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Outdoors and Health

A Policy Perspective: what's it got to do with the CCW?

John Watkins

Countryside Council for Wales

'Outdoor Health Network VC Roundtable 3'

2nd June 2009

Countryside Council for Wales

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Introduction

The Countryside Council for Wales has two purposes (Environment Protection Act 1990 Part VII s.130(2)):

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To conserve and enhance natural beauty in Wales.

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To encourage greater access to, and enjoyment of the countryside and coast of Wales.

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Vision:

OHN Challenge

Working for a better Wales where everyone values and cares for the environment.

“One Wales”

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“One Wales: a progressive agenda for the Government of Wales” (2007). Outcomes:

- More and better jobs and skills;
- Improving health; and
- Developing strong and safe communities.

“We will foster a sense of public ownership in relation to the countryside, urban green spaces and our coastline, recognising that many socially excluded groups do not currently enjoy their social, cultural, and health benefits”

Sustainable Development Duty

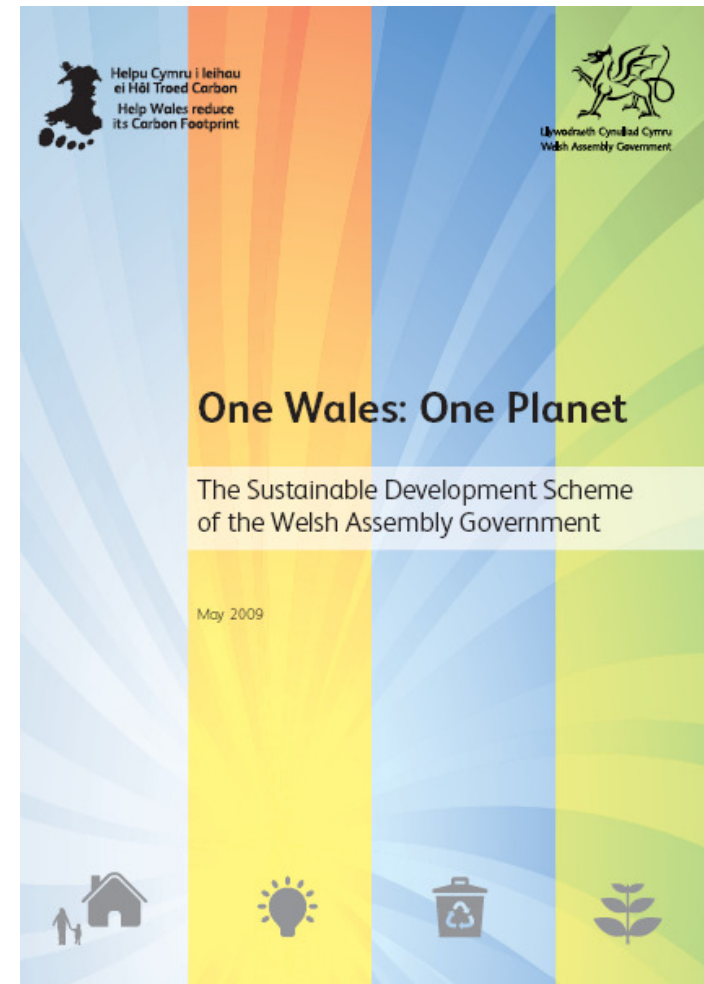
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Welsh Assembly Government:

A distinctive statutory duty in relation to sustainable development.

This duty, under the Govt. of Wales Act 2006 (Section 79), requires Welsh Ministers to make a scheme setting out how they propose, in the exercise of their functions, to promote sustainable development.

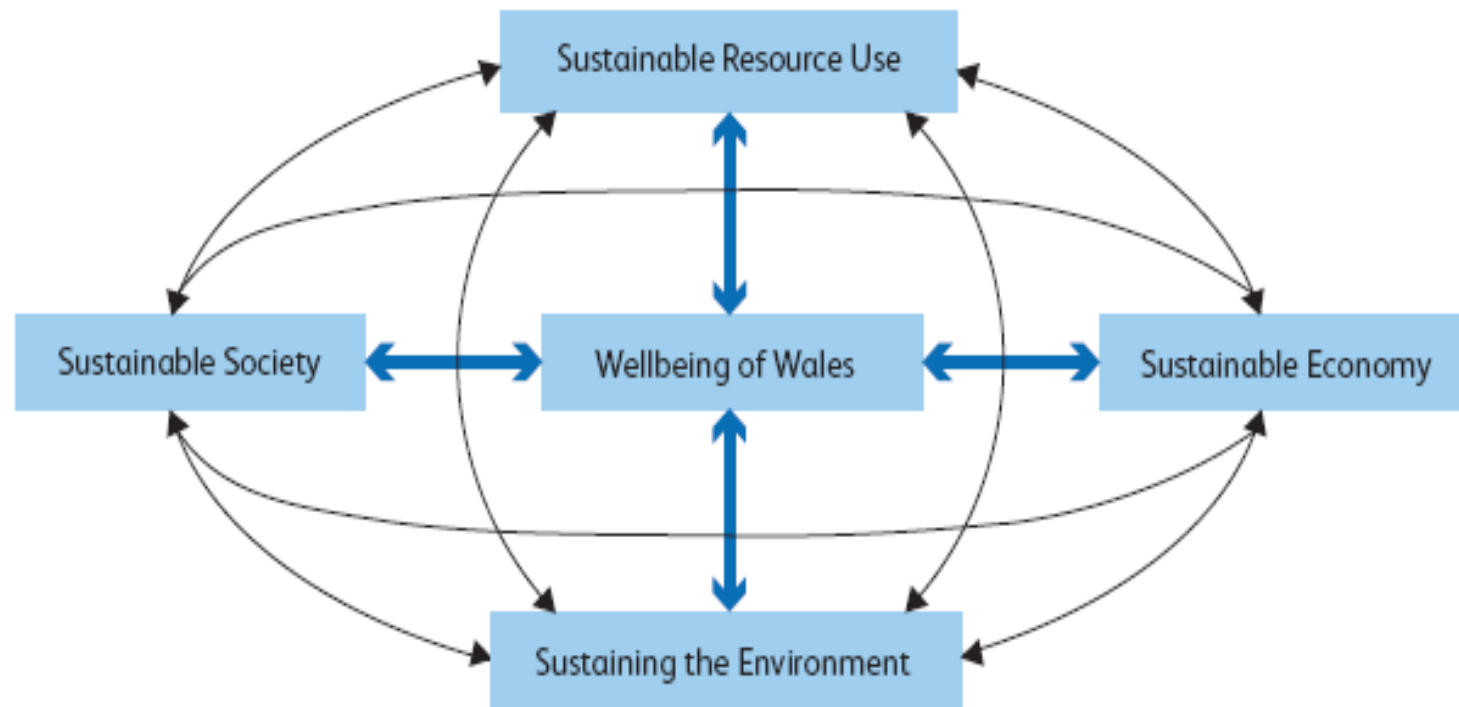


Main Outcome: Sustaining the Environment

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“Our land, freshwater and marine environment is best managed to provide the services of food, wood, water, soil, habitats and recreation.”



“It’s the economy, stupid!”

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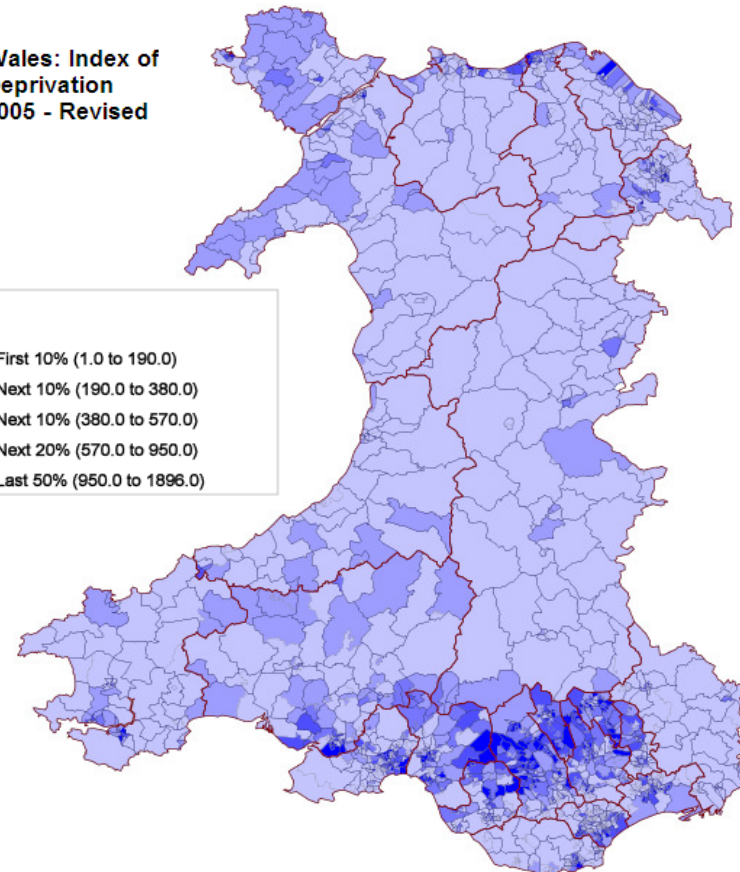
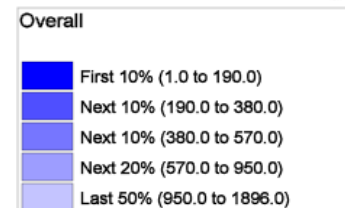
GDP 90% EU

75% West Wales and Valleys

400,000 Economically Inactive

22.7% Long Term Illness

Wales: Index of Deprivation 2005 - Revised



Health Status Wales (2005)

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Mortality rates are among the worst in Western Europe.

Death rates from heart disease are substantially higher than in many Western European countries.

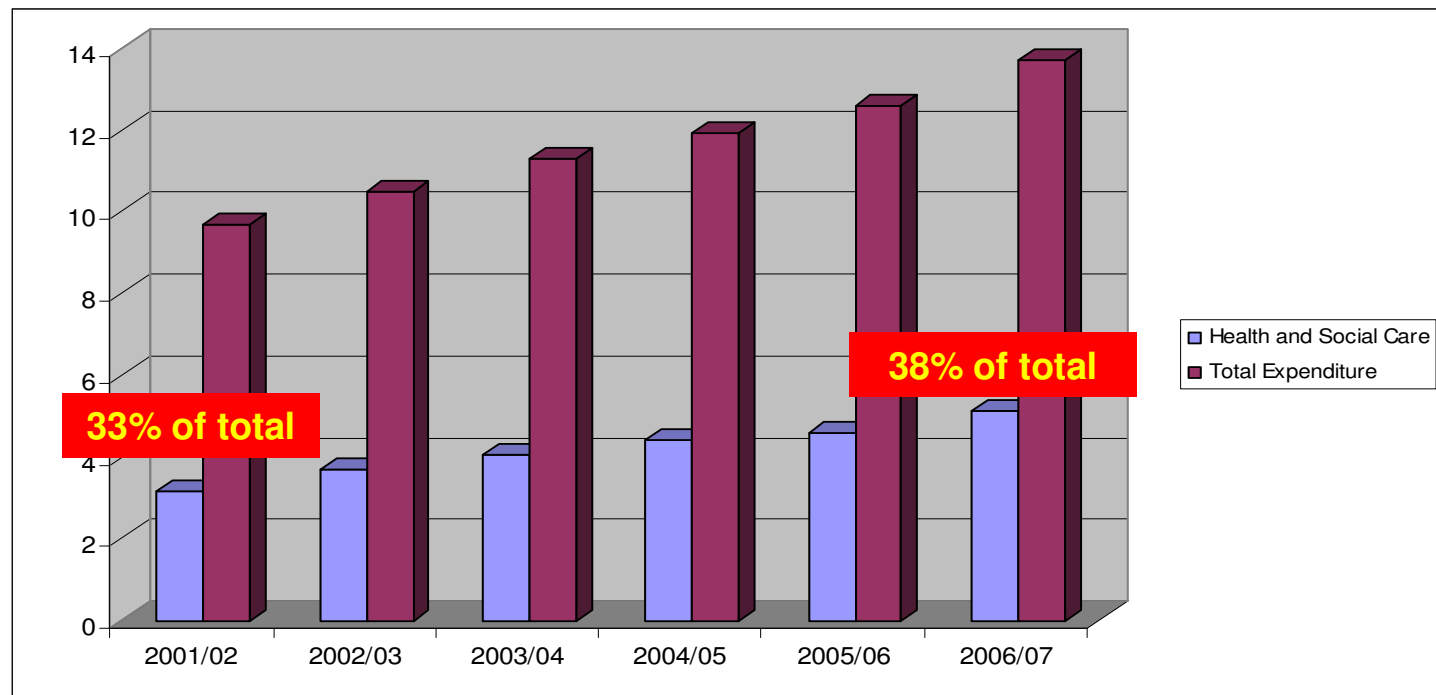
Amongst the highest rates of cancer registrations in Western Europe.

In the 2001 Census 12% of the Welsh population, compared to 9% in England, reported that their health was not good. All Welsh local authorities had rates above the English average.

Cost to Government

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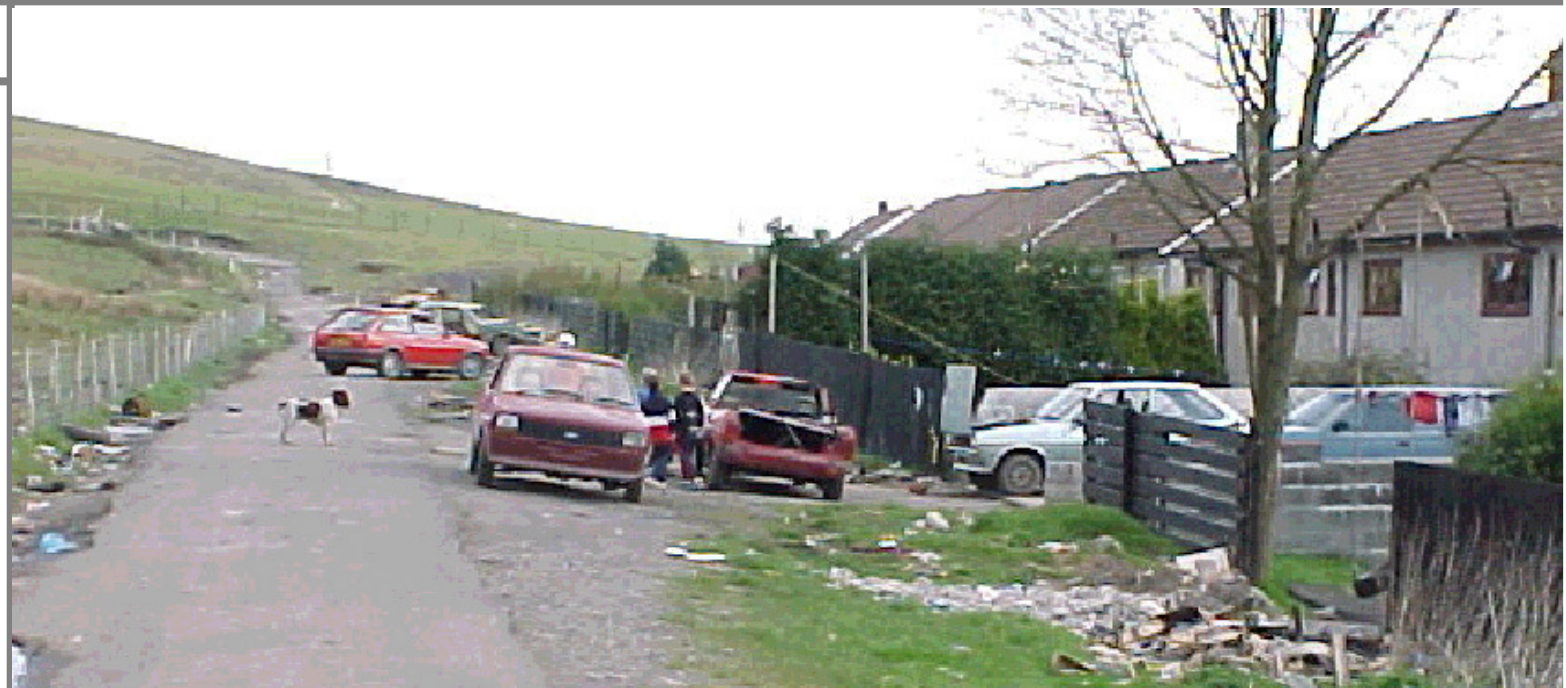


Time to Deliver. The Third Term & Beyond: Policy Options for Wales, Institute of Welsh Affairs (2006)

A wicked issue?

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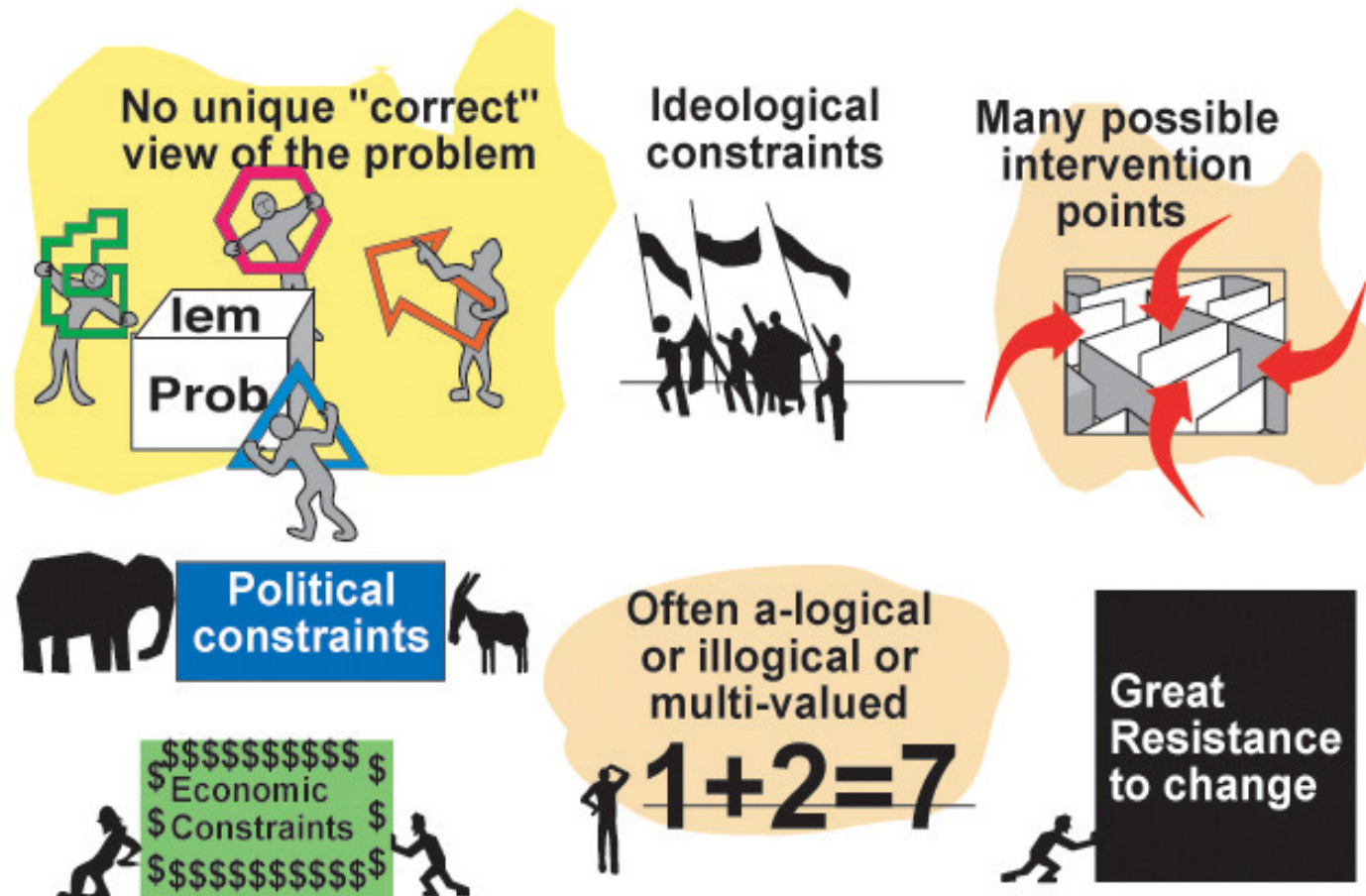


"Smoking, drinking and drug-taking. I put it down to one thing ... until money is spent on these areas ... there doesn't seem to be much point in trying to stop people smoking and what else. As long as the environment is going down the pan the people will go down with it"

What part for us in health's wicked issues?

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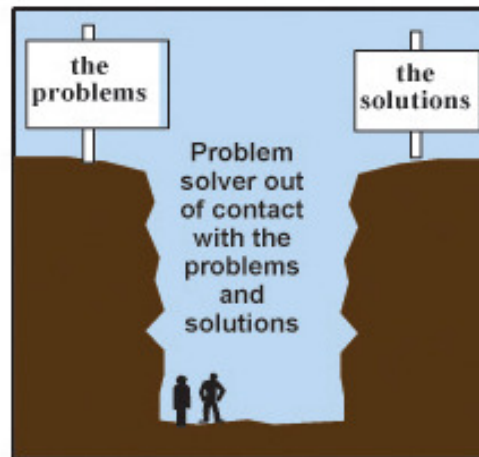


What part for us in health's wicked issues?

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Different views of problem and solutions are contradictory



Most problems are interconnected to other problems



Multiple value conflicts



Risk difficult or impossible to calculate



Considerable Uncertainty

Ambiguous



Consequences difficult to imagine



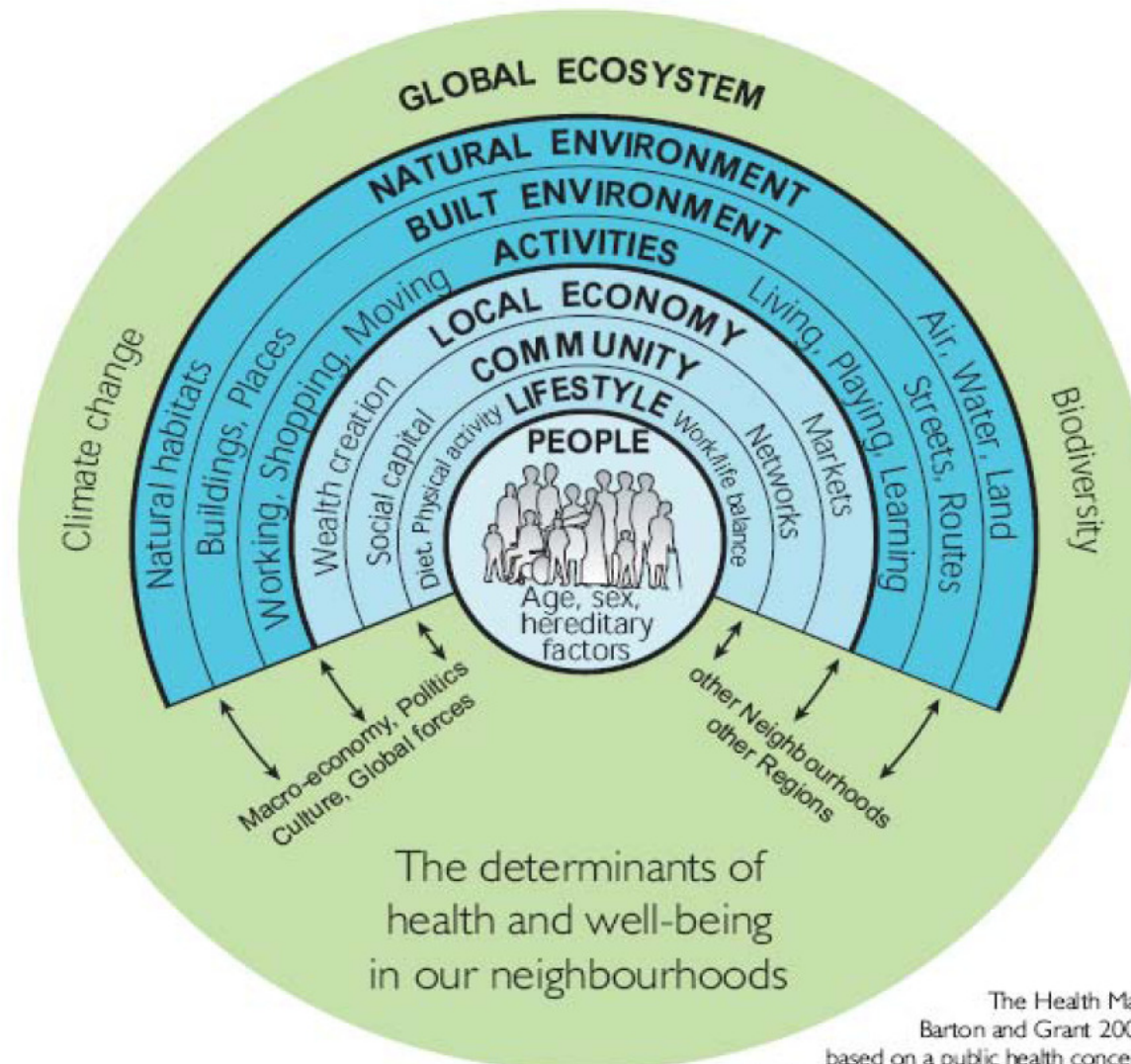
Data are often uncertain or missing

?	?	?	?
?		?	?
	?	?	?
??	?	?	

Health Determinants

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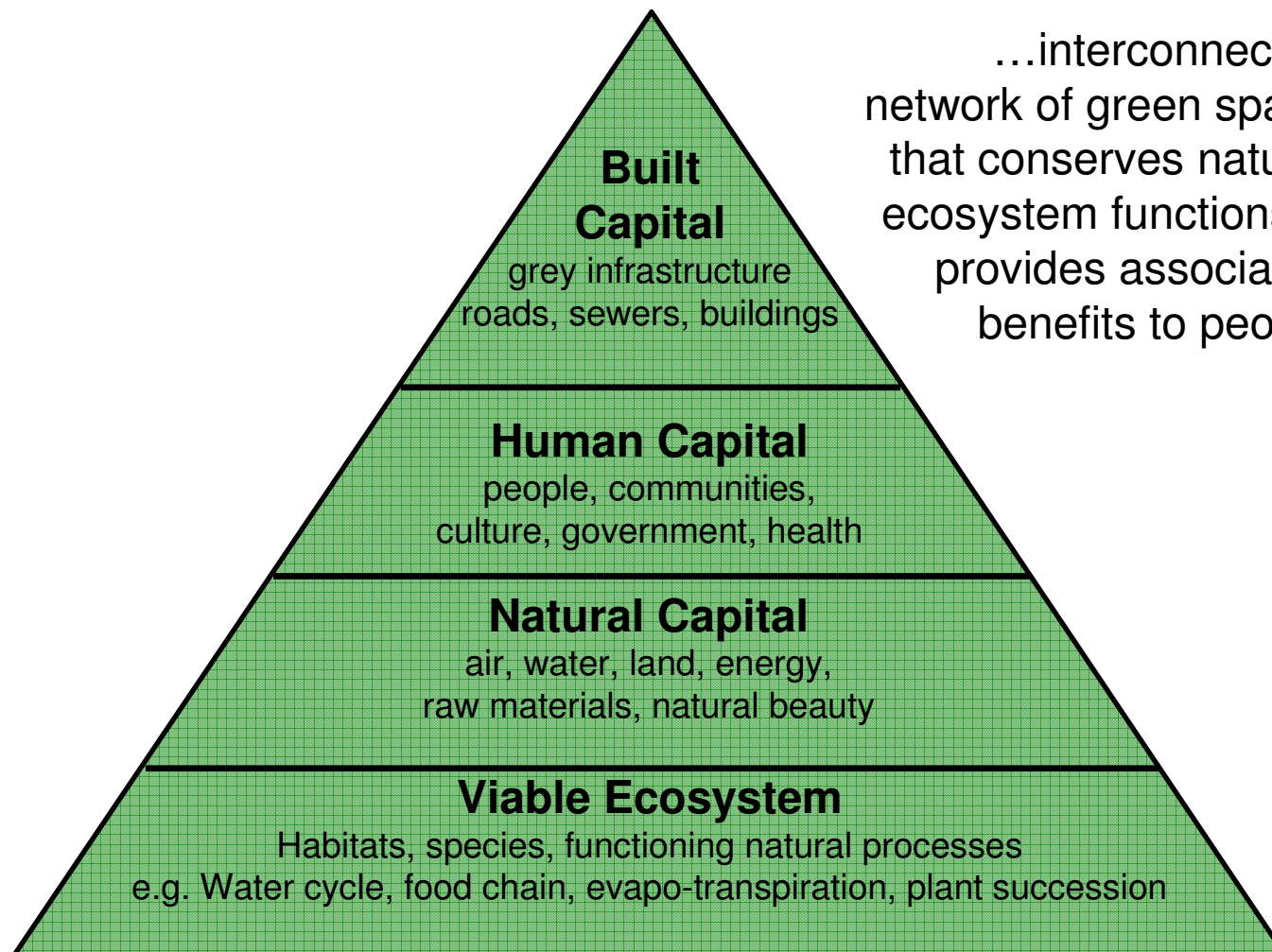
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Green Infrastructure

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Policy: Natural Heritage a Pathway to Health

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Our beliefs about people and nature

- everyone is entitled to experience nature (this includes our own staff) because it can maintain and restore health, help to improve social, mental and spiritual well-being
- everyone should have easy access to nature regardless of their individual situation
- natural environments within urban and rural areas can help support economic, social and health benefits
- partnerships with organisations and people concerned about the development of natural spaces will bring about healthy and sustainable communities
- interaction with nature must be achieved sensitively so that people's health and well-being is optimised without compromising biodiversity

Policy: Natural Heritage a Pathway to Health

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Priority Actions:

Raise awareness of the health and well-being benefits of the natural heritage of Wales.

Maximise opportunities for all people in Wales to access the health and well-being benefits of our natural heritage.

Continue to develop understanding and evidence of the contribution of natural heritage to sustain health and well-being.

Examples of CCW activity

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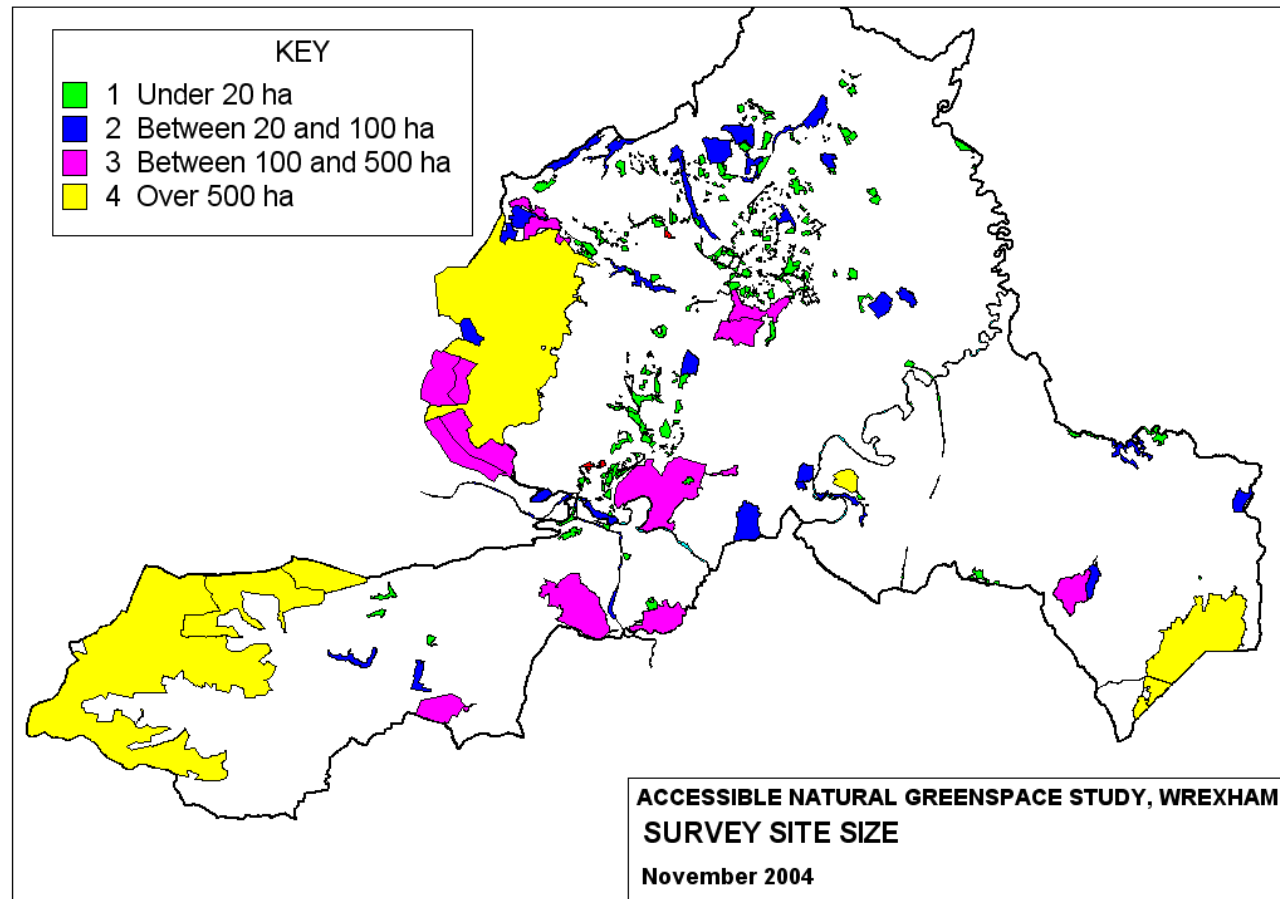
OHN Challenge

- Conservation of Welsh landscape and biodiversity as 'life support' mechanism;
- Recreation opportunities through open access, coastal access, rights of way, and the greenspace toolkit;
- Health programmes e.g. Let's Walk Cymru, Mentro Allan, and ongoing advice to Health Social Care and Wellbeing Partnerships.
- Agri environment schemes to promote sustainable agriculture to protect landscapes and opportunities for access.
- Information e.g. Countryside Code and campaigns such as "Fy Mro/My Special Place".

Accessible Natural Greenspace

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Bulk of CCW research is terrestrial, marine and fresh water research: strategic survey, monitoring, and assessment e.g:

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'Diet analysis and foraging requirements of the Barbastelle, *Barbastella barbastellus*: implications for management and conservation'; and

Models

Policy

Current status and distribution of the Shrill Carder Bee (*Bombus sylvarum*) on the Castlemartin Range

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'Social science' is (slowly) increasing in acceptance as a necessary component across all of our remit, not just 'access'.

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CCW Recreation Research

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Lacks the breadth of a social science approach, but is a starting point.

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Participation data: *the users and non-users*

Wicked Problem

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Participant experience: *awareness, motivation, and satisfaction*

Policy

User impacts: *understand and manage negative impacts*

Work

Research

Recreational benefits: *understand and maximize the benefits*

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Demand & supply: *inform the shape of current and future provision*

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CCW is currently developing an approach that we are calling “Compass: Integrating Outdoor Recreation Planning”

The goal of Compass is to provide recreation planners and managers with a clearly defined, demand-orientated framework for making better decisions for providing for and conserving a spectrum of high quality and diverse recreation opportunities.

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The Compass approach will be developed to incorporate:

A mapped overview of the supply of recreational settings, opportunities and facilities.

Quantitative research on visitor numbers and recreational patterns in relation to demographic categories.

Qualitative research which seeks to understand people's preferences, motivations and barriers in relation to recreational settings and activities.

Research on the potential impacts of recreation activities on settings and other users.

Issues & Priorities

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1. Tackling inequalities and actively pursuing social justice.
2. Promoting 'green infrastructure' and the link between a healthy environment and the health of people.
3. Supporting improved mental health & well-being.
4. Designing communities to support better health.
5. 'Behaviour change'.
6. Spatially referencing priorities.



The OHN: contribution and catalyst

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- Contribute to the ongoing, reflexive, and adaptive approach to the health and environment agenda.
- Contribute to redefining the problem and the solutions.
- Improve knowledge and its transfer into policy arena.
- Help identify causality and connections.

What could your collective disciplines do to help me, my partners, and my political masters, to prioritise who needs to do what with who where in Wales, and tell me what difference it may make, and what difference it did make?

Today, tomorrow, and in plentiful supply, please

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