



Health inequalities

Rural land management

Declining biodiversity

A changing climate

How to use this document

Explore the themes by using the grey navigation bar at the top of the page. To get back to this homepage just click the puffin at the top.

South West Area Statement – Emerging themes

The [Natural Resources Policy](#) sets out the key *challenges and opportunities* in Wales. These are the circles on the outer ring of this diagram (bottom left) from Welsh Government. Through our work in South-West we've identified issues of particular concern in the area and (approximately!) re-sized the circles to reflect these. The three circles in the middle of the diagram are the *priorities* from the NRP and are how we will seek to address the challenges. Linked to the NRP the *emerging themes* are what the evidence is telling us is importantly locally in South West.

What's the evidence behind these?

These themes build on the ongoing discussions through Public Services Boards (PSBs), the NRP challenges and priorities, and the evidence contained in our Area Profile. To arrive at these we have used:

- Expert local knowledge from a series of structured discussions.
- Information from the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) on ecosystems and their resilience, and the risks to the benefits they provide.
- The Wellbeing Assessments and Plans, and the priorities that are emerging through the Public Services Boards (PSBs).

What are the next steps?

We are going to work with our partners and stakeholders to understand what's behind these themes and identify the opportunities for improvement – from policy interventions to on-the-ground action.





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Reducing health inequalities

There are stark health inequalities across the area. The PSB Wellbeing plans clearly support this theme.

We want to improve health by protecting and enhancing existing natural resources and habitats. These are then able to support preventative approaches to deliver health outcomes and reduce inequality. Specific examples of interventions are - Green infrastructure opportunities in the Swansea Bay and Loughor Estuary areas, and access to green/blue space in rural areas.

What sort of subjects does this theme include?

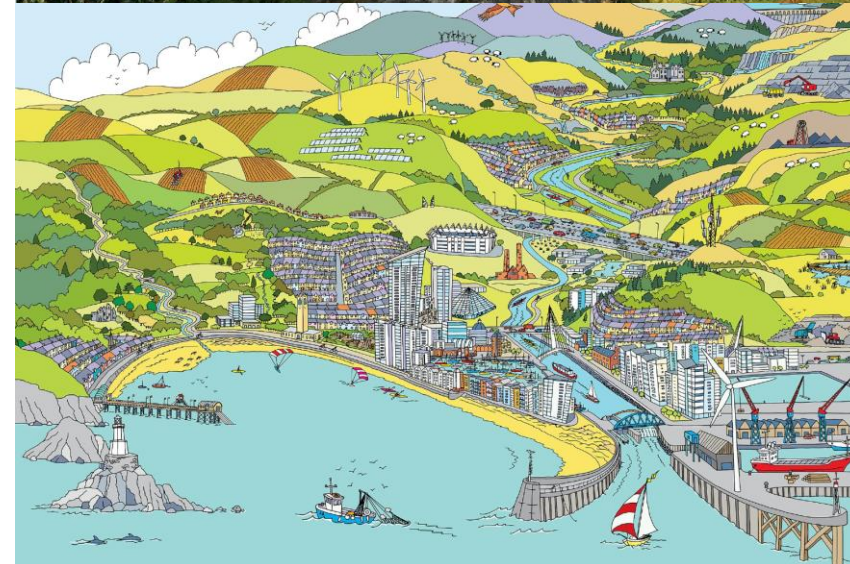
Subjects included in this theme include, but are not limited to:

- Urban air pollution (road emissions and industry)
- Accessible green spaces (for all)
- Recreation opportunities (to improve mental and physical health)
- Ensuring healthy ecosystems (e.g. bathing waters)

Top three NRP 'key challenge' addressed: Reduce the risk of flooding; Improve noise and air quality; Climate change through ecosystems-based approach.

NRP Opportunity addressed: Supporting tackling inequalities; Supporting health outcomes.

See the stats 





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Ensuring sustainable rural land management

Ensuring sustainable rural land management is emerging as a key theme. Currently we are seeing detrimental impacts on water quality, biodiversity and air quality arising from some land management practices, although sometimes it's a lack of active management that lies at the heart of the problem.

We want to investigate root causes and look at innovative ways to improve the situation, while seeking to deliver multiple benefits. We will do this by working with multiple stakeholders to help us address this challenge.

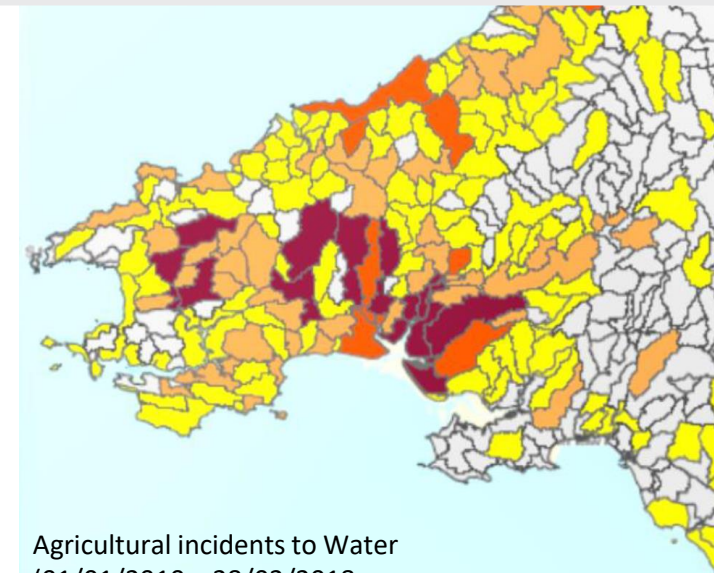
What sort of subjects does this theme include?

Subjects included in this theme include, but are not limited to:

- Agricultural diffuse and point source agricultural pollution to both water and air – supporting farmers to reduce the risks arising from production
- Land management on our special sites – promoting active management where necessary
- Forestry management
- Rural environmental crime
- *It's important to note that not all of the above practices are 'un-sustainable' across all of south-west, we want to ensure good practice is shared across the place*

Top three NRP 'key challenge' addressed: Improving water quality and quantity; Maintaining productive capacity; Reversing the decline in biodiversity.
NRP Opportunity addressed: Supporting tourism and recreation; Supporting health outcomes.

See the stats 



Agricultural incidents to Water
(01/01/2010 – 28/02/2018)

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The South West has a huge array of habitats which support species of international importance. But they are at risk from inappropriate management and destruction.

Opportunities exist for greater cohesion via the planning system, community involvement and sustainable land management.

Bringing biodiversity to the fore as an emerging theme ensures that it is not lost against competing priorities.

What sort of subjects does this theme include?

Subjects included in this theme include, but are not limited to:

- Protecting and enhancing our habitats and species – including our most special areas
- Improving habitat and species connectivity
- Connecting our communities to nature

For NRW's strategic biodiversity steer please visit our [vital nature](#) page.

See the stats 

Top three NRP 'key challenge' addressed: Reversing the decline in biodiversity; Improving water quality and quantity; Climate change through ecosystem based approaches.

NRP Opportunity addressed: Supporting tourism and recreation; Supporting health outcomes.





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Resilience to a changing climate

Total carbon emissions in Carmarthenshire, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot (NPT) are within the top six highest for counties in Wales (Pembrokeshire ranks 9th).

Greenhouse gas and CO₂ emissions are amongst the highest in Wales, particularly in NPT and Swansea.

Water resources are more vulnerable in South West than other parts of Wales and coastal communities in South West are more susceptible to climate change impacts.

We want to work with communities and industry to ensure that both they and the ecosystems around them are resilient to a changing climate. We also want to look at how we can support climate change mitigation and carbon reduction measures. E.g. explore different economic models (such as community agriculture or circular economy).

The Marine Area Statement has identified 'coastal adaption' as an emerging theme and seeks to *explore what needs to happen to ensure Wales has a coastline that is resilient to climate change and delivers multiple benefits*

What sort of subjects does this theme include?

Subjects included in this theme include, but are not limited to:

- Our global impact (personal, business and industrial)
- Appropriate coastal management and planning
- Community-based actions

See the stats 

Top three NRP 'key challenge' addressed: Climate change though ecosystem based approaches; Improving air and noise quality; More renewable energy.

NRP Opportunity addressed: Supporting health outcomes; Support tackling inequalities; Supporting tourism and recreation.



South West Area Statement

Emerging themes



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Behind the headlines

¹ Marmot, M, 2010, Fair Society Healthy Lives (Full Report). London: The Marmot Review

² RNAG classified as being a 'major' source with a category certainty of either 'confirmed' or 'probable'.

Emerging theme	What's the evidence behind this theme?
Supporting health outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) across the region for males is lower than the UK average with HLE for both males and females in NPT and Carmarthenshire lower. The wellbeing assessment for NPT stated The difference in life expectancy between males living in the least deprived and most deprived areas of NPT is 7.4 years, with a healthy life expectancy gap of 18.4 years. Unfortunately, for women the gap between those living in the most and least deprived areas appears to have increased over recent years. Evidence suggests that this is because women living in the most deprived areas of NPT have not seen the improvements in life expectancy over time that men and women living in less deprived areas have enjoyed. - Public Health Wales estimated the cost of physical inactivity at £35 million/year, whilst Welsh Government suggest the cost of poor air quality across the UK is calculated to be £20billion/year - -> The natural environment can ameliorate the detrimental health effects of long term deprivation - Urban canopy cover varies across the south West. When looking at the larger urban areas there are towns with notably low percentages such as Port Talbot at 7.5% and Gorseinon, Haverfordwest, Carmarthen and Llanelli at around 11%. Estimates for tree cover in Swansea range between 16-18% however this covers a large area and canopy cover is not evenly distributed within this (tree cover in deprived areas tends to be lower and relatively less rich in amenity trees).
Ensuring sustainable rural land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In South West 42% of the issues relating to SSSI management units are attributed to agriculture and land management – these are primarily concerned with grazing and scrub. - Pollution and waste accounts for 26% of the issues relating to SSSI management units in SW, primarily relating to air pollution and water pollution (both diffuse and point sources). - In South West 14% of the reasons for not achieving Good status (RNAG) are due to pollution from rural areas (22% when unknown sources removed). - -> 53% of RNAG under this category are related to farm infrastructure - -> 24% of RNAG under this category are related to forestry - South West Wales is a hotspot for agricultural pollution incidents in a Welsh context with most of these incidents associated with the dairy industry and occurring in Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and parts of Ceredigion (2016/17). - Physical modifications are responsible for 13% of RNAGs and pollution from sewage and waste water is responsible for 11% of RNAGs. - ~5% of reasons for not achieving Good are due to abandoned mines. These are on the Teifi, Aman, Twyi, Pelenna, Afan, Ffrwd Wylt and Clyne.
Reversing the decline in biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - South-West Wales contains a huge array of habitats and species, from the rich inter-tidal zones (with Wales' only Marine Conservation Zone) around the coast to the varied uplands (including priority grassland and heathland habitats). Our habitats support species of international importance such as the Manx Shearwater with Skomer and Skockholm supporting the largest breeding population in the world. 8.7% of the SW area is designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). - In South-West 72% of our SAC monitoring units are classified as being in unfavourable status (with only 7% of these classified as recovering) - The State of Nature report (2016) found that 33% of the priority species assessed in Wales are classified as declining over the last decade. Although the rate at which species are becoming extinct is slower in the west of Wales as opposed to the east (one species every 5-7yrs and 1-4yrs respectively). - 20% of RNAG (unknown removed) in SW are due to physical modification – restricting species movement. - LBAPs - SAC action plans (PIP system)
Resilience to a changing climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - According to Welsh Government figures Carmarthenshire, Swansea and NPT are within the top six local authorities in terms of total carbon emissions in Wales (Pembrokeshire ranks 9th). In terms of per-person total emissions (therefore accounting for population) NPT is the largest emitter of CO₂ in Wales at 8.6 tonnes per person. - -> In terms of sectoral breakdown for SW the top three sectors are Industry and commercial electricity (1.52MtCO_{2e}), road transport (1.05MtCO_{2e}) and domestic gas (0.55MtCO_{2e}). - Shifts in the spatial range of species and changes in phenology will have implications for the ecological composition of communities and habitats, with both winners and losers. Some areas will experience local species extinctions. Species at their southern range margin are at significant risk of being lost from current parts of their range (CCRA 2017). - Overall, the area of Best and Most Versatile (Grades 1 to 3a) agricultural land in Wales and England is projected to decline from 37% currently to 7% in the 2080s (high emissions scenario) due to increased aridity and droughtiness (<i>national data with local areas being affected differently</i>). Over the same time period, the area of Grade 4 land is projected to increase from 2% to nearly 66% (CCRA 2017).