

Casnewydd, Caerdydd a'r Barri - Disgrifiad cryno

Mae dwy ddinas a maestrefi cysylltiedig â threfi dibynnol yn dominyddu'r rhan hon o dde-ddwyrain Cymru. Maent yn cynnwys Caerdydd prifddinas Cymru a'r anheddiad fwyaf, yn ogystal â Chasnewydd, Cwmbrân, Pont-y-pŵl, Penarth a'r Barri. Mae'r ardal yn ffurfio coridor trafniadaeth a datblygu prysur. Fe'i lleolir ar yr iseldiroedd arfordirol rhwng aber yr afon Hafren gyda'i lefelau, a chyrion Cymoedd De Cymru gyda'i ucheldiroedd. Mae'r ardal yn cynnwys prif borthladdoedd Caerdydd, Barri, Casnewydd, a'r rhwydwaith mewnol diwydiannol cysylltiedig. Yn ogystal mae yna ardaloedd preswyl, maestrefol helaeth a chyfleusterau manwerthu, hamdden a busnes mawr. Mae yna rwydwaith dwys o ffordd a rheilffyrdd prysur, gan gynnwys rhan o goridor yr M4.

Mae'r tirweddau trefol wedi ehangu dros y ganrif ddiwethaf ar draws beth oedd cynt yng nghefn gwlad agored. Fe newidiwyd eu sbardunau economaidd yn ddramatig o'r cyfnodau diwydiannol i'r ôl-ddiwydiannol, gyda llawer o ailstrwythuro ffisegol yn y newid. Mewn mannau, mae rhai o'r tirweddau trefol mwyaf newydd a mwyaf arloesol Cymru yn dod i'r amlwg, gydag adeiladau pensaernïol a mannau cyhoeddus eiconig newydd. Efallai mai'r mwyaf amlycaf yw'r newid yn nociau Caerdydd. Yn y 19eg canrif rhain oedd y dociau mwyaf yn y byd ar gyfer allforio glo. Heddiw mae allforio glo wedi gorffen ac mae gan y bae forglawdd. Mae'r dirwedd newydd yn un o weinyddiaeth, busnes, hamdden ac adloniant. Mae Canolfan Mileniwm Cymru a Senedd Cynulliad Cymru yn cyfleu natur eithafol y newid ymarferol, ffisegol a chanfyddiadol sydd wedi digwydd o fewn cof. Bellach Caerdydd yw'r gyrchfan twristiaeth fwyaf poblogaidd yng Nghymru, gyda nifer o brif leoliadau chwaraeon a celfyddydol, siopa trefol a mwy o amrywiaeth ddiwylliannol ac ethnig nag sydd mewn unrhyw ran arall o Gymru.

Mae Casnewydd hefyd yn ehangu a datblygu'n gyflym, a chafodd statws dinas yn 2002. Mae'r bont lwyfan metel pwysig (un o'r unig ddwy sy'n dal mewn bodolaeth yn y DU) yn symbol peirianegol o'r gorffennol diwydiannol. Mae'r ystadau tai 20fed Canrif a diwydiannau newydd yn dynodi ehangu cyflym y ddinas, ynghyd â'r M4 brysur, tra bod yr ailddatblygu ar lan yr afon wedi arwain at nifer o adeiladau newydd a mannau cyhoeddus.

Eto er gwaethaf yr holl ddatblygu, mae'r ardal hefyd yn cynnwys unig lain las Cymru (o amgylch Caerdydd) ac ardaloedd deniadol o goetir gwledig, tiroedd pori a gwrychoedd mewn ardal wledig agored. Mae hyn yn arbennig o nodedig yn y rhan rhwng dinas Caerdydd a Chasnewydd. Hefyd mae rhannau a choridorau gwyrdd yn mynd trwy ardaloedd trefol, er enghraifft ar hyd coridorau afonydd fel Afon Taf drwy Gaerdydd, a'r system llecyn glas cynlluniedig yn nhref newydd Cwmbrân.

Summary description

Two cities and associated suburbs and satellite towns dominate this part of south-east Wales. They include Wales' capital and largest settlement, Cardiff, as well as Newport, Cwmbran, Pontypool, Penarth and Barry. The area forms a busy transport and development corridor. It occupies the coastal lowlands between the Severn estuary with its levels, and the edge of the South Wales Valleys with their uplands. The area includes major ports at Cardiff, Barry and Newport, and associated industrial infrastructure. There are also extensive residential, suburban areas and major retail, business and recreational facilities. There is an intensive network of busy roads and railways, including part of the M4 corridor.

These urban landscapes have expanded across formerly open countryside over the last century. Their economic drivers have changed dramatically from the industrial to post-industrial eras, with much physical restructuring in the change. In places, some of Wales' newest and most innovative urban landscapes are emerging, with iconic new architectural forms and public spaces. Perhaps most notable of all has been the change in Cardiff's docks. In the C19th they were the largest in the world and famous for the export of coal. Today coal export is gone and the bay has a barrage. The new landscape is of administration, business, leisure and recreation. The Wales Millennium Centre and the Welsh Assembly Senedd buildings illustrate the extreme nature of functional, physical and perceptual change that has taken place within living memory. Cardiff is now the most popular tourist destination in Wales, it has a number of leading sporting and arts venues, city shopping and a greater cultural and ethnic diversity than in other parts of Wales.

Newport is expanding and evolving quickly too, and was granted city status in 2002. The landmark metal transporter bridge (one of only 2 remaining in the UK) symbolises an industrial engineering past. C20th housing estates and new industries symbolise the rapid expansion of the greater city, together with the busy M4 motorway, whilst its riverside redevelopment has resulted in many new buildings and public realm.

Yet despite all this development, the area also includes Wales' only Green belt (around Cardiff) and appealing areas of sylvan woodland, pastures and hedgerows in open countryside. This is particularly notable in the section between greater Cardiff and Newport. Green wedges and corridors also penetrate urban areas, for example along river corridors such as the River Taff through Cardiff, and greenspace in the planned the new town of Cwmbran.

Key Characteristics
Edge to the coalfield - lowland margins to the south-east of the South Wales coalfield. A varied geology of mudstones, sandstones and a few outcrops of limestone. Many glacial moraine features.
Busy, heavily urbanised areas - containing Cardiff, and other large settlements including Penarth and Barry to the south to the west and the city of Newport and new town of Cwmbran to the east.
Cardiff – capital city, largest urban area and principle administrative centre for Wales. The Romans established a settlement at Cardiff, remains visible in Cardiff Castle. Mid C19 th growth as the most important port in the world for coal export. Cardiff Bay has since regenerated as a secondary focus in the city. The urban form of Cardiff expands across much of the surrounding landscape.
Ports – Cardiff, together with Barry and Newport with it's industrialised river frontage.
Urban fringe / peri-urban areas – for example land between Penarth and Barry, which contains linear settlement linked by rural roads but has an urban fringe character in parts.
Green belt with lush fieldscapes and woodlands - rural pastures and woodlands provide a contrasting peaceful, providing a green setting. Cardiff has the only green belt in Wales. Medium sized fields are mainly enclosed by hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees.
Prominent landmark structures - include Millennium Stadium in Cardiff; the series of bridges in Newport including the Transporter bridge; the chemical works at Barry, standing out prominently on the skyline.
The M4 motorway - forms a noisy, busy corridor between and bypassing the two cities, together with the main railway.
Green wedges / corridors penetrating urban areas – including wooded river corridors in Cardiff and Newport and the coast at Barry.

Lowland river corridors - Rivers Taff and Ely drain into Cardiff Bay and the tidal River Rhymney runs through east Cardiff; the tidal River Usk forms the focus of Newport with the River Ebbw meandering to the south east.

St Fagans - National History Museum displays around 40 vernacular buildings in a picturesque setting adjacent to St Fagans Castle.

Visual and Sensory profile

This is one of the most urbanised and busy landscape character areas in Wales. The cities of Cardiff and Newport are linked by the M4 corridor with the new town of Cwmbran to the north of Newport and the towns of Barry and Penarth to the west of Cardiff. These urban areas are separated by gentle rolling pastoral landscapes with a medium scale field pattern generally but with some arable land lying just north of the M4 corridor. Woodland tends to be in small blocks and deciduous or mixed in character.

Cardiff Bay provides a modern focus with leisure, government, commercial and residential uses bringing vitality to the southern part of Cardiff. Landmark buildings such as the Millennium Centre with its massive sculptural steel roof and slate walls and the delicate Welsh Assembly building act as foci around the impounded lake with its leisure boats and crisp modern barrage. Penarth Head and the Leckwith Scarp act as the backdrop of views to the lowland urban scene. The commercial docks, now much downsized, form a distinctive skyline to the south.

The landscape and coast between Penarth and Barry is partly urban fringe in character and includes the popular Cosmeston Lakes Country Park, converted from gravel workings. The coast has features of interest including cliffs, coves and wave platforms and includes the distinctive Sully Island and Lavernock Point with its views to Flatholm and the Somerset coast.

Newport is an industrial city lying on the sloping valley sides of the tidal River Usk, which forms a focus for the town with its muddy banks and sinuous course. A series of landmark bridges punctuate the river, which is visible particularly where crossed by the M4 and the main line railway. The fine civic centre building acts as a landmark, prominent above the town centre. Newport has been famous for its gigantic landmark transporter bridge, but is now epitomised by the Celtic Manor golf course and conference centre to the east which acts as a noticeable landmark perched above the M4, together with the nearby factory complex and white structures intended to house high-tech electronic manufacturing units. These are highly visible from across the Gwent levels to the south.

The industrial development of the area continues north up the valleys of the Ebbw towards Rogerstone and the Lwyd to Cwmbran and includes the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. Transport corridors of road and rail mean the area is lacking in tranquillity.

Cwmbran is a C20th new town with commercial and residential areas and a strong open space network. This merges with the southern outskirts of Pontypool which lies outside the area and exhibits the characteristics of the South Wales valleys.

The M4 carries high volumes of traffic linking Cardiff and Newport with London and is a major economic driver for the area. It influences large tracts of land in terms of noise and visual intrusion. Many views from the M4 to the north are framed by the steeply rising upland plateaux of the South Wales Valleys landscape. This evokes a strong sense of the

proximity to upland landscapes, which stand dramatically above the gently rolling and often heavily settled landscapes that lie below.

The open rural land between the urban areas is under pressure but is surprisingly tranquil in parts away from the transport corridors. It provides a welcome relief from the bustle of a dynamic part of Wales.



Cardiff, Wales's largest city and principle administrative centre for Wales, showing the city centre areas, the castle and it's parklands, the River Taff, Millennium Stadium and Severn Estuary in the background. © Crown Copyright (2010) Visit Wales



Cardiff – the old civic quarter, with wide planned layouts well-dressed stone buildings. A wider suburban area extends beyond. © Crown Copyright (2006) Visit Wales



Built landmarks - Cardiff's former docklands and Newport's old transporter bridge.

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Looking up the Usk Valley from Newport. © Crown Copyright (2010) Visit Wales



Newport's river corridor (River Usk) © Crown Copyright (2010) Visit Wales



River Taff, a green, river corridor, running through Cardiff. © Crown Copyright (2013) Visit Wales



'Little Switzerland' from the Ridgeway view point. This appealing countryside forms the setting to Newport, with the rising uplands of the South Wales Valleys character area in the distance to the north-west, showing the hill of Twmbarlwm. © Crown Copyright (2010) Visit Wales



The rural landscape between Cardiff and Newport at Lower Machen, showing the Rhymney River. © LUC



Penarth © Crown Copyright (2008) Visit Wales



Barry © Crown Copyright (2006) Visit Wales



Suburbia, this example being at Newport, and showing the extensive 'urban forest'.
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Geological Landscape influences

The area occupies the lowland south-eastern margins of the South Wales Coalfield Basin and includes the conurbation of Cardiff /Barry, Newport/Cwmbran/Pontypool, and the countryside between. The topographical 'grain' of the landscape is strongly influenced both by lithology and structure.

Exposed bedrock includes a wide variety of sedimentary rocks including mudstones, sandstones and limestones, which crop out in the core of the Cardiff-Cowbridge Anticline, a major arch-shaped fold that extends westwards into the adjacent Vale of Glamorgan. Old Red Sandstones are exposed on both flanks of the Anticline, whilst limestone and mudstone are confined to a few isolated coastal outcrops between Cold Knap Point and Sully Island. The spectacular exposures along segments of the coastline are geological SSSI, whilst there are wide sandy beaches on the open coast at Barry.

The character area lay close to, but within, the southerly limits of glaciers that flowed down the valleys from the Brecon Beacons. Significant thickness of till (boulder clay) lies to the north and west of Newport, which probably represents the position of a terminal moraine, however, small tongues of ice were able to penetrate the escarpment and flow southwards along the Wenvoe and Michaelston-le-Pit valleys. The till often forms a pronounced hummocky topography which is well displayed, for example, in the areas north of Rogerstone and Lisvane. A topographic depression at Coryton results from melting buried ice.

Glacial deposits which had accumulated on the valley floors have been progressively incised and the materials re-worked and re-distributed. The area is cut today by several major rivers: the Taff and the Ely that both drain into Cardiff Bay, the Rhymney, and a short reach of the Usk and tributaries at Newport. Along the coastal margin, gradually rising sea levels resulted in progressive infilling of the seaward reaches of the valleys with river deposits, that consist mainly of alluvial muds, silts, sands and a little gravel.

The slow moving river mouth of the Taff deposits alluvium, giving rise to rich, fertile soils. Elsewhere, reddish coloured loam is the predominant soil type, subject to seasonal water-logging in places. Red clayey soils are found over the mudstones in the south of the character area.

Landscape Habitats influences

Between the main urban areas of Cardiff and Newport, agricultural land use is mainly pasture for dairying and sheep, with unmanaged scrub and pony paddocks.

Generally medium sized regular fields are enclosed by hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees. Cardiff has the only Green Belt in Wales which helps safeguard its green edge with a number of linear woodlands penetrating into the built up area along the main river corridors. Newport, on the other hand, has a Wetlands Reserve near the Uskmouth Power Station. Formed as mitigation for the destruction of habitats by the creation of the Cardiff Barrage partly on former ash pits from the power station, the Reserve incorporates over 150 hectares of lowland wet grassland, which supports nationally important populations of wintering wildfowl and waders. Wintering species include wigeon, shoveler, teal, pintail and gadwall, along with breeding populations of shoveler, garganey, lapwing and redshank. In addition, the SAC and SSSI of the tidal River Usk is an historically important

transport waterway, and an ecological feature whose course meanders through an extensive flood plain as far as Caerleon. Many rare, threatened and declining species are associated with the river, including otter, kingfisher, sand martin, river and brook Lampreys, twaite and allis shad. The river and the Levels are both vulnerable to the effects of climate change as water levels rise – the Levels the more so.

Cardiff is remarkable for the numbers of attractive, large scale parks – the Bute Gardens corridor and Roath Park in particular, with significant green spaces in the riverscapes that reach into the heart of the city.

Cosmeston Lake Country Park, south of Penarth, is a key recreational site. It, like Roath Park, is also a haven for wildlife, protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Thirteen species of dragonflies and damselflies are known to breed within Cosmeston, making it one of the richest sites in South Wales for this threatened group of insects. Habitats of value within the site include remnant limestone grassland. Over 300 species of flowering plants have been recorded in the Park, with notable examples including the bee orchid and everlasting pea.

Historic Landscape influences

Many South Wales Valleys open into the area, issuing both their rivers and historically rail lines carrying coal for export. In the C19th the productivity was such that Cardiff was one of the largest coal ports in the world. Cardiff Bay today, in contrast, provides a modern focus with leisure, government, commercial and residential uses bringing vitality to the southern part of Cardiff. Landmark buildings such as the Millennium Centre with its massive sculptural steel roof and slate walls and the delicate Welsh Assembly building act as foci around the newly impounded bay.

Just north of Cardiff's shopping core with its distinctive arcades lies the elegant early C20th Civic Centre built from Portland stone with its formal layout and imposing buildings. Residential areas constructed around or before this time tend to be of formal layout and use the distinctive Pennant stone with Bath stone dressings. There are several designed outer suburbs of distinctive appearance, such as Rhiwbina and Cyncoed. The historic village of Llandaff has now been absorbed into greater Cardiff.

Penarth is an appealing suburb of Cardiff set on top of cliffs with a formal promenade. Barry, is best known for its pleasure beach which still attracts day trippers for sand, sea and ice cream. Its docks are being redeveloped but the town still retains an industrial character with its large chemical works. St Fagans, to the west of Cardiff, is a formal parkland which includes the Museum of Welsh life which exhibits buildings reconstructed from across Wales in a landscape setting.

Newport replaced Caerleon on the Usk as a port, guarded by a C14th stone-built castle nearby and with a church on a hill. The town thus grew up as a long street between church and river crossing. In the industrial revolution the town on the east bank of the river became more attractive. Archdeacon Coxe's 'long, narrow and straggling town' was by the middle of the C19th experiencing a new prosperity and burgeoning expansion on the surrounding hills on both sides of the river. The area also contains relatively modern settlements like Parc Seymour, Underwood, Bettws, High Cross, Rogerstone, Rhiwderin and Underwood – all satellite residential areas. Saved by public demand, the late C19th Newport Transporter Bridge across the Usk dominates the skyline to the south. Newport is still expanding on its edges and regenerating along the river. Large business and

commercial parks appear on its periphery, pedestrianisation of public domains has taken place in the city centre, and along the Riverside down Old Dock Street there are attractive public leisure spaces and restored historic municipal parks.

The historic Roman town of Caerleon, with its evocative Amphitheatre, Barracks, Baths and Museum, lies at one end of a time spectrum, while at the other is the new town of Cwmbran and the dominant, overbearing bulk of the Celtic Manor Resort. From other periods – mostly 19th century – are the remarkable engineering feat of the Fourteen Locks, the industrial town of Pontypool, and the salubrious suburban villages of Radyr and Dinas Powys.

The port and seaside town of Barry is re-inventing itself in the western coastal area, while Penarth has recently, with the creation of Cardiff Bay, added vibrancy to its Edwardian gentility with a lively Bay-side restaurant and retail development. Caerleon is now very much a tourist destination as well as being a dormitory for commuters and on its edge is a large campus of the University of South Wales. Large parts of the town have been designated as Conservation Areas.

Cultural Landscape influences

This is a vibrant, diverse, densely-populated area, reflecting not only the area's long history of travel along and on the Severn, and with Bristol and North Devon, but also its links with a much wider world, and Cardiff's claims to be regarded as a capital. Newport's history as a trading centre is much longer than Cardiff's, but both came to dominate the world trade first in iron and then in coal in the C19th, reflecting the explosive growth of industrial development in the 'hills' (so called before they became known to everyone as the 'valleys'), the constructions of canals, tramways and railways to the new coastal harbours and the phenomenal growth of the shipping industry. Development led to a massive population increase and migration from many other areas and a diverse ethnic and cultural mix evolved.

Cardiff's new rich in the 1920s caused it to be known as 'the city of dreadful knights', yet its aristocratic patron, the Marquis of Bute, had bequeathed it a picturesque pseudo-Medieval castle in its centre and the civic centre in Cathays Park borrowed from the flamboyance of Paris, Budapest and Vienna to create a capital in all but name, until 1955, when the city was formally declared capital of Wales. The foundation of a university and the establishment of a Welsh 'Skansen' (open-air folk museum) at St Fagan's enabled the area both to look to the future and to understand its past. Now Cardiff's former docklands embrace change on a grand scale, being the home to the new and visually iconic Welsh Assembly building, together with café's, plazas, shops, hotels and cultural facilities such as the Millenium Centre. The much diminished role of the docks, and the end of coal export from both Cardiff and Newport, would have been utterly inconceivable to anyone who remembered them in their hey-day. No longer are coal-trucks shunted into sidings in their thousand at Barry, Butetown and Mendalgief, nor is the skyline dominated by hoists and ship's funnels.

Newport received its first Charter in 1385. Although documents survived from this period, little evidence had come to light to confirm the importance of Newport during the later middle ages, until the discovery of a near complete sea-going vessel in 2002. Although not all the facts are clear at the moment, it would seem to be the first hard evidence for Newport being a centre of industry and trade in the mediaeval period. Newport expanded rapidly and changed from a small sea-port town to one of the most important places in the

country for coal export and steel production during the 19th century Industrial Revolution. The town became known for its accessible modern docks. Trade flourished and further extension of the docks added to Newport's reputation – in 1914 Newport shipped over 6 million tons of coal per year. The Chartist Uprising of 1839 in Newport concerned demands made by the Chartists including a vote for all men over 21 years, secret ballots, wages for Members of Parliament and the abolition of the property qualifications for MPs. All of these demands were incorporated within the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Twenty-two Chartists were shot dead by soldiers and their leaders transported but later pardoned. These men suffered for principles which we now take for granted and which form the basis of modern parliamentary democracy.