



**University of Brighton**

# **A Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in Wales**

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Produced by  
The University of Brighton, G & L Hughes Ltd and exeGesIS SDM Ltd

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## A Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in Wales

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Countryside Council for Wales  
Environment Agency Wales  
Forestry Commission Wales  
Sports Council for Wales  
Visit Wales  
Welsh Assembly Government  
Welsh Local Government Association

**Table of Contents**

<b>Page No</b>	<b>Contents</b>
4	Purpose and Vision
5	The 4 Stage Plan
6	Summary of Strategic Priorities and Opportunities
8 – 18	Stage 1: WRR: Demand and Supply
8	1.1 The Value of WRR
9	1.2 The Priorities of the Welsh Assembly Government
11	1.3 Participation and Demand
14	1.4 The supply side: water bodies and current use
19-25	Stage 2: Gaps in Provision
19	2.1 Meeting demand and filling the 'gaps' in supply
22	2.2 Recent initiatives to address the gaps in provision
24	2.3 Overview of gaps in provision
26-39	Stage 3: Strategic Initiatives, Actions and Opportunities
26	3.1 Introduction
26	3.2 Strategic Initiatives
32	3.3 Strategic Actions
37	3.4 Strategic Opportunities
40 – 43	Stage 4: Delivery and Funding
40	4.1 Delivery Options
42	4.2 Funding Implications of Delivering the Strategic Plan
43	4.3 Monitoring and Evaluation
44 – 49	Appendices and Maps
44	A Consultation procedures and project methods
47	B Key plans and strategies cross referenced in the plan
49	C List of Maps

**List of Tables**

<b>Table No</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page No</b>
1.1	Current and/or predicted participation in selected WRR Activities	12
1.2	Water Bodies in Wales	14
1.3	WRR Activities	15
1.4	Conclusions from accessibility mapping exercise	17
2.1	Welsh Water	21
4.1	Delivery option and partners for WRR strategic priorities and opportunities	41
4.2	WRR strategic priorities and opportunities: costs and links to One Wales themes	43

## A Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in Wales

### **List of Maps**

Map No	Map Title
1	Water bodies and Communities First Areas
2	Accessibility to rivers and enclosed inland waters used for game fishing pay to access
3	Accessibility to rivers and enclosed waters used for coarse fishing access by private pay (open to all) or public pay
4	Accessibility to enclosed waters used for sailing and windsurfing
5	Accessibility to coast, estuaries and enclosed inland waters used by personal water craft
6	Accessibility to coast, estuaries and enclosed inland waters larger than 15 hectares
7	Accessibility to navigations, enclosed waters and rivers with voluntary agreements used for canoeing
8	Selected Priorities and Opportunities

## **Purpose and Vision**

The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to identify clear and succinct priorities for the protection and development of water related recreation (WRR) in Wales, within the context of the current legislation. The vision can be summarised as:

Everyone who wishes to participate should be given the opportunity to enjoy (safely, responsibly, sustainably and with confidence) the full range of legal water related recreation on inland and coastal waters in Wales.

## **Water Related Recreation**

Water related recreation (WRR) activities are defined in this plan as those (sports and recreation activities) that make direct use of natural and artificial outdoor water resources (coastal and inland). They thus do not include activities where water is used as a landscape amenity, such as walking, cycling, sea cliff climbing or bird watching. They also do not include activities conventionally practiced in swimming pools, such as competitive swimming and water polo. A list of the principal WRR activities is given below:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Types of Use</b>
Paddlesports	Canoe polo; freestyle kayaking; canoe sailing; marathon; open canoeing; sea kayaking; slalom; sprint; surf; wild water racing; white water rafting; touring and recreation
Coarse fishing	Rivers, canals and enclosed waters (ponds, lakes and reservoirs)
Game fishing	Fast flowing rivers and Stillwater fisheries
Sea angling	Angling from shore or boat
Canal cruising	Conventional narrow boat inland cruising
Personal watercraft	Jet skis
Rowing	Competitive rowing in sculls to eights; some informal use of rowing boats
Sailing and windsurfing	Dinghies, yachts and larger sailing craft, keelboats and windsurfers
Land and sand yachts	Wheeled sail-powered frames used for competition and informal activities
Sub-aqua	Scuba diving
Surfing	Surfing and body boarding
Swimming	River and lake swimming
Water skiing	Water skiing, wakeboarding, on rivers, enclosed waters, estuaries and the sea
Wildfowling	Hunting and shooting ducks and geese
Gorge Walking	Climbing/scrambling/wading/swimming up and down steep river gorges
Model boats	A range of competitive classes, for motorised and wind powered craft
powerboats	All inland and inshore powered craft other than personal watercraft and ski tenders
Marine cruising	Motor cruisers used on navigations, estuaries and the sea

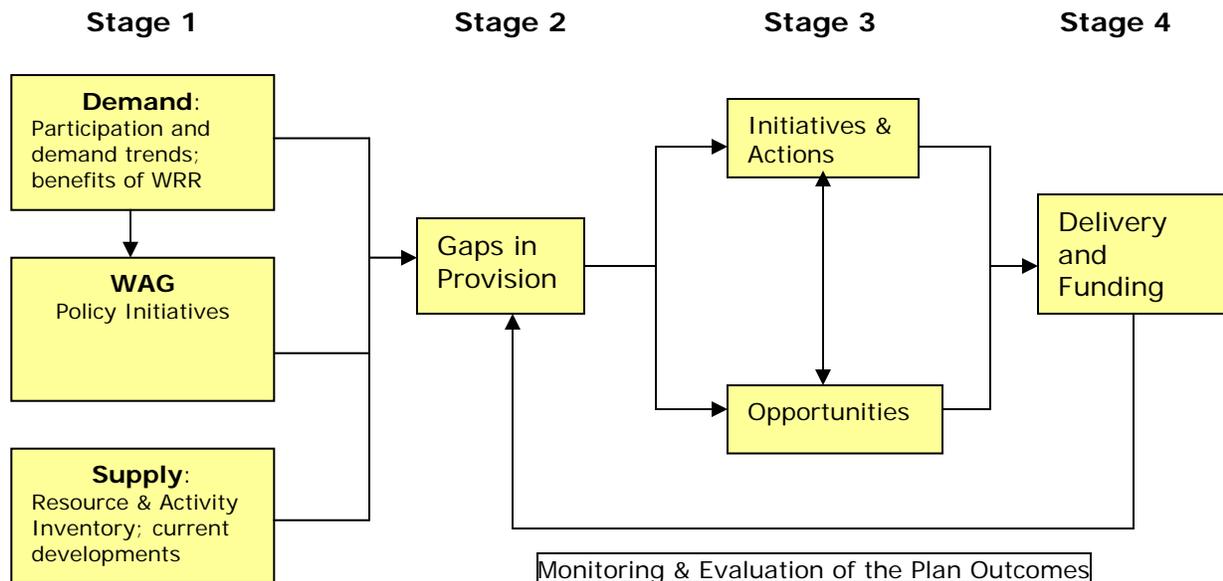
## The 4 Stage Plan

The strategic plan is based on two sources of information collated in **Stage 1** of the development of the plan:

- the **demand** for WRR, informed by projections about social change in Wales and the economic, social and health benefits of WRR which are also reflected in Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) policy,
- the **supply** of water and facilities for WRR, based on an inventory of the water resources that exist in Wales and their current and proposed recreational uses.

These are used in **Stage 2** to identify current gaps in provision. **Stage 3** involves addressing the gaps in provision by strategic initiatives and actions (initiatives that need to be implemented to fill the gaps) and opportunities (initiatives that would supplement the priorities and improve WRR).

**Stage 4** of the plan considers how the priorities and opportunities might be provided, with a monitoring and evaluation loop to check progress in addressing the gaps. This is shown diagrammatically below. The data collection and analysis process is set out in Appendix A.



## **Summary of Strategic Initiatives, Actions and Opportunities**

### **Strategic Initiatives – these need to be undertaken to create an appropriate strategic context for the planning and development of WRR in Wales**

#### ***SI1: Creating a robust evidence base upon which to plan for WRR:***

The quality of evidence available for decision making is incomplete. It is widely recognised, for example, that participation and demand data are partial, and that there is little reliable evidence about latent demand for WRR. There is, furthermore, a lack of information available on the space and other requirements of individual activities, meaning that planners and leisure operators frequently have to make assumptions, or rely on incomplete evidence. There is, thus, a need for existing evidence to be drawn together to ensure that the most effective use can be made of it. The evidence base also needs to include examples of best practice in environmental and other forms of management, examples of codes of conduct, information on environmental and other designations, and materials relating to the potential impact of the Water Framework Directive and the proposed Marine Bill.

#### ***SI2: Information and Marketing:***

Not all current opportunities for WRR are well used or understood. This should be addressed through a new partnership approach to providing information, using existing websites and information sources as appropriate. This will ensure that the right information gets to those seeking WRR and those who could benefit from access to WRR. It is important to link this to extant information services, such as the CCW/SCW natural facilities database, the EA(W) WRR audit (upon which this strategic plan is based) and current websites such as those operated by Visit Wales and British Waterways

#### ***SI3: Safety and Liability issues:***

There is much concern about occupier and operator liability with respect to providing WRR activities, particularly if more informal access to the countryside is encouraged. This is allied to growing concerns about health & safety audits and management and widespread support for encouraging the emergency services to become more involved in WRR activity planning. There is a need to ensure clarity about the current legal position, and the responsibilities that this places on owners, occupier, operators and participants. One initiative could be the provision of workshops to inform stakeholders on safety and liability issues.

#### ***SI4: Sharing Good Practice :***

There is considerable strength of feeling that the current lack of formal canoe and swimming access to many of Wales' rivers needs to be remedied. The WAG pilot projects have been implemented to address this, through developing good and innovative practice. An initiative is required to ensure, when the WAG pilots have had time to take effect, that the lessons learned are shared, and that all parties can work together to develop an appropriate approach to access that can be rolled out more extensively in Wales. Just as 'Waterways for Wales' establishes a 'made in Wales' approach to the regeneration of canals, so the pilots have the potential to establish a 'made in Wales' approach to canoe and swimming access.

#### ***SI5: Developing a Strategic Regional Agenda for WRR:***

There is a need to establish excellence in the provision of and support for WRR in all parts of Wales. This can be achieved through the creation of hubs and associated networks in key activity areas such as community provision, marine industries and outdoor activities. Linking the hubs to Wales' regional spatial agenda will have the added benefit of making explicit the regional dimension of WRR.

#### ***SI6: Celebrating Culture and Language:***

There are many opportunities to support the Welsh language and culture through the provision of WRR. In particular, developing coaching and training in the Welsh language and by linking WRR to Wales' natural, cultural and social heritage. There should be a specific priority within this to work with British Waterways to develop a cultural celebration through the waterways. Support could also be given to developing the recreational (as opposed to the fishing) use of coracles, thus further celebrating Wales' marine heritage.

**Strategic Actions - Initiatives that need to be implemented to fill current 'gaps' in provision for WRR.**

**SA1: Significant Sites:**

There is a lot of existing provision for WRR in Wales, but some of this provision requires renovation and improvement before it can fulfil its potential. An example of this is the poor state of many slipways, which are increasingly found wanting in health & safety terms. There are also numerous reservoirs and other enclosed waters that could sustain a lot more WRR activity than is currently the case. It is a priority that this existing resource is improved before new capital is allocated to address the remaining gaps.

**SA2: New Access to reservoirs, canals and public lands**

There is a considerable amount of publicly owned land in Wales (held mainly by the Forestry Commission, the National Parks and other local authorities, and British Waterways), together with land held in trust (the Crown and National Trust estates) and former public land (now owned by Welsh Water, for example). It should be a priority action to assess which of this property borders or incorporates strategically significant water resources that can be released for WRR. An implementation plan should then be established, together with a compliance framework to ensure, that where practicable, public access to the water is provided and maintained. There is also a need to support the work of British Waterways, in developing the full potential of the canal and inland waterway network, and Welsh Water and the other reservoir owners, in ensuring that all suitable reservoirs are sustainably developed for WRR.

**SA3: Accessible Places:**

Steps should be taken to identify and develop sustainable new resources, *where significant numbers of people can be given the opportunity of enjoying WRR*. While there is a need to consider how to overcome barriers to access, particularly in areas of social deprivation, the emphasis should be on quality opportunities for large numbers of people (the resource allied to equipment and services). There are also links to be made here to education and to the potential for mainstreaming WRR into the National Curriculum.

**SA4: Delivering NGB Facility Strategies:**

Most National Governing Bodies have facilities strategies, either for Wales, or covering Wales as part of a wider UK approach. Working with the Sports Council for Wales, there is a need to combine all the strategies, to ensure that all sports are properly provided for in the most sustainable and coherent way – at local, regional, national and international levels - and that synergies in provision are developed where possible.

**Strategic Opportunities - Initiatives that would improve the quality of the strategic initiatives and actions**

**SO1: Environment: WRR Provision in Regional Environment Parks:**

Opportunities exist through the development of 'Regional Environment Parks' which offer a mix of WRR and other recreation activities in high quality natural environments. This concept has been suggested for the Dee Estuary, and could equally be applied to Newport and the Gwent Valleys, the Elan Valley, or elsewhere.

**SO2: Tourism: developing 'Hydrocentres':**

The concept of a 'Hydrocentre' comprises boat storage, servicing and chandlery in a mixed residential (mainly holiday lets or timeshare, with some affordable housing for permanent occupation), leisure and shopping environment, with visitors and locals able to access the centre by sustainable means, thus minimising their carbon footprint. There is potential in north Wales, at Llandudno and Colwyn Bay for example (which are popular for motorised WRR), and in south Wales, at Porthcawl for example (which is popular for surfing and has the potential to rival Newquay in Cornwall as a major surfing venue).

**SO3: Developing the International Dimension:**

There are already a number of key international quality WRR facilities and resources in Wales – Pwllheli for sailing, for example – and other places and facilities have similar potential; these range from natural resources like rivers, to the artificial white water course in Cardiff, and the potential that Porthcawl can develop as an international surf centre. There is an opportunity to develop this aspect of WRR provision, particularly through the national and regional planning processes, both to demonstrate the high quality WRR available in Wales and as a contribution to Wales' economy.

## **Stage 1: WRR: Demand and Supply**

### **1.1 The Value of WRR**

The provision of WRR opportunities has a number of positive outcomes for Wales, including health benefits, social inclusion, environmental protection and economic benefits.

#### **1.1.1 Health benefits**

Physical activity is one of the most undervalued interventions in improving public health. It is closely associated with better physical and mental health, reduced mortality and weight control. Physical activity also helps improve balance, coordination and endurance in older people. Most of the potential health benefits in adults can be achieved through a total of 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity on at least five days per week<sup>1</sup>. WRR activities are ideal in this respect, especially swimming, rowing, canoeing, dinghy sailing and other activities that require sustained physical exertion. The benefits of physical activity are recognised by WAG, and form a cornerstone of its key policy in this area, Health Challenge Wales<sup>2</sup>.

#### **1.1.2 Social inclusion**

The social benefits of participation in outdoor recreational activity to quality of life have now been clearly established<sup>3</sup>. Social benefits for the individual include simply having fun, developing social networks, acquiring knowledge and skills, and gaining a sense of achievement. Communities also reap rewards as people take part in common activities and some individuals are diverted from crime and antisocial behaviour. WAG<sup>4</sup> states that sport and physical activity 'binds communities and the nation'. In Wales free swimming has been introduced for children and older people and this could act as a springboard for WRR participation. WRR activities offer a very diverse range of opportunities for people of all abilities, skills and fitness levels. They have considerable potential for increasing participation amongst groups of people with low participation rates who often face barriers to taking part in outdoor activities. Examples of WRR initiatives to improve participation include: the Angling Participation Project<sup>5</sup> which has found that, among disabled people, angling is their second choice outdoor activity to try out and their first choice to repeat; Get Hooked on Fishing, a police initiated project that has achieved a marked reduction in offending and truancy, and an improvement in educational performance amongst those taking part; and the British Canoe Union's Paddle-Ability projects.

#### **1.1.3 Environmental Protection**

The potentially negative impacts of WRR on vulnerable habitats and species has led many sport governing bodies to develop stewardship initiatives and environmental

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<sup>1</sup> Welsh Assembly Government (2003) *Review of health and social care in Wales*. Cardiff: WAG. Welsh Assembly Government (2003) *Wales A Better Country: The Strategic Agenda of the Welsh Assembly Government*

<sup>2</sup> <http://new.wales.gov.uk/subsite/healthchallenge/>

<sup>3</sup> Environment Agency (2006) *A Better Place to Play, Our Strategy for Water Based Sport and Recreation (2006 – 2011)*.

<sup>4</sup> Welsh Assembly Government (2005) *Sport and Physical Activity Strategy: Climbing Higher*. Cardiff: WAG.

<sup>5</sup> Jointly sponsored by Environment Agency Wales

strategies such as the Royal Yachting Association's *Boating for Life strategy and The Green Blue*. In many parts of Wales the Countryside Council for Wales, National Park Authorities, Environment Agency Wales and other organisations successfully manage a high level of WRR activity in very sensitive environmental sites using a wide range of tools such as permits, short closures and codes of conduct. Well managed WRR can contribute to significant environmental improvements. For example, angling organisations, landowners and private sector operators have all worked in partnership with Environment Agency Wales to contribute to a significant increase in the availability and quality of riverine game fish habitat. These partnerships have also increased the availability of coarse fishing over the last 30 years. This includes the development of good quality coarse fisheries within the rivers of Eastern Wales and the establishment of high quality 'trophy' fisheries for grayling and barbel in particular.

#### **1.1.4 Economic benefits**

Work by the Valuing our Environment Partnership<sup>6</sup> has found that the economic impact of the environment contributes around 9% of Wales' GDP and around 1 in 6 jobs (approximately 170,000 direct and indirect jobs). Approximately one-third of this economic impact is contributed by the marine and coastal environment, including WRR. There are considerable regional variations in the economic impact of the environment. The environment in the south east, south west and north of Wales produces £2bn - £2.4bn of output per region per annum (at 2003 prices), and accounts for 11-18% of jobs. In contrast, the economic impact of the environment in Mid Wales produces half the output of the other regions, but accounts for 2-3 times as many jobs (33% of the region's jobs are related to the environment). The economic impact of WRR is contained within these figures, but it is not possible to estimate the magnitude of this impact.

## **1.2 The Priorities of the Welsh Assembly Government**

The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and its agencies have recognised the benefits of WRR, in a number of policy arenas. Its long-term strategy for sport and physical activity<sup>7</sup> and the Environment Agency's fishing strategy<sup>8</sup> address the health and social inclusion agendas, where WAG has set a goal that, within 20 years, sport and physical activity will be at the heart of Welsh life and at the heart of Government policy. The essence of this strategy is to maximise the contribution that sport and physical activity can make to well being in Wales across its many dimensions. The priorities for sport and physical activity are:

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<sup>6</sup> The partnership is led by National Trust Wales and involves Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency Wales, Heritage Lottery Fund Wales, Welsh Assembly Government – DEIN. It has published a number of reports on the economic impact of Wales' environment, including: '*Valuing our environment: the economic impact of the coastal and marine environment of Wales*' (2006), and '*Valuing the environment of Wales: a review 2001-6*' (2006).

<sup>7</sup> WAG (2005) *Climbing higher: strategy for sport and physical activity*. Cardiff: WAG.

<sup>8</sup> Environment Agency (2006) *Fishing for the Future: Angling in 2015 – Our Plan to Increase Participation*

## A Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in Wales

- Wales needs to be more physically active in order to be a healthier nation;
- Wales needs healthy citizens to deliver long-term prosperity;
- Wales needs to maximise the synergy between sport, physical activity and the natural environment;
- Wales needs its people to be more 'physically literate';
- Wales needs more physically active communities and;
- As well as the success of individuals, Wales needs systematic and sustainable success in priority sports.

This is complemented by the focus on economic impact and environmental protection found in WAG's coastal tourism<sup>9</sup> and watersports strategies<sup>10</sup>, allied to WAG's *Environment Strategy for Wales*<sup>11</sup>, the lead strategy for the protection and enhancement of the environment. The overall approach is captured in WAG's economic, social and environmental priorities for the next four years, as set out *One Wales: a Progressive Agenda for the Government of Wales*<sup>12</sup>. The key aim is:

"Improving the quality of life of people in all of Wales's communities, from all walks of life, and especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged"

Opportunities for WRR can play an important role in the delivery of three main themes in the *One Wales* agenda in the following ways:

- *A healthy future* - participation in WRR has clear health benefits;
- *Jobs in living communities* - coastal and water-related tourism contributes significantly to regional economic health, employment generation, skill development and local regeneration;
- *Support for the Welsh language, heritage and culture* - the use and celebration of the quality of Wales' natural environment and built heritage provides ample scope for supporting the Welsh language.

The *Wales Spatial Plan*<sup>13</sup> provides sub-regional visions to support *One Wales*, and has a specific objective for WRR which is to:

"Integrate spatial management and development of the marine and coastal environment and our inland waters to make use of Wales' maritime potential in a sensitive and sustainable way"

The *Wales Spatial Plan* provides a basis for local communities in different parts of Wales to establish their own distinctive approaches. In the most deprived areas of Wales local people and agencies will be supported by the *Communities First Programme*<sup>14</sup> to work together in tackling social exclusion, poverty and disadvantage.

<sup>9</sup> WAG (2007) *Draft coastal tourism strategy*. Cardiff. WAG.

<sup>10</sup> Visit Wales (2004) *Catching the wave: a watersports tourism strategy for Wales*. Cardiff: Visit Wales.

<sup>11</sup> Welsh Assembly Government (2006) *Environment Strategy for Wales*. Cardiff: WAG.

<sup>12</sup> WAG (2007) *One Wales: a progressive agenda for the Government of Wales*. Cardiff: WAG.

<sup>13</sup> Welsh Assembly Government (2004) *People, Places, Futures – The Wales Spatial Plan*. Cardiff: WAG. Note, revisions to the Spatial Plan are currently (January 2008) under consultation.

<sup>14</sup> Communities First is the Welsh Assembly Government's flagship programme to improve the living conditions and prospects for people in the most disadvantaged communities across Wales.

## A Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in Wales

In addition to the national agenda, EU policy has an impact on WRR in Wales, particularly through the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD)<sup>15</sup>, which provides a new emphasis on river basin planning as a means of protecting inland and coastal waters, driving sustainable use of water as a natural resource and create better habitats for wildlife that live in and around water. The proposed UK Marine Bill will offer additional protection, particularly if a new Marine Management Organisation is established.

There are many other national plans and strategies for Wales that influence WRR opportunities for health, economic, social and environmental reasons. The principal documents that have also contributed to the nature and content of the strategic plan for WRR are summarised in Appendix B.

### 1.3 Participation and demand

#### 1.3.1 Participation and demand by Welsh residents

The existing data for Wales on participation in WRR is not reliable enough to draw clear conclusions on either recent changes in participation or in likely future demand for individual sporting activities. Broad trends for Wales can be revealed by using current data on WRR participation for the UK and information for Wales on participation in outdoor pursuits generally. The Sports Council Wales (SCW) currently undertakes reliable biennial participation surveys about outdoor pursuits (excluding some team sports such as rugby and football). Key headline findings for 2004/5 (the most recent survey available) were<sup>16</sup>:

- 45% of the Welsh population took part in outdoor pursuits, although this falls to 9% when walking is excluded (an earlier survey SCW survey found that just over 3% of the population participate in WRR, with 67% of these participants being anglers);
- There are distinct geographical differences in terms of participation rates across Wales. Rural locations, particularly in the north, have higher participation levels in outdoor activities compared to urban and deprived areas (60% of those living in some parts of North Wales are physically active at a level that achieves health benefits, compared to 30% in metropolitan areas and less than 10% in some of the Valley communities);
- Men are twice as likely as women to undertake outdoor pursuits that are not walking related;
- The lowest levels of participation are amongst socio-economic groups D and E.

Comprehensive surveys (annually since 2002) of WRR participation across the UK have been undertaken by the British Marine Federation (BMF), Royal Yachting Association (RYA), Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)<sup>17</sup>. The surveys provide detailed estimates of the level of

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<sup>15</sup> Brought into English and Welsh law in 2003, and reflected in the Wales Environment Strategy 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Sports Council Wales (2005) *Framework for the development of sport and physical activity*. Cardiff: SCW.

<sup>17</sup> BMF, MCA, RNLI, WYA (2006) *Watersports and leisure participation survey 2006*. Guildford: Arkenford Market Research.

participation in 21 WRR and leisure activities. There are difficulties in drawing conclusions for Wales, as much of the analysis is for the UK as a whole, while the regional breakdown is undertaken on the basis of ITV regions, where Wales is included with the West and South West regions of England. With this caveat in mind, the key findings that are relevant to Wales are:

- Over a quarter of the UK adult population now spend some of their leisure time in ways closely linked to coasts and inland waterways;
- The participation rates are 12.2% for coastal walking, 11.3% for general leisure time at the beach, 10.3% for outdoor swimming and 6.7% for 'any boating activity';
- Coastal walking, general leisure time at the beach, paddlesports, motor boating/cruising, surfing and kitesurfing, are increasing in popularity (in terms of the number of participants and the amount that they participate). For most other activities in the UK participation is static or declined slightly.
- For most WRR activities participation rates are higher for men compared to women, younger age groups compared to older ones and AB groups compared to the other socio-economic groups. Many commercial WRR operators observe that, in many parts of Wales, cost can be a deterrent to local people participating in WRR;
- The Wales/West/South West TV region records the highest participation rate of all ITV regions for 'any boating activity' (9.26%) and the second highest rate (38.97%) for any water related activity; and
- The Midlands TV region, a major generator region for WRR in Wales, is experiencing the largest growth in WRR participation in the UK (+11% in 2006).

These findings can be supplemented by the technical data collated to support the Welsh Coastal Tourism Strategy<sup>18</sup>, which were based on summarising survey and governing body data (Table 1.1).

**Table 1.1 Current and predicted participation in selected WRR Activities**

<p><b>Canoeing</b> – Slow growth predicted (UK Sport disputes this, stating that growth across the UK is high, at 9% pa);</p> <p><b>Diving</b> – Static but potential growth, particularly if additional (and more accessible) dive sites are released;</p> <p><b>Personal watercraft</b> – Future increase, dependent on the availability of facilities;</p> <p><b>Kite surfing</b> – Currently increasing;</p> <p><b>Rowing</b> - Growing rapidly; the number of rowing clubs has increased from 7 to 26 in a decade;</p> <p><b>Sailing</b> – Static but likely to increase;</p> <p><b>Sea Angling</b> – Static, with recent decline in clubs and members;</p> <p><b>Surfing</b> – Recent growth and gradual future increase;</p> <p><b>Wind surfing</b> – Modest future increase.</p>
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<sup>18</sup> Hyder Consulting (2006) *Welsh Coastal Tourism Strategy, Technical Report*.

### **1.3.2 Tourism demand**

Although tourism nights in Wales fell by 15% in the 1990s, demand for WRR remains an important part of the tourist economy. For example, Visit Wales<sup>19</sup> estimates that water sports holidays in Wales account for 880,000 tourism trips, 4.54m nights and £160m of tourist spending<sup>20</sup>. Recent work by the Valuing our Environment Partnership<sup>21</sup> indicates that the overall economic impact of the coastal environment equates to nearly 100,000 direct and indirect jobs, nearly £5bn per annum income to businesses and a contribution of £1.5bn to Wales' GDP.

The water environment plays a role in tourism more generally. A quarter of all tourism trips in Wales are to the coast and 44% of these visits are to North Wales. Of the UK tourists who visit Wales 13% take part in outdoor swimming<sup>22</sup>, 6% in sea angling, 5% in sailing, 3% in motor cruising, and 2% in coarse/game angling<sup>23</sup>. The demand from tourists for WRR will thus be more dispersed throughout coastal and rural areas. These demands create a secondary requirement for resources and facilities, including considerable coastal development such as transit marina berths to offer a 'safe haven' around the Wales coast<sup>24</sup>.

### **1.3.3 Potential Drivers of Change in Outdoor Recreation**

Recent research undertaken by the Henley Centre<sup>25</sup> for Natural England (and thus primarily about England) suggests that there are some general trends in outdoor recreation that are relevant to Wales. These are also likely to shape the future of demand for WRR in Wales:

- We live in an increasingly affluent society, with a greater focus on the 'experience economy' where people will pay for services and experiences rather than material goods;
- There are an increasing number of older people, who are developing a greater range of interests associated with health and well being, including in 'non-traditional' adventure based or challenge activities. At the same time young adults have increasingly sedentary and 'indoors' lifestyles;
- There is an increased need for information, both in terms of extending its' availability, and in providing it in a wider range of formats;

In addition to these factors in Wales, there continues to be a trend of reduction of employment in manufacturing and traditional jobs combined with the move towards a service economy which impacts on the culture and heritage of Wales<sup>26</sup>, with implications for the Welsh language. In particular, service and hi-tech jobs are increasingly sought in accessible rural areas and established metropolitan centres –

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<sup>19</sup> Visit Wales (2006) *Draft coastal tourism strategy*.

<sup>20</sup> It was widely asserted during the fieldwork that as many as half of these visits are by canoeists. However, there are no data available to substantiate this claim.

<sup>21</sup> Valuing our Environment Partnership (2006) *The economic impact of the coastal and marine environment of Wales*.

<sup>22</sup> In this case, 'outdoor swimming' refers to bathing – usually in the sea – rather than river or 'wild' swimming.

<sup>23</sup> Hyder Consulting (2006) *Welsh Coastal Tourism Strategy, Technical Report*.

<sup>24</sup> Visit Wales (2006) *Draft Welsh Coastal Tourism Strategy*.

<sup>25</sup> Henley Centre (2005) *Potential Drivers of Change in Outdoor Recreation to 2020: A Report for Natural England's Outdoor Recreation Strategy*.

<sup>26</sup> Economic Strategy Unit, Welsh Assembly Government (2003) *Employment and population trends in Wales*.

## A Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in Wales

with people prepared to commute to access them – at the expense of more traditional work in the Valleys and industrial coastal areas of Wales.

### **1.3.4 Overall participation and demand trends**

Overall, the participation data and trends suggest that, whilst some activities have static levels of participation, others have experienced recent growth that is likely to continue in the future. Demand for WRR from Welsh residents is likely to show modest increases in the future. Despite some urban-rural differences in participation, the geography of demand for WRR from Welsh residents will reflect the geography of the population. One third of the Welsh population lives in the major urban areas of south east and north east Wales. Demand for 'doorstep' opportunities will be greatest where there are concentrations of population. However, there is a need to consider how to engage the young and increasingly hard-to-reach members of society, to ensure that they experience the benefits of WRR. In contrast, the demand for WRR activities from outsiders, especially from the English Midlands, is likely to rise substantially. While this should have a positive economic impact on the Welsh economy, there are likely to be issues about its potential environmental and social impacts.

## **1.4 The supply side: water bodies and current use**

### **1.4.1 The physical resource**

Table 1.2 and Map 1 indicate that Wales is well supplied with water spaces that could potentially be used for WRR. Wales has a long coastline and 31 substantial estuaries. The physical environment means that there are fewer moving and enclosed waters in the west and south west of the country than elsewhere. The topography means that other areas, especially in the north, have high quality white water for canoeing.

**Table 1.2 Water Bodies in Wales**

<b>Coastal Waters</b>	
Coast length	1426 km
Estuary area	23912ha
<b>Inland waters</b>	
Canal length (including disused stretches)	203km
Canal navigations	152km
River lengths (rivers are main rivers defined by Environment Agency)	4681km
River navigations	120km
River access agreements for canoeing (inc. 35km WCA signed agreements as of September 2007 and 56km on the Wye/Usk pilot agreement). NOTE: recent WCA policy statements suggest that the 35km of agreement may be under threat of revocation.	91km
Enclosed waters area (inc. lakes, reservoirs, gravel pits 0.1ha or greater outside urban areas or of any size within urban areas)	8501ha
Enclosed waters (number)	657

### 1.4.2 Water related recreation activities on waters in Wales

At least one of the many WRR activities takes place on the vast majority (97-98%) of canals, coasts and estuaries in Wales. The use of rivers and enclosed waters is considerably lower. WRR activities occur on 71% of the total river length<sup>27</sup> but only 4% of the length has a right of navigation and a further 2% is covered by signed or pilot canoe access agreements. Only 59% of the area of enclosed waters is used and this space is mainly on larger lakes and reservoirs.

Coasts and estuaries are used for a broad range of WRR activities (20+ activities in the case of coasts, and 15+ activities in the case of estuaries). The main uses of the coast are swimming, sailing, angling, surfing, cruising and use of personal watercraft (jet skiing). Most of these activities (although not surfing) are significant in estuaries, together with water skiing. However, it should be noted that some estuaries, including the Severn Estuary, Dee Estuary and the lower reaches of the Rivers Wye and Usk, can be hostile physical environments for small craft, particularly where access to land is poor and tidal streams are very fast.

Canals are often used by a range of activities and are dominated by flat water canoeing (80% of the total canal length) and cruising (51%). Coarse angling also uses 27% of the total canal length. The sharing of space is less common on other inland waters where the dominant use is angling which occurs on two thirds of the river length and on 26% of enclosed waters. There is considerable inland water in the three National Parks, including 162 enclosed waters and 664kms of river. Beyond the headline findings, some interesting issues emerge, which have been collected in Table 1.3:

**Table 1.3 WRR Activities**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Existing Provision</b>
Paddlesports, including canoeing, kayaking and rafting	These activities are popular on moving waters such as estuaries and rivers where there is a public right of navigation or an access agreement (few are available in Wales). Canals are popular for flat water canoeing and kayaking, as are enclosed waters (20% of the area of enclosed waters in Wales is used for paddlesports).
Coarse fishing	Coarse fishing opportunities are not as numerous as those for game fishing. Coarse fishing does not appear to take place on rivers in isolation from game angling. Canals are used for coarse fishing, and have a particular value in not having a closed season. There are numerous stillwater coarse fisheries, many of which are managed as commercial businesses.
Game fishing	This is the most widespread use of rivers, occurring on two thirds of river length. A wide range of stillwater game fisheries exist from small put and take commercial venues to the large reservoir sites such as Brenig, Clywedog, Llysyfran and Llandegfedd, all of which have hosted major international competitions. The Welsh Bank Fly Fishing Championships are held on the Elan Valley reservoirs.
Sea angling	Sea fishing, from boats or from the shore, takes place around much of the coast of Wales, with different beaches and stretches of coast offering different opportunities and challenges. The coast of North Wales, such as the Llyn Peninsula and Anglesey, offer particularly fine sea fishing.

<sup>27</sup> It should be noted that some of these overall figures should be treated with caution, since some of the use of rivers and enclosed water will be casual or claimed, and thus not subject to precise verification.

## A Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in Wales

Canal cruising	Canal cruising is growing in popularity, with the Monmouth & Brecon Canal and the Llangollen Canal being amongst the most popular in the UK.
Personal watercraft	Although limited to the coast, personal watercraft use is widespread compared to power boating, occurring on over half the coastal length and estuarine areas whereas for power boating the figures are 23% coast length and 11% of estuary area.
Rowing	Only a small amount of water space is used for rowing in Wales – 6% of estuarine areas, and 3% of the areas of enclosed waters.
Sailing and windsurfing	Sailing occurs on large parts of the coast and takes place in around half of estuarine space. It is less widespread on inland waters, occurring on only 18% of the area of enclosed waters. The same is the case for windsurfing, although at lower levels of use.
Sub-aqua	Despite being suited to inland waters, scuba diving appears to be largely limited to coastal waters, occurring on only 1% of enclosed waters.
Surfing and kite surfing	Surfing occurs on 37% of coastal length and kite surfing 28% but these activities are concentrated in the areas of Wales with appropriate conditions
Swimming	Occurs on 22% of the area of enclosed waters, but often this is not at managed sites. There is very little river swimming (only 5% of total river length). This is despite the revival of freshwater swimming in the UK and the popularity of the activity in Continental Europe. This may indicate a demand for more managed facilities.
Water skiing	There is virtually no inland enclosed water available for motorised use. Even water skiing that benefits from calmer flatter inland water compared to the sea takes place on only 1% of the available area of enclosed water.
Wildfowling	Wildfowling, the pursuit of wild ducks and geese, has 30 clubs in Wales. The main areas of activity are coasts and estuaries, with the Dee Estuary being a major wildfowling centre.
Gorge Walking	There are few recognised sites for gorge walking, with the two principal ones in North Wales suffering from congestion on popular weekends. This has led to more use of other sites.

### 1.4.3 The supply of strategic waters and resources

Some water bodies that are currently used are highly important strategic locations for specific WRR activities and will need to be maintained in the future. The Draft Coastal Tourism Strategy for Wales identifies the Llyn Peninsular (sailing, diving, surfing, kite sports), Anglesey<sup>28</sup> (sea angling, diving and kite sports) and Pembrokeshire (diving and surfing) as strategic sites for a number of WRR activities. These indicate that strategic sites can be successfully shared by WRR activities creating mutual benefits. There is also a suggestion in the draft strategy that there is a strategic requirement for new marina development, to allow 'safe' passage around the Wales coast. This is reflected in the Mon-Menai Plan, for example, which identifies the need for better provision for a range of sailing and marine activities, from dinghy and inshore sailing to provision for cruise liners.

Of the inland water bodies and moving waters, the Afon Tryweryn in Bala is a very high quality white water canoe and rafting facility that, because it is fed by dam-release, can be used regularly<sup>29</sup>. The other white water facility of strategic significance is the proposed Cardiff Bay White Water Centre, again because it can be used regularly. The Lakes Tegid, Padarn and Llangorse are also highly important for watersports, while the Alwen Reservoir in Denbigh is a rare example in Wales of a club-managed water ski facility and one of only four enclosed waters where water

<sup>28</sup> The Mon-Menai Plan suggests that the entire coast of Anglesey and the Menai area is strategically significant, particularly for Anglesey itself, where it is a key driver of employment and income generation for local people.

<sup>29</sup> Given the requirement for certain water conditions in most upland rivers, the WCA has argued that all the main rivers in Wales have strategic significance, since only a few of them will be suitable for canoeing at any given time, with conditions varying valley-to-valley

## A Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in Wales

skiing occurs in Wales. A number of lakes and reservoirs in the south of the country – such as Llandegfedd - are also important, because of their location close to large centres of population.

The limited number of canals in Wales means canal navigations of any significant length are important inland waterways for canal cruising, canoe touring and providing good quality waterside walking links between urban and rural areas. The Llangollen Canal is particularly important in terms of industrial heritage.

### ***1.4.4 The supply of water bodies and travel accessibility***

The usable supply of water for Welsh residents and tourists wishing to take part in WRR is determined in part by travel accessibility, which is a measure of the travel time to water bodies from residential and tourist locations. An analysis of the accessibility of current water bodies for selected WRR activities has been completed. This suggests that most areas of Wales have relatively easy travel access to coastal or inland angling opportunities where the inland waters are open to all by payment to a private or public body. For some other WRR activities travel accessibility is more problematic. The results of the accessibility analysis for these activities are shown on the maps in Appendix C.

The maps have been generated using network analysis based on car travel times. In some parts of Wales, and in certain conditions, travel times will be slower than the norms assumed (see Appendix A). Also in many locations journey times will be much longer by public transport. The maps also show the proportion of the population in Wales and Communities First areas that are within certain travel time intervals. The key conclusions that can be drawn from the maps are shown in Table 1.4.

**Table 1.4 Conclusions from Accessibility Mapping Exercise**

Map 2 - Most areas of Wales have good accessibility to inland water for game fishing.

Map 3 - Most areas of Wales have good accessibility to inland water for coarse fishing. Those small areas where the time interval exceeds 20 minutes usually contain a local coarse fishery but these will not be open to all and are used by private clubs.

Map 4 – Accessibility to inland waters used for sailing or windsurfing is limited in many parts of Wales; half of the population in Communities First areas do not live within 20 minutes of an inland sailing or windsurfing facility. Coastal and estuary facilities will compensate in some areas but not in inland south Wales, central Wales and border regions. Some border areas can access sailing sites in England.

Map 5 – Accessibility to inland water used for powered sport is poor and is not mapped as so few inland water spaces are currently used (only 4 enclosed waters are used for water skiing). The coast, estuaries and marine 'lakes' can compensate for particular activities. The map indicates that for those living near the coast accessibility is good to locations that are used by personal water craft except in parts of South Wales. Accessibility maps to current locations for rowing and diving would show similar patterns as little inland water is currently used for these activities, although this is compensated for in some parts of Wales by coastal and estuarine locations.

Map 6 - There are many enclosed waters in Wales over 15ha in size that could accommodate powered craft alongside other activities, subject to environmental and other constraints. Accessibility to waters of this size is poor in south central Wales and the border regions. This is partly compensated for in some border areas by enclosed waters in England.

Map 7 – There are limited number of legal and contractual opportunities for inland canoeing. The map shows accessibility to these locations is poor in the south west, west central and central border regions of Wales. For the latter the only nearby river space is in England.

## A Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in Wales

The position for canoeing as indicated in Map 7 is more complex in reality. The Welsh Canoeing Association (WCA) notes how little legal and contractual access there is to rivers in Wales and all voluntary agreements are subject to conditions limiting use. The data collected during the preparation of the plan suggest that the practice of canoeing is more widespread, and actually takes place on over half of the river length in Wales. This suggests a substantial amount of 'informal' activity is undertaken, with or without the permission or knowledge of the riparian owners concerned. For the purposes of this plan only canoeing on rivers with agreements or public rights of navigation can be considered as providing opportunities. Without these rights the access cannot be promoted to others and issues such as health and safety, entry and exit points, and associated facilities cannot be readily managed.

Other activities, such as river and lake swimming also involve a significant amount of informal activity. Stakeholders involved with river and lake swimming have recently been collating information on locations where this activity occurs. The lack of current information further confirms the need for better public information on where WRR can take place safely and with certainty.

## **Stage 2: Gaps in Provision**

### **2.1 Meeting demand and filling the 'gaps' in supply**

The trends and patterns in demand and supply – when set alongside the potential value of WRR in delivering key WAG policies - are summarised below.

#### ***2.1.1 Demand issues***

The demand and participation information for Wales raise the following issues for the strategic plan:

- WRR initiatives seeking to increase participation must target low participation social groups and areas, especially those in urban/Communities First areas. Information from Sports Council for Wales shows that the contribution of WRR activities to improving the health and well being of Welsh people is not well understood, and little attention has yet been given to developing initiatives that encourage health-related participation. The responsibility for increasing levels of physical activity is held by a range of agencies and portfolios. There is a need to ensure that the potential of WRR is embraced through the different WAG portfolios, for example, planning, health, social justice, education, and that there is a joint approach by the national agencies to maximizing the opportunities.
- There is also the problem that, despite there being a lot of specialist information available on recreation opportunities, one of the key constraints to people making choices to use the natural environment to benefit their health is a lack of generally available information about “where can I go and what can I do”. This is a particular issue for poorer coastal communities which often experience difficulty in knowing where they can legally gain access to the coast. In addition, few people in disadvantaged communities can afford the cost of WRR, even when it is offered at subsidised fees. The Assembly Government’s free swimming initiative should be recognised in this context.
- Account must be taken of the geography of demand which will reflect the concentration of population in urban areas and the dispersed coastal and rural locations visited by tourists taking part in WRR.
- A geographical spread of WRR facilities and water spaces is required throughout Wales, to take account of patterns of demand; the need for good access to a range of opportunities; and the relatively long journey times - that would result in non-sustainable travel patterns - if facilities are only available in specific sub-regions.
- Specialist facilities will need to be concentrated at specific locations for cost and environmental reasons, but differences in demand from residents and tourists mean that specialist facilities will be required in a number of sub-regions of Wales. A similar situation exists with many activities, where there is a need for a concentration of resources to achieve a critical mass of activity, training, accommodation and so on, but with a need to ensure that there is a suitable network for spreading the benefits to other areas.

## A Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in Wales

- Participation in most WRR activities is likely to grow. More reliable data on participation and latent demand is required to allow monitoring of the WRR strategic plan.
- In parts of Wales there is a feeling that WRR is something that visitors do and there are poor links to local communities, their heritage and culture. Currently many of the instructors come from outside Wales and this constrains the potential of WRR to make a major contribution to supporting the Welsh language. A series of interventions are required, including more facilitation and training using the Welsh language.
- There is concern, amongst local communities, that local people – and their culture and language – will be excluded on cost grounds from the high quality environment that they have traditionally enjoyed and importantly, have helped to maintain and manage.
- The draft Technical Advice Note (TAN) 13 on Tourism considers that communities should gain maximum benefit from tourism in both the long and short term and should be involved in the development and promotion of facilities. It indicates that tourism should be supported as a means by which awareness and appreciation of the Welsh language and culture can be promoted. Added to this is a conviction held by many that the Welsh culture is expressed in part through the interaction of Welsh people and their environment.

### ***2.1.2 'Gaps' in supply***

The information on the supply and current use of water bodies indicate that there is more inland water that could potentially be used for WRR activities. The specific implications of this information are:

- Use and accessibility data indicate there are geographical 'gaps' in supply, including accessible provision for canoeing, coarse angling (south west Wales), diving, river/lake swimming, rowing, sailing and windsurfing, gorge walking and water skiing. There are also gaps in the provision of inland marinas on canals (particularly in the Brecon Beacons National Park). On the coast, the draft coastal strategy suggests that there is a need for more or larger marinas in some areas.
- There is also an organisational barrier to filling the gaps by providing new opportunities. There is no current guidance for planning authorities on what types and sizes of water resources are required, and in what locations. This leaves them unable to plan for WRR when preparing or reviewing Community Strategies, while also being unable to extract the full benefit from planning conditions imposed on major developments near inland and coastal waters.
- For all WRR activities there are locations in Wales of strategic significance that are currently under-used or where future opportunities could be developed. Few of these locations are publicly identified by national governing bodies for sport or other organisations. The governing bodies need to work with the statutory agencies, especially Sports Council Wales, to ensure a shared understanding of their priorities so that they can be clearly identified in the

## A Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in Wales

planning process. Management Plans need to be developed for each major WRR activity, which recognise the value of key strategic resources to enable the activity to continue to flourish as part of an integrated approach which builds consensus with other stakeholders.

- There are many water resources owned in full or in part by public agencies, public bodies and water companies. For example, Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water (DCWW) owns 79 reservoirs, many of which are currently used for some WRR activities. While DCWW makes a major contribution to provision for WRR (see Table 2.1), there is a feeling by many participants and representatives that more could be done, on reservoirs and other resources owned by DCWW, public bodies and other agencies. There is a similar, if more limited, case with respect to rivers under public ownership. While ownership is often fragmented, there are 26 rivers where lengths of over 1km have adjoining land owned by public sector agencies which are currently not used for WRR where there is clearly the potential to develop more WRR uses.

**Table 2.1 Welsh Water Reservoir Activities**

	Public (including tickets)	Fishing day	Sailing	Canoeing	Sub Aqua	Water Skiing	Visitor Centre
Llyn Alaw	*						*
Llyn Alwen	*					*+	
Llyn Aled	*						
Llyn Brenig	*+		*				*
Claerwen/Elan Valley	*						*
Usk	*			*+			
Beacons	*+						
Cantref	*+						
Llwyn - On	*						
Talybont	*+						
Llandegfedd	*+		*	*+	*+		
Llys-y-Fran	*+		*	*++			*
Rosebush	*						
Pontstcill			*+	*+			

+Canoeing By Organised Groups. Sub aqua restricted to WASC/BASAC. Sailing and waterskiing via club. Fishing Rover Permit available.

++Canoeing by pre arrangement.

- The National Park Authorities and organisations responsible for sites with environmental designations provide a management framework for WRR activities which is not available in other parts of Wales. Existing use of water bodies in the National Parks indicate that these frameworks can be used to balance successfully WRR and conservation interests in environmentally sensitive areas.
- The current supply situation is made more problematic by congestion at well known water bodies through large numbers of users. There are also cases of

inappropriate use, where people are not aware of the needs of others. The infrastructure and services available at the sites that can be used are often inadequate. This can range from poor, inadequate or inappropriate car parking, slipways, changing accommodation, storage and associated facilities, to a lack of equipment for hire or training in the safe use of equipment or the environment. There is also a lack of suitable accommodation and catering at some sites and destinations. Small scale remedial works can address many of these issues.

## **2.2 Recent initiatives to address the gaps in provision**

### ***2.2.1 Coastal Developments***

Most recent studies of coastal WRR have been based on the potential to develop tourism. The position of WAG on coastal tourism and the development of marinas is set out in the Welsh Coastal Tourism Strategy<sup>30</sup>. The purpose of the Strategy is to identify a clear way forward for the development of coastal tourism, which realises and builds on the economic potential of the coastline of Wales while respecting its environmental quality and recognizing the importance of achieving community benefits. The Strategy refers to the general need to improve access including slipways and parking, and identifies a range of new opportunities including improved provision for diving, surfing, climbing, kite sports, sea angling and leisure boat trips. There is particular reference in the strategy to marinas, with the view expressed that more transit berths are required around much of the coast, to provide 'safe havens' for marine cruising. Since the publication of the consultation draft there has been a change of Government and the responses to the draft are being analysed in the new policy context.

Another development of note is the publication of the Mon-Menai Coastal Action Plan<sup>31</sup>, designed to complement the draft national strategy. The Mon-Menai Plan makes the point that, for isolated coastal communities such as Anglesey, the economic benefits of coastal tourism can assume major proportions, particularly as alternative employment declines. The plan proposes a number of WRR developments, including a cruise ship berth at Holyhead and a 'water sports beach' at Penrhos, to cater in particular for powered and sail craft.

### ***2.2.2 WAG 'Pilot Projects'***

The Welsh Assembly Government has awarded funding of £100,000 to the Countryside Council for Wales and the Forestry Commission, specifically for water access pilot projects, which, if successful, may be replicated or adapted for use elsewhere. Five new projects have been identified:

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<sup>30</sup> Issued as a consultation document in January 2007.

<sup>31</sup> Isle of Anglesey County Council (2007) *Increasing the benefit of the Mon-Menai coast ... an action plan.*

***The Wye and Usk Foundation: Model Canoe Access Agreement***

The Wye and Usk Foundation have been working on updating and re-instating previous agreements permitting canoe access to the upper Wye and Usk, but which have now become defunct. The new agreement, which could become a model for agreements on other rivers, permits canoeing at any time from mid October to mid March (i.e. outside the fishing season) and when the river is in spate during the fishing season (March to October). The agreement covers 56km on the Wye (from near Rhayader to Hay) and the Usk (from Sennybridge to Crickhowell).

***British Waterways: Montgomery Canal***

This project aims to establish a family orientated outdoor pursuits and recreational hub on the Montgomery Canal between Burgedin Lock and Berriew village (approx 10 miles). The intention is to attract new visitors to the area and bring benefits to local tourism and non-tourism businesses. This has been planned with careful attention to conservation as part of the canal is a Special Area for Conservation. The project will centre on (in the first instance) the promotion of water based activities (canoeing and kayaking) but will also promote cycling and walking along and around the canal corridor as family and group orientated activities.

***National Trust: River Glaslyn and Llyn Dinas***

The project supports access improvements to the River Glaslyn and Llyn Dinas for water-based recreation activities. The work funded as part of this project will include on-site interpretation, information on codes of conduct to ensure responsible behaviour and physical infrastructure improvements to provide access to the water.

***Health Challenge Pembrokeshire: Llysyfran Reservoir***

This project aims to encourage people to get on to, and beside, the water. The Pembrokeshire National Park Authority will work in partnership with Health Challenge Pembrokeshire to support activities at the reservoir, with participants encouraged to canoe, row and walk sections of the reservoir and its banks.

***Forestry Commission Wales: Afon Mawddach***

Forestry Commission Wales have commissioned Snowdonia-Active to undertake work to pilot methods of facilitating opportunities for water-related recreation, including both activities that take place on the water, such as canoeing, and those that use the river corridor, such as walking.

### ***2.2.3 Rivercall***

This new Environment Agency Wales service, which the Minister launched at the Royal Welsh Show in July, now covers 34 rivers in Wales providing telephone hotline information on water flow levels.

### ***2.2.4 Fishing VisitWales***

The Fishing Visitwales website is being developed to incorporate live water level information, in order to reduce wasted journeys by anglers (and other users). The redesign of the website will also incorporate an improved fishery search facility.

### ***2.2.5 Planning Guidance***

Draft revised planning guidance on open space and outdoor recreation (Technical Advice Note 16) is being prepared by the WAG planners. In preparing their Local Development Plans, LPAs will be under an obligation to prepare an assessment of their open space requirements (TAN 16 refers to this as an Open Space Strategy) to

## A Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in Wales

ensure that adequate land (green space) and water (blue space) resources are allocated for formal and informal sport and recreation. This assessment should provide the framework for well located sport, recreation and leisure facilities that are sensitive to the needs of users, attractive, well designed, well maintained, safe and accessible to all. This is a major step forward in helping to ensure that accessible opportunities will be made available for local people.

### **2.2.6 Improved quality of life through the sustainable development of the waterways of Wales**

The Waterways for Wales project was launched through a consultation in 2003, which paved the way for a strategic plan, published in 2004<sup>32</sup>. The basis of the plan is to develop a 'made in Wales' inland waterway network to help improve the quality of life in Wales through:

- Stimulating economic regeneration;
- Acting as a catalyst for rural recovery;
- Developing sustainable living;
- Promoting the vitality of Welsh cultural heritage; and
- Promoting Wales in the wider world.

A working group has been established to:

- Provide strategic insight in project identification and priority, partnership development and indicators of progress; it is envisaged that members of the working group will largely work to their own strategies and projects, but that new initiatives and collaborations will emerge;
- Initiate liaison with regional or project partnerships that will focus on project delivery and report back to the national working group; new partnerships may emerge from the working group;
- Consider how project proposals can best secure the appropriate blend of funding and resources within the partnership structures, recognising the unique input each partner organisation can contribute;
- Ensure the voluntary sector is included in the working group at national level and that the working group and local partnerships should between them ensure community participation in the initiation and development of proposals and projects at the local level;
- Address other relevant issues such as strategic problems in accessing funding; resolving issues of competing interests; benchmarks and measures of economic, environmental and quality of life impacts; bottlenecks in navigation restoration or marina development.

### **2.3 Overview of gaps in provision**

There are eight principal gaps in provision, some of which have been addressed in part by recent developments, but all of which constrain the potential value that can be gained from WRR. The gaps (Gs) are:

- G1) Specific planning guidance on the provision for WRR. This is a problem throughout Wales, but is at its most acute in urban and *Communities First* areas, where water resources are at a premium for recreation and non-recreation uses alike.

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<sup>32</sup> British Waterways (2004) *Waterways for Wales. The way forward.*

## A Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in Wales

- G2) A comprehensive approach to the provision of information about WRR opportunities in Wales. Elements of an information system exist, but there is a need to co-ordinate the development of the system to ensure that it provides appropriate information when people require it.
- G3) There is a gap in the identification and protection of strategic WRR sites and resources. Most sports and recreation activities rely on a small number of strategically important sites, but often have no way of protecting or developing the sites. There is thus a need to develop a system for registering and protecting such resources.
- G4) Access to a range of WRR activities is not evenly spread across Wales. There are gaps in provision caused by topography (a relative lack of inland waters in west Wales and in the English border region), restrictive ownership regimes (many reservoirs and rivers, throughout the country) and environmental designations and concerns (recognising that some designated waters are able to support recreation provision). As a result there is a strategic need to secure more inland waters for most WRR activities in parts of Wales. This is particularly acute close to urban and *Communities First areas*, in West Wales and in the English border regions. In addition, there is a need to secure better coastal access, particularly for deprived coastal communities.
- G5) There is a gap in the provision of a comprehensive range of facilities and services to support the development of different types of WRR. Thus, while the topography can support different types of activity in different sub-regions of Wales, there is a need to develop a more strategic approach to supporting the development of the activities themselves. A cornerstone here is ensuring that existing facilities (waters, slipways, parking, changing rooms, etc) are improved to ensure that they yield the maximum sustainable benefit for WRR.
- G6) There is good environmental practice in the management of WRR in the National Parks and some other designated areas. However, there is no evidence that this practice has been disseminated to other areas or agencies. This leaves a gap in the provision and management of sustainable WRR throughout Wales.
- G7) With the exception of 'Waterways for Wales', little WRR activity is currently developed to celebrate Welsh culture. In particular, Welsh language coaching and training is just commencing, as is the widespread recognition of the relationship between outdoor recreation activities and the natural environment in Wales.
- G8) There are also gaps in the provision of large scale WRR facilities that can boost sub-regional economies and labour markets. Indeed, current plans indicate that the large scale developments that are being considered will be located in Cardiff and Swansea, rather than away from the metropolitan centres.

## **Stage 3 Strategic Initiatives, Actions and Opportunities**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Three levels of initiative are required to address the gaps in provision:

- **strategic initiatives:** required to create an appropriate strategic context for the planning and development of WRR in Wales;
- **strategic actions:** these need to be undertaken to fill current 'gaps' in the provision for WRR; and
- **strategic opportunities:** these are developments that would improve the quality of the strategic initiatives and actions; they tend to be at a larger scale than the initiatives and are designed to realise some of the sub-regional benefits brought about by the initiatives and actions.

### **3.2 Strategic Initiatives**

Six initiatives have been identified that need to be undertaken to create an appropriate strategic context for the planning and development of WRR in Wales:

**SI 1: Creating a robust evidence base upon which to plan for WRR**

**SI 2: Information and Marketing**

**SI 3: Safety and Liability issues**

**SI 4: Sharing Good Practice**

**SI 5: Developing a strategic regional agenda for WRR**

**SI 6: Celebrating Culture and Language**

Each of these is considered in detail on the following pages.

## SI 1: Creating a robust evidence base upon which to plan for WRR

The quality and quantity of evidence available for decision making about the planning and development of WRR is incomplete. It is widely recognised, for example, that participation and demand data are partial, and that there is little reliable evidence about latent demand for WRR. While the Valuing the Environment Partnership has undertaken research on the environment as a whole, there has been no disaggregation to allow the value of WRR to be estimated. There are also gaps between the role and value of WRR for Welsh people and as a major tourism industry. There is thus a need for robust data on participation, trends in participation, latent demand and the value to Wales of investment in WRR. The Countryside Council for Wales and Forestry Commission Wales have made a start to this, by beginning to monitor changes in outdoor recreation as part of delivering Climbing Higher. This includes undertaking a survey of outdoor recreation, starting in 2008, with a 6000 sample size, to measure changes in participation rates.

There is also a lack of information available on the space and other requirements of individual WRR activities, meaning that planners and leisure operators frequently have to make assumptions, or rely on incomplete evidence. Consequently, there is a need to develop robust guidance on 'blue (water) space' needs and demands, to help local authorities and others plan for WRR. There is extant guidance on the provision of natural greenspace in urban and residential areas<sup>33</sup>, which provides a framework into which 'blue space' guidance can be inserted. Draft guidance has been prepared as part of the process of preparing this draft strategic plan, and will be available for consultation in 2008. The guidance contains 'Blue Space' targets for local authorities on accessible water, defined as water to which at least some members of the public are able to gain access and participate in at least some recreation activities. In general, the greater the availability of a range of different types of accessible water, the more utility 'Blue Space' will have in meeting the needs of local people.

In addition, the evidence base needs to include examples of best practice in environmental management, examples of codes of conduct, information on environmental and other designations, and materials relating to the potential impact of the Water Framework Directive and the proposed Marine Bill. An example of good practice that could be included here are the Pembrokeshire Marine Code developed for the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC. There is a particular need to identify methods of assessing when WRR pressure outstrips the carrying capacity of a site. There is little evidence at present that many sites experienced sustained over-use. However, there are coastal 'hotspots' where erosion occurs, the National Park Authorities report that some areas require measures to reduce visitor intensity and impacts, and the conservation authorities report that disturbance, particularly at nesting times, can be caused by relatively low-intensity use. A robust impact assessment measure would be of value in such situations. Current work for Defra, on the Water Framework Directive, could yield some information on this.

**Proposal:** There is a need for all the agencies involved in WRR to ensure that relevant information is made available in an accessible form, and that there is suitable advice to help those wishing to use the information. The work done by the Valuing Our Environment Partnership is an example of good practice in this area, as is the dissemination work of the Countryside Recreation Network. A directory of information sources would be particularly valuable in this context, as an initiative to support the implementations of the strategic actions and opportunities set out later in this strategic plan.

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<sup>33</sup> Countryside Council for Wales (2006) *Providing accessible natural greenspace in towns and cities: a practice guide to assessing the resource and implementing local standards for provision in Wales*. Bangor: CCW

## SI2: Information and Marketing

Wales has extensive existing resources and facilities for water based recreation but the majority of people do not know what exists and how to access the resource. Opportunities to participate in WRR can be increased by providing people with improved information on existing and new, access and facilities on lakes, reservoirs, rivers and the coast. There is a need for further development of information systems linked to marketing and promotion, targeted at key population groups including young adults, disabled people, older people, excluded groups, and those people with health-related problems. Targeting the right information to the right people is the key here, for information alone will not improve participation.

The Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) Natural Resource Database has potential for development into a suitable public information portal, covering all recreation activities, whether or not they involve water. Activities such as walking, cycling and riding have been given priority in the development of the database but there is potential to extend it to include water related activities. Clearly there is a decision to be made about whether an integrated system such as this is preferable to a stand-alone WRR database, but it is desirable to consider the expansion of an existing initiative before reaching a decision about how to develop the WRR portal. It may also be the case that, if the database is expanded to cover WRR, additional funding can be drawn into the project to underpin its development and implementation.

A partnership should be created to develop the information and marketing portal. In addition to CCW, the partnership should comprise Environment Agency Wales (its audit of inland and coastal WRR prepared for this plan), Sports Council for Wales and Forestry Commission Wales (data on the implementation of Climbing Higher), Visit Wales ([www.waleswatersports.co.uk](http://www.waleswatersports.co.uk)), British Waterways ([www.waterscape.com](http://www.waterscape.com)), forums such as the North West Wales Outdoor Partnership and the Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum, and local authorities such as The Isle of Anglesey County Council (its Mon-Menai Action Plan).

### SI3: Better Information on Safety and Liability Issues

All WRR activities have elements of danger associated with them; people drown and are injured in water-related accidents. This is exacerbated when unauthorised or informal access is gained to resources such as rivers, lakes and reservoirs. Welsh Water has agreed with WAG to run a safety campaign about the dangers of swimming in reservoirs. Similar campaigns are required for other resources, to impress on the public that encouragement to undertake WRR activities should not be separated from understanding the risks involved, and the actions that can be taken to mitigate those risks.

There is much concern about occupier liability with respect to providing WRR activities, particularly if more informal access to the countryside is encouraged. Many landowners claim that one of the obstacles to offering increased access to WRR, particularly the use of inland rivers and enclosed waters, is concern over the extent of their liability in the event of an accident. This has been exacerbated by uncertainties over occupier liabilities on land defined as Access Land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and more general concerns about increasing insurance premiums. Clarity is required about the current legal position with respect to liability and the responsibilities that this places on the owners and occupiers of land and property and those providing WRR activities.

In addition, there are also questions of what activities can reasonably be accommodated on which waters. Sub-aqua diving is a case in point: risk assessments undertaken by the water industry have traditionally found that direct human contact with water in reservoirs, as in diving and swimming, is contrary to the primary purpose of the reservoir (water supply). In addition, the uneven and unknown nature of the bottom of many reservoirs (submerged buildings, for example) make – the risk assessments suggest – such resources too hazardous for diving to be permitted. Welsh Water currently allows diving at one reservoir. However, there may be others that are equally suitable, or it may be a case of revisiting the risk assessments in the light of modern technologies and the increasing demand for such activities to be allowed or encouraged. What is required in this case is guidance on undertaking risk assessments, with good practice examples of how activities such as sub-aqua diving have been assessed and accommodated under different situations.

There are, more generally, growing concerns about health & safety audits and management. Responsibility for licensing has recently passed from the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority to the Health & Safety Executive, which has created an Adventure Activities Licensing Service. While outdoor centres are able to comply with the licensing requirements, there are concerns that voluntary clubs and organisations struggle to find enough volunteers who are trained and willing to take responsibility for running WRR activities.

Taking all these issues into account, there is a need for an initiative to ensure that there is clarity about legal responsibilities and how to address safety and liability issues associated with WRR. This could be through the provision of new information materials, or specific workshops organised by bodies such as the Countryside Recreation Network, and using the expertise of bodies such as Environment Agency Wales. One example of good practice in this area is the Scottish Natural Heritage guidance on occupier liability<sup>34</sup>; a similar guide for Wales could be extremely useful.

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<sup>34</sup> Scottish Natural Heritage (2005) *A brief guide to occupiers' legal liabilities in relation to public outdoor access*. Perth: SNH.

**SI4: Sharing Good Practice**

There is considerable strength of feeling that the current lack of formal canoe and swimming access to many of Wales' rivers needs to be addressed. Associated with this are concerns about managing local resources for local people (and a concern that this approach cannot work in addressing national issues such as access), and about the future role of the national governing body for canoeing in Wales (the Welsh Canoe Association – WCA). While it is recognised that WAG has sought solutions, not least through the CCW report on options for canoe access to inland waters<sup>35</sup> and the current good practice schemes, and has a clear policy on the issue, concerns remain that the voluntary approach is impermanent, and that access to specific rivers at specific times does not meet the aspirations of participants.

The WAG pilot projects represent an attempt to address the issues raised, within the current legal framework, by seeking to pilot agreements that move from inflexible time-based agreements to ones that concentrate on the quantity of water in the river (on the basis that good canoeing is associated with spate conditions). Time is needed to see what impact the pilots have and what lessons can be learned, from the projects and from the EA agreements negotiated in England. As one angling representative commented during the consultation for this plan: there is *'more than enough water time for angling and canoeing to come to agreements'*.

In addition to access issue themselves, it is also recognised that there is a benefit to be gained in terms of climate change and the need to foster a low-carbon economy: linking low impact forms of WRR (canoeing, angling, sailing, gorge walking) with public transport, rental facilities and local amenities is a way of maintaining outdoor recreation, but in a way that minimises its impact on the environment.

An initiative is thus required to review the outcomes of the WAG pilot projects and work with all parties to develop an appropriate approach to access that can be rolled out more extensively in Wales. Just as 'Waterways for Wales' establishes a 'made in Wales' approach to the regeneration of canals, so the pilots and follow-up project have the potential to establish a 'made in Wales' approach to canoe and swimming access to non-tidal inland waters.

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<sup>35</sup> Countryside and Community Research Unit (2007) *Managing recreation on inland waters in Wales: a review of approaches*. CCW Policy Research Report No 07/4. Bangor: CCW.

## **SI5: Developing a strategic regional agenda for WRR**

The Wales Spatial Plan and Area Strategies focus on interlinking and interdependent, but distinctive, sub-regions, each of which has identified hubs of economic and social development. The hubs and their associated networks are designed to foster sustainable communities that have diversified local economies with key specialisms or distinctiveness. The desire to develop sub-regional hubs is reflected in the locations of the different types of WRR that are proposed in the strategic priorities and opportunities. Each sub-region of Wales has at least one WRR hub which will develop specialisms that define the region. Although hubs will vary, they should have good facilities and associated services, equipment for hire, coaching, links to vocational education and suitable accommodation for visitors. Examples of the hubs are:

### ***South Wales: Newport and the Gwent Valleys Water Based Community Recreation Hub***

This is an area lacking in accessible water resources and has low participation rates in physical activity. A hub and network, using resources such as the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal, lower River Usk and the Llandegfedd Reservoir, could provide new routes into sport and recreation, particularly for the most disadvantaged groups in society. Many national governing bodies have participation schemes that could be utilised here.

### ***South West Wales: Pembrokeshire Marine Hub***

The Pembrokeshire Spatial Plan Area Strategy identifies the Cleddau (Milford Haven/Neyland, Pembroke, Pembroke Dock up to Haverfordwest) as a potential economic hub serving the Pembrokeshire coast. WRR activity is a significant element of the economic activity of the area, providing high quality angling, diving, surfing and coasteering, for example. There is considerable potential to drive the regeneration of the area by increasing recreational capacity where it can be accommodated with commercial port use and nature conservation.

### ***West Wales: Carmarthen Outdoor Activities Hub***

Carmarthen has the potential to act as the focus of outdoor activity provision in the area. With additional infrastructure and links to the universities at Aberystwyth and Lampeter there is the opportunity to foster a network of outdoor activity provision that utilises the coast for specialist activities as well as some of the remoter inland water areas which can link to the rural development programme.

### ***Mid Wales: Brecon Paddlesports Hub***

There is potential around Brecon to provide for most paddlesport disciplines, using the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, Llangorse Lake and the Rivers Wye and Usk. The BCU centre at Symonds Yat should be included in the network, while there are significant commercial interests and outfitters in the Glasbury and Hay area, to provide equipment and training.

### ***North West Wales: the Mon-Menai Activity Water Sport and Recreation Hub***

North West Wales is an established destination for visitors undertaking WRR activities. Anglesey (sea angling, sea and beach sports), Tryweryn (white water), Plas Menai (sailing and canoeing), Plas y Brenin (canoeing) and Pwllheli (sailing) are acknowledged as centres for WRR activity. The potential here, in line with the Mon-Menai Action Plan, is to develop the offer more fully to achieve the full economic and social potential of the activities and the associated benefits such as tourist accommodation and services.

### ***North East Wales: Motorised Water Sport and Recreation Hub***

Colwyn Bay (motorised sea sports/personal watercraft), Conwy (cruising), Llangollen (canal cruising) and Rhyl (motorised sea sports/ personal watercraft) are the focus of motorised WRR for which there is growing demand and a limited number of places able to accommodate these activities. Local water ski clubs are hoping to improve provision for water skiing at the mixed use Rhyl Marine Lake. The technology and support services required for these types of recreation are also suitable for the Wrexham, Deeside, Ellesmere Port economic hub development proposed for North East Wales and its border with England.

## **SI6: Celebrating Culture and Language**

There is considerable potential for WRR to enhance Welsh culture, heritage and language. In particular, an initiative could be developed to use the Welsh Language as a medium for coaching, mentoring and instructor training. This initiative proposes to build on the work of the North West Wales Outdoor Partnership to increase the opportunities to be introduced to the disciplines of WRR through the Welsh language. Many of the instructors currently are non Welsh speakers and there is a need to enhance the skills and qualifications of Welsh speakers to be able to take on roles of providing instruction and teaching as a way of engaging Welsh speakers.

There is also ample opportunity to work with British Waterways (BW) to recognise the Welsh culture through the industrial archaeology of the canals and their environs. BW hopes shortly to have its Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and its surrounds recognised as a World Heritage Site; this would be the only waterway in Wales to be so recognised. Other canals in Wales do have built and historical assets of national and international significance, as well as protected sites for fauna and flora. Canals are used by third sector and private operators for organised outdoor activities and training, and by community groups catering for a range of users including the disabled and disadvantaged. There is potential for the provision of some of these activities in the Welsh language.

There is also an opportunity to support the expansion of interest in the use of coracles as a form of recreation and heritage preservation rather than traditional fish exploitation. The use of traditional netting methods is regulated to conserve fish stocks but other activities could be developed that would preserve the use of these ancient craft without increasing fish exploitation. In doing this the coracle, as an expression of Welsh heritage, could be introduced to other areas and resources. Their use is currently confined to fishing in the Rivers Teifi, Taf and Tywi.

### **3.3 Strategic Actions**

Four strategic actions have been identified to address current gaps in provision:

#### **SA1: Significant Sites**

#### **SA2: New Access to Reservoirs, Canals and Public Resources**

#### **SA3: Accessible Places**

#### **SA4: Delivering National Governing Body Strategies**

They are described in more detail on the following pages:

## SA1: Significant Sites

### *Improving existing facilities*

There is widespread concern that many existing water resources are underused, or fail to achieve their potential, because they are in a poor or unsuitable condition for use. Many slipways, for example, are poorly maintained and often do not meet current health & safety standards. This can render whole areas of coast or estuaries effectively out of bounds for many craft. This is the case on the lower Wye, for example, where there are few access points below Tintern Abbey. It is also often the case that there is limited suitable parking close to slipways and other accesses. This can lead to inappropriate parking, or it can lead to participants going elsewhere or even, eventually, giving up their sport. In addition, many water resources lack good changing areas and equipment storage, making them unattractive, especially for those new to WRR activities. Llandegfedd Reservoir comes into this latter category, despite determined efforts from local enthusiasts. A strategic programme of improvements to existing facilities could release a lot of capacity, often close to where people live, or at locations that they want to visit and use. In terms of determining which sites are the most important for such improvements, it is necessary to identify the most strategic sites for different activities and ensure that these sites are improved to meet their potential. Strategically, sites that are significant for a number of activities or reasons should be valued most highly in this exercise. However, there is currently little information – for most activities – on the identity of strategically significant sites:

*Environmentally significant sites:* The Countryside Council for Wales has identified a number of sites that are environmentally significant and have WRR activities taking place. Some of these sites suffer disturbance by WRR activities, suggesting that changes must be implemented to ensure that WRR can continue without degradation to the sites.

*Significant sites for angling:* Rivers in Wales are internationally renowned for the quality of their angling, and account for 40% of the sea trout and 20% of the salmon caught in England and Wales. This means that many Welsh rivers are strategically significant sites for angling. This does not mean that they are important solely for this activity, nor that they cannot sustain other activities.

*Significant sites for canoeing:* Many rivers in Wales are potentially significant for paddlesports, although few are legally accessible. Currently, the most important natural sites are Afon Tryweryn and Llyn Tegid, Llyn Padarn and Llangorse lake. In addition, paddlers view the proposed Cardiff Bay white water facility as significant.

*Significant sites for mixed-use:* Canals are some of the most significant sites in this category, particularly in the western valleys. A number of estuaries are important locations for sailing and powered sports, mainly because they offer safe refuge, launching and storage facilities. Pwllheli is a key base sailing and is identified by the RYA as one of only 5 locations in the UK suitable for world class events and training. Land yachting has extensive space requirements which can be found at a number of beaches, including Pembrey and Pendine in Carmarthenshire and Rhosneigr in Anglesey. Similarly the 8 surf schools in Wales are at strategically important surf beaches in Gower, Abersoch, Porthcawl, St. David's and Mathry. At all these beaches other recreational activities have a significant presence. At inland enclosed waters, such as Llangorse and Alwen, water skiing operates alongside other recreational activities on the land and water, while Llandegfedd caters for scuba diving in addition to other water related activities. Cosmeston lake is an important site for model boating and this is shared with canoeing, sailing and diving.

## **SA2: New Access to Reservoirs, Canals and Public Resources**

### ***Reservoirs***

Following privatisation of the water industry, Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water (DCWW) has retained ownership of 79 reservoirs and associated land, throughout Wales. While a number of these resources are used extensively for water-based sport and recreation, others are not, even in locations that are suitable for WRR, such as areas close to major urban areas in the South and South East of Wales. DCWW makes the point that its primary concern is water supply, not WRR. However, where WRR is feasible, DCWW is willing to receive approaches from organisations wishing to develop WRR. There would seem to be a strong case for such an approach to be made, especially to secure: more mixed use in the south east; more canoe and rowing access, particularly in mid and north Wales; more angling and diving in Snowdonia; and powered sports – particularly waterskiing on any reservoirs that are found to be suitable. There are 17 reservoirs in close proximity to Community First areas in South Wales but on many there is no public fishing access unless under the auspices of clubs. Some of these sites may have potential for coarse as well as game angling. There are other reservoir owners who may be equally able to provide new WRR opportunities (reservoirs such as Clywedog, Margam and Shotwick).

### ***Canals***

There is a significant opportunity to extend the recreational canal network in Wales. British Waterways and its partners have an established programme (Waterways for Wales) that identifies what needs to be done and what benefits can be achieved. The plans for the restoration of the Montgomery, southern Monmouthshire & Brecon and Swansea, Neath & Tennant Canals provides major opportunities for WRR. Work is underway to extend navigation on these waterways, which will open up new possibilities for recreation, often in areas that have few alternative WRR resources.

### ***Rivers***

There is a considerable property estate owned by the public sector in Wales<sup>36</sup>. WAG is keen to encourage access to this land where it is practicable and beneficial to do so. There may also be opportunities to utilise water bodies linked to power generation such as Llyn Trawsfynydd and Tanygrisiau Reservoir. An analysis of water in public ownership has been undertaken which suggests that the potential of the following rivers should be further investigated: North Dulas, a tributary of the Dyfi; Upper Ystwyth; Teifi at the Tregaron Bog area; Neath at Nedd Fechan and Mellte; River Afan and the Pelenna tributary; River Ebbw at Aberbeeg and Abercarn; and the Eastern Cleddau - downstream of Narberth. Closer examination may reveal that some of these sites are unsuitable for legal or other practical reasons.

### ***Compliance monitoring framework***

There are major opportunities to secure additional water resources for WRR. It is important that a full inventory is prepared, and that initiatives are monitored, to ensure that the full benefits of public and quasi-public ownership are realised. Monitoring could be led by a single body, but it will need a partnership approach, to ensure that all sport and informal recreation opportunities are considered.

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<sup>36</sup> The principal owners include the Forestry Commission, Defence Estates, National Parks, CCW, Environment Agency, British Waterways and some local authorities. There is also Crown Estate and National Trust property, especially on the coast.

### **SA3: Accessible Places**

Steps should be taken to identify and develop sustainable new resources *where significant numbers of people can be given the opportunity of enjoying WRR*. While there is a need to consider how to overcome barriers to access, particularly in areas of social deprivation, the emphasis should be on the quality and quantity of opportunities. There are links to be made here to education and to the potential for mainstreaming WRR into the National Curriculum.

#### **Lakes and reservoirs**

Improving the use of reservoirs has been highlighted as a strategic priority (SA2). Some reservoirs occupy a strategic location for attracting significant numbers of users, for a range of activities. In these cases, steps should be taken to ensure that the full potential is developed. Two possibilities that meet these criteria are:

**Llandegfedd Reservoir:** Identified by Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water as a priority for investment, this large reservoir is set in east Gwent near Pontypool. There are few other large waters in the area. It already provides for some activities but has the potential to become a multi use site to meet the needs of a variety of activities, particularly coarse and game angling, sailing, diving and paddlesports.

**Llyn Brenig, Wrexham:** this site comprises a lake and surrounding protected woodlands. It is currently used for low key sailing and angling. The potential here is to create a year-round visitor facility that would interpret the landscape, fauna and flora and encourage people to explore the lake and its surrounds by water craft. In addition, the lake is large enough to support permanent sports provision on a much more substantial scale than is currently the case.

Other potential sites include the **Llywn-On, Cantref, Beacons** and **Neuadd Reservoirs**.

#### **Rivers**

There is considerable demand for both long and short distance travel on moving waters, for a range of activities, particularly on sections of river that are near population centres. These are often not the rivers most in demand for white water experiences, but are those that are capable of supporting use by people with a range of skill levels (subject to suitable instruction and guidance). Some of the WAG pilot projects are being used to address access issues. Potential rivers and centres that could, through the provision of access arrangements, address this requirement include: the **River Dee** below Llangollen; the **River Teifi** from Llandysul to Cardigan; the **River Tywi** from Llyn Brienne, through Carmarthen to the **Taf & Gwendraeth Estuary**; the **River Seiont**, connecting Llyn Peris and Llyn Padarn with the sea; and the **River Conwy**, connecting into the Conwy estuary.

#### **Accessible Estuaries and Coast**

Some of the Wales coast can be difficult to access, particularly for poorer coastal communities. Navigation is also difficult in some areas because of a lack of facilities to access the water and to moor in safe water. The constraints are partly due to current and tides, but also the lack of suitable slipways, moorings and transit berths in marinas that offer easy and safe access to the sea and associated estuaries. Developing infrastructure to overcome this problem will make some of the remoter areas of the coast of North and West Wales more accessible to a wider range of users. Examples of areas that would benefit from development include the **Teifi, Mawddach, Dyfi, Glaslyn** and **Conwy Estuaries** and the **Mon-Menai coast**.

#### **Community First Angling**

This project is proposed to develop coarse angling linked to Community First Areas. Whilst many angling clubs and federations are actively involved in attracting marginalised and excluded people into angling, the purpose of this initiative would be to address inclusivity and deprivation issues amongst young people and disabled people in particular. Given that rivers throughout most of Wales are mainly used for game fishing it is proposed to focus attention on the development of **stillwater and canal coarse fisheries**, which have the advantage of being accessible throughout the year.

#### SA4: Delivering National Governing Body Strategies

Most National Governing Bodies have facilities strategies, either for Wales, or covering Wales as part of a wider UK approach. Those that do not have formal strategies are often able to identify what resources and facilities they require. Working with the Sports Council for Wales, there is a need to combine all the strategies, to ensure that all sports are properly provided for in the most sustainable and coherent way – at local, regional, national and international levels - and that synergies in provision are developed where possible. Some examples are:

##### **Canoeing**

**Tanygrisiau Reservoir and Afon Goedol:** potential for an 'extreme canoeing' course using a lake and its outflow (grade V to VI), subject to resolving issues over the potential impact on the designated woodland next to the river. Proposed **Cardiff Bay Olympic Standard Canoe Slalom:** an enclosed artificial course of about 250m in length is being considered, with pumps which will operate between 8-16 cumecs. It will be Olympic standard and will act as a training venue for the 2012 Olympics and a back-up venue for the Games. This will be a considerable WRR legacy after the Games.

##### **Surfing**

**Borth, Artificial Reef, West Wales:** consideration is being given to creating an artificial reef to enhance the surfing potential of the Borth area. This initiative would expand the tourism offer in this remote part of west Wales by offering more consistent surfing thereby extending the season and attracting different types of visitors. **Porthcawl:** with excellent surf and some tourist accommodation, Porthcawl is an ideal location to develop a new international surfing venue.

##### **Rowing, Canoe Sprinting and Dragon Boating**

**South Wales:** There is a current proposal for a 1,500m, 7 (rowing) lane course, in Cardiff Bay. There is also suitable rowing water for 4km up the **River Taff** and 3km up the **River Ely**, both in Cardiff. The impounded **River Tawe** in Swansea offers a potential 4km. In addition, there is suitable water for rowing at the **Millennium Lakes of Llanelli**. The Amateur Rowing Association in Wales hopes that at least one of these schemes can be brought forward.

##### **Dinghy Sailing**

The Royal Yachting Association has asserted that there are just five centres in the UK capable of hosting an Olympic pre-training camp. One of these – **Pwllheli** – is in Wales. Gwynedd Council have engaged consultants to look at proposed sailing developments, with part of the mix under consideration being to establish a **National Sailing Academy**. If this proceeds it will include accommodation to complement existing training facilities. Pwllheli's position is strengthened by the investment being made in it as an event venue. £120,000 is to be invested over the next three years to bring national and international sailing events to Pwllheli Sailing club and to further raise the profile of the area as a world class sailing location. There are also opportunities to develop sailing/watersport centres associated with redevelopment of 'urban' waterfronts and the **Head of the Valleys** project.

##### **Sea Sailing and Cruising**

The Welsh Yachting Association supports improvements to marina facilities and 'safe havens' at a number of sites around the Welsh coast.

### 3.4 Strategic Opportunities

#### SO1: WRR Provision in Regional Environment Parks

The concept of the regional park has been introduced in the North East Wales Spatial Plan Area Strategy (the River Dee Regional Park), as a large area of land that is designated as a park because of its coherence in cultural, environmental or recreational terms. Much of the park land will continue in its current use. Opportunities will be taken to develop recreational facilities such as walking and cycling routes and, where there is appropriate water, WRR facilities. The opportunities set out here relate to environmental integrity, with an emphasis on the water environment as a basis for conservation, sustainable recreation and water related activities. Some examples that could be developed include:

##### ***Dee Estuary Regional Park***

According to the NE Wales Spatial Plan Area Strategy, the concept of Regional Parks within the NE Wales sub-region aims to establish an internationally acclaimed attraction with a unique sense of place. The River Dee Regional Park has already been proposed, to complement the existing Mersey Waterfront Regional Park. The concept behind the River Dee Regional Park is to provide a new focus for this area of Wales, as well as recognising its connection to the Merseyside region of England. In addition to its heritage emphasis, it is envisaged that the Regional Park will provide for informal recreational access on land. However, there is potential for this to be extended to enhanced provision where appropriate for water-based recreation, on the lower River Dee and particularly in the Dee Estuary. There is potential to develop an access arrangement for touring canoeing on the River Dee below Llangollen, recognising that the Dee Estuary is not considered to be suitable for most types of canoe use. There are also links to the Llangollen Canal and the potential World Heritage site at the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct.

***Valleys Regional Environment Park:*** The Heads of the Valleys Programme is a 15 year regeneration programme which has been developed in full partnership with a number of local authorities and other Government bodies (including CCW and Visit Wales). The leisure and recreation goals for 2020 are that the Heads of the Valleys will be seen as an attractive place to visit, offering local people and visitors high quality facilities and attractions, with events such as live music and theatre. It is also envisaged that the tourism and leisure sector will play a more significant role in the economic prosperity of the area, complementing attractions in Cardiff, Newport, the Gower and Brecon. At present there are no specific projects for WRR. There is potential to work with the partners to identify WRR sites and initiatives that could be developed into a Valleys Regional Environment Park, making links between people, their activities, the rivers they live by and the reservoirs at the tops of valleys. The Park could thus fulfill an important WRR function for local people and visitors. The proposals for ***Llandegfedd Reservoir*** and the southern end of the ***Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal*** could fit within this broader Valleys Regional Environment Park concept, as could development of the ***Bryn Bach Country Park*** in Tredegar, with its 36 acre coarse fishery.

***Elan Valley Regional Environment Park:*** The Elan Valley is rich in fauna & flora, and the visitor centre is a popular local and regional attraction. The 6 reservoirs currently offer over 50kms of bank fishing and host the Welsh Bank Fly Fishing Championships. The Elan Valley Estate is 45,000 acres (much of which is SSSI, ESA, SPA, SAC and NNR) owned by DCWW. The Elan Valley Trust (EVT) has 999yr lease on 43,000 acres, with the remaining 2000 (the reservoirs, forestry and visitor centre) operated by Severn Trent Water. The management objectives are about nature, and access on foot. Although remote from major population centres, the Elan Valley lends itself to an integrated approach to sustainable recreation development, whilst recognising the conservation value of much of the area. While unable to sustain a high level of WRR, the reservoirs represent one of the few places in Wales where some canoe and rowing disciplines could take place. If such opportunities for WRR were developed, on a sustainable basis, they could have a positive impact on the local economy without detriment to the culture or environment of the estate.

## **SO2: Tourism Opportunities: 'Hydrocentres'**

The concept of the 'Hydrocentre' is a self-contained water-related residential and short stay accommodation development, in which the owners and tenants of the residential units have boat or other WRR equipment storage and launch facilities, as well as access to maintenance and repair services. In addition, the Hydrocentre complex would have high quality gym, fitness centre and swimming pool facilities, as well as catering and some retail. There would also be public transport services linking the Hydrocentre to the mainline rail network.

The idea behind the Hydrocentre is the development of a more sustainable approach to city dwellers having access to coastal and sea-based water sports away from home. At present they are faced with storing their boats and equipment at home and towing them to the coast whenever they want to use them. Hydrocentre allows them to store their boats and equipment at the coast, have access from home via public transport (with no need for private transport while they are at Hydrocentre), and to have access to small scale affordable accommodation suitable for frequent short breaks from home. While helping to reduce the carbon footprint of coastal water sports, Hydrocentre also offers an opportunity to reuse large industrial buildings located either on the waterfront of former ports and naval bases, or on industrial parks close to the coast (and accessible by local boat transport).

The Hydrocentre is best suited to the north and south coastal areas of Wales.

In **Colwyn Bay, Rhyl** and **Llandudno**, the emphasis – in keeping with the *North East Wales Motorised Water Recreation Hub* – could be on powered craft. The Hydrocentre would thus focus on marine engineering and repair services, with appropriate facilities for access to coastal waters.

On the South coast of Wales, **Porthcawl** could be a suitable location for a Hydrocentre, but relating to surfing and sail sports rather than motorised ones. Given its good public transport links with London and Bristol, Porthcawl has the potential to follow a similar developmental programme to Newquay in Cornwall, where 'Surfpods' (a form of Hydrocentre) are being developed as small scale accommodation for visiting surfers.

### **SO3: Developing the International Dimension**

It is clear that Wales has the quality of natural resources to develop a number of international WRR venues that are capable of contributing significantly to local and regional economies. Particular opportunities are available for the following activities:

#### ***Dinghy Sailing***

***Pwllheli*** has already been identified as an international venue for sailing, and a development programme has been put in place. The ***Mon-Menai Action Plan*** adds to this through the promotion of sailing on the Menai Strait and the Anglesey coast, with ***Plas Menai*** able to offer coaching and training at all levels.

#### ***Surfing***

***Porthcawl*** has the capacity to become an international centre for surfing, and certainly a rival to Newquay and Westgate Bay in Cornwall. With its relative proximity to Cardiff, Porthcawl is well placed to capture a youth market interested in surfing and popular culture, while fast train access from London to Bridgend makes it more accessible than North Cornwall.

#### ***Paddlesports***

***Afon Tryweryn*** is already well established as a premier white water river in the UK. The development of ***Tanygrisiau Reservoir and Afon Goedol*** could offer an international 'extreme canoeing' venue which, when added to the proposed ***Cardiff Bay Olympic Standard Canoe Slalom*** course, could place Wales firmly on the international map for white water venues. In addition, the ***River Wye*** and the ***Llangollen*** and the ***Monmouthshire & Brecon Canals*** offer high quality marathon courses and several lakes and reservoirs (including ***Tegid, Padarn, Llangorse*** and, potentially, ***Elan***) offer excellent waters for sprints and other still water events.

#### ***Land sail sports***

The long flat beaches of ***Pembrey, Pendine*** and ***Anglesey*** offer considerable potential to develop international venue for land and sand yachting. While all the beaches are used for multiple activities, developing management arrangements could allow their use for major events.

## **Stage 4 Delivery and Funding**

### **4.1 Delivery Options**

In order to deliver the proposals effectively, key issues to be addressed include:

- All key agencies need to agree to the strategic priorities and create a united front and vision for government and funding bodies;
- Coordinating the delivery of the strategic plan will continue to be managed by the partners (WAG, CCW, British Waterways, Environment Agency Wales, Sports Council for Wales and Visit Wales). In order to advance each priority a lead organisation will be identified as part of developing a practical implementation plan;
- Resources need to be targeted at those agencies, authorities and stakeholders that are directly involved in delivering WAG targets, especially increasing participation in outdoor recreation;
- The key agencies need to develop a collective approach to funding, including seed funding, to enable delivery partners to be flexible and proactive in securing the infrastructure requirements necessary to deliver the strategic plan;
- Working groups should be developed to lead the specific initiatives identified in the strategic plan;
- Delivery models should be developed that are able to combine multiple agency funding streams, property rationalisation and sale, co-responsibility (planning agreements, for example) and co-location in addressing the strategic plan.

Table 4.1 below outlines the types of delivery options that are appropriate to the different proposals, as well as identifying the key stakeholders for each of the proposal:

A Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in Wales

**Table 4.1 Delivery option and partners for WRR strategic priorities and opportunities**

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Delivery Options</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>
S11. Evidence Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wales Rural Observatory</li> <li>New venue</li> </ul>	Universities WAG and its agencies NGBs Commercial sector
S12. Information and Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public funding and delivery (development of CCW initiative, possibly linked to Rivercall and Fishing VisitWales)</li> <li>Public funding and private delivery</li> <li>Private initiative</li> </ul>	EA Wales CCW Sports Council Wales Visit Wales BW NGBs Outdoor centres
S13. Safety & Liability Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultant contract</li> <li>Internal review</li> </ul>	Adventure Activity Licensing Service Local authorities Landowner and farming representatives LAFs
S14. Sharing Good Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultant contract</li> <li>CCW/EAW/FCW review</li> </ul>	WAG Delivery partners NGBs
S15: Regional Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designations</li> <li>Planning gain</li> <li>Co-location of provision</li> <li>Partnership delivery</li> <li>Private sector</li> <li>Public funding</li> <li>Private/voluntary/trust initiative</li> </ul>	WAG Local authorities Sports Council for Wales CCW Visit Wales Disability Sport Wales Waterways Wales National Park Authorities Universities and FE colleges Private commercial and hospitality sectors Passenger transport sector Health trusts
S16. Celebrating Culture and Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross-sector partnership</li> <li>Asset review/rationalisation</li> <li>Traditional delivery</li> <li>Trusts</li> <li>Planning gain</li> </ul>	Welsh Language Board and the Urdd Harbour authorities Local authorities The Crown Estate National Trust Private landowners Local clubs Emergency services Education services Universities/FE colleges
<b>Actions</b>		
SA1. Significant Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public funding and delivery</li> <li>Public funding and private delivery</li> <li>Private or voluntary initiative</li> <li>NGB intervention</li> </ul>	EA Wales Private owners NGBs and clubs Public and former public owners The National Trust
SA2. New Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public funding and delivery</li> </ul>	Public agencies and bodies British Waterways Welsh Water National Trust National Park Authorities Local authorities
SA3: Accessible Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public funding</li> <li>Private/voluntary/trust initiative</li> <li>Cross-sector partnership</li> <li>Asset review/rationalisation</li> <li>PFI and other private finance</li> <li>Partnership</li> </ul>	NGBs British Waterways Local authorities Harbour authorities Local clubs Welsh Water

## A Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in Wales

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-location of provision</li> <li>• Planning gain</li> <li>• Codes of conduct</li> <li>• Access and management agreements</li> <li>• Access Orders</li> </ul>	Public owners Disability Sport Wales
SA4. NGB Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGBs</li> <li>• Sports Council Wales</li> <li>• Local authorities</li> <li>• Commercial sector</li> <li>• Voluntary Sector</li> </ul>	NGBs Sports Council Wales EA Wales Visit Wales British Waterways Commercial sector
<b>Opportunities</b>		
SO1: Regional Environment Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public funding</li> <li>• Public/private finance initiatives</li> <li>• Private finance</li> <li>• Planning gain</li> <li>• Tariff system</li> <li>• Public land disposal or asset rationalisation</li> <li>• Borrowing</li> </ul>	Local authorities Highways authorities CCW Sports Council for Wales Welsh Water Health trusts EA Wales British Waterways
SO2: 'Hydrocentres'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public funding</li> <li>• Public/private finance initiatives</li> <li>• Private finance</li> <li>• Planning gain</li> <li>• Tariff system</li> <li>• Public land disposal or asset rationalisation</li> <li>• Borrowing</li> </ul>	Local authorities Private sector Visit Wales
SO3: International dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public funding</li> <li>• NGBs</li> <li>• Public/private finance initiatives</li> <li>• Private finance</li> <li>• Planning gain</li> </ul>	Local authorities Commercial Developers Sports Council for Wales Welsh Water Visit Wales EA Wales

### 4.2 Funding Implications of Delivering the Strategic Plan

The proposals are informed by the key drivers set out in 'One Wales' and the issues identified that have implications for participation. At the core of the strategic plan is the conviction, set out in 'Climbing Higher', that increasing participation in outdoor recreation will lead to mental and physical health benefits across the nation. More participation will lead to additional jobs and wealth being created. In addition, greater access to, and familiarity with, the natural environment of Wales will underpin support for the Welsh language and culture. The relative weight of each of the proposals in achieving these benefits is set out below in Table 4.2. The table also shows the likely magnitude of cost of each priority and opportunity. In some cases a range is given since the priority can be advanced by both small and major initiatives.

**Table 4.2 WRR strategic priorities and opportunities: costs and links to One Wales themes**

Proposal	Healthy Future	Jobs in Living Communities	Support for the Welsh Language	Magnitude of Cost
<b>Initiatives</b>				
SI1: Evidence base	3	3	3	££
SI2: Information and marketing	2	1	2	££
SI3: Safety & liability	2	2	2	£
SI4: Sharing Good Practice	3	1	2	£
SI5: Regional agenda	2	3	3	££-£££
SI6: Celebrating Culture/ language	1	2	3	£-££
<b>Actions</b>				
SA1: Significant Sites	3	1	2	£-££
SA2: New access	3	2	2	££-£££
SA3: Accessible Places	3	2	2	£-££
SA4: NGB strategies	3	2	2	££-£££
<b>Opportunities</b>				
SO1: Regional Environment Parks	2	1	2	££-£££
SO2: 'Hydrocentres'	1	3	1	£££
SO3: International dimension	2	2	1	£££

Scoring system: 1 = secondary benefits; 2 = some direct benefits; 3 = major direct benefits  
 Funding: £ = small scale funding (up to £100,000), ££ = £100k-£500k, £££ = more than £500k

### 4.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

This strategic plan is intended to be a 'living' document that is subject to regular review and revision. Many of the gaps that have been identified in this plan will be filled by the implementation of the priority actions. It may be that other gaps will become clear as the quality of information grows and people's expectation of the quality and quantity of provision changes. Equally, it may be that, as the gaps are filled, the potential of the opportunity actions becomes more apparent, particularly in helping address sub-regional economic and social development. It is therefore recommended that an annual monitoring report is prepared on the actions that have been initiated in the previous year, with 5 yearly reviews of the plan itself, to ensure that it remains fit for its purpose.

## **Appendix A**

### **Consultation Procedures and Project Modules**

This appendix describes all the data and material that has been used in the development of the strategic plan for WRR. Eight main activities were undertaken concurrently in order to develop the plan.

#### *Stakeholder workshops*

Seven full day workshops with stakeholders were held in Wales between 26 February and 14 March at Newtown, Aberystwyth, Bangor, Wrexham, Cardiff, Narberth and Swansea. All attendees received a workshop report for comment. An overall report for the workshops in Wales is available at <http://www.brighton.ac.uk/waterrecreation/reports.htm>

#### *A project website*

A project website was set up at <http://www.brighton.ac.uk/waterrecreation/>. This provides a project overview, details of the project team and future activities, workshop outputs and an opportunity to submit comments. The draft plan is also available on the website and comments can be submitted via the website.

#### *Stakeholder posters*

Prior to each workshop attendees were asked to prepare a poster setting out their views on the key issues facing WRR. These were designed to promote discussion at workshops. Some stakeholders prepared posters after workshops. All posters were then posted on the website and a blog developed to allow comments to be made on individual posters.

#### *Further consultation*

Some key stakeholders were unable to attend workshops so they were consulted separately. The workshops and other of the main activities identified key documents and information that had to be obtained from some stakeholders by further consultations. All relevant sporting national governing bodies were also involved either in the workshops or in further consultations.

#### *Additional comments from stakeholders*

A number of stakeholders submitted comments directly or via the website. These were summarised and considered alongside material gained from the workshops.

#### *A review of all other relevant plans and strategies at a regional and national level.*

A total of 65 plans and strategies relevant to WRR in Wales were summarised to identify if they should be accommodated or cross referenced in the strategic plan. Of these, 31 were specifically for Wales and the rest were for Great Britain or the UK. In conjunction with the steering group the key plans to be cross referenced in developing the WRR strategic plan were identified and they are summarised in appendix B. A series of other plans and strategies have also been accommodated especially in the priorities and proposals but they are not mentioned specifically.

#### *Spatial Decision Support System (SDSS) for water bodies in Wales*

exeGIS Spatial Data Management ([www.esdm.co.uk](http://www.esdm.co.uk)) have led the development of a Spatial Decision Support System (SDSS) to provide evidence on the nature and

## A Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in Wales

use of water bodies in Wales. Information from the SDSS has been used as evidence to inform the development of the strategy.

A number of different spatial datasets were brought together using a geographic information system (GIS) to create an inventory of the total water resource.

For the river network Environment Agency supplied 'General Quality Assessment' (GQA) data and a UK 'main rivers' dataset. Parts of the GQA and main rivers dataset were combined to generate a comprehensive river network reaching to the tidal limit and water flow data in the GQA dataset was used to exclude very small rivers that were unlikely to be suitable for any form of recreation. The resulting network was divided into uniquely identified 'sections', based on intersections with other rivers (confluences). Sections were generally limited to a maximum length of 15 km. It is important to understand that whilst the total river network used in this project has been generated rationally and in manner that is repeatable on other UK regions, the inclusion of a river (or part thereof) does not necessarily mean that it is suitable for any recreational use. For the above reason it should be understood that figures presenting the proportion of the river network that can be used for a recreational activity, refer to the total river network identified by this project and not the proportion of the river network that is necessarily suitable for that activity.

For lakes and reservoirs Environment Agency supplied Lakes data and Risk Assessment data and these were used along with UK lakes data ([www.uklakes.net](http://www.uklakes.net)). Due to their large numbers water bodies smaller than 1ha were removed from the dataset in rural areas although kept in urban areas. It should be understood that figures presenting the proportion of the lakes and reservoirs that can be used for a recreational activity, refer to the total lakes and reservoirs identified by this project and not the proportion of the lakes and reservoirs that are necessarily suitable for that activity.

Analysis of the data in the SDSS has included simple descriptive statistics and more complex accessibility or network analysis. The later analysis calculates travel times from areas of populations to the nearest location suitable for the activity being reported on. Travel times are based on travel by car, with the following relationship between road type and average speed:

- Motorway 65 MPH
- Trunk Road 55 MPH
- A Road 40 MPH
- B Road 34 MPH
- Other Minor Roads 25 MPH

Travel from the nearest point on the road network to the recreation location (approximate position) is assumed to be on foot in a direct line, with a travel speed of 3.125 mph.

To identify 'nearest location' a series of 'access points' were automatically created across the network. Access points were added every 0.5km to rivers, canals, coast line and estuaries and a centre point was added to each lake and reservoir.

Population figures are approximate values based on a point data set of post code areas and total population numbers from the 2001 Census of Population.

## A Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in Wales

The data from the project will be made available to Environment Agency Wales and will be one of the outputs from the development of the Strategic plan for WRR.

### *Steering group meetings*

The preparation of this plan was managed by regular meetings of a steering group comprised of representatives from British Waterways, Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency Wales, Forestry Commission Wales, Sports Council for Wales, Visit Wales, Welsh Assembly Government and Welsh Local Government Association.

## A Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in Wales

### Appendix B

#### Key plans and strategies cross referenced in the plan

Strategy Document	Date and Lead Agency	Key Policies
One Wales: A Progressive Agenda for the Government of Wales	2007, WAG	An Agreement which describes the programme of government for the next 4 years, based on a commitment to 5 key themes of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social justice and inclusivity</li> <li>• Sustainability</li> <li>• A healthy future</li> <li>• Jobs in living communities</li> <li>• Support for the Welsh language and associated heritage and culture</li> </ul>
Wales Spatial Plan		Aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support all communities in tackling the challenges presented by population and economic change;</li> <li>• enhance the natural and built environments and their contribution to well-being and the distinctive identity of Wales;</li> <li>• ensure that mainstream health and education support meets the needs of less well-off communities.</li> </ul>
Communities First Programme		Enables local people in designated 'Communities First' areas to work together and, with local agencies, tackle social exclusion, poverty and disadvantage
The Environment Strategy for Wales	WAG 2006	"By 2026, we want to see our distinctive Welsh environment thriving and contributing to the economic and social wellbeing and health of all of the people of Wales"
Sport and Physical Activity Strategy: Climbing Higher	WAG 2005	Target that within 20 years (2025) sport and physical activity will be at the heart of Welsh life and at the heart of government policy.
Health Challenge Wales		A common goal around which organisations, communities and individuals in all areas of Wales can jointly develop and share new action to improve health and well-being
Wales Spatial Strategy	WAG	Interventions which are about achieving sustainable development: employment; economic regeneration; impact of population growth and re-distribution; sustainable transport patterns; housing and environmental improvement
Wales Spatial Strategy Area Interim Statements	WAG 2007	These Statements establish the spatial and land use implications of providing opportunities and put forward a strategic view for local development planning to consider in terms of detailed policies, sites and planning guidance. A common theme is the importance of place to quality of life as an economic, social and environmental driver
Technical Advice Note 13: Tourism	WAG Draft 2006	WAG is committed to sustainable tourism development, with policy objectives relating to economic development, environmental protection & enhancement, and social policies and the WRR plan can contribute significantly to this agenda. The guidance emphasises the need for a strategic vision of local authorities.
Catching the Wave: A Watersports Tourism Strategy for Wales	2004	This strategy sets out the case for the development of watersports in Wales based on tourism.
Draft Wales Coastal Tourism Strategy	Draft Jan 2007	The study when published in its final form will provide the focus for investment in WRR at the coast. It is seeking to identify a clear way forward for the development of coastal tourism, which realizes and builds on the economic potential of the coastline of Wales while respecting its environmental quality and recognizing the importance of achieving community benefits.

## A Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in Wales

Wales Fisheries Strategy Consultation document	WAG 2007	This strategy considers the three fisheries sectors of aquaculture, commercial sea, and inland and recreational. The strategy notes that some fisheries owners would support the development of local formal access arrangements and that these should be encouraged as they could provide increased opportunities.
Wales Outdoor Activity review	Sports Council for Wales 2007	A strategic review of the outdoor environment which is informed by existing research. Considers the scope and potential for increasing participation in physical activity and approaches that might be adopted.

**Appendix C Maps**  
**List of Maps**

1. Water bodies and Communities First Areas
2. Accessibility to rivers and enclosed inland waters used for game fishing pay to access
3. Accessibility to rivers and enclosed waters used for coarse fishing access by private pay (open to all) or public pay
4. Accessibility to enclosed waters used for sailing and windsurfing
5. Accessibility to coast, estuaries and enclosed inland waters used by personal water craft
6. Accessibility to coast, estuaries and enclosed inland waters larger than 15 hectares
7. Accessibility to navigations, enclosed waters and rivers with voluntary agreements used for canoeing
8. Selected priorities and opportunities

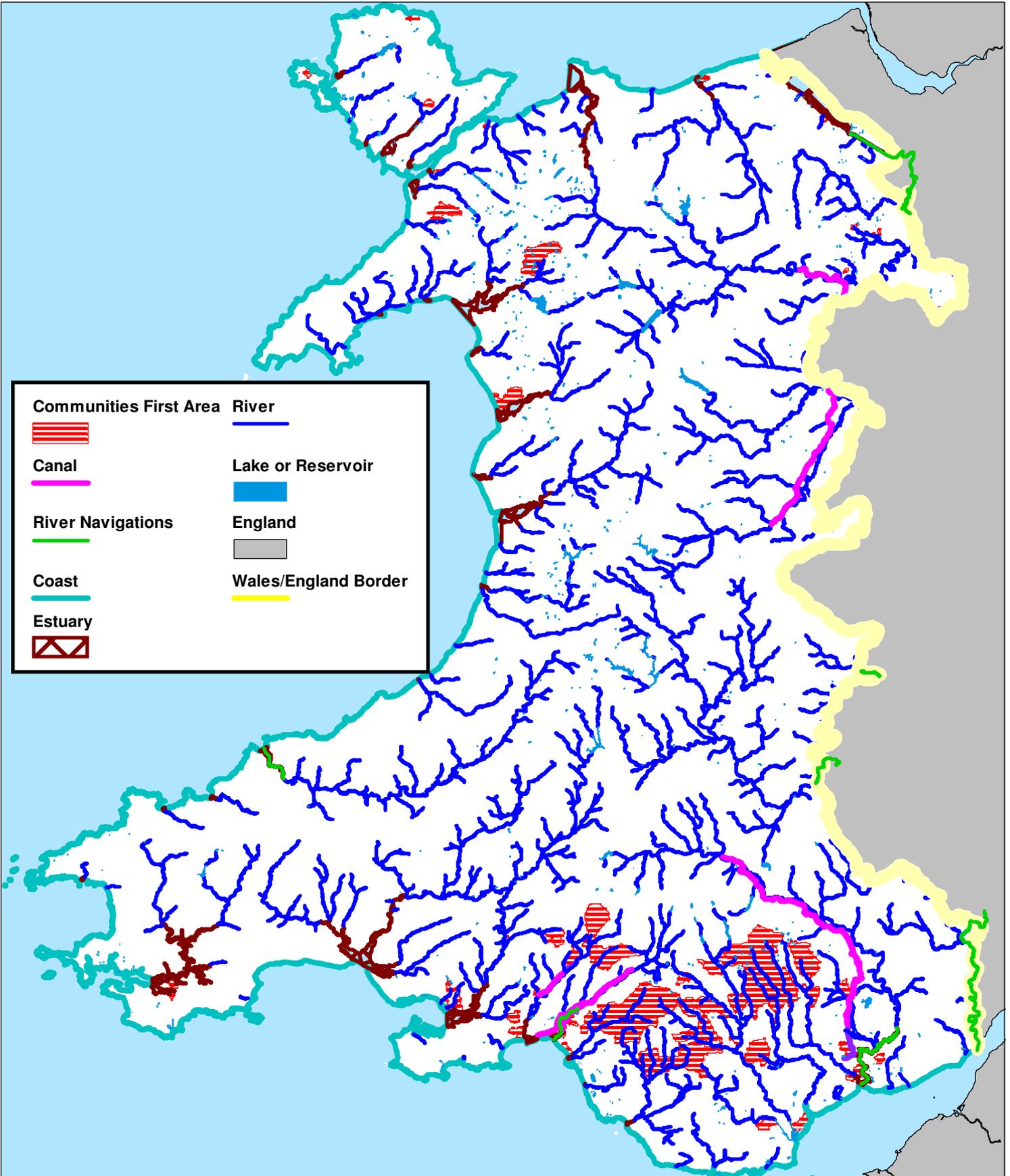
# Strategic Plan for WRR in Wales

## Map 1 Wales - Water bodies and Communities First Areas



### Map Description:

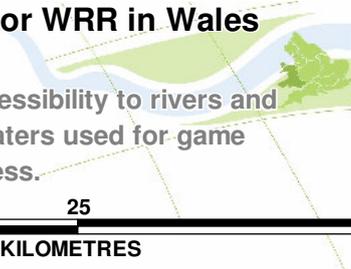
Water bodies include coast, estuaries, rivers, enclosed inland waters and canals, Communities First Areas as defined by Welsh Assembly Government using the Index of Multiple Deprivation. (Please note some smaller enclosed waters are not visible on the map due to the scale used).



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# Strategic Plan for WRR in Wales

Map 2 Wales - Accessibility to rivers and enclosed inland waters used for game fishing pay to access.



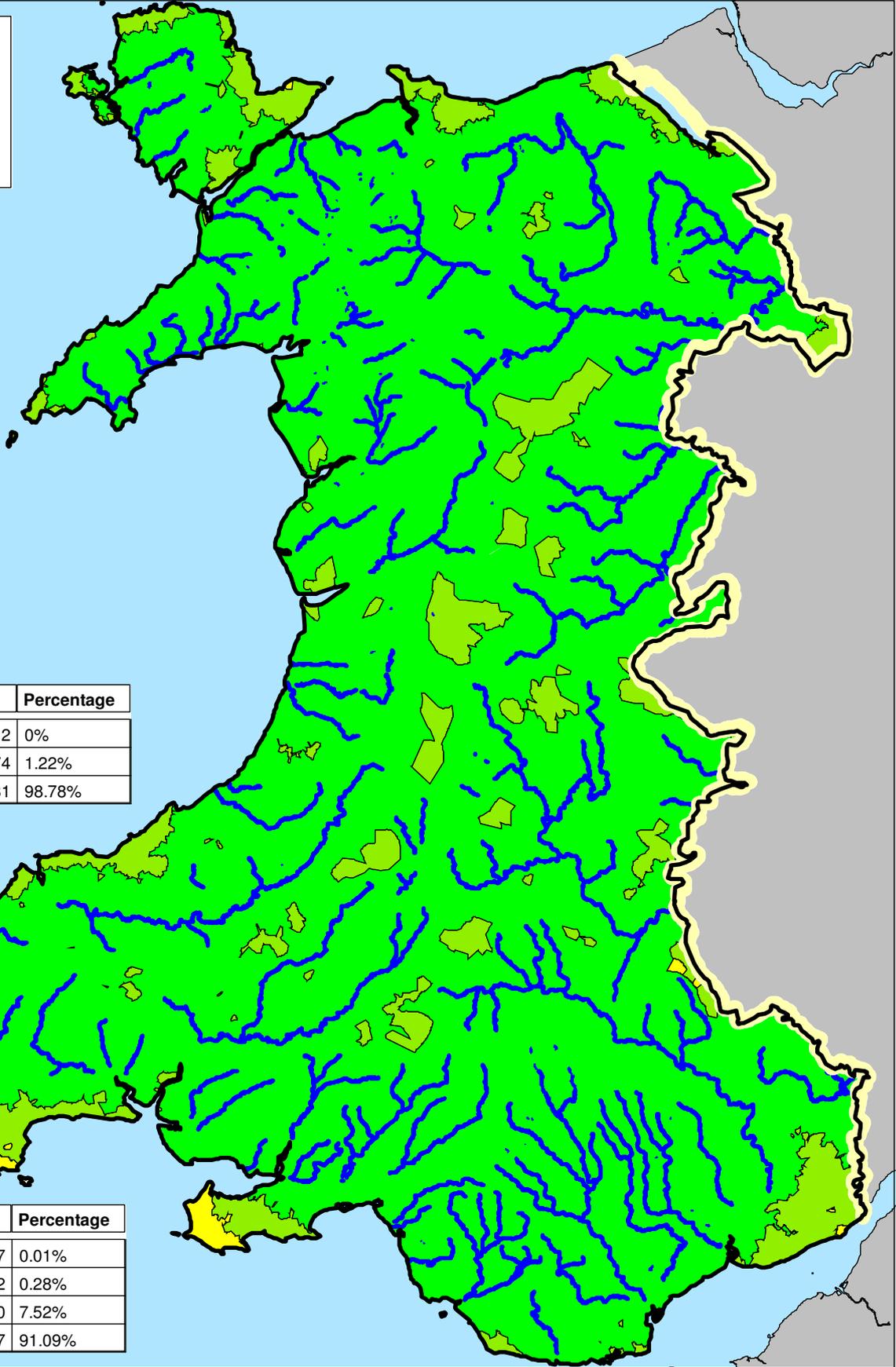
Scale: 1:1,000,000  
 Analysis Unique Identifier: 2.4\_17

## Map Description:

Time intervals to rivers and enclosed inland waters used for game fishing by private pay (open to all) or public pay. Figures show proportions of population in time intervals for Wales and Communities First Areas.

**Travel Time Intervals**

- 30 - 60 minutes
- 20 - 30 minutes
- 10 - 20 minutes
- 0 - 10 minutes



### Communities First Areas

Travel Interval	Population	Percentage
20 - 30 Mins	12	0%
10 - 20 Mins	4,874	1.22%
0 - 10 Mins	395,981	98.78%

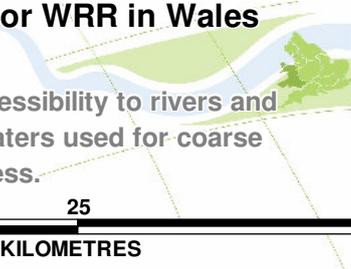
### Total Population

Travel Interval	Population	Percentage
30 - 60 Mins	317	0.01%
20 - 30 Mins	8,242	0.28%
10 - 20 Mins	218,300	7.52%
0 - 10 Mins	2,644,287	91.09%

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# Strategic Plan for WRR in Wales

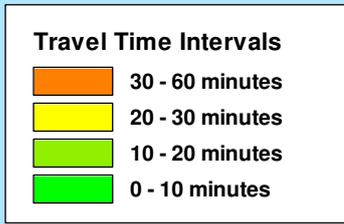
Map 3 Wales - Accessibility to rivers and enclosed inland waters used for coarse fishing pay to access.



Scale: 1:1,000,000  
 Analysis Unique Identifier: 2.4\_18

## Map Description:

Time intervals to rivers and enclosed waters used for coarse fishing access by private pay (open to all) or public pay. Figures show proportions of population in time intervals for Wales and Communities First Areas.

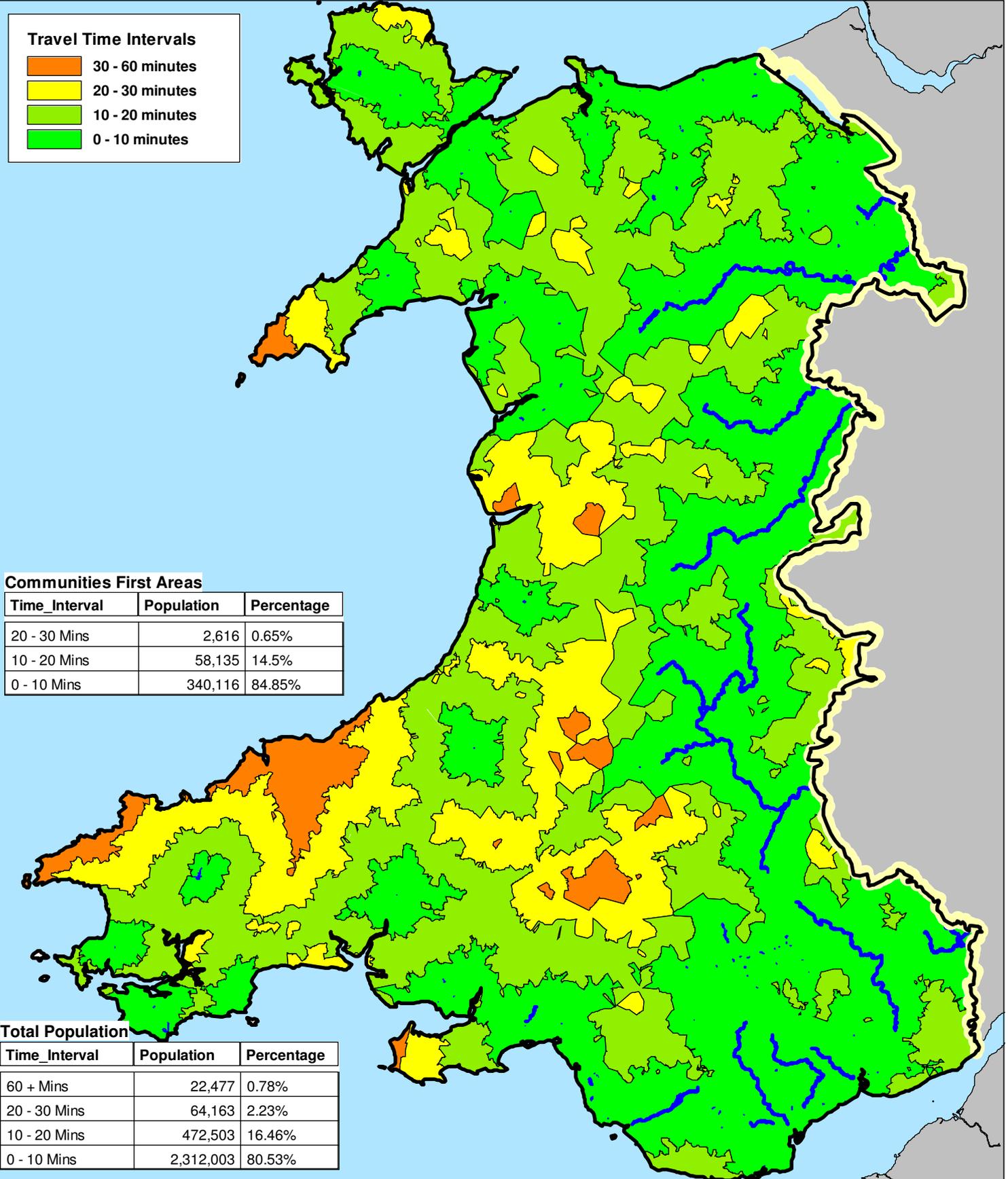


### Communities First Areas

Time Interval	Population	Percentage
20 - 30 Mins	2,616	0.65%
10 - 20 Mins	58,135	14.5%
0 - 10 Mins	340,116	84.85%

### Total Population

Time Interval	Population	Percentage
60 + Mins	22,477	0.78%
20 - 30 Mins	64,163	2.23%
10 - 20 Mins	472,503	16.46%
0 - 10 Mins	2,312,003	80.53%



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