



**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH:  
A SMART FUTURE**

**Sustainable Economic Regeneration  
Strategy and Action Plan**



**Volume 1:  
Long Term Strategy and  
Action Plan, 2003/4-2005/6**



***Final Draft***

presented to  
**Bridgend County Borough Council**  
**The Bridgend Objective 1 Partnership**

by  
**Shared Intelligence**





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## Let's imagine...it's 2020...

Two decades past his allotted three score years and ten, Wyndham Price looked back on a long and successful life and career. Born in Maesteg during the early thirties and educated at the town's Grammar School, he had taken a classic way out of a Welsh mining community and become a teacher. But his interest in radical politics had led him to become mayor of a newly established New Town in Essex in his early thirties, which in turn awakened an interest in town planning and urban development that allowed him to become the director of a planning think tank. Moving on, he became chief executive of a very successful English new town before finishing his career in community regeneration and inner city development and finance. He knew that an ambitious development strategy for Bridgend had been adopted in the early years of the Millennium. Many of the proposals naturally took years to bring to fruition. So it would be interesting to appraise their effect. Besides, he wanted to pass his professional eye over his roots one last time as well as show them to his great grandchildren...

### But did he find...

Maesteg looked bleaker than he remembered. He would have sworn that the pub opposite was derelict but he had seen several people go in...

The main street seemed to be mainly take-aways, with their piles of litter outside, or charity shops. Few of the streetlights worked and there seemed to be gangs of youths under the few in operation. Drugs, he wondered, or stripped down parts from stolen cars, given that there were so few job opportunities in town?

He had heard that most of the jobs on offer in the County Borough were in the cheap bars and clubs in the centre of Bridgend or the sea front cafes and computer games parlours in Porthcawl but when he had visited those towns that afternoon both were as depressing as Maesteg.

Every shop in Bridgend had 'To Let' signs above - and too many charity shops below. The few people wandering around looked dowdy and as if life was too heavy a burden. He had visited the main industrial area, which he had remembered as the thriving home to many international brands in the 1990s, along with a several home-grown companies whose owners had trained in the foreign owned factories. Now it was virtually empty with most of the large factories converted to second hand car dealers and the smaller ones empty or 'car parts recycling establishments'.

Even the McArthur Glen Designer Outlet scheme at Sarn, once the pride of the local shopping scene and one of south Wales' major visitor attractions, was a shadow of its former self as the new competitors and city centre shopping developments in Cardiff and Swansea had eclipsed it.

He had also given the newish school at the entrance to the Maesteg a professional once-over. Clearly built to be the hub of the community in more optimistic days, its failure to live up to its designers' intentions was almost palpable. Too many windows were smashed; too few people were in its once well equipped computer labs; and the only cars in the car park looked as if they would never move again.

He wasn't even looking forward to the picnic planned for the one of the valleys tomorrow - the scenery may be spectacular but he fully expected the people to be surly and the place full of litter.

He felt embarrassed to have brought his grandchildren to see this. What was he going to feel like by the time he took all of his family back to that dingy hotel by the M4? It might be new but it was so dirty and unloved, but he had been unable to find anything else... he should have guessed from the boring website for the County Borough. At least tomorrow they could leave and spare his blushes....

### Or was it...

Maesteg looked good in the summer evening sun. The visitors to the Heritage Quarter, sitting at the many bistros amongst the flowers in the pedestrian area looked as if they had really appreciated the new holographic 1920s rugby match against old rivals Llanelli. Certainly, the restored nineteenth century department store, now an antiques emporium, had been a hit with his daughter and he was sure his son would enjoy the visit to the steam railway in the valley tomorrow. Even the school on the way into town seemed to live up to its name as the Maesteg Learning Hub - the car park was full, there were smiling, brightly dressed people wandering all over the grounds and sitting under the trees, no doubt eating the ethnic food from the day's special courses he'd seen advertised on the great local web-site when researching the family trip.

They had all enjoyed the afternoon in Porthcawl - the road in was beautifully landscaped and bright with flowers. The new housing areas, both the trendy apartment blocks around the harbour and the five bedroom detached mansions near the Royal Porthcawl golf course, seemed to complement the splendidly restored hotels and new sleek chrome and glass restaurants along the sea front. But it had also been great to see the music students in that amazing carbon fibre bandstand on the Promenade. Who would have thought global warming would have allowed palm trees to flourish here - or that the authorities would have had the imagination to plant them and the skills needed to nurture them? Or that artists and craftsmen would have followed them.

Bridgend had been interesting too. He was glad he had chosen to visit during the annual Arts Festival, even though it had meant that the streets were packed. He'd expected Cardiffians but not so many foreigners. The flowers in the streets had also been magnificent; the town really deserved its Britain in Bloom prize. And that row of shops and restaurants that lined the new Riverwalk in the town centre! Now he knew why his friends in Cardiff were jealous. It must have taken all of the Council's courage to press on in the face of doubts from almost everyone that Bridgend couldn't be home to the best when Cardiff and Swansea were so close. But hindsight had clearly revealed the accuracy of the view that it could attract specialists that neither could support on its own. Mind you, £3,000 for that sculpture his wife had fallen for had been a little extravagant - although he had to admit that the design was stunning - and by a local artist, too.

The Business Park had been better landscaped than he had remembered, and he knew that the new Office Park had won design awards. But what really impressed him was the number of manufacturing firms. True, many of the multi-nationals had gone or downsized, but the products the current companies made were so up-market and successful that he knew they would still be around in another ten years time. But it was the myriad of locally owned factories - he'd expected the owners to have BMWs but not so many of the workers...

He really was impressed with how everywhere in the Borough exuded pride and quality. So, why had he left? And was his oldest grandson serious about setting up a branch of his successful industrial design business here? He hoped so, but the local competition was going to be strong by the look of the name boards in the windows above the shops in Bridgend town centre. Another magnificent meal tonight in the country house hotel should convince him.

The possible future facing Bridgend County Borough's communities may be as polarised as those above - and many of the critical decisions that will shape which future comes to pass over the next fifteen or so may be being made now or in the very near future.

This new regeneration strategy has been prepared for the County Borough Council and the Bridgend Objective 1 Partnership to help achieve the more desirable of the scenarios above. It has been given the title '[Bridgend: A Smart Future](#)' because the aim of the strategy is to make Bridgend 'smart' in appearance, 'smart' in the sense of becoming stylish, even fashionable but, more importantly, 'smart' in that it is better informed and more innovative, able to earn its living in the increasingly competitive global economy.

## glossary

BCBC	Bridgend County Borough Council
BIF	Business In Focus
BISP	Bridged Information Society Plan
CCET	Community Council For Education and Training
ELWa	National Council-Education and Training Wales
GCSE	General Certificate of School Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
ICT	Information and Communications Technologies
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LEAP	Local Enterprise Action Plan
NAW	National Assembly for Wales
NEAP	National Entrepreneurship Action Plan
NOP	National Opinion Polls
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
ONS	Office of National Statistics
REAP	Rural Economy Action Plan
RSA	Regional Selective Assistance
SEWEF	South East Wales Economic Forum
SPD	Single Programming Document
VAT	Value Added Tax
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government
WEFO	Welsh European Funding Office
WDA	Welsh Development Agency
WTB	Wales Tourist Board

# 1 introduction and summary of programmes

## Introduction and Aims

**1.1** Bridgend County Borough has an excellent location midway between Cardiff and Swansea on the M4 Corridor through South Wales (the Cork to Kiev Euro-route) and has eligibility for EU Objective 1 funds as well as UK Tier 1 Assisted Area Status. It has been identified as one of the ten fastest growing local authority areas in the UK in terms of job creation and has an extremely strong manufacturing sector. However, it contains deep-rooted pockets of deprivation and too many of its residents are excluded from fully participating in its community and economic life. It is also likely to face significant restructuring of its economy over the next few years. Its manufacturing sector will face international competition that will best be countered by producing ever higher-value added products. Its traditional tourism industry will need to expand into new niches and growth areas and its under-developed service sector - in which industry and end-consumers alike rely on neighbouring cities for almost everything above local needs - must be encouraged to grow. Thus, it can survive the immediate future relatively well but has many challenges to face and opportunities to seize in the medium term and has much to do to develop the economic components of its social inclusion programme to reach the standards set elsewhere in South Wales valley communities.

**1.2** The County Borough Council and the Bridgend Objective 1 Partnership are implementing an agreed economic development action plan and its supporting programmes. They also have a wide range of relevant strategic development schemes in operation or in the pipeline and an excellent programme delivery capability. This is enhanced by good working relationships amongst themselves and with their other strategic partners and stakeholders such as local companies and residents. However, they have recognised that the time is ripe for having a fresh, ambitious look at how the County Borough's economy should be encouraged to evolve to produce greater prosperity for all in the medium- to long-term.

**1.3** Therefore, in June 2002 Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC)<sup>1</sup> and the Bridgend Objective 1 Partnership commissioned Shared Intelligence to prepare a new Sustainable Economic Regeneration Strategy that would be visionary and strategic, setting an agenda for 10-15 years ahead. At the heart of the County Borough's requirements was to consult with those partners and stakeholders who will contribute to implementing any new proposals. The resulting long-term Sustainable Economic Regeneration Strategy would be supported by a new three year Action Plan for the period 2003/4 to 2005/6 that would identify projects and actions designed to initiate movement in the required strategic directions.

**1.4** This new Strategy therefore sets out the revised aims and objectives for the economic development of the County Borough for the next decade or so and presents an integral Action Plan detailing specific projects and potential funding sources designed to initiate the implementation of that Strategy during its first three years. The brief for the strategy development contract stated that the recommended actions should be 'ambitious and innovative'. The Strategy put forward therefore deals only with major issues or ones where a significant change of pace or direction is needed. It makes little comment on core operational actions by the County Borough or its partners where these are likely to continue to be effective with little alteration although, clearly, many (e.g. financial assistance to SMEs) will continue to be of vital importance. Therefore, unless explicitly stated otherwise, the recommended strategy endorses the continuation of BCBC's existing economic regeneration activities and those of its partners.

**1.5** Indeed, the proposed new Strategy and Action Plan have been designed to be consistent with the latest strategies and policies of the Welsh Development Agency (WDA), The National Council-Education and Learning Wales (ELWa), the Wales Tourist Board (WTB) and the South East Wales Economic Forum's (SEWEF) economic development strategy, 'A Capital Region'. The objective is to align proposals for Bridgend with the themes, objectives and proposed programmes and actions of those other strategies. This will allow the County Borough to maximise its contribution to the regeneration of Wales' economy and tap into wider efforts. However, the format and approach of any one of these wider strategies has not been slavishly followed, as the regeneration of Bridgend will be better achieved through an approach tailored to local needs and priorities. So, to ensure that the County

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<sup>1</sup> For the sake of clarity, when the term 'Bridgend' is used, it refers to the whole of the County Borough. When the settlement of Bridgend is referred to, the words 'Bridgend town' are used.

Borough's role in meeting wider needs is not neglected, each detailed proposal has been required to show how it contributes to delivery of other national objectives. Also, the need for the new Strategy for Bridgend to be sustainable has been taken very seriously and a 'Sustainability Index' has been developed. This has also been applied to each detailed proposal. The following definition of sustainability has been adopted: "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

**1.6** The new Strategy must also propose a local policy framework for the implementation of the next phase of the Objective 1 Programme for West Wales and the Valleys in Bridgend and for the implementation of other related programmes and initiatives in the County Borough. It will also underpin the economic component of the County Borough's first Community Strategy, which must be prepared by 2004 and will have a planned life of ten years.

**1.7** Two key initial activities in the development of the new priorities were a comprehensive review of the economic statistics for the local authority area and appraisals of the stated objectives of BCBC's relevant partner organisations. These were then supplemented by consultations with officials of the County Borough Council and their partner organisations and other key players in, and observers of, the economy of Bridgend. At the heart of this process was a set of workshops with the four Task Groups of the Bridgend Objective 1 Partnership set up to guide the use of EU Structural Funds in the County Borough. Finally, as Shared Intelligence formulated draft proposals and refined them, it engaged in a programme of presentations to Council Members and Officers and officials of partner organisations. Its final report was presented to the Council in June 2003.

**1.8** The full list of Sub-programmes and Projects that should be pursued over the next three years to launch the Strategy are presented below with a coding system to facilitate tracking of their implementation. A more detailed version with its rationale is presented in Section 5.

## The Three Year Action Plan: Proposed Programme and Projects

<b>Action Programme: Strategic Positioning and Marketing (AP1)</b>	
<b>Sub-Programme AP1.SP1: Town Centre Renewal</b>	
<b>Year 1</b>	
<b>Project</b>	
AP1.SP1.P1:	Town Centre Renewal Schemes in Bridgend
AP1.SP1.P2:	Town Centre Renewal Schemes in Maesteg
AP1.SP1.P3:	Town Centre Renewal and Tourism Development in Porthcawl
<b>Sub-Programme AP1.SP2: Strategic Infrastructure and Environmental Enhancement</b>	
<b>Year 1</b>	
AP1.SP2.P1:	Improve Traffic Flow At M4 Junctions 35 and 36
AP1.SP2.P2:	Environmental Improvement Task Force and Transport Corridor Enhancements
AP1.SP2.P3:	Seek Upgrading of The M4 And Mainline Rail Service across South Wales
AP1.SP2.P4:	Proposals to Improve the Ability of Maesteg Rail Passengers Using the New Passing Loop to Get to their Final Destinations
<b>Year 2+</b>	
AP1.SP2.P5:	Develop Long Term Proposals to Improve Public Transport to Major Employment Areas from the North of the Borough and Areas with Excluded Populations
<b>Sub-Programme AP1.SP3: Replenishing the Shopping, Tourism and Leisure Offer</b>	
<b>Year 1</b>	
AP1.SP3.P1:	Actively Participate in the New Herian Initiative to Promote South Wales' Industrial Heritage as a Tourism Attraction
AP1.SP3.P2:	Tourism Facility Signage Upgrading
<b>Year 2+</b>	
AP1.SP3.P3:	Develop and Market a Stronger Events and Festivals Programme, including entering the three main towns in Britain in Bloom
AP1.SP3.P4:	Attract a Brand Name 3 or 4 Star Hotel with Conference Facilities
AP1.SP3.P5:	Sports Development Study
AP1.SP3.P6:	Promote Outdoor Leisure Tourism in the County Borough
AP1.SP3.P7:	Support Development of the Garw Valley Railway if its Viability is Demonstrated
AP1.SP3.P8:	Undertake a Feasibility Appraisal to Develop a Multipurpose 'Arts and Performance Centre and Gallery'
<b>Sub-Programme AP1.SP4: Defining a New Sub-Regional Role and Communicating The Vision</b>	
<b>Year 1</b>	
AP1.SP4.P1:	Identifying how the County Borough could Improve its Role in the Sub-Regional Economy over the Long Term
AP1.SP4.P2:	Develop and Implement a Wider Communications Strategy for the Vision, prioritising turning the Borough website into a showcase
AP1.SP4.P3:	Sub-Regional Communications Strategy re. The Business Offer
<b>Year 2+</b>	
AP1.SP4.P4:	Develop an Annual Flagship Leisure Event

**Action Programme 2: Modernising the Economy (SP2)**

**Sub-Programme AP2.SP1: Developing Enterprise and Helping Companies Gain Competitive Advantage**

Year 1

- AP2.SP1.P1: Undertake Regular Reviews of Local Business Needs to Re-orientate the Business Climate to Support Local Companies
- AP2.SP1.P2: Promote Networking and Collaboration among Local Companies
- AP2.SP1.P3: Support the Development of Strong Links between Local Companies and South Wales' Universities and Bridgend College
- AP2.SP1.P4: Develop the After-Care Service Given to External Manufacturing Investors
- AP2.SP1.P5: Seek to Develop a Commonly Networked Centre of Excellence in Manufacturing Training and Support
- AP2.SP1.P6: Implement Bridgend Business Support Framework and Introduce Common Computerised Client Contact System
- AP2.SP1.P7: Develop a Local Procurement and Supplier Chain Initiative to Take Advantage of Housing Stock Transfer
- AP2.SP1.P8: Establish an Enlarged Programme of Inward And Outward Trade Missions

Year 2+

- AP2.SP1.P9: Formulate a Sectoral Development Initiative in Environmental Services and Equipment /Carbonless Fuels
- AP2.SP1.P10: Continue Applying a Local Version of National Entrepreneurship Action Plan

**Sub-Programme AP2.SP2: Provision of Sites and Premises**

Year 1

- AP2SP.2.P1: Ongoing Business Parks Programme
- AP2.SP2.P2: Supply of Offices in Bridgend and Maesteg
- AP2.SP2.P3: Support Current Schemes to Develop an Up-Market Office Campus

**Action Programme 3: Fostering Life Long Learning and Skills Development (AP3)**

Year 1

- AP3.SP0.P1: Developing Higher Level Skills
- AP3.SP0.P2: Develop the Bridgend Life Centre
- AP3.SP0.P3: Extend the Network of Lifelong Learning Centres
- AP3.SP0.P4: Develop a Learners' Forum
- AP3.SP0.P5: Construction Industry Training and Employment Promotion (Including Llynfi Valley Construction Training Unit)

Year 2+

- AP3.SP0.P6: Training in Customer Care and Interpersonal Skills in Schools and Basic Skills for Adults
- AP3.SP0.P7: Develop Proposals to Help More People Become Economically Active, Specifically Targeting Women

**Action Programme 4: Strengthening Communities (AP4)**

Year 1

- AP4.SP0.P1: Develop Initiative to Increase Capacity for Participation and Partnership Working
- AP4.SP0.P2: Continue to Develop Community Enterprise Centres
- AP4.SP0.P3: Support Implementation of Projects Emerging from the Current Garw Valley Community Regeneration Study
- AP4.SP0.P4: Implement the proposed REAP (Rural Economy Action Plan)

Year 2+

- AP4.SP0.P5: Enhance the Existing LEAP Programme

**Action Programme 5: Promoting Take-Up of ICT (AP5)**

Year 1

- AP5.SP0.P1: Develop and Implement the Bridgend Information Society Plan
- AP5.SP0.P2: ICT Take-Up Surveys of Business and Households Plus Appraisals of Public and Voluntary Sector (and every two years)
- AP5.SP0.P3: Secure Access to Local Authority's/Public Sector's Dedicated Networks by Local Companies

Year 2+

- AP5.SP0.P4: Establish a BCBC e-Procurement Capability and Promote It to Potential Local Suppliers
- AP5.SP0.P5: Multi-Agency ICT Training Initiatives

**Action Programme 6: Strengthening the Local Economic Development Capacity (AP6)**

**Sub-Programme AP6.SP1: The County Borough Council**

Year 1

- AP6.SP1.P1: Review of EDU Resources to Deliver Strategy
- AP6.SP1.P2: Cross Departmental 'Futures Team'

Year 2

- AP6.SP1.P3: Evolve the 'Sustainability Index'

**Sub-Programme AP6.SP2: Funding and Partnership Arrangements**

Year 1

- AP6.SP2.P1: Develop the Projects Records System Developed for this Strategy

Year 3

- AP6.SP2.P2: Evolve the Local Objective 1 Partnership Beyond the Current Objective 1 Deadline

**Sub-Programme AP6.SP3: The Role of the Private Sector**

Year 1

- AP6.SP3.P1: Establish a Joint County Borough Economic Advisory Panel



## 2 context

**2.1** The new Sustainable Economic Regeneration Strategy for Bridgend will be implemented against a backdrop that the County Borough, its Council and its partners can only influence around the edges but which will impact directly upon it. One of those factors is the external economic environment, the other is the governmental context in which it will be implemented. This section outlines both.

### External Drivers and their Challenges

**2.2** Over the lifetime of the Strategy, Bridgend's economy will be shaped by economic, technological and social forces over which BCBC and its partners, even local operations of major multi-national companies, will have little influence. However, they must seek to exploit those factors that offer opportunities and develop policies and actions to ameliorate the effects on the County Borough of the less desirable ones in order to maximise its capacity to increase prosperity and reduce deprivation.

**2.3** These forces can be categorised as:

- social and community trends
- structural economic changes and the knowledge-based economy
- technology drivers
- skills requirements
- trends in foreign direct investment
- environmental considerations.

### Social and Community Trends

**2.4** Population ageing will alter the dependency ratio (working age people to the rest of the population) as well as decrease the average size of households whilst increasing demand for "town centre living". Society's attitudes to authority are also changing, allowing greater freewill and creativity, generating new economic opportunities and increasing the need for flexibility and innovation.

### Structural Economic Changes and the Knowledge-Based Economy

#### New Knowledge-based Activities

**2.5** Key elements of economic success are changing rapidly, especially the growth of the so-called "knowledge based economy" which is facilitated by the introduction of new technologies. This, in turn, requires successful local economies to move into new market niches and the development of new high value-added products and services. This re-emphasises the need for international networking and intelligence, for up-skilling workers and for good access to equity investment to finance the development and delivery of new products and services.

## Competitive Advantage and Sectoral Development

**2.6** There can be little doubt that localities need competitive advantage to become prosperous - almost all of the world's richest areas have highly specialised industries, often layered on top of a broad base. Only occasionally do they have specialised, mono-sectoral, economies - economies which tend, in the long-run, to be vulnerable. Strong local sectors produce competitive advantage through staff development and exchange, through specialist knowledge on products, production techniques and markets, through better support systems (physical and communications infrastructure, training, business services, local government support, etc). Bridgend should therefore concentrate on developing a good business climate for all companies and actively participate in the policies designed to develop strong clusters in South Wales.

## Service Sector Growth

**2.7** It is also important to recognise the importance of the switch to services in the industrialised world. Today, massive regional economies like London and New York can exist virtually without any manufacturing - and many of them are very prosperous. Services add value to products and they recycle local money quickly, allowing prosperity to become self-sustaining. This switch to a more services-dependent economy is partially driven by the inexorable general rise in affluence: since the mid 1960s annual real compound growth of GDP per capita in the UK has been in excess of 1.5%. As they get richer, people tend to move from satisfying basic needs to fulfilling more 'inessential' desires. As a result tourism/travelling, eating out, home improvements and purchases of furniture and domestic electronics grow much faster than GDP. Over the next few years, therefore, Bridgend is likely follow the example of areas like Cardiff and the South East of England that enjoy higher GDP per capita and experience demand for more and better services - but it will need to minimise leakage of expenditure to larger neighbours that offer more choice.

## The Technology Drivers

**2.8** The rate of adoption of recently introduced technologies and ones that will be developed during the lifetime of the Strategy will be central to the creation of competitive advantage and therefore vitally important to the future prosperity of the County Borough. This means that an essential part of the Strategy must be to improve the County Borough's - and especially its businesses' - access to new technologies, and their early adoption of them.

## Skills Requirements

**2.9** The adoption of new technologies will strengthen even further the need to recognise that the skill requirements of modern companies of all types will change rapidly, become ever more quality orientated and complex and focused on the application of knowledge. The Strategy will therefore need to facilitate this shift by helping companies understand their future skills requirements and then be able to develop their personnel.

## Trends in Foreign Direct Investment

**2.10** Bridgend has a superb track-record of attracting external investment in manufacturing - as amply demonstrated by the fact that many investors have re-invested not just once or twice but many times. However, locations in Eastern Europe and the Far East now offer skilled work forces, dynamic management, better access to markets and labour costs at a fraction of the UK's. These developments will make it ever more difficult for locations like Bridgend to compete with regard to mass-market products. Thus, the future strategy with regard to attracting external investment should re-orientate away from attracting external direct investment in mass market products towards attracting high value-added production and niche manufacturing plus tradeable services, including tourism.

## Environmental Considerations

**2.11** Internationally, there is growing emphasis on conserving scarce natural resources, but sustainable development - in the broadest sense - could be a foundation for economic prosperity. Quality of life has become an increasingly important value in today's society, with the role of the natural and built environments central, so Bridgend's economic success will depend to some extent on how it conserves and improves its environment.

## The Impacts of These Factors

**2.12** These drivers of change will impact on Bridgend County Borough in complex ways which cannot be predicted with confidence. Therefore the new Sustainable Economic Regeneration Strategy must be flexible enough to accommodate them. This suggests that some important re-orientation of the County Borough's current Sustainable Economic Regeneration Strategy is desirable. The prime objectives of that re-orientation should be to give the County Borough's workers, companies and communities a competitive advantage in their markets and give sectoral development greater support over time as strong sectors evolve and effective local methods of supporting them are developed. It means delivering ever high value-added in manufacturing and services alike and using the current relative strength of the local economy to develop and marshal resources and know-how now in preparation for a major push in about two or three years time to move into a phase of diversification and value-added over the rest of the next decade. Without such efforts stagnation and decline are very possible in the medium to long-term.

## A Key Requirement: Integration of Local Policy with Other Organisations

**2.13** For Bridgend to strengthen its economy it is essential to agree a long-term Vision, and then invest to deliver that Vision using the resources and energies of the County Borough Council, other public agencies and the private sector in well co-ordinated, focussed ways. This must take account of the existing national, regional and local policy frameworks. The key elements of these are all briefly described below - Appendix B presents them in more detail.

## The National Policy Background

**2.14** Since April 2000, the Welsh Assembly Government has articulated a set of strategic proposals in '**Better Wales**', '**A Plan for Wales**' and a National Economic Development Strategy, '**A Winning Wales**' which sets out ten priorities and associated actions that form the agenda for economic development across Wales.

**2.15** Achievement of these essentially lies with the Strategies and Corporate Plans of the key national executive agencies: the Welsh Development Agency, the National Council-ELWa and the Wales Tourist Board. The Welsh Assembly Government also provides three national programmes of relevance to the economic regeneration of Bridgend: the Wales Information Society which seeks to increase take up of ICT, Wales Trade International (WTI), which supplies practical support to Welsh companies which trade internationally and Communities First, which funds programmes and actions to improve some of the most deprived communities in Wales including four in Bridgend County Borough.

## The Regional Policy Context

### The West Wales and the Valleys Objective 1 SPD, 2000-2006

**2.16** At the regional level the key document that will affect the development of Bridgend is the West Wales and The Valleys Objective 1 Single Programming Document, 2000-2006 which establishes the background against which EC funding for local regeneration will be available. Its main objectives relate to increasing GDP levels, creating new employment opportunities and reducing economic inactivity. It is structured around six strategic priorities:

1. developing the SME base;
2. modernising the economic base;
3. community regeneration;
4. promoting employability and the development of a learning society;
5. rural development and the sustainable use of natural resources; and
6. strategic infrastructure development.

**2.17** In addition, **Strategic Planning Guidance for South East Wales**, published in January 2000 by the consortium of local authorities which serve South East Wales, sets out principles to shape the future development of the region. Then, in July 2000, the South East Wales Economic Forum agreed an economic strategy for the region - **The Capital Region** - that aims to establish the region in the top quartile of the UK's most prosperous regions by 2010. This strategy, along with A Winning Wales, emphasises the need for economic diversification.

## The Local Policy Context

**2.18** This new sustainable economic regeneration strategy for Bridgend will form the backdrop for the economic development component of the Bridgend Community Strategy due for publication in 2004. It builds on a consultants' report "A Sustainable Economic Regeneration Strategy for Bridgend County Borough Council"<sup>2</sup> received by BCBC in March 2001 which proposed three 'Operational Themes', ten 'Action Areas' and 79 'Actions'. Those Action Areas were:

1. Improving the competitiveness and employment potential of the SME sector
2. Inward Investment Promotion and Information Services
3. Creating a competitive Business Environment
4. Improving employability and developing pathways to employment
5. Developing a lifelong learning culture
6. Skills for Business
7. Capacity building support for active citizenship and partnership working
8. Community-based actions for overcoming social exclusion
9. Community-led action for regeneration
10. Supporting the development of the social economy

**2.19** It was followed by a Draft Local Action Plan, 2000-3 and then a Draft Local Strategy, 2000-2010 prepared by the County Borough Council and endorsed by the Bridgend Objective 1 Partnership.

**2.20** In addition, the following relevant strategies and action plans recently prepared by or for BCBC have been reviewed during the preparation of this Sustainable Economic Regeneration Strategy as they help set the context for implementing the new Strategy:

- BCBC Corporate Plan
- Bridgend Objective 1 Partnership and Local Action Plan
- Unitary Development Plan
- Local Agenda 21 Strategy
- Biodiversity Action Plan
- Countryside Management Strategy and Action Plan
- Tourism Strategy
- Local Transport Plan
- Education Strategic Plan
- Strategic Sites Appraisal Study
- Maesteg Town Centre Strategy
- Communities First Bridgend - Preparing for Change 2001-2004
- Llynfi Valley Property Survey
- A Community Strategy for the Llynfi Valley
- Llynfi Valley Needs Assessment
- Bridgend Town Centre Strategy
- Porthcawl Town Centre Strategy
- Bridgend Information Society Plan
- Draft Bridgend CCET Annual Recommendations
- Annual Economic Development Business Plan

<sup>2</sup> ECOTEC Research and Consulting, April 2001

## 3 the bridgend economy today

### Overview

**3.1** Bridgend is located almost mid-way between Cardiff and Swansea on the M4 corridor in South Wales, but with a coastal zone. Indeed, geographically it comprises three parallel sub-area/local economies that are quite distinctive yet intertwined:

- the coastal strip to the south based around the seaside resort and residential town of Porthcawl;
- the M4 Corridor across the centre of the County Borough, based on Bridgend itself but including the smaller nearby settlements of Pencoed and Pyle/Kenfig/Cornelly to the east and west respectively;
- the Valleys area to the north of the M4 where there are three valleys, the Llynfi to the west, which contains Maesteg, the largest town in the sub-area and the second largest in the County Borough, the Garw and the Ogmore.

**3.2** To understand the local economy and explore the shape of the most appropriate sustainable regeneration strategy for the County Borough, the following SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis was prepared and used as the basis for drawing conclusions. It does not follow the traditional SWOT format whereby Strengths and Weaknesses are internal and Opportunities and Threats external, but instead uses one in which Strengths and Weaknesses relate to the current situation and Opportunities and Threats have a strong future likelihood. A fuller description of the County Borough's economy is presented in Appendix A.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Excellent strategic position and transport links (M4/rail mainline, EU Objective 1 funds, nearby airport, Heritage Coast, mid way between Cardiff and Swansea)</li> <li>2. Good sub-regional location mid way between Cardiff and Swansea, Valleys and coast and McArthur Glen/Sarn shows area can serve a large catchment if offer strong/distinctive</li> <li>3. Strong, diverse manufacturing industry</li> <li>4. World brand leaders important in local economy, e.g. Sony, Ford/Jaguar, COSI (Revlon), Merck, John Raymond</li> <li>5. Superb inward investment track record</li> <li>6. Some excellent indigenous companies</li> <li>7. Service sector growth</li> <li>8. Strong tourism industry</li> <li>9. Low unemployment</li> <li>10. Good supply and choice of land and premises for manufacturing and some services</li> <li>11. Enterprising college provides a wide range of courses and facilities</li> <li>12. Technology support capabilities well established</li> <li>13. National economic development players active but mainly using national programmes</li> <li>14. County Borough Council also has well developed programmes</li> <li>15. Local partnership's team work good</li> <li>16. Broad range of economic development projects under way/in pipeline</li> <li>17. Bridgend town centre proposals</li> <li>18. Landscape of much of the area is good</li> <li>19. ICT provision at least adequate</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No consensus or clear vision of how the County Borough will earn its living in the future</li> <li>2. "Ordinariness" - the County Borough is statistically average and has no major international profile, features or strengths</li> <li>3. No especially strong sectoral clusters or local competitive advantage vis a vis the world stage</li> <li>4. Overshadowed by Cardiff and Swansea</li> <li>5. Low profile and image not positive or distinctive</li> <li>6. Few top quality retailing, leisure or arts facilities</li> <li>7. Inward manufacturing investment unlikely to continue on scale of past</li> <li>8. Entrepreneurship levels below even the Welsh average</li> <li>9. Wages/disposable incomes not high</li> <li>10. Unemployment high in some areas</li> <li>11. Long-term and youth unemployment high</li> <li>12. Service sector relatively poorly developed, especially business services</li> <li>13. Little opportunity for large-scale development in Bridgend town centre, especially for offices</li> <li>14. Skills/educational levels acceptable not high</li> <li>15. Deprived housing areas/neighbourhoods</li> <li>16. No university in the Borough</li> <li>17. Opportunities in sports poorly exploited</li> <li>18. Much of tourism product is old fashioned, no major recent investments or national/international standard attractions</li> <li>19. Physical environment in some Valleys areas poor</li> <li>20. Access to/from valleys constrained - M4 as much a barrier as an opportunity</li> <li>21. Little developable land in Valleys, especially Maesteg</li> </ol>

<p>20. No major negative image issues 21. Modern housing stock offering good choice and value</p>	<p>22. Porthcawl seems not to be being renewed quickly enough 23. Unattractive 'access corridors'/poor roadside maintenance 24. Limited social enterprise and true community regeneration</p>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine and exploit a distinctive role for the County Borough in the South Wales economy</li> <li>2. Develop a higher profile/stronger image for the County Borough</li> <li>3. Develop stronger manufacturing clusters based on local and international firms producing more specialised, higher value added products</li> <li>4. Develop local and sub-regional/regional support for the above, e.g. technical support centres/technology transfer activities/peer group clubs, high end training programmes, trade missions, local supplier chain initiatives, Entrepreneurship Action Plans, etc</li> <li>5. Develop the technical training capabilities of the County Borough to serve South Wales</li> <li>6. In particular, build stronger links between Universities in South Wales and local companies</li> <li>7. Support the development of the County Borough's small but high growth potential businesses and industrial sectors</li> <li>8. Develop the local business services sector, perhaps with a high quality Office Park</li> <li>9. Brighten up the towns by implementing planned improvements to the public realm, refurbishment of key buildings, selective redevelopment, encouraging Britain in Bloom participation and approach corridor environmental improvements</li> <li>10. Develop top end leisure facilities</li> <li>11. Retrieve retail and leisure leakage to Cardiff and Swansea</li> <li>12. Develop tourism in Valleys, possibly linked to McArthur Glen</li> <li>13. Housing stock transfer could create opportunities for local businesses, improve the environment and health of local residents and facilitating the development of community enterprises in deprived areas</li> <li>14. Enhance community development and community enterprise in Valleys areas, deprived urban wards and areas of social housing</li> <li>15. See welfare and social services as an economic sector and maximise their roles in the County Borough's economy</li> <li>16. Regenerate Porthcawl to contribute more to local economy</li> <li>17. Improving access to Objective 1 funds</li> <li>18. Taking steps to improve the ability of local companies to compete successfully for public sector contracts</li> </ol>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is a strong likelihood of major loss of main private sector manufacturing employment</li> <li>2. Lack of re-investment by current international investors</li> <li>3. The M4 becomes barrier between the poorer Valleys and the job opportunities to the south</li> <li>4. Failure to develop competitive advantage amongst indigenous companies and growth sectors</li> <li>5. Service sector continues to be under-represented</li> <li>6. Failure to retrieve retail and leisure leakage to Cardiff and Swansea</li> <li>7. Local tourism product goes into decline</li> <li>8. Bridgend Town centre does not maximise its contribution to economic success</li> <li>9. Failure to raise educational levels, job opportunities, incomes and aspirations of the residents of deprived areas of the County Borough</li> <li>10. Failure to develop a critical mass of community development and community enterprise</li> <li>11. Continuing inaction at Porthcawl</li> <li>12. Failure to invest in South Wales' transport network makes the County Borough's manufacturing companies and service centre attractions uncompetitive.</li> <li>13. An economic disaster - such as foot and mouth outbreak - has a permanent negative impact on manufacturing, tourism and/or shopping in the County Borough</li> </ol>

## Critical Success Factors

**3.3** The ability of Bridgend County Borough to continue to give its residents and workers the level of affluence they aspire to will depend upon:

1. taking advantage of the area's excellent location and ensuring that its transport system is at least adequate;
2. formulating a clear vision of how the County Borough will earn its living in the future and leading the efforts by the Council's partners and local stakeholders to deliver that vision;
3. maintaining its manufacturing base by encouraging it to produce ever more sophisticated products;

4. developing its local services such as retailing, leisure and arts/culture so as to retrieve expenditure currently being lost to large neighbouring cities;
5. developing local business services;
6. ensuring that the County Borough's town centres are modernised and play an enhanced role in the economic life of the area;
7. continuously improving its tourism offer to stay competitive in traditional markets and to develop new ones, especially in industrial heritage, activity holidays and short breaks;
8. ensuring that a culture of lifelong learning develops in the County Borough to ensure that its work-force is adaptable and well-trained;
9. ensuring that the Borough has the business accommodation needed;
10. ensuring that the businesses and people of the County Borough successfully adopt new technologies, especially ICT, early and effectively;
11. ensuring that growing prosperity is shared and that local concentrations of unemployment, youth unemployment and long-term unemployment are reduced; and
12. ensuring that community regeneration initiatives have a strong economic component and especially that they encourage the establishment of viable social enterprises.

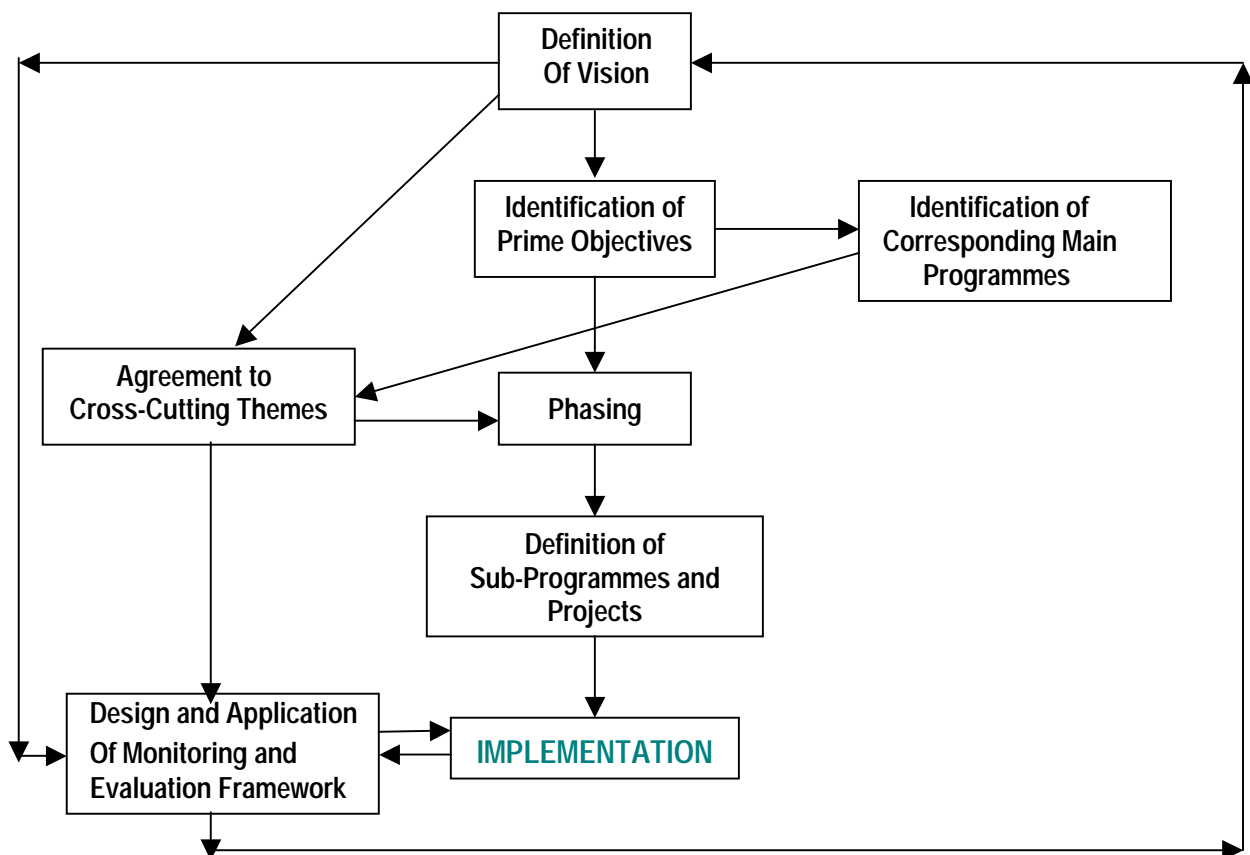
## 4 the long term strategy: vision, prime objectives, action programmes and strategic phases

### The Approach Adopted towards Strategy Development

4.1 The following seven-point, hierarchical approach to formulating a Strategy has been adopted:

1. defining an agreed *Vision* of the desired future state
2. identifying *Prime Objectives* that will guide efforts to achieve that Vision
3. agreeing *Action Programmes* - one per objective - for delivering results and allow allocation of responsibility for driving each such Programme
4. agreeing *Cross-Cutting Themes* and whether they need specific actions or can be adequately addressed within the Action Programmes
5. agreeing any main *Phasing* of prime objectives and projects over the strategy period
6. defining *Sub-Programmes* and individual *Projects* so that action can be taken to achieve the objectives and support the cross-cutting themes
7. identifying and applying *a monitoring and evaluation framework* via which progress can be assessed and timely adjustments made, both in terms of whether change is in the right direction and fast enough

4.2 This process can be shown diagrammatically, revealing the loops back from the evaluation element to implementation and review:



**4.3** The first five of these are presented in this section as the “Strategy” while initial Sub-programmes and Projects (i.e. number 6) are presented in the next section as a first phase Action Plan, with number 7 forming the final section of the report.

**4.4** The **Action Programmes should run for the life of the Strategy and provide a framework** into which new projects can quickly be inserted. Projects included in the Strategy should be **additional**, i.e. they should pass the test that they will make a sizeable contribution to achieving the overall Strategy and they would not happen anyway (or are more likely to happen if they are included in the Strategy).

**4.5** This hierarchical approach to strategy formulation allows responsibility for making things happen be allocated to individuals, thus facilitating tracking of whether they are happening. Action Programmes are activities that directly deliver measurable improvements to local economic performance while Cross-cutting Themes should be more indirect, either ‘support activities’ that raise the chances of achieving the Action Programmes or actions that contribute to delivering wider objectives than just the Economic Regeneration Strategy. It is therefore equally essential that responsibility for overseeing delivery of each cross-cutting theme should be allocated to an individual.

**4.6** BCBC’s previous economy regeneration strategy had a short time horizon of three years which is insufficient to make serious inroads to achieving new major objectives - an approach which does, however, mean that there is a strong programme of actions and projects in the pipeline. Therefore it is proposed that a longer ‘Strategy Horizon’ to around the middle of the next decade be adopted for the new Strategy. The forthcoming Community Strategy for the Borough will run to 2014 and the current Unitary Development Plan for Bridgend (the physical/land use plan for the County Borough) to 2016.

**4.7** It is therefore proposed that the Sustainable Economic Development Strategy for Bridgend be designed for delivery over the period to 2016. Within this longer period, the first Action Plan should have a life of three years to allow the major shift from current activities to the new priorities proposed.

## The Vision

**4.8** A Vision for a place must encapsulate what that location is seeking to become and guide how it will be achieved. For Bridgend it therefore needs to be about prosperity, strengthening and modernising the County Borough’s economy and town centres, reducing exclusion and raising competitive advantage.

**4.9** Therefore, following extensive discussions, it has been agreed that Bridgend County Borough Council and its partners on the Bridgend Objective 1 Partnership adopt the following Vision for their sustainable economic regeneration efforts to 2016:

*Bridgend County Borough will develop competitive advantages, for itself and its people, communities businesses and other enterprises, based on becoming a ‘smart’ community, well maintained, well connected, well informed and innovative, playing a significantly enhanced role in the economy of South Wales by developing its locational and human resource advantages. Its mixed economy will provide a wide range of job opportunities in successful and growing companies in both manufacturing and services that operate across the South Wales economy and further afield. Its communities will be prosperous enough to have become vibrant and pleasant places to live, work and relax. Its poorer people will be catching up and have opportunities for further improvement. Above all, its people will have the income and the opportunities to enjoy the fruits of their labours.*

## Six Prime Objectives

**4.10** Based on the analysis of the local economy and context against which the Strategy will be implemented (presented earlier), it is proposed that the Sustainable Economic Regeneration Strategy for Bridgend County Borough be implemented through six Action Programmes designed to achieve the following six prime objectives:

1. establishing a clear and widely agreed understanding of how the County Borough will earn a good living and contribute to the South Wales economy by the middle of the next decade, communicating that understanding so that it will be widely recognised and pursued and undertaking critical strategic schemes specifically designed to support the Vision
2. foster the modernisation of the economy of the County Borough
3. encourage positive attitudes to acquiring knowledge and skills
4. strengthening the economies of the poorer communities within the County Borough using community regeneration techniques
5. increasing the penetration, take up and effective use of new information technologies in the County Borough
6. strengthening the economic development capacity of the County Borough Council and its key partners and their co-ordination and joint working arrangements

## Six Action Programmes

**4.11** Delivery of these should be through six corresponding Action Programmes, named as follows:

1. Strategic Positioning And Marketing
2. Modernising The Economy
3. Fostering Life Long Learning And Skills Development
4. Strengthening The Communities
5. Promoting Take Up Of ICT (Information and Communications Technologies)
6. Strengthening The Local Economic Development Capacity

**4.12** These Action Programmes should be achieved through projects organised within sub-programmes and by allocating responsibility for managing them to an individual who can be held to account regarding delivery.

## Four Cross-cutting Themes

**4.13** The Welsh Assembly Government and its main agencies have identified four common cross-cutting themes:

1. sustainability
2. equal opportunities
3. social inclusion
4. promoting take up of ICT

**4.14** It is recommended that each of these be adopted for the Economic Regeneration Strategy for Bridgend County Borough. Progress towards achieving all of them should be achieved through them being given due consideration in the detailed design of individual projects. In addition, the fourth - promoting take up of ICT - is considered to be such an important objective in its own right that it should also be a main Action Programme with specific projects designed to help deliver it.

**4.15** Therefore, **every** programme and project will be required to demonstrate how it will help deliver these cross-cutting themes and match to the main themes of the Valleys and West Wales Objective 1 Single Programming Document and its Priorities and Measures. It is recommended that a relevant senior BCBC officer (at least Assistant Director level) be given responsibility for checking how each project is expected to contribute to the achievement of the cross-cutting theme and then for checking that the expectation is being delivered. Those officers would report independently to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Cross-cutting Themes. They would evaluate each programme and project against a checklist of indicators to be developed for each theme. Indicators have already been developed by BCBC for Sustainability; it should therefore develop similar ones for the other cross-cutting themes.

### **Sustainability: Applying An Index**

**4.16** The Economic Regeneration Strategy for Bridgend County Borough must be sustainable and must support the Welsh Assembly Government's objective, expressed in its first cross-cutting theme, of making Wales' economy, society/culture and environment sustainable.

**4.17** Whilst there is a large and growing literature on sustainability appraisal, few working mechanisms have been developed to date. The Welsh Assembly Government has recently designed an "Integration Toolkit" to evaluate the contribution of policies and projects during development and delivery in taking forward its guiding themes of sustainable development, equality and social inclusion. A similar but modified approach could be developed locally to appraise the sustainability of projects proposed in the Sustainable Economic Regeneration Strategy for Bridgend

**4.18** It is therefore proposed that a pragmatically developed "Sustainability Index" is used. This would be restricted to factors relevant to economic regeneration and only consider environmental or social sustainability where these have been identified as relevant to the economic regeneration needs of the Borough. The Index would be built up by identifying a number of key 'Sustainability Factors', scoring each project out of ten against each factor and multiplying each such score by a weighting to allow for some factors being considered more important than others and then adding all of the scores to calculate the index score (out of 100). The weighting could then be altered as necessary as experience builds up with regard to using the Index.

**4.19** Eight 'Sustainability Factors' seem pertinent:

- 1. Contribution to economic growth**  
The project should normally contribute to economic growth or arresting decline
- 2. Contribution to building capacity**  
Some projects will be designed to help create sustainable new capacity in the economy or the economic development system. Whilst they may therefore have no direct impact on the economy they will be of great importance to the sustainability of the Strategy
- 3. Workable: able to achieve the impact within plan period - but then able to evolve beyond that period**  
Projects should be deliverable within the action plan or strategy period but should be capable of evolving beyond it
- 4. Longevity: likelihood of continuing after plan period**  
Projects should have a long-life and be able to continue after their initial set up period

5. **Resource Efficiency: minimisation of natural resource inputs and waste outputs**  
Projects should be efficient with regard to their inputs of natural resources and in terms of their waste output
6. **Socially sustainable: tackles poverty and social exclusion or equips people with the skills to fulfil their potential**  
Some projects may have specific social or community regeneration objectives of relevance to the Economic Regeneration Strategy (especially Action Programme 3)
7. **Enhances the environment (can be given a negative score)**  
Some projects may have specific environmental enhancement objectives of relevance to the Economic Regeneration Strategy (especially Action Programme 1)
8. **Consequences of failure (impact/additional public resources needs)**  
Should a Project prove not to be viable or to have unexpected negative impacts, the consequences could be very significant in terms of preventing the achievement of other objectives or in terms of needing further injections of public support to get them back on track.. It is therefore important to estimate those impacts

**4.20** This approach would, in theory, allow projects to be ranked, but this could be dangerous because some projects may be judged so important or necessary to facilitate other projects or desired outcomes that even if the risk is high it should go ahead. A drawback with this approach is, of course, that it relies on estimates, but nothing in the future is certain. Its advantage is that it provides an updateable framework, it forces decision-makers to think about sustainability in specific terms and it also encourages the formulation of a commonly held view. It is also likely to become more accurate as it is applied. Most importantly, however, it provides a framework in which to identify proposals where risk i.e. sustainability, is most problematic and in need of being given maximum attention or exceptional monitoring in order to identify problems early and correct them. Thus the Index should be used pragmatically, in conjunction with the anticipated benefits of the project to justify its final inclusion in the Strategy.

**4.21** The following table is a template for calculating the Sustainability Index for individual projects - it is used in the Project Record Sheet to calculate scores for each project:

Sustainability Factor		Score out of ten*	Weighting	Weighted Score
1.	Contribution to economic growth		2	
2.	Contribution to building capacity		2	
3.	Workable: able to achieve the impact within plan period - but then able to evolve beyond that period		1	
4.	Longevity: likelihood of continuing after plan period		1	
5.	Resource Efficiency: minimisation of natural resource inputs and waste outputs (1= poor minimisation, 10 = good utilisation)		1	
6.	Socially sustainable: tackles poverty and social exclusion or equips people with the skills to fulfil their potential		1	
7.	Enhances the environment (can be given a negative score)		1	
8.	Consequences of failure (impact/additional public resources needs)		1	
<b>Total (out of 100)</b>				

\* 1= small effect, 10= large desirable effect

## Strategic Phases

**4.22** Implementing such a Strategy will need at least ten to fifteen years and a plan period or 'Strategy Horizon' of 2016 (the Unitary Development Plan's end date) has been suggested. This will not need a common approach over the entire period and three phases should be assumed:

1. Gearing Up for Change (the first three years)
2. Getting the Basics Right (the second three years)
3. Delivering the Big New Impacts and a Sustainable Economic Structure

**4.23** The contents and style of each is presented briefly below and Stage 1 is presented in more detail in the next section. The detailed elements of Stages 2 and 3 would be defined in the regular update of this Strategy and Action Plan that will be needed.

### **Phase 1: Gearing Up for Change**

**4.24** A relatively short period of say two years will be needed to re-organise, to think through in detail how to deliver the step changes identified as desirable in the Strategy above and to design major schemes. In the meantime, normal national programmes can continue and the County Borough Council's current project proposals can continue to be implemented. These must be designed to maximise opportunities to benefit from EC Objective 1 funding. Then, from year three onwards (2005/6), major new initiatives can be unveiled.

### **Phase 2: Putting New Building Blocks in Place**

**4.25** These major new initiatives should predominantly be building blocks for the long-term vision. This phase should therefore concentrate on capacity building and creating opportunities for entrepreneurship to flourish, for manufacturing to use the new local support systems to start to develop new products and markets and for more sophisticated business services to become properly established while community regeneration starts to produce initial results. This period will need at least another three years, which will probably see the end of the current Objective 1 regime and any replacement or transitional arrangements.

### **Phase 3: Achieving Sustainable Results**

**4.26** Thereafter, major improvements to economic performance should begin to materialise and the virtuous circle of sustainable economic development should allow the public sector to fall back to providing a combination of strategic intelligence and guidance and practical support through small projects tailored to niche problems.

## 5 gearing up for change: the action plan, 2003/4-2005/6

### Introduction: Programmes, Projects and Project Record Sheets

**5.1** Realising the preferred vision will not be easy. The public sector must provide real leadership - making tough decisions, targeting key investments ruthlessly, and sometimes taking calculated risks. The following sub-programmes and projects, organised within the six proposed programmes are put forward as the means to translate the principles of the long range Bridgend Sustainable Economic Regeneration Strategy into action during the initial three year phase of strategy implementation, for the period 2003/4 to 2005/6. Some must be deliverable quickly and so may need to be small, others should be large and capable of holding people's attention and involvement during the inevitable lengthy gestation period.

**5.2** Projects are suggested in the following section to form an initial Action Plan. Many are new, emerging from consultations undertaken during the strategy formulation exercise and included because they will significantly facilitate the achievement of the Prime Objectives of the Strategy. Some are already in the funding pipeline and are included because they support the thrust of the proposed new Strategy. None have been tested for their full viability and funding capabilities and so their inclusion may be modified as this detailed work is undertaken. The Action Plan is itself a framework for future actions with current recommendations. It is also designed to be flexible enough to accommodate ideas and projects that will contribute towards the prime objectives of the Strategy.

**5.3** To assist the process of tracking their relevance to the Strategy and the objectives of BCBC's partners in the endeavour of regenerating the economy of Bridgend in a sustainable manner, pro-formas called 'Project Record Sheets' have been developed (see Appendix E for a blank). Partially completed versions will be prepared for each project identified in the Strategy - they cannot be filled in completely until partners' involvement is negotiated. These are presented in Volume 3 that completes the full set of Strategy documents. Collectively, these project record sheets are intended to provide a system for programme control and monitoring that is flexible enough to develop as new projects are added. The system is also designed to allow easy identification and tracking of the progress of each project using a project numbering system within the programme/sub-programme hierarchy. Individually, they describe each project, justify its inclusion in the Strategy (linking it to other plans and projects), set dates and identify partners in each project's implementation and its resource needs. The Project Record Sheet also shows the project's contributions to achieving the objectives of the Welsh Assembly Government, WDA, WTB and ELWa.

### The Action Plan 2003/4 to 2005/6

**5.4** Each of the six main Action Programmes is described in more detail below, and its inclusion in the programme justified, with sub-programmes suggested for each. Section 6 then proposes Projects to be delivered within a three-year Action Plan to begin in Financial Year 2003/4.

**5.5** It should be emphasised that these are intended to be Bridgend County Borough-specific programmes, not routine local application of national programmes - which are expected to continue anyway. Some are, however, heavily modified or up-graded versions of national programmes - the modifications being necessary to meet local conditions and needs significant enough to justify strategic prioritisation. Not all programmes need apply across the whole County Borough all of the time.

## Action Programme 1: Strategic Positioning and Marketing

**5.6** The proposed Vision for Bridgend County Borough is very much based on it playing a 'significantly enhanced role in the economy of South Wales'. This Vision must be understood and supported by everyone who will play a role in achieving it: public servants and the organisations they work for, relevant voluntary sector organisations, workers, business-people, visitors, journalists, etc.

**5.7** The Prime Objective of the Regeneration Strategy to be achieved through delivery of this programme is:

*'establishing a clear and widely agreed understanding of how the County Borough will earn a good living and contribute to the South Wales economy to the middle of the next decade and communicate that understanding so that it will be widely recognised and pursued.'*

**5.8** Mining communities know their role, capital cities understand their function, ports know how they earn a living. The modern multi-functional settlement like Bridgend town is more difficult to categorise and understand. Settlements like those in the Valleys whose economic *raison d'être* have changed - or traditional seaside resorts like Porthcawl - face uncertainty with regard to their positioning. For a County Borough like Bridgend, with three very different types of main settlements, these issues can be even more uncomfortable. Simple 'positioning', as with the mining community, cannot be reinstated. Life is more complex. The way forward must lie with reaching an ever greater consensus about how the County Borough and its individual communities will earn their living in the future. This should be based upon 'quality' and 'pride'.

**5.9** Quality means higher value added products and services, which themselves depend on investment, training and innovative product development in competitive industries and companies. Pride means self-belief that the County Borough, its communities, its enterprises and its workers can produce better goods, services and experiences than ever before and than their competitors. Both can deliver competitive advantage.

**5.10** Often this will be in the global market place but it will be sensible to give top priority to where Bridgend County Borough and its constituent communities fit into the Cardiff city region, of which they are a part and must become more integrated. Heavy levels of commuting into and out of the County Borough demonstrate this but there is too much leakage of end-consumer retail and leisure expenditure from the County Borough to the Capital. There is also an over-dependence on business services bought in from Cardiff. At the same time, the County Borough's manufacturing industry serves an ever wider global market place. This is an enormous strength to be developed further (see Action Programmes 2 and 3) but there remain many under-exploited opportunities to sell goods and services to the people of the rest of the sub-region. The Vision for Bridgend must see it strengthening its local services and developing products and services, especially in leisure and tourism, that will significantly increase expenditure from the rest of the sub-region. However, to exploit some of those opportunities will require significant improvements to key parts of the infrastructure of the County Borough and outside it. It will also need that Vision communicating to those people who must work to deliver it and be customers of it.

**5.11** More importantly, there is an immediate short-term need for progress to be made and to be seen to be made. Places are known by their town/city centres which symbolise their capacities and characteristics (for good or bad). There are current proposals for the upgrading of all of Bridgend County Borough's town centres. It is essential that these plans are implemented to facilitate the economic development of the Borough. Individual residents, business-people and workers will be prouder of something they have confidence in, confidence based on seeing real progress. They will only back the proposed vision if it seems relevant and if they see the authorities starting to deliver.

**5.12** There are several key improvements to the Borough's transport infrastructure that are urgently needed now. There are also environmental improvements and much needed better physical linkages to the surrounding sub-

region, not all of them major, which - if made quickly and communicated as the beginning of a new Strategy and as the first steps towards achieving a new vision for the County Borough - will pave the way for greater support to more long-term strategic objectives. There is also a need to improve the facilities (shopping, tourism and leisure) that the County Borough offers to its residents and visitors.

**5.13** Therefore four sub-programmes are suggested within this Action Programme:

1. Town Centre Renewal
2. Strategic Infrastructure and Environmental Enhancement
3. Replenishing the Shopping, Leisure and Tourism Offer
4. Defining A New Sub-Regional Role and Communicating The Vision

**5.14** An important aspect of these sub-programmes is their integration. Strategic infrastructure is not needed to maintain existing services but to facilitate the achievement of the Strategy or a major element within it (so M4 junction improvements should not be promoted to ease traffic flow but because they allow developments seen as essential to the strategy) and the communication strategy does not exist to inform people - useful and desirable as that is - but to ease attainment of the Strategy. The case being made by the County Borough to its partners and stakeholders for involvement in delivery or funding of projects must be based on this integration, inter-connectedness and inter-dependence of all elements of the Strategy.

**5.15** On the surface, this very strategic Programme does not interface directly with specific Measures and Priorities within the Single Programme Document for West Wales and the Valleys, which determines eligibility for Objective 1 funding of specific projects. However, individual projects within it may qualify under a number of Priorities and Measures, especially:

- Priority 1 Measure 5 'Providing Sites and Premises for SMEs' (ERDF)
- Priority 2 Measure 1 'Information and Communications Technology Infrastructure' (ERDF)
- Priority 2 Measure 2 'Stimulate and Support Demand for ICT Applications' (ERDF)
- Priority 3 Measure 3 'Regeneration of Deprived Areas through Community Led Initiatives' (ERDF)
- Priority 5 Measure 6 'Promoting Local Economic Development' (ERDF)
- Priority 5 Measure 7 'A Sustainable Countryside - Environment and Protection of the Natural Environment and Countryside Management' (EAGGF)
- Priority 5 Measure 8 'Support for Recreational opportunities and Management of the Natural Environment' (ERDF)
- Priority 6 Measure 1 'Accessibility and Transport' (ERDF);
- Priority 6 Measure 2 'Energy Infrastructure' (ERDF);
- Priority 6 Measure 3 'Strategic Employment Sites' (ERDF);
- Priority 6 Measure 4 'Environmental Infrastructure' (ERDF).
- Various - Other Measures As Appropriate

**5.16** This Action Programme can be expected to contribute significantly to the achievement of Cross-cutting Theme 1 'Sustainability' by helping shift the economy onto a more sustainable basis.

**5.17** In addition, there are proposals for the development of a major film studio, **Dragon Studios**, just outside the Borough to the north east of Bridgend town. This scheme is capable of significantly helping revolutionise the image of the area and so once its development starts, BCBC should build on its existing co-operation with Sgrin and seek to maximize the benefits of the scheme for the County Borough. This could be done through organising local training in film making skills and associated ones like mobile catering, recruiting local location owners onto the sub-regional database, producing a movie location brochure for the County Borough, organisation of 'Fam' (familiarisation) visits for UK Film Location Managers, etc.

### **Sub-Programme AP1.SP1: Town Centre Renewal**

Project AP1.SP1.P1: fund and **implement the current proposals for town centre renewal in Bridgend** including exploring opening up a River Walk and developing leisure activities in a Café Quarter (year 1).

Project AP1.SP1.P2: fund and **implement the current proposals for town centre renewal in Maesteg** (year 1).

Project AP1.SP1.P3: fund and **implement current proposals for town centre renewal and tourism developments in Porthcawl** including consideration of developing a Restaurant Quarter and a surfer's beach at Rest Bay (year 1).

### **Sub-Programme AP1.SP2: Immediate Strategic Infrastructure and Environmental Enhancement**

Project AP1.SP2.P1: implement proposals to **improve traffic flow at Junction 36** of the M4 and find short term improvements to ease congestion on Junction 35 which is a very major current obstacle to manufacturers in the area - inactivity is likely to result in serious job losses from outward relocations over the next five years or so (immediate).

Project AP1.SP2.P2: establish an **Environmental Improvement Task Force** to undertake and oversee the implementation of '**Corridor Environmental Enhancement Reviews**' of key vistas and approaches in the County Borough (year 1 onward).

Project AP1.SP2.P3: lobby intensively with appropriate partners to **achieve upgrading of the M4 and mainline rail service** in South Wales (year 1 onward).

Project AP1.SP2.P4: develop specific proposals for ensuring that passengers using enhanced rail services resulting from construction of the **Maesteg Rail Passing Loop** are able to get to their final destinations (year 1).

Project AP1.SP2.P5: develop long term proposals to **improve public transport access to major employment areas** from north of the M4 and from areas with excluded populations (year 2).

### **Sub-Programme AP1.SP3: Replenishing the Shopping, Tourism and Leisure Offers**

Project AP1.SP3.P1: actively participate in the new **Herian** initiative to promote industrial heritage tourism in South Wales (year 1 onwards).

Project AP1.SP3.P2: **improve tourism facility signage** significantly (year 1 onward).

Project P1.S3.P3: **develop and market the County Borough's events and festivals programme** including entering the three main towns in the Britain in Bloom Competition (year 2).

Project AP1.SP3.P4: seek to **attract a brand name 3 or 4 star hotel** with leisure and conference facilities to Bridgend town (year 2).

Project AP1.SP3.P5: undertake a **sports development study** to identify sporting activities and facilities that could be developed in the County Borough (with existing facilities and proposals, including those of the College, forming a good base) that could serve a wider population than just the County Borough (year 2).

Project AP1.SP3.P6: **promote outdoor leisure tourism in the County Borough**, including continuing to develop the Borough's cycleway network and supporting the establishment of community enterprises related to outdoor

leisure activities (year 2 onward).

Project AP1.SP3.P7 Support development of the proposed **Garw Valley Steam Railway** attraction if its viability is demonstrated (year 2).

Project AP1.SP3.P8: seek to develop new major cultural attractions such an **Arts and Performance Centre and Gallery**, possibly in conjunction the proposed Life Centre (feasibility/development study year 2).

### **Sub-Programme AP1.SP4: Defining a New Sub-Regional Role and Communicating the Vision**

Project AP1.SP4.P1: prepare proposals for **how Bridgend could improve its role in the sub-regional economy** over the Strategy period concentrating on retrieving retail and leisure leakage but looking at the potential for theme parks, residential care homes, private hospitals, language schools, specialist training facilities, etc., and then implement them (year 1).

Project AP1.SP4.P2: develop and implement a comprehensive **Communications Strategy** to communicate the proposed vision and the steps being undertaken to achieve it to residents, companies in the County Borough and to companies and partners outside, prioritising **establishing the website for the County Borough as a showcase** for its ambitions (year 1).

Project AP1.SP4.P3: develop and implement a comprehensive **Communications Strategy to promote the County Borough's business offer in the sub-region** mainly using PR (year 1).

Project AP1.SP4.P4: there is a need to develop a **flagship event** to attract local people and visitors alike that will both give local people pride and announce to everyone that Bridgend is ambitious; it must therefore be delivered with style (develop in year 1, implement from following year).

## **Action Programme 2: Modernising the Economy**

**5.18** The proposed Vision for Bridgend County Borough stresses the importance to Bridgend of developing competitive advantages for its economy and businesses so that it becomes a modern mixed economy able to offer its residents employment choice and high wages.

**5.19** The biggest single threat to Bridgend's economy is potential losses of manufacturing employment either through relocation of companies to low cost areas abroad or simple inability of local enterprises to compete with companies operating from such locations. This is, however, an opportunity, because the only successful way to respond is by producing more complex and sophisticated products and this type of activity usually needs more sophisticated production techniques and more skilled workers and so pays higher wages. As a generalisation, as workers receive better remuneration they have more disposable income and consume more goods and services as well as save more - much of this extra activity usually being local, thus benefiting the local economy and creating a virtuous circle rather than the downward spiral of decline.

**5.20** Balancing this the biggest single opportunity in front of the Bridgend economy to generate well paid jobs lies with expanding its relatively poorly developed business services sector. This can be done by encouraging start-ups by local people, expansions by Cardiff companies and investments by major UK players or even international players. Dealing with these issues will best be achieved by actions designed to help local companies gain competitive advantage.

**5.21** A particular strength of the local economy is the variety and choice of sites and premises it offers at reasonable prices for economic activity. This, of course, is also a very well established way of helping give local companies competitive advantage. This advantage needs to be maintained.

**5.22** This programme will help deliver Prime Objective 2:

*fostering the modernisation of the economy of the County Borough*

**5.23** Therefore, two sub-programmes are recommended within this Action Programme:

1. Developing Enterprise and Helping Companies Gain Competitive Advantage
2. Sites and Premises for Businesses

**5.24** This Action Programme can be expected to contribute significantly to the achievement of Cross-cutting Themes 1 'Sustainability' (by helping shift the economy onto a more sustainable basis) and 3 Social Exclusion (by creating more opportunities - but other programmes will need to take up those opportunities). Some of its projects may also help support Cross-Cutting Theme 4 Promoting Take-up of ICT.

**5.25** Individual projects within this Action Programme may qualify under a number of Objective 1 Priorities and Measures, as follows:

- Priority 1 Measure 1 'Financial Support For SMEs' (ERDF)
- Priority 1 Measure 2 'Promoting Entrepreneurship And Increasing The Birth Rate Of SMEs' (ERDF)
- Priority 1 Measure 3 'Developing Competitive SMEs' (ERDF)
- Priority 1 Measure 4 'Promoting Adaptability And Entrepreneurship' (ESF)
- Priority 1 Measure 5 'Providing Sites And Premises For SMEs' (ERDF)
- Priority 2 Measure 1 'Information and Communications Technology Infrastructure' (ERDF)
- Priority 2 Measure 2 'Stimulate and Support Demand for ICT Applications' (ERDF)
- Priority 2 Measure 3 'Support for the Development of Innovation and Research and Development' (ERDF)
- Priority 2 Measure 4 'Skills for Innovation and Technology' (ESF)
- Priority 2 Measure 5 'Clean Energy Sector Developments' (ERDF)
- Priority 6 Measure 2 'Energy Infrastructure' (ERDF)
- Priority 6 Measure 3 'Strategic Employment Sites' (ERDF)
- Priority 6 Measure 4 'Environmental Infrastructure' (ERDF)

### **Sub-Programme AP2.SP1: Enterprise Development and Helping Companies Gain Competitive Advantage**

Project AP2.SP1.P1: undertake regular **reviews of local business needs** in order to identify how best to help companies and re-orientate the business climate in appropriate ways to support them (year 1).

Project AP2.SP1.P2: **promote networking and collaboration amongst local companies**, covering both manufacturers and service business (year 1).

Project AP2.SP1.P3: **support the development of strong links between local companies and South Wales universities and Bridgend College** (year 1).

Project AP2.SP1.P4: **maintain the after-care service given to external manufacturing investors** and use it proactively to seek further investment from them or consolidation onto sites in Bridgend (year 1).

Project AP2.SP1.P5: seek to establish a commonly marketed **networked centre of excellence in manufacturing training and support** including the College, its new subsidiary facilities and the Waterton Technology Centre (year 1).

Project AP2.SP1.P6: implement the proposed **Bridgend Business Support Framework** ensuring that it integrates the activities of all the bodies providing business support using a **common computerised client contact management** system (year 1).

Project AP2.SP1.P7: Develop **local procurement and supplier chain initiative** to ensure that local companies benefit from the County Borough's housing stock transfer (year 1).

Project AP2.SP1.P8: formulate a local sectoral development initiative in the **environmental protection services and equipment/carbonless fuels** sector, perhaps with adjacent local authorities (feasibility/development study in year 2).

Project AP2.SP1.P9: with Wales Trade International and the Chamber of Commerce, **establish a comprehensive and well serviced programme of inward and outward trade missions** for Bridgend companies based on a local Exporters' Club, probably organised under the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce and the establishment of long term relationships with a small number of foreign chambers identified to match the priorities of club members (year 1).

Project AP2.SP1.P10: continue local application of the national **Entrepreneurship Action Plan** as a framework for local business birth-rate and survival improvement in Bridgend (year 2).

### **Sub-Programme AP2.SP2: Sites and Premises for Businesses**

Project AP2.SP2.P1: **maintain the current programme of bringing forward major business parks** (year 1 onward).

Project AP2.SP2.P2: **ensure the provision of a wide range of offices in Bridgend and Maesteg town centres** ensuring that demand for serviced accommodation and large spaces can be met (ongoing) and expand, improve and market the current '**professional services quarter**' at Court Street in Bridgend town centre (year 1 for feasibility study).

Project AP2.SP2.P3: **support current schemes to develop an upmarket Office Park in Bridgend** (year 1).

## **Action Programme 3: Fostering Life Long Learning and Skills Development**

**5.26** Surviving and prospering in the modern ultra-competitive world will not just be about ensuring that companies have good premises, that entrepreneurs get their chance or making certain that communities function well in terms of supporting local economies. Above all, it is likely be about having the calibre of skilled, flexible and thoughtful workers needed to allow companies to be competitive and profitable and offer their personnel high rewards. The proposed Vision for Bridgend County Borough recognises that prosperity will depend upon its human resources. This means ensuring that local people have basic skills and sophisticated skills, seek to learn and develop in their every day as well as working lives and have access to high quality training and personal development opportunities, as well as recognising that modern employment requires flexibility and the attitudes this requires. One integrated programme (i.e. with no sub-programmes) is proposed to address these issues.

**5.27** This programme will help secure achievement of Prime Objective 3:

*encourage positive attitudes to acquiring knowledge and skills*

**5.28** This Action Programme can be expected to contribute significantly to the achievement of Cross-cutting Theme 1 'Sustainability' by helping shift the economy onto a more sustainable basis, but indirectly, and to Theme 3, Social Inclusion, and Theme 4, Promoting Take up of ICT, by giving people access to new skills and learning capabilities.

**5.29** The projects within this Action Programme can be expected to qualify for Objective 1 funding mainly through the following SPD Priorities and Measures:

- Priority 4 Measure 1 'Preventative and Active Labour Market Measures' (ESF)
- Priority 4 Measure 2 'Social Inclusion' (ESF)
- Priority 4 Measure 3 'Lifetime Learning for All' (ESF)
- Priority 4 Measure 4 'Improving the Learning System' (ERDF)
- Priority 4 Measure 5 'Improving the Participation of Women in the Labour Market' (ESF)
- Priority 4 Measure 6 'Anticipation and Analysis of Skill Needs'
- Priority 1 Measure 2 'Promoting Entrepreneurship and Increasing the Birth Rate of SMEs (ERDF)
- Priority 1 Measure 4 'Promoting Adaptability and Entrepreneurship' (ESF)
- Priority 2 Measure 4 'Skills for Innovation and Technology' (ESF)
- Priority 3 Measure 1 'Community Action for Social Inclusion' (ESF)

### Proposed Projects

Project AP3.SP0.P1: **developing higher level skills** (from year 1, as recommended in the Draft Bridgend CCET Annual Recommendations, 2002-2005).

Project AP3.SP0.P2: actively pursue the **development of the Bridgend Life Centre** as a flagship component of the redevelopment of Bridgend town centre and to support the promotion of use of ICT (year 1).

Project AP3.SP0.P3: extend the network of local **Lifelong Learning Centres** across the Borough (year 1).

Project AP3.SP0.P4: **Develop a Learners' Forum** as recommended in the Draft Bridgend CCET Annual Recommendations, 2002-2005 (from year 1).

Project AP3.SP0.P5: Ensure an adequate supply of **construction industry training and promote employment in the industry** to satisfy the needs of the expected investment following the transfer of the County Borough's Housing Stock, including establishing the proposed Llynfi Valley Construction Training Unit (year 1).

Project AP3.SP0.P6: enhance **training in customer care and interpersonal skills** as part of key action area C2.3 'Key skills and their application - communication' - in BCBC's Education Strategic Plan, 2002-2005 and as part of the package of basic skills enhancement for adults (year 2).

Project AP3.SP0.P7: review existing research and formulate appropriate responses to the opportunity to **help more people become economically active**, ensuring that the particular needs of women are included (year 2 onwards).

## Action Programme 4: Strengthening Communities

**5.30** The communities of the County Borough will be a key point of local pride and potential self-belief. They are also the environment in which much economic activity takes place and the source of informal support and ideas as well as services which provide jobs for others. In some communities, poverty and economic exclusion are widespread and services have declined, with crime sometimes perceived to be growing in the wake of job losses. Self-help by citizens has declined. The proposed Vision for Bridgend County Borough appreciates the importance of

this issue and identifies the need for its 'communities ... to become vibrant and pleasant places in which to live work and relax (with) its poorer people ... catching up and having the opportunities for further improvement'.

**5.31** The Communities First programme will provide the framework for economic, social and environmental renewal of communities within the County Borough. Under the Communities First programme, four disadvantaged areas are being initially targeted for action<sup>3</sup>. Early action will focus on engagement, capacity and partnership building. Partnerships in these target areas will develop examples of good community regeneration practice which can be sustained and used as a blueprint for success to be applied in other local communities. The initial Communities First programmes will also link to major housing renewal initiatives arising from the transfer of the local authority housing stock to a new social landlord - Valleys to Coast. Later in the life of Communities First, additional areas with high levels of deprivation - notably areas where social housing is prevalent - should be targeted with the precise objective of:

*strengthening the economies of the poorer communities within the County Borough using community regeneration techniques*

**5.32** Action Programme 4 will add an essential economic development component to community regeneration programmes by supporting the development of the so-called 'Third Sector' and local community enterprises. A simple Action Programme without any sub-programmes is proposed. It will initially target the four Communities First areas within the County Borough - and their Partnerships - maximising links to Objective 1 funding. This includes extending the coverage of the Action Programme to the whole of the Garw Valley and part of Cornelly as currently targeted under Priority 3 of the Objective 1 programme. Finally, as part of the overall approach to promoting local community enterprises, initial efforts will also be targeted at ten 'rural' wards as designated for funding support under Priority 5 Measure 4 and Priority 5 Measure 6 of the Objective 1 programme.

**5.33** This Action Programme can be expected to contribute significantly to the delivering Cross-cutting Theme 3 Social Inclusion by developing new community based initiatives in which excluded people can - and should be encouraged - to participate.

**5.34** The projects within this Programme can be expected to qualify for Objective 1 funding mainly through the following SPD Priorities and Measures:

- Priority 3 Measure 1 'Community Action for Social Inclusion' (ESF)
- Priority 3 Measure 2 'Partnership and Capacity Building' (ERDF)
- Priority 3 Measure 3 'Regeneration of Deprived Areas Through Community Led Initiatives' (ERDF)
- Priority 3 Measure 4 'Support for the Social Economy' (ERDF)
- Priority 4 Measure 2 'Social Inclusion' (ESF)
- Priority 1 Measure 2 'Promoting Entrepreneurship and Increasing Birth Rate of SMEs' (ERDF)
- Priority 1 Measure 5 'Providing Sites and Premises for SMEs' (ERDF)
- Priority 4 Measure 3 'Lifetime Learning for All' (ESF)
- Priority 4 Measure 4 'Improving the Learning System' (ERDF)
- Priority 4 Measure 6 'Anticipation and Analysis of Skill Needs'
- Priority 5 Measure 4 'Promoting Adaptation and Development of Rural Areas' (EAGGF)
- Priority 5 Measure 6 'Promoting Local Economic Development' (ERDF)
- Priority 6 Measure 1 'Accessibility and Transport' (ERDF)

### Proposed Projects

Project AP4.SP0.P1: develop initiative to **increase capacity for participation and partnership working** in target communities (year 1)

Project AP4.SP0.P2: **continue to develop local Community Enterprise Centres** where demand and need exist (year 1 onward).

Project 4AP.SP0.P3: Support the implementation of **projects emerging from the current Garw Valley Community Regeneration Study** being taken forward by the Garw Valley Regeneration Partnership (Year 1).

Project AP4.SP0.P4: develop and implement the proposed **REAP Programme (Rural Economy Action Plan)** giving emphasis to community enterprise in the ten designated wards (year 1).

Project AP4.SP0.P5: consider significantly **enhancing the existing LEAP Programme**, concentrating on community enterprise (year 2)

## Action Programme 5: Promoting Take-up of ICT

**5.35** This programme will help secure achievement of Prime Objective 5:

*increasing the penetration, take up and effective use of new information technologies in the County Borough*

**5.36** The proposed Vision for Bridgend County Borough recognises the importance of Bridgend being a 'smart', connected community. This will depend largely upon how well it uses new information and communications technologies (ICT). The only hard information on use of ICT in the County Borough (an NOP survey of April 2000) found low levels of use of digital technologies amongst SMEs, a situation which needs to be changed or the whole Strategy will be at risk. In such a rapidly changing world, this is very out of date information. It is also very narrow: ICT usage amongst the general population, the larger businesses and the voluntary and government sector is also important, especially take-up of broadband. The starting point for this Action Programme must therefore be a proper assessment of the 'state of the art of use of digital technologies across all sectors and significant groups in the County Borough'. For this reason it is recommended that a major project within this Action Programme should be information gathering.

**5.37** The need is for a representative survey of households and businesses, supplemented by reviews of the current and planned expansion of use of ICT by the public and voluntary sectors. It should look at awareness of new technical solutions and likelihood of applying them and expected constraints to take up as well as current levels of usage. It should be repeated every two years to monitor change and take-up. Actions and additional ideas for projects should flow from the findings but can be expected to align with those currently being considered under the auspices of the Bridgend Information Society Plan.

**5.38** There is also a need to promote the availability of and access to major facilities like Life Centres and Learning Hubs that can make the general population aware of new technologies and the opportunities as well as see how they can be used and to do so in exciting ways that use that new technology. In addition, the public agencies can take a lead in showing these benefits to businesses and to the general population - and perhaps even giving them access to surplus capacity in some of their systems. Finally, there is a need to encourage SMEs to take up new ICT opportunities.

**5.39** Again, a simple Action Programme without any sub-programmes is proposed. Many of the individual projects to be implemented will emerge from the survey proposed above. Others are suggested in the section below.

**5.40** This Action Programme can, of course, be expected to contribute significantly to the achievement of Cross-cutting Theme 4 Promoting Take up of ICT. It should also help deliver Theme 1 'Sustainability' by helping modernise the local economy and make it more sustainable because it uses new technologies with a future, and to Themes 2

Equal Opportunities and Theme 3 Social Inclusion by improving opportunities for excluded people to participate. Those opportunities, will, of course, only be utilised if specific action are taken within appropriate projects.

**5.41** Projects within this Action Programme may qualify for Objective 1 funding through the following SPD Priorities and Measures:

- Priority 1 Measure 4 'Promoting Adaptability and Entrepreneurship' (ESF)
- Priority 2 Measure 1 'Information and Communication Technology Infrastructure' (ERDF)
- Priority 2 Measure 2 'Stimulate and Support Demand for ICT Applications' (ERDF)
- Priority 2 Measure 3 'Support for the Development of Innovation and Research and Development' (ERDF)
- Priority 2 Measure 4 'Skills for Innovation and Technology' (ESF)
- Various - Other Measures As Appropriate

### Proposed Projects

Project AP5.SP0.P1: develop and implement the **Bridgend Information Society Plan** (year 1).

Project AP5.SP0.P2: surveys of businesses and households plus appraisals of public and voluntary sector, immediately and then probably every two years (year 1, 3, etc.)

Project AP5.SP0.P3: **establish a BCBC e-procurement capability and promote it to potential suppliers** via seminars; preferably having offered the system to other public sector organisations that operate in the County Borough (e.g. WDA, ELWa, Heath Authority) or alternatively encourage them to develop their own systems (year 2).

Project AP5.SP0.P4: support for **multi-agency training initiatives** in context of ICT (year 1, as recommended in the Draft Bridgend CCET Annual Recommendations, 2002-2005 - probably year 2).

Project AP5.SP0.P5: explore how **the public sector's dedicated networks can be used by local companies** (year 1).

## Action Programme 6: Strengthening the Economic Development Capacity

**5.42** This programme will help deliver Prime Objective 6:

*strengthening the economic development capacity of the County Borough Council and its key partners and their co-ordination and joint working arrangements*

**5.43** What is being proposed in this new Strategy is a shift from an approach based on loosely connected strands and fairly specific projects of varying sizes to one based on a clear long-term strategic (and widely accepted) view on the future of Bridgend to be achieved by a number of priority action programmes expected to remain pertinent for several decades and based on very major (in term of changing views and perceptions of the County Borough), broad, multi-faceted projects. This will require refinement of the way BCBC organises its economic development function and resources it as well as significant enhancement of the way in which it interacts with its partners in economic regeneration. In particular it must move to a stronger role as a facilitator of action rather than intervening directly.

**5.44** The proposals being made also need far greater intellectual and practical inputs to strategy refinement and implementation by the private sector of the County Borough than has been the practice to date - or is the norm in the UK.

5.45 Therefore three sub-programmes are suggested within this Programme:

1. The County Borough Council
2. Funding And Partnership Arrangements
3. The Role Of The Private Sector

5.46 This Action Programme will have limited scope for Objective 1 support but some projects may qualify for Objective 1 funding through the following SPD Priorities and Measures:

- Priority 3 Measure 2: 'Partnership and Capacity Building' (ERDF)
- Priority 4 Measure 3: 'Lifetime Learning for All' (ESF)

### **Sub-Programme AP6.SP1: The County Borough Council**

Project AP6.SP1.P1: to support implementation of the Strategy and delivery of its projects **review staff needs and other resources** (year 1).

Project AP6.SP1.P2: establish a **cross-departmental 'Futures Team'**, probably headed by a member of the IT team, serviced by Policy Co-ordination and reporting to the Chief Executive, to look out systematically for new technologies and developments of strategic importance for the County Borough and BCBC - to report annually as well as alerting departments that need to respond on an 'as required basis' (year 1).

Project AP6.SP1.P3: **evolve the 'sustainability index'** recommended in this Strategy to apply across all major proposals for action and to improve its effectiveness (on-going).

### **Sub-Programme AP6.SP2: Funding and Partnership Arrangements**

Project AP6.SP2.P1: use and **develop the Project Records system** created for this Strategy and identify staff members from the partnership to drive each programme, sub-programme and project, including computerising it and giving all partners appropriate direct access to it (year 1).

Project AP6.SP2.P2: **evolve the Local Objective 1 Partnership** to continue beyond the current Objective 1 deadline (2006), probably adjusting its Task Forces to align with the Action Programmes suggested in this Strategy, with sub-groups as necessary. Continue to develop the more pro-active role suggested above to ensure that this new body's modus operandi is for individual members to represent their entire organisation at meetings but bring specialist staff to attend and to undertake work when needed (year 3).

### **Sub-Programme AP6.SP3: The Role of the Private Sector**

Project AP6.SP3.P1: Establish a (relatively small) **Joint County Borough Economic Advisory Panel** of senior Council officers (Chief Executive, EDO, Chief Planner, Education Officer), WDA/ELWa/WTB senior personnel and up to ten owners and managers of large or especially dynamic or important local business enterprises to advise on strategic economic problems and opportunities before the County Borough. Probably meeting twice a year (once on an away-day basis) but with papers on issues prepared by small working groups of more junior people including private sector junior high flyers. The private sector should probably set the Panel's Agenda (year 1).

## 6 the monitoring and evaluation framework

6.1 Strategies and Action Plans are for implementation. Monitoring their progress, effectiveness and impact are therefore essential and should be seen as an integral part of the strategy design and implementation process. This section outlines proposals for a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework covering:

1. who should undertake the monitoring and evaluation?
2. how often should it be undertaken?
3. what performance indicators should be used?
4. what targets should be set

6.2 Each is discussed below but first it will be useful to understand the principles on which proposals should be based

### Principles

6.3 The following principles should apply to the framework:

- consistency with the monitoring and evaluation cycles, performance indicators and targets for the existing Corporate Plan, Objective 1 and the proposed Community Strategy;
- consistency with the conclusions of the various groups of local authority economic development personnel and others looking at the best indicators to apply to local regeneration strategies;
- use of the Project Record Sheets to agree indicators and targets, when appropriate, for individual projects and to record progress against them;
- aggregation of the above performance indicators into overall Strategy and Action Programme targets;
- emphasising timely and cost-effective collection and dissemination of conclusions in order to influence short-term actions and long-term strategy;
- in-house operation of the system but maybe with independent interpretation of conclusions and certainly with occasional fully independent assessments;
- only indicators subject to significant influence by the activities in the Strategy/Action Plan should be given targets, although wider/less easily influenced indicators such as GDP should also be tracked;
- maximum use of published official data series;
- limited but highly selective use of specially collected data;
- acceptance that many of the topline objectives of the programme are “aspirational” and therefore not necessarily quantifiable;
- benchmarking against other local authorities should be used to secure comparative evaluation of performance.

- 6.4 It is expected that the Objective 1 Partnership will provide the 'client' to which evaluation reports are presented. It is anticipated that the majority of the monitoring will be undertaken as part of existing work, therefore by Council officers.

## The Monitoring and Evaluation Cycle

- 6.5 It is proposed that the framework for monitoring and evaluation should be as follows:
1. half yearly 'Progress Reports' produced by the Monitoring And Evaluation Sub-group to a standard format with a succinct commentary concentrating on headline issues and showing accumulated progress over time - produced within one month of the end of the half year and submitted to the Objective 1 Partnership 'for information'.
  2. 'Annual Performance Review Reports' also produced by the Monitoring And Evaluation Sub-group using the same (accumulating) format as the half yearly Progress Reports but with a more detailed commentary and issues section for the Objective 1 Partnership to review at its (proposed) away day.
  3. 'Impact Evaluations' which would underpin major reviews of the strategy and so should be produced by independent consultants working to the Monitoring And Evaluation Sub-group every three years (or on a different frequency should circumstances require it).
- 6.6 Independent observations on items 1 and 2 above could be secured from consultants or a 'peer review' by another local authority/partnership, perhaps on a 'quid pro quo' arrangement.

## Performance Indicators

- 6.7 There should be four different classes of performance indicators:
1. 'Direction Indicators' (a small number of key economic statistical series which are monitored to see if they are changing in desirable directions but which are not heavily directly influenced by the Strategy/Action Plan) that track the performance of the local economy;
  2. 'Project Impact and Value for Money Indicators' - the first show the impacts of individual projects and need often to be defined for individual projects on a one-off basis while the latter compare output against input with both normally given a monetary value such as cost per job to allow comparison of effectiveness of spend;
  3. 'Key Milestones' that show progress is being made in the right direction before final impacts are available or targets achieved; and
  4. 'Aggregated Strategy and Programme Indicators' built up from the sum of the expected impacts of all projects within a programme.
- 6.8 Detailed proposals, based on the 'Suggested Key Indicators For Economic Regeneration' proposed by the Audit Commission (November 2002), for each are presented in Appendix D.

## Project Impact and Value for Money Indicators

- 6.9 The detailed definition of Projects and the evolution of the Project Record Sheets system would identify those most appropriate for each project. Examples are also given in Appendix D.

## Key Project Milestones

- 6.10 These would also be identified from the application of the Project Record Sheets system.

## Aggregated Strategy and Programme Indicators

- 6.11 These would be assembled after the application of the Project Record Sheets system.

## Proposals for Initial Direction and Programme Indicators and Targets

- 6.12 The proposed Key Direction Indicators and targets for the Strategy and five of its main active Programmes (the sixth one relates to how the Strategy will be delivered) are presented below.

### The Overall Strategy

Indicator	Target
Local GDP per head	Growth 30% faster than Welsh performance
The proportion of people of working age in employment	Growth of 0.5% pa
Proportion of the working population who are unemployed and claiming benefit (claimant count)	1% below Welsh average by 2006
Proportion of unemployed people claiming benefit who have been out of work for more than one year	2% below Welsh average by 2006
Average wages	Equal to Welsh average by 2006 (1% faster growth p.a.)
Levels of deprivation	Where lower than Wales they remain so Where higher than Wales (health, education and employment) they are below the Welsh average by 2006
Annual change in number of local jobs	1% faster than Wales average
The total number of VAT registered businesses	2500 by 2006
Number of new VAT registered companies net of de-registrations	286 p.a. by 2006 and 325 p.a. by 2010
The total number of local jobs by sector	Manufacturing: declining 2% slower p.a. than Wales Non-public Sector Services: growing 2% p.a. faster than Wales
Percentage of population of working age qualified to NVQ level 4 and higher	20.5% by 2006 and 22% by 2010
Percentage of population with no qualifications	22% by 20-6 and 20% by 2010

### Action Programme 1: Strategic Positioning And Marketing

Indicator	Target
Increasing expenditure in Bridgend Town Centre	5% in real terms by 2060
Major renewal scheme in each town centre	Under construction by 2006
More shoppers from outside BCBC	5% by 2006
Tourism spend	£130m in 2006 at 2000 prices

### Action Programme 2: Modernising The Economy

Indicator	Target
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Number of locally owned businesses employing 25 or more people	10% higher by 2006 and 25% higher by 2010
The total number of VAT registered businesses	2,500 by 2006
Number of new VAT registered companies net of de-registrations	285 p.a. by 2006 and 325 p.a. by 2010
The total number of local jobs by sector	Manufacturing: declining 2% slower p.a. than Wales Non-public Sector Services: growing 2% p.a. faster than Wales
Investment in modern plant machinery and research and development	Total and social investment as a percentage of GDP

### Action Programme 3: Fostering Life Long Learning And Skills Development

Indicator	Target
Number of Learning Centres	3 more under construction by 2006
% of population with NVQ4+	25% by 2014
% of population with NVQ3	14% by 2014
% of population with Trade Apprenticeships	9% by 2014
% of population with NVQ2	14% by 2014
% of population with NVQ1	14% by 2014
% of population with no qualifications	15% by 2014
% of population receiving on job-related training	5% more than currently by 2006 and 1% more by 2014 (to be determined by survey)
Educational Attainment	16 year-olds with no qualifications 15% lower than 2002
	Adult literacy/numeracy
Participation in learning	Learning participation 10% higher by 2010 (to be determined by survey)
Giving people the skills to be flexible at work	10% more local businesses recognised as Investors In People by 2006

### Action Programme 4: Strengthening The Communities

Indicator	Target
Percentage of children under 16 living in low-income households in wards	Down 5% by 2006
The percentage of population of working age who are claiming key benefits	Down 5% by 2006
Social Enterprise	15 new social enterprises by 2006 and 50 by 2010

### Action Programme 5: Promoting Take Up Of ICT (Information and Communications Technologies)

Indicator	Target
% of Households with access to internet	To be determined
% of Companies using broadband	To be determined
% of companies using e-procurement	To be determined

## The Monitoring and Evaluation Personnel

**6.13** It is suggested that the Objective 1 Partnership - and any follow on organisation, as proposed in the Strategy - should set up a small Monitoring And Evaluation Sub-group serviced by appropriate personnel in the Chief Executive's Department of Bridgend County Borough Council. This should undertake the monitoring/progress review activities and commission the impact evaluations proposed above.