

reach

**Bridgend's Rural Development
Programme
Local Development Strategy
October 2009**



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1. Executive Summary

This Local Development Strategy (LDS) puts forward Rural Bridgend's submission for Axes 3 and 4 funding under the Rural Development Plan for Wales, 2007-2013. It is built on the foundations of the first LDS for Rural Bridgend, submitted to Welsh Assembly Government and adopted in November 2007.

The original LDS provided a starting point for rural activity in Bridgend County Borough and took an incremental approach to rural development with an initial focus on the Garw Valley area of the County Borough within Axis 3 and across the rural territory within Axis 4, between 2007 and 2009. The establishment of the Reach rural development programme management is now complete and the delivery of projects for the Business Plan 1 period is currently underway, with a network of groups and organisations contributing to shaping the rural agenda. There are still challenges ahead; particularly the need to continue to build capacity in rural areas, not just by Reach solely but through bringing other partners alongside and working collectively. This revised LDS recognises that there is still significant investment needed in identifying Bridgend's rural communities' needs and for Bridgend to understand who represents rural communities and what role they have to play in Bridgend life.

There is therefore a need for the LDS to invest on the ground, to build intelligence, to grow networks and to continue to empower communities to take control of their own destiny. The decision to continue with the key themes of **People, Place, Enterprise, Produce** and **Tourism** demonstrates that Bridgend needs to extend its knowledge in these specific areas as well as work at a strategic level in clustering ideas and connecting projects and communities. The LDS also identifies opportunities to look beyond the boundaries of Rural Bridgend and to identify how neighbour areas can link into its landscape and setting within South Wales so that it is integrated whilst simultaneously respecting its own local distinctiveness.

The LDS, through its established rural partnership and local action group has embraced the multi-sectoral approach and has now refreshed its vision to "*create a cohesive, sustainable and connected rural Bridgend*". The key objective for the LDS is therefore to invest locally, to understand community needs and to ensure equitable coverage of support by its geography and for by its people so that rural Bridgend has a strong identity and sense of place.

2. Introduction

This Local Development Strategy (LDS) puts forward Rural Bridgend's submission for Axes 3 and 4 funding under the Rural Development Plan for Wales (RDP), 2007-2013. The document is an update on the previous strategy that was approved by Welsh Assembly Government in 2007, and provides a statement on how rural development working has progressed within Bridgend County Borough - as a direct result of the investment from Business Plan 1 activity with the Reach Rural Development Programme. This activity has centred around those projects that have been supported through Axes 3 and 4 of the RDP and the formation of both a Rural Partnership body and a Local Action Group which both provide direction and governance for the overall programme's direction.

The LDS therefore builds on the effort and investment incurred to date, with the continued aim to help people in Bridgend's rural communities to take advantage of the programmes available to them to support rural regeneration and economic development. This will be achieved through building capacity in rural areas, through informing, upskilling and empowering communities to take control of their own destiny through a multi-sectoral approach.

In 2007, Rural Bridgend had never had a focus on rural development due to competing needs elsewhere in the County Borough. There was also limited awareness that beyond the key urban centres of Bridgend, Maesteg and Porthcawl, there were areas that were marginalised and faced barriers in terms of depleted basic services, a lack of business cohesion and missed opportunities in using local assets such as the landscape, produce and local people.

This document therefore provides an update on the progress made to date and revisits the vision for Rural Bridgend for the next business plan period from 2011 to 2013. Above all the LDS needs to bring about positive and sustainable economic change for rural communities through shared governance, and an inclusive and innovative approach which can lead to the development of new products and actions. The LDS also needs to reflect within the Wales Spatial Plan context where Bridgend is positioned with the opportunity to work with neighbouring authorities and partnerships on integrating wider agendas, programmes and projects, so that there is coherence and the promotion of a wider region to investors, visitors and local people alike. This objective may be more achievable now as Reach has gathered research and intelligence on its rural area and how it relates to neighbouring areas in terms of shared assets and connections that bring about wider economic benefits to Bridgend and the sub region.

In terms of the approach that the LDS needs to adopt, it needs to reflect on its pilot stage and in addition to set out its direction for Business Plan 2. In 2007, the County Borough Council took the decision to take an incremental approach to development, with the initial focus between 2007 and 2010 focusing on the Garw Valley area of the County Borough through certain Axis 3 activities, whilst Axis 4 activity looked at adopting the LEADER approach through activities underpinned by the key themes of the LDS. The 2011-2013 period will allow Reach to build upon the initial targeted

approach and the lessons learnt and roll out rural development activities within Axis 3 across the whole rural territory. Furthermore, it will see the continuation of Axis 4 activity across the whole rural territory so that there is an equal and fair distribution of opportunity, investment and growth.

Bridgend County Borough

The County Borough of Bridgend is at the geographical heart of South Wales. It covers an area of approximately 25,500 hectares, and in 2001 had a population of 128,650.

The County Borough extends approximately 20km from east to west, encompassing the Ogmore, Garw and Llynfi valleys to the north, and bordering the Bristol Channel to the south. The largest settlements are the towns of Bridgend and Maesteg and the seaside resort of Porthcawl. Bridgend is the largest of these settlements and is the administrative centre for the area.

The County Borough has an excellent transportation infrastructure with the M4 motorway traversing the southern part of the County Borough in an east-west alignment, providing fast road access to Cardiff, Swansea, the rest of South Wales and beyond. Additionally, an inter-city high speed rail service, linking the area with the whole of the national rail network, provides fast and efficient rail transport, whilst Cardiff-Wales Airport is only 19 kilometres away.

Access to the motorway system is facilitated by three motorway junctions at Pencoed, Sarn and Pyle. The locational advantages largely attributed to the motorway have seen the 'M4 Corridor' attracting considerable inward investment, as well as being a focus for out-of-town retail developments. The area has also been the preferred location for most of the major volume house builders. Indeed, the M4 Corridor has seen rapid expansion and major releases of land for development over the past 15 years, with the focus being on Bridgend and its environs.

Meanwhile, in contrast to the M4 Corridor, many of the valley communities in the north of the County Borough are experiencing problems of deprivation. These areas, previously dependent upon the coal and iron industries, have suffered the most in terms of the dramatic shift in the structure of the local economy over the past 30 years or so, and have been starved of new job opportunities and of investment in general. Increasingly, what were once cohesive and viable valley communities are becoming fragmented and excluded from the benefits of economic growth. Although there has been some population growth in recent years, changes in retail patterns and service use, means that some communities, particularly in the Ogmore and Garw valleys, are unable to sustain commercial ventures including essential shops, and increasingly there is a need for community facilities to be heavily subsidised.

The changing fortunes of the communities of the County Borough are closely tied in with the changes which have taken place in the economy. Many of the communities in the County Borough owe their origins to the iron and coal industries which formed the lifeblood of the area for much of

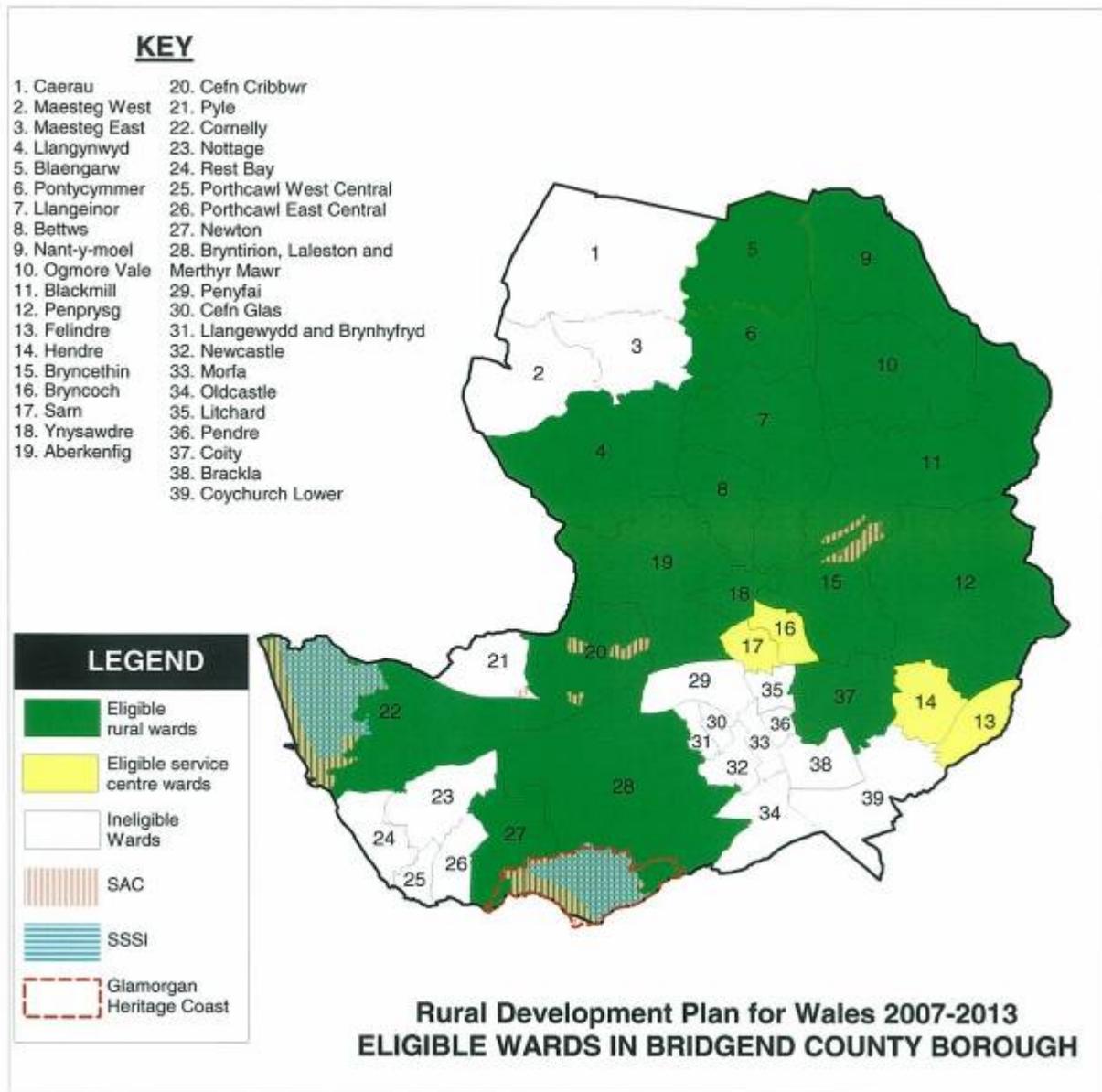
the past 100 years. However, since the 1940s these traditional heavy industries have gradually disappeared. New employment opportunities were created as modern manufacturing enterprises became established, primarily in the southern part of the County Borough along the major road network. This area is now home to many important international manufacturing establishments. Whilst manufacturing remains an important source of jobs in the local economy, the current recession has had a significant impact and there have been some headline closures in the manufacturing sector in particular, contributing to a steep rise in claimant unemployment.

Services, particularly Public Services such as the health service and public administration are now the principal source of jobs in the area. Many of the jobs that have been created in this sector have been taken by female workers and women currently account for 59% of the Public Services workforce in the County Borough, a significantly higher proportion than in the rest of Wales. These changes will have had a profound impact on many households in the rural area, with a subsequent effect on community cohesion.

Eligible Area

The LDS does not cover the whole of the administrative county of Bridgend, but relate to two of three specific areas defined for the purposes of the RDP (see figure 1).

Figure 1- Map of Eligible Area



The eligible rural wards are shown in table 1, with their location within Ogmore Vale, the Garw Valley, Aberkenfig, Cornelly and Newton and the Penprysg / Coity area of the County. Projects can be wholly located in these wards with the full benefits arising from the project accruing to it.

Table 1- Eligible Rural Wards

Aberkenfig	Cefn Cribwr	Nant-y-moel
Bryntirion	Coity	Newton
Bettws	Cornelly	Ogmore Vale
Blackmill	Laleston and Merthyr Mawr	Penprysg
Blaengarw	Llangeinor	Pontycymmer
Bryncethin	Llangynwyd	Ynysawdre

Four service centre wards of Bryncoch, Felindre, Hendre and Sarn are also eligible for funding. However, projects can only accrue up to 30% of the benefits arising in service centre wards with the balance accruing to the surrounding rural area.

Table 2 - Service Centre Wards

Bryncoch	Felindre
Hendre	Sarn

The three urban centres of Bridgend, Maesteg and Porthcawl and their immediate outlying wards are not eligible for funding under Axes 3 and 4, although it is acknowledged that indirect benefits may accrue to these areas through activities having a wider economic impact on the County Borough.

Table 3 - Ineligible Wards

Brackla	Maesteg East	Pendre
Caerau	Maesteg West	Pen-y-fai
Cefn Glas	Morfa	Porthcawl East Central
Coychurch Lower	Newcastle	Porthcawl West Central
Litchard	Nottage	Pyle
Llangweydd & Brynhyfryd	Oldcastle	Rest Bay

3. Rural Development in Bridgend – The Case

The following section illustrates the key economic and social characteristics of eligible rural wards and service centre wards in Bridgend. Where possible, comparison with the whole of Bridgend and Wales has been undertaken.

Population

The following table shows population data obtained from the 2001 Census and population projections for 2008 obtained from the Statistical Directorate of the Welsh Assembly Government. It shows that the eligible rural wards represented 35% (service centre wards, 8%) of the total resident population in Bridgend in 2001, which subsequently grew to 37% (service centre wards remained at 8%) in 2008. The population percent change shows that collectively the eligible rural wards have experienced more growth than all other wards in Bridgend.

Figure 2 - Population

Geographic area	Population 2001	Proportion of Bridgend's population (%) 2001	Population 2008	Proportion of Bridgend's population (%) 2008	Population Percent Change (%)
Service Centre Wards*	10,580	8.2	10,969	8.1	3.7
Eligible Rural Wards**	44,347	34.5	49,589	36.8	11.8
Total Rural Bridgend	54,927	42.7	60,558	44.9	10.3
Bridgend	128,649	100	134,794	100	4.8
Wales	2,903,085	-	2,993,438	-	3.1

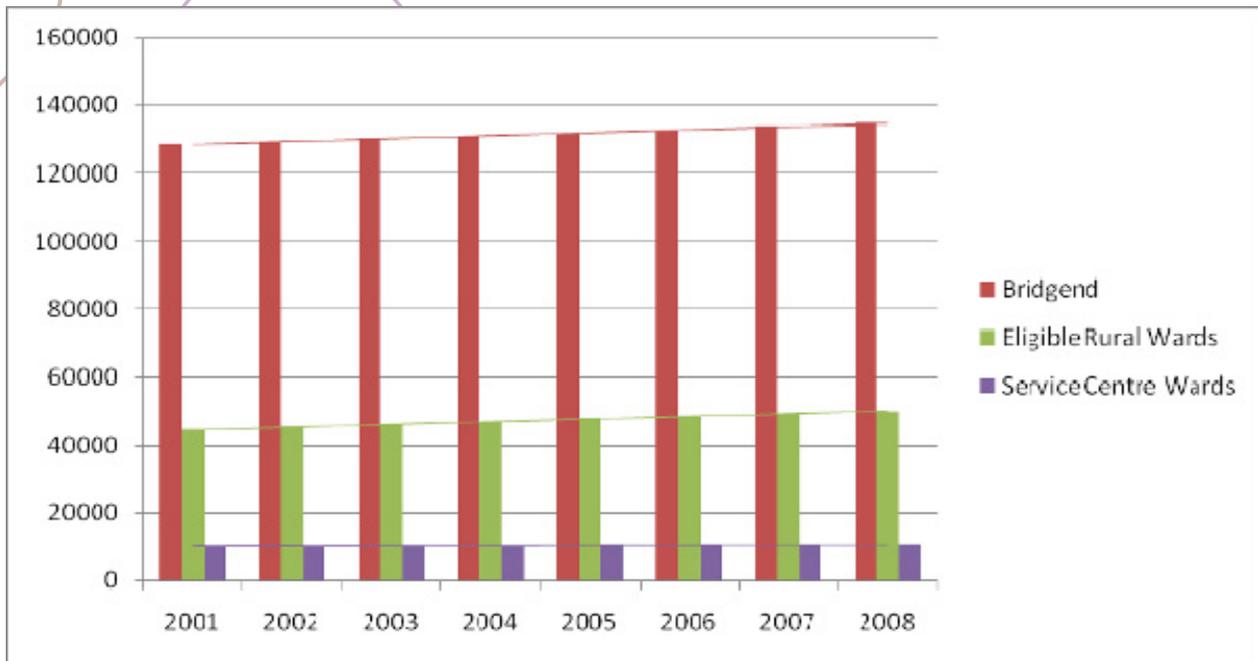
Source: Office for National Statistics, 2001 Census. Statistical Directorate, Welsh Assembly Government: Stats Wales 2008 Projections.

*Service centre wards include: Felindre, Sarn, Bryncoch, and Hendre

** Eligible Rural wards include: Aberkenfig, Bettws, Blackmill, Blaengarw, Bryncethin, Bryntirion, Laleston and Merthyr Mawr, Cefn Cribwr, Coity, Cornelly, Llangeinor, Llangynwyd, Nant-y-moel, Newton, Ogmere Vale, Penprysg, Pontycymmer, Ynysawdre.

The graph in Figure 3, below, details population change over time. It shows that the Eligible Rural Wards have marked a steady increase in population between 2001 and 2008 at a similar, but slightly higher rate than the population growth throughout Bridgend as a whole. However, the Service Centre Wards population has remained constant over the same period.

Figure 3 – Population Change over Time



Source: Statistical Directorate, Welsh Assembly Government: Stats Wales 2008 Projections.

Changes witnessed since 2007

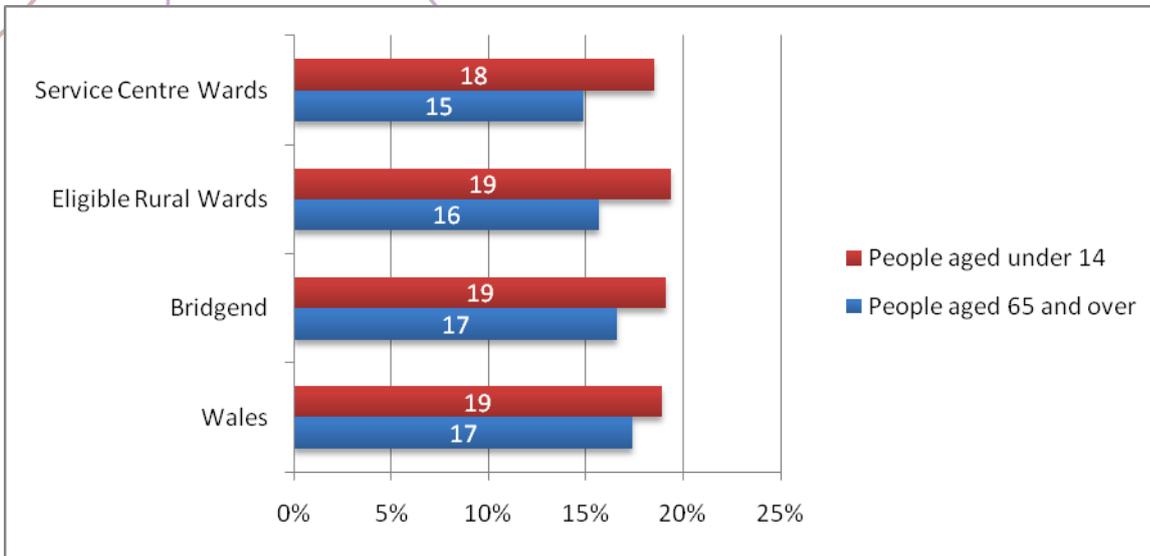
- Strong growth in population in the eligible rural wards

Population - Age Profile

In 2001, there was a relatively low level of disparity in the age profiles throughout the service centre and eligible rural wards as a percentage of their overall population, in comparison with both each other and with regional / national figures. The service centre wards had a marginally lower level (1%) of people aged under 14 in 2001, although they also had a smaller proportion of people over 65. This would suggest that the service centre wards collectively had a larger proportion of working age population than the eligible rural wards, which in turn, had a higher proportion than both Bridgend as a whole and Wales.

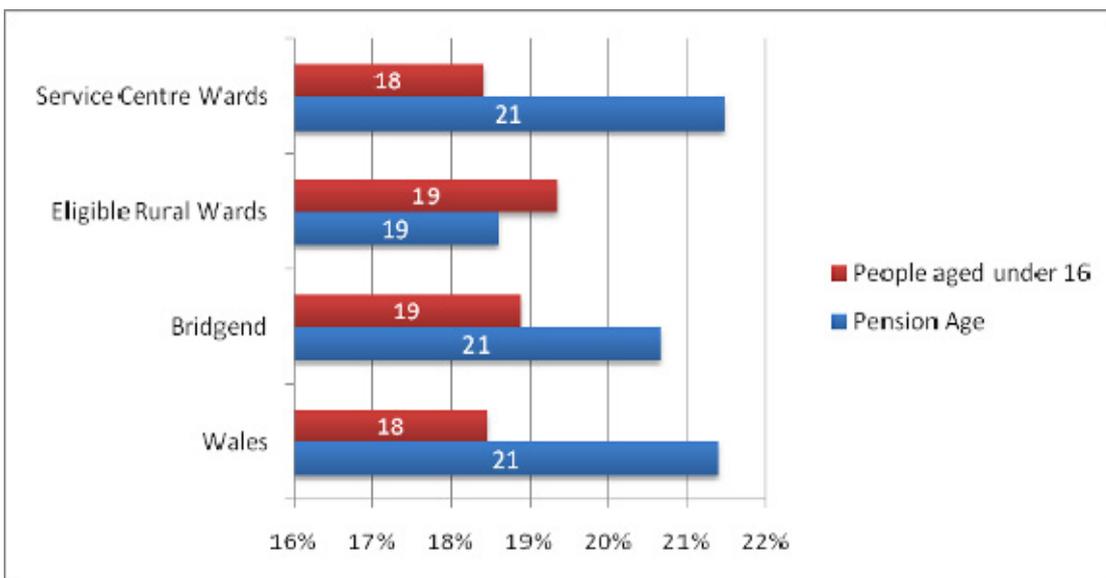
Projections for 2008 population by age were measured slightly differently, in that instead of 0-14, young people were measured at 0-16 and people of pension age included women aged over 60, rather than 65 as previously. However, this did not significantly alter the figures, which indicate that the young population has remained relatively stable as a proportion of the population, whilst the proportion of pensioners in Wales and all subordinate geographical areas increased over the period. Within Bridgend, the eligible rural wards have not experienced the same increase in the proportion of pension age population as the service centre wards, Bridgend or Wales. The implied result is that the eligible rural wards now have a comparatively younger (i.e. working age) population.

Figure 4 - Age Profile 2001 (0-14; 65+)



Source: Office for National Statistics, 2001 Census.

Figure 5 - Age Profile 2008 (0-16; Pensioners: Male 65+, Female 60+)



Source: Statistical Directorate, Welsh Assembly Government: Stats Wales 2008 Projections.

This change is likely to be due to in-migration of working age people into the rural wards, probably away from areas of more expensive property along the M4 corridor, or alternatively people taking advantage of increased equity (prior to the current recession) and moving into the rural area to take advantage of quality of life benefits.

Either of these shifts will have a number of impacts on the rural area:

- An increase in the proportion of economically active people;

- A possible increase in overall skills levels, with potential for incomers to contribute to community initiatives;
- Risk of diluting the strong community identity;
- Increased competition for affordable housing.

Changes witnessed since 2007

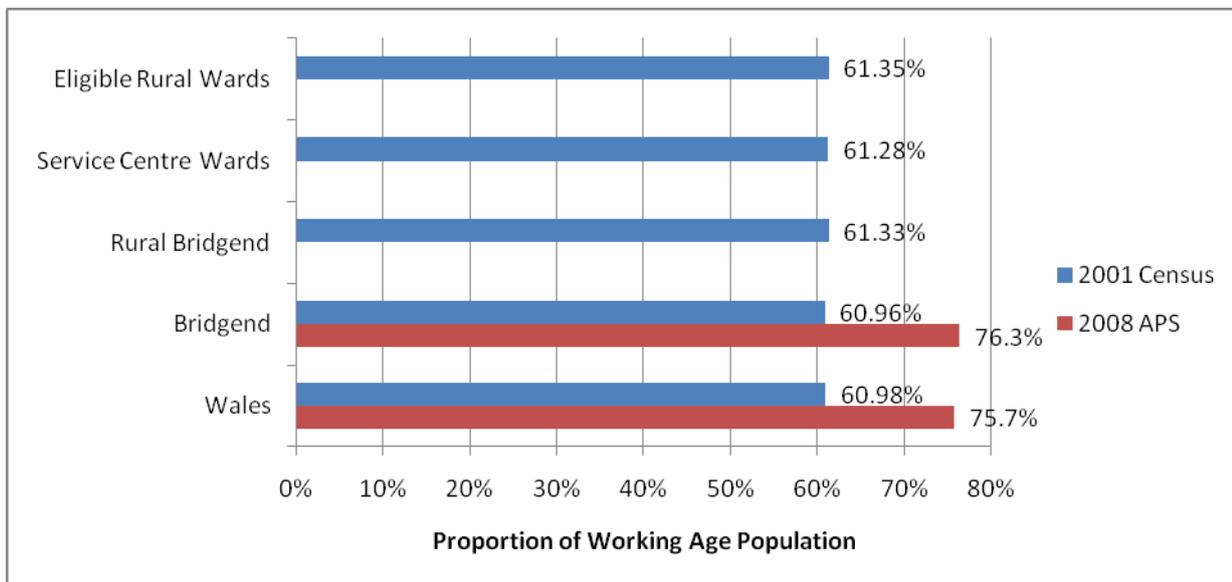
- Growth in population focused on working age residents in the eligible rural areas.

Economic Activity

Analysis of 2001 Census data reveals that the level of economically activity in the service centre wards and the eligible rural wards was very similar to the levels in Bridgend and Wales. In 2001, Economic activity within Rural Bridgend was in fact, marginally higher than the averages in Wales and Bridgend.

Observation of annual population survey data for 2008 illustrates that Bridgend¹ has experienced a 15% growth in the percentage of the working age population that are economically active since 2001. This is slightly higher than the Wales mean (75.7%) and median (75.2%) values, indicating that Bridgend has out-performed the majority of Local Authorities in Wales in terms of economic activity increases in the period 2001 – 2008. This may reflect an increase in employment opportunities in the county borough, or may again be due to in-migration of economically active residents from outside the area.

Figure 6 - Percentage of Population Economically Active



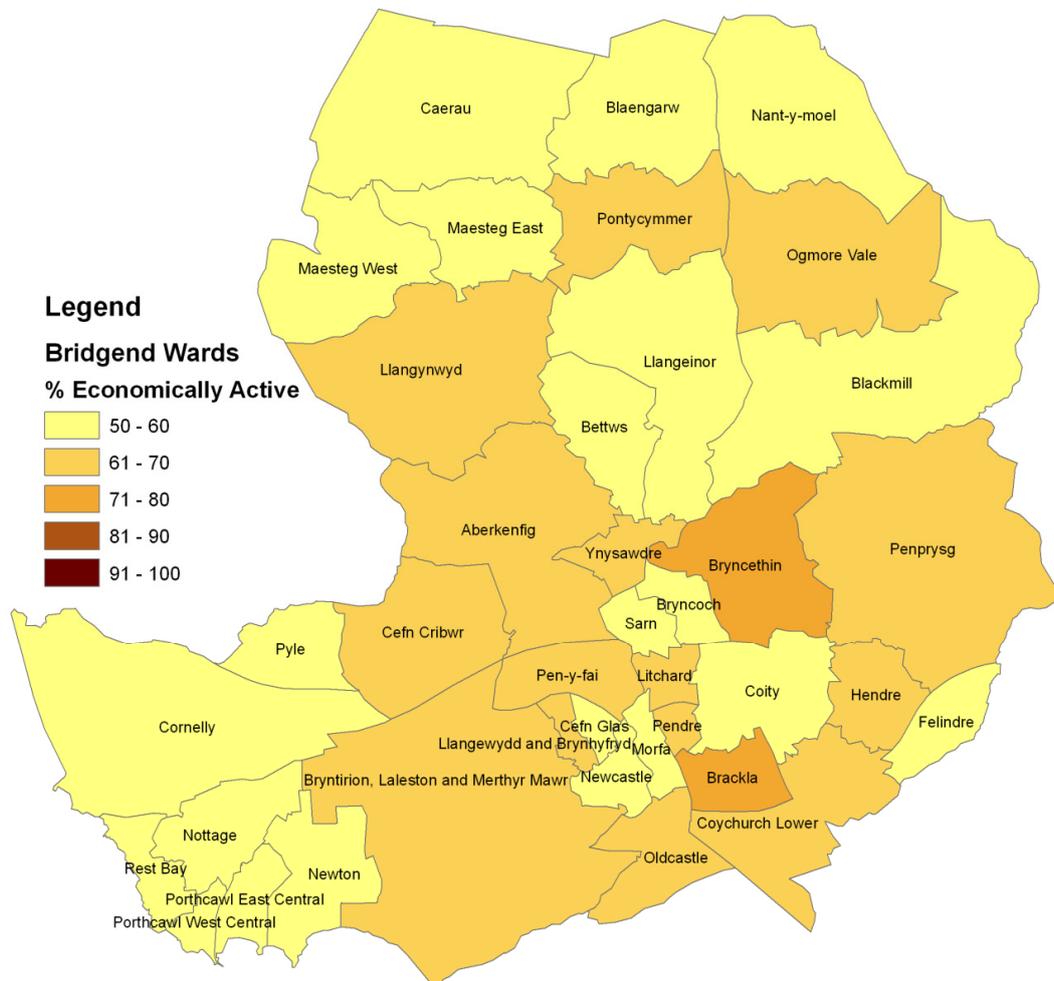
Source: Census of Population, 2001 & Annual Population Survey 2008. Note: APS data not available for ward areas.

¹ Comparison with more recent data at ward level is not possible because the smallest geographical area that the annual population survey collates data for is Local Authority. The most recent ward level data for economic activity is the 2001 Census.

The increase in economic activity may also reflect a reduction in the number of residents on incapacity benefits. In February 2009, there were 3,490 people in the eligible rural wards on incapacity benefit or severe disablement allowance, a fall of 11% since 2007. This may reflect a gradual reduction in the legacy of former industries, as those affected by working in coal mining and other primary industries move out of the working age population and onto pensions. Similar falls have occurred across Bridgend and Wales as a whole.

Figure 7 - All Persons Economically Active by Ward, 2001

**Percent Economically Active
by Ward
Bridgend County Borough Council**



Source: NOMIS August 2001 Data
Created: October 2009
Compiled by: Miller Research (UK) Ltd.

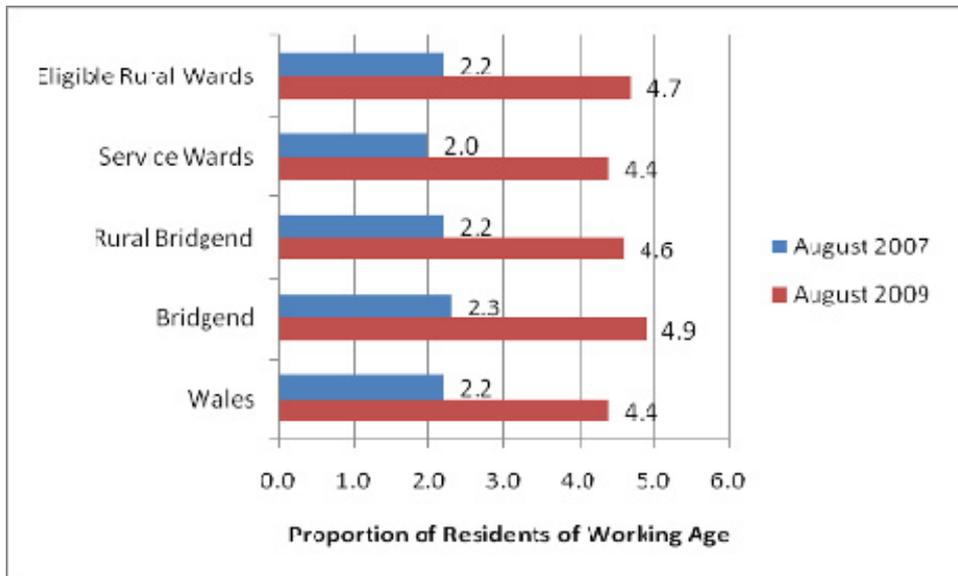
Changes witnessed since 2007

- General increase in economic activity rates. It is likely, however, that many of the eligible rural wards retain relatively low activity rates.

Unemployment

Claimant unemployment in rural Bridgend has increased significantly over the last two years, in line with changes across Wales. The level of unemployment among the working age population in the eligible rural wards (4.7%) is 0.2% below the average for Bridgend (4.9%) as a whole, but above the average for Wales as a whole. Male unemployment is of particular concern – currently standing at 6.7% in the eligible rural wards as opposed to 6.3% across Wales. This figure is concerning, given that residents of rural areas are more unlikely to claim benefits or register as unemployed – thereby masking potentially higher figures.

Figure 8- Percentage of Population Claimant Unemployed

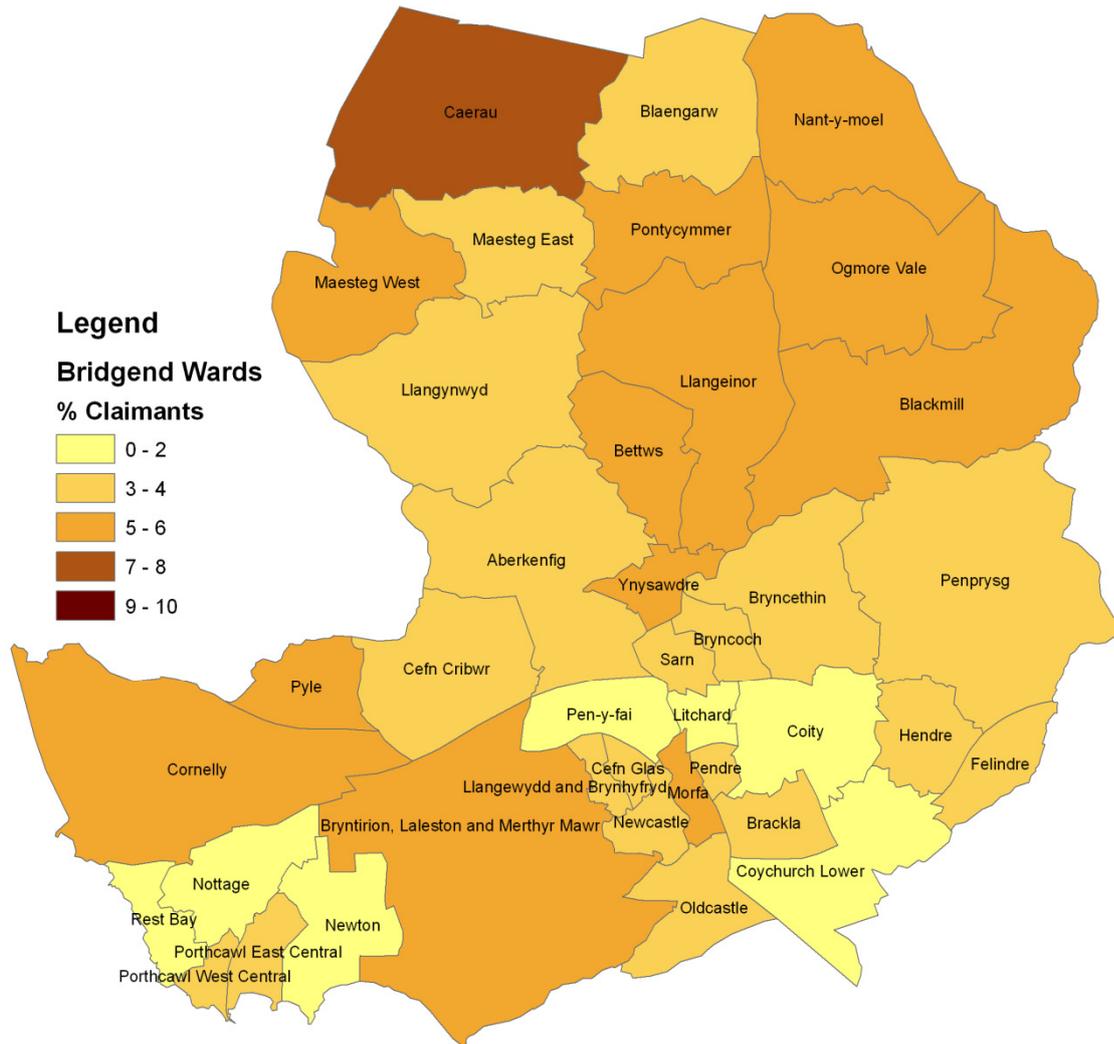


Source: National Statistics (Nomis: www.nomisweb.co.uk) Claimant Count Data from JobCentre Plus. (Unadjusted)
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At a ward level, Caerau has especially high claimant unemployment.

Figure 9 - Claimant Count by Ward

**Percent Claimants
by Ward
Bridgend County Borough Council**



Source: NOMIS August 2009 Data
Created: October 2009
Compiled by: Miller Research (UK) Ltd.

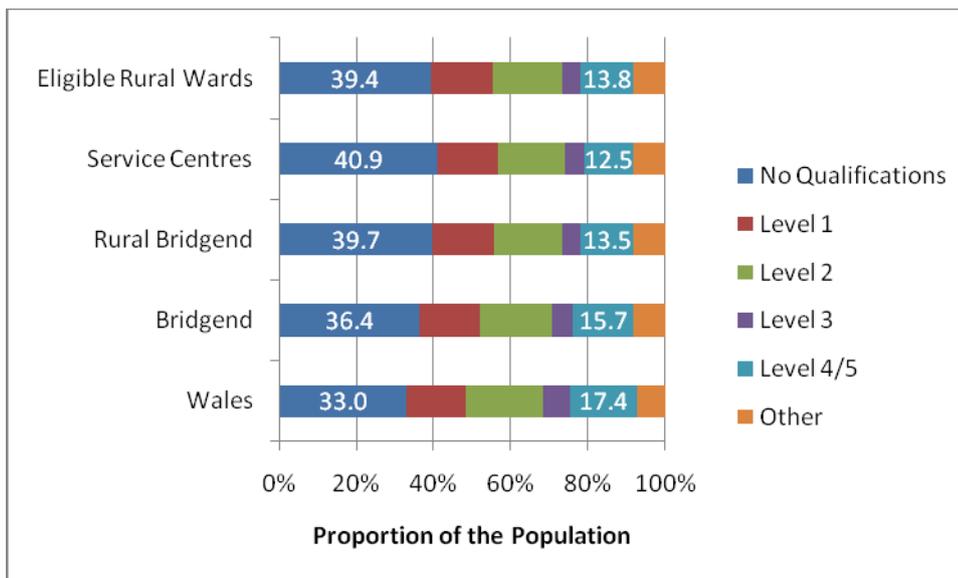
Changes witnessed since 2007

- A significant rise in claimant unemployment since 2007, with the rate in eligible rural wards rising faster than Wales as a whole.

Skills Levels

Skills levels and qualifications are a growing concern for the UK and Welsh Governments and recent policy and initiatives have been introduced with the aim of raising the skills levels within the UK and Wales. Data from the 2001 Census shows that 33% of the Welsh working age population had no qualifications at all, while just 17.4% were educated to degree level. Whilst Bridgend’s qualification profile shows lower skills levels than the rest of Wales, rural Bridgend has a higher proportion still of working age population with no qualifications (nearly 40%) and a lower proportion of the population with a degree (or equivalent). The population within the service centre wards has marginally lower levels of qualifications than those in the eligible rural wards, but the overall rural area is shown to be low skilled. Although data for 2009 is not available at ward level, it is likely that the overall skills profile will have improved as a result of in-migration. However, this will be matched by a parallel shift in the proportion of skilled residents working outside the area. There is nothing to suggest an increase in skilled jobs available in the rural area.

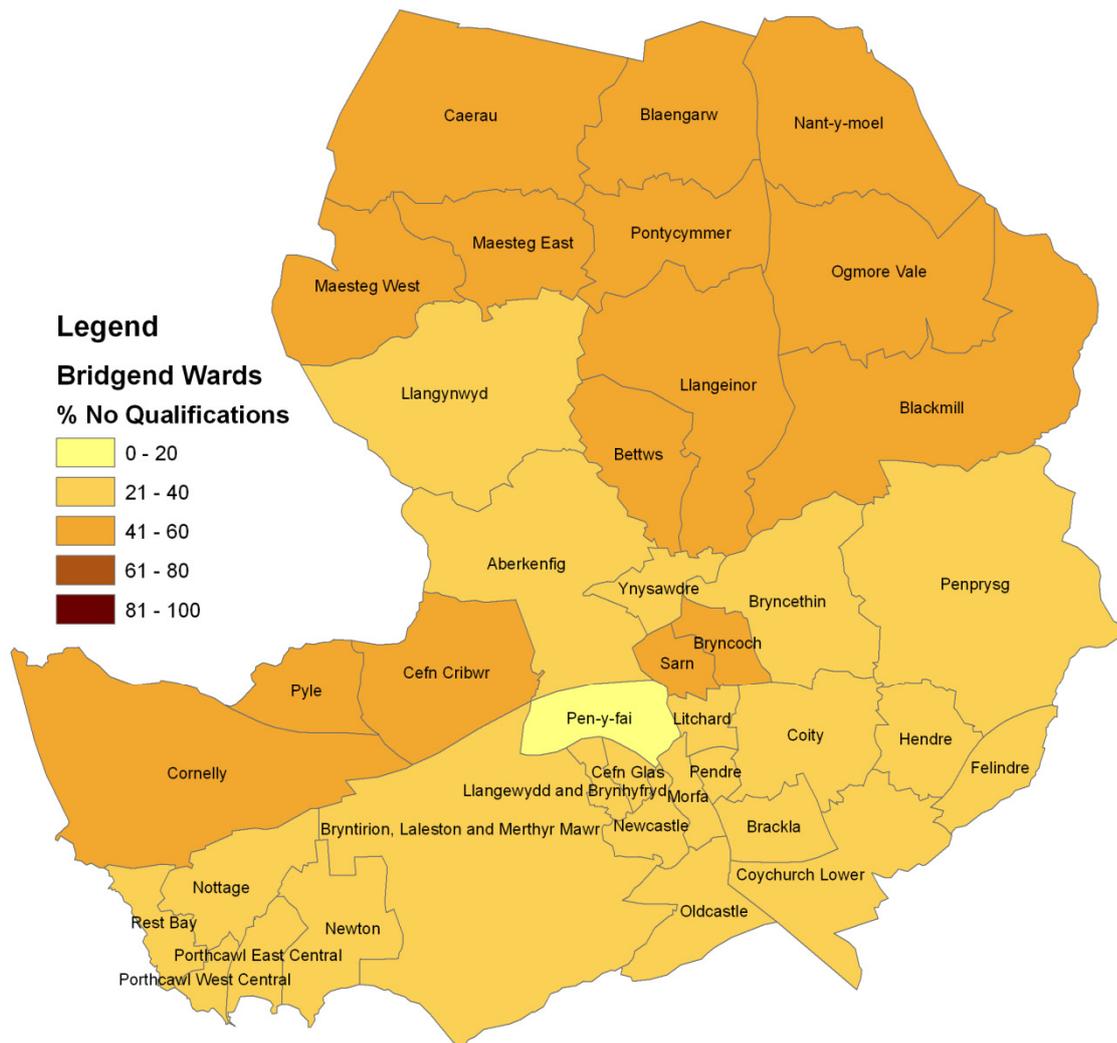
Figure 10 - Qualifications of Residents in Bridgend



Source: National Statistics (Nomis: www.nomisweb.co.uk) Census of Population, 2001
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Figure 11 - All Persons with No Qualifications by Ward

**Percent of Population with No Qualifications
by Ward
Bridgend County Borough Council**



Source: NOMIS August 2001 Data
Created: October 2009
Compiled by: Miller Research (UK) Ltd.

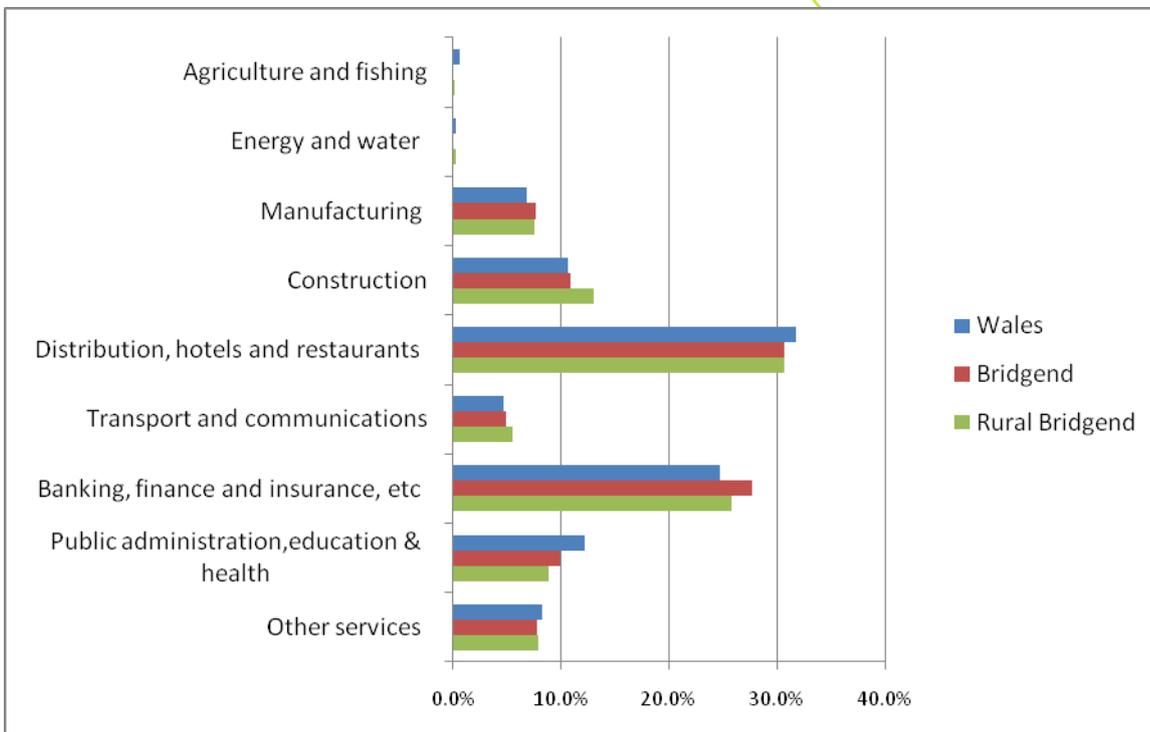
Changes witnessed since 2007

- No data to log change since 2007. Although population changes may have raised skills levels slightly in the eligible rural area, it is likely that the area retains a skills deficit in comparison with Wales as a whole.

The Economy and Labour Market

According to the Annual Business Inquiry (ABI) for 2007, the business structure in Bridgend is generally focused on the service sector. Almost one third of the business units in Bridgend are in the Distribution, Hotels and Restaurants sector and over a quarter of businesses are in Banking, Finance and Insurance. This pattern is repeated in Rural Bridgend; however, Rural Bridgend has a higher proportion of business units in Construction and Transport & Communication than Bridgend County as a whole.

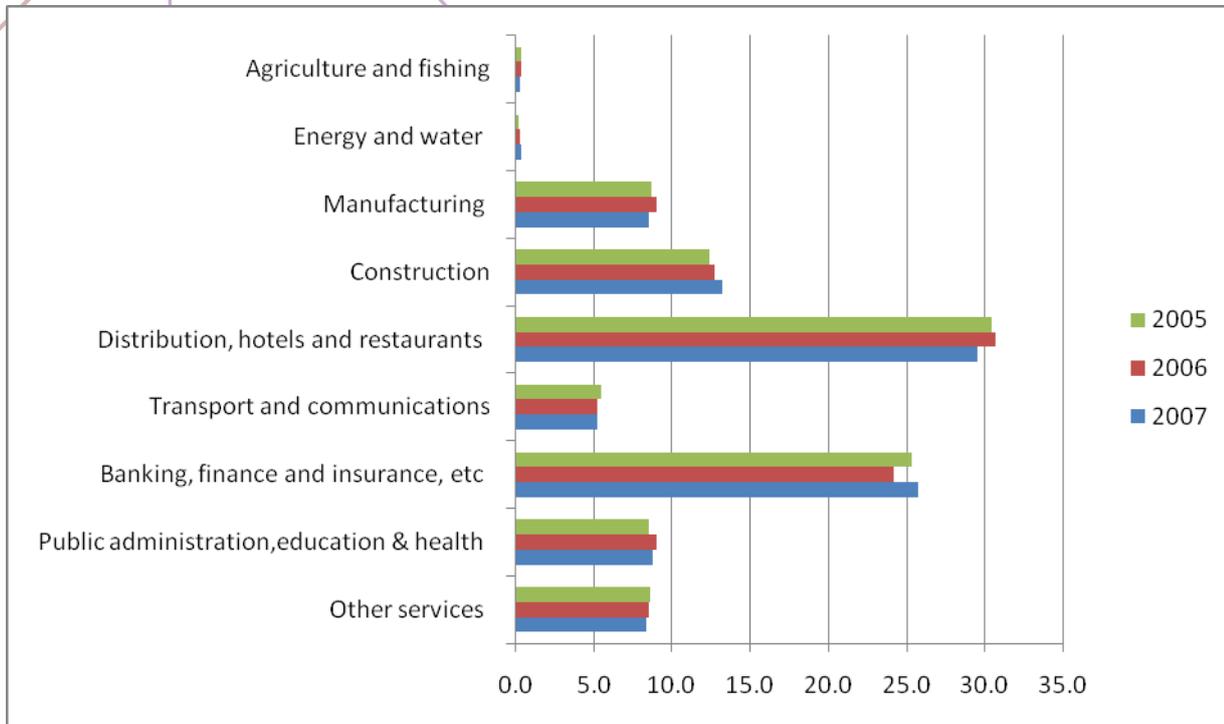
Figure 12 - Businesses in Rural Bridgend



Source: National Statistics (Nomis: www.nomisweb.co.uk) Annual Business Inquiry 2007
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Comparison of businesses in eligible rural wards over the past three years shows marginal changes in a number of areas. The Construction sector and the Energy and Water sector have witnessed low but consistent growth year on year. The most notable change in the Banking, Finance and Insurance sector occurred between 2006 and 2007 although this is closer to the 2005 level following a slump in 2006. Bridgend enjoys a larger than national average proportion of workers in this sector and it appears that the eligible rural wards have also benefited from this. The proportion of businesses in the Distribution, Hotels and Restaurants sector, as well as the Manufacturing sector was at a three year low in 2007.

Figure 13 - Businesses in eligible rural wards 2005-2007

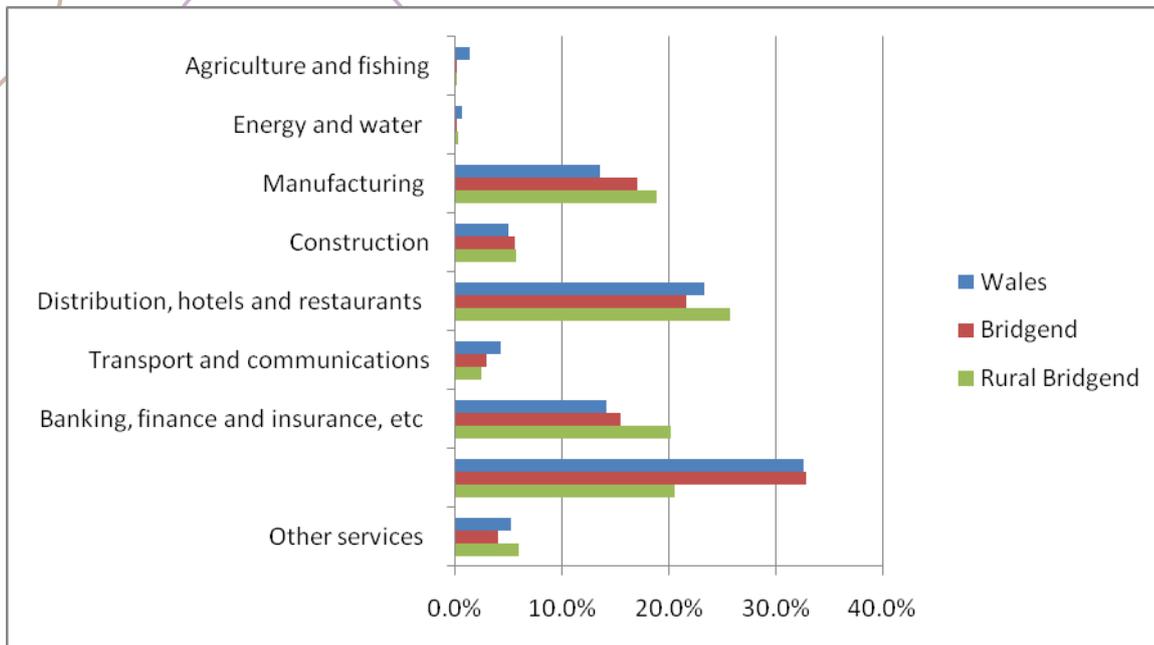


Source: National Statistics (Nomis: www.nomisweb.co.uk) Annual Business Inquiry 2005, 2006 & 2007
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Employees

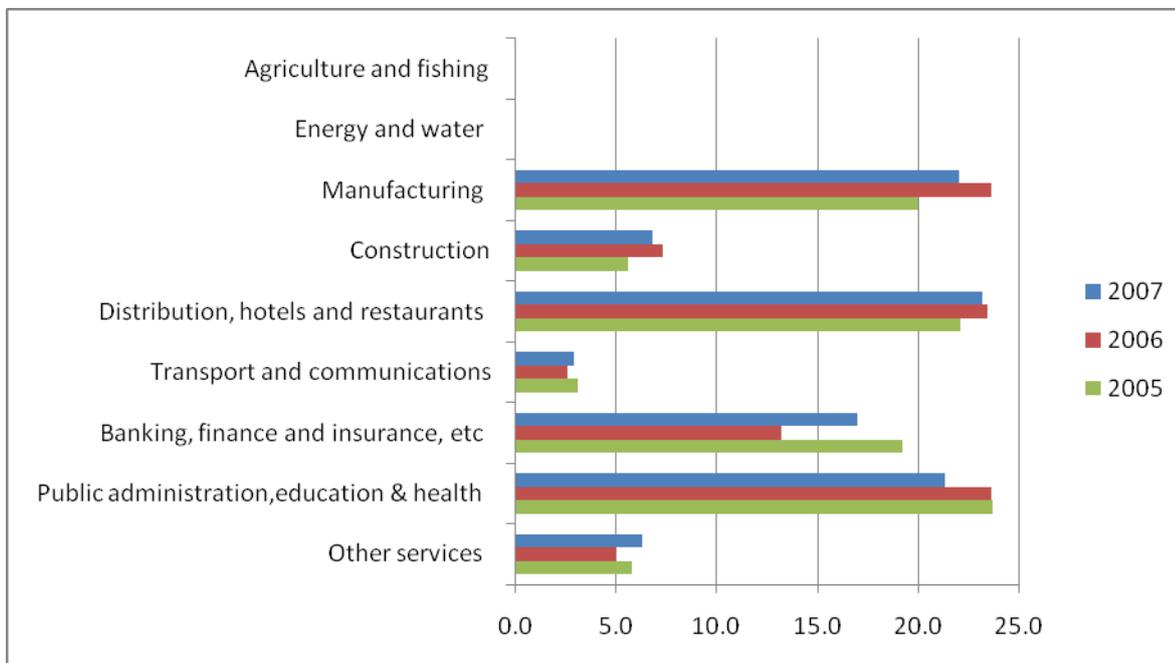
In terms of employees, however, the picture is different; Bridgend has a higher proportion of the population employed in the Public Sector than the rest of Wales, with employment in Public Administration, Education and Health employing nearly 35% of the working age population. This sector however, it is not as important for the eligible rural wards. In 2007, more people were employed in Manufacturing and Distribution, Hotels and Restaurants than the Public Sector, although this sector was the third largest employer.

Figure 14 - Employees in Rural Bridgend



Source: National Statistics (Nomis: www.nomisweb.co.uk) Annual Business Inquiry 2007
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Figure 15 - Employees in eligible rural wards 2005-2007



Source: National Statistics (Nomis: www.nomisweb.co.uk) Annual Business Inquiry 2007
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NOTE: Agriculture and Energy & Water display no data because it is in breach of the CONFIDENTIAL DATA: 1947 STATISTICS OF TRADE ACT due to the low numbers involved and so no data can be displayed.

Bridgend is characterised by a high proportion of SMEs. Within Bridgend County Borough 82% of the business units employ less than 10 people whilst in Rural Bridgend this increases to 86%. Within Rural Bridgend there are just 36 employers with more than 50 employees.

Farming occupies around 12,000 hectares of the land in Bridgend and retains a strong influence on the rural area. The latest data from the Welsh Assembly Government show that 523 people are employed in agriculture in the County, on 251 holdings. However this data will mask significant levels of self-employment and portfolio employment common to the agricultural community.

Changes witnessed since 2007

- Distribution, Hotels and Restaurants remain particularly important employers in Rural Bridgend, perhaps most notably the designer outlet at Sarn;
- The Rural area is dominated by micro-enterprises;
- Residents of the eligible rural wards are most likely to work in Distribution, Manufacturing or Public Services, although Manufacturing and Public Services employment declined between 2005 and 2007.

Tourism

Tourism is a vitally important industry to the UK, Wales and to Bridgend County Borough area. It generates inward expenditure as well as providing employment for residents. The Bridgend County Tourism Strategy recognises that currently the county's tourism offer is centred on the coastal belt, especially in Porthcawl, however, it also identifies that there are opportunities waiting to be exploited elsewhere in the county, particularly in the rural valley areas.

The most recent STEAM² data illustrates that the tourism sector in Bridgend sustains approximately 4,736 jobs (direct and indirect) and accounts for approximately £275.4 million of spend in the region. This equates to a 17% increase since 2003 which is characterised by successive years of increases and decreases as can be seen in Figure 17. The six years leading up to 2008 have illustrated a trend whereby even years (2004, 2006 & 2008) experienced an increase on previous years tourism income whilst the odd years (2003, 2005 & 2007) a decrease.

The largest fall in tourism-related income in Bridgend was recorded between 2006 and 2007. The economic downturn which began in the latter half of 2007 may have contributed to this decline, although the recession only really gathered speed during the first few months of 2008 and also, this would not explain the downturn in 2005. Therefore, there must be other factors that are contributing to the repetition of a downward trend every other year.

² The Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor, 2008.

Figure 16 - Tourism Income in Bridgend 2003-2008

Sector	Expenditure (£s millions)						Rate of Change 2003-2008 (%)
	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	
Accommodation	15.5	14.2	15.2	15.0	15.6	15.9	-2.5
Food & Drink	34.9	33.2	34.3	33.2	33.6	32.5	7.4
Recreation	10.8	10.3	10.6	10.3	10.4	10.1	6.9
Shopping	77.7	67.2	76.1	71.2	77.0	58.7	32.4
Transport	19.6	18.7	19.3	18.7	18.9	18.3	7.1
Indirect Expenditure	89.1	80.7	87.6	83.5	87.6	76.1	17.1
VAT	27.7	25.1	27.2	26.0	27.2	23.7	16.9
Total Income	275.4	249.5	270.4	257.8	270.3	235.4	17.0
Change in income*	25.9	-20.9	12.6	-12.5	34.9	-	-
Rate of Change on previous year (%)	10.4	-7.7	4.9	-4.6	14.8	-	17.0

Source: STEAM 6 year study

*Change is calculated as the difference between present and previous year.

Analysis of expenditure by sector illustrates that shopping has witnessed the largest increase (32.4%) which can be attributed to the success of Bridgend Designer Outlet.

The accommodation sector has experienced the only visitor expenditure decline (-2.5%) during the period 2003-2008. This may be the result of a number of closures in 2004-05. Generally speaking, accommodation in Bridgend is clustered in the south of the County and is mostly hotels and guesthouses. The Tourism Strategy identifies that there is a shortage of self-catering, hostel, bunk barn and camping and caravan accommodation within the County – all of which could be developed in Rural Bridgend.

The number of tourists visiting Bridgend in 2008 (3.78m) was at a similar level to 2006 visitor numbers (3.77m) despite the 2008 levels experiencing a 5% increase over the previous year. As would be expected, the trend of visitor numbers during the period under analysis mirrored the income trends explained earlier. In the years that visitor numbers fell, visitor income also fell, but interestingly at a slightly disproportionate rate. This suggests that income contribution per visitor also changed and that a fall in visitor numbers does not necessarily translate to an equal (and proportional) reduction in income. These findings support the suggestion that in 2007, visitors were feeling the effects of the credit crunch and subsequently spent less whilst in Bridgend. By combining the income data with visitor number data it is possible to (crudely) calculate the contribution per visitor (Figure 17), which shows that visitor contribution (to total tourism income i.e. both direct and indirect) in 2007 was at its lowest since 2003. So a 4.5% fall in visitor numbers had the effect of causing a disproportionate 8% fall in income.

Figure 17 - Income contribution per visitor

Visitor contribution (£s)	
2008	72.95
2007	69.32
2006	71.74
2005	71.31
2004	73.65
2003	66.57

Source: Original data - STEAM 6 year study. Calculations by Miller Research (UK) Ltd.

Figure 18 - Numbers of Tourist Visiting Bridgend

Type of Accommodation	Tourist Numbers 000's						Rate of change: 2003-2008 (%)
	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	
Serviced	153	147	152	147	157	144	6.3
Non-Serviced	206	197	194	194	191	191	7.9
Visiting Friends and Relatives	207	205	202	201	201	199	4.0
Day Visitors	3,209	3,050	3,221	3,073	3,121	3,002	6.9
TOTAL	3,775	3,599	3,769	3,615	3,670	3,536	6.8
Rate of Change: previous year (%)	4.9	-4.5	4.3	-1.5	3.8	-	-

Source: STEAM 6 year study

The converse is true upon analysis of visitor contribution between 2007 and 2008, where a 4.9% increase in visitor numbers resulted in a 10% increase in income. Once again this disproportionate increase in income was underpinned by a significant increase in contribution per visitor of approximately £4 (£69.32 to £72.95) which illustrates one of two things. Either people who visited Bridgend were inclined to spend more - despite the recession, or that the visitor economy in Bridgend was better equipped to integrate spend into the economy (because income considers both direct and indirect spend) as a result of changes to the visitor economy since 2007.

For example, considering the fall in visitor numbers between 2004 and 2005, anecdotal evidence points to the closure of a number of serviced accommodation businesses in urban areas (157 to 147) during this period.

As a whole, the data collected over the last six years indicates that there had been an increase in visitor numbers over the year period by 6.8% and an increase in income of 16.9%. Therefore, contribution per visitor had increased over the period.

Day visits are a vital component of the tourism product in Bridgend County Borough and result in large amounts of visitor expenditure. In 2008, day visitors accounted for 85% of all tourist days in Bridgend. The main day trip destinations were Porthcawl and Bridgend Designer Outlet (Sarn, J36 M4). The latter is involved in its own marketing promotions, which enhances the image of the area for tourists. The Local Authority (with others) is also involved in a number of events and has successfully been running the Strategic Tourism Events Fund since 2006 which has resulted in grants being allocated to event organizers to develop and promote events within the county as tourist attractions – and consequently to increase the economic benefits to the area. This fund has assisted events such as the Elvis Festival, Porthcawl Sea Festival, Cwlwm Celtaidd and events at Bryngarw Country Park. Strategic events held within the County Borough attract significant day visitors and increase awareness of the area. However, they can also contribute towards the regeneration of town centres and to environmental improvements. In 2008, a total of 11 major events had benefited from the fund, resulting (according to BCBC figures) in 900,000 visitors to the area and accounting for a potential £53m spend³.

³ Bridgend County Borough Council, Report to Cabinet, Strategic events within Bridgend County Borough Tuesday 2nd December 2008. (NOTE: these figures were due for review in 2009)

Figure 20 identifies the number of days stayed in the various types of accommodation within the County Borough.

Figure 19 - Number of Tourist Days in Bridgend

Type of Accommodation	Tourist Numbers 000's		
	2003	2008	Rate of change (%)
Serviced	144	153	6.3
Non-Serviced	191	206	7.9
SFR	199	207	4.0
Day Visitors	3,002	3,209	6.9
TOTAL	3,536	3,775	6.8

Source: STEAM 6 year study

Summary

The socio-economic data has shown that whilst Rural Bridgend is generally performing well in terms of economic activity there are areas of economic development that need addressing, skills levels and qualifications are below average and the economy is dependent on a relatively low number of sectors.

In summary:

1. *Eligible rural ward population is increasing, whilst service centre population remains constant;*
2. *Eligible rural wards are now estimated to have a greater proportion of working age people in their population than the service centre wards or Bridgend;*
3. *Claimant unemployment in rural Bridgend has increased significantly over the last two years, in line with changes across Wales. In particular, male unemployment is high;*
4. *Both service centre wards and rural Bridgend have a higher proportion of the working age population with no qualifications and a lower proportion of the population with a degree than Bridgend and Wales;*
5. *Economic activity is focussed on the service sector, as manufacturing employment declines, both through structural changes and as a result of the current recession;*
6. *Micro-enterprises dominate the business structure of Rural Bridgend, accounting for more than 85% of all businesses;*

7. *Fewer people work in the public sector in eligible rural wards compared to Bridgend and Wales as a whole;*
8. *The tourism industry is increasingly important to Bridgend although day trippers and shopping dominate visitor numbers.*

Figure 20 - Rural Bridgend - SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The area is easily accessible from the Midlands, Southeast and Southwest England, Ireland and Continental Europe; ▪ Bridgend has three motorway junctions providing easy access to the south and mid areas of the County Borough. ▪ Individual sectors in Bridgend have seen a growth in productivity over recent years – particularly in modern service sectors such as business services and professional services. ▪ The County Borough contains a number of high quality tourism product elements making it attractive to certain sectors. ▪ Beauty of the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manufacturing and public service employment are over-represented in the local economy. ▪ Unemployment for young people (aged 16-24) is high compared to GB, Wales and South Wales. ▪ There is a deficit of people with the highest level qualifications (Level 4+) and an over-representation of people with no qualifications across all age groups. ▪ There is a low skilled economy with a greater proportion of lower-end occupations. ▪ Concentrations of deprivation in Bridgend CB exist in both urban Bridgend and the Valleys. The most challenging areas include Bettws, Blackmill, and Llangeinor. ▪ Quality of life in Bridgend CB is not high according to the Experian index – Bridgend CB is ranked 314th out of the 408 LADs in England and Wales and 15th out of the 21 LADs in Wales. ▪ Data recorded by the National Assembly has shown that Bridgend CB suffers from higher levels of smoking, binge drinking, obesity and mental illness. ▪ Loss of local shops and basic services ▪ Disjointed communities ▪ Lack of serviced accommodation ▪ Lack of strategic communication ▪ Lack of a rural identity

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diversification into higher value employment sectors ▪ Build on industrial heritage ▪ Access to the wider countryside ▪ Employment starter sites ▪ Local food chains ▪ ECO tourism ▪ Energy renewable schemes ▪ Arts and crafts network ▪ Physical regeneration through community action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workplace earnings were 2.7% higher than resident earnings in 2006, suggesting workers commute into Bridgend CB from outside and earn higher wages. ▪ Growth in other competing areas and impact on local services ▪ Degradation in the environmental quality of the area ▪ Decline in graded accommodation. ▪ Development of more out of town retailing. ▪ Development of competing tourist attractions in other resorts and tourist destination areas. ▪ Lack of trained staff in accommodation and attraction sector

Key Issues

Using the baseline data, SWOT analysis, understanding of the area and reference to other strategies and action plans, the Bridgend Rural Partnership has identified the following key issues facing Rural Bridgend.

- Low economic activity
- Unemployment relatively higher than Welsh average
- Lower than average weekly earnings
- Number of households that do not have access to a vehicle
- Lack of basic amenity e.g. central heating
- Low attainment in higher education qualifications
- Skill shortages in rural areas
- Poor quality physical environment – heavy manufacturing industrial legacy
- Quality of tourism accommodation and product
- Weak attraction and events base within the County Borough
- Some communities lack access to basic services – shops, post offices, etc
- Local people do not recognise rural Bridgend as a “day out”
- Lack of rural identity
- Lack of walking and cycling trail infrastructure
- Need to integrate outdoor pursuits and countryside management
- Lack of private sector cohesiveness and involvement

4. Business Plan 1 - Progress to Date

As part of the continuous learning within Reach, an interim evaluation is being undertaken at the time of revising the LDS. This is providing direct assistance to project sponsors on project and monitoring requirements and in increasing their awareness of the role of their project within wider rural development activity.

Early headlines from the evaluation show that projects delivered under Business Plan 1 have made some significant inroads into the development of a more vibrant and sustainable Rural Bridgend. Despite some significant externally caused delays and changes at the start of the programme period, actions have been delivered which have both built capacity and paved the way for sustainable development across the Rural Area. Working under the five themes of Place, People, Enterprise, Produce and Tourism, Reach rural co-ordinators have supported third party project sponsors in delivery and have worked directly with communities to grow activity.

Barriers to Delivery

A number of factors have limited the degree of successful delivery to date. These include:

- Initial changes to the programme, leading to administrative delays and the need to rewrite some materials;
- The cost heading review, which again placed a significant administrative burden on project sponsors;
- The scale of need in terms of cultural change within certain communities within the rural area, for example in relation to local produce. One project sponsor reported that *“we need to teach people about fresh food before we can start on local”*;
- The lead time for delivery of projects, including the time taken to build a new team from scratch and to establish delivery frameworks ahead of projects commencing;
- Issues of capacity building and developing workable monitoring and evaluation systems that can be easily understood and complied with.

Future Developments

All those involved in delivering the Rural Development Programme in Bridgend would like to see greater partnership or collaboration with other rural areas, although a substantial amount of informal learning exchange has taken place with authorities more experienced of rural development such as Monmouthshire and the Vale of Glamorgan.

5. Nature of Partnership

Partnership Arrangements

The Rural Development Plan for Wales, specifically the development and delivery of Axes 3 and 4 is centred on a partnership-led approach that addresses spatial, strategic and local objectives. The scheme guidance note recognises that *“Partnerships must be relevant, comprehensive and representative of local needs and priorities and based on proportionate representation from the four sectors: private, public, community and voluntary. Membership of the Partnership Board should reflect the characteristics of its area and the opportunities identified in the LDS.”*

Whilst, the Reach Rural Partnership is still maturing, there is a strong commitment to being seen as an open representative body that will shape and direct future rural activities. In forming the partnership, the following key ingredients have been used:

- Worked with existing partnership set-ups that met or had synergy with the general principles of the Rural Development Plan;
- Approached existing active partner and likely rural stakeholders;
- Reviewed the membership of the Rural Partnership and the Local Action Group to make both more fit for purpose for phase 2.

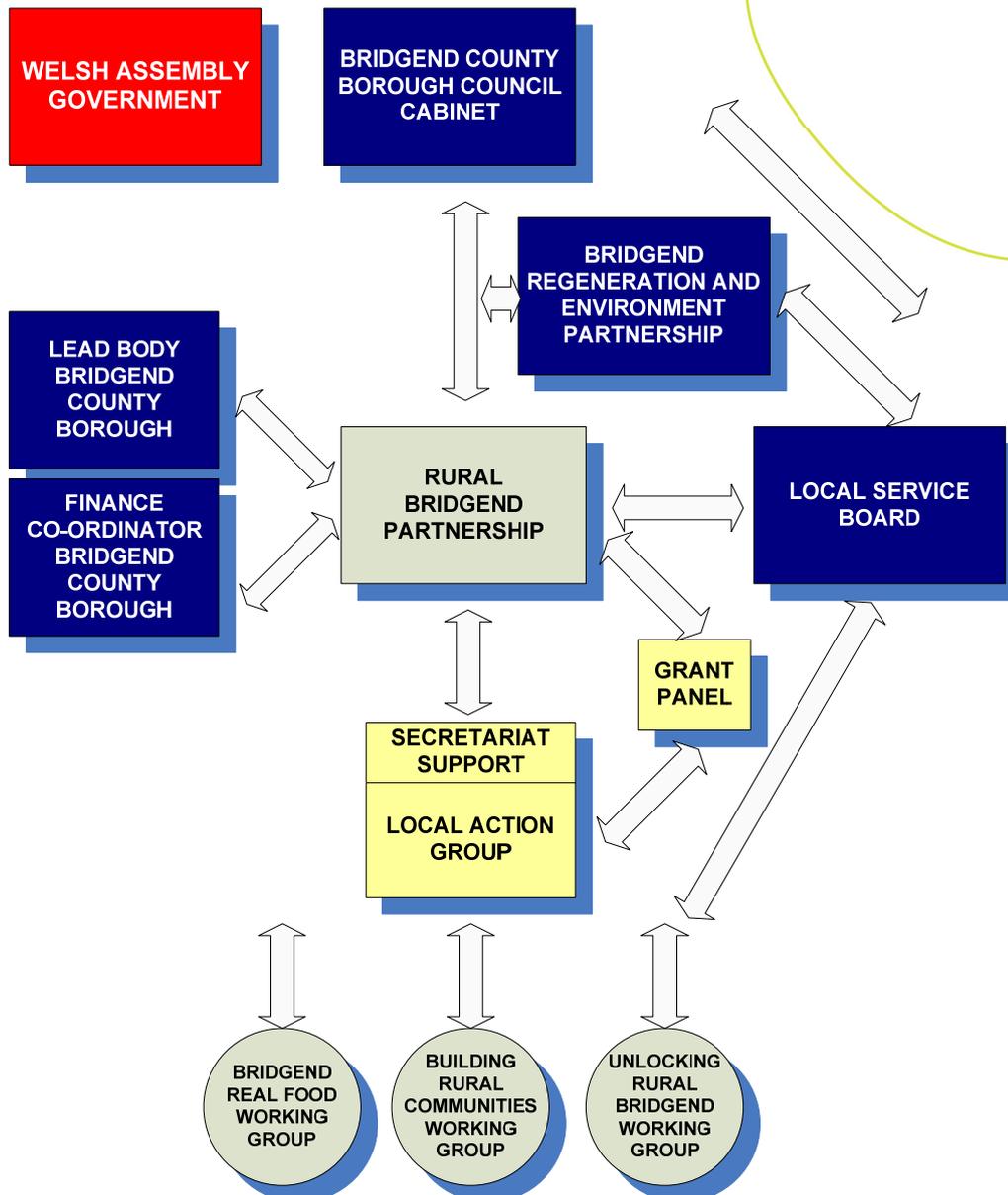
Since the announcement from the Welsh Assembly Government to Partnerships of the need for a revised LDS, the following key activities have been undertaken in Bridgend, to ensure partners are aware of the RDP requirements, opportunities for identifying strategic and local needs and the final adoption of the draft Local Development Strategy document. These have been:

- Proposal for development of phase 2 business plan approved by Rural Partnership – 16th June 2009;
- A full review of membership undertaken – 19th June 2009;
- Presentation to the Rural Partnership on the 9th September 2009 on the Business Plan 2 process, specifically on the timetable for the LDS;
- Issued initial draft LDS document to Rural Partnership members on the 28th September for comment;
- Hosted a LDS Review workshop on the 5th October for members of the Rural Partnership, Local Action Group and advisors;
- Issued a revised LDS to Rural Partnership, Local Action Group and advisors – 8th October 2009.

As an outcome of the 2006/07 LDS process the “Rural Bridgend Partnership” body was established that provides the strategic direction and guidance for implementation of the LDS in Bridgend

County Borough. The initial LDS and Business Plan for the 2008-2010 period also led to the appointment of the Lead Body and Financial Co-ordinator, programme manager and a number of rural co-ordinators which are detailed later on in this document. The issue of community and stakeholder engagement has also been addressed with the creation of themed fora, which provide the grass roots platform for identifying local issues. Again, this is developed further on in this document. The diagram below illustrates the relationship of the various bodies and lines of reporting and communication.

Figure 21 - Rural Partnership - Reporting and Communication



Rural Bridgend Partnership Body. The partnership today is a broad and representative mix of organisations from local services, heritage, environment, social enterprise, arts and culture, economic development, transport, and housing.

It is Bridgend's intention to work towards achieving 'The ten key characteristics of a Sustainable Rural Community' – that will establish them as economically, socially, culturally, and environmentally sustainable. These are:

- *A population with a viable age structure i.e. a healthy mix of old and young;*
- *A diversified economic base beyond the primary agricultural and production sectors;*
- *A viable and sustainable primary sector which provides both fresh food and other needs;*
- *A rural population with the physical and mental health which is at least as good as it is elsewhere;*
- *Access to an attractive and clean environment;*
- *Pride in the local identity i.e. history, culture and environment;*
- *Widespread business ownership i.e. high rates of locally financed and initiated new small enterprises;*
- *Public agencies working together towards common goals and agreed values;*
- *Local communities working together to assess risks and prepare for change;*
- *Healthy rural communities doing their own development and not having it done to them by others.*

The table below indicates the make-up of the Partnership, with its terms of reference and Memorandum of Association appended to this document. The Partnership is bound by the Memorandum of Understanding which is included in the appendices.

Chair – Rural Bridgend Partnership. The Chair-person of the Rural Bridgend Partnership Body is Deputy Leader of Bridgend County Borough Council and holds the Cabinet portfolio for Cross – Cutting Issues, including Regeneration.

Contact Details
Cllr David Sage
C/o Member Services
Civic Offices,
Angel Street,
Bridgend, CF31 4WB
01656 643643

Figure 22 - Rural Bridgend Partnership Body

Organisation	Sector
<i>BCBC</i>	Public
<i>Groundwork</i>	Voluntary
<i>Sustainable Wales</i>	Voluntary
<i>Council for the Protection of Rural Wales</i>	Voluntary
<i>BAVO</i>	Voluntary
<i>Wales and West Housing</i>	Voluntary
<i>Wales Co-op centre</i>	Voluntary
<i>South Wales Police</i>	Public
<i>Local Health Board</i>	Public
<i>National Farmers Union</i>	Community
<i>Farmers Union of Wales</i>	Community
<i>Bridgend Farmers' Market</i>	Community
<i>Business in Focus</i>	Private
<i>Women's Farming Union</i>	Community
<i>Capital Region Tourism</i>	Public
<i>SUSSED</i>	Private
<i>Food Co-ops</i>	Public
<i>Young Farmers</i>	Voluntary
<i>SHOUT</i>	Community
Local Access Forum*	Community
Allotments Association*	Community
Porthcawl and District Tourism Association*	Private
Valleys to Coast*	Voluntary
Social Firms Wales	Private

* To be confirmed

Role. The main role of the Partnership is to:

- Develop and review the LDS to target available Axis resources to local areas of need and opportunity;
- Monitor and approve reports on progress in implementing the LDS and identify gaps in provision;
- Monitor the activities of the Delivery Organisation(s);
- Ensure that robust, good value for money and well developed projects are put forward and selected for appraisal and funded; and
- Promote the programme locally.

As part of the development process, the Rural Bridgend Partnership will pursue further groups, organisations and sectors with the potential that others may join the partnership in due course. There is appropriate representation within the Partnership but additional members may be sought as part of the ongoing development process.

Rural Bridgend Partnership will meet on a quarterly basis at venue within Bridgend County Borough. Emergency and ad-hoc meetings can also be called, in addition to the formation of a special working groups that may be generated as a result of Axis 3 and 4 activities.

Lead Body and Finance Co-ordinator. The role of the Lead Body will be to oversee the delivery of the LDS, on behalf of the Partnership including progress on individual projects, and ensure that the projects supported underpin the overall aims and objectives. Bridgend County Borough Council will be responsible for these duties and responsibilities for the period 2007-2013, with the Communities Directorate appointed as Lead Body.

The role of the Financial Co-ordinator will be to ensure that grant is applied and used properly and within regulatory requirements in compliance with grant terms and conditions and in accordance with funding agreements, scheme guidance and all approved systems and procedures of the Partnership. In order to meet the controls, governance and compliance requirements of the CAP Regulations that apply to the Rural Development Plan 2007-2013, the Financial Co-ordinator will be Bridgend County Borough Council's Resources Directorate, which is a separate function to the Communities Directorate. The Finance Co-ordinator will undertake due diligence checks on all delivery organisations relating to Axis 3 and Axis 4 of the RDP.

The County Borough Council is familiar with these roles, having successfully operated Objective 1 European Structural Programme over the last five years, as well as other domestic and European funding schemes.

Contact Details for the Lead Body

<p>Louise Fradd Director: Communities Regeneration Directorate Civic Offices Angel Street Bridgend CF31 1LX t: 01656 643380</p>	<p>Ieuan Sherwood Rural Development Manager Reach Engine House Parc Tondu Tondu Bridgend CF32 9TF t: 01656 815 080 f: 01656 815 085 e: ieuan.sherwood@bridgend.gov.uk www.bridgendreach.org.uk</p>
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Contact Details for the Finance Co-ordinator

Business Manager Financial Planning
Finance Section
Resources Directorate
Bridgend County Borough Council
Civic Centre
Angel Street
Bridgend
CF31 4WB.
Tel: 01656 643359

Secretariat Support – The role of the Secretariat Support is to assist with the development and day to day running of the Rural Bridgend Partnership and the Local Action Group a Partnership Secretariat Officer is provided for within the Reach programme management team proposed. This post is responsible for the following key duties and tasks:

- Organisation of Rural Bridgend Partnership – meetings – agendas, minutes, reports, actions
- Skills and training development needs for individual partnership members and group management support
- Best practise and dissemination
- Marketing, publicity and awareness raising
- Dealing with expenses and claims

Local Action Group (LAG). The specific activities and costs of the delivery organisation are fully described in section 6 and 7 of this report. CVs of the LAG members are appended to this document.

Table 4 - Local Action Group

Organisation	Sector
BAVO	Voluntary
FUW	Voluntary
BCBC	Public
OVCRA	Community
MA Consulting International	Private
Countryside Council for Wales	Public
Gill Morgan – private farmer	Private
Communities First	Community

Chair – Local Action Group – The Chair-person of the Local Action Group is Heidi Bennett, Director of Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations.

Advisors. The role of the Advisors is to assist and update the partnership and the LAG; advisors have also been identified who will principally be sourced from public sector bodies. The current list includes:

Area	Named Officer
Regeneration Funding	Mark Halliwell / Lisa Jones
Social Inclusion	Sue Whittaker / Chris Lewis
Children and Young People	Les Jones / Jean Gregson
Economic Development	Ray Pearce / Jeff Peters
Strategic Regeneration	Andrew Jones / Delyth Samuel
Tourism	Andrew Lloyd-Hughes / Gina Gavigan
Environment	Zoe Livermore / Steve Moon
Highways/Public Space	Aubrey Green / Andrew Mason
Property Development	Paul Thomas
Legal	Nigel Flanagan
Adult Community Learning	John Woods / David Chambers

Observers.

Rural Development Plan – Tracey Jones, Rural Relationship Manager, DET, Welsh Assembly Government.

As and when required, specialist advisors will be sought on specific issues, e.g. renewable energy. The establishment of an Axis 4 Local Action Group, specifically key staff resources is discussed in sections 6 and 7 of this document.

Management Team. The day to day running of the staff associated with the Local Action Group is the responsibility of the Rural Development Manager post. To support the Manager with strategic guidance and decisions, the management team comprises of the Lead Body, Bridgend County Borough Council and the Chair-person of the Rural Bridgend Partnership Board be allocated this responsibility.

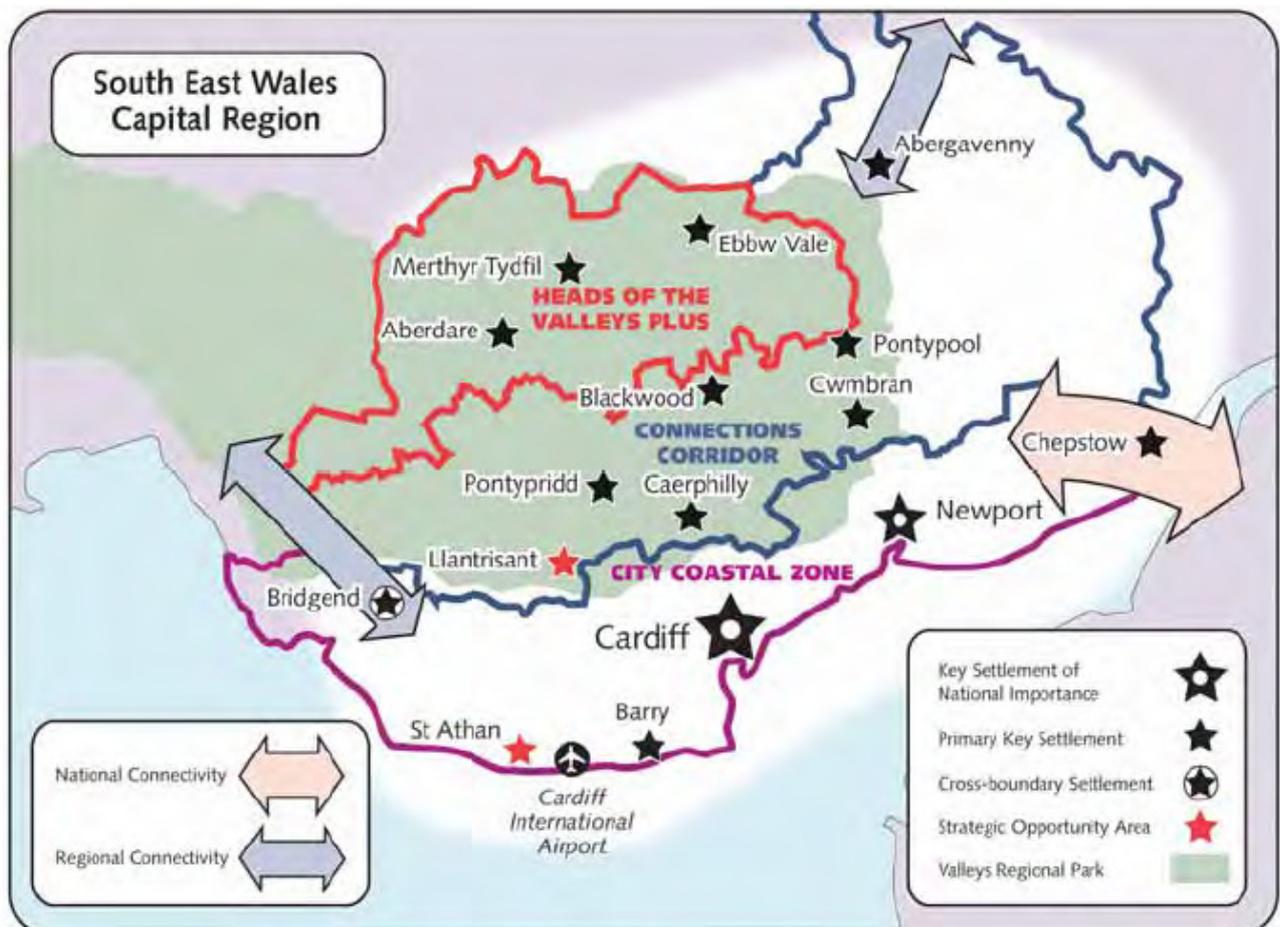
6. Relationship with other areas

Whilst the LDS needs to have an area focus, it is equally important that we understand our relationship with neighbouring areas, so that the whole of Wales benefits from a stronger and integrated framework that builds on local assets, movement, opportunities and inter-relationships that makes us more competitive within national and international markets.

South East Capital Region

Bridgend sits at a crossroads in Mid South Wales. It is identified within the South East – Capital Region, sitting within the city coastal zone looking east to Cardiff, but also within the connections corridor and the heads of the valleys plus area. Further, it has an alignment with the Swansea Bay – Waterfront and Western Valleys to the West. The vision for the SE Wales Capital area is:

‘An innovative skilled Area offering a high quality of life - international yet distinctively Welsh. It will compete internationally by increasing its global visibility through stronger links between the Valleys and the coast and with the UK and the rest of Europe, helping to spread prosperity within the Area and benefiting other parts of Wales’



Priorities for the Capital Region include:

- The area will function as a networked city region, on a scale to realise its international potential, its national role and to reduce inequalities;
- A fully integrated high quality transport system is necessary for this to happen. Over the 20 year horizon of the Wales Spatial Plan, all the Area's key settlements should be linked to Cardiff or Newport by suitable high capacity public transport;
- The success of the Area relies on Cardiff developing its capital functions, together with strong and distinctive roles of other towns and cities.

Within the connections corridor the Wales Spatial Plan identifies that the mid valleys and rural areas are increasingly under pressure for economic and housing development spilling out of the cities and city fringes. While some areas of deprivation remain in this sub-region, this connecting strip between coastal city growth and the restructuring area in the Heads of the Valleys Plus zone is generally increasing in prosperity.

At the heart of the vision for the area is a network of strong, sustainable communities spreading prosperity from the two major centres of Cardiff and Newport to valleys across the region. Key valley settlements will have more affordable and attractive housing, a better range of local services and a variety of retail and leisure facilities. Community and voluntary sector activity in building social capital, delivering key services and supporting active and vibrant communities, complements other improvements. Bridgend is one of the key fourteen key settlements having a critical role to play in the success of the Capital Region.

Swansea Bay City Region

The Plan states that Bridgend has an interface and inter-relationship with its neighbours, with a particular role to play in linking with the Swansea Bay city region. The vision for the Swansea Bay area is for:

'A network of interdependent settlements with Swansea at its heart which pull together effectively as a city region with a modern, competitive, knowledge-based economy designed to deliver a high quality of life, a sustainable environment, a vibrant waterfront and excellent national and international connections'

The key priorities for the region are:

- Improving accessibility. This includes improved telecommunication links as well as developing transport connections between the key settlements;
- Developing a cutting edge knowledge economy so the region is less reliant on low paid, low skilled jobs;

- Reducing economic inactivity and developing an integrated skills strategy;
- Implementing the Waterfront Masterplan to maximize opportunities along the stunning Coastline;
- Developing a strong leisure and activity based tourism industry;
- Ensuring that environmental protection and enhancement are fully integrated.

In promoting a sustainable economy a key focus is to take a co-ordinated approach to the immediate waterfront, with a masterplan to cover development based on land and water to create a vibrant and distinctive waterfront from Pembrey to Porthcawl. It has been developed in partnership, to bring together existing proposals and identify new opportunities and enhance the links between the Western Valley communities and the coast.

Key activities include:

- Developing marinas and waterways to act as catalysts for growth;
- Maximising the coastal route for tourism growth creating a Swansea Bay Coastal Path;
- Linking communities to the coast through sustainable transport options;
- Waterfront regeneration to facilitate the growth of the knowledge economy;
- Recognising opportunities offered by the unique environmental assets within the zone, whilst also addressing the need to tackle challenges arising from climate change;
- Linking interventions to training and helping people who are economically inactive to get jobs;
- Securing wider community involvement;
- Maximising opportunities to improve the Area's health through waterfront activities;
- Supporting sub-regional working to improve the tourism offer.

Propositions

Key propositions include:

- The Valleys need to be strengthened as desirable places to live, work and visit; combining a wider mix of types of housing and good access to jobs and services, in distinctive communities set in an attractive environment.
- Private house building and the improvement of public sector housing stock have a key role to play in regeneration in the Valleys. Well-performing schools, leisure and retail facilities will also be important in attracting people to live in the Valleys.
- The linked challenges of low economic activity rates, skill levels and poor health need to be tackled to address social exclusion and improve economic performance in a lasting way.
- Investment in the early years development of children growing up in communities with concentrations of deprivation is a high priority, while the principle of lifelong learning needs to be embedded in communities on a larger scale.
- Development must not compromise the attractiveness of the area's towns and wider environment, which are key factors in the area's success. A better balance of development is necessary to avoid overheating in the coastal zone.

- The tourism and leisure sector has the potential to contribute to a much greater extent to the area's economy. This includes heritage, culture, events and countryside based activities and destinations.

Areas of action

- Local authorities should plan to provide a wider mix of housing in the Valleys, prioritising locations with easy access to sustainable modes of transport.
- Local authorities are required to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2012. The level of committed forward investment realised through this process should act as a catalyst for local social and economic regeneration and skills/training programmes for local people.
- Reducing health inequalities and promoting healthier lifestyles through Health Challenge Wales and targeted action to tackle health inequalities.
- Improved collaboration between HE and FE institutions, ELWa, the WDA and business to identify opportunities to strengthen the knowledge economy and intervention on skill development linked to economic priorities
- Increasing levels of economic activity, supported through the policies in "A Winning Wales", "A Learning Country" and "Reaching Higher", and the Assembly Government's Report on Raising Economic Activity Rates (July 2004).
- Work by the Welsh Assembly Government with Jobcentre Plus to support the Pathways to Work pilot, designed to help people on Incapacity Benefit into work. The Assembly Government will work with Jobcentre Plus to test out complementary action in other areas. Subject to the evaluation it will seek to persuade the Department of Work and Pensions to extend such approaches.
- Support early years development under the Cymorth programme and action in early years education.
- The Welsh Assembly Government to review and strengthen as appropriate the toolkit for action on affordable housing, to provide Local Authorities with ways to meet local housing needs more effectively.
- Address social deprivation through Communities First.
- The WTB, WDA, Local Authorities and CCW to develop a Welsh coastal tourism strategy, to create coherent network of routes, destinations and facilities. Detailed project implementation and development at the local level.
- The emerging Environment Strategy to guide our stewardship of the land and sea

Implications for Local Development Strategy

The Wales Spatial Plan has a number of key implications for the Local Development Strategy for Bridgend, particularly in the areas of tourism and outdoor leisure and the potential to develop heritage, culture, events and countryside based activities within the county. Due to its geographical location within the Glamorgan Hills, much of Bridgend's rural landscape is ideal for development as

part of a national cycle route. The County could also play a key part in a national tourism strategy aimed at hill walking and horse-riding given the abundance of remote countryside within the valleys area.

Communities First is evidently a programme with particular relevance for the county, with two Communities First wards in the pilot area of the Garw Valley and Blackmill as the third eligible ward in Bridgend as a whole. It is therefore essential to encompass local Communities First officers within this strategy to ensure that any proposals align with Communities First objectives.

If Bridgend is to successfully market itself as a tourist destination it will be important to maintain effective and environmentally friendly countryside management practice. The Environmental Strategy will therefore play a key role in directing any physical development within the county and ensuring that construction is undertaken through sustainable processes. The LDS also needs to take into account developments within the Swansea Bay Spatial Plan in order to maximise the regeneration opportunities for tourism in particular.

Working With Other Rural Partnerships – Progress to Date

Those involved with the Rural Development Programme in Bridgend have to date engaged with:

- The Wales Rural Network study visits: Anglesey and Pembrokeshire
- The Wales Rural Network thematic groups: Tourism, Agri-Food, Energy
- The all Wales Programme Management Network
- The South Wales Programme Management Network
- Independent study visits to other rural Counties: Vale of Glamorgan, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire and Conwy

7. Addressing local needs

The Local Development Strategy identified through an appraisal of existing practice in rural Bridgend a number of strategic and sub-regional issues that were not just associated with Bridgend but are evident in most rural communities. There was therefore a clear recognition that any emerging LDS needs to reflect local circumstance and need and in order to achieve shared governance at a local level and to ensure delegation of responsibility amongst all partners, engagement needed to be embedded from the start of the development process.

The LDS process in 2006-07 provided a series of opportunities for local rural organisations to identify and direct the shape of the strategy. This involved:

- Review of key community baseline documents – Garw Valley Regeneration Action Plan (October 2003), community consultation events (September 2005)
- Three number Rural Bridgend Partnership meetings (23rd October; 16th November; 7th December 2006)
- Face to face meetings/telephone conferences with key partners and organisations
- Regular client/Bridgend County Borough Council Economic Development Officers Group meetings

As a result of these meetings and in addition to the strategic review the following areas of local need have arisen.

- Untapped environmental and tourism opportunities
- Lack of basic services for the whole rural community
- Broken infrastructure
- Isolated and weak enterprise culture

Untapped Environmental and Tourism Opportunities

- Not making the most of key historical figures, e.g. Richard Price
- Maximise the potential of Bryngarw Country Park
- Need to integrate walking, cycling, horse-riding and outdoor activities into community and countryside management
- Lack of quality serviced accommodation
- Potential for links to Neath and Port Talbot and RCT
- Promote and enhance the community route
- Address key note heritage buildings and spaces for economic and community use.
- Develop a rural events/festivals programme
- Develop a multi-purpose centre that meets local and visitor demand- based around sports and cultural based tourism
- Re-visit the Mynydd Carn project
- Invest in local interpretation and “storytelling”

- Local ambassadors training for retail, tourism and hospitality sector

Lack of Basic Services

- Locally based skills development – learning brokers project, e-learning – HE colleges
- Develop a vocational training centre
- Poor access to CABs, credit unions, health and support services
- Need to engage with hard to reach groups – “door-knocking” or quick win projects?
- Healthy living campaign – green box schemes, allotments, etc
- Low confidence in rural communities
- Limited public transport – community transport ideas
- Develop a knowledge bank
- Loss of shops and services

Broken Infrastructure

- Lack of connectivity amongst rural communities – parochial, inward-looking – not willing to share
- ICT take up – up-skilling/equipment/portals/local procurement/supply/communication
- Poor road network – grading, parking, signage
- Continuity in upgrading key rural gateways
- Poor quality housing stock
- Marginalised sections of community
- Loss of chapels – heritage
- Reopen – railway – commuter and visitor draw

Isolated and Weak Enterprise Culture

- Garw Valley has a poor image for investment
- Lack of employment starter sites
- Provision of business units over village shops
- Evidence of an arts and crafts enterprise – lacks cohesion and identity
- Scattered businesses that have no alignment nor framework of co-operation
- Opportunities to build enterprise on local ecology, biodiversity, local produce, renewable energy
- Lack of shared services infrastructure – processing, packaging, delivery, branding, marketing
- Outdoor activities – key direction for entrepreneurs – space to think – management training opportunities

Throughout business plan 1 the following mechanisms have been utilised to identify concerns and opportunities for responding to local issues:

Rural Partnership – 4th September 2008

2nd December 2008

26th March 2009

16th June 2009

9th September 2009

Local Action Group –

19th February 2008

4th March 2008

5th June 2008

2nd July 2008

4th September 2008

14th October 2008

27th November 2008

14th January 2009

18th February 2009

2nd April 2009

14th May 2009

24th June 2009

5th October 2009

Rural Tourism Working Group – meeting on average every six weeks

Rural Communities Working Group – meeting on average every six weeks

Rural Food Working Group – meeting on average every six weeks

In 2009, this process culminated in a multi-sector workshop with the Rural Partnership, Local Action Group and advisors as part of the review of the Local Development Strategy.

The evidence gathered throughout 2008-2009 has identified a number of changes in relation to local issues in relation to the five key themes of LDS: People, Place, Enterprise, Produce and Tourism. The following notes represent the comments that were made.

People

- The need to understand the problem – mapping community services
- Building connectivity
- Understanding communities not currently touched
- Issues of capacity – the need to prioritise
- Communicating with residents
- Achieving buy in
- Activities to build health and well being in the rural area

Place

- Identity of rural Bridgend
- Do residents see themselves as rural?
- Local energy schemes
- The Washery site
- Small scale trails, signs, improvements
- Community use of woodlands
- Improve access
- New approaches to public transport
- Build on what exists
- Publicise good points
- Needs to be long term
- Understand community need
- Target resources where they are needed
- People
- Community engagement
- communicating with residents
- Keeping people informed
- Strong communication strategies
 - BCBC
 - Reach
 - Rural communities
 - People on the ground
- Encourage self-help
- Capacity of team to cover all wards
- Healthy lifestyle
- Develop health and well being activities
- Well educated

Enterprise

- Roll out rural retail programme
- Support community enterprise
- Especially green enterprise
- Healthworks programme
- Timber could be linked to tourism
- Log Cabins
- Craft products

- Better links with Forest Enterprise
- What is a rural business?
- Improve routes to market for rural businesses and products
- Need to be realistic
- Develop businesses that boost rural identity
- Create a network of rural businesses
- Green enterprise
- Green Tourism
- Make products from recycled material
- Support for retail hubs in communities
- Use of community centres as channels for local goods and services
- Develop a village hall booking system
- Community retail
- Need for objectives to be more focused
- Links to local affordable food
- Encourage rural enterprise
- Run market stalls in Bridgend and Maesteg to encourage start ups
- Starter units
- Work through community groups to encourage enterprise
- Develop "new rural" businesses
- Trading locally

Produce

- Developing Supply
 - Social responsibility
 - Food miles
 - Developing growers
 - Allotments and community gardening
 - Involve children
 - Growing in vacant public spaces
 - Easing supply chains
- Developing Demand
 - Developing a food culture
 - Education
 - Cooking with cheaper fresh ingredients
 - Importance of healthy eating
 - Publicise farmers' markets
 - Emphasis on local and fresh rather than organic
 - Address economic barriers

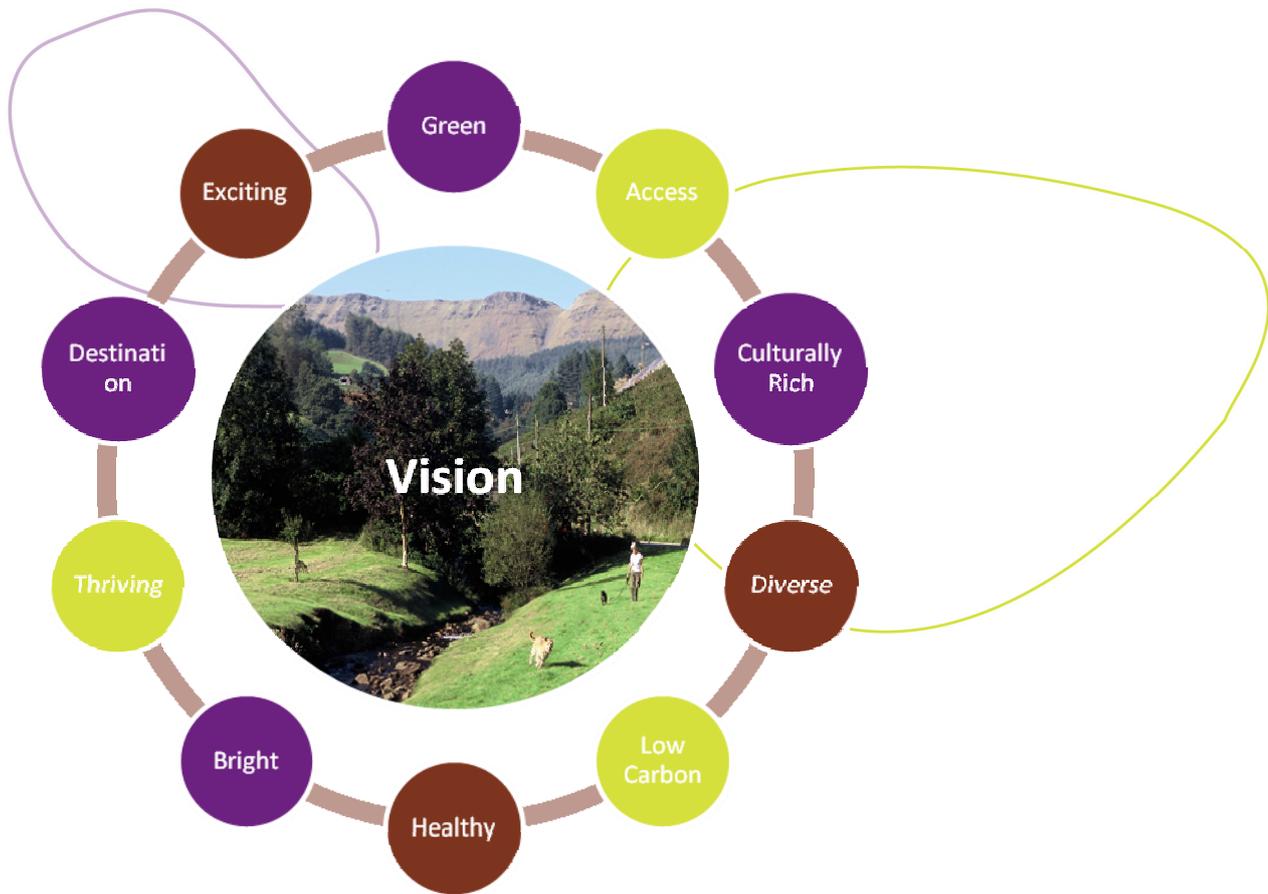
Tourism

- Avoid duplication of Axis 1
 - Develop clear strategy
- Quality, sustainable tourism offer
 - Improving our offer
 - Better and more accommodation
 - Develop close links between Reach and BCBC Tourism
 - Publicise through Porthcawl and McArthur Glen

General

- Reach - Deliverers or facilitators?
- Links to other partnerships
 - Develop complementary approaches / funding
- Avoid duplication
- Use of best practice
 - Visits to other projects

At the review workshop, participants were asked to visualise how they would see rural Bridgend in future years as a result of the rural development work. Some of their thoughts are shown overleaf:



In looking at how the Rural Partnership and Local Action Group are going to deliver the vision in relation to ways of working, the workshop identified the following key words:



2009 – Emerging Approach and Themes

It is clear from the experience of delivering phase 1 that some emerging themes and areas for action have been identified. Specifically, there is still a significant way for rural working to go, with Reach only being operational for some 9 months on project-based activity. The notable successes that have been achieved in such a short period of time highlight real potential for growth for this area of work, with further development and expansion of both the profile and extent of rural development activity within the county. There is however a need to be realistic and grounded in what needs to be developed and delivered with a clear focus on avoiding duplication of effort, working with existing partners and on complementary projects and ensuring inclusive engagement. There is also the need to ensure that the work that gets taken forward is clearly rural in nature.

There is still a need to work in an incremental way in relation to rural development in Bridgend. In doing so, it has been identified that a wide range of activity will be required with a particular focus on educating, raising awareness and building sustainable solutions. These solutions should not dependent on big structural changes but can act independently through a bottom-up process and through local governance of decision-making and action.

A recurring discussion point throughout the delivery of phase 1, through the various means in which local views have been sought, has been the importance of Rural Bridgend's identity. A great deal has been achieved in terms of developing a brand for the programme (Reach) and a range of communication tools, however this needs to be stepped up. The focus being increasing engagement with people in rural communities, further establishing rural issues on the agenda of key local, regional and national partnerships and policy debates and further cementing linkages amongst these specific wards, villages and valleys, so that co-operation and mutual working is further encouraged.

The consultation that has taken place throughout Business Plan 1 and in reviewing this Local Development Strategy has highlighted that as rural development working in Bridgend has only just started, continued investment in the approach, communication and local intelligence in what rural areas need is required. This will enable more informed decisions on all future rural activity within the county as well as building relationships with Bridgend's neighbours on complementary rural initiatives.

8. Vision, Aims and Objectives

Vision



The visions, aims and objectives of this Local Development Strategy have been shaped on the aspirations and contributions of the Reach Rural Partnership and Local Action Group.

Themes, Aims and Strategic Objectives

Rural People

Aim:	To maximise the economic wellbeing and quality of life for people in rural Bridgend
Strategic Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve the services available to local people, in turn enhancing the quality of life within rural communities. • To increase the number of rural communities where residents feel healthy, confident, safe and socially inclusive. • To work in partnership with others to support and advocate for efforts for the development of good quality affordable housing and a range of rural facilities and services. • To support age-balanced communities, working towards addressing the leakage of younger people out of the rural area.

Rural Place

Aim:

To build cohesive, sustainable and connected communities through fostering a sense of place and by supporting a high quality natural and built environment.

Strategic Objectives:

- To support improvements to the general environment within rural Bridgend.
- To help protect, enhance and improve access to green open spaces.
- To encourage communities to care for their local environment.
- To support projects to upgrade townscape and to celebrate rural heritage through historical buildings and places that underpin rural Bridgend's identity.

Rural Produce

Aim:

To see a thriving, participative local food economy in rural Bridgend.

Strategic Objectives:

- To support an increased supply of, and demand for, fresh, local food.
- To develop an enabling and supportive range of networks.
- To increase the range of awareness raising activities.
- To support an increased range of cooperative food distribution and community growing opportunities.

Rural Enterprise

Aim:

To create a more sustainable, connected economy in rural Bridgend, providing well paid, satisfying work, whilst minimising the need to commute from the area.

Strategic Objectives:

- To support and connect rural businesses and foster a culture of entrepreneurship.
- To work with partners to create an environment where community enterprises can flourish.
- To help provide the infrastructure, buildings and support to nurture and grow indigenous micro enterprises and SMEs.

Rural Tourism

Aim:

To create a co-ordinated tourism offer in rural Bridgend, which maximises the potential of the natural assets within the county for local people and visitors to enjoy

Strategic Objectives:

- To build a shared understanding of what Rural Bridgend is and support the development of its identity for residents and visitors.
- To work with partners to market rural Bridgend in its regional context.

9. Axis 3 and Axis 4 Activities

The LDS has so far identified the current issues facing the rural wards of Bridgend and established its position on its rural partnership after some two years into the process. Through a structured and on-going review process we have identified the needs of the local communities. Guidance from Welsh Assembly Government places emphasis on a single Partnership and a single LDS that integrates Axes 3 and 4. This section of the report sets out Bridgend's respond to the approach and activities it wishes to cover through the two Axes.

An Integrated Approach

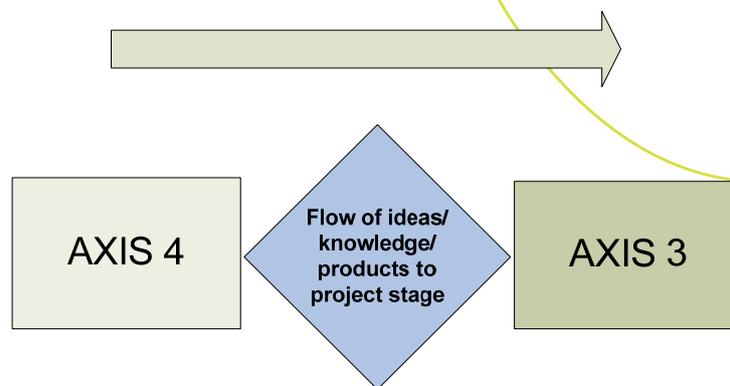


Figure 23 - Relationship between Axes 3 and 4

Our interpretation of the guidance from Welsh Assembly Government is that the LEADER models through Axis 4 will primarily focus on being innovative and pilot new approaches. The development of “new” processes, “new” products and “new” approaches in relation to the rural context in Bridgend is paramount. The creation of a Local Action Group, strongly linked to a Rural Partnership, will continue to stimulate dialogue, knowledge transfer and best practice examples to empower people to develop ideas and to pilot projects that contribute to economic and social well-being. The flow of ideas and knowledge between Axes 3 and 4 is important in terms of building capacity, the acquisition of new skills and the further sustainable growth of rural working in Bridgend.

When looking to create an integrated approach and to make a rural community sustainable, there are ten key factors, which account for differences in economic performance, which can be translated into seven broad themes⁴. These are:

- Skills and education

⁴ Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013, Axes 3 and 4 - Guidance Notes

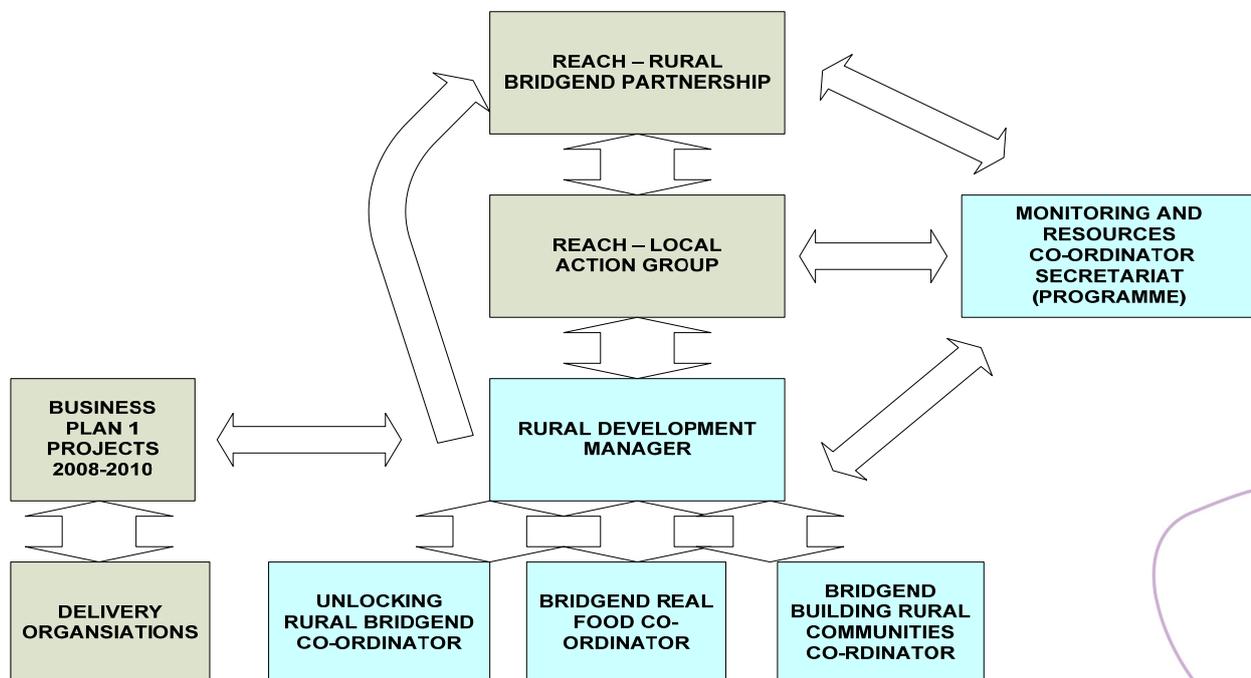
- An open economy and society
- Environmental qualities and planning
- Entrepreneurship and enterprise
- Cultural capacity
- Marketing and identity
- Institutional effectiveness

Axis 4

In response to the relative low level of community development work in the rural areas of Bridgend County Borough, the local authority has identified the need for an incremental approach to the development and delivery of rural working over the 2007-2013 Rural Development Plan period.

The initial focus of the 2007-09 Local Development Strategy was therefore centred on the Garw Valley due to its geographical identity within the County Borough and a strong need for a co-ordinated programme that builds economic well being from within rural communities. Due to a low baseline in community development and a fragmentation amongst individual communities, the approach adopted in the initial years of the LDS for Bridgend has been based around capacity building, specifically building local networks and intelligence and researching the local need for future projects and products. The following diagram represents the staffing and reporting structure for the Local Action Group staff as of October 2009.

Figure 24 - Reach Staffing and Reporting Structure



The strategic management and support functions of the programme team are retained through the Rural Development Manager, Monitoring and Resource Co-ordinator and secretariat support to the Rural Partnership. Managed by the Rural Development Manager, rural co-ordinator posts each have a specific overview focus on certain themes of the LDS: rural tourism (Unlocking Rural Bridgend), local produce (Real Food project) and rural capacity building (Building Rural Communities). Currently the themes of 'place' and 'enterprise' are cross-cutting, which is something we hope to build on in future phases with additional co-ordinators have specific focuses on these themes. Axes 3 and 4 projects are administered and monitored by the Rural Development Manager and Monitoring and Resource Co-ordinator with a number of delivery organisations accountable for project delivery during Business Plan period 1.

To qualify for consideration under Axis 4, a LAG must meet the requirements of Article 61 of 1698/2005. The following table presents our assessment against these specific requirements:

EC Requirements	Our Response
Have an area-based local development strategy intended for a well identified sub-regional rural territory;	Rural wards of Bridgend and key service centre identified – relationship with Wales Spatial Plan also identified.
Be a local public-private partnership	Partnership instigated as specified in LDS.
Utilise a bottom-up, inclusive approach;	Process has commenced as part of development of LDS and Axes 3 and 4 identify.
Operate through multi-sectoral design and implementation principles based on the interaction between actors and projects of different sectors of the local economy;	Identified through Partnership and LAG operation and terms of reference and through the proposed themes and their inter-relationship.
Implement innovative approaches;	Part of emerging development process. Communication, development and interaction will embrace innovative approach through day to day running of axes and project development and delivery.
Implement co-operation projects; and	LDS has identified opportunities for sub-regional working. Development of LDS in Bridgend has also established links with Monmouthshire's Adventa programme. Existing partners familiar with local co-operative working.
Develop the networking of local partners / partnerships.	Already commenced with LDS process, dialogue with Adventa. Local partners keen to work with and streamline existing networks.

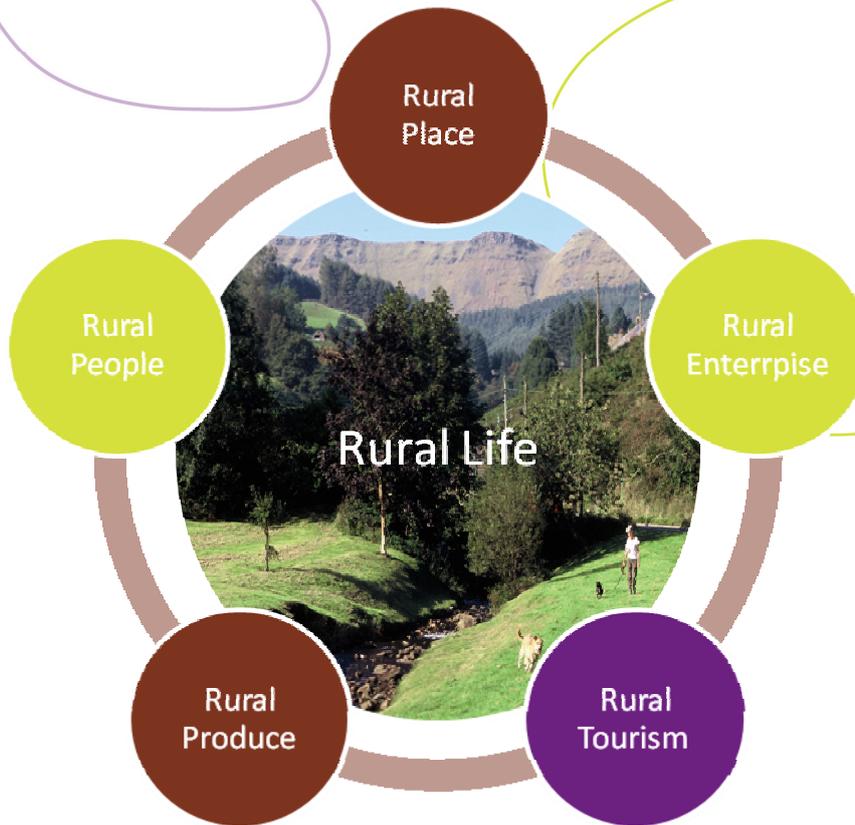
The LAG must also comply with the requirements of Article 62(1) of 1698/2005. The following table presents our assessment against these specific requirements:

EC Requirements	Our Response
Propose an integrated local development strategy based at least on the elements set out above;	Proposed LDS embraces key principles of approach and principles.
Consist of either a group already qualified for the LEADER II or LEADER+ initiatives, or according to the Leader approach, or be a new group representing partners from various locally based socio-economic sectors in the area concerned;	This process will be new to Bridgend in relation to LEADER type initiatives, but there is already experience in Communities First, Regeneration activity, voluntary type activity and a baseline for partnering type approach through local and strategic networks.
At the decision making level, the economic and social partners, as well as other representatives of the civil society, e.g. farmers, rural women, young people and their associations, must make up at least 50% of the partnership;	Target groups identified. Developing representation across partnership as part of LDS process.
Show an ability to define and implement a development strategy for the area;	LDS has defined pilot and future phases of activity. Garw pilot area has an existing focus through physical regeneration type work.
Select an administrative and financial lead actor able to administer public funds or come together in a legally constituted common structure the constitution of which guarantees the satisfactory operation of the LAG and its ability to administer public funds;	Lead body and financial body chosen as Bridgend County Borough Council and clarity on relationship between LAG and partnership has been demonstrated.
Cover a coherent area which offers sufficient critical mass in terms of human, financial and economic resources to support a viable development strategy;	Baseline demographic and socio-economic analysis in LDS shows coverage and has a substantial area of demand for interventions and implementation of a bottom-up and targeted approach.

Axis 3

Due to Rural Bridgend being in the early days of development, no ready made projects were identified in Business Plan 1, but through the development process for the LDS, some key themes and possible project ideas were identified. These will be built upon and supplemented during the

development process for Business Plan 2 allowing people to develop thinking about ways of working, communication and delivery. The development of these areas will be addressed through the business plan process.



Theme 1 – Rural People

<p>Aim:</p> <p>Strategic Objectives:</p>	<p>To maximise the economic wellbeing and quality of life for people in Rural Bridgend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve the services available to local people, in turn enhancing the quality of life within rural communities. • To increase the number of rural communities where residents feel healthy, confident, safe and socially inclusive. • To work in partnership with others to support and advocate for efforts for the development of good quality affordable housing and a range of rural facilities and services. • To support age-balanced communities, working towards addressing the leakage of younger people out of the rural area.
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Objectives

Objectives	Activities
To understand the needs of individual rural communities and to help them develop a distinct identity within that of the wider rural area	<i>To engage, listen and record what communities' needs are through grass roots activities such as community profiles, orientation visits, action planning and local engagement sessions.</i>
	<i>To build capacity through joint working with complementary agencies and organisations.</i>
	<i>To co-ordinate a network of people within communities that relates to a common focus and identity and which can identify opportunities for communities to exchange ideas and shared projects.</i>
Increasing access to employment and training within Rural Communities	<i>To developing and offer training courses that cover a range of subjects including training in rural skills.</i>
	<i>To increasing access and provision to affordable childcare.</i>
Creating more opportunities for our young people	<i>To offer alternative curriculum/vocational opportunities, that are linked to community led activities which will increase the skills and future opportunities for our young people.</i>
	<i>Increase the leisure activities on offer for our young people to help reduce social exclusion and to generate a sense of pride in our communities.</i>
To celebrate and promote our rural	<i>Strengthening the identity of rural Bridgend through</i>

heritage and culture	<i>its local cultural heritage e.g. arts, music and new media. This can add to the tourism offer as well as providing leisure and social opportunities for local residents.</i>
To increase accessibility within Rural Bridgend	<i>Improving transport and ICT infrastructure, including community/tourism transport initiatives and community ICT provision.</i>

Theme 2 - Rural Place

Aim:	To build cohesive, sustainable and connected communities through fostering a sense of place and supporting a high quality environment.
Strategic Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support improvements to the general environment within Rural Bridgend. • To help protect, enhance and improve access to green open spaces. • To encourage communities to care for their local environment. • To support projects to upgrade townscape and to celebrate rural heritage through historical buildings and places that underpin Rural Bridgend's identity.

Objectives

Objective	Activities
Generating a stronger sense of pride through improving the townscape and built environment in villages, rural areas and rural landscape	<i>Supporting projects that will help revitalise and regenerate physical assets.</i>
	<i>Identifying alternative usage for redundant buildings and derelict land that meets local need.</i>
Improve public green space and recreational space and general access to the countryside	<i>To improve access to countryside and green spaces with provision of good interpretive information and facilities.</i>
	<i>Identify sites that could be developed into new green spaces or recreational facilities.</i>
To raise awareness and understanding of local and global environmental issues amongst all sectors of the community	<i>Developing community recycling and composting schemes and other self help type initiatives.</i>
	<i>Encouraging businesses to act in an environmentally responsible manner through promoting schemes such as Green Dragon.</i>
To celebrate and market our rural environment	<i>To ensure that rural Bridgend is promoted as part of a wider destination offer, marketing its environment in a way that appeals to local residents and to visitors.</i>
	<i>Helping to promote local ecology, habitats, biodiversity and local heritage as part of the tourism offer.</i>
To encourage walking, cycling and riding, thereby reducing car dependency and reducing pollution	<i>Developing new networks and trails and promoting these to local residents and to visitors.</i>

Theme 3 - Rural Produce

Aim:	To see a thriving, participative local food economy in Rural Bridgend.
Strategic Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support an increased supply of, and demand for, fresh, local food. • To develop an enabling and supportive range of networks. • To increase the range of awareness raising activities. • To support an increased range of cooperative food distribution and community growing opportunities.

Objectives

In terms of specific objectives this theme will focus on:

Objectives	Activities
To support local producers	<i>Encouraging the development of local products and activities that make best use of local resources e.g. small scale energy production; local heritage/culture; habitats and biodiversity; local branding thus adding value to local resources.</i>
To develop a local food culture	<i>To encourage rural people to take more interest in food production and to choose to buy local produce.</i>
	<i>Increase the availability of local produce through developing new outlets and distribution channels.</i>
	<i>Promote awareness of the benefits of fresh and local food, through home cookery demonstrations, foraging and general education.</i>
To encourage people to become involved in producing and distributing their own food	<i>To develop a local brand for produce sourced and made within the County.</i>
	<i>Support the development of growing through increased availability of local allotments or growing on public spaces.</i>
	<i>Develop community food distribution, through use of local food in community facilities, food co-operatives and local exchange.</i>

Theme 4 – Rural Enterprise

Aim:	To create a more sustainable, connected economy in Rural Bridgend, providing well paid, satisfying work, whilst minimising the need to commute from the area.
Strategic Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support and connect rural businesses and foster a culture of entrepreneurship. • To work with partners to create an environment where community enterprises can flourish. • To help provide the infrastructure, buildings and support to nurture and grow indigenous micro enterprises and SMEs.

Objectives

In terms of specific objectives this theme will focus on:

Objectives	Activities
To support rural businesses to grow	<p><i>Supporting the start up and survival of new and existing businesses by providing access to finance, skills and expert business support.</i></p> <p><i>Providing business start up units and shared, serviced office space.</i></p>
To increase the levels of skills within our rural communities	<i>Develop workshops and training programmes to increase the skills within Rural Bridgend.</i>
Support for the development and creation of social enterprises	<i>Creating an environment that encourages the development of community/social enterprises, providing increased employment opportunities in rural areas.</i>
Encouraging the development of environmentally friendly products and businesses	<p><i>To develop social enterprises around energy conservation and recycling.</i></p> <p><i>Investigate community sustainable energy programmes.</i></p>
To support the timber industry	<i>To explore timber related enterprises.</i>

Theme 5 – Rural Tourism

Rural Tourism

Aim:	To create a co-ordinated tourism offer in Rural Bridgend, which maximises the potential of the natural assets within the county for local people and visitors to enjoy
Strategic Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To build a shared understanding of what Rural Bridgend is and support the development of its identity for residents and visitors. To work with partners to market Rural Bridgend in its regional context.

Objectives

In terms of specific objectives this theme will focus on:

Objectives	Activities
Improving access within Rural Bridgend that also connects key urban settlements within Bridgend and its rural hinterland and across the sub region.	<i>To improve and connect footpaths, cycleways, trails and community transport within Rural Bridgend.</i>
	<i>To develop regionally connected multi-modal routes to connect Rural Bridgend to neighbouring destinations and wider visitor markets.</i>
Upgrading the tourism product within rural Bridgend	<i>To enable tailored support for rural tourism businesses and organisations to understand their markets and improve the quality of their product.</i>
	<i>To increasing the number and range of serviced and non-serviced accommodation providers within rural areas to the right quality standard.</i>
	<i>To provide more visitor facilities e.g. toilets, car parking, information points, interpretive information panels and refreshment facilities so that the right level of infrastructure is in place.</i>
	<i>To build local infrastructure for outdoor activities in Rural Bridgend, thereby maximising the potential benefits of natural assets.</i>
To develop a tourism identity for Rural Bridgend	<i>To establish the potential for heritage tourism based in Rural Bridgend, based on historic associations with famous people or events.</i>
	<i>To raise the profile of Rural Bridgend, its activities, facilities and attractions, through establishing an identity and marketing through partners.</i>

To support the improvement of skills within the tourism and hospitality sectors	<i>Increasing the level of service provision to visitors and consequently increasing return visits, raise satisfaction levels and longer stays.</i>
To promote sustainable tourism	<i>To promote walking and cycling to visit Rural Bridgend and reduce dependence on the car.</i>
	<i>To encourage tourism providers to sign up to an environmental scheme e.g. Green Dragon.</i>
Develop new Rural Events and festivals to celebrate Rural Bridgend	<i>Provide financial support and advice and guidance for new events and festivals within Rural Bridgend.</i>

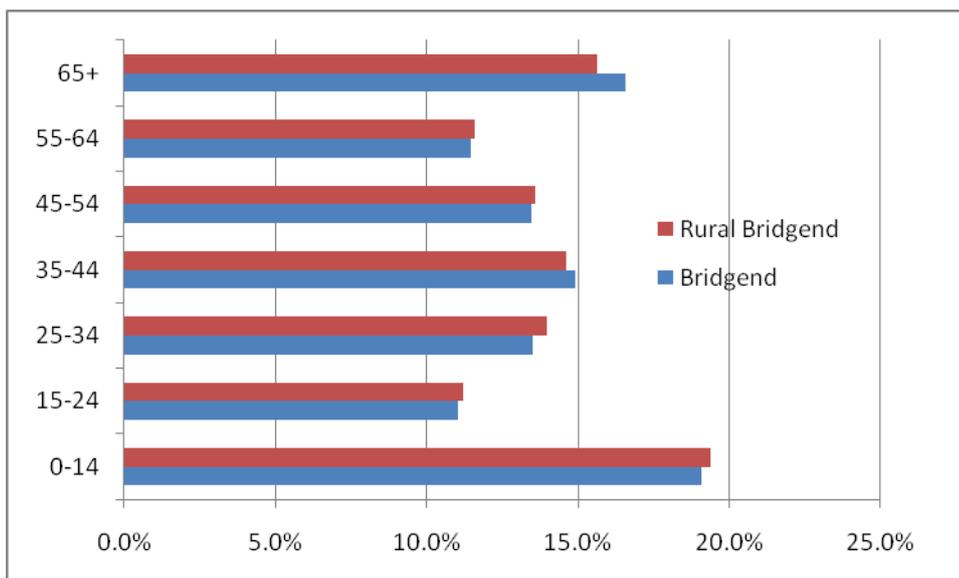
10. Target groups

Activity within the LDS will cover the target groups of micro and small enterprises, Welsh speaking communities, black and ethnic minority groups, children, the elderly and the under employed. We will adopt an inclusive approach to all groups, whilst we recognise that some groups may have greater needs than others due to the geographical and demographic make-up of the pilot area and wider Rural Bridgend.

Young People

Figure 25 below shows that Rural Bridgend has a lower age profile than Bridgend as a whole. Out-migration is a key problem for many parts of the County and thus it is vital to develop initiatives to encourage young people to stay in Bridgend and in turn to contribute to the local economy and society.

Figure 25 - Age Profile within Rural Bridgend



Source: National Statistics (Nomis: www.nomisweb.co.uk) Census of Population, 2001
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We aim to consult with local people and communities on ways to improve opportunities for young people in rural areas. We hope to engage with vulnerable young people and reduce the number of children and young people who are at risk of developing anti-social tendencies. This will be achieved through working closely with the Bridgend Children and Young People's Partnership, existing and futures outreach projects and schools within the County

Women

The economic activity rate for women in rural Bridgend is 54% compared to 68% for men. The main reasons for economic inactivity amongst women within Rural Bridgend are retired (33%), looking after home/family (25.7%) and permanently sick (24%).

Women, particularly those who have been absent from the workplace for a period of time following childbirth, are a key target group for this LDS. Through extending childcare provision, providing skills development and training opportunities and introducing initiatives aimed at encouraging women into work, we hope to create a more inclusive economy and society in Bridgend. We will engage with women through multifarious institutions and organisations including WI, childcare facilities and health centres

Retired People

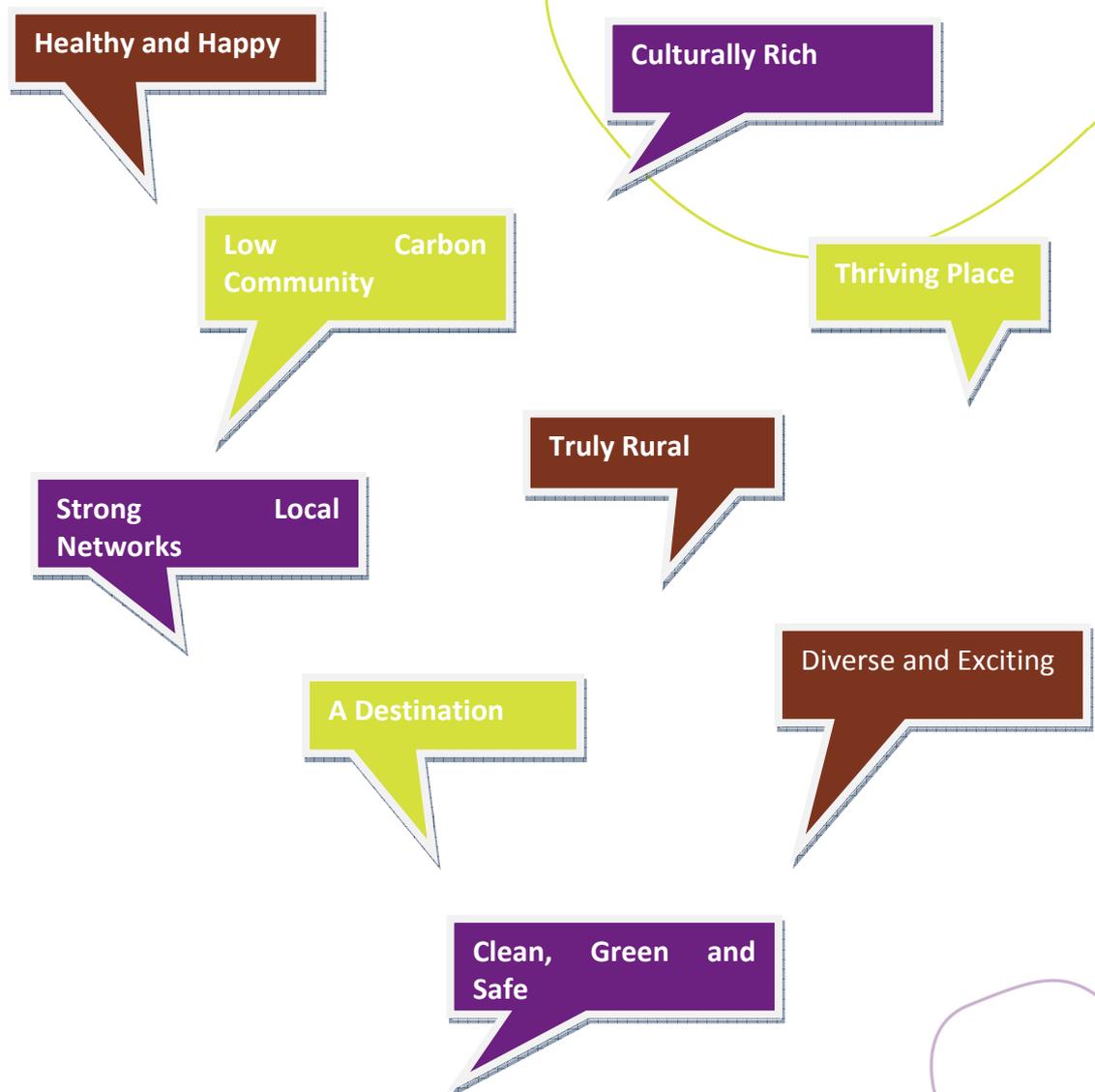
Retired people constitute just over 15% of the population of Rural Bridgend and thus a key element of this LDS needs to focus on improving the quality of life for the elderly members of the population in rural Bridgend. Through public consultation we hope to identify the issues facing retired people in rural communities and propose initiatives for addressing these issues.

Local Businesses

As we have seen in section 3, small businesses are integral to the economy in Rural Bridgend, 85% of the business units in Rural Bridgend employ up to 10 people and 30% of employees work in a company with up to 10 employees. Therefore a key element of this strategy is to improve the range of business support that is currently available in order to assist the growth and development of local companies. Whilst two of the themes of this strategy focus on the food sector and tourism sector respectively, as part of the rural enterprise theme, we recognise the need to develop initiatives to support businesses across a range of sectors.

11. The Future – What will Success Look Like?

The eventual goal of the Partnership is to create a strong rural identity within Bridgend which celebrates its heritage and environment, whilst looking to the future to provide a vibrant economy and a good quality of life. Shouldn't we put the vision in here as this statement is different? Bridgend will start to be an area which exhibits the following characteristics by 2013:



12. Strategic Integration

The need to ensure local needs fit within larger national, regional and sub-regional strategic planning is important if Wales is to provide integrated, targeted public services. There is also a need for the Welsh Assembly Government to have dialogue with local people through area based partnerships such as LEADER type partnerships to reflect local circumstances and priorities. To ensure there is an understanding of national, regional and local policy, the following snapshot has been undertaken.

Strategic – Welsh Assembly Government

People, Places, Futures – The Wales Spatial Plan is about reflecting honestly and clearly on the way a whole range of activities and investment occurs across Wales. It aims to ensure the Welsh Assembly Government's policies and programmes come together effectively with the workings of local government, business and other partners across Wales, to enable a truly sustainable future - one that works for all the different part of Wales. It sets a strategic, integrating agenda for the next 20 years.

The 2008 Wales Spatial Plan Update builds on the work undertaken and achievements made across Wales since the Plan's original adoption in 2004. The broad 20 year agenda and overall role, purpose and principles of the Wales Spatial Plan remain unchanged. However, this Update brings the Wales Spatial Plan into line with One Wales, and gives status to the Area work which has developed during the intervening years.

One Wales: A Progressive Agenda for the Government of Wales was published in June 2007 and sets a programme of government for the then new coalition government of Plaid Cymru and the Labour Party in Wales. The document covers all areas of governmental responsibility including the economy, health, education, social justice, the environment, culture and society, and sets out overarching principles for the Government to follow in all subsequent policies, programmes and decisions.

Wales: A Vibrant Economy is the strategic framework for economic development and focuses on encouraging sustainable growth through helping more people into work and helping to raise earnings for those in work by maximising the value created in the Welsh economy.

Skills That Work for Wales: a Skills and Employment Strategy and Action Plan was published by DCELLS in 2008, and builds upon and replaces the Skills and Employment Action Plan 2005. Its main aims are three-fold: to improve skill levels nationally; to work with the Department for Work and Pensions to get more people into work; and to improve the quality and relevance of education and training. Through this strategy DCELLS hopes to make best use of Welsh people's talents, to

regenerate the most deprived communities in Wales, to help families and children to escape from poverty and to encourage businesses to grow and the Welsh economy to prosper.

Farming, Food & Countryside – Building a Secure Future was published in May 2009 and sets out a clear vision of Welsh farming at the heart of a sustainable countryside and profitable rural economy up to 2020. It is an over-arching strategy which builds on the earlier 'Farming for the Future' strategy. It covers a number of key areas including: connecting to the marketplace; producing sustainably and profitably; safeguarding animal health and welfare, plant health and food safety; sustaining our countryside; and encouraging innovation.

One Wales: One Planet was published in May 2009 and is the Sustainable Development Scheme of the Welsh Assembly Government, replacing the Assembly's former Sustainable Development Action Plan 2004-2007. The rationale of the new document is that the overall wellbeing of Wales is dependent upon sustainable use of resources, a sustainable economy and society and on sustaining the environment. Its vision of a sustainable Wales and the supporting definition of sustainable development will be the overarching strategic aim of all of the Assembly Government's future policies and programmes.

Food Tourism Action Plan: 'Food and Drink for Wales'

In 2009 the Food Tourism Action Plan: 'Food and Drink for Wales' was published jointly by the Tourism, and Food, Fisheries and Marketing Development divisions of the Welsh Assembly Government. The Plan defines Food tourism as *"Any activity that promotes high quality, distinctive, local and sustainable food experience linked to a particular place."* The Plan recognises the need to take forward the cross-cutting aspirations of many existing strategies and initiatives, particularly in relation to sustainability, tourism and the agri-food sector.

Furthermore, in achieving these broad objectives *the Plan seeks to realise a number of* key high level outcomes relating to both of these central sectors in Wales, in addition to the overarching sustainability objective which runs through all Assembly policies. These outcomes are to:

- Increase visitor numbers to Wales who are likely to return and become advocates for Wales.
- Ensure more visitor spend stays in the local economy.
- Ensure more visitors to Wales feel that they have experienced a distinctive Welsh experience.
- Increase demand for Welsh food and drink produce.
- Minimise the impact of the tourism and food and drink industries on the environment.

The Welsh Assembly Government's Environment Strategy for Wales was published in 2006 and is the Welsh Assembly Government's long term strategy for the environment in Wales. It identifies the challenges facing the Welsh environment and sets a vision for achieving clean, healthy, biologically diverse environment by 2026. It covers five key environmental themes including:

addressing climate change; sustainable resource use; distinctive biodiversity, landscapes and seascapes; the local environment; and environmental hazards.

Making the Connections sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's vision of a prosperous, sustainable, bilingual, healthier and better educated Wales which will guide the transformation of public services and deliver services of top quality in Wales. In June 2005 the Welsh Assembly Government published Delivering the Connections which is the action plan for taking this vision forward. The plan sets out the improvements required in public services in Wales, incorporating local government, the National Health Service, education, other public bodies, the voluntary sector and the private sector to improve services. The goal is to make services more responsive to the needs of individuals and communities; more accessible to all and open to genuine participation; more coherent, delivering through simpler, more joined-up structures; more effective in tackling problems and more efficient in delivery.

LDS Relationship

The LDS responds to national policy in that its approach looks at Bridgend's relationship within the sub region in terms of complementing its neighbouring areas and how rural Bridgend links with its key urban settlements. An holistic approach to rural communities so that activity is co-ordinated, integrated is set out that meets smarter service delivery as well as allowing for local decision-making on key issues. The LDS also tackles key thematic issue such as rural skills, sustainable approaches to project delivery as well as addressing innovation and countryside management within farming and the value of food tourism within the rural economy.

Regional

Western Valleys Strategic Regeneration Area – Strategy – Draft March 2009. In the 'One Wales' Agreement the Assembly Government makes a commitment to "establish integrated and cross-cutting initiatives aimed at economic development and regeneration, particularly in areas of high deprivation - the existing models of the Heads of the Valleys Programme and Môn a Menai will be exemplars". The collective vision for the area identified as the Western Valleys is that.....

"By 2015 the Western Valleys will embrace a network of distinctive, vibrant, sustainable communities that are confident and secure in themselves and with their relationship to the wider world. Communities that are sustained by an increasing culture of self reliance and enterprise in which everyone can fulfil their greatest potential by linking communities with opportunities, whilst protecting their first class environment."

The strategy identifies that the key characteristics of communities located within the proposed Western Valleys SRA are typical of many former mining and industrial areas in decline including

some degraded landscapes, dereliction, with higher than average worklessness and poor health outcomes and a general lack of investment over time. Conversely however, the Western Valleys also contain some of the most striking scenery in Wales, including a gateway to the Brecon Beacons, the Afan Forest Park and remnants of important industrial and cultural history. The area is also recognised within south Wales as Welsh Language stronghold. The Western Valleys area contains four primary key settlements (hubs) identified within the Swansea Bay and Western Valleys spatial plan area as having a critical role to play in the success of the region as a whole. These are the hubs of Cross Hands/Ammanford, Pontardawe/Clydach, Neath and Maesteg. However, a significant proportion of the area's population resides in a much larger number of dispersed settlements in semi-rural valley locations, many of which are dependent upon the area's primary key settlement/hubs for some amenities. Investment will need to be balanced between the key hubs and the locally important service centres.

The programme area does coincide with the rural development programme area of operation, with the Ogmere Valley wards being eligible for both streams of funding over the next few years.

LDS Relationship

The LDS recognise the need for co-ordination and a targeted approach to the utilisation of Western Valleys programme area resources within Bridgend's rural communities. The Reach programme team has a close working relationship with responsible officers at Bridgend County Borough Council on WVRSA activities with the LDS themes having an awareness of Western Valley strategic priorities and how both the RDP and WVRAS can work towards a collective set of activities that tackle economic, social and environmental needs. The WVRAS programme also coincides with the Business Plan 2 period, 2011-2013, with a real emphasis on ensuring investment is joined up and sustainable, generating tangible benefits within deprived communities.

Local - Bridgend

This section of the policy review focuses on the following documents;

- Bright Future – A Community Strategy for Bridgend County 2009-2012
- Bridgend County Children and Young People's Plan 2008-11
- Bridgend County Borough Corporate Equality Scheme 2009-2012
- Our Vision: Fit for the Future - Bridgend County Borough's Regeneration Strategy 2008-2021
- Bridgend County Tourism Strategy 2000-2006
- Your Life - in a Healthier Community Health, Social Care and Well-Being Strategy for Bridgend County Borough Council 2008 – 2011
- Community Safety Partnership 2008-11 Crime and Disorder Plan for Bridgend County
- Rural Bridgend Local Produce Demand Study, 2009
- Rural Tourism Product Research, 2009

Bright Future – A Community Strategy for Bridgend County 2009-2012

Bridgend County Borough is considered to be a county of contrast, community, opportunity and business. Based on this, the Strategy concentrates on six areas to address the current climate and future improvements; or to realize the vision for Bridgend: “A *bright future that celebrates and builds on the successes of our past and present*”. Those areas include: Strong Communities, Young Voices, Healthy Living, New Opportunities, Proud Past, and Green Spaces.

Within the Strategy there is acknowledgment of opportunities not being utilized and how they will use those opportunities in the future, and acknowledgement of the past and how that can be preserved and used in the future. There is a focus on young people in the community and building the strategy through consultation with local residents. The Strategy shows previous progress and how to continue that progress. The Strategy also responds to the desire and many benefits of green spaces. Areas of specific concentration to address first include alcohol misuse, the economic recession, emotional wellbeing, and citizen engagement.

The Local Service Board is in direct correspondence with the deliver board which consists of: Learning and Skills Network, Children and Young People’s Partnership, HSCWB Partnership Board, Community Safety Partnership, Never Too Old Action Team, and Regeneration and Environment Partnership.

The Strategy aims to work within the national priorities set out by the National Assembly for Wales in One Wales. This four year programme for government aims to achieve:

- A strong and confident nation
- A healthy future
- A prosperous society
- Living communities
- Learning for life
- A fair and just society
- A sustainable environment
- A rich and diverse culture

The Strategy not only looks nationally, but regionally as well addressing sustainable development, equality and Welsh language, and engagement, communication and consultation.

The Strategy ends with a 12 month action plan, addressing each of the sections previously presented with projects, activities, milestones, responsibility, and success measure.

Bridgend County Children and Young People’s Plan 2008-11

Whilst a high proportion of children and young people in Bridgend County Borough are taking advantage of the services, activities and opportunities available there is still room for improvement and the new Bridgend County Children and Young People’s Plan 2008-11 address this. There are

seven core aims to give children and young people a chance to have a high quality of life including areas such as: education, health, access to play, leisure, sporting and culture activities, access to a safe home and community, being respected and not being disadvantaged by poverty and having a secure family environment. Each aim has strategic intentions and does not limit focus to urban areas but the whole county. Aims have contributions of local partners to delivering local priorities which are laid out in prioritised outcomes, actions, operational plan(s), service providers, resources and sources of funding, and completion dates. Agreed performance measures and targets include priority outcome, measure, current performance, local targets, and responsibility.

Bridgend County Borough Corporate Equality Scheme 2009-2012

The Bridgend Corporate Equality Scheme sets out the plan for delivering the Council's services and meeting equality duties. The scheme embodies the Authority's commitment to be Fair, Ambitious, Customer-focused and Efficient (FACE); and will enable local people, partner organisations and national organisations with an overview of the Council's priorities and planned actions for the following three years. Overall, the ultimate goal is to improve the quality of life for those living and working in the county borough enabling all citizens, families, and communities to take advantage of the opportunities on offer. The Equality Scheme lays out recent achievements as well as presenting future actions. It is the aim of the Council to update and address issues laid out in the Scheme frequently as it is understood the environment of the county is ever evolving.

Our Vision: Fit for the Future - Bridgend County Borough's Regeneration Strategy 2008-2021

Fit for the Future defines regeneration as an over-arching activity delivering a balanced approach to revitalising the well-being of communities through social, physical, and economic improvements. The Strategy seeks to promote entrepreneurial and wealth-creating activities: it builds on and integrates economic development and tourism, urban and rural physical regeneration, and health. The Strategy also integrates with key values embedded in the Community Strategy. Working alongside other major local strategies, including Bridgend CBC's Corporate Plan, the Economic Regeneration Strategy, the Health and Well-Being Strategy, and sub-regional plans for tourism, transport and rural development, *Fit for the Future* emphasizes key actions to prepare for, take and maximise opportunities for local people and businesses, and to attract new investment into the Borough. Its vision is:

By 2021, Bridgend County Borough will be recognised as a self-contained, productive sub-regional economy, with a skilled and utilised workforce, in a place where people and businesses want to be

The strategy identifies that the County Borough has a great natural environment, and in being home to a world-class manufacturing business. It does however identify that it needs to develop itself as a

sub-regional centre, it will need to raise its competitiveness and grow the distinctiveness of its brand. A number of key challenges are identified by the strategy:

Challenges for businesses

- At present the overall performance of the economy is not competitive.
- There is a productivity gap.
- And enterprise is also an issue.

Challenges to people

- Inactivity and skills shortages in the labour market are a cause for concern.
- Improving education and skills supply is a key to future prosperity and economic activity.
- Success needs to be better shared to tackle deprivation, poor health outcomes and high benefit take-up.

Challenges for places

- Quality of life is not highly rated against Welsh competitors.
- Environment and tourism are major assets, but need improved access, visibility and differentiation from competitors.
- Infrastructure development will need to be focused on to attract inward investment and support job creation.
- Town centre renewal is a crucial element in the regeneration of Bridgend CB.

In looking at action planning, there are a number of gaps that need addressing which have a relationship within the rural landscape.

Strategic Aim 1: Enabling wealth and increasing enterprise

Focus Clusters

To address the productivity and enterprise challenges facing Bridgend CB, and to raise competitiveness, Focus Clusters are proposed. The current state of clustering will be identified, and a development programme developed. Clusters are geographically proximate groups of interconnected companies - suppliers, service providers, and associated institutions in a particular field, linked by commonalities and complementarities. This could be applied to food and tourism based industries and within rural businesses that are based in the knowledge sector, innovation and new technologies.

The Business Ideas Bank

To stimulate entrepreneurial activity and encourage enterprise, activity focusing on supply chain development provides the ideal opportunity for a further, closely linked, transformational, action through establishing a 'Business Ideas Bank'. This is designed to encourage new start-ups and provide new growth-oriented opportunities for existing businesses.

Joint procurement initiative

This is a short-to-medium action bringing together major procurement activity, involving schools, prisons, hospitals and the local authority, to focus opportunities for local procurement, and improved access to public sector contracts for SMEs and social enterprises. In relation to this objective, actions need to be taken both by the public sector and the businesses themselves to enable the local business population to maximise procurement opportunities.

Strategic Aim 2: Building up skills levels and entrepreneurial attitudes in an active labour force

Develop a Skills Strategy

This short-term Action is a fundamental first step identified by all parties as crucial to our success in raising skill levels and integrating our approaches to skills development. It will improve and develop labour market intelligence, guide the wide variety of skills training and education activity already in place, and focus it to meet demand. The Strategy will target key skills gaps identified in the Strategic and Operational Aims: young people with no skills, and the need to boost knowledge-based business.

Strategic Aim 3: Making a great place to live, work, visit and play

Branding Bridgend CB

Sensitivity to the issue of potential confusion between the town and the County Borough of Bridgend underlines a more fundamental need to find a unified and unique brand for Bridgend CB. Uniting and unifying the work of partners leading the Local Service Board and this Strategy will raise aspirations of existing residents and businesses, allow new marketing material to highlight Bridgend CB's potential, and also respond to the key issue of how to differentiate Bridgend CB from its neighbours, as well as benefit from wider investment in the region. The need to develop an image for Bridgend CB which will attract further business investment, inward migration and tourism, is at the heart of Fit for the Future. The brand needs to engage private and public sector service providers in meeting local needs.

Valleys Regional Park (supported by the Rural Development Plan)

Acting as a crucial link between economic, social and environmental regeneration, this action to strengthen the environmental networks will enhance quality of life and support tourism and leisure. This long-term Action builds on existing work to create a Valleys Regional Park in the Heads of the Valleys Plus area and the Valleys part of the Connections Corridor. Working with key partners, including WAG and the Countryside Council for Wales, Bridgend CB will need to identify opportunities to align the programme to existing investment and activity, particularly in relation to the Rural Development Plan and projects in the Heads of the Valleys Plus area and the Valleys part of the Connections Corridor.

Hosting a Major Event

Bridgend CB already has a strong reputation for activity sports, in particular, golf and watersports. However, there is widespread anticipation that Bridgend CB can work with adjoining authorities and agencies to develop and market plans for high profile, prioritised programme major events. This action will build on existing capacity and expertise: the first actions will be developed from existing proposals to attract wide international coverage and knock-on tourist and leisure investment

opportunities, through golf, watersports and music events. Bridgend CBC will take forward this action, to engage stakeholders and build practical outputs linked into the new brand for Bridgend CB.

Bridgend - a Fairtrade Town

Fair trade is being promoted as part of a WAG initiative with Wales aiming to become the world's first Fairtrade country. With the existing recognition of Porthcawl as a Fairtrade town, Bridgend's Town Centre regeneration offers an opportunity to create a further Fairtrade Town, and then Bridgend CB as a Fairtrade County Borough, strengthening both the image building and business development aspects of Fit for the Future. The medium-term action, bringing together the majority of businesses to promote fair and ethical trade where possible, combines wealth creation with an ethical, environmental and marketing tool.

Strategic Aim 4: Strengthening and renewing infrastructure

21st Century Employment Sites

This long-term Action involves deepening understanding to enable us to develop a programme to exploit opportunities already emerging, through a high quality mix of employment sites, to meet the demands of the changing economy and to create a mix of employment opportunities to meet and lead development of the various skills sets and service provision within the area. These strategic development projects are often beyond the control of Bridgend CB and could create both opportunities and threats which should be fully explored. The potential benefits of employment and business opportunities which could arise through value-added jobs and supply chain linkages should be exploited. The potential negative impacts such as potential inward and outward migration and changing requirements for health and education services will also be considered to ensure that our Strategy is fully informed by future developments.

An Audit of Public & Third Sector assets

As part of a range of early actions to improve information and focus, identified in the strategy development process, this audit will report on a wide range of physical assets held by the Council and its public sector partners. Delivery capacity for the Strategy as a whole will be enhanced by a detailed understanding of properties available for use, for change of use and for transfer into regeneration programmes. The audit will also include assets dedicated to community use, to bring together an overview of access and availability – through this action, options for bringing buildings into use, changing use and identifying resulting opportunities for private and community sector organisations will be clarified.

Implementation

Implementation of Fit for the Future will be the responsibility of the Regeneration and Environment Partnership (REP), a sub-group of the Local Service Board. This structure is still evolving at present, but it is envisaged that the LSB will create a Regeneration and Environment Partnership with private, public, voluntary and community sector membership, to lead the Strategy. Delivery of projects will be led by a variety of appropriate agencies and companies, with a co-ordination and support service from Bridgend CBC officers.

Bridgend County Tourism Strategy 2000-2006

Tourism is recognised as an important part of the local economy. £119 million was spent in the year 2000 alone, that includes 2,430 people employed in the sector, and 3,127,000 visitors to the Borough. This tourism strategy indicates its intention to “develop local priorities to enable the full potential of the area to be achieved in terms of tourism.” Further to this, they state their vision as; To develop, co-ordinate and manage tourism, in order to maximise its benefits to the local economy whilst minimising any adverse effects on local communities and the environment.

The strategy recognises the threat to UK tourist destinations from the competition of foreign holidays, but also recognises the tourism growth opportunities that present themselves along the M4 corridor and in the valleys and in particular, the cluster of tourist attractions in the Garw Valley.

Following consultation with the tourism trade, council officers and members, this partnership has led to the following 7 key issue definitions;

- Tourism signposting and information provision;
- Quality of accommodation and product;
- Weak events and attractions base;
- The need to develop new markets;
- The need to enhance the image of the area in a cost effective manner;
- Environmental degradation and the need for improvement;
- Training and staff issues.

Key actions and objectives have subsequently been developed to provide the framework for strategic growth in Bridgend County Borough over the next 5 years. Monitoring and review will take place annually and involvement of the private sector will be on-going throughout the entire period through the Tourism Forum – a group of tourism operators meeting biannually.

Finally, the document stresses the aims of the strategy as to produce an agreed strategic framework that reflects the views of the tourism industry and identifies the way forward to achieve the vision statement during the period 2002-2006. Furthermore, work is currently underway to extend the strategy post 2006.

Your Life - in a Healthier Community Health, Social Care and Well-Being Strategy for Bridgend County Borough Council 2008 – 2011

This is the second Strategy of its kind to be produced using a Health Needs Assessment to steer health service planning for the subsequent three years. It replaces its predecessor strategy (Health Social Care and Wellbeing 2005 – 2008), and was produced by the Health and Well-Being Partnership. This Partnership comprises many stakeholder organisations including Abertawe Bro

Morgannwg University NHS Trust, the National Public Health Service, Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations and Bridgend Community Health Council. The vision of the Partnership for the long-term future of Bridgend County Borough is two-fold, namely:

- The health and well-being of the people of the County Borough of Bridgend will be the best in Wales; and
- Everyone has appropriate access to first class services delivered by organisations working together.

The aim of the Strategy is to improve people's health and well-being, to help people to receive good public services when and where they need them and to make sure there is fairness applied to all people who need to get a service.

As indicated above, prior to the publication of the Strategy, the Partnership carried out a Health Needs Assessment process, which indicated that they should focus attention over the next three years on four main priorities:

- Increasing physical activity and improving nutrition;
- Chronic disease prevention and management;
- Improving mental health and emotional well-being; and
- Tackling alcohol misuse.

In addition there are three themes underpinning the priorities of this plan, namely:

- Reducing Health Inequalities;
- Healthy Living and Well-Being; and
- Health and Social Care.

The plan is reviewed annually by the Assembly Government, and will be replaced in 2011.

Community Safety Partnership 2008-11 Crime and Disorder Plan for Bridgend County

This is a partnership document written collaboratively by Bridgend County Borough Council, South Wales Police Bridgend, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, and Bridgend Local Health Board. The Partnership's Vision is to make Bridgend County an even safer place to live, work and visit, through sustained joint working between the statutory, business and third sector partners.

There are four main objectives to the plan:

- Addressing Quality of Life issues;
- Reducing Violent Crime;

- Tackling Prolific and Priority Offenders; and
- Improving Communication and Reassurance.

Furthermore the following recommendations reflected in the Police and Justice Act 2006 and in subsequent regulations, are embedded into the operations of Bridgend CSP:

- Empowered and Effective Leadership;
- Visible and Constructive Accountability;
- Intelligence led Business Processes;
- Effective and Responsive Delivery Structures;
- Engaged Communities; and
- Appropriate Skills and Knowledge

The plan states that the interaction between the CSP and communities should be a two way process, with each working together to agree priorities and actions. The premise behind this is that this interaction will foster greater understanding between the community and partners, which in turn will not only reduce crime and disorder but will also improve local quality of life issues and reduce the fear of crime.

Rural Bridgend Local Produce Demand Study, 2009

In early 2009 by Bridgend County Borough Council on behalf of the Reach project commissioned a research exercise to investigate demand for local produce in rural Bridgend. The Rural Bridgend Local Produce Demand Study Report has recently been produced

The primary aim of this research was to:

- Understand the current use of local produce by businesses in Bridgend County Borough, the demand for the produce and the barriers to accessing the produce;
- Understand the current use of local produce by key public sector organisations in the area, and the barriers preventing access to local produce;
- Understand what the perceived current barriers are to buying locally which will help address some of these barriers in the future;
- Gain an understanding of what markets the existing producers in Bridgend are accessing; and
- Create a comprehensive supporting database of food related businesses in the area.

The research was undertaken through three key stages. The first involved a desk based review of food related businesses in the area and the subsequent generation of a business database. Secondly, consultation was undertaken with key local public sector procurement departments in

various organisations in Bridgend. The third and final stage of the research involved a survey of 202 food related businesses.

The paragraphs below set out some of findings of particular relevance to this research.

Food related businesses in rural Bridgend are predominantly micro-businesses. Almost 70% of responding businesses employ less than nine members of staff whilst fewer than 2% of the cohort claimed to employ more than 50 people. Annual turnover varies considerably although over a quarter of businesses reported turnover being over £250,000.

In terms of markets, just over half of respondents stated that the majority of their customers are based in Bridgend and a further fifth (approximately) claimed a market majority in the South East Region (but not including Bridgend).

The main drivers for customers' preferences as perceived by food related businesses were: quality (40.5%); supporting producers/economy (29.5%); and price (26.8%). However there was a general consensus amongst respondents that customer commitment to supporting local and national food producers had increased in recent years.

The study had sought to investigate the sourcing of local produced food by businesses in the food industry which are not involved in primary production. However, the range and quality of responses given to this area of questioning was variable, as many respondents were unable to provide robust responses. Nevertheless over half of non-primary producers claimed that they did not find any difficulties in sourcing Welsh produce. The most commonly identified methods for marketing and promotion of local food was through use of menus and, to a lesser extent signage. Very small numbers of businesses promoted local produce through word of mouth or in the newspaper.

The final aspect of the business survey focused on primary food production in order to identify the proportion of different production activities: red meat was the common response given by 38 of producers, dairy/milk accounted for seven responses, whilst 13 claimed to generate 'other produce' (including fruit & vegetables, poultry and eggs). Less than one in ten farmers and producers had ever tendered for work from the public sector. The main finding from the Public sector procurement research which is of potential relevance to this Local Development Strategy was the evidence which suggested that many smaller, local businesses remain unable to compete for local contracts with public sector organizations.

In conclusion to this research exercise, the report outlines ten recommendations for the Reach partnership to take forward in order to aid future development of local food production and consumption in the area. In sum, these relate to communication and further qualitative research with businesses, Informing businesses of future opportunities in supplying the public sector, hosting

a meet-the-buyer event with procurement representatives, Investigate how local distribution channels operate, exploring opportunities for local producers to become involved with regional distribution channels or establishing regional co-operatives and establish strong working relationships between Reach and other support agencies

Rural Tourism Product Research, 2009

In 2009 Bridgend Rural Partnership commissioned a research project involving a comprehensive mapped audit of tourism product in the rural wards of Bridgend CBC. The intention was that this audit would subsequently inform future marketing and development. The audit would also be represented in a digital map format in order to give an idea of spatial relationships between products.

The research sought to achieve three objectives, namely, to:

- Understand existing rural tourism provision and markets;
- Increase community engagement in rural tourism; and
- Inform future strategic rural tourism development.

The methodology for the audit was two-fold involving desk and field based research along with a programme of community consultation, in the interests of stimulating community 'ownership' of tourism within the Rural wards. The audit identified through the audit included: 28 accommodation providers; 110 attractions (including landscape assets; crafts; folklore sites etc); 62 activity related assets; 78 hospitality/catering providers; 14 event related assets; 15 other assets (e.g. shopping; choirs/bands; toilets etc; and 6 projects currently in development.

The research indicated that the local audience was crucial to the survival of these diverse tourism assets although roughly 40% of respondent businesses claimed to receive significant business from nonlocal/overseas customers. Respondents cited a range of users who support their business including locals (classified a catch all 'everyone'); families; visitors; business and corporate; students/schools; and, (interestingly, to a lesser extent), cyclists and walkers.

Over 80 people attended the consultation events, and contributed to discussions on existing tourism assets as well as opportunities for and threats facing tourism development within Rural Bridgend.

These issues are summarised below:

- The need to address issues regarding identity and image;
- The need to provide basic amenities at key visitor 'hubs';
- The need to rationalise print/web-based information;

- The need to further develop the accommodation offer;
- The ongoing need for support for Rural tourism in terms of marketing/communication/providing strategic direction/networking;
- The need to address public transport weaknesses/provide special services for walkers/cyclists;
- The need to lobby against inappropriate development;
- The incredible network of walking/cycling routes and the importance of securing resources to maintain them;
- The importance of ensuring that community ownership is maintained;
- The need to address the issue of improving the quality of many facilities; provide ongoing support for existing attractions and support developments which meet identified needs; and
- The opportunity to develop strategic links.

In addition, the report sets out in detail more specific recommendations regarding product development, including:

- Enhancing the walking/cycling/riding offer;
- New products centred around:
 - Early heritage;
 - Church tourism;
 - Views and vistas;
 - Informal activity breaks;
 - Events; and
 - The story of Richard Price.

Finally, these diverse issues and recommendations are summarised in an action plan aimed to stimulate the on-going development of the tourism industry in the area.

LDS Relationship

Whilst the word “rural” does not appear as a specific focus within Bridgend’s strategic documents, issues such as re-skilling, addressing health inequalities and well being, educational attainment and investing in Bridgend’s workforce underpin the wider area including our rural communities. Strategies such as “Fit for Future” also recognise that rural areas can contribute to the wider economy in relation to rurally based industries such as knowledge and technology based enterprises and the importance of local assets being maximised that use innovative techniques and add value. There is also a recognition of the inter relationship between key settlements such as Bridgend and Porthcawl and the rural areas, in terms of an integrated tourism product and using the larger urban centres as a place to market and showcase rural products. A number of local strategies recognise that Bridgend needs to position itself through a brand and how rural areas contribute to the wider product and offer is critical to its unique selling point to its residents, visitors and investors. Local research undertaken by Reach also shows that there is great potential for connectivity and linkages in terms of local supply chains, cycling and walking routes and using rural villages as hubs for visitors as well as for local residents.

13. Cross Cutting Themes

Equal Opportunities

The development and delivery of all activities through Rural Bridgend will provide equal opportunities for all and recognise the needs of everyone. This will be fully reflected in the flexible working practices adopted by Rural Bridgend and its staff.

Rural Bridgend activities will clearly demonstrate the steps taken to identify and remove barriers to participation by disadvantaged groups. Positive action will be taken to support and assist such groups to overcome barriers to their participation, including:

- Lack of role models and community support
- Lack of support for those with childcare and other caring needs
- Language deficiencies, particularly for those for whom English or Welsh is not a mother tongue
- Travel costs
- Lack of information about opportunities
- Access issues

Rural Bridgend will adopt an equal opportunities policy framework, which is all embracing.

Gender balance on the Local Action Group, in all project based work, on formal groups and sub-groups as well as any appointments is a consideration.

Equal opportunities are not restricted to the issue of gender. It includes supporting disabled people, those with care responsibilities, and those experiencing rural isolation. Rural isolation is an issue for Rural Bridgend despite good transport through the County. Isolation is particularly experienced by single parents, young people, disabled people and the elderly. There is limited public transport within the County.

Environmental Sustainability

Rural Bridgend adopts the Brundtland Commission's definition of sustainable development: 'development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

Bridgend's countryside is one of its key strengths and indeed opportunities. Rural development work through Axis 3 and 4 is seen as an opportunity to capitalise sensitively on this most natural of assets. All activities will demonstrate how they support sustainable development and have

considered their likely impact upon the environment. Projects are encouraged to link with Bridgend's Sustainable Development strategy.

ICT

ICT is a core theme in rural development activities. General trends in terms of ICT usage in Bridgend would suggest that there are some strengths to build on. However, there are significant difficulties in achieving cost-effective broadband access to the Internet in many areas outside (and indeed within) the main towns.

There is clearly much more that can be done to capitalise on the use of ICT to improve the viability of communities. There are significant opportunities to be gained by applying ICT in the exchange of information between individuals within rural communities, amongst communities themselves and between rural communities and the Global community.

Rural Bridgend supports communities in embracing ICT through raising awareness and capacity building, especially amongst the identified target groups.

Welsh Language

The partnership conducts all its activities in line with Bridgend County Borough's existing Welsh Language Scheme.

Bridgend County Borough Council has adopted the principle that in the conduct of public business and administration of justice it will treat the English and Welsh Languages on the basis of equality. The Council's Welsh Language scheme sets out how Bridgend County Borough Council will give effect to that principle when providing services to the public in Wales.

14. Community Involvement

LDS Development Activity to Date

In developing this revised Local Development Strategy, the Reach programme has provided opportunities for Rural Partnership and Local Action Group members to help shape the document in a number of ways.

- An initial workshop on the 9th September where members were informed of the timetable for developing the revised LDS and to identify any initial issues in terms of process and purpose of the document.
- The issue of an interim draft to stimulate discussion on whether strategic aims and objectives and key themes are still relevant to rural activity beyond 2009.
- The hosting of a half day workshop on the 5th October where rural partnership and local action group members, along with advisors provided direct comments on the 2007 LDS vision, themes and objectives and provide a critical review of these in lights of knowledge and experiences gained through Business Plan period 1 and from other activities gained in rural Bridgend. The comments from the workshop have been addressed in this document represents a direct response to current need and the direction the LDS should take future rural activity. Reach invited final comments on the draft LDS by email, which have been incorporated into this document.

Future Activity

As part of developing Business Plan 2 and by way of underpinning the strategic objectives of the LDS an extensive and inclusive engagement process is being rolled out between October 2009 and March 2010 to identify current and future needs and wants. This specifically includes:

- Community engagement workshops targeting every rural ward where local residents and organisations can identify current needs and ideas for taking initial EOIs forward and final project development.
- A questionnaire survey made available to every rural resident
- Workshops with Reach's thematic working groups of food, tourism, communities, environment and others as considered appropriate to identify lessons learnt, research outcomes and to identify opportunities for



reach out
news from rural bridgend

A New Rural Focus for Bridgend

Businesses and individuals across Bridgend had an opportunity to taste a variety of rural skills and share their interest in highlighting the role of our rural communities at the vibrant launch of reach at Lakeside Farm Park, Glynogwr in July.

LOCAL MP Hwira Iwan Davies and Justice Gregory AM joined over 100 people in celebrating the launch of reach, the Rural Development Programme for Bridgend.

Anyone interested in finding out more about reach should contact the central team on 01456 815080 or email rural.development@bridgendreach.org.uk

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clustering ideas to ensure strategic impact and linkages with the LDS.

Other activity planned by Reach includes:

- Annual rural conferences
- Seminars on key current and future rural issues
- The launch of its Programme Website
- Regular newsletters
- Study visits to current Business Plan 1 projects as well to other rural programme areas as part of best practice
- Networks in relation to each of our themes
- Local forums within rural communities

15. Additionality and relationship to other Local Partnerships

The Rural Partnership will form part of the family of partnerships overseen by the Bridgend Local Service Board. In practice, the Rural Partnership will report to the Local Service Board directly when required as well as via the Bridgend Regeneration and Environment Partnership.

The EU Convergence programme will be particularly important in helping to meet the action plans within the regeneration strategy for Bridgend County Borough, currently being finalised for public consultation in early 2008.

Bridgend's Regeneration and Environment Partnership, the Children and Young People's Partnership and Local Service Network is responsible for development and delivery of the area's regeneration strategy and has taken the lead in co-ordinating the previous Objective 1 programme 2000-2006, and is now in the midst delivering the Convergence Programme. The two Convergence operational programmes – European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) – were launched by the Welsh Assembly Government in September/October 2007 and provide major funding opportunities to support the economic regeneration of Bridgend County Borough, building upon the Community Strategy and a number of the Council's corporate priority themes as follows:

- Creating learning communities
- Children today, adults tomorrow
- Valuing our valleys
- Realising the potential of our major towns
- A diverse and sustainable economy
- Supporting our disadvantaged communities

Over the period 2007 – 2013, the Convergence programme in West Wales and Valleys has been allocated EU grant aid of around £1.4 billion at current prices, and together with match funding will constitute an economic regeneration programme of £3.2 billion. The eligible West Wales and Valleys area covers 15 local authority areas, including the whole of Bridgend County Borough.

The Council has acted as lead body for the Partnership to provide secretariat services and to provide technical support on EU funding. It is important to note that any activity proposed within the rural development will be complementary to the Convergence Programme and will not duplicate other activity within the County Borough. Section 10 of this document also demonstrates how the LDS will integrate with local policy document, in addition to its relationship with the spatial plan.

16. List of supporting documents

- A1 – Bridgend Rural Tourism Partnership Terms of Reference
- A2 – Bridgend Rural Partnership Memorandum of Understanding
- A3 - Reach Rural Partnership Members
- A4 - Local Action Group Membership
- A5 – Advisors for Partnership and LAG
- A6 - Bridgend LAG Terms of Reference
- A7 – Welsh Language Policy
- A8 - ICT Policy
- A9 - Sustainable Development Policy