

Foreword

by Councillor Jim Jones, Chair of the Group



As Chair of the North Wales Regional Planning Group it gives me great pleasure to introduce the adopted edition of this document.

This is the first time that an attempt has been made to establish a shared vision which can influence development planning across the whole of North Wales. The document is the result of a sustained cooperative effort by all the Planning Authorities of North Wales. We all recognise the importance of ensuring that there is a common approach to issues which cross authority boundaries. We believe that it will help to minimise disagreement between neighbours as we all prepare our Unitary Development Plans. We also believe that the creation of a shared vision for the land use planning of the region is a valuable objective in its own right. It will be particularly helpful in promoting a better understanding of the issues at the National and European levels.

I look forward to using this document to work closely with the National Assembly for Wales on developing a future spatial planning framework for North Wales.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Jones', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jim Jones

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1. Introduction

Background

1.1 'Planning Policy Wales' does not provide defined regional planning policy guidance or a sub regional policy context for the preparation of UDPs. Instead, the Welsh Assembly Government advised local planning authorities to collaborate in setting strategic planning objectives and policies for their areas, and to establish appropriate voluntary working arrangements to achieve this. This initiative will now be used in the preparation of the Wales Spatial Plan by WAG.

1.2 The North Wales Regional Planning Group consisting of elected Members of Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd and Wrexham Councils and the Snowdonia National Park Authority was established to achieve these aims. It is advised by the heads of the planning services for the Authorities.

Status

1.3 The Guidance has been adopted by the constituent local authorities as Supplementary Planning Guidance (for dates see end). Authorities will be expected to have regard to this document in preparing their Unitary Development Plans (UDPs). It may be a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. The Welsh Assembly Government will be urged to have regard to this document in making decisions on planning appeals and inquiries into Unitary Development Plans.

1.4 This Regional Planning Guidance document covers the period 1996 – 2011. The Guidance will be reviewed and rolled forward on a five year cycle.

Purpose

1.5 This document aims to provide:-

- a strategic context for the preparation of Unitary Development Plans (UDPs) in North Wales
- a context for resolving cross border planning issues
- a land use framework for inward investment, for the revised EU structural funds and to protect and enhance the built and natural environment.
- a basis for a positive dialogue with the National Assembly for Wales over the future planning of North Wales.

Paragraphs in **bold** are the key elements of the Guidance. Certain aspects of national policy are also repeated because of their importance to the planning of North Wales.

1.6 Consultation took place on the first draft of this document in

- Preparation** Spring 1999. As a result this document has been revised to take account of comments made. Further work was undertaken during 2000 on minerals and waste guidance and on population and household projections. A separate Report of Consultation is available which summarises comments made and the responses to them.
- Further Information** 1.7 For further information, please contact your local planning authority or Malcolm Phillips on 01978 292510. This document will shortly be published on the Wrexham Council web site (www.wrexham.gov.uk).
- Adoption Dates**
- Denbighshire – July 2001
 - Snowdonia N P - July 2001
 - Wrexham – July 2001
 - Ynys Mon – September 2001
 - Flintshire – October 2001
 - Conwy – November 2001
 - Gwynedd – July 2002

2. Area Profile

2.1 The North Wales region is rich in culture, heritage and landscape. It is geographically predominantly a rural area. It is also a diverse region. The western parts - the more rural and inaccessible areas where the Welsh Language and culture are strong - have suffered economically from problems associated with peripherality. The eastern parts - more urban and accessible in terms of infrastructure - have experienced strong growth coupled with significant in migration.

2.2 North Wales comprises Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Isle of Anglesey, Wrexham and the Snowdonia National Park. The area covers 6172 sq. kms. (29% of Wales), and has a population of 656,000 (22% of Wales) concentrated in the more urbanised and industrialised areas of north-east Wales, and the North Wales coast. There are 333 persons per square kilometre in Flintshire, but only 46 in Gwynedd. The proportion of Welsh speakers in the population generally rises from east to west, from 13-14% in Flintshire and Wrexham to 62% in Anglesey and 72% in Gwynedd. The North Wales coast is a popular area for retirement, with 27% in Conwy, and 24% in Denbighshire over retirement age, compared to the Welsh average of 20%. There are some 287,000 dwellings in North Wales. The proportion of local authority housing varies from 9% in Conwy, to 28% in Wrexham.

2.3 The North Wales economy produces some £5 billion of output annually, with around 220,000 employees and an estimated 42,000 people in self employment. The structure of the economy has changed considerably over the last 20-30 years. Manufacturing industry is concentrated in Flintshire and Wrexham, with 72% of North Wales' manufacturing employment, and is now more diversified than in the past. The area has strong ties with the economy of north west England, and there is a considerable amount of cross border commuting, both from Wales into England and vice versa. In the west, services predominate, particularly tourism, which is largely seasonal. The level of unemployment is lower in the east of the area : 3.5% in Flintshire and Wrexham, but rising to 5.4% in Gwynedd and 7.8% in Anglesey (as at September 1999).

2.4 Central and western parts of the region have been awarded European Union Objective One status making them eligible for the highest level of structural funds assistance available. This offers the opportunity over the next seven years to establish the foundations for sustainable economic development.

2.5 North Wales continues to be a major supplier of aggregate

minerals, producing over 8 million tonnes of hard rock annually, and about 1½ million tonnes of sand and gravel. It is also the major source for natural slate in the United Kingdom. A major development in recent years has been the start of commercial oil and gas production from Liverpool Bay. In addition to the gas fired power stations adjacent to the Dee Estuary, there is a nuclear power station in Anglesey (Wylfa) with a link to Anglesey Aluminum, the largest smelter in Britain, and several major hydro electricity generating stations in Snowdonia, and several windfarms on Anglesey.

2.6 The major retail centres in North Wales are Bangor, Llandudno, Rhyl, and Wrexham, and there are a number of smaller centres and market towns. Shopping patterns in the east of the region are heavily influenced by the presence just over the border of Chester and other regional attractions. A sub-regional out of town shopping centre is located at Broughton in Flintshire.

2.7 Tourism has long played a crucial part in the economy both of the North Wales coast, with major holiday resorts such as Rhyl and Llandudno, and also in the inland parts of North Wales, especially Snowdonia. Some 23,000 jobs in north Wales are in tourist related industries. 67% of which are located in Conwy, Denbighshire and Gwynedd. Some of these jobs, however, are seasonal.

2.8 Agriculture and Forestry remain important in the rural economy of North Wales. It is characterised mainly by permanent grassland and rough grazing, and only about 10% of farmland is arable. Much of inland North Wales is upland. Over 90% of the farmland in Gwynedd is classified as Grade 4 or 5, and over 70% of Gwynedd, Conwy and Denbighshire is classified for agricultural purposes as Disadvantaged or Severely Disadvantaged, and therefore qualifies for special assistance under European Union rules. Three parts of North Wales (Anglesey, Llyn, and Clwydian Range) have been declared Environmentally Sensitive Areas, where the emphasis is on the encouragement of environmentally friendly farming practices. Parts of North Wales also benefit from other agri-environmental schemes such as Tir Cymen and Tir Gofal. These schemes play an important part in enhancing the environment of the area and providing economic benefit to the farming community.

2.9 North Wales has an exceptional range of built and natural heritage which justifies protection and enhancement. It includes the Snowdonia National Park and three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Anglesey, Llyn and Clwydian Range). Three areas of Heritage Coast have been designated, covering parts of Anglesey, much of Llyn, and the Great Orme. In addition to its conservation areas and listed buildings the Edward 1 castles in Beaumaris, Harlech, Caernarfon and Conwy are a World Heritage Site. The

register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales, produced by CADW, ICOMOS UK and CCW in 1998, identifies 18 landscapes of outstanding or special historic interest either wholly or particularly within the region. The region also has areas of national importance for nature conservation, and other sites outside statutory designated sites which are important because they provide wildlife corridors or links necessary to maintain current range and diversity of our flora, fauna and survival of important species.

2.10 The principal port in North Wales is Holyhead, through which large volumes of freight and passenger traffic pass to and from Ireland. Good road and rail links and port facilities with Ireland are considered essential for the future economic prosperity of the region, particularly Anglesey and Gwynedd. Mostyn, on the Dee Estuary, continues to develop as a port for the industrial areas of north-east Wales. The key road transport links are the A55 Expressway, and the A5, A483, A487 and A470. The principal rail route is the North Wales coast line, which links the region to Chester and London. Although there are airfields at RAF Valley in Anglesey, at Caernarfon, and at Hawarden (serving the British Aerospace factory), there are no major commercial airports. There are good connections via the motorway network to Manchester and Liverpool airports.

3. Regional Planning Principles

3.1 In preparing their UDPs and in making decisions on planning applications which are likely to have cross-boundary implications, authorities are expected to have regard to the principles set out below. The principles seek to promote sustainable social and economic development, including the protection and promotion of the Welsh Language and culture, its landscapes, built and natural heritage.

- Environment 3.2 North Wales is fortunate in having outstanding natural and built environments, including its coasts, which Unitary Development Plans should protect and enhance not only for their own intrinsic qualities but because of the contribution they make to community life and economic development.
- A Healthy Economy 3.3 ‘Pathway to Prosperity - a new economic agenda for Wales’ sets out the government’s agenda to ‘transform the Welsh economy into a higher value added innovative regional economy, capable of delivering increased prosperity to the people of Wales’. The Unitary Development Plan has a key role to play in supporting this Strategy and facilitating efforts to regenerate and diversify the region’s economy. This extends beyond the provision of land to ensure that other features of the area that play a role in attracting investment and foster indigenous growth - its outstanding natural features, its towns and built heritage and its communications - all support this objective in a sustainable manner.
- Thriving Communities 3.4 Unitary Development Plans must promote sustainable communities. This means protecting local identity. They should ensure that the scale of housing allocations is appropriate to their needs and is consistent with the provision of services and the likely availability of jobs. The needs of the Welsh Language and culture throughout the region must be protected. Authorities should make positive provision for future generations in terms of land for community buildings and spaces.
- Better Use of Resources 3.5 Unitary Development Plans should seek to produce a pattern of development which is more sustainable in terms of the use of land and to reduce the use of resources for transportation, energy, minerals and waste.
- Relationship With Neighbours 3.6 The development of North Wales should be based on principles which are compatible with neighbouring regions and seek to build on joint strengths for mutual benefit wherever possible.

4. Strategy

The Strategy seeks to build on the Regional Planning Principles to provide a clear physical framework for future development in North Wales. **The fundamental aim is to develop the region's assets and to spread economic growth and its benefits throughout the Region within the context of sustainable development.**

The Strategy is developed around 9 building blocks:-

Developing North Wales' position between Ireland, England and the rest of Wales by up-grading infrastructure within and outside the Region. The key requirements are:-

- Upgrading key transport corridors which provide essential rail, bus and trunk road links to adjacent areas and the principal towns within the region.
- Development of telecommunications
- Development of ports and airports within and outside North Wales
- Liaison and dialogue with neighbours on these matters.

Recognition of the opportunities provided by European funding.

This involves setting out a clear land use strategy to help underpin the higher levels of economic activity that are expected as a result of Objective 1 investment.

Protecting the unique culture and natural built environment by safeguarding:-

- Welsh language and culture
- The sea, coastline and countryside
- Wildlife
- Air and water quality
- Buildings and areas of historic and archaeological significance.

Identifying Sites for Large Scale Inward Investment and for Regional Employment which recognise the different scales of development in the more urbanised eastern and the more rural western parts of the Region.

Developing principal towns and villages by focusing on:-

- Renewal and regeneration of older more urban areas
- Strengthening the role of coastal resorts, rural market towns and key villages.

Provision of houses at a scale and in locations which support existing communities and economic development.

Rural regeneration by encouraging diversification of the rural economy and providing for employment and housing at a scale appropriate to the needs of these communities.

Utilising the Region's resources by:-

- Ensuring an adequate supply of minerals having regard to the need to protect the environment and local communities
- Carefully exploiting the wide range of finite (including oil and gas) and renewable energy resources

Providing for the reduction, re-use, recycling and disposal of waste in accordance with the Government's waste strategy

5. Environment

Environmental Features

5.1 Unitary Development Plan proposals should acknowledge important environmental features and establish policies to protect or enhance areas in National Parks; Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; Heritage Coast; the best and most versatile agricultural land; designated sites of nature conservation; built conservation areas and historic buildings; ancient monuments and archaeological sites. The main environmental features in North Wales are shown on Map 2. The countryside should be protected for the sake of its landscape.

Environmental Management

5.2 Development should be guided away from the most precious and most sensitive areas. Where material factors are sufficient to override conservation considerations and development does occur it should aim to benefit the rural economy and maintain or enhance the environment. Policies should seek the integration and management of local environmental and landscape features including local flora and fauna and the historic environment creating lasting benefits for existing and future generations and to minimise the extent of any change that may be caused.

5.3 Unitary Development Plan policies and proposals should take account of and where appropriate integrate existing and emerging Biodiversity Action Plans, Local Agenda 21 and other Strategies and, where applicable, those of neighbouring authorities and other environmental organisations. Natural resources and the protection of key habitats and species should be viewed positively as a valued asset rather than an obstacle to development to be enhanced through the Unitary Development Plan process, wherever possible

Settlement Boundaries

5.4 In drawing up their settlement boundaries in Unitary Development Plans, local authorities should balance the need for additional development land with the need to encourage the reuse of brownfield sites within settlements and to protect sensitive areas on their edges and open countryside beyond. They should assess the effectiveness of existing policies in guiding development and influencing travel patterns, particularly in areas with strong development pressures. The usefulness of Green Wedges/Barriers, where they exist, in meeting these aims should be evaluated and, if they are not proving effective, the use of Green Belts should be considered.

Development Sites

5.5 Most new development should be closely related to the

existing settlement pattern so that it is readily accessible and minimises the need to travel long distances. Areas of open space should be protected to preserve the character of settlements and every opportunity should be made to reuse and convert existing buildings and to redevelop and recycle urban land.

5.6 Unitary Development Plans and their supporting advice, such as Supplementary Guidance, should seek to achieve high standards of built development. It should be of a scale, design and nature which integrates well with the environment in which it is located; must respect local characteristics and use non-renewable resources as efficiently as possible. Every effort must be made to avoid environmental damage, where damage is unavoidable appropriate mitigation will be required.

5.7 The identification of sites for retail and leisure should accord with the sequential approach, i.e. identifying suitable sites in the first instance near to town centres; then on the edge of town centres and finally within urban areas in locations which are accessible by a choice of means of transport. Preference should be given to previously developed land in the main urban areas which can be well served by public transport.

The Coast

5.8 The North Wales coast contains some of the most important and fragile eco-systems in the UK many of which are of international importance. It stretches from the Dee Estuary SSSI, SPA and RAMSAR site in the east to the Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau Candidate Marine SAC in the west. The quality and attraction of the shore is a vitally important part of the region's tourist and leisure economy upon which both the bigger and smaller resorts depend.

5.9 The Port of Holyhead and the expanding Port of Mostyn are key elements of the transport infrastructure in North Wales. Obviously they depend upon a coastal location and form important trade links with other regions of the EU and beyond. The existence of off-shore oil, gas and aggregate reserves, together with the search for renewable energy sources such as wind farms, present their own opportunities and challenges for decision-makers. The coast has and will continue to play a major part in the economy of the area.

Integrated Coastal Planning & Management

5.10 Guidance on coastal issues seeks to encourage Local Authorities to act together to deliver a sustainable, integrated and environmentally sensitive land use planning strategy for the region's coast.

5.11 Policies and proposals in Unitary Development Plans should aim to enhance the economic prospects of the coastal area whilst protecting and enhancing its biodiversity, natural character and quality of the landscape and built environment. In this way the true value of the coast to the people who live, work and enjoy it can be realised.

5.12 Integration is made difficult by the fact that the controls and regulatory mechanisms on development are exercised by a number of different agencies operating under separate legislative authority which are further complicated by European regulations. The fragmented regulatory system is a significant impediment to securing the required degree of co-ordination of on-shore and off-shore activities in the coastal zone and maritime waters. It is imperative that there is an effective mechanism to facilitate much closer co-operation between all Agencies, Government Departments, Local Authorities and the private Sector.

Acting Together

5.13 Local Authorities can do much to ensure that there is greater collaboration in the preparation of their own Plans together with those of other Agencies. Existing and emerging strategies include:-

- Local Environment Agency Plans (LEAPS) for: Merionedd, Anglesey, Eryri/Llyn, Conwy/Clwyd, Dee;
- Shoreline Management Plans for Liverpool Bay, Ynys Enlli to Llandudno, and Cardigan Bay;
- Dee Estuary Strategy.

Such networks and groupings along the North Wales Coast can provide a platform to secure greater understanding and co-operation.

Coastal Zones

5.14 In preparing Unitary Development Plans neighbouring coastal authorities should liaise closely in identifying the extent and characteristics of coastal areas of influence. Local Planning Authorities will need to develop policies and strategies in a methodical and consistent manner with a view to identifying what is the relative weight afforded to and the functions and role of the major coastal land uses in its area. Such an assessment will give transparency to the process of considering the economic, social and environmental influences, and help identify where development may or may not be considered acceptable. The process will assist in both the making of and defending policy and development control decisions.

5.15 As a guiding principle only development which requires a coastal location should be so located. Development on the coast should be considered in the context of the capacity of the coast and maritime waters to absorb change and any risks which may arise from erosion, flooding or pollution.

5.16 The coast is a continuum and it is necessary to ensure that the policies and treatment of coastal zones at administrative boundaries are consistent and compatible. Local Planning Authorities should liaise at an early stage in the Plan preparation or review and ensure that other Local Authority functions which have a coastal influence are also involved. This will include issues of access and recreation, tourism, coastal defence, beach cleaning and emergency planning.

6. A Healthy Economy

Industry

6.1 Planning Guidance (Wales) has indicated that north east Wales is likely to continue to be a focus of economic development. However, the Guidance indicates that the Government is committed to ensuring a better distribution of jobs and investment particularly to rural Wales.

6.2 In the last five years, some 190 hectares of land in North Wales has been developed for industrial and non-retail development but the performance of the region as a whole has been patchy with unemployment rates in North West Wales higher than the national average. The improvement of the A55 has not, as yet, brought significant identifiable benefits to some areas of North West Wales. The main concentrations of industry are on Deeside and in Wrexham. Elsewhere, the service sector provides the main source of employment.

6.3 The economic advantages of the region include good connections to the motorway network in England, port facilities at Mostyn and at Holyhead, providing a link with Ireland; an inter-city rail route from Holyhead to Chester connecting with the main towns and cities of Great Britain, a good economic record, a flexible labour force, a range of higher education facilities and a quality environment. North West Wales, including Denbighshire, has been awarded EU Objective 1 status and appropriate projects are able to attract European grant aid.

Land Supply

6.4 The planning system can assist both economic and urban regeneration through positive policies and the process of land allocation in Unitary Development Plans. By these means, it is possible to assist the development of a balanced economy and to offset a decline in traditional forms of employment.

6.5 Local authorities will assess the amount and type of employment land required in their own areas, having regard both to the needs of the indigenous economy and the need to attract inward investment.

6.6 Account needs to be taken also of the strong economic interactions between North East Wales and the North West of England and the growing links with Ireland. The authorities of North East Wales will need to liaise with the English border authorities.

6.7 Unitary Development Plans should identify sites for employment development, and maintain a portfolio of readily available sites to meet the needs of small, medium and large-sized firms.

Sites for Large Scale Inward Investment

6.8 Planning Guidance (Wales) has identified the need for sites to support large scale inward investment. In North West England, for example, these sites have been identified as being capable of employing over 3000 people, accommodating one or two major developments and be over 50 hectares in size. In North Wales such sites should meet the criteria set out in paragraph 6.10. It is envisaged that such sites will be of National (UK) significance and, therefore, will be suitably located for international access.

Regional Employment Sites

6.9 The more important sites will be identified as "regional employment sites". These are the bigger sites available for development by the larger firms and for inward investment. The selection of these sites should be undertaken through a collaborative process, involving the local authorities in North Wales, the North and Mid Wales Economic Fora and the Welsh Development Agency as part of the production of the Unitary Development Plan.

6.10 Regional employment sites should exhibit the following characteristics:

- **be of sufficient size for the purpose**
- **be on land that is reasonably level and economic to develop**
- **preferably be previously developed land**
- **have good accessibility to the road and rail network**
- **normally be situated within or on the edge of main settlements**
- **be served, or capable of being served, by public transport**
- **preferably be in an Assisted Area**

6.11 Existing employment sites are shown on Map 1, Main Development Sites. Further sites will usually be identified through the development plan process. In exceptional cases, the needs of single large employment generators may be provided on other sites not contained in Unitary Development Plans.

6.12 Local authorities and the Welsh Development Agency will work in partnership to ensure the provision of infrastructure where it is lacking, bidding for available government funds where necessary.

6.13 Major employment sites should be safeguarded from other forms of development for the duration of this guidance.

Alternative uses will rarely be permitted on these sites and then only if they are relatively small in scale and do not conflict with the general intention to make provision for commercial and industrial development on the selected sites.

Tourism

6.14 North Wales has many attractions and tourism is an important job provider. Employment in tourism is, however, mostly seasonal or part-time and is generally low paid. There is a substantial amount of tourist accommodation available, mainly on holiday camps, a large element of which is self-catering. The main exception to this is Llandudno which has 18% of all hotel bedspaces in Wales.

6.15 Changes in consumer tastes and developments in travel opportunities since the mid 20th Century have been accompanied by a decline in the traditional British seaside resort. The tourism market is much more segmented than previously and there is a greater emphasis on individual activities, day trips, touring holidays and quality. There is a continuing need for investment in facilities and accommodation if the tourism sector is to respond to these and new challenges in the 21st Century.

6.16 Local authorities should enable, in their Unitary Development Plans, the provision of a variety of accommodation types and new attractions, including all weather attractions. Local authorities should seek to encourage quality and an extension of the holiday season. By these means it should be possible to influence the provision of more full-time and better paid jobs in tourism.

Town Centres

6.17 The area's main regional centres are Bangor, Llandudno, Rhyl and Wrexham together with smaller centres, rural market towns and tourist centres located across the region.

6.18 The region's town centres contain very high levels of investment in infrastructure, historic buildings, public facilities and shops. The concentration of facilities reduces the need for separate journeys, allows for multi-purpose trips and encourages the most efficient use of transport. They serve areas much wider than their immediate built up areas and play an important role in the social and community life of the area and are a significant source of jobs.

6.19 Unitary Development Plans should therefore make positive provision through land allocations for retail and other commercial developments to maintain the viability and vitality of the region's town centres and market towns.

6.20 Out of town centre development will be acceptable only where the scope for in centre development is very limited; the requirements of the sequential test are met and where impact is acceptable including impact on other centres.

6.21 In the case of small market towns Unitary Development Plans should consider allocating sites which enable a food store to locate in or on the edge of the town centre if this would maintain their continuing viability and vitality.

Regional Shopping Proposals

6.22 Town centre and retailing development in North Wales has been strongly influenced by the amount of expenditure which leaks out of the region particularly to Chester and Cheshire Oaks but also to developments in Liverpool and Manchester. The region as a whole will seek to resist further out of town centre developments or major extensions to them because of the vulnerability of existing town centres to further losses of expenditure.

6.23 It is considered inappropriate that any additional regional shopping centres (that is, retail developments of over 20,000 sq metres gross) outside towns should be located in North Wales because of:-

- the existence of major town centre and out of centre development commitments**
- the difficulty of clawing back any leaked retail expenditure**
- the need to safeguard town centres**
- the environmental impact in terms of lengthening shopping journeys**

6.24 Local authorities should prepare their Unitary Development Plans to take account of this view and ensure consultation and co-operation between authorities on food or non-food proposals of 10,000 sq metres or more.

6.25 In view of the existence of major retailing proposals in both North Wales and North West England and the potential adverse economic impact on town centres in North Wales, Planning Authorities in North Wales will seek to agree similar arrangements with neighbouring authorities in England.

7. Thriving Communities

Housing

7.1 North Wales has experienced different pressures on its housing markets over recent decades. The east has seen considerable housing development at a scale well above the needs of the area's local people. This development has been a mixture of retirement housing, mainly for people from North West England, and commuter development which has resulted in the large daily journey to work flows along the A55 and A483 and into Chester, the Wirral and other parts of the North West. The west has not been subject to the same pressures, but its future prosperity relates to the environmental, cultural and linguistic characteristics of the area.

7.2 The scale of development in the eastern part of North Wales is clearly not sustainable in the future in terms of the scale of traffic movements, the implications for the local labour market and services and the effect of these large and often unsympathetic residential developments on the surrounding environment. In the west immigration has changed the linguistic character of the area. The strategy is therefore one of providing houses at a scale and in locations which support existing communities and economic development, avoiding growth for its own sake.

7.3 Housing provision in Unitary Development Plans will be based on the following considerations:-

- **Meeting the future housing needs of local authority's existing population and any resulting household growth.**
- **The provision of housing to meet the needs of future migration trends should be based on a number of considerations:-**
 - **past levels of migration;**
 - **the desirability of achieving an age structure that does not place undue strains on local facilities or give rise to concerns about the future of the local community;**
 - **local economic policy in relation to the attraction of inward investment and the capability to provide jobs;**
 - **the capacity of the area and the availability of infrastructure to satisfactorily accommodate future housing.**

7.4 The provision for housing should recognise the need to maximise the use of the existing housing stock as well as derelict and under-used sites and vacant commercial properties in town centres and elsewhere. Provision based on windfall sites and conversions in Unitary Development Plans must be

justified on the basis of local knowledge and past trends.

7.5 Unitary Development Plans should base their housing proposals on the figures set out below. The North Wales authorities now have up to date population and household projections (Appendix 1) and have individually completed work on environmental constraints and capacity studies. The figures below reflect these considerations.

Proposed Maximum Housing Land Requirements 1996 - 2011	Local Authority	
	Anglesey	2,200 (1)
	Conwy	4,500 (2)
	Denbighshire	4,100 (3)
	Flintshire	7,400 (4)
	Gwynedd	3,400 (5)
	Snowdonia	700 (6)
	Wrexham	5,600 (7)
	Total	<u>27,900</u>

(1) This figure reflects the County's concern to redress the predicted population decline over the Plan period by facilitating housing development and is higher than the housing forecast.

(2) Figure in Draft UDP, approved by the County Council for consultation purposes. This enables a modest level of population growth and immigration consistent with (i) the encouragement of inward investment and job growth and (ii) the capacity of the area to accommodate future development, particularly along the coast. Figure excludes Snowdonia National Park

(3) Proposed change to Deposit UDP Spring 2000:- 4100 for the period 1996 – 2011.

(4) This figure is derived from the Structure Plan Second Alteration: Flintshire Edition for 1996-2001 and from the UDP Consultation Draft (May 2000) for 2001-2011. It should be noted that the housing need figure published in the Flintshire UDP Consultation Draft was 6,500 for the period 2000-2015.

(5) Figure based on research commissioned jointly by the North Wales local authorities. Figure excludes Snowdonia National Park. Change of use would contribute about 500 units to this figure.

(6) Derived from household projections with assumption of lower rates of migration based on evidence of zero net migration in Merionnydd between 1991 and 1996. It is assumed that growth within the Park will be slightly lower than in Gwynedd and Conwy in recognition of its lack of large urban centres.

(7) Figure in Deposit UDP, March 2000, 5550. Consistent with latest population/household projections.

Appendix 1 contains population and household projections.

New Settlements

7.6 The scale of the housing requirements given above means that no new settlements will be required in North Wales to meet these figures.

Welsh Language

7.7 The location, scale and type of development should always take into consideration regional and local distinctiveness and

the need to safeguard and enhance the Welsh language and culture where it is part of the social fabric of the community.

Rural Areas

7.8 The conflicting pressures of development and conservation have never been greater on rural areas.

7.9 Unitary Development Plans should draw up clear guidelines to protect important natural features and areas and facilitate appropriate development which safeguards these interests whilst helping to diversify and regenerate the economy and allow local communities to flourish.

7.10 Housing policies should reflect the need to sustain local communities, recognising that some additional housing will help local communities flourish. This means setting a scale and, where local surveys have been done, type of provision that local communities can cope with without damaging their physical and social character. This applies equally to English and Welsh speaking areas.

7.11 The recent decline in farm incomes re-emphasises the need for planning policies to facilitate appropriate rural diversification schemes, stimulate job creation and retain existing sources of employment and services such as local shops and community facilities.

7.12 Unitary Development Plans should provide suitable sites for such developments and facilitate appropriate expansion or conversion schemes for employment. They should protect sensitive areas from inappropriate development, making provision elsewhere.

7.13 The strategy in the Unitary Development Plan should explicitly recognise the interaction between town and country and the implications that decisions on retailing or transport in towns, for example, will have for the rural areas.

8. Better Use of Resources

Transport

8.1 A land use strategy can play a part in reducing the need to travel by promoting self-sufficient communities and locating major developments where they do not increase travel distances or encourage reliance on cars or lorries. Land use planning cannot alone achieve the switch from motor vehicles to other forms of transport. Policies have to be considered in the wider context of non land use measures, such as, financial support for the public transport network and through responses to, for example, the Road Traffic Reduction Act.

Land Allocations

8.2 Unitary Development Plans should:

- **Seek to co-ordinate land use and transport policies to reduce use of cars with particular reference to those emerging from Local Transport Plans.**
- **Develop policies and proposals which reduce the need for travel by car or lorry in favour of other, more environmentally acceptable forms of transport.**
- **Encourage the design of development which facilitates the use of transport modes other than cars and lorries**
- **Recognise the continued importance of the car in rural areas where the use of other forms of transport may be unrealistic.**
- **Set out criteria to examine new land allocations in relation to the transport network and seek to provide every opportunity for public transport, cycling and walking to be used for journeys.**
- **Recognise the importance of sound road safety principles in new development as a way of reducing the number of accidents.**
- **Provide advice on standards for off-street parking and other demand management measures.**

Infrastructure

8.3 Local authorities, in their Unitary Development Plans, should make provision for physical infrastructure to enable improvements to be made in communications, not just within the region but with other parts of the UK and Ireland. Particular attention should be given to strategic bottlenecks in the system. The key links are:

- **Holyhead-Chester-Manchester/Crewe/London and Chester-Wrexham-Shrewsbury-Cardiff railway lines.**
- **A55 Expressway from Holyhead to the National motorway Network in England, including the A494, A550 and A5117 link.**
- **A483, A487 and A470 which provide links to South Wales.**
- **Strategic bus route corridors linking the main towns and centres of employment.**

- **Ports of Holyhead, Mostyn and Port Penrhyn.**
- **Air facilities at Hawarden, Valley, Mona and Caernarfon and outside the region at Manchester and Liverpool.**
- **National Cycle Routes N5 (Holyhead to Liverpool) and N8 (Holyhead to Cardiff).**

8.4 The development of new and improved facilities to enable a greater proportion of freight to be transported by rail and sea should be encouraged. Where appropriate, Unitary Development Plans should identify and safeguard sites adjacent to rail lines and seaports which would be suitable for businesses willing to use these facilities. The potential for establishing local road/rail terminals suitable locations across North Wales should be examined.

8.5 Unitary Development Plans should facilitate the spread of digital communications - both to reinforce the economic attractions of the area and to reduce the need to travel.

Energy

8.6 North Wales, as elsewhere, is critically dependent upon a readily available supply of energy, the production and consumption of which have significant impacts on the environment. A first aim must therefore be to reduce energy consumption.

8.7 Unitary Development Plans should include policies which seek to reduce the demand for and use of finite energy resources, such as through energy conservation.

8.8 The whole process of energy related development is fragmented at present, with control being vested in various bodies. There is a need for greater integration of control over offshore and related onshore energy developments by all agencies, government departments and local authorities.

Oil & Gas

8.9 It is Government policy to ensure the maximum economic exploitation of oil and gas reserves consistent with good practice and the protection of the environment. Offshore exploration and exploitation for oil and gas has and is taking place in several areas of Liverpool Bay and the Irish Sea and further commercial developments are expected to follow.

8.10 At present, gas is brought onshore and processed at Point of Ayr, Talacre which has scope for significant expansion. It provides a ready made processing centre for any further oil and gas exploitation in the northern sector of the Irish Sea.

8.11 Unitary Development Plans need to give further consideration to the future impact of possible production from western and south western sectors of the Irish Sea and the resulting need to also identify sites for pipeline landfall, processing and associated power generation activities in north west Wales.

8.12 Unitary Development Plans should consider including policies which facilitate the development of onshore oil and gas reserves and service facilities to support the industry, provided that interests of acknowledged environmental or amenity importance would not be significantly harmed.

8.13 Many areas of North Wales are covered by important environmental designations and need to be protected from any adverse impacts of development.

8.14 New oil or gas pipelines should be located on geologically stable formations not forming part of the surface or ground water catchment and away from areas where the environment is particularly sensitive in order to minimise conflicts with existing and proposed land uses and to protect water resources from pollution.

8.15 The exploitation of oil and gas reserves may result in additional pressure for combined cycle gas turbine power stations utilising sour gas, which is very expensive to process and refine.

Renewable Energy

8.16 Unitary Development Plans should guide the development of new power generation and transmission facilities to, wherever possible, locations within or adjacent to existing industrial areas or on appropriate brownfield sites to ensure they do not have unacceptable impact on local communities or the environment and, where practical, avoid the need for overhead powerlines.

8.17 The Non Fossil Fuel Obligation (NFFO) has stimulated rapid growth in renewable energy development activity, ranging from wind and hydro electric schemes through to combined heat and power, solar and biomass systems. North Wales has the potential to contribute to the government's target of securing 10% of UK electricity demand from renewable sources by 2010 and has already seen a number of applications for alternative energy developments as a result of the promotion of the NFFO.

8.18 Unitary Development Plans should include policies which aim to facilitate the development of appropriately sized renewable energy schemes where their environmental impact is acceptable.

Minerals

8.19 A wide range of minerals is won in North Wales for construction,

energy generation and specialist industrial uses. Limestone, sandstone, sand and gravel are used as construction materials ("aggregates"), while clay is won for brick and tile manufacture and slate is quarried for roofing and building. The minerals industry is an important component of the local economy and provides significant employment, especially in rural areas. However, mineral development needs to be carefully controlled to minimise its impact on the character and local residents of an area. New mineral development should seek to avoid nationally designated areas of landscape or ecological interest.

8.20 Development Plans should aim to safeguard mineral resources from being sterilised by inappropriate development.

8.21 Development Plans should include policies to resist new or extended workings or the proposed re-opening of old quarry workings (including dormant quarries) in National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, nationally designated sites of ecological importance and other sites of national importance within the Region.

Provision of aggregates within the Region

8.22 The National Assembly for Wales intends to produce a Technical Advice Note on the detailed provision and working of aggregates. In the meantime, national and regional guidance is available in:-

- (a) Minerals Planning Policy Wales, published by the Assembly in December 2000. This sets out the broad context for all mineral working and emphasises the need to pursue the principles of sustainable development in parallel with ensuring that essential supplies of aggregates are maintained.
- (b) Minerals Planning Guidance Note 6 (Aggregates Provision in England and Wales), published jointly by the Department of the Environment and Welsh Office in 1989. Substantial parts of this note have been cancelled but the sections relating to the maintenance and calculation of landbanks for aggregate minerals and the monitoring and review of resources and demand still apply.
- (c) Guidelines for Aggregates Provision, produced by the North Wales Working Party on Aggregates in March 1995. This document contains forecasts of the likely demands for aggregates from North Wales sources in the period until 2006.

8.23 The key issue as far as North Wales aggregates provision is concerned will be the extent to which an adequate landbank of reserves can be maintained in the light of the significant landscape, amenity and ecological constraints that apply throughout the region. The current guidance (Minerals Planning Guidance Note 6) states that the landbank for an appropriate local area should be sufficient for at least 10 years extraction in the case of sand and gravel and that a longer period may be required for crushed rock. It may not, however, be practicable to achieve these targets (or any revised targets which may be set by the National Assembly) within the boundaries of individual planning authorities. Mineral Planning Policy Wales indicates that, in such

circumstances, a joint approach must be agreed between neighbouring authorities, including liaison with relevant mineral planning authorities in England.

8.24 An assessment is required of how provision for the supply of aggregates is to be apportioned between local authority areas within North Wales. This issue will be considered by the North Wales Working Party on Aggregates which includes representatives of the local authorities, the National Assembly and the quarrying industry.

8.25 Development plans should make provision for an appropriate local contribution to maintaining an adequate landbank of aggregate minerals within the sub-regional areas of North-East Wales (covering Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham) and North-West Wales (covering Anglesey, Gwynedd and Snowdonia National Park). Plans should recognise any special circumstances which will affect the contribution which an individual local authority area can make.

Impact on the Environment

8.26 Apart from supplying local markets within the region there is a substantial export of minerals, particularly by road to the North West Region of England from North East Wales. One quarry along the North Wales coast is rail linked and two have wharves for export by sea.

8.27 Development Plans should encourage the sustainable transport of minerals, for example by sea or rail, wherever practicable, in preference to road transport.

8.28 The continued validity of old mineral planning permissions, dating from the period from 1947 to 1982, has now been confirmed through the lists prepared under the Environment Act, 1995 as part of the Minerals Review procedure. Many such permissions in North Wales are inappropriate by modern standards, by virtue of the landscape or ecology of the area, proximity to residential areas, or are served by a poor road network. The "Review" procedures now provide an opportunity to apply modern conditions (or appropriate Orders) to such sites.

8.29 Development Plans should aim to minimise, and where possible mitigate, the detrimental impacts of mineral operations, including transportation, on the environment and the amenity of local communities.

8.30 Development Plans should require the progressive reclamation of mineral workings.

8.31 Material can frequently be recovered from mineral and construction wastes such as colliery spoil or slate waste for use as "secondary aggregates". Potential uses include use as an aggregate, for constructional fill or for cement manufacture. The use of such materials

can assist in reducing the demand for primary minerals won from quarries.

8.32 Development Plans should encourage the provision of secondary aggregates.

Waste

8.33 The bulk of household waste produced in North Wales is disposed of by landfilling at a small number of landfill sites. Many of the existing landfill facilities in the region have limited remaining capacity and consequently additional treatment and disposal facilities will be needed. Some clinical wastes are incinerated within the Region, while "Special" wastes are exported out of the Region for treatment or disposal in England. There are few recycling facilities for construction and demolition waste in the region at present.

8.34 The Waste Strategy 2000 for England and Wales (May 2000) is focusing on the following principles:-

a) The Waste Hierarchy:

This is based on

firstly the minimisation of waste wherever it originates;

secondly on the reuse of waste materials;

thirdly through recovery of waste, by recycling into new products, composting, or using it as a fuel to produce energy.

finally Landfill will remain as the final disposal option, but the amount of waste going to landfill will be greatly reduced as a result of EC Landfill Directive 1999/31/EC.

b) Proximity:

Waste should be managed in an appropriate facility as close as possible to its source.

c) Self sufficiency:

Each region should aim wherever practicable, for self sufficiency in managing waste.

d) Best Practicable Environmental Option:

Ensuring that the choice of any particular option is based on consideration of its environmental implications compared with any practicable alternatives, and that the option chosen will cause the least environmental damage and be consistent with current regulations.

e) Sustainability: meeting the needs of the community whilst not denying future generations the right to the best of the current environment.

This strategy will be reviewed by the National Assembly in 2001-2.

8.35 The UK Government and National Assembly for Wales have set targets as follows:-

Household Waste:

to recycle or compost at least 25% of that produced by 2005.

to recycle or compost at least 30% of that produced by 2010.

to recycle or compost at least 33% of that produced by 2015.

Industrial and Commercial Waste:

to reduce the amount landfilled to 85% of 1998 levels by 2005.

Biodegradable Municipal Waste

(Partly household, partly commercial) sent to landfill.

By 2010 to reduce to 75% of that produced in 1995.

By 2013 to reduce to 50% of that produced in 1995.

By 2020 to reduce to 35% of that produced in 1995.

As a result of the obligation to implement these targets new facilities will need to be developed within the North Wales region which can reduce, reuse and recover waste, particularly domestic waste. New landfill disposal sites may also be needed in certain parts of the region. There will also be a need to review some existing sites, due to the changing volume, type and classification of waste arisings.

8.36 Development Plans should require any necessary waste management or disposal sites to be adequately restored to an appropriate afteruse, with necessary aftercare.

8.36 Development Plans should make provision for the establishment of an adequate network of waste management and disposal facilities to ensure that the North Wales region is, as far as practicable, capable of dealing with all waste arisings within the region. Local Authorities should recognise any special circumstances which will affect the ability of an individual Local Authority to provide particular facilities.

8.37 An assessment is required of the alternative waste management facilities which will be needed to handle the wastes which now go to landfill. This issue will need to be considered strategically at a regional level. This will include local authorities, the waste management industry, the Environment Agency Wales, and the National Assembly.

8.38 Development Plans should ensure that in granting permission for any new development the generation of waste is minimised and the means of treatment or disposal of waste arising from any manufacturing or other process associated with the development has been taken into account.

8.39 Development Plans should ensure that there is a presumption

against waste management facilities which would result in a cumulative capacity in excess of the region's requirements.

8.40 Development Plans should generally presume in favour of facilities for the reduction, reuse and recovery of waste produced within the region, so long as the quality of the environment for adjacent land and land users is not significantly harmed.

8.41 Development Plans should resist the location of major new waste management or disposal facilities in National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, nationally designated sites of ecological importance and other sites of national importance within the region.

8.42 Development Plans should ensure that any necessary new waste management or disposal sites are satisfactorily reclaimed.

9. Reviewing the Guidance

9.1 To remain relevant this guidance will be reviewed and rolled forward on a five year cycle.

9.2 Members of the North Wales Planning Group will receive regular monitoring reports on the key data set out below and a full review of the Guidance will be conducted within three years to respond to any updated household forecasts.

9.3 In order to keep the Guidance relevant and up-to-date and to assess whether the region is developing in a sustainable way, the regional planning principles must be monitored. Indicators have been selected for each profile which are capable of being measured. No targets are set in this Guidance. It is a matter for the authorities in

preparing their UDPs to set their own targets.

Key Data

- Environment**
- indicators from the Local Biodiversity Action Plan and Habitat and Species Action Plans
 - number and type of departures from the Unitary Development Plan

A Healthy Economy

- availability of strategic sites
- employment land availability
- health checks on town centres

Thriving Communities

- housing land availability
- population and household growth
- number of Welsh speakers
- housing need

Better Use of Resources

- mineral reserves and landbanks
- waste generated/recycled
- existence of waste minimisation strategies
- indicators from Local Transport Plans

10. Consultees

Anglesey County Council
Association of Local Councils
British Coal Opencast
British Rail Property
British Telecom
British Waterways
British Wind Energy Association
CBI
Central Trains
Ceredigion County Council
CELTEC
Cheshire County Council
Chester City Council
Civil Aviation Authority

Coal Authority
Commission for Racial Equality
Conwy County Borough Council
Council for National Parks
Countryside Council for Wales
CPRW
Crown Estates Commission
Dee Estuary Advisory Group
Denbighshire County Council
Dublin & Dun Laoghaire Regional Authority
Ellesmere Port & Neston Borough Cncl
Environment Agency
Equal Opportunities Commission

ETSU
Farming and Rural Conservation Agency
Farmers Union of Wales
Flintshire County Council
Forestry Commission
Friend of the Earth (Cymru)
Government Office for the North West
Gwynedd Council
Health and Safety Executive
House Builders Federation
Hyder PLC
MEP & MPs and AMs
Mid Wales Economic Forum
Ministry of Defence
NFU
National Assembly for Wales (Planning
Div.)
National Grid
National Power
North Wales Economic Forum
North Wales Health Authority
North Wales Police
North West Regional Chamber
North West Trains
Powergen PLC
Powys County Council
Quarry Products Association
Railtrack PLC
Richards Moorhead & Laing Ltd
Royal Mail Property Holdings West
RSPB
Scottish Power
Secretary of State for Wales
Shropshire County Council
Snowdonia National Park
Sports Council for Wales
Transco
Wales and West Trains
Wales Tourist Board
Welsh Development Agency
Welsh Historic Monuments CADW
Welsh Language Board
Wrexham County Borough Council
Wrexham Water PLC

To add your name to the consultation
list, please telephone Judith Williams
on 01978 292501

Population and Household Projections

1. Introduction

1.1 In the absence of a reliable up to date set of population and household projections for North Wales, the North Wales local authorities commissioned consultants to provide population projections in 2000. The purpose of the projections is to assist in strategic and local planning and in service planning; specifically to help;

- establishing strategic guidance across North Wales;
- formulating housing policy in UDPs;
- assessing National Assembly projections
- providing guidance for other service providers, particularly in the public, but also the private sector

2. Current data availability

2.1 The only official benchmark against which authorities can currently assess their emerging policies is the National Assembly set of projections for Unitary Authorities based on 1991-94 trends.

2.2 Consultants provided more recent forecasts for each of the six Unitary Authorities in North Wales giving a degree of consistency, independence and authority.

3. The methodology, options and preferred option

3.1. The suite of models selected has been in use and regularly developed over the last quarter of a century. It is a multi-area model, incorporating migration flows between all constituent areas and flows in and out with up to 4 external areas. Migration for the area was constrained to mimic the National Assembly top down approach.

3.2 Ten scenarios were tested based on the different assumptions about the recent trends in migration, household formation and housebuilding. The details of the project were presented to a group of both information specialists and planning officers. There was a lengthy discussion to determine which of the projections should form the basis of the agreed strategic guidance. Inevitably some authorities favoured projections which most closely fitted their policy intentions. The pros and cons of agreeing a range rather than a single figure were also discussed.

3.3 The group agreed that Projection P2aV1, which was the option recommended by the consultants, should be adopted as a benchmark by the sponsoring authorities. The option is the most statistically reliable and most closely resembles what might have been produced in a National Assembly publication. For households it used the most up to date data which showed the best fit and required the least adjustment to produce outputs matching known base year trends.

4. Results for North Wales

4.1 The tables below shows the results of the preferred projection for population and households throughout North Wales. The greatest change in population is expected in Conwy followed by Denbighshire and Flintshire. Anglesey's population is likely to continue the decline of recent years.

Population	Anglesey	Gwynedd	Conwy	Denbighshire	Flintshire	Wrexham
1996	67,056	117,795	110,595	90,408	144,918	125,110
2001	64,772	118,234	113,878	92,021	148,133	125,536
2006	63,103	119,579	116,589	94,166	149,885	125,948
2011	61,787	120,737	119,155	96,119	151,275	126,308
2016	60,876	121,806	121,749	97,890	152,347	126,745

Households	Anglesey	Gwynedd	Conwy	Denbighshire	Flintshire	Wrexham
1996	27,801	49,632	47,652	38,851	56,878	50,876
2001	27,677	50,836	49,513	40,122	60,072	52,878
2006	27,713	52,541	51,487	41,702	62,536	54,540
2011	27,678	53,833	53,393	43,213	64,527	56,319
2016	27,780	55,252	55,567	44,857	66,442	57,459

5. Use of the figures

5.1 The North Wales local authorities have agreed that the figures in projection P2aV1 be used in preparing Strategic Planning Guidance for North Wales and as a benchmark against which individual authorities assess their own policy based forecasts and. They are not policy figures themselves but trend based projections. Local authorities may also wish to use them to guide service departments in their strategic service planning.