



Flintshire Regeneration Strategy

2009 – 2020



Flintshire County Council | Environment Directorate
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Foreword

Flintshire has seen strong economic growth over the last ten years, however, since the 2008/9 crisis we have faced uncertain times and we will need to work hard to maintain the prosperity we now enjoy. Generally the county has been more resilient to those changes than other parts of Wales and benefits from its strong manufacturing sector which globally has seen growth. However, some parts of the County have not shared in the prosperity that we have enjoyed over the years.

This Strategy sets out a framework for the Council and its partners to guide regeneration over the next ten years.

Flintshire is a proud Welsh county with a long history. We have strong cultural, social and economic ties with neighbouring parts of England as well as with the adjoining counties in Wales. We recognise that we have shared economic social and environmental interests and we will work alongside our neighbours to meet the needs of our county, whilst at the same time protecting and enhancing our environment.

The County Council has set out a bold and ambitious programme for our communities and people, particularly so given the challenging times we now face. The Council occupies a pivotal role in the local economy through the Local Service Board and by working in partnership with organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors, the Council will provide clear, transparent leadership for raising prosperity across the County.

This Strategy has been developed through consultation with a range of partner organisations. It has deliberately been kept concise and action focussed, we are in more uncertain economic times and actions on the ground are key to success.

We know that success is most likely to come from making best use of those resources that are already available to us and by working more effectively. Flintshire has much to be proud of, we still have low unemployment, a successful economy with many well-known names located here, including Airbus UK, Toyota, Iceland and Unilever. However, we cannot be complacent. We know that in the future, those areas that are most successful will be those that are the most enterprising, innovative and are attractive places to live, work in or to visit. That is our vision for Flintshire.

The County Council will not be able to deliver this programme by itself, so I invite all those who wish to work with us to create a prosperous, fair and pleasant county, to work with us to achieve these ambitions. We have already established a Regeneration Partnership to drive implementation and monitor progress. It is serviced by the Council and includes Councillors and Officers, as well as local organisations and national agencies. This will be reviewed to ensure that it meets the demands placed upon it.

We are committed to moving forward quickly and the timescale in preparing this strategy is a clear demonstration of that. We know that after the current recession there will be an upturn and we want Flintshire to be prepared for that.

Councillor Matt Wright
Executive Member Regeneration and Tourism

Dave Heggarty
Head of Regeneration

February 2011

Background

Flintshire's economy has seen successful regeneration and diversification following the steel, coal and textiles closures of the 1980's and 1990's. However, the economic situation now being faced is one of the most challenging since 1945. The UK economy has been in a period of recession with potentially severe impacts for businesses, employment and individuals.

A crisis in the banking system brought a sharp fall in the sterling exchange rate and a collapse in the housing market. Much of the world economy faced a downturn with the financial and construction sectors being most affected. A reduction in consumer spending is still being felt on high streets.

It is against this background that the Regeneration Strategy is being prepared.

The recession had a variety of impacts on Flintshire;

- ▶ A small increase in unemployment. The level for Flintshire was 2.8% in December 2008, compared to 5.6% for the UK, and was 3.0% in quarter 3 of 2010 having dropped slightly from 3.3% in quarter 1 of 2010. A study commissioned by the Local Government Association on the prospects for North West England in November 2008 had suggested a rise in unemployment of up to 6.7%.
- ▶ A fall in private sector investment, particularly in housing and the retail sectors.
- ▶ A fall in private house building, this is also the main source of affordable housing for Flintshire - via the Affordable Housing Policy which requires residential developers to provide a proportionate range of affordable units.
- ▶ A reduction in the level of new business starts and inward investment.
- ▶ Reduced income to the public sector through falling capital receipts with fewer sales of assets, alongside a general tightening of public spending as part of the deficit reduction programme, set out within the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Vision

“Economic prosperity is fundamental to creating well-being in Flintshire. We want Flintshire to be a prosperous County, where a strong local economy with a sound knowledge and skills base provides the foundation for success.

We want Flintshire to be a County of innovation and excellence that fulfils its potential for economic development and prosperity at the regional, national and international level. Across the public, private and voluntary sectors, we want Flintshire to have a strong reputation for high quality and innovative service delivery and collaborative partnership working.

We aim to develop a sustainable, world class, modern economy, based on business enterprise and a highly motivated, well-trained workforce, supported by cutting-edge technology and which maximises the area’s physical and human assets.

We will strengthen the rural economy through encouraging diversification and revitalise the County towns by developing them as popular local centres, each with their own distinctive character that complement each other and the wider retail ‘offer’ across the sub-region.

We will also develop a range of initiatives aimed at a substantial minority of local people who are subject to poverty, disadvantage and hardship. We are committed to helping our most deprived communities, to give them an equal opportunity of enjoying the economic future success of Flintshire.

We recognise that people’s actual or potential economic circumstances are influenced by many factors including educational attainment, health status, living circumstances, caring responsibilities and their family situation. We will work together in partnership to lead public sector responses to the economic position to support local organisations (especially Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs)), skills and retraining; housing market support; infrastructure; and help for individuals and families.”

The draft Economy Statement of Ambition from the Flintshire Local Service Board Vision, January 2009

What will the Strategy do?

- ▶ It will take forward the vision emerging from the Local Service Board (LSB) into a long term Regeneration Strategy, to 2020.
- ▶ It will focus on economic regeneration in a broad sense, bringing together needs relating to people, places and employment. It will link to other priorities being developed by the LSB in relation to environment, health, education and community safety.
- ▶ It will set out to engage the wider group of partners and stakeholders in Flintshire and beyond and will be challenging and ambitious.
- ▶ It will require a change of culture and will play to Flintshire's strengths.
- ▶ It will contribute to a reduction in factors leading to poverty and disadvantage.
- ▶ It will respond to the challenges and opportunities resulting from demographic change.
- ▶ It will provide a framework for policy development and investment.
- ▶ It will promote sustainable economic development and regeneration.
- ▶ It will connect areas of need to areas of opportunity.
- ▶ It will give appropriate emphasis to both rural and urban regeneration issues.
- ▶ It will set out deliverable actions, which are both sustainable and will produce clear benefits.
- ▶ It will consolidate what has gone before, highlighting the issues and challenges faced.
- ▶ It will identify the resources required to deliver the right outcomes.

The strategy will fit within a hierarchy of strategies and policies from the European to national devolved government levels, to the regional and sub-regional levels and down to the Flintshire County level. The actions set out within the strategy all comply with and complement this wider policy background. The relevant policies and strategies are listed in Appendix 1.

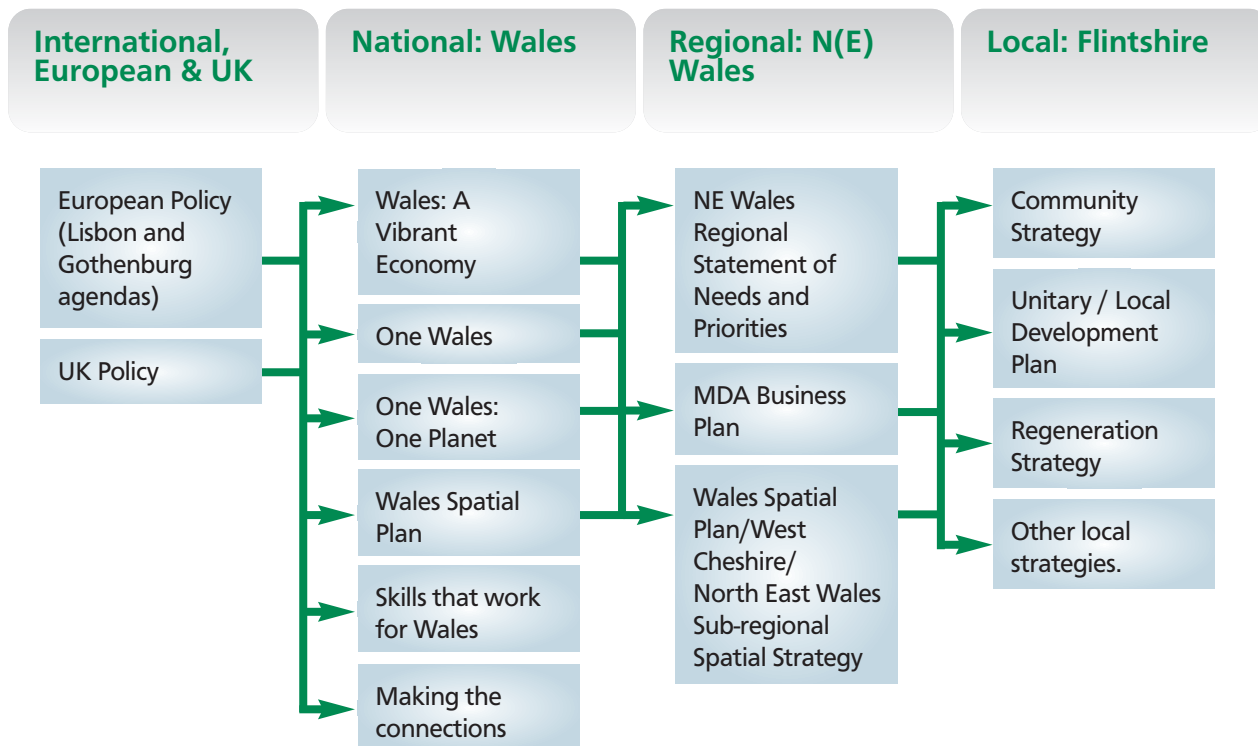


Figure 1 | Strategic fit

Key principles

The Strategy will be developed and implemented on the following principles:

- working to improve economic performance across the County;
- working to improve economic activity levels and support enterprise in our most deprived areas;
- creating sustainable places where people want to live and work and where businesses want to invest;
- developing a stronger sense of common purpose for regeneration across different agencies;
- recognising that some areas have been left behind and that what works well in one area of Flintshire may not be appropriate in another. Actions will be better targeted, co-ordinated and based on strategic priorities;
- recognising that everyone, irrespective of their health status, level of physical or learning ability or background will be supported to reach their individual potential and benefit from opportunities developed through the implementation of this strategy;
- recognising that Flintshire is part of a closely interrelated wider economic sub region in the Mersey Dee area. Working with our partners in the Mersey Dee Alliance to sustain shared economic social and environmental strengths;
- involving local people and businesses from the start, using local knowledge of what works best;
- creating the right conditions for businesses to grow and to help local people into work.

Appendix 3 presents a brief statistical analysis of the needs of Flintshire. This data, and information from other sources (listed in Appendix 2), has been used to inform the SLOT table presented below, and hence the Vision and Strategic Objectives for the Strategy.

Strengths, Limitations, Opportunities, Threats (SLOT) analysis

Strengths

- ▶ Well located for serving UK markets, although more peripheral to Europe as a whole, with excellent access to the national highway and rail infrastructure.
- ▶ Part of a dynamic sub-region – West Cheshire and North East Wales.
- ▶ Economically successful area with low unemployment, high Gross Value Added per head and high levels of economic activity.
- ▶ Strong base of high value manufacturing employers.

Limitations

- ▶ Heavy reliance upon car use.
- ▶ Prosperity of the County not shared by all of the population.
- ▶ House prices remain high compared to incomes.
- ▶ Employers finding skills supply problems
- ▶ Out dated image as purely heavy industrial area.
- ▶ Town centres suffering varying levels of decline.

Opportunities

- ▶ Greater joint working with other successful partners across the sub-region.
- ▶ Potential A55 Technology Corridor initiative.
- ▶ Potential new employment sites at Northern Gateway and Warren Hall.
- ▶ Nationally important landscapes of the Dee Estuary and Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and predominantly high quality rural setting.
- ▶ Six million people within 90 minutes drive time.
- ▶ Manufacturing base is well-positioned to take advantage of any economic upturn and the favourable exchange rates.
- ▶ Future development of the Wrexham / Bidston line to increase sustainable transport opportunities.

Threats

- ▶ Current economic downturn will impact upon businesses, employment, housing development and investment.
- ▶ Extensive areas with flood risk, especially employment land along the Dee Estuary.
- ▶ High level of dependence upon manufacturing, which is a nationally-declining sector.
- ▶ Increased commuting by car between lower priced housing in Flintshire and employment centres in West Cheshire and Chester.
- ▶ Decline in high street retail sales creating abandoned town centres.

Targets

Target	Amount	By when?
Increase VAT Registered New Business Start Up Rate	40% increase over 2009 level	2013
Increase small – medium sized enterprise (SME) employment	15% increase over 2009 level	2013
Increase employment of disadvantaged groups	5% increase over 2009 level	2013
Businesses receiving support to start or to grow	1600	2011
Employees receiving training	920	2011
People benefiting from new rural services to support community sustainability	300	2011
Town centre action plans produced	7	2010
Individuals receiving support to access employment, learning or volunteering	825	2011
Events to attract visitors supported	55	2011
People receiving training	1335	2011
Projects to develop Flintshire's heritage and culture	36	2011

Table 5 | Strengths, Limitations, Opportunities, Threats (SLOT) analysis

Strategic Objectives

The Regeneration Strategy sets out an integrated approach towards three Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective 1 | A Competitive Flintshire

To develop a sustainable, world class, modern economy, based on business enterprise and a highly motivated, well trained workforce supported by modern technology, which maximises the County's physical and human assets.

The key themes are to:

Theme 1.1 | Support business competitiveness

Theme 1.2 | Make best use of the County's employment land

Strategic Objective 2 | Sustainable Communities

Strengthen the rural economy through encouraging diversification and revitalise towns by developing them as successful local centres, each with their own distinctive character which complement each other and the wider retail offer across the County and neighbouring Counties.

The key themes are to:

Theme 2.1 | Develop successful town centres

Theme 2.2 | Regenerate our housing stock

Theme 2.3 | Maintain viable and attractive rural areas

Theme 2.4 | Develop the tourism potential of the County

Strategic Objective 3 | Employment & Skills

Develop a range of initiatives aimed at local people who are suffering poverty, disadvantage and hardship. The most deprived communities will be helped to give them an equal opportunity of benefiting from the future economic success of Flintshire.

The key themes are to:

Theme 3.1 | Improve levels of employment and skills

Theme 3.2 | Tackle poverty and exclusion

Strategic Objective 1 | A Competitive Flintshire with Strong Successful Businesses

Theme 1.1 | Support business competitiveness

Flintshire is strategically located on a key European route stretching from Dublin to Hamburg (Trans European network 22). Successful development of employment sites principally in the east of the County rely heavily on access to the UK motorway network and to the markets of North West England. Within 30 minutes drive of Flintshire there is a population of nearly 1.6 million people, principally to the east.

Flintshire is considered to be the economic driver for North Wales. It has attracted a range of large highly successful employers and retained a substantial manufacturing base where other areas have seen major decline. The economy has more in common with that of the neighbouring North West of England than with North Wales.

The County is highly dependent upon manufacturing with around 34% of all jobs, the figure for UK is now around 14%. In the recent past this was seen as a weakness, given the rapid growth in the service and financial sectors. However, Flintshire's strength is manufacturing, particularly advanced manufacturing which is increasingly a focus for policy makers because of its significant wealth generating potential.

The advanced manufacturing sector in Flintshire includes aerospace, pharmaceuticals, fine chemicals, paper and automotive components.

The global economy is moving from the industrial age to the knowledge age. Competitiveness is increasingly derived from the application of knowledge and high level skills rather than simply price. These 'knowledge intensive business sectors' (KIBs) are the foundation of the local economy and to survive they will need to be continuously innovative, creative and fast moving.

The County will need to support this sector by the development of higher level skills and capabilities, innovation, research and development (R&D), training and technology transfer, if it is to maintain a substantial KIBs employment.

The strategy will:

- ▶ build closer links with the further education/higher education sectors;
- ▶ prioritise the development of a Centre for Advanced Materials in Flintshire - a link to transfer research and development (R&D) and technology from higher education to local employers;
- ▶ support the development of Northop Campus as a new further / higher education facility, with expertise in biosciences;



- support the development of a North Wales-North West England Technology Corridor, based on the opto-electronics facilities at Optic, St Asaph, the proposed Northop Biosciences Centre, the proposed Advanced Materials Centre at Deeside, the Creative Industries Centre at Wrexham, Chester 'Super Zoo' and the Daresbury Advanced Research Centre;
- ensure that Flintshire has the appropriate transport and other infrastructure needed to sustain a modern competitive economy.

The development of a strong 'KIBS' (Knowledge Intensive Business Sector) base will be critical to Flintshire's future prosperity.

Flintshire has succeeded in the past by providing a very attractive package, particularly to footloose manufacturing industry. There is now little inward investment in this sector with areas in Eastern Europe and the Far East more attractive. There are also very few head office functions located in the County, meaning that discussions on investment are often taken outside the County, in part a consequence of the lack of suitable sites for head office functions. Bringing forward appropriate land and premises will be key to attracting future job creating investment.

Success in attracting major employers has not been matched by the development of 'home grown' local small businesses. There are 2685 businesses in Flintshire employing between 2 - 49 people, these offer potential for growth in the future. It is important that the needs of this group are met in terms of skills, business support, premises and procurement.

Flintshire has a poor tradition of business start up, in part a reflection of its large employer culture and in part, because of the choice of jobs available. The rate at which Flintshire generates new businesses needs to be stronger. Prosperous areas tend to show high rates of business start up, but Flintshire is only about three quarters of the average UK rate (29 VAT registered start ups per 10,000 population, compared with 44 for the UK). In comparison, the figure for Macclesfield, an area that has similarly transformed itself from reliance on traditional industries, is 66.

A step change is needed, in the promotion of, and support for, self employment. The Council proposes to develop a new strategy for small business support working in partnership with Deeside College. This will require a long term culture change, including working with schools and colleges to raise the attractiveness of self employment as an option.

Support for emerging and existing small businesses also needs to take into account the needs of the social business sector, which has a valuable role to play in meeting local needs through an alternative, sustainable, business model.



The goals for the Strategy are therefore to:

1. develop a new strategy for small business support and provide a package of measures to support the SME sector in Flintshire, including social enterprises;
2. work with partners to provide a responsive one-stop-shop for business in Flintshire;
3. help businesses to improve their environmental performance and increase the number of environmental industry jobs in Flintshire.
4. support the development of strong local supply networks and encourage local purchasing;
5. build further links with the Higher and Further Education sectors;
6. support the development of a Centre for Advanced Materials;
7. support the development of a North Wales-North West England Technology Corridor.

Theme 1.2 | Make best use of the County's employment land

Employment sites in Flintshire vary in quality and in the roles they play. Existing employment sites need investment to enable them to adapt to the changing needs of new business.

In 2008, Flintshire County Council commissioned consultants DPDS Ltd., to review the current supply of employment land in Flintshire, its relevance to current needs and its availability in order to clarify our understanding of current land supply.

The DPDS study recognised that Flintshire has a large supply of employment land, although only half was found to be suited to the type of high quality uses that the County needs in order to attract higher value employment opportunities. The study also examined the constraints upon developing sites, identifying that while the majority of employment land was identified as unconstrained, it was not necessarily ready for occupation.

Poorer quality land may not be suitable for modern employment use. It may also need significant investment in transport links and infrastructure before it can be classed as readily available for business development. This may not be cost-effective for some of the poorer quality sites.

Many existing employment sites in Flintshire are also in need of improvement to maximise their value to the economy of Flintshire, reduce their environmental impacts and increase their value to local communities

The goals for the Council and its partners are to:

1. facilitate the development of high quality strategic employment sites at Northern Gateway and Warren Hall. These sites will provide the great majority of employment opportunities in the County over the next ten years;
2. re-engineer sites to maximise their attractiveness as business locations;
3. encourage the development of sustainable alternative uses for vacant brown field sites and derelict properties;
4. provide a greater level of co-ordination, business support and networking on employment sites, beginning with Deeside Industrial Park;
5. support environmental improvements by businesses and encourage the adoption of environmental good practice (as demonstrated at Flint Castle Park) including the development of sustainable travel planning; and
6. manage Flintshire County Council property assets to support wider regeneration.



Strategic Objective 2 | Sustainable communities

The UK Government, defines Sustainable Communities as:

- “active, inclusive and safe;
- well run;
- environmentally sensitive;
- well designed and built;
- well connected;
- thriving;
- well served; and
- fair for everyone.”

We will contribute to the development of Sustainable Communities in Flintshire, alongside the other strategies prepared under the over-arching Community Strategy. In particular, we will apply the principles outlined above to the development and management of communities in Flintshire.

The quality of places, whether they are rural areas, town centres, employment sites or green space, is critical to the vitality of the County. Poor quality places deter investment, reduce business viability, raise the fear of crime amongst residents, increase the incidence of poor physical and mental health, and promote a cycle of spiralling decline. We will follow the principle of environmental justice – that everyone should have access to a good environment.



Theme 2.1 | Develop successful town centres

As the 'shop windows' for the County and as vital providers of services and employment, town centres are critical to the perception and image of Flintshire as well as the focus of social and economic activity. The physical appearance and vitality of the town centres does not currently reflect the overall prosperity of the County and all town centres are experiencing decline.

In 2007 Flintshire County Council commissioned a household survey by BMG Research. Households were asked to identify the town they used most frequently and to rate their satisfaction against a range of criteria including safety, environment, congestion, parking availability, and range of services. Flintshire towns in general were found to have significantly lower satisfaction ratings than towns outside the County across many of the survey questions.

The 2008 Town Centre Health Checks Study commissioned by Flintshire County Council and prepared by Roger Tym and Partners found that the majority of towns secured a very small market share of the available consumer spend, with the majority "leaking" to other destinations. It is considered that a relatively small shift in patterns of consumer behaviour could bring significantly higher levels of expenditure into Flintshire's town centres. In particular, Roger Tym and Partners found that there is a significant untapped market for further growth in the leisure and hospitality sector upon which local towns could capitalise. Tourism was also identified as an under-developed opportunity.

The Regeneration Strategy will seek to ensure that Flintshire town centres are vibrant and attractive with successful businesses serving the needs of the local community through a number of innovative measures.

In 2009/10, the County Council commenced a programme of working with local partners to develop Town Action Plans for each of the seven main town centres - Buckley, Connah's Quay, Flint, Holywell, Mold, Queensferry and Shotton. Although formal action plans won't be developed, in the short term, for other towns in Flintshire, their regeneration needs will still be assessed and action taken wherever possible to maintain their viability and vitality.

The Town Action Plan approach brought together funding support from:

- Flintshire County Council
- WAG Tidy Towns Programme
- WAG Local Environmental Quality Fund
- Town Councils

A number of 'early win' projects included environmental upgrades, 'Spring Cleans', security projects and retail support ('Shop Doctor')

This programme will move forward into the development of bespoke action plans, setting out a vision and master plan for each town centre, bringing together funding from the widest range of sources.



A priority action is to bring stakeholders for each town together to:

- identify a future role for each town;
- identify what strengths and opportunities the town has and to create a vision for the future of the town;
- identify the barriers to achieving that vision;
- put in place actions to overcome these barriers;
- put in place arrangements which ensure that the town is managed effectively, efficiently and will respond to the future needs of its users.

This action planning process will provide clear, practical plans that will set out the approach to the regeneration of town centres in Flintshire. This will give clarity to stakeholders, provide encouragement and confidence to potential investors, provide a useful tool to monitor progress and feed into future planning processes. The town action plans will be adopted as policy tools and will be used to guide future supporting strategies and plans.

Action plans will be developed on a town by town basis and reviewed as market forces dictate. The goals for the action plans include:

1. facilitating new commercial developments in the retail core of the town centres, including through land assembly exercises and bringing derelict sites and vacant premises into use;
2. improving the built environment, public realm, and facilities for users;
3. manage the town centres so that they provide a safe and hospitable environment for evening and night-time users;
4. develop a strategy to enable markets to play a more significant role in the economy of the town centres;
5. providing alternative means of transport to the private car;
6. improving access for all abilities and supporting businesses to adapt their practices to changing customer demands;
7. promoting the development of housing above retail premises and encouraging new town centre housing;
8. improving the integrated management of town centres.

Theme 2.2 | Regenerate Flintshire's housing stock

Housing is an important element in developing Sustainable Communities. The Welsh Assembly Government document 'One Wales: A progressive agenda for the governance of Wales' states that "lack of good quality housing affects people's health and well-being, and influence their long-term life chances... A stock of good-quality affordable homes is the foundation of thriving local communities in all four corners of Wales." Some of the most deprived communities in Flintshire are characterised by a predominance of social housing and in many cases by a poor physical environment and housing stock. There are other areas within the County where there are concentrations of older housing in private ownership that are also in need of significant upgrading.

There is a wide range of partners involved in managing areas of housing and success in raising the quality of neighbourhoods will depend upon a cohesive approach to their improvement and management. Examples of partners and initiatives which will need to be joined up will include:

- ▶ Communities First partnerships;
- ▶ WAG Tidy Towns and Local Environmental Quality programmes;
- ▶ Voluntary sector activity to improve the environment by both local groups as well as larger national organisations such as Groundwork and BTCV Cymru;
- ▶ Police environmental audits and neighbourhood policing panels;
- ▶ Council and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) housing management and tenant participation services; and
- ▶ Council service providers.

Housing will play a crucial role in delivering the objectives of the Regeneration Strategy. An adequate supply of quality homes is essential to the economic success of Flintshire, whilst investing in new and upgraded housing is likely to remain a major contributor to improvement in the physical environment of Flintshire and will be a critical component of many regeneration schemes. The Regeneration Strategy will need to utilise and consider the North East Wales Housing Market Assessment, Hometrack Housing Intelligence, Affordable Housing Delivery Statement, Local Housing Plan, the emerging Unitary Development Plan / Local Development Plan and the Leisure Strategy for Flintshire, to ensure complementarity and in particular to:

1. maximise the value of housing investments in the public and private sector bringing opportunities for wider regeneration as well as opportunities for new employment and training programmes;
2. ensure housing development meets varied and changing needs of the area, and contributes to the supply of affordable housing, including links to the work of the Wrexham and Flintshire Rural Housing Enabler;
3. further develop the strategy and initiatives to bring redundant properties back into residential use to meet housing need, in particular in town centres, contributing to their revitalisation;
4. manage areas of social housing to tackle areas of blight and ensure access to a quality environment for residents
5. tackle areas of poor private sector housing in urban and rural areas.



Theme 2.3 | Maintain viable and attractive rural areas

Flintshire's rural area, as designated by WAG in 2005 covers nearly 80% of the County with a population of 67,370 and an area of 34,514 hectares. The rural area is mainly served by the two market towns of Holywell and Mold which service the rural hinterland for shopping, health facilities, leisure facilities and secondary school education. The area is characterised by the presence of picturesque villages and agricultural dwellings forming a high quality landscape and natural features such as the Clwydian Range, Dee Estuary and Halkyn Mountain.

Since the year 2000, there have been a number of new rural initiatives launched to regenerate Flintshire's rural communities. Some of these concentrated on regenerating rural communities, for example Rural Community Action, Article 33 and LEADER, while others such as the Small Towns and Villages Enterprise Initiative focused on business and investment.

These initiatives have provided a catalyst for the revitalisation of Flintshire's rural communities and made a valuable contribution in improving the quality of life in the county's rural areas. The intention is to build upon this success by maximising the opportunities presented by new regeneration programmes, such as the Rural Development Plan for Wales.

Although rural Flintshire predominantly has a high quality landscape, high levels of affluence and strong tourism potential, it also has some areas of deprivation, poor access to services in some locations and low availability of affordable housing.

The general good health and state of the county can disguise and overlook the fact that there are some communities within Flintshire that are experiencing social and economic difficulties. Two of the five Communities First areas (Rural North Flintshire and Mold Bryn Gwalia) are located in rural Flintshire. Within the rural areas, deprivation tends to be concentrated in isolated pockets and because there is often a perception of idyllic rural lifestyles, this deprivation can be masked.

The Rural Development Strategy (2007–13) sets out a strategic framework to facilitate the development of initiatives and projects using the following approach:

- ▶ encouraging the diversification of the rural economy;
- ▶ supporting schemes that will raise the standard of living and quality of life in rural communities;
- ▶ enabling of holistic, innovative approaches to rural regeneration;
- ▶ engaging with rural communities and facilitating their participation in the regeneration of their locality.



The Rural Development Strategy highlights four strategic themes;

- development of the tourism industry;
- developing a greater Sense of Place;
- developing rural services, social enterprise and IT;
- reducing energy use and generation of waste, promoting sustainable land use, forestry and supporting the development of the agri-food sector.

The Rural Development Plan for Wales (RDP) 2007 – 2013 channels European Commission and Welsh Assembly Government funding to implement a number of projects under these themes through the Flintshire Rural Partnership.

This programme will be one of the key drivers of rural development over the life of the Regeneration Strategy. At a grass roots level it will provide an opportunity for individuals, businesses, organisations and communities to access funding support and participate in activities that will contribute to the development and strengthening of Flintshire's rural communities.

In the longer term, the goals for the Regeneration Strategy are to:

1. encourage entrepreneurial activity, especially creating opportunities for young people;
2. enhance the skills of the rural workforce;
3. modernise and diversify the rural economic base; encourage collaborative working to reduce costs and support the development of local supplier networks and pilot new products and markets;
4. improve access to rural services and explore access to innovative solutions to declining rural services, (for example Pub is the Hub);
5. support the development of social enterprise solutions to the provision of rural services;
6. develop the rural tourism industry and increase its contribution to the economy;
7. develop links between service centres and the rural hinterland;
8. support the development of affordable rural housing, including the reuse of empty or redundant properties; and
9. improve transport links to rural communities, particularly sustainable transport provision.

Theme 2.4 | Tourism

“Tourism is an important part of the local economy contributing directly to the financial buoyancy of the county. It provides employment and is an important contributor to the social and environmental well being of the area.”
Flintshire Tourism Strategy 2008

Tourism also helps to raise the image and profile of an area. A favourable image and perception are key elements in securing private investment. Tourism is currently estimated to be worth £160.6m annually to Flintshire’s economy, generated by 2.7 million visitors each year. The North Wales Borderlands partnership between the local authorities and businesses in Flintshire, Denbighshire and Wrexham has promoted the area nationally since 1996, securing funding from external sources to support the campaign.

Flintshire has many strengths as a destination – including a high quality landscape, a rich heritage and culture (in particular Clwyd Theatr Cymru in Mold), attractive towns and a range of attractions and events. There is significant potential to grow the value of the industry in Flintshire, by maximising the role of tourism as part of a wider regeneration approach. The County’s large business base also generates significant levels of business tourism. This ranges from visits from sales representatives and customers, to contractors and suppliers. These generate a substantial demand for hotel, catered and self-catered accommodation.

“The Flintshire Tourism Strategy will make use of the superb natural environment of Flintshire, along with the richness of its heritage, culture, language and products, to invite people to explore, understand and enjoy the county. This diverse offer will be complemented by: a commitment to quality; easy access to information; and by striving to ensure that every facet of the visitors’ experience meets their expectations.”
The Vision from the Flintshire Tourism Strategy 2008

It sets out five strategic aims for tourism:

- reviewing and improving branding for marketing;
- improving the tourism product;
- raising the quality of the industry and the destination as a whole;
- improving access to information;
- fostering greater partnership working.

Major investment in the tourism industry in rural Flintshire is underway through the Rural Development Programme, supporting the development of sustainable tourism in the Clwydians, piloting new tourism products, raising the quality of businesses and the destination as a whole, developing sense of place initiatives, together with a range of regular events, such as Mold Food Festival, Cadi Ha and Buckley Jubilee.



In the context of the Regeneration Strategy, tourism has a wider role to play. Tourism can:

- “be a major element of regeneration in urban and rural areas
- provide a catalyst for growth, raising the profile and stabilising out – migration
- provide new employment opportunities and diversification of the local economy
- help maintain local facilities, including shops, pubs, leisure centres and accessibility, including public transport
- drive improvements in the quality of the local environment
- improve image and perception of the County and encourage investment”

The key goals proposed are:

1. implement actions identified within the Flintshire Tourism Strategy 2008-13;
2. integrate tourism development into wider town centre development so that the role of the towns as attractive and well-managed destinations is strengthened;
3. integrate tourism development into the management of the major landscape areas in Flintshire – Clwydian Range and the Dee Estuary;
4. the tourism industry is heavily concentrated around the north Flintshire coastal villages, particularly Talacre and Gronant, which need an integrated approach to their regeneration and management to balance environmental, social and economic pressures;
5. maximise the role of tourism as a career and support increased employment flexibility in the industry to widen participation;
6. improve accessibility, including sustainable transport provision; and
7. improve the image and profile of Flintshire through tourism marketing, events and the management of the destination as a whole.

Strategic Objective 3 | Employment & Skills

Theme 3.1 | Employment and Skills

Over the last 20 years, traditional industries in Flintshire have given way to aerospace, food, paper, chemicals and automotive components. However, although engineering, manufacturing, retail, financial and business services were recently predicted to grow in Flintshire, there is now concern that these sectors are to be amongst those most subject to the economic downturn.

Although this downturn could affect all occupations, it is more likely that, combined with the constant need for improvement and the demand for higher level skills, they will mostly impact on those occupations requiring the lowest skill levels.

Local redundancies are currently having a small but significant impact both within the county and the surrounding area. Flintshire is heavily dependent on manufacturing, with 33.9% of all employment being within the sector.

Part-time and lower skilled workers are more likely to be affected by these redundancies. The number of lower skilled employees in the manufacturing sector in the county has fallen 15% over the last three years (2005 – 08) (Office of National Statistics Annual Population Survey). The number of higher skilled workers in the sector has risen 32% over the same period.



Table 7 shows how Flintshire compares to Wales and the UK on employment and skills levels.

Proportion of people:	Flintshire	Wales	UK
Of working age who in employment (2008)	61%	60.2%	62%
Active in the labour market (Oct 2008 – Sep 2009)	80.7%	75.4%	78.9%
Self employment (Oct 2008 – Sep 2009)	7.4%	8.6%	9.1%
Not in employment or training (Oct 2008 – Sep 2009)	19%	24.6%	21.1%
Registered as not working (Dec 09)	3.7%	4.3%	4.1%
Working in lower skilled jobs (Oct 2008 to Sep 2009)	21.4%	20.4%	18.2%
Skilled to NVQ1 or equivalent (2008)	87.6%	78.6%	78.9%
Skilled to NVQ4 or equivalent (2008)	24%	26.5%	29%

Table 7 | Key unemployment indicators

Source: NOMIS

In addition, 28% of the people in Flintshire have problems with literacy and 27% have problems with numeracy (Basic Skills Agency). Without the basic skills to read and understand information, these individuals' potential to enter and sustain employment is diminished further.

Flintshire's County Council's Draft 14 – 19 Strategy acknowledges that there is further work needed to match employment and skills needs to training opportunities. There is also recognition that education and skills are essential for maintaining the economic prosperity of Flintshire. A commitment to lifelong learning will help the county to adapt to changing economic conditions and the changing demand for different occupations and industrial sectors .

Flintshire County Council's Directorate Plan for Lifelong Learning and the planned Schools Modernisation Strategy aim to support the 14 – 19 agenda and lifelong learning by making the schools network fit for the current demands of the area, demographical changes and business

One of the biggest challenges faced in Flintshire is worklessness.

The number of unemployed is relatively low but in addition there are up to a further 12000 people who have been made redundant or taken early retirement, or are out of work and living on benefits. Although many of these people would like to work, various factors including discrimination, poor childcare and transport facilities and low wages, often allied to a lack of skills, have combined to make them feel that it is often not worth even applying for jobs.

We will focus actions on:

- hard to reach adults with low skills
- a recognition of the value of 'pre engagement work'
- intensive outreach work
- local delivery and local solutions

'Re: Working Flintshire', the Flintshire Employment Strategy states that:

- 39% of companies in Flintshire believed there is a significant gap between the generic skills needed for business and those of applicants.
- 18% reported a significant skills gap exists amongst their current employees.
- 11.1% of working age people in Flintshire are reliant on key 'out of work' benefits including 7.2% on incapacity benefit, 1.6% on lone parent benefit and 1.2% on disabled benefit. This equates to 10250 people of working age who are not experiencing the positive effects that employment can bring.

'Re: Working Flintshire' is the first dedicated strategy for regenerating employment within the County. The strategy includes six strands:

1. Realising goals – partnership working, recognising and celebrating achievement
2. Reaching out – provision of advice and information services
3. Releasing potential – provision of training, pre- and post-employment support, and work experience
4. Reducing barriers – provision of support services to increase opportunities
5. Recognising equality and diversity – providing for the needs of disadvantaged groups
6. Responding to employer needs – provision of skills to meet employer needs

Individuals who are economically inactive already face multiple barriers to engaging with the labour market. Therefore, with increasing redundancies, the challenge for Flintshire is even greater in providing support and training for those who want to work.

There is a need to provide locally based solutions to local needs and to recognise the need for soft skills development, volunteering and the gradual steps towards activity that are required before entering accredited training or mainstream employment.

Flintshire, like many other counties, is now seeking to develop projects to assist people into employment and training, and to support local SME's through possible bids to the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and other funding initiatives.

The following actions and projects have been taken forward from the recommendation of the Flintshire Employment Strategy:

- Employment and European Development Officer role has been created
- Employment Strategy Group has been developed with key partners
- An internal Community Learning partnership is being developed
- Employment Training Action Team project has now been approved for RDP funding, to be delivered in partnership with Flintshire Local Voluntary Council
- Genesis has received 6 years funding to increase economic activity amongst those who are hardest to reach
- Workwise has RDP funding to support access to employment
- Business in the Community Business Action on Homelessness project has been supported
- Intermediate Labour Market has been supported to provide structured work experience to economically inactive people
- PRIME CYMRU supported to pilot mentoring for older people into employment
- ReACT being supported to help redundant workers secure new employment
- ProACT programme being supported to provide training to people at risk of redundancy

The following sub regional projects are under development in partnership with Wrexham County Borough Council and are aiming to apply for external funding:

- ▶ Extending the Deeside Shuttle and improve access to employment and training
- ▶ Supporting young people leaving care and entering training, education or employment
- ▶ Business co-ordinator to support the development of DIP including fostering relationships with employers

The following projects are under development with partner organisations and are aiming to apply for external funding:

- ▶ Intermediate Labour Market - North East Wales in partnership with the Wales Council for Voluntary Action
- ▶ Family Employment Initiative in partnership with BTCV Cymru

The following Mersey Dee Alliance projects are under development

- ▶ Make – It in Manufacturing - in partnership with North West Manufacturing Institute and Local Authorities in the Mersey Dee Alliance region

The Regeneration Strategy proposes the following goals:

1. The role of the Employment Strategy Group needs to be developed further, with particular focus on the efficient co-ordination of employment support programmes.
2. Community Learning needs to be co-ordinated effectively across the local authority and in partnership with other organisations.
3. Lifelong learning needs to be supported further in partnership with schools, colleges and training providers.
4. Further development of partnership with employers to support the transition of young people from school to the world of work.
5. Further funding needs to be sought through EU and other external sources to develop and support continued delivery of new and existing projects in the county and the North East Wales / West Cheshire sub region.
6. The role of FCC as an employer within the community needs to be developed further.
7. The growth in HVA manufacturing needs to be supported with programmes that develop skills to advance new technologies and support the sustainability of high level skills.
8. ReACT / ProACT needs to be supported within the county and the surrounding area to assist businesses in retaining and / or supporting employees in times of economic hardship.

Theme 3.2 | Tackling poverty and social exclusion

Poverty particularly affects those: in work but with low incomes; with caring responsibilities; with low skills; in temporary or seasonal employment; with poor mental or physical health or with disabilities; or dependent upon benefits. Social exclusion is about more than poverty. It is a shorthand term for what can happen “when people or areas face a combination of linked problems, such as poor health, unemployment, discrimination, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime and family breakdown. These problems are linked and mutually reinforcing.”

A key finding from the report, Defining and Describing Poverty and Related Disadvantage in Flintshire, commissioned by the Flintshire Well Being Network, was that many people face more than one factor which can contribute to poverty and its related disadvantage.

Poverty and deprivation have a recognised negative impact on general health, and, in turn, this is likely to lead to unemployment, loss of income and disadvantage. In addition, for some young people factors such as a negative experience of education and exposure to crime can increase the risk of social exclusion further.

Those most at risk of exclusion are often the hardest to engage in improving the provision of services. This engagement, though, is essential if service provision is to be properly targeted and tailored to individuals' needs. The voluntary and community sectors often play a leading role in engaging with excluded groups.

Flintshire has a number of communities amongst the most deprived in Wales. Pockets of poverty and disadvantage are scattered across the county, with particular concentrations in the areas targeted by the Communities First programme. However, poverty is found across the whole County and can be masked by surrounding affluence so that those affected are harder to identify and target and more likely to be missed.

The Housing and Regeneration Strategies will be delivered through integrated actions to ensure that housing investments have the greatest impact possible. Joint working on the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, housing renewal programme and fuel poverty initiatives will be prioritised, in addition to projects for welfare rights support.

We will develop joined up approaches to assessing and meeting the needs of individuals. Service providers will be brought together so that their services can be made more accessible within deprived communities. In particular, support will be provided for the provision of advice services, financial literacy projects, community finance initiatives and activities to increase benefit take-up.

Partnership with the voluntary sector offers opportunities to utilise the strengths of both sectors in addressing complex problems and bring additional resources to bear. For example, Flintshire County Council currently funds the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) to provide advice services. The CAB has been able to draw down additional funding from other sources, increasing the original investment fourfold.

The development of social enterprises offers an alternative way to create job and training opportunities. Social enterprises are project making businesses set up to tackle a social or environmental need, examples in Flintshire include Flintshire Refurbs (furniture recycling), Flintshire Credit Union (finance) and Groundwork Wrexham and Flintshire (environmental educational, training). This sector offers a route to training and employment for those people who find difficulties in entering the conventional employment market.

The Regeneration Strategy proposes the following goals:

1. encourage flexibility in the workplace so people can juggle work with changing personal circumstances such as health status and caring responsibilities;
2. form strong partnerships with the voluntary sector to tackle poverty and exclusion;
3. support the work of the Communities First partnerships and other community development programmes in Flintshire;
4. raise skill levels to increase earning potential and reduce vulnerability to unemployment and associated disadvantage;
5. provide guidance and support to keep people in the workplace;

6. create innovative approaches to providing joined-up, cost effective and flexible service provision, for example, through the use of mobile services and shared facilities will improve access to services;
7. improve the co-ordination of support to people with barriers to learning, employment or volunteering;
8. use the opportunities created by housing investment to reduce fuel poverty, improve neighbourhoods, engage with excluded groups and improve community facilities;
9. work in partnership with key agencies to raise awareness of the links between, poverty, health, disadvantage and unemployment;
10. build the capacity and facilities available to communities;
11. improve accessibility to work, services and leisure; and
12. develop social enterprises as a means to create jobs, new businesses and as a means of delivering services.

Cross cutting themes

The Strategy is underpinned by four cross cutting themes:

Theme 1 | Sustainability

The Regeneration Strategy proposes a number of actions that seek to improve the economic prosperity of the County. Whilst ensuring that these actions do not adversely affect the global and local environment, the Strategy needs to maximise the opportunities the local environment has to offer. This can be achieved through promoting sustainable development and the sustainable management of environmental resources.

The UK wide approach to sustainable development recognises the following key priority areas:

- Climate change and energy – mitigation and adaptation
- Peak oil – pressures of supply
- Sustainable consumption and production
- Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement
- From local to global: building sustainable communities.

The Welsh Assembly Government has signed up to these key priorities. Wales is the first country in the world to place a duty on itself to deliver services through the principle of sustainable development and has signed up to the following:

- Sustainable Development Scheme – One Wales One Planet
- Zero Carbon Economy
- Green Jobs for Wales
- Climate Change Strategy High Level Policy Statement
- Environment Strategy

Flintshire County Council operates in accordance with its Environment Policy which underpins the requirement to work with local partners and stakeholders. The Council has achieved Green Dragon Level 3 and signed the Welsh Declaration for Climate Change. Environment is a theme of the Community Plan and an initial project is looking at carbon mitigation and adaptation. In addition there is a pilot for an 'All Wales' Changing Climate: Changing Places which will explore local contingencies by adapting to local incidents through amending working practices and locations.

A detailed monitoring framework for this cross-cutting theme is appended below.

Theme 2 | Social inclusion

The Regeneration Strategy seeks to reduce inequity and tackle social exclusion and poverty: the activities to be taken forward under the third objective, "Employment and Skills", are entirely focussed on this theme. Major projects will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure that the varying needs of the people affected are identified and met.

Theme 3 | Welsh language

The Welsh language represents an important asset for Flintshire. In 2001 there were over 20,000 people who could speak Welsh. The Strategy contains a number of initiatives to promote and safeguard the Welsh language. In particular, activities under the “Sustainable Communities” objective focus upon the language, culture and heritage of the area and upon developing a stronger “sense of place”.

laith Pawb, the WAG Action Plan for the Welsh language suggests a number of actions that WAG will take to increase the use of the Welsh language and maximise its economic potential, many of which operate within Flintshire. It also suggests actions that can be taken through rural development and tourism which can bring economic benefit to the County and which are covered in the relevant strategies and action plans.

In addition, all activities developed under the Strategy will need to meet the requirements of Flintshire County Council’s Welsh Language Scheme.

Theme 4 | Developing Flintshire’s image

Although Flintshire has seen strong economic growth in recent years, it lacks a clear identity and strong visibility. A strong image helps to create a sense of identity and underpins local pride. It is also an important element in securing external investment– areas with a poor image or with little local identity will struggle to attract investment.

The County has a good story to tell. It has good and improving transport links, a strong economy with many well known companies based here, a good environment and a high quality of life.

We will review our process for publicising local success stories and promoting the county’s offer to potential investors. This will be linked to the marketing of Flintshire’s offer to visitors as a border county, rich in Welsh cultural heritage, but close to the tourists, businesses and markets of North West England.

Adoption of the cross cutting themes will be monitored through the lifetime of the Strategy and the impact of the overall Strategy in meeting them will be assessed and reported upon on an annual basis.

Monitoring framework

The framework contains three elements:

- Each project delivered under the Strategy will set out the outcomes it will seek to achieve, for example: jobs created; new businesses created; visitors attracted, as part of its creation.
- Each project will also be expected to outline what outputs they will deliver in order to achieve these outcomes, for example: number of businesses advised; number of grants given; number of physical improvements made; private sector leverage etc.

This framework will ensure the monitoring of the overall Strategy in terms of its progress towards the cross-cutting themes and in terms of the outputs and outcomes being delivered over time. It will need to be flexible to react to changing circumstances.

The Regeneration Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis. This review will examine the evidence gathered during the 12 month period and will assess:

- whether the original Vision and Objectives remain relevant or whether amendment is required in the light of changing circumstances;
- whether the Strategy is making satisfactory progress towards the results set out initially, whether those Results require amendment due to changing circumstances, and whether new activities are required to keep the Strategy delivery on target;
- whether individual projects are meeting their expected outcomes;
- whether projects are meeting their development milestones, or whether refocusing of the projects is required;
- whether the activities within the Strategy are demonstrating measurable impacts upon the four cross-cutting themes;
- whether partners are fully engaged in the delivery of the Strategy and whether there are new opportunities for joint working; and
- what lessons have been learnt through the process that could be applied to future work or shared.

The outcomes of this review will be reported:

- to the public through the Council web site;
- to Council Members through Executive and Scrutiny committees;
- to partners and other strategic partnerships; and
- to funding bodies.

Monitoring environmental sustainability cross-cutting theme

The impact of actions undertaken will be monitored to measure:

- ▶ At the lowest level, Level 1, where activity creates awareness of the environmental consequences of what is proposed.
- ▶ At the second level, Level 2, where the activity encourages or promotes action to address environmental sustainability.
- ▶ At the highest level, Level 3, where the activity achieves a measurable change that enhances the environment or improves sustainability.

The Regeneration Strategy will address environmental sustainability. It sets out an evaluation process which will:

- ▶ confirm that all activity meets the minimum standard for environmental sustainability;
- ▶ identify which environmental sustainability priority has been addressed;
- ▶ establish the range of issues which are being addressed such as climate change, efficient energy use, carbon footprint, sustainable purchasing policies, recycling, biodiversity, local products and local renewable energy;
- ▶ determine what has been achieved; and
- ▶ identify how these have been attained.

Tools that could be used to monitor progress include:

- ▶ Green Dragon Accreditation Level 1, 2 and 3 – ranging from developing an environmental policy, evaluating business impact to implementing change.
- ▶ BACLIAT (Business Area Climate Impact Assessment Tool)
- ▶ Flintshire County Council Equalities Impact Assessment, Welsh Language Assessment and Health Impact Assessment – to assess levels of community cohesion, equality within communities and futurity.

The three levels reflect the different potential environmental gains that may be delivered by activities within the Strategy. Level 1 achieves a minimum standard of environmental sustainability, Level 2 achieves a desirable standard and Level 3 an ideal standard. All activity and actions delivered through the Regeneration Strategy will have an economic impact, however small, and thus should achieve Level 1 at the very least.

Appendix 1 | Policies and Strategies

- ▶ Wales: A Vibrant Economy (WAG) (2005)
- ▶ One Wales (WAG) (2007-2011)
- ▶ One Wales: One Planet (WAG) (2010)
- ▶ Wales Spatial Plan (WAG) (2004, 2008)
- ▶ Skills that Work for Wales (WAG) (2008)
- ▶ Making the Connections (WAG) (2004)
- ▶ NE Wales Regional Statement of Needs and Priorities
- ▶ West Cheshire / North East Wales Sub-regional Spatial Strategy (2006-2021)
- ▶ Mersey Dee Alliance Business Plan (2005-2009)
- ▶ Flintshire Community Strategy (2004-2020)
- ▶ Flintshire Unitary Development Plan (2000-2015)
- ▶ Council Plan (2006-2009)

Appendix 2 | Evidence Base

In the last two years the Council and its partners have carried out extensive work which has been drawn on to produce this strategy. This has given us a substantial evidence base which helps us to better understand Flintshire's social-economic position - business, people and places. Sources include:

- ▶ FCC LSB Vision - Economy Statement of Ambition
- ▶ The Flintshire Profile 2008
- ▶ The Economy: A Focus on Wales, (Office for Wales/WAG October 2008)
- ▶ Flintshire Rural Development Strategy 2007-13
- ▶ Flintshire Tourism Strategy 2008-13
- ▶ Flintshire Employment Strategy 2005-10
- ▶ Flintshire Town Centre Health Check Study, (Roger Tym and Partners October 2008)
- ▶ Good Health, Good Care Strategy 2008-2011
- ▶ Transforming Education and Training Provision for Flintshire: Outline Strategic Programme for 14-19 and post 16
- ▶ Children and Young Peoples Plan
- ▶ Draft Directorate Plan - Lifelong Learning
- ▶ Draft 14 – 19 Strategy
- ▶ Youth Services Strategy
- ▶ Defining and describing poverty and related disadvantage in Flintshire, 2007
- ▶ Flintshire Local Housing Market Assessment
- ▶ Local Housing Strategy
- ▶ Renewal Policy
- ▶ Flintshire Employment Land Study (DPDS February 2009)

Appendix 3 | Statistical Analysis

Flintshire's economy

Flintshire, is in general, a healthy mixed economy, with a strong manufacturing base. It is more successful in terms of GVA per head of population than the Wales average, but less so than the UK average. It has a better qualified population and a lower unemployment rate than that for Wales and the UK. In terms of economic activity, Flintshire outperforms both Wales and the UK figures, however, the exception is business registration rates, where Flintshire lags behind both Wales and UK averages.

Key indicator	Flintshire	Wales	UK/GB
GVA per head (Flintshire and Wrexham combined)	£16,442	£14,226	£18,945
Working age population as % total population	61.30%	60.30%	62.20%
Economic activity rate as % working age population	81.00%	75.80%	78.80%
Job Seekers Allowance claimants as % of working age population	3.20%	3.80%	3.40%
% with level 4+ qualifications	23.00%	25.40%	28.60%
% with no qualifications	10.50%	15.40%	13.10%
Business registration rate (reg/10k population)	29	37	49
Incapacity Benefit claimants as % of working age population	7.20%	10.60%	7.00%
Residents median household earnings	£22,927	£22,116	£24,924

Table 1 | Key indicators

Flintshire is an area characterised by its 'borderland' location, bridging as it does the industrial tradition of North West England and the rural beauty of North Wales and the Dee Estuary.

Its location is strategically important, offering the main thoroughfare between North Wales and the motorway network of North West England and beyond.

Following a long period of industrial decline, the county has undergone large scale restructuring and sustained economic success. The County has built on its strengths in industrial processes, advanced manufacturing, aerospace, food and environmental technologies. Flintshire is now one of the most important manufacturing areas in Wales, accounting for around twenty per cent of all such jobs. International companies such as Airbus UK, Toyota, Corus, UPM Kymmene, Warwick International and Convatec. The service sector is also growing, particularly in both IT and finance. Moneysupermarket.com and Unilever, are now major employers.

There are currently 6,800 businesses trading within the county, 94% of which employ fewer than 50 employees, providing 38% of all jobs. Conversely, 4% of Flintshire companies employing over 50 employees are responsible for 47% of all jobs.

Employees	% Businesses	% Job Contribution
0-50	94%	38%
50-250	4%	47%
250+	2%	15%

Table 2 | Nomis Statistics, 2005

The importance of the SME contribution to Flintshire and the UK economy is therefore highly significant and needs to be further strengthened in the current economic downturn and the loss of over 1200 jobs since January 2006.

Flintshire contributes some 60% to the North East Wales GDP of £4,269 million. Deeside Industrial Park represents one of the largest employment centres in Wales with more than 10,000 people employed by over 600 businesses. The manufacturing strength of the County represents 34.54% of total employment, compared to an average 13.4% for Wales and 10.9% for the UK. The overall restructuring of our business base and the move to higher value added activity, means that the economy is very different than when the county faced the downturn of the early 1990s. This changed business base presents Flintshire with real long term opportunities, since the county has relative strengths and greater than average concentrations in sectors which are likely to prove more resilient to current global conditions.

	Manufacturing	Construction	Services	Tourism
Flintshire	34.5%	5.8%	59%	7%
Wales	13.4%	5.3%	79.6%	8.9%

Table 3 Jobs by sector (Census 2001)

Flintshire's economy has much more in common with neighbouring areas of England than it does with the rest of North Wales. It is in recognition of shared economic and community interests that the Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA) has developed across the West Cheshire, Wirral and North East Wales areas. The Alliance is led by the local authorities of Cheshire, Chester, Denbighshire, Ellesmere Port & Neston, Flintshire, Wirral, Wrexham, and the Welsh Assembly Government and Merseytravel.

The partnership recognises that the area represents a single economic sub-region with a population of approximately 930,000 which is divided by a national boundary. Partners agree to work together on common strategic interests to sustain the economic future of the travel-to-work area, and facilitate a coherent approach to social, economic and environmental issues.

The MDA partnership was established in April 2007. It has developed a shared strategy designed to build on the area's competitiveness to secure its long term future, through working more effectively in partnership to meet the needs of the real economy that operates beyond the confines of borders and administrations.

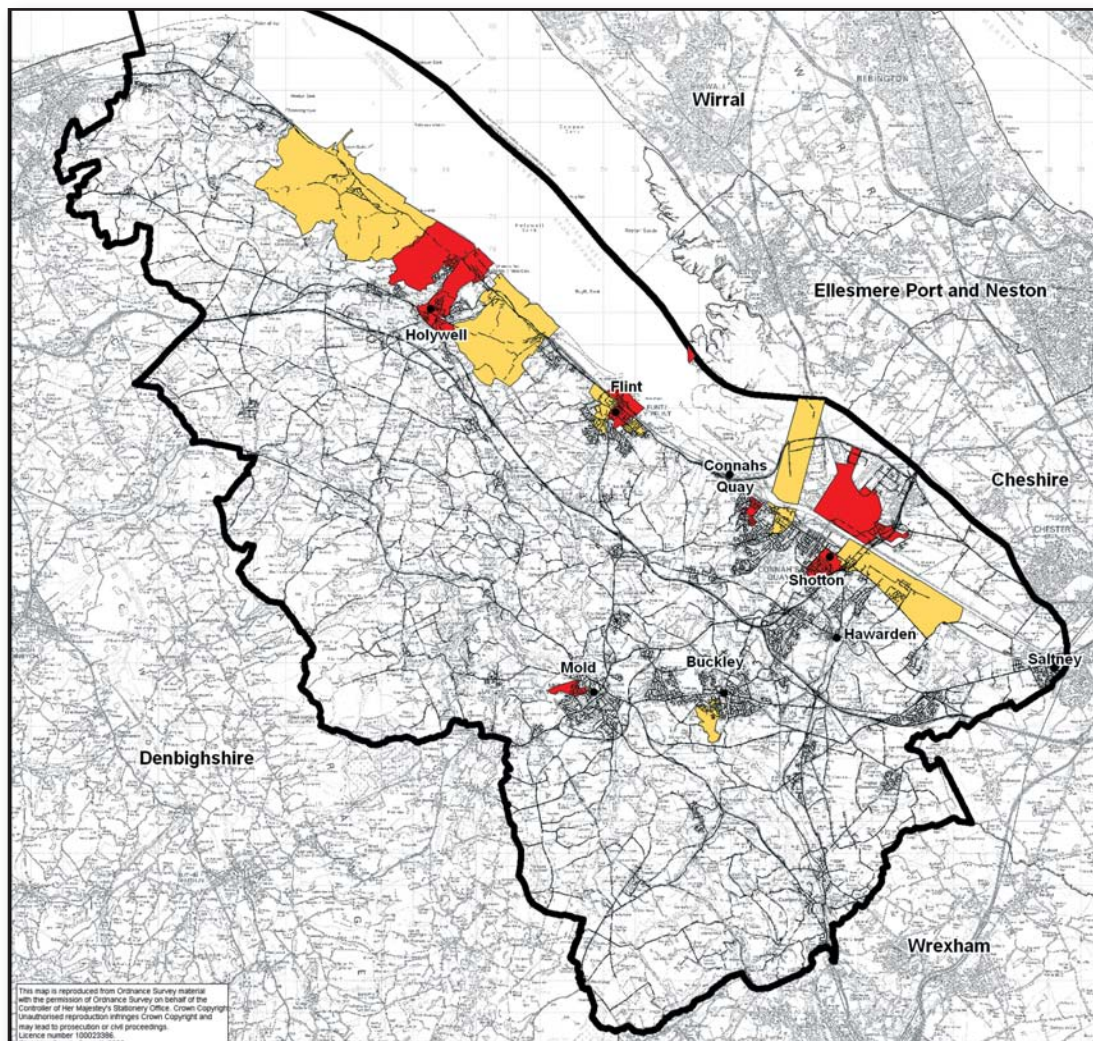
Demographic change

Flintshire, in common with the rest of the UK, will see an ageing population. (Table 4). In addition to putting extra pressure on service provision, this will impact upon the County in many ways, including: the loss of workforce to caring roles, the need to retain older workers through changed working patterns; and coping with a tightened labour market.

Population projections by age	1991	2005	2026
Below working age (17 or less)	24%	22%	18%
Working age (18 to 59/64)	59%	59%	54%
Above working age (60/65 or over)	17%	19%	28%

Table 4 Population projections by age
Source: Flintshire Profile 2008

Distribution of deprivation



Overall deprivation - neighbourhoods amongst the most deprived in Wales

Legend: 10% 20%

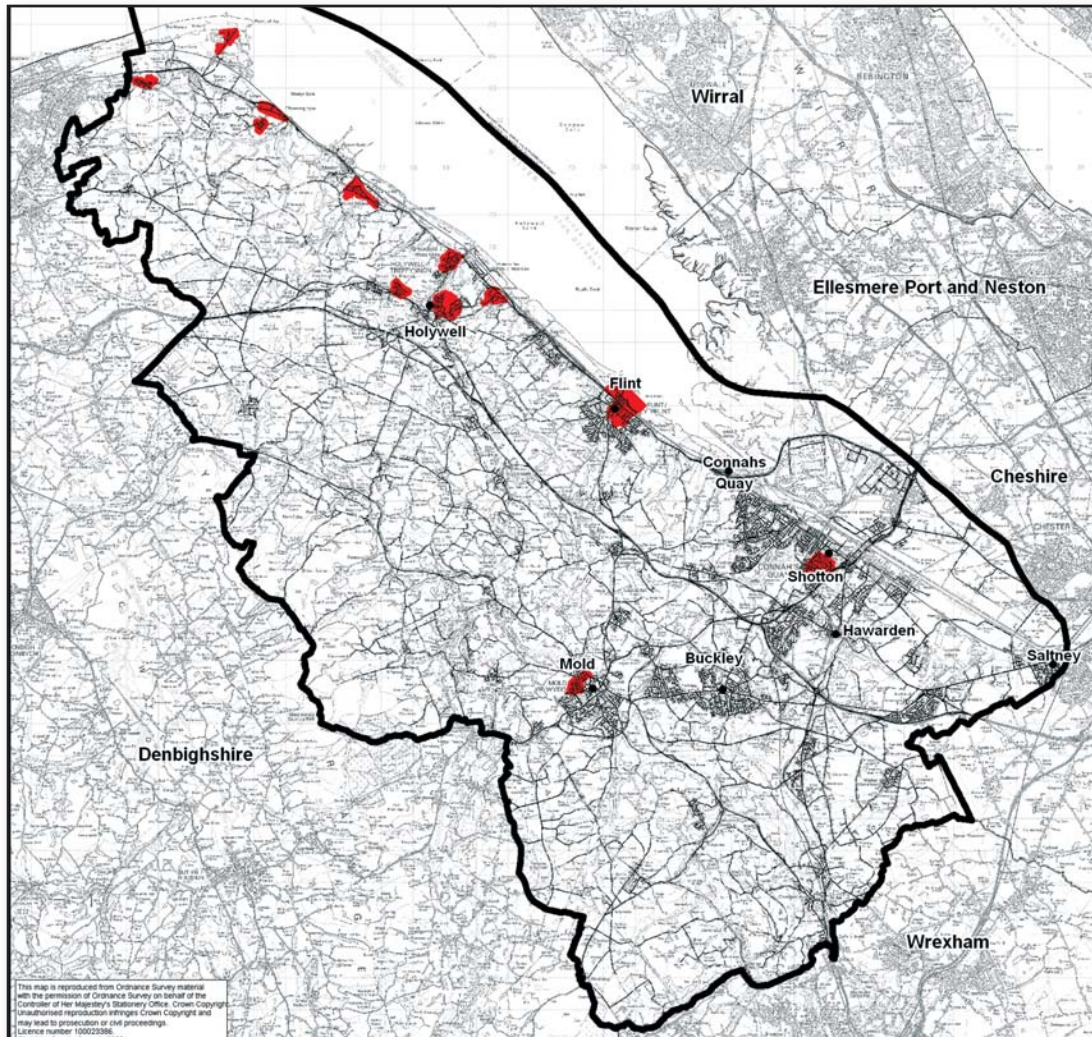
Overall deprivation map
Source: WIMD

Although Flintshire as a whole is performing better than Wales there remain concentrated pockets of deprivation where the overall level of prosperity is not shared.

The map shows the distribution of deprivation across Flintshire, as identified in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2008. There are areas of Flintshire amongst the 10% most deprived in Wales in Holywell, Greenfield, Shotton, Mold, and Flint. Other areas within the 20% most deprived in Wales are also located across the urban areas of Flintshire, so that every town has at least some level of deprivation.

The distribution of deprivation is particularly concentrated in certain areas of Flintshire, requiring integrated, multi-agency responses. However, in addition, there are people suffering from deprivation and exclusion in lower concentrations across the whole of Flintshire, where they are harder to identify, reach, and support effectively.

Many of the deprived areas of Flintshire benefit from the Welsh Assembly Government Communities First designation, to tackle problems of severe multiple deprivation, as shown in the map.



Communities First neighbourhoods

Legend: Communities First coverage

Communities First Neighbourhoods
 Source: FCC

Appendix 4 | Glossary

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BACLIAT	Business Area Climate Impact Assessment Tool
BTCV	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
CAB	Citizens Advice Bureau
Cadwyn	Cadwyn Clwyd
CF	Communities First
Cittaslow	International organisation promoting slow town values
DCELLS	Department of Children, Lifelong Learning and Skills
ESF	European Social Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EU	European Union
FCC	Flintshire County Council
FE	Further Education
FLVC	Flintshire Local Voluntary Council
HE	Higher Education
HVA	High Value Added
KIBs	Knowledge Intensive Business sectors
LSB	Local Service Board
MDA	Mersey Dee Alliance
NOMIS	Web-based database of labour market statistics
North Wales Borderlands	Tourism Marketing Area

NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
PRIME CYMRU	Prince's Trust Charity supporting people in Wales, 50+
ProACT	Employers Support Programme
ReACT	Redundancy Action Scheme
R&D	Research and Development
RDP	Rural Development Plan for Wales
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
SLOT	Strengths, Limitations, Opportunities, Threats
SME	Small and Medium sized Enterprises
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government
WCBC	Wrexham County Borough Council