



# Barriers and enablers to aligning policy agendas – the case of Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales

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# Context

## Threats



Sea level rise – 0.27m and 0.69m for Cardiff under a medium emissions by 2100



245,000 properties are at risk of flooding from rivers, the sea and surface water



2,700km of coastline with Ca. 400 properties at risk of coastal erosion

## At risk



75% coastline designated for environmental importance



Heritage and cultural asset



60% of the population live in coastal areas



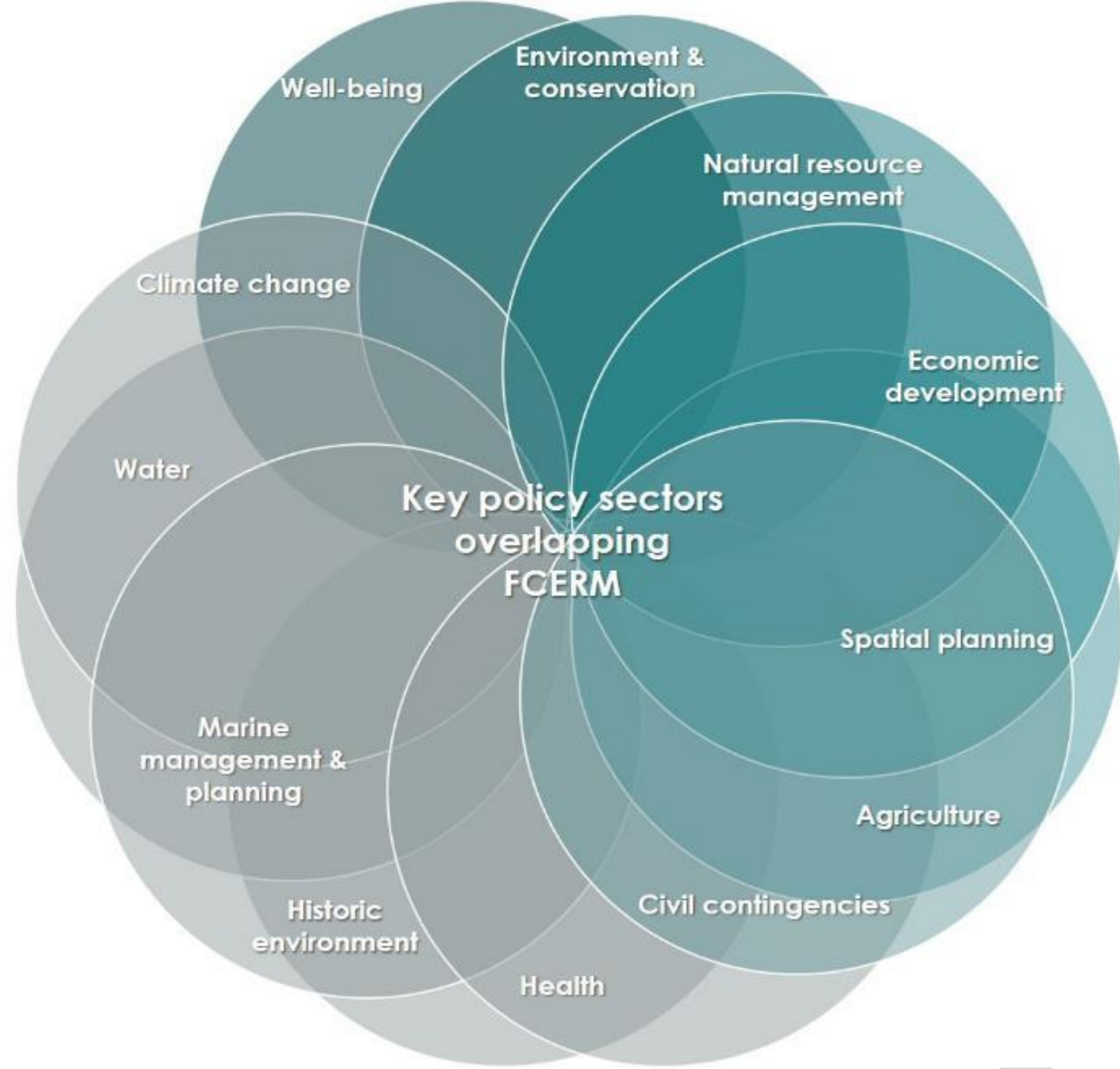
Key economic sectors (e.g. tourism, agriculture)



Critical infrastructure

# Context

- **FCERM overlaps multiple policy areas**
- **New legislative portfolio in Wales** to strengthen alignment across policy and delivery
- **Efforts to move away from policy silos**, join-up working and deliver multi-beneficial schemes
- **Shared vision** to strengthen the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales ...



# Context

- **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** enshrines the Sustainable Development Principle and Fives Ways of Working
- Places a **well-being duty** on public bodies to work towards a shared vision for Wales – and 7 national Well-being Goals



Long-term



Prevention



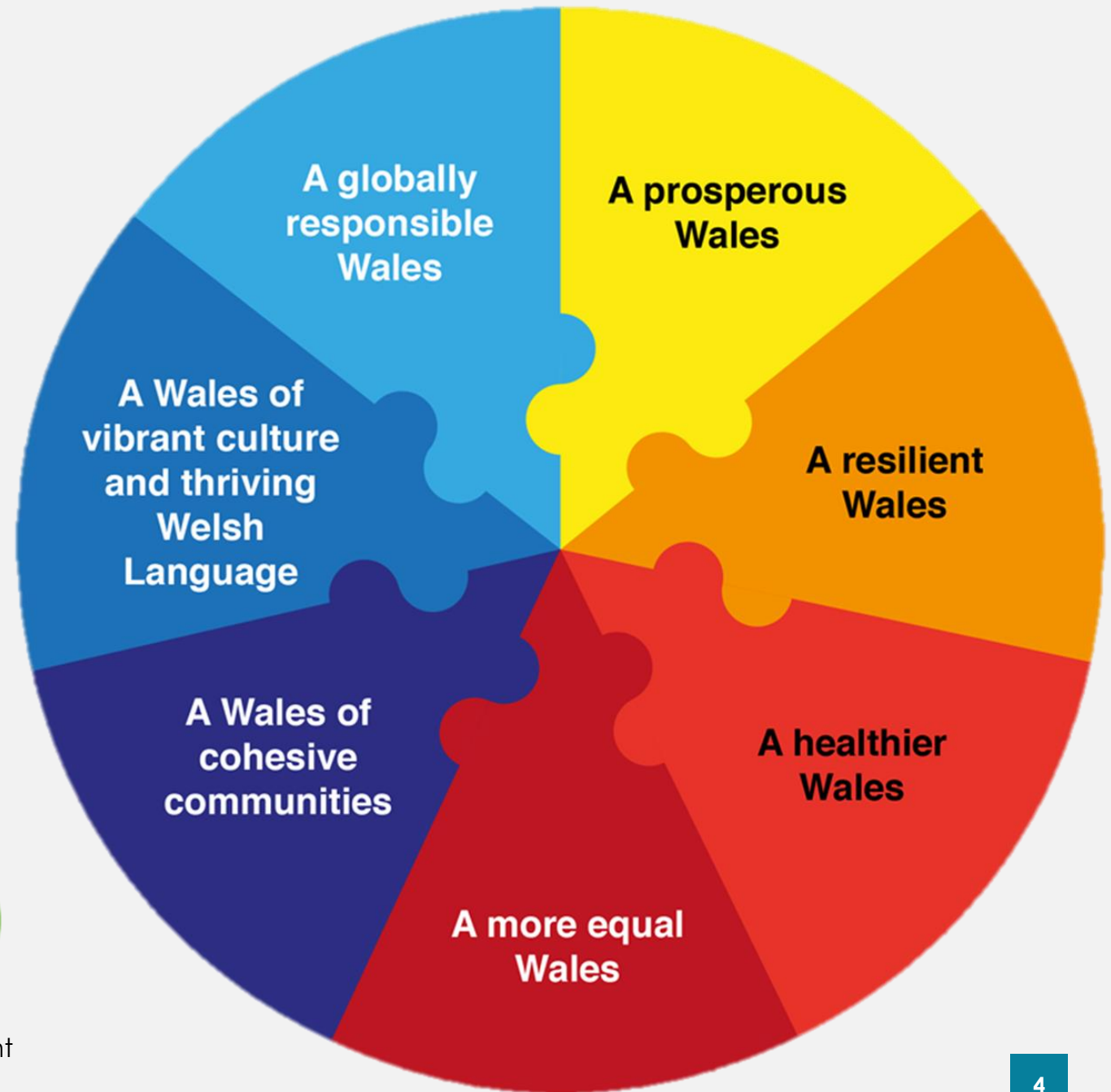
Integration



Collaboration



Involvement



# Why is alignment of FCERM to other policy agendas so important?

- Fulfilling the principle of sustainable development;
- Maximising contribution to national well-being goals;
- Efficiency and value for public money through delivery of multi-beneficial schemes;
- Implementing coastal adaptation and 'just transitions' for the future;



# What are the barriers and enablers to aligning FCERM with other policy agendas?

Methodology

# Project overview



- **CoastWEB** - Valuing the contribution which COASTal habitats make to human health and WellBeing, with a focus on the alleviation of natural hazards
- Funded by the **Valuing Nature Programme**
- **Interdisciplinary research team**, led by PML involving environmental science, environmental economics, psychology, sociology, geography and arts



# Methods

- In-depth **policy and legal analysis** – what's (not) said and how
- **Evidence repository** – ca. 200 entries
- **Stakeholder interviews** x45
- Wide range of stakeholders working at national to local scales within FCERM and allied policy sectors
- **Stakeholder workshop**





# Evaluation framework

## 20 core criteria

**Benchmarks** to determine the extent to which these criteria are

### Process

- Embedding core principles of Ecosystem-Based Management
- Integration
- Coordination
- Collaboration & cooperation
- Stakeholder participation
- Scale
- Evidence-based decision-making
- Learning

- Uncertainty & flexibility
- Institutional capacity
- Valuation methods
- Resource efficiency
- Transparency & access to information
- Accountability
- Social equity, fairness & justice

### Outcome & impact

- Societal resilience
- Ecosystem resilience
- Economic resilience
- Well-being

A photograph of a coastal town, likely in the UK, showing significant damage to the promenade and beach area. The foreground is dominated by dark, jagged rocks and debris scattered across the ground. A concrete walkway on the left is partially destroyed, with metal railings leaning precariously. In the middle ground, a red and white striped caution tape is strung across the area, cordoning off a section. A group of people is gathered in the background, looking towards the sea. The buildings along the coast are multi-story, with some showing signs of wear and damage. The sea is visible on the left, with waves breaking onto the beach. The sky is overcast and grey.

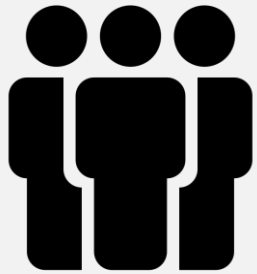
**Aligning policy agendas: The enablers**

# Enablers

- **Key triggers for shifts in governance**
  - Catalyst flood events – key for sustaining momentum and interest
  - International agreements (e.g. UN SDGs, Paris Agreement)
  - “Brexit” - particularly within the agricultural sector (“Sustainable farming and our Land” consultation proposes payments for ecosystem services and sustainable land management)
- **Legislative impetus** and stronger legal imperatives that demand integration and shifts in institutional cultures and practices;
  - Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
  - Environment (Wales) Act 2016
  - Planning (Wales) Act 2015
  - Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016

# Enablers

- Self-reinforcing policy and policy instruments
- Key “bridging mechanisms”, some examples:



## Actors

- Key champions;
- Memorandums of Understanding;
- Cross-departmental Membership of programme boards;
- Public participation;
- Key boundary organisations



## Rules

- Sustainable development principle and Fives Ways of Working
- S6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty
- Powers to experiment
- TANs in spatial planning



## Resources

- Funding criteria – e.g. NFM options must be short-listed;
- Area Statements
- Increasing evidence-base
- Wales Flood Map



## Discourses

- Key boundary concepts
- Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR)
  - National Well-being Goals
  - ‘Placemaking’

An aerial photograph of a coastal town. In the foreground, a dark, pebbly beach meets the ocean. A road curves through a residential area with houses and green lawns. In the background, a large mountain range stretches across the horizon under a hazy sky. The text "Aligning policy agendas: The barriers" is overlaid in white on a dark horizontal band across the middle of the image.

# Aligning policy agendas: The barriers

# Barriers

- The “**Adaptation gap**” in funding
  - Criticisms of CRMP funding traditional defence-based schemes;
  - Prioritisation system favours protection of homes from flooding and minimally rewards multi-benefits;
  - No funding available for decommissioning;
  - *“Capital rich, but revenue poor”*
- **Path dependency** created by flood defences and reinforced by funding criteria
- **Institutional inertia** - Risk aversity in public sector and ‘business as usual’ approaches

## “This is a wake-up call”: the villagers who could be Britain’s first climate refugees

As sea levels rise, Fairbourne, sandwiched between mountains and the beach, is being returned to the waves. But where will its residents go?



# Barriers

- **Lack of strategic leadership** and calls for greater guidance at the local scale. Reflects wider emphasis on climate change mitigation over adaptation.
- **Legislative rigidity** – e.g. Duty to maintain Public Rights of Way incompatible with dynamic coastlines
- **Weak legislative wording** e.g. to ‘regard’ SMP2, Area Statements and Well-being Plans, or NRW to ‘encourage’ others to take steps to implement Area Statements
- Integrated working is challenged by;
  - **Mis-alignment in planning cycles;**
  - **Differing priorities** between stakeholders;
  - **Budget silos;**
  - **Lack of resources for collaboration.**

“...lack of resources means that **nobody can actually fully commit to that collaboration**, you know the day to day job takes precedent so quite a lot of opportunities are missed because nobody has got time or the resources to do more work in these areas”



**Moving forwards**  
Conclusions & recommendations



# Conclusions

- There are **numerous ‘bridging mechanisms’** to enable stronger integration and delivery of multi-beneficial schemes - However, there are **difficulties in implementing this** on the ground.
- FCERM currently **under-represents its contribution to wider well-being** - there is a need for the FCERM community to better articulate the wider well-being benefits of their activities to attract engagement from others (push and pull messaging).
- **FCERM is not demonstrating equal consideration of national well-being goals, nor is it maximising its contribution to the goals** – integration is weakest in relation to health, culture & Welsh language.
- **Leveraging governance mechanisms** to better align policy agendas and unlock additional sources of funding to deliver multi-beneficial schemes – strengthening and building on ‘the enablers’ and addressing ‘the barriers’.

# Recommendations

- **There is a need for urgency in the current climate emergency** - Longer-term adaptation should be better embedded within the risk-based paradigm of FCERM and added as an explicit objective within the revised National Strategy for FCERM in Wales. Stronger strategic steering and guidance is needed, and a 'united front' on coastal adaptation matters.
- **To address the current 'adaptation gap' in funding**, there is a need to re-think how funding is prioritised within the CRMP/FCERM programme;
- **Efforts must be made to bridge current departmental silos** and unlock opportunities for cross-department/cross-sectoral funding;
- There is a moral responsibility to **actively and meaningfully engage (not consult) communities** and other stakeholders now in order to collectively navigate the future and shape '**adaptive placemaking**' and '**just transitions**' – a whole system approach is needed;
- **Addressing legislative barriers** (e.g. aligning PRow with principles of SMNR);
- Thinking beyond FCERM-silo (flood protection) and **re-framing FCERM as a service-straddling issue**;
- **Change takes time!**



**THANK YOU**

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