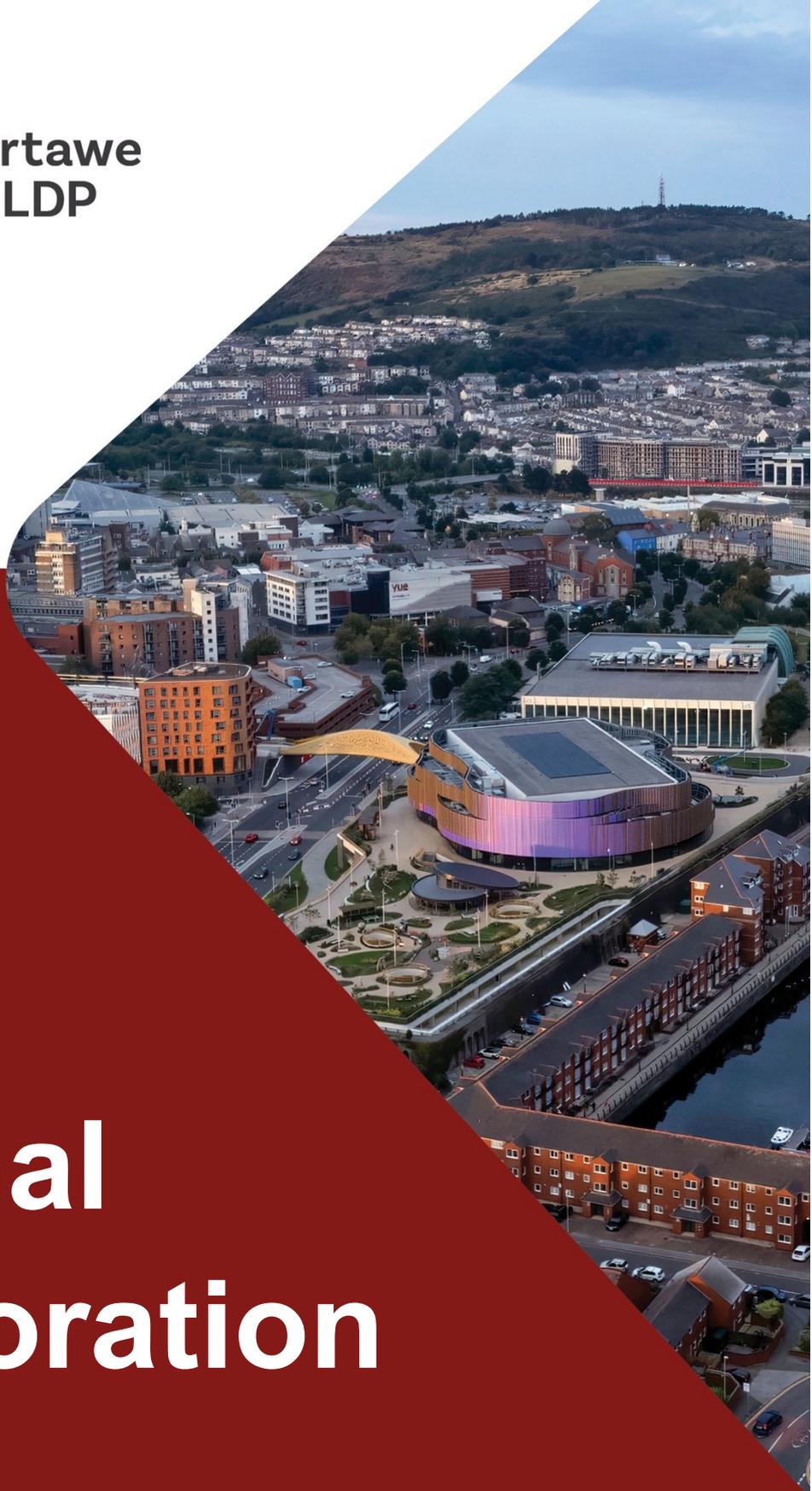




CDLI Abertawe Swansea LDP 2023-2038



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Regional Collaboration

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1.0 Introduction

Overview and Purpose

1.1 This paper provides detail on regional collaboration between authorities and stakeholders in the production of the Swansea Local Development Plan 2023-2038 (LDP2). The importance of regional collaboration in the process of Plan formation is implicit, with notable reference given to the Tests of Soundness and the [Development Plans Manual](#) (2020) in this regard.

2.0 Regional Context

Geography

2.1 The City and County of Swansea covers some 380km² and is located on the south coast of Wales (Figure 1). It contains a mixture of urban, rural and coastal locations and shares its boundary with two Local Planning Authorities: Neath Port Talbot (NPT) and Carmarthenshire, with whom various geographical and transport linkages are shared. Swansea Valley extends into NPT and the slopes of the Drummau Mountain at the northeastern edge border NPT. The southern boundary encompasses coastline along Swansea Bay to the Burry Inlet and Carmarthenshire. To the north lies extensive rural hinterlands, including the vast open moorlands of the Lliw Uplands up to the ridge of Mynydd y Gwair overlooking the Amman Valley.

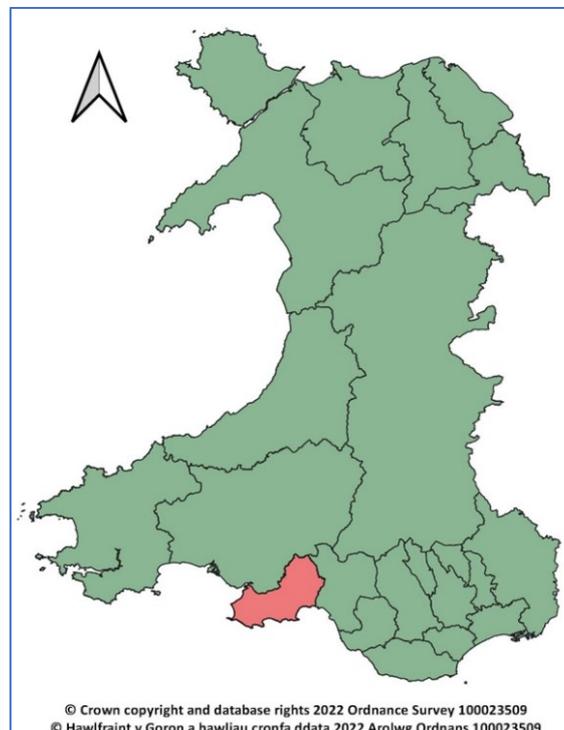


Figure 1 Swansea in Context

Infrastructure

2.2 The County has important regional transport linkages, particularly with NPT and Carmarthenshire. The M4 motorway runs east/west from London to Carmarthenshire, passing through Swansea from NPT in the east to Carmarthenshire in the West. The A4067 runs from Swansea north through NPT and the Skewen area of NPT has direct transport links with the Birchgrove area of Swansea. The A483 provides a link to NPT to the east and the Fabian Way Corridor Strategic Development Area is identified in the adopted Swansea LDP which includes the Swansea University Bay Campus.

2.3 The A484 connects Swansea to Carmarthenshire, over the River Loughor and the A48 connects the M4 at junction 44 in Swansea west to the Pont Abraham Interchange in Carmarthenshire. Pontarddulais in Swansea has close links with Hendy in Carmarthenshire, whilst Garnswllt in Swansea has links with Ammanford.

2.4 Train stations are located at Swansea High Street Station (Central), Gowerton, Pontarddulais, Landore and Llansamlet. High Street Station serves the strategic rail network (London – Swansea), west through Carmarthenshire to Fishguard; and north to mid Wales and Manchester.

2.5 [Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 \(2021\)](#) recognises that the South West Wales region is served by ports at Milford Haven, Port Talbot, Swansea and Fishguard and plays an important role supporting the maritime sector and the national economy. It recognises that the ports are important national infrastructure and supporting their future role locally, regionally and nationally is a key consideration.

2.6 Swansea Port and Docks is an important commercial asset, providing jobs and business opportunities that contribute towards economic regeneration and international trade. The port has the capacity to handle large vessels and is equipped to handle a wide range of cargo. The port is an attractive destination for visiting cruises and offers exciting development opportunities.

2.7 National Cycle route 4 passes through the County, from NPT in the east to Carmarthenshire in the west, whilst route 43 travels north from Swansea, passing through NPT to Coelbren, Powys.

2.8 Welsh Government and Transport for Wales are working in partnership with Carmarthenshire, NPT, Pembrokeshire and Swansea Councils to develop proposals for the Swansea Bay and West Wales Metro, which will provide a series of regional integrated transport systems across Carmarthenshire, NPT, Pembrokeshire and Swansea. Collaborative work across the regional has been extensive on this project and is ongoing.

Ecological Features and Green Infrastructure (GI)

2.9 The County contains many internationally and nationally designated ecological sites, including sites that cross administrative boundaries of Carmarthenshire and NPT.

2.10 The Crymlyn Bog SAC and SSSI covers almost 300ha; the majority is also designated a Ramsar site (all but 35ha) and one third of Crymlyn Bog is a National Nature Reserve. The Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries European Marine Site covers both the Swansea and Carmarthenshire administrative boundaries, and ongoing

collaboration has taken place over the years between Carmarthenshire and Swansea Councils (together with partner agencies in the form of Dwr Cymru Welsh Water and Natural Resources Wales) in respect of balancing the need to deliver development with nature conservation interests – including by way of a multi-agency Memorandum of Understanding approach.

2.11 The Council's GI Assessment demonstrates the cross-boundary nature of GI features and assets and ongoing collaboration with neighbouring authorities will continue in the development of this work. Previously, the Council collaborated with Carmarthenshire and NPT Councils regarding the designation of Special Landscape Areas and settlement boundaries (where crossing/close to administrative boundaries) and this will continue with the development of LDP2.

Future Wales

2.12 Swansea is situated within Future Wales' South West Wales region, as shown in Figure 2. The Local Planning Authorities within the SWW planning region are Swansea, NPT, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, parts of Bannau Brycheiniog and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. Of the Authorities within the region, all are at different stages in their respective Development Plan preparation processes (replacement/revised LDPs) at the date of this paper (December 2024):

- Bannau Brycheiniog - withdrew RLDP in June 2024, to commence a new Delivery Agreement in 2024/2025.
- Carmarthenshire County Council - at Examination in Public;
- Pembrokeshire Coast National Park - adopted RLDP, review has now commenced;

- Pembrokeshire County Council - at Deposit consultation;
- NPT – undertaken consultation on Preferred Strategy;
- Swansea Council - Preferred Strategy consultation Feb-April 2025.

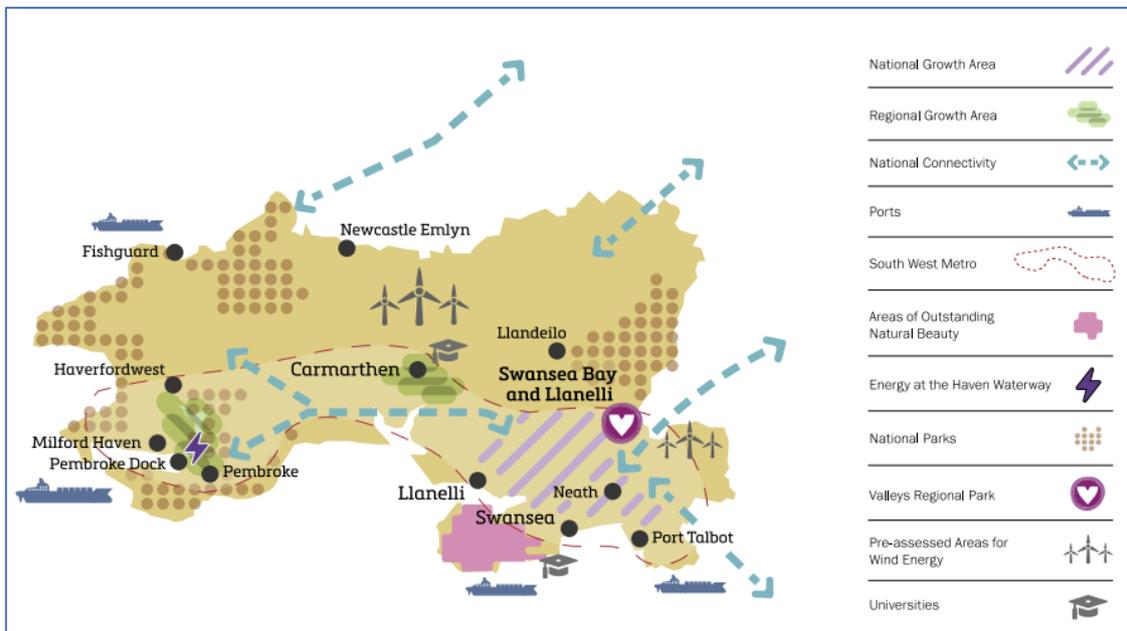


Figure 2 Extract from Future Wales showing the strategic direction for South West Wales, including the National Growth Area around Swansea Bay

The Swansea Bay and Llanelli National Growth Area

2.13 Policy 28 ‘National Growth Area – Swansea Bay and Llanelli’ states that Swansea Bay and Llanelli will be the main focus for growth and investment in the South West region. LDPs should recognise this area as the focus for strategic economic and housing growth; essential services and facilities; advanced manufacturing; transport and digital infrastructure. The spatial area of the NGA was

refined within the Swansea Bay and Llanelli National Growth Area Definition Project, 2023 (discussed further in section 4 below).

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

2.14 Future Wales Policy 17 identifies a Pre-Assessed Area for Wind Energy in the north of the County, crossing the administrative boundary of NPT.

The Swansea Bay City Deal

2.15 The Deal highlights the strategic economic importance of South West Wales (Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea), with £1.3 billion of funding available for programmes and projects. It is led by the four regional local authorities, Swansea Bay and Hywel Dda University Health Boards, Swansea University, the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, and private sector partners.

Health

2.16 The Swansea Bay University Health Board covers both Swansea and NPT Local Authority Areas, with health care services delivered for the population of both counties.

Education

2.17 Swansea contains two Universities: Swansea University and University of Wales Trinity St David (UWTSD). Both universities also have campuses outside Swansea – Swansea University in NPT and UWTSD in Carmarthenshire and Lampeter.

3.0 Links Between Swansea and Neighbouring Authorities

Commuting and Travel to Work Area

3.1 Data published by Welsh Government from the Annual Population Survey illustrates the strong integration between the Swansea labour market and its neighbour authorities of NPT and Carmarthenshire. Analysis of travel-to-work patterns suggest that the most significant cross-boundary flows occur into Swansea from these adjacent areas. In 2023, Swansea had the second highest net inflow of local authority areas in Wales (+9,000), behind only Cardiff. The data also indicates that 88% of Swansea residents worked within the local authority area, with only Pembrokeshire, Cardiff, Gwynedd and Ceredigion having a higher equivalent figure.

Table 1 Commuting

Area	Number of working residents	Number working in the area	% of residents working in area of residence	Commuting out of the area	Commuting into the area	Net inflow
Swansea	117,400	126,400	88% (103,200)	14,200	23,200	+9,000
Neath Port Talbot	65,100	46,800	60% (39,300)	25,800	7,500	-18,300
Carmarthenshire	82,900	80,300	77% (63,800)	19,200	16,600	-2,600
Wales	1,465,100	1,414,800	97% (1,383,200)	81,800	31,600	-50,200

Where the residents of Swansea work:

Swansea = 103,200; Carmarthenshire = 6,000; Neath Port Talbot = 3,900; other areas = 4,300.

Origin of those working in Swansea:

Swansea = 103,200; Neath Port Talbot = 11,300; Carmarthenshire = 9,100; other areas = 2,800.

Source: Annual Population Survey (ONS); Commuting tables 2023, Welsh Government (published on Stats Wales 11 April 2024).

Notes:

- i. The statistics provide estimates of commuting for local authorities in Wales for the calendar year 2023, based on Annual Population Survey (APS) data from ONS. As the APS is a sample survey all estimates are subject to sampling variability.
- ii. The statistics examine commuting patterns for those in employment. The analysis is based solely on a person's main job.

3.2 The 2021 Census recorded peoples actual place of work and results (Table 2) demonstrates that most people commute from Swansea to NPT (7%), followed by Carmarthenshire, Bridgend and Cardiff.

Table 2 Main Commuting flows from Swansea (2021)

	number	%
Working Residents of Swansea	100,601	100
Worked from home	38,122	38
Travelled to work elsewhere in Swansea	46,058	46
Travelled to work in Neath Port Talbot	7,162	7
Travelled to work in Carmarthenshire	4,072	4
Travelled to work in Bridgend	1,403	1
Travelled to work in Cardiff	770	1

Source: Census 2021

3.3 Conversely, the 2021 Census showed that approximately one third of the people working within the County – excluding anyone working from home – were not living in the County, with around one in six living in NPT, while a further 11% travelling in from Carmarthenshire (Table 3).

Table 3 Main Commuting Flows to Swansea (2021)

	number	%
Individuals at workplaces in Swansea	58,647	100
Residents of Swansea	38,122	65
Residents of Neath Port Talbot	9,302	16
Residents of Carmarthenshire	6,726	11
Residents of Bridgend	1,442	2
Residents of Rhondda Cynon Taff	614	1

Source: Census 2021

3.4 The ONS updated the defined Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs) in 2016 (ONS (2016) TTWA analysis in Great Britain). The Swansea TTWA includes the whole of the County, the majority of Neath Port Talbot, parts of both Carmarthenshire and Powys. The TTWA defines areas in which at least 75% of residents work and at

least 75% of workers live. Analysis of commuting patterns emphasises the importance of this functional relationship with NPT, aided by strong road and rail connections as well as a clustering of large employment centres along the coast. The economic relationship between the County and neighbouring authorities is therefore important on a regional scale and influences the area's housing market.

Economic and Housing Market Area

3.5 LPAs in the South West Wales region commissioned a common evidence base for the Economic and Housing Growth Assessment. Consultants Turley assessed the Functional Economic Market Areas (FEMA) for Swansea as part of the Assessment in order to consider the functional relationships between Swansea and the other authorities within the South West Wales geography, as well as other proximate and adjacent authorities within the Plan making context.

3.6 Turley looked at the study area in its wider strategic/policy context and then functional linkages including commuting, travel to work areas, migration, house prices and flows of goods, services, information and retail and consumer catchments. The analysis was used to conclude on the extent to which Swansea represents a distinct and self-contained functional economic market area geography. This was considered to be important in providing spatial context to the scenarios of growth which have an impact on the adjoining authorities with the strongest evidenced relationships.

3.7 Turley concluded that it was reasonable to suggest that in determining a FEMA for Swansea, Swansea and NPT could be broadly considered collectively. They however noted that each area does though still offer the opportunity for residents to live and work within their boundaries, as the majority of the working

population of Swansea either working from home or travelling to a workplace in the County, as discussed above.

4.0 Regional Working

4.1 Taking into consideration the regional linkages outlined above, this section details regional work undertaken, and in many cases continuing to be progressed to benefit the production of LDP2. The Council has continued to work closely with neighbouring authorities and those within the region in a number of ways as set out below.

Regional Meetings

4.2 Council officers have regularly attended and participated in meetings of the South West Wales Planning Officers Group; the South West Region Financial Viability Group; the South Wales Regional Aggregate Working Party, as well as the various technical groups of the Planning Officers Society Wales (POSW) including the mineral and waste planning group, the placemaking group and the LDP group. In addition to these, the Council discusses regional planning matters with all relevant neighbouring authorities to discuss cross-boundary issues, share best practice and discuss methodologies and proposed policies/strategies within emerging development plans.

Corporate Joint Committee

4.3 **The South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee (SWWCJC)** was formally constituted in January 2022. Its Corporate Plan 2023-2028 sets out its well-being objectives and refers to the South West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan and the preparation of a Regional Transport Plan and a Strategic Development Plan. The SWWCJC has established a Strategic Planning Sub-Committee which Swansea Council chairs via its leader, and which is attended by officers. It is noted

that the [Draft Regional Transport Plan](#) has been published for consultation at the time of writing

Regional Commissions and Strategic Planning Projects

4.4 Swansea Council has worked in collaboration to share methodologies and project aims for a range of evidence and research to underpin LDP2. Methodologies for the Employment Land Review, Green Infrastructure Assessment, Green Wedge Assessment, Best and Most Versatile Land, Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Assessment and Special Landscape Areas have also been shared.

4.5 Work on a **Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment (Stage 1)** was commissioned in 2022 as a joint regional project to cover the whole region, including additional specific flooding information for each individual local authority.

4.6 Authorities in both the West Wales and Mid Wales regions have worked together with Andrew Burrows of Burrows-Hutchinson Ltd on the development and implementation of a **Development Viability Model (DVM)** for use by all the Authorities. This is now being rolled out as a common approach across most of Wales. The DVM is a spreadsheet based appraisal tool capable of assessing the overall levels of viability in sub areas of an authority, as well as for testing the suitability and deliverability of specific sites for inclusion in a Development Plan.

4.7 Swansea, NPT and Carmarthenshire Councils have worked together to commission a common evidence base to refine the definition of the **Swansea Bay and Llanelli National Growth Area (NGA)**. In the interests of regional collaboration, Pembrokeshire, whilst outside of the NGA were involved and consulted. The Definition Project Research Report (2023) considered a wide range of factors across the study area including functional spatial geographies, house prices, population and

employment density, economic output expressed as Gross Value Added (GVA), settlement hierarchies of respective adopted LDPs, strategic transport and public service infrastructure, active travel network maps, Swansea Bay and West Wales metro, economic assets and the Welsh Language.

4.8 The NGA commission also considered constraints to national growth such as **environmental protection designations** and areas of **flood risk**. Other issues such as agricultural land classification, pre-assessed areas for wind energy and Heat Priority areas, green wedge designations and spatial policy matters such as special landscape areas were also included. This work culminated in the spatial representation provided below:

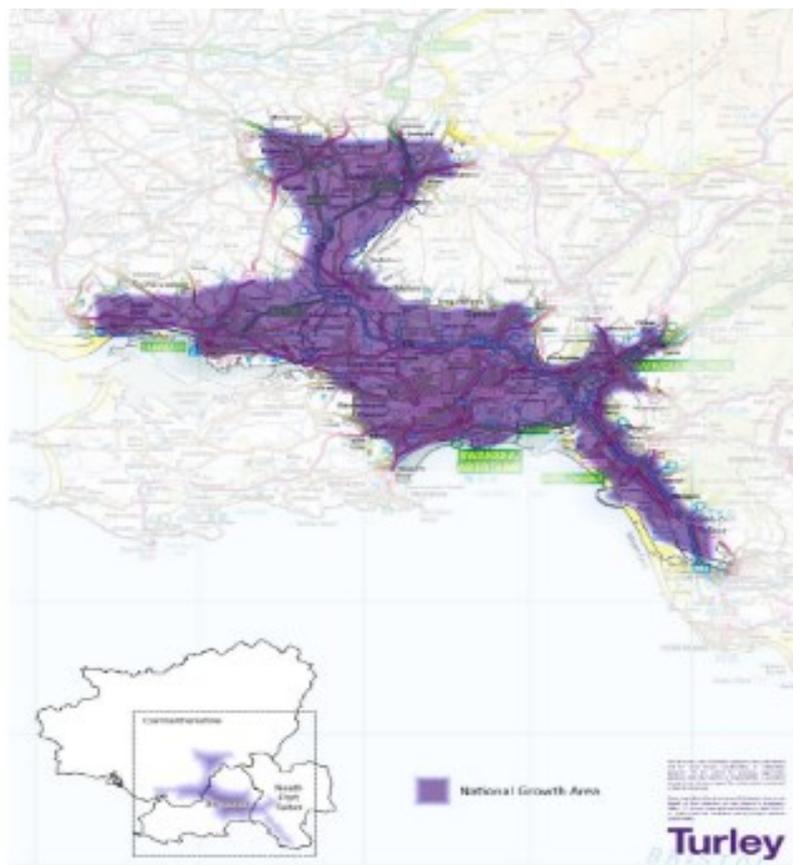


Figure 3 NGA refinement work (2023)

4.9 Turley were jointly commissioned by Swansea and NPT to prepare **Economic and Housing Growth Assessment and Local Housing Market Assessments**. As part of this evidence, cross-border housing and jobs markets and travel to work patterns were considered. Turley have also undertaken an economic assessment for Carmarthenshire; therefore, all authorities within the NGA have used a similar methodology for assessing economic requirements.

4.10 Welsh language: Welsh speaking ability within the County and adjoining authorities was taken into consideration in the current LDP and designation of the Welsh Language Sensitivity Area. This will be re-assessed during preparation of LDP2.

4.11 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Assessment: both Swansea and NPT have commissioned City Science Consultants to undertake their Assessments, ensuring a shared methodology across both regions.

4.12 Waste Planning: the LPA is part of the Mid and South West region (alongside Carmarthen County Council, Ceredigion County Council, Pembrokeshire County Council, Powys County Council, NPT, Pembrokeshire National Park Authority and part of Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority) and collaborates to produce an Annual Waste Monitoring Report. The Report collates and presents data to enable the effective monitoring of both the region's waste arisings and waste management facilities and to assess the region's performance against the targets set out in the Welsh Government's overarching waste strategy Towards Zero Waste.

4.13 Minerals policy: regional discussions are ongoing with Carmarthenshire and NPT Councils regarding aggregate apportionment to inform the position for Deposit LDPs across the region.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 This paper has set out a number of ways in which the Council has shown commitment to working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities and other partner organisations in the preparation of LDP2. Such work has recognised Swansea's key strategic location and position within the wider region and NGA.