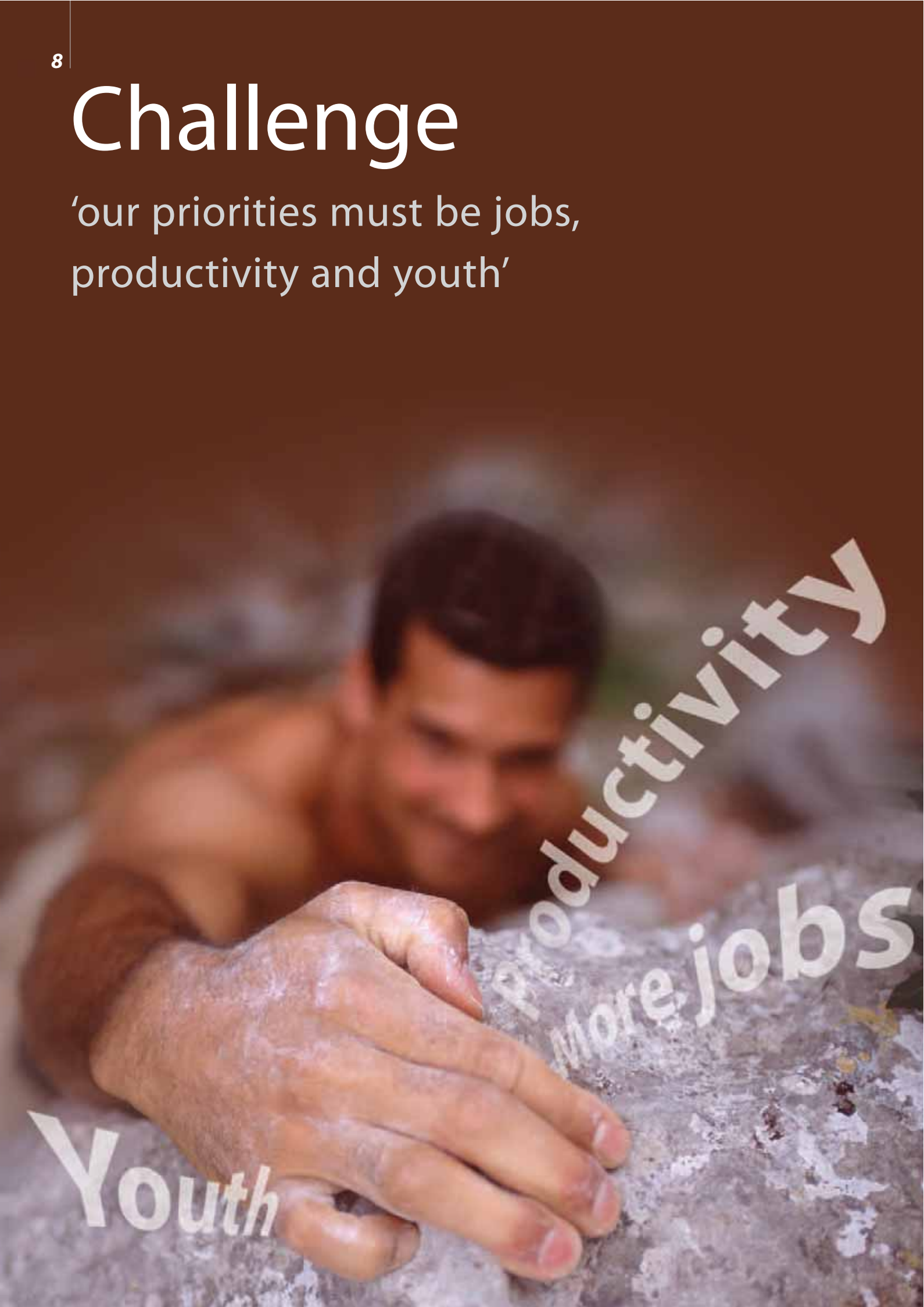


Challenge

'our priorities must be jobs,
productivity and youth'

Youth

productivity
more jobs



Carmarthenshire has made considerable progress since 2000. However, the UK economy has grown at a faster rate and the prosperity gap has widened and significant challenges remain. They are long running and structural. Consolidating and building on our success to date will depend on addressing deep rooted causes that require prolonged and sustained effort to overcome. There are no easy or quick fix answers.

Progress since 2000

- Strong performance in Gva per capita and productivity by historical standards.
- Strong jobs growth and unemployment at long-term low.
- Growth in new business formation rates.
- Increased numbers with higher level qualifications and a fall in those without any qualifications.
- Positive impact of Objective 1 funding on key priorities.
- A small rise in the number of working age adults.
- The Sites, Premises and Infrastructure Masterplan set up to address the need for business land and units.
- Communities First areas established.
- Community development needs supported through funding packages.
- Partnership working embedded in delivery structures.

Challenges

- The key drivers of prosperity – high productivity, retention of talented and qualified young people, high economic activity – still lag behind the UK.
- New business formation and skills levels are still below UK levels.
- Encouraging existing business sectors to adapt and grow and new growth sectors to emerge, improving the perception of key sectors as career opportunities.
- Implementing the Masterplan and linking it to business growth and community development.
- Addressing economic and social exclusion.
- Bending main stream services to support Communities First areas.
- Addressing the needs of particular areas of Carmarthenshire within a framework of county-wide integration.
- Ensuring support for business growth, the environment and the Welsh language over the long term.
- Uncertainty over levels of EU funding post 2006 and the implications of CAP reform.
- Improving the environmental quality of our key towns and retail centres.
- Responding to regional, national and global trends

*During 1995-2000 Carmarthenshire experienced low growth in Gva per capita (+1.3%) when compared with the UK (+15.7%). In 2000-2005 growth was much higher (+6.4%), but still less than the UK (+9.7%). Addressing the causes of lower growth is crucial to improvement.
(Source: Cambridge Econometrics LEFM)*



We need to create more jobs, start more businesses, help more inactive people into employment, increase the value added by business, increase our skills and retain and attract more young people.

Since 2000, over 3000 additional jobs have been created. In addition, key foundations for progress have been put in place for the next ten years.

Priorities

'increasing the number and quality of jobs available to people'



1) Jobs

Support for the start-up and survival of new businesses

- Promoting entrepreneurship.
- Support for new start-ups, including micro businesses.
- A particular focus on high growth start-ups (HGSUs) with ambition to grow, take risks and innovate.
- Support for start-ups in sectors that deliver jobs growth and above average Gva growth.
- Short term seed and pre-seed funds linked to after care promoting survival beyond grant aid.
- Short term employment subsidies and recruitment support.

Support for social enterprises

- Raising awareness of opportunities, best practice and achievements.
- Quality business advice, support and training.
- Developing social enterprise networks.
- Promoting sector/cluster based approaches.

Attracting inward investment

- Marketing with partners targeted on key sectors.
- Support measures to create cluster growth in target sectors including Technium and other initiatives.
- Projects that deliver jobs and increase productivity.

Increasing the competitiveness of key settlements

- A focus on the Growth Centres of Llanelli, Ammanford/Cross Hands and Carmarthen.
- A focus on Market Towns and their hinterlands, including sites and premises, property development/conversion, working from home.
- Key town centre renewal.
- Marketing towns and sites.
- Supporting action to strengthen key settlements under the Wales Spatial Plan.
- Waterfront regeneration.

The proportion of people of working age, who are in employment is estimated to be 66%, compared with 74% in Great Britain as a whole. The challenge for Carmarthenshire is to significantly reduce the gap by 2015.



There is a need to create new jobs in established and new sectors in regenerated key towns, providing opportunities for talented young people to stay and for inactive people to enter work.

Over 3000 extra jobs have been created over the last five years, a rise of 5.2%. New business formation has risen from 71% to 88% of UK levels since 1995.

'assisting people into jobs'

Basic skills



Childcare

Financial support

2) Economic Inactivity

Promoting access to employment

- Promoting and supporting entrepreneurship amongst the inactive.
- Addressing the barriers to entering the labour market, eg childcare and transport.
- Supporting the voluntary sector in providing a route into employment through paid or voluntary work.
- Facilitating the establishment of Intermediate Labour Markets.
- Giving financial support, eg 1 Fund, Credit Unions, LETS.
- Improving the link between jobs, learning and recruitment, through employer, trainer and Job Centre Plus partnerships.
- Championing Job Centre Plus/local agency partnership approaches.
- Improving access to learning for basic skills and vocational training.
- Promoting employer based opportunities to facilitate employment access for all.
- Providing support to employers to encourage recruitment.
- Community learning.

A lower than average proportion of those of working age, who are in work or looking for work, accounts for 35% of the prosperity gap with the UK. This is mainly due to long term sickness and disability, but also includes students, people looking after the family/home and early retirees.

Increasing social enterprise to create socially and environmentally healthy communities

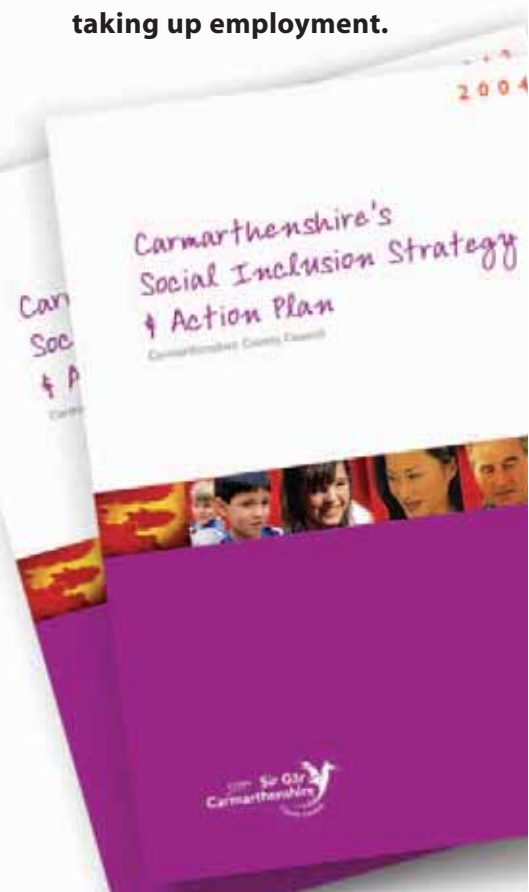
- Supporting social enterprise as a means to economic activity, skills acquisition, capacity building and the improvement of services and environment within disadvantaged areas.

There is a need to forge linkages between the jobs being created and those currently inactive people who want to work. This will involve addressing deprivation and exclusion issues to tackle the barriers preventing people taking up employment.

Tackling deprivation and promoting social inclusion

- Prioritising groups of people and areas facing high levels of exclusion, in particular the Community First areas - Glanymor, Tyisha, Felinfoel, Llwynhendy, Pantyffynnon and Bynamman as well as unpaid carers, people with learning disabilities, mental health problems, physical disability or sensory impairment.
- Capacity building, motivating, engaging, awareness raising.
- Integrating economic support measures with wider community development and social inclusion.

The number of new jobs is growing at a faster rate than hitherto. The roll-out of Pathways to Work by Job Centre Plus will provide an opportunity for us to assist the inactive into jobs through a partnership approach.



'raising the productivity of
our businesses'



3) Productivity

Promoting Innovation

- Supporting the development of new processes and the use of new technology.
- Supporting research & development and new products, processes.
- Developing supplier chain linkages.
- HE/FE/SME support networks.

Encouraging Better Marketing and Exporting

- Improving access to and awareness of markets.
- Marketing and export advice.

Providing quality business services

- Quality business support, including specialist support for growth sectors.
- Short term financial products focused on achieving sustainable outcomes over the long term.
- Support for firms in achieving quality standards.
- Linking business support to training.

Adding Value to Local Resources

- Assisting the development of processing, products and services based on local resources.
- Exploiting regional opportunities eg: energy and tourism.
- Fostering demand for local food, organics, wood and other products.
- Building the capacity of local firms to meet local procurement needs.
- Encouraging tourism across all areas of the county using the local environment, leisure, heritage and culture and based on :
 - developing a strategic and holistic approach to sector development.
 - "Putting Carmarthenshire on the Map" - marketing of the County as a destination based on research.
 - sustainable infrastructure.
 - supporting niches, eg walking, cycling, motor sports, culture, gardens, golf, water.
 - increasing value generated and extending the season.
 - improving consistency and quality of products and services.
 - promoting the perception of tourism as an employer.
 - improving quality and skills in the labour market.

Low average productivity accounts for 28% of the prosperity gap with the UK and is due to some existing sectors performing less well and also a lack of high value added sectors in the County.



There are a number of sectors, with strong growth prospects, eg tourism, knowledge, auto components, and emerging sectors, eg creative, food, computing, on which to build.

The business climate is increasingly innovative and competitive. There is a need to change attitudes, assist existing businesses adapt and change, and promote new businesses in new sectors.