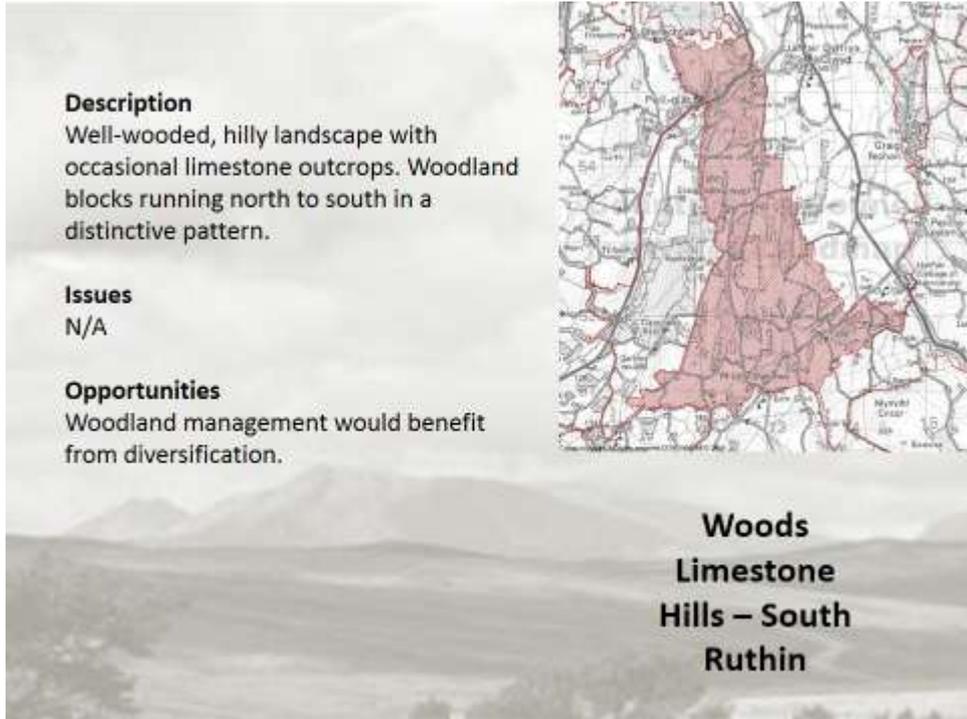
**Description**
Well-wooded, hilly landscape with occasional limestone outcrops. Woodland blocks running north to south in a distinctive pattern.

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Woodland management would benefit from diversification.
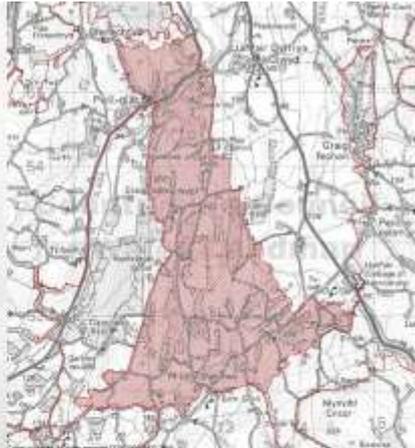
**Woods Limestone Hills – South Ruthin**
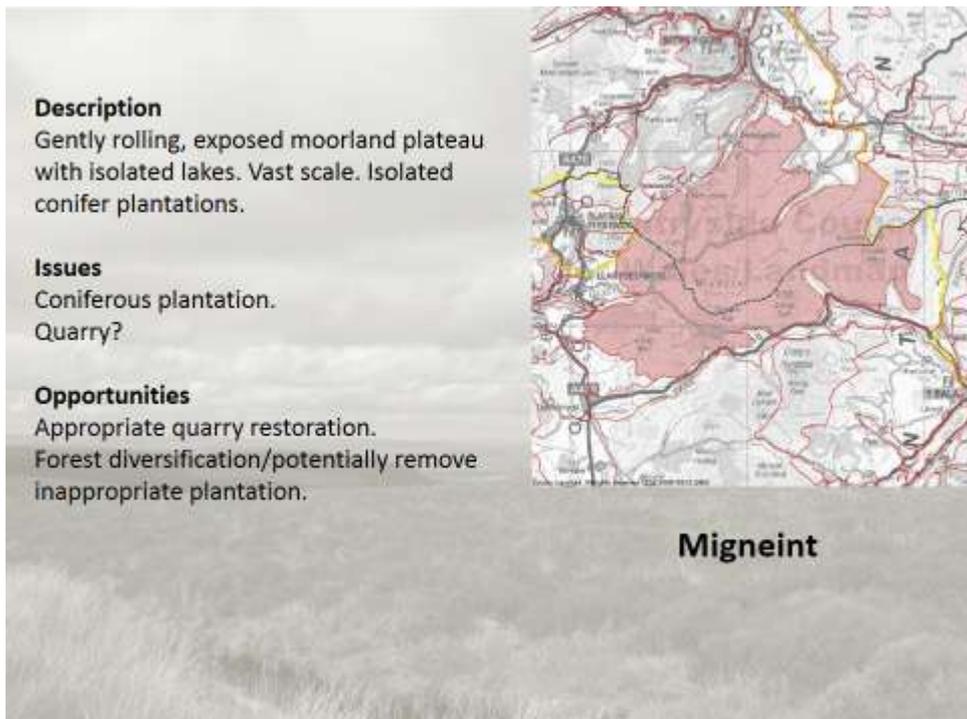
**Description**
Gently rolling, exposed moorland plateau with isolated lakes. Vast scale. Isolated conifer plantations.

**Issues**
Coniferous plantation.
Quarry?

**Opportunities**
Appropriate quarry restoration.
Forest diversification/potentially remove inappropriate plantation.

**Migneint**

**Description**
Gently rolling farmland within open valley.
Scattered farmland and fields with dry
stone walls and hedgerows.

**Issues**
Condition of walls?

**Opportunities**
Bracken management where appropriate.
Manage hedgerows.
Restore dry stone walls
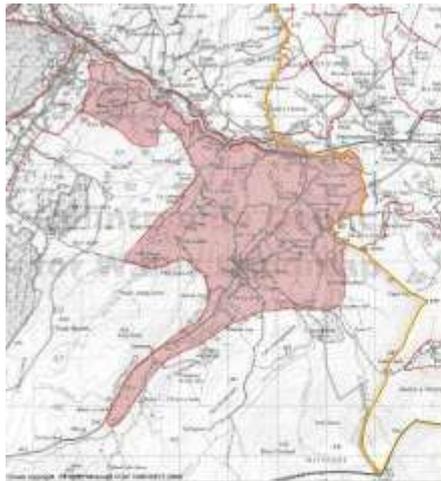
**Ysbyty Ifan**
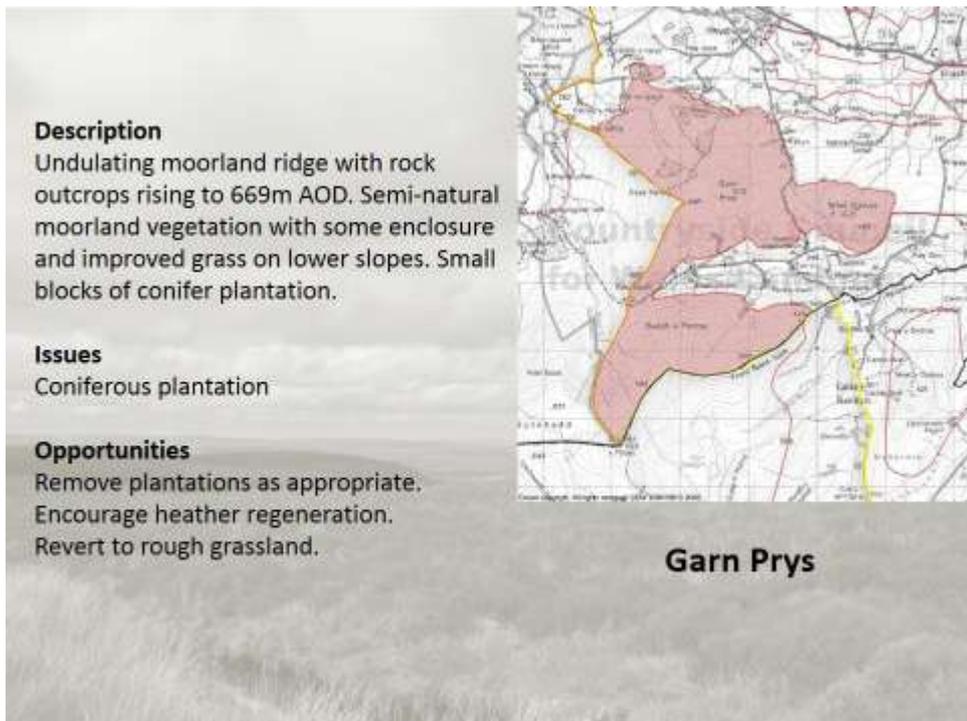
**Description**
Undulating moorland ridge with rock
outcrops rising to 669m AOD. Semi-natural
moorland vegetation with some enclosure
and improved grass on lower slopes. Small
blocks of conifer plantation.

**Issues**
Coniferous plantation

**Opportunities**
Remove plantations as appropriate.
Encourage heather regeneration.
Revert to rough grassland.

**Garn Prys**

**Merddwr Ceirw
Alwen upper
valley sides**

**Description**
Upper valley sides, some steep, linking to adjacent plateau. Between 300 and 400m AOD. Outcrops on steep slopes. Mosaic of improved fenced or walled fridd. Patches of moorland. Isolated conifer belts. Small isolated ponds.

**Issues**
Conversion of fridd

**Opportunities**
Diversify woodland by removal/replanting where appropriate.
Manage for fridd.
Promote wet areas for biodiversity

**Description**
Open, undulating upland between 300 and 450m AOD. Some outcrops. Improved rectilinear fields with fences and a few walls. Wet flushes. Small isolated conifer belts. Deciduous trees in valley bottoms.

**Issues**
Coniferous plantation.
Loss of stone walls.

**Opportunities**
Repair stone walls.
Encourage wet flushes.
Replace conifers if possible.
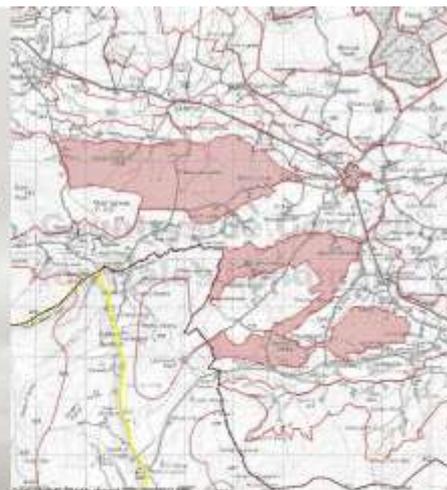
**Maes-newyddion
uplands**
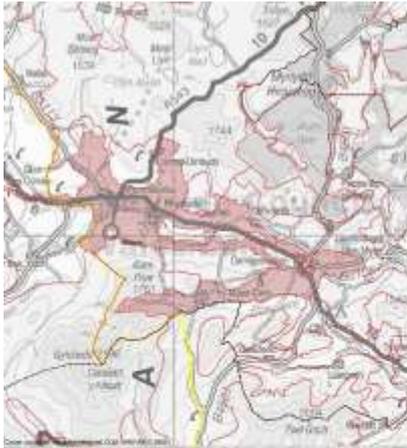
## Merddwr and Ceirw Valleys

**Description**
Relatively broad valley floors. Mainly pastoral farming. Some very small, sinuous fields systems on upper valley sides. Field boundaries of stone, fence and overgrown hedges. Scattered deciduous woodland.

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Manage stone walls and hedgerows.

## Mynydd Poeth
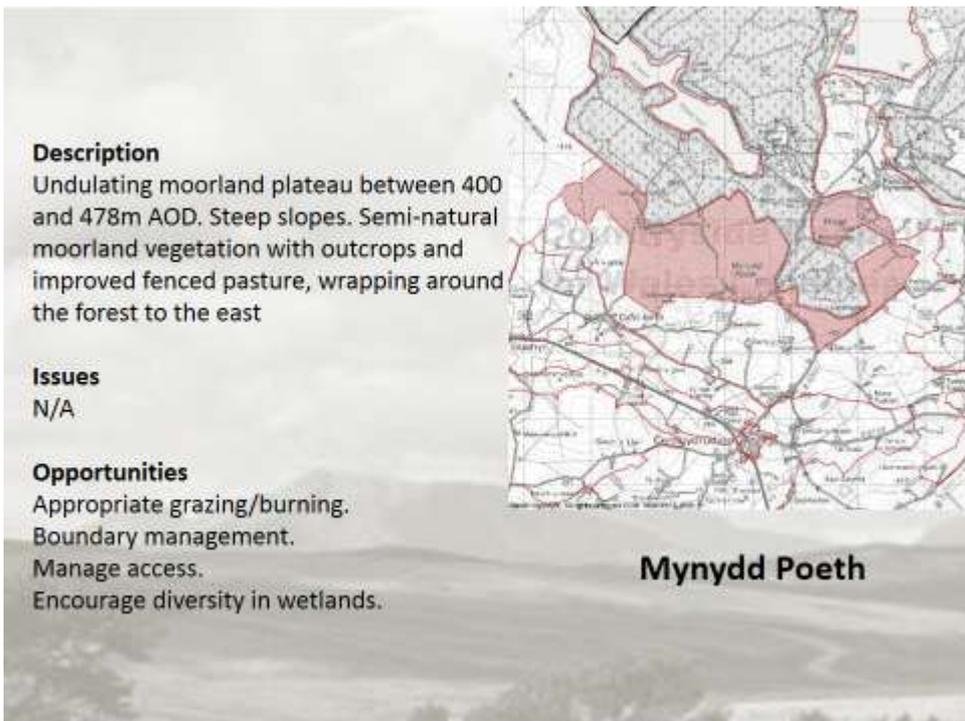
**Description**
Undulating moorland plateau between 400 and 478m AOD. Steep slopes. Semi-natural moorland vegetation with outcrops and improved fenced pasture, wrapping around the forest to the east

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Appropriate grazing/burning.
Boundary management.
Manage access.
Encourage diversity in wetlands.
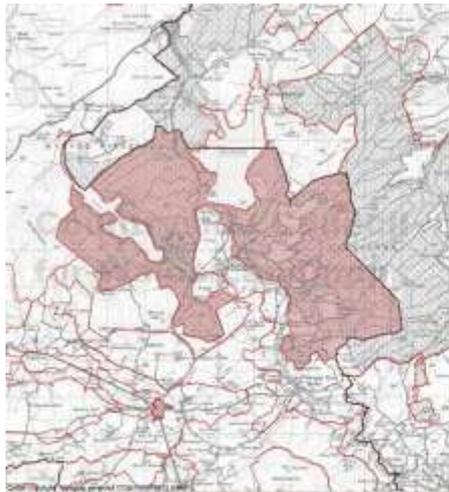
**Clocaenog
Forest West**

**Description**
Upland forested plateau. Two major
reservoirs. Mainly sitka spruce. To the east,
small pockets of pasture.

**Issues**
Coniferous plantation.
Red squirrel population.

**Opportunities**
Improve public access.
Diversify woodland species by managing
rides and clearings.

**Description**
Linear, sinuous, enclosed by coniferous
forest to the east and west. Some
deciduous species on the shore. Some
recreation, mainly sailing and fishing.

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Encourage deciduous vegetation.
Encourage species diversity in grasslands.
Manage coniferous forest edges.

**Alwen
Reservoir**

**Description**
Narrow upland valleys with steep slopes.
Mosaic of medium sized pasture and rough
grazing in a strong pattern of small fields.
Occasional woodland on steep slopes.

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Promote hay-making.
Exclude livestock from woodlands.
Maintain stone walls and traditional stone
bridges.
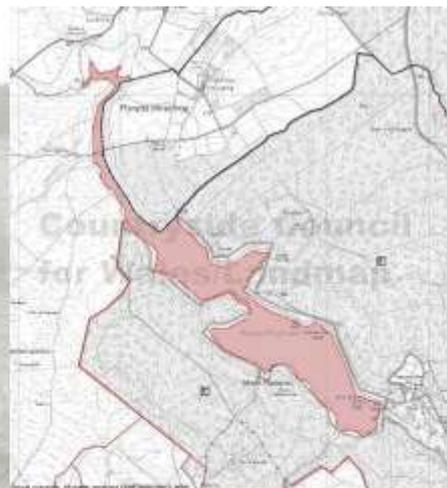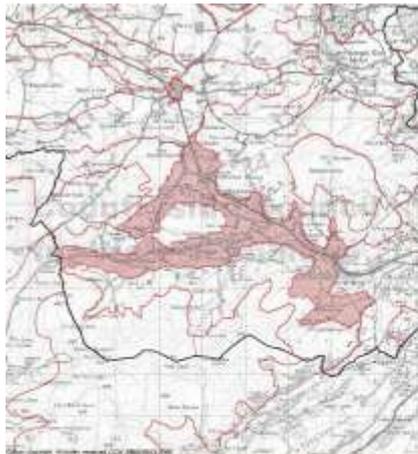
**Ceirw and Medrad
narrow valleys**
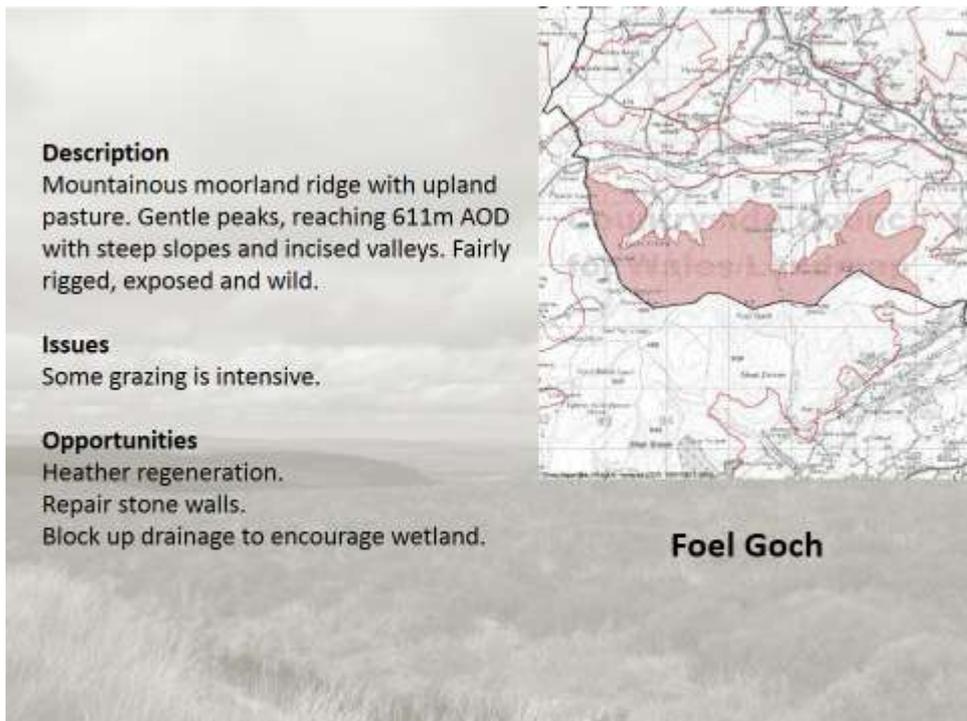


**Description**
Mountainous moorland ridge with upland
pasture. Gentle peaks, reaching 611m AOD
with steep slopes and incised valleys. Fairly
rigged, exposed and wild.

**Issues**
Some grazing is intensive.

**Opportunities**
Heather regeneration.
Repair stone walls.
Block up drainage to encourage wetland.

**Foel Goch**

**Description**
Open and exposed. Moorland ridged landscape lying between Llantysilio Mountain and Eclusham Mountain. Some coniferous plantation.

**Issues**
Slate workings
Plantations

**Opportunities**
Diversify woodland.
Encourage wetland flushes.
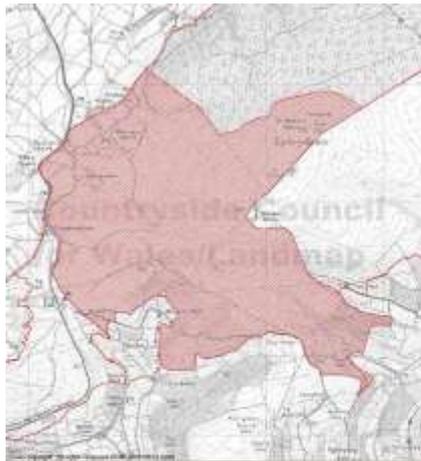
**Cyrn-y-Brain Moor**

**Description**
Strongly undulating hilly area. Overgrown hedgerows. Varying field pattern, regular medium to large on upper slopes to the west, smaller on lower slopes to the east. Many hedgerow trees.

**Issues**
Maturing vegetation.

**Opportunities**
Replace maturing/declining woodland/ hedgerow trees.
Manage hedgerows, allowing hedgerow trees to develop.
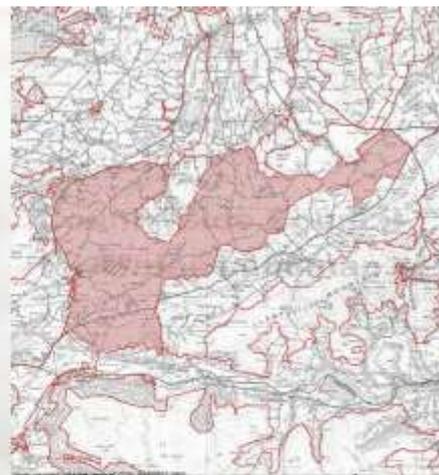
**Hills South of Llanelidan**

**Description**
Winding wooded corridor with adjoining intensive slopes and plateau. Pasture with hedgerows.

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Enhance hedgerow boundaries and woodland cover.
Plant additional trees to enhance biodiversity.

**Nant y Garth Pass Hills**

# Area11 – Dyffryn Clwyd/Vale of Clwyd

- Distinctly undulating landform
- Broad, low lying valley of the River Clwyd
- Lowland pasture with woodland and historic parks
- SSSIs include alder carr, swamp and rush pasture, and ash-wych elm woodland
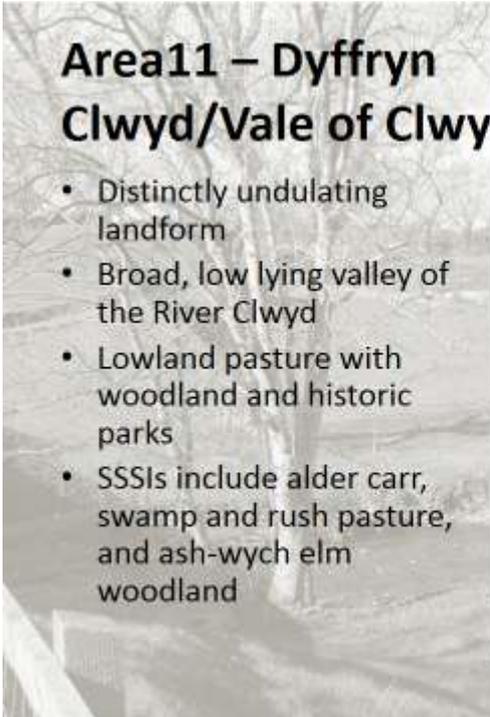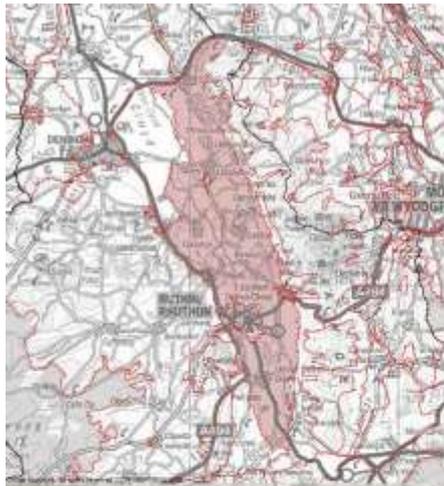
**Vale of Clwyd -
Denbigh-Ruthin**

**Description**
Enclosed pastoral farmland with dense hedgerow tree cover along the floor and lower slopes of the River Clwyd. Patchwork of small to medium size fields with small woodland blocks.

**Issues**
Much of the tree cover is maturing and may be declining.

**Opportunities**
Planting hedgerows, trees and small woodlands.
Diversify field margins.
Improve stone walling where appropriate

**Description**
Strongly wooded area. Long, thin rectangular field patterns radiating out from Denbigh, becoming more irregular eastwards with more hedgerow trees and wooded margins.

**Issues**
Maturing hedgerows and trees.

**Opportunities**
Planting/enhancement of hedgerows.
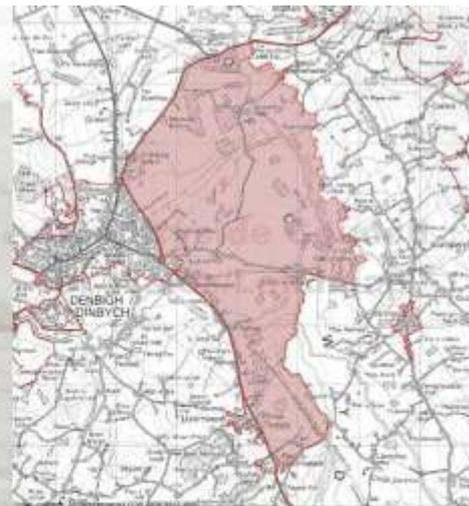
**Vale of Clwyd
Llanrhaeadr**
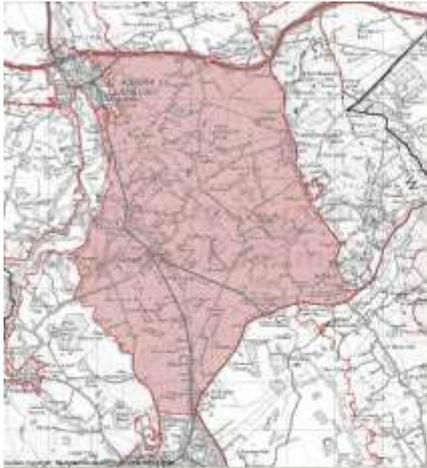
### Vale of Clwyd – North of Denbigh

**Description**
Estate wooded character on gently undulating valley floor. Livestock rather than arable to the south. Mature hedgerows with trees.

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Reinforce field boundaries.

### Clwydian Slopes Mid-Vale

**Description**
Steep hillside slopes. Small-scale filed pattern, dominated by largely overgrown hedges and few small deciduous woodlands. Mainly livestock. Divided by narrow, often well vegetated streams.

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Maintain hedgerows by hedge-laying and gapping where appropriate. Replace mature trees.

Area 12 – Dyffryn Dyfyrdwy a Llangollen/Llangollen and Dee Valley

- Lowland pasture and hillside sheep grazing
- Mainly geometric field patterns with hedgerow boundaries
- Densely wooded valley floor with wet woodland/deciduous blocks
- Many small streams feed into the River Dee



15. Dyffryn Dyfyrdwy a Llangollen/Llangollen and the Vale of Dee
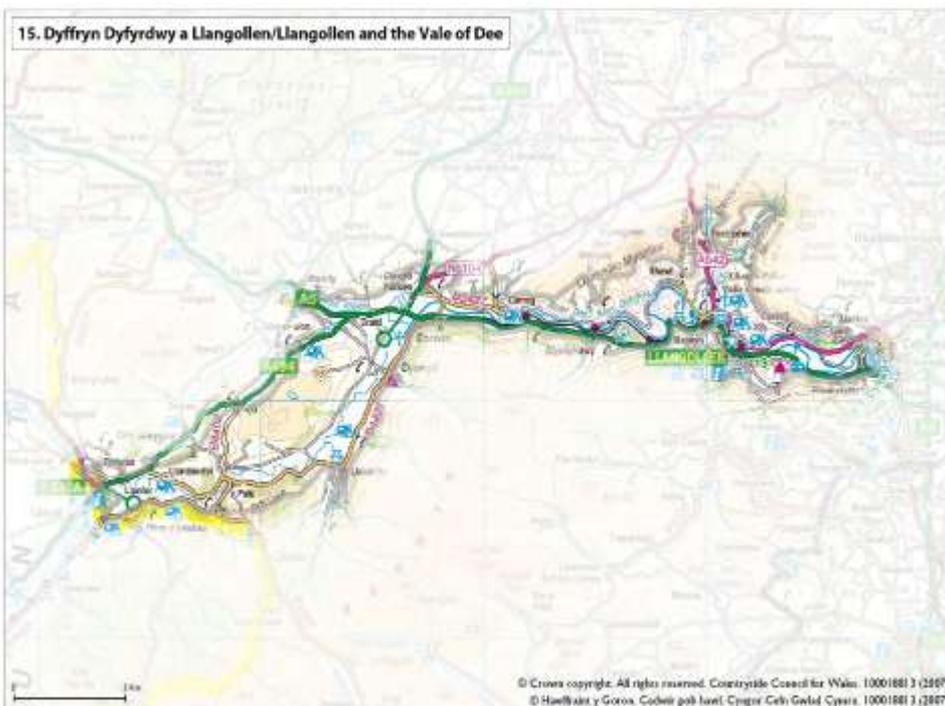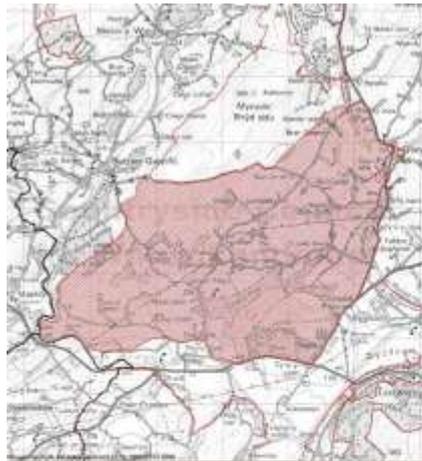
**Description**
Upland enclose pasture, mainly improved.
Undulating topography with irregular,
medium scale field pattern.

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Maintain organic regime.
Enhance field boundaries

**Gwyddelwern Hills
(including the Rug
Estate)**

**Description**
Small, steeply rising rugged hill, with
outcrops. Open mosaic of moorland,
bracken, rough grass and improved
grassland.

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Manage bracken.
Revert improved grassland to rough
grassland or moorland.



**Pentre Llawen**

## Vale of Llangollen

**Description**
Narrow, steep-sided valley. Mosaic of woodland and pasture, alongside meandering river. Mixed woodland blocks and hedgerows.

**Issues**
A5 detracts from an otherwise picturesque landscape.
Maturing woodland and hedgerow.

**Opportunities**
Monitor hedgerows and woodland for replacement, s appropriate.

## Berwyn Mountain

**Description**
Extensive tract of open moorland. Heather/bilberry and rough grazing. Bracken on slopes. Some upland lakes. Many boggy areas.

**Issues**
Coniferous plantation

**Opportunities**
Manage heather and bilberry moor. Introduce deciduous woodland/remove coniferous, as appropriate.
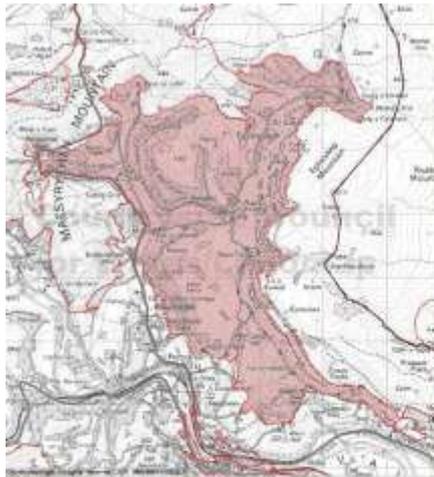
**Description**
Mixed deciduous woodland on valley sides and hillocks. Small-scale field patterns on valley floor and lower slopes. Mature hedgerows with many hedgerow trees.

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Phased replacement of over-mature tree and hedgerow species.

**Horseshoe Pass Valley**

**Description**
Enclosed farmland landscape with distinctive, overgrown hedges and trees. Mainly pasture, with some arable.

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Enhance hedgerow diversity.
Remove and replace maturing trees and hedgerows, as appropriate.
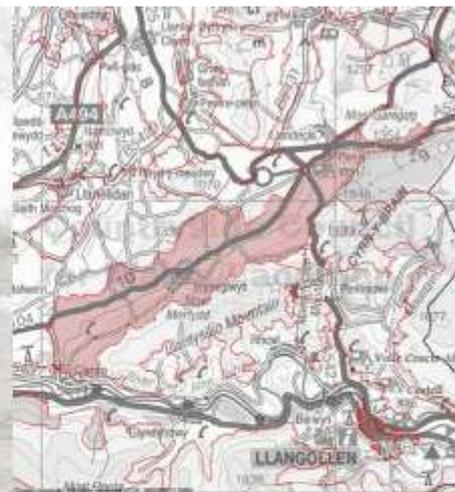
**Morwynion Valley**

**Description**
Distinctive undulating ridge and spur.
Heather, gorse and bracken dominant.
Deeply incised flanks with open
moorland summits.

**Issues**
N/A

**Opportunities**
Manage heather moorland.
Stop up drains to improve
boggy/wetland areas.

Llantysilio
Mountain



Ecosystem Services associated with the Hiraethog

More information on ecosystem services is available here:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecosystem_services

## Biodiversity Issues

- Limited records of reptiles – provide scrapes – encourage repopulation – use Glastir?
- Promote otter habitat – manage watercourses
- Promote hedgehog habitat around settlements
- Promote regeneration of Black Poplar – floodplain woodland management
- Use Glastir to promote Black Grouse where relevant
- Promote nesting sites for Barn Owls – measures to maintain populations of prey species by reductions of chemicals – promote rough grass as hunting ground

## Biodiversity Issues

- Upgrade records for dormouse – manage hedges/ woodlands – improve corridors – exclude livestock to increase understory – identify target areas for dormouse conservation – dormouse nest boxes where necessary
- Manage for butterfly species – grizzled skipper/pearl bordered fritillary
- Manage red squirrel population in Clocaenog Forest – monitor against wind farm development – remove grey squirrel populations
- Manage invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam

# Appendix 2: Discussion guide used for stakeholder interviews

The following discussion guide was used as the basis for interviews with stakeholders undertaken during the course of the development of this strategy.

## This document

First of all, thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.

This is a guide for the discussion that we would like to have with you as part of the above research. We would be grateful if you can find a few minutes to read it in advance of the discussion. It includes some background information about the research and also a list of questions that we would like to discuss with you. This discussion guide is however exactly that - a *guide* to the issues that we would like to discuss during the meeting. We would, of course, be happy to discuss any other issues which you feel are relevant.

## Some background

Wavehill have been appointed by Cadwyn Clwyd and the Conwy Rural Local Action Group (acting on behalf of a consortium of local organisations) to carry out a strategic economic and community regeneration study of the Hiraethog rural area which will form the basis of a development strategy for the area. The strategy should be based on a thorough understanding of the opportunities, needs and challenges in the economy, community, society and demography of Hiraethog. A key part of this project will therefore be to establish those things. At the end of the study, a 20-year Development Strategy and 10-year Action Plan for the economic and community regeneration of the Hiraethog area will be produced.

### The Hiraethog Area

Hiraethog is an upland region in Conwy and Denbighshire. The target areas for this consultation is the area which contains, in Denbighshire, the electoral wards of Efenechtyd, Llanrhaeadr yng Nghinmeirch, Upper Denbigh, Corwen and Llanfair DC/Gwyddelwern, and in Conwy the electoral wards Llansannan, Uwchaled, Llangernyw, and Uwch Conwy.

The Hiraethog area possesses and is surrounded by small urban settlements which include Denbigh, Corwen, Ruthin, Llanrwst and Betws y Coed which act as service centres for the Hiraethog area.

These are to be included in the study insofar as economic regeneration issues and service provision for their rural hinterlands are concerned to identify actions which could have a direct impact on the sustainability or development of Hiraethog communities.

## The Interview

We anticipate that the interview should take no longer than 30 minutes depending of course on how much you have to say. As you can appreciate, we will be interviewing a wide range of people as part of the research. Accordingly, some of the questions listed may not be applicable to you; we will of course focus on those questions which are relevant to you.

Any comments that you make will be confidential and the information you provide will only be used for the purposes of this research. Comments that you make will not be attributed to you unless we have your explicit permission to do that.

## Questions for discussion

1.  As an introduction, can you please introduce yourself by referring to:

    *   The organisation that you work for
    *   Your role within that organisation
    *   The area that you represent/work in

2.  What is your involvement in the Hiraethog area? *For example do you operate a business in the area, do you live there, do you represent businesses/people in the area etc.*

3.  How would you describe the Hiraethog area to someone who's never been?

*The rest of the questionnaire is split into a number of categories that the strategy will cover. For each category we'll be asking you to identify strengths & opportunities and weaknesses & threats.  The reason for this is to try and identify what the strategy needs to focus on under each category.  We apologise if it seems as if the questionnaire is repetitive. It is however important that we cover all these issues with you and consider the needs of the Hiraethog area from a number of different perspectives.*

### A Place to live

*These next few questions are about sustaining and developing the Hiraethog area as somewhere where people are able to live. So, for these questions you should think about things such as the quality and availability of housing, access to the services that people need, transport and so on.*

4.  Generally how would you describe the Hiraethog area as a place to live?

5.  What are its main weaknesses as a place to live?

6.  What are the main threats to the area as a place to live? What could cause the area to become a worse place to live than it is now?

7.  What are its main strengths as a place to live?

8. Can we build on those strengths? What opportunities are there to make Hiraethog a better place to live?

9. Based on the discussion that we've just had, what in your view are the main 'actions' that should be undertaken over the next 10 years to safeguard and/or improve Hiraethog as a place to live?

*Economic Activity*

*These next few questions are about sustaining and developing economic activity in the Hiraethog area. So, for these questions you should think about things such as businesses and jobs in the local area.*

10. Generally, how would you describe the economy in the Hiraethog area?

11. What are the local economy's strengths?

12. Can we build on those strengths? What are the opportunities to develop the economy of the area?

13. What are the main weaknesses of the area's economy?

14. What are the main threats to the local economy?

15. Based on the discussion that we've just had, what in your view are the main 'actions' that should be undertaken over the next 10 years to safeguard and/or develop the economy in the Hiraethog area?

*Natural Environment and Landscape*

*These next few questions are about sustaining and developing the natural environment and landscape in the Hiraethog area. So, for these questions you should think about things such as the landscape, habitats, wildlife and so on.*

16. Generally how would you describe the natural environment and landscape in the Hiraethog area?

17. What are the strengths of the natural environment and landscape in the Hiraethog area?

18. Can we build on those strengths? What are the opportunities to enhance the natural environment and landscape of the area?

19. What are the weaknesses of the natural environment and landscape in the Hiraethog area?

20. What are the threats to the natural environment and landscape which could lead to a decline in its quality?

21. Based on the discussion that we've just had, what in your view are the main 'actions' that should be undertaken over the next 10 years in the Hiraethog area to safeguard and/or develop the natural environment and landscape?

### *Culture and Heritage*

*These next few questions are about sustaining and developing culture and heritage in the Hiraethog area.*

22. Generally, how would you describe the culture and heritage in the Hiraethog area?

23. What are the main weaknesses in relation to the culture and heritage in the Hiraethog area?

24. Are there any threats which could lead to a negative impact on culture and heritage in the Hiraethog area?

25. What are the strengths of the Hiraethog area's culture and heritage?

26. Can we build on those strengths? What are the opportunities to improve or enhance the culture and heritage of the Hiraethog area?

27. Based on the discussion that we've just had, what in your view are the main 'actions' that should be undertaken over the next 10 years in the Hiraethog area to safeguard and/or develop its culture and heritage?

### *Leisure facilities and activities*

*These next few questions are about sustaining and developing leisure facilities and services in the Hiraethog area. So, for these questions you should think about things that local people and visitors can do in the area during their leisure time.*

28. Generally, how would you describe leisure facilities and activities in the Hiraethog area?

29. What are the strengths of the leisure facilities and activities in the Hiraethog area?

30. Can we build on those strengths? What are the opportunities to develop those facilities and activities?

31. What are the main weaknesses of the leisure facilities and activities in the Hiraethog area?
32. What are the main threats to leisure facilities and activities in the area?

33. Based on the discussion that we've just had, what in your view are the main 'actions' that should be undertaken over the next 10 years in the Hiraethog area to safeguard and develop its leisure facilities and activities?

*Final thoughts*

34. In your opinion, taking everything that we've just discussed into account, what should be the main focus of the development strategy? What are the priorities?

35. Do you have anything to add on an issue we've discussed or would you like to raise an issue we have not discussed?

*Thank you*

# Appendix 3: Proposed RDP for Wales 2014-2020 schemes

Source: Welsh Government website as at 26th September 2014
http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/cap/ruraldevelopment/rural-development-plan-for-wales-2014-2020/?lang=en

At the time of writing this report, the Rural Development Programme for Wales (RDP) for 2014-2020 had not been finalised a draft of the operational programme having been submitted to the European Commission by the Welsh Government in July 2014. It is anticipated that the new programme will be operational from January 2015 and, if approved, it will provide £953m of European and Welsh Government funding over its lifetime.

Three objectives have been proposed for the Wales RDP[50]:

1.  Increase the productivity, diversity and efficiency of farming and forestry businesses, improving their competitiveness and resilience, reducing their reliance on subsidies;
2.  Improve the environment, encouraging sustainable land management practices, the sustainable management of our natural resources and climate action; and
3.  Promote strong, sustainable rural economic growth and encourage community-led local development.

The RDP will be delivered via a number of schemes, summarised below. These are noted here in order to provide an indication of potential support and sources of funding for the actions set out later in the report.

*   **Glastir** is the Welsh Government's key sustainable land management scheme available to land managers across Wales. The scheme includes a number of components: (a) *Glastir Entry* is the basic level package. Land Managers can select activities from a wide range of options to achieve a threshold score, based on the eligible area of their farm. Where successful, a land manager will be making a five-year commitment to undertake management options and/or capital works under a contract and receive an annual payment to compensate them for undertaking these activities; (b) *Glastir Advanced* is the package designed to support land managers to undertake higher level environmentally beneficial activities on their farms; (c) *Glastir Commons* is available to groups of individuals who hold rights on Common Land or persons who graze land used in common who have joined together to form a Grazing Association; (d) *Glastir Organic* is a support mechanism for land managers who wish to either convert to organic or continue to farm organically; (e) *Glastir Woodland Creation* will provide financial support to create new native and mixed woodland and will include support for planning new woodland and access to advisory services; (f) Glastir Woodland Management is available for those who have

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[50] Source: Wales Rural Development Programme 2014-2020: Final Proposals. Available here:
http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/environmentandcountryside/wales-rdp-2014-2020-final-proposals/?lang=en

existing woodlands of 0.25ha or greater. There will be support for work to improve the environment, enhance the resilience of the woodland and help improve future economic returns; and (g) the *Small Grants and Habitat Network* which will provide (i) a simple part-farm support package for small capital works projects to deliver environmental benefit and will include small woodland planting and (ii) a specific intervention to deliver key objectives within specified geographical areas utilising facilitated co-operation measures.

- The **Co-operation Fund** will provide support via a combination of grants to co-operative groups and funding of animators/facilitators who broker and facilitate co-operative projects. Other project costs, such as feasibility studies, supply chain mapping and gap analysis, will also be funded (although at lower rates). This scheme will assist two or more parties to work co-operatively towards a project that will (a) encourage development of new products, practices, processes and technologies, in pilot projects, and to share related knowledge, and in support of short supply chains and local markets; (b) Create Woodland Establishment and Woodland Management Plans; (c) fund feasibility studies for community energy projects; (d) pilot projects to test means to obtain improved environmental practices, mitigate or adapt to climate change, and reduce reliance on carbon fuels; and (e) encourage community grown food.

- The **Knowledge Transfer & Innovation (KT&I) Programme** will provide access to an integrated Wales-wide programme of knowledge transfer activities and support for innovation. The programme will deliver two main tiers of activity. **Tier 1** will include (1) Demonstration activities; (2) Information actions – technical guidance, blueprints, podcasts, webinars; (3) Sector specific activity including workshops, surgeries, specialist events and discussion groups; (3) A Skills Development & Continuous Professional Development (training) programme incorporating an e-learning package with links to relevant accreditation bodies; (3) Promoting the use of ICT and e-learning in farm and forestry management to facilitate improved monitoring of physical and financial performance. **Tier 2** will include: (1) a coaching and mentoring programme to support business development, innovation, diversification and encouraging new entrants to the industry; (2) opportunities for short term farm/forestry exchange/study visits linked to learning through knowledge transfer; a Leadership & Management development programme which supports the agriculture and forestry sectors. The programme is expected to be active from April 2015.

- The **Farm Advisory Service** will provide farm and forestry businesses with access to strategic business and specialist technical advice. Advice will be available on a one-to-one or group basis but will be specific to the farm and focus on solving a particular issue(s) such as (a) improving resilience, competitiveness, economic and environmental performance; (b) supporting farm modernisation, innovation and entrepreneurship; (c) climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity, the protection of water and also agricultural practices beneficial to the climate and the environment; and(d) specific advice for farmers setting up for the first time. The service is expected to be active from April 2015.

- The **Rural Community Development Fund** will be administered by the Welsh Government and be aimed primarily at LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs) and other community-based

organisations to support projects in key rural priority sectors. The scheme will support locally-determined needs as part of a national framework to ensure that the same types of interventions are available across Wales. A range of projects can be supported including small-scale infrastructure, ICT and renewable energy, support for local basic services and cultural and natural resources. In line with **local development strategies** (developed by the LEADER LAGs as introduced below), it is the aim that the activities supported will promote **jobs and growth**, and help **tackle poverty** in communities. The Welsh Government will, subject to agreement with the European Commission, launch the scheme in mid-2015 and there will be at least two application rounds.

- **LEADER** involves a community led rural development methodology based on a number of core components including partnership, 'bottom-up' development, innovation and cooperation. It is implemented by local area partnerships that bring together public, private and third sector interests. LEADER partnerships are known as a Local Action Group (LAG) each of which develops a Local Development Strategy which sets out what issues the rural population considers to be the main challenges that LEADER funds should tackle. In particular, LEADER will facilitate experimentation and pilot new innovative approaches and will support rural communities, including community based organisations and business in Wales. The Welsh Government will, subject to agreement with the European Commission, launch the LEADER scheme in January 2015. As the LEADER LAGs are based on Local Authority areas, two will potentially be active in Hiraethog, the LAGs for rural Conwy and rural Denbighshire.

- The **Processing and Marketing Grants Scheme** will provide financial assistance for capital investments, adding value to agricultural products. Micro, small and medium size businesses in the food processing sector are those likely to be eligible. The scheme is due to be launched in April 2015.

- The **Sustainable Production Grant Scheme** is a capital grant scheme designed to help farmers modernise their on-farm facilities with the aim of enhancing profitability and environmental outcomes. Projects will need to be targeted at one or more of four themes: (a) soil and crop management; (b) production housing and handling; (c) animal and plant health and welfare; and (d) crop storage. Support will also be available under the scheme for on-farm renewable energy projects involving self-consumption of the energy produced. The scheme is due to be launched in January 2015.

- The **Young Entrants Support Scheme** is an initiative designed to encourage a constant stream of young people with new ideas into farming in Wales. The key elements within the scheme are: (i) mentoring from experienced farmers willing and able to pass on their experience and skills); (ii) a facilitation service available to all in the scheme which will include a land matching service; (iii) a working capital grant to support the young entrant with the costs of setting up as head of holding for the first time; and (iv) a mandatory training / skills programme. The Welsh Government intends to launch the scheme in July 2015.

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