

Initial recommendations of the Designated Landscapes expert group for Wales

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Abbreviations

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
ARP	Access Reform Programme
BRICs	Building Resistance into Catchments
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEH	Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
CRDV	Clwydian Range and Dee Valley
	Diversity, Extent, Condition, Connectivity and Aspects of ecosystem resilience
DECCA	
eNGO	Environmental Non-Governmental Organisation
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
FRAP	Flood Risk Activity Permit
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework
INNS	Invasive Non-Native Species
INRS	Integrated Natural Resources Scheme
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
LAs	Local Authorities
LDO	Local Development Order
LFA	Less Favoured Area
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFM	Natural Flood Management
NL	National Landscape
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NPA	National Park Authority
NREA	Nature Recovery Exemplar Area
OA	Optional/Collaborative Actions
OECM	Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measure
OWC	Ordinary Watercourse Consenting
PENs	Priority Ecological Networks
PS	Protected Sites
RDP	Rural Development Programme
RPW	Rural Payments Wales
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFS	Sustainable Farming Scheme
SLSP	Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places
SMNR	Sustainable Management of Natural Resources

SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SPA	Special Protection Area
SuDs	Sustainable Draining Systems
TCLW	Tirweddau Cymru Landscapes Wales
UA	Universal Actions
WBFG Act	Wellbeing of Future Generations Act
WEL	Wales Environment Link
WOM	Woodland Opportunity Map

Executive Summary

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) recognises protected areas as the cornerstone of biodiversity conservation. National Parks and National Landscapes (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) form part of the UK's protected area network and are key to delivery of the CBD target that at least 30 per cent of land, freshwater and seas are effectively conserved and managed by 2030. These areas have an important role to play in Wales' response to this global commitment.

As part of the Welsh Government's Biodiversity Deep Dive, this interim report outlines progress towards the commitment to unlock the potential of Designated Landscapes to deliver more for nature and 30 by 30. Our work had seven themes which:

- considered the global context within which Designated Landscapes operate and explored the added value of adopting global good practice.
- developed a strategic framework for all Welsh Designated Landscapes to add impact at pace to their focus on nature recovery.
- explored a Team Wales approach and how better collaboration could drive increased effectiveness.
- considered legislative levers, opportunities and constraints
- piloted an approach to opportunity mapping for nature.
- considered the role of Designated Landscapes in supporting farmers and land managers to deliver more for nature.
- discussed the importance of diversity and inclusion in driving innovation, behavioural change and effectiveness.

National Landscapes and National Parks are collectively known in Wales as Designated Landscapes. The term "landscape", as it applies in environmental management, has different meanings and multiple applications. It is a term that is not always applied coherently and is usually contested. This has been further complicated by the ambition to conserve and enhance natural beauty, and for this aim to become the foundation for how we define the purpose of Designated Landscape management.

Although physical and sensible, in that they can be perceived through the senses, landscapes are the outcome of processes, driven, defined, and understood culturally by people. They have their roots in social conscience, and different social groups can appropriate the same space in different ways. Designated Landscapes are contested spaces, over which the exercise of power creates discernible territories, both material and symbolic. Landscape is a medium of cultural expression that has the power to reinforce values and a sense of identity. It is equally capable of creating discomfort, alienation and isolation. Those empowered with its management therefore hold significant responsibility.

Landscape is a meeting ground between nature and culture, geology and geography, past and present, and between tangible and intangible values. Its expression in policy terms is therefore complex, but ultimately ripe with progressive potential.

As we work to address the existential crises of climate change, nature loss and wider environmental degradation, the relationships between environmental, social, and

economic policy have become clear. ‘Landscape’ as a nexus is not only an effective antidote to the reductionist approach to environmental management that has exacerbated the problems we face today, but could be the central mechanism by which people can engage with the natural world.

An attempt to reflect the complexity of ‘landscape’ frames this initial report. Brevity is important, but so is a recognition that the problems we face are ‘wicked’, policies are interdependent, and the systems to which they apply, interconnected.

Wales’ protected areas will be fundamental to nature recovery.

National Parks and National Landscapes are globally recognised as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Category V protected areas¹. They form part of a global suite of protected areas. Whilst it is important to define protected area objectives and understand the role they can play in contributing to wider global targets, the central issue is their effectiveness in conserving and restoring biodiversity.

Designated Landscapes in Wales are in a prime place to learn from the thinking surrounding two United Nations programmes – the CBD and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), both of which are naturally brought together through the Landscape Approach² framed in Wales by the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act and for which the IUCN’s Category V Protected Area management guidelines³ provide the governance mechanism.

There are many global initiatives that either directly or indirectly can help realise Welsh Government’s ambition for Designated Landscapes. References in this report to the work of the IUCN, and that surrounding the CBD and the SDGs is important but not exhaustive. Expanding our global perspective on protected area management will support innovation, challenge cultural biases, and ultimately improve the effectiveness of Designated Landscapes in Wales.

The CBD has three main objectives: the conservation of biological diversity; the sustainable use of the components of biological diversity; and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources. The integrated approach to management planning adopted by National Parks and National Landscapes is ideally suited to advancing these objectives in a way that reflects their interdependences.

¹ Crofts, R., Dudley, N., Mahon, C., Partington, R., Phillips, A., Pritchard, S., & Stolton, S. (2014). Putting nature on the map: A report and recommendations on the use of the IUCN system of protected area categorisation in the UK. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. Available at: <https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/44891>.

² Sayer, J., Sunderland, T., Ghazoul, J., Pfund, J.-L., Sheil, D., Meijaard, E., Venter, M., Boedhihartono, A. K., Day, M., Garcia, C., van Oosten, C., & Buck, L. E. (2013). *Ten principles for a landscape approach to reconciling agriculture, conservation, and other competing land uses*. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 110(21), 8349-8356. Available at: <https://www.pnas.org/doi/abs/10.1073/pnas.1210595110>.

³ Phillips, A. (2002). *Management guidelines for IUCN category V protected areas: protected landscapes/seascapes*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. Available at: <https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/8170>.

Management planning is a participatory process that integrates national strategic priorities with local need. They are plans for the area, not the authorities, and are revised every five years.

The expert group highlighted the importance of two upcoming documents – Natural Resources Wales' emerging management planning guidance, and a Wales-wide strategic framework, in development by Tirweddau Cymru Landscapes Wales (TCLW), that explores a set of integrated goals designed to increase the pace of delivery and impact change at a systems level. These documents will help frame decision-making during this period of change.

Additionally, the group highlighted the importance of State of the Landscape reports. These would provide a snapshot of the current baseline condition, feedback on the efficacy of existing policies, and model future scenarios.

In Wales, Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995 and Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 impose a duty on relevant authorities to “have regard” to the purposes for which National Parks and National Landscapes (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) are designated, respectively. This “Duty of Regard” is a central statutory pillar in delivering the objectives of Designated Landscapes.

The Duty of Regard means that relevant authorities, e.g. utility companies need to take guidance into account, and to ‘have and give clear reasons’ for any departure from it. The Duty of Regard applies to all functions, not just those relating to planning, and is applicable whether a function is statutory or permissive.

Importantly, the Duty of Regard is process rather than outcome-orientated, e.g. the focus is on whether or not a relevant authority has thought about the purposes of designation, rather than how it can work in partnership to further them through its decision-making. The group assert that the efficacy of this duty is currently insufficient.

The group recommends establishing a National Relevant Authorities Forum to work collaboratively at a strategic national scale to drive systemic change and provide the context for individual Designated Landscapes management plans.

Recognising that the Duty of Regard has been recently strengthened in England with a requirement to be more proactive, there is value in monitoring the impact of this change with a view to assessing the need for legislative change in the next Senedd term.

Designated Landscapes, as IUCN Category V protected areas, are “areas where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value”⁴. Recognising and respecting this interaction is paramount to their effective management. Consideration of access, inclusion, equity, and justice forms an integral element of environmental decision-making. This is essential to unlocking the motivation, innovation and practical action required to drive nature recovery in Designated Landscapes. The

⁴ Dudley, N., Stolton, S., & Shadie, P. (2013). *Guidelines for applying protected area management categories including IUCN WCPA best practice guidance on recognising protected areas and assigning management categories and governance types*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. Available at: <https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/30018>.

group support the approach set out in the Just Transition Framework consultation document⁵.

A Team Wales approach was recognised as key to unlocking the potential of Designated Landscapes. A high degree of collaboration is already taking place, but simplified, faster, more efficient processes and relationships with key conservation delivery partners is essential. Addressing issues around permitting and consenting is a priority. A Team Wales approach to shared governance, streamlined delivery, and risk management is essential if we are to unlock the potential of Designated Landscapes to deliver more for nature and 30 by 30.

Through TCLW the group explored the use of freely accessible datasets to better understand how nature recovery mapping can be used by Designated Landscape teams to target nature recovery activity as efficiently as possible.

This work, piloted over the course of this report, generated nature recovery maps for two Designated Landscapes. This iterative and highly collaborative process resulted in a finalised series of Prioritised Nature Recovery Action maps that highlighted conservation priorities, landscape scale nature recovery opportunities and priorities, and where to target nature-based solutions. Adopting this approach across all Designated Landscapes will be key to addressing nature recovery at scale and pace.

The Welsh Government is currently developing new legislation for statutory biodiversity targets. Among the public bodies who would be subject to these targets are NPAs and Local Authorities. The prioritised nature recovery maps for Designated Landscapes will be a key way for NPAs and National Landscape teams to both target delivery and demonstrate progress against any new statutory targets.

National Park Authorities and National Landscape partnerships have worked collaboratively with farmers since their creation, recognising that agriculture is the dominant land use and a key delivery mechanism by which the nature and climate emergencies can be effectively addressed. A resilient and sustainable incentive system to support farmers and growers is therefore crucial.

Designated Landscape management plans provide a locally led, strategic assessment of the character and qualities of places recognised as national assets. The plans articulate what constitutes valued and valuable landscape, endorsed by expert input and public opinion. The Designated Landscape management plan provides a key integrating framework to deliver across the range of recommendations set out in the [Designated Landscapes Biodiversity Deep Dive action plan](#).

The development of the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) for Wales provides an opportunity to integrate the purposes of Designated Landscapes with incentives for positive agro-ecological practice, reflect the importance and value of investing in their special qualities, and support the delivery of the socio-economic and well-being duties.

Designated Landscapes bodies can, through participatory management planning, facilitate local conversations with farmers, growers and land managers to co-create a compelling vision for future food and farming at a landscape scale. Teams can offer

⁵ Welsh Government. (2024). *Just Transition Framework*. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/just-transition-framework>.

a strategic approach to achieve this vision, aligning positive land management with nature recovery and other components of natural beauty. Their detailed understanding of the area, coupled with strong local relationships provides the ability to guide and optimise the relationship between Sustainable Farming Scheme outcomes and delivering on the 30 by 30 target.

Designated Landscape teams are also well placed to identify how enablers such as the Integrated Natural Resources Scheme (INRS), Nature Networks Fund, philanthropic givers, and opportunities for blended finance could support, and further develop, momentum for change.

The group therefore recommended support for specialist advisors, embedded in Designated Landscapes but working in partnership through TCLW, to enable a consistent approach to farmer and land manager engagement. They would facilitate sharing of knowledge and expertise to enable action to be tailored to individual landscapes. Local knowledge, tailored support, prescription, and intervention that translates national priorities into locally relevant opportunities is key to achieving effective management and nature recovery.

As at early 2025, funding has been secured to commence a dedicated scheme, Ffermio Bro: Farming in Designated Landscapes, set to go live in financial year 2025/26. This scheme will seek to deliver on the opportunities outlined above.

Public participation in planning and decision-making is fundamental to effective Designated Landscapes management. Not only does this help build consensus around co-created plans of action, but it can help address issues of justice and equity. Participatory dialogue is an essential precursor to meeting climate and nature emergency targets. It will help drive the necessary behavioural change required alongside legislation and ensure the cultural nature of Wales' Designated Landscapes is reflected in planning and decision making.

The decisions people make, and the behaviours they adopt, lie at the heart of unlocking the potential of Designated Landscapes to deliver more for nature and 30 by 30.

Recommendations

The group make 9 key recommendations at this stage:

- **Recommendation 1:** Designated Landscapes should actively engage with, contribute to, and learn from global good practice in defining, planning and monitoring protected area management effectiveness.
- **Recommendation 2:** Natural Resources Wales' (NRW) 'Updated Management Plan Guidance' should provide a renewed focus and ambition and define the framework within which Deep Dive recommendations can be delivered.
- **Recommendation 3:** 'State of the Landscape Reports' should be explored as a mechanism to identify baselines, support objective setting, scenario plan, and target activity.
- **Recommendation 4:** The duty of regard is currently sub-optimal. The group recommends setting up a National Relevant Authorities Forum supported by an update of the current Environment Act 1995 s62/ CRow 2000 s85 guidance in order to coordinate a more strategic response to exercising the duty

- **Recommendation 5:** Geographical Information System (GIS) capability needs to be strengthened within Designated Landscapes, potentially through a collaborative programme and staff resource.
- **Recommendation 6:** The breadth and depth of collaboration by Designated Landscapes needs to be widened, with consideration of access, inclusion, equity and justice forming an integral element
- **Recommendation 7:** A Team Wales approach to shared governance, streamlined delivery, and risk management is essential if we are to tackle the technical challenges associated with consents, permitting, and grant funding.
- **Recommendation 8:** The development of the SFS provides an opportunity to integrate the purposes of Designated Landscapes with incentives for positive farming practice. Specialist advisors, embedded in Designated Landscapes but working in partnership through TCLW, would enable a more consistent approach to farmer and land manager engagement.
- **Recommendation 9:** Further work is required to create a culture of respect, cooperation, and connection with Wales' natural environment, fostering a sense of stewardship and pro-environmental behaviour. Increased promotion of the Countryside Code, building on the new Countryside Code Strategy and Action Plan for Wales, and Welsh Government's Access Reform Programme have important roles to play here.

The group proposes to continue building on the work undertaken to date, by focusing on several workstreams outlined below. The group will consider if wider representation is required to undertake the workstreams and will continue to work closely with the other Deep Dive expert groups.

Proposed workstreams

1. Defining a role for Designated Landscapes in the Sustainable Farming Scheme

Recognising the fundamental importance of supporting farmers and land managers deliver for nature and the climate, Designated Landscapes intend to define their role in SFS and work to optimise their input. This will involve a collaborative bid to the Integrated Natural Resources Scheme.

2. Realigning National Park and National Landscape Management Plans with the nature and climate emergency

In response to emerging Management Plan guidance, the group intends to look at how the Management Planning process can better reflect the nature and climate emergencies, how State of the Landscape reports can better inform objective setting, and how best to define and promote effective management, robust monitoring and reporting mechanisms

3. Nature Mapping

The group intends to continue working closely with NRW to explore how best to roll out nature mapping work across all Designated Landscapes. Work will include further consideration of datasets, SSSI condition mapping, targeting and prioritisation.

4. Building Collaboration

Building on the Team Wales approach, the group will explore how to promote Designated Landscapes as ‘Landscapes for Everyone’, to include strategic and tactical proactive communications around nature and climate to support positive behavioural change. Work will include training and learning in climate and nature literacy and a programme of work to raise awareness with PSBs and other strategic bodies.

5. Resourcing action

Work will include exploring Green Finance opportunities and gearing up to embed this in resource streams. Providing evidence and argument to NRW and Welsh Government to ensure Designated Landscapes bodies are funded adequately, sustainably, and flexibly to deliver nature recovery

6. Improving processes

Work will continue with NRW to consider issues around consenting and permitting, and Welsh Government around updating national planning policy guidance and permitted development.

7. Working fairly

The group will consider how the ‘Just Nature Transition’ concept might be more formally incorporated into the wider Just Transition to net zero decarbonisation framework. Additionally, the group will explore how the forthcoming Anti-racist Wales Action Plan for the environment, climate change and rural affairs and other wider assessments, actions or reporting requirements are better integrated and simplified.

8. Considering legislation

The group will consider the need for legislation in the next Senedd to reform the statutory purposes, duties and governance arrangements for Designated Landscape bodies to equip them better to drive nature’s recovery.

Introduction

Background

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was adopted during the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (www.cbd.int/qbf). It set out an ambitious pathway to reach the global vision of a world living in harmony with nature by 2050 as well as 4 goals for 2050 and 23 targets for 2030.

Target three (Fig 1), widely referred to as the 30 by 30 target, aims to ensure that at least 30% of land, freshwater and seas are effectively conserved and managed by 2030 as a key part of the overall mission to halt and reverse biodiversity loss. In Wales, the Senedd declared a nature emergency in 2021 to help drive positive action towards tackling the joint nature and climate crises.

The target recognises that well-governed, effectively managed and representative protected areas are a proven method for safeguarding both habitats and populations of species and for delivering important ecosystem services and multiple benefits to people. They along with Other Effective Area Based Conservation Measures are a central element of biodiversity conservation strategies at local, national and global levels.

The Convention on Biological Diversity defines a protected area as geographically a defined area which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives. National Parks and National Landscapes form part of a global suite of Protected Areas. They are classified by the IUCN as Category V Protected Areas.

Terminology

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) were rebranded in 2023-24 as National Landscapes. When referring to the legislation, their legal title of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or AONBs is used. Throughout the rest of this report, they are referred to as National Landscapes.

In Wales, National Parks and National Landscapes are collectively termed as Designated Landscapes (DLs). This term has no legal basis, but it is the collective noun Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Welsh Government use.

The terms National Parks and National Landscapes refer to the designation. National Park Authorities and Local Authorities responsible for National Landscapes refer to the governance structures.

Biodiversity Deep Dive

The Minister for Climate Change publicly announced support for the 30 by 30 target and commenced a Biodiversity Deep Dive focussing on how Wales can implement the CBD target to effectively conserve and manage 30% of land and sea by 2030. The objective of the Biodiversity Deep Dive is “to develop a set of collective actions we (in

Wales) can take immediately to support meaningful delivery of the CBD 30 by 30 goal, recognising the capabilities we have in Wales and reflecting our duties and approach under the Wellbeing of Future Generations and Environment (Wales) Acts.”

A small core group of critical thinkers led by the Minister was formed by Welsh Government. The group was supported by expert subgroups on marine, Designated Landscapes, land management, and monitoring. The group focused on addressing the 30 by 30 target by considering the following questions:

- How can the existing protected site network (Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and Ramsar sites) be effectively managed for nature?
- How do we enable National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to deliver landscape scale biodiversity and ecosystem enhancement across their areas?
- What is the role of the future Sustainable Farming Scheme in reversing the decline in biodiversity.
- What vehicles, such as Nature Recovery Exemplar Areas (NREAs), could be used to expand the current designations to include areas which are of particular importance for biodiversity and its contribution to people?
- How do we ensure that our protected sites are well connected and integrated into the wider land and seascapes?
- How and who do we best engage and collaborate with to help us achieve our target and address the nature crisis?
- How do we deliver an effective programme of action over the next decade?

The recommendations of the Deep Dive were published on the 3 October 2022 (www.gov.wales/biodiversity-deep-dive-recommendations). This included:

Recommendation 3. Unlock the potential of Designated Landscapes (National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) to deliver more for nature and 30 by 30.

The recommendation outlined the need to take immediate action to **support the National Parks and AONBs to develop prioritised action plans for nature restoration embedding these in strategic planning.**

It also recommended longer term action to:

- Realign Designated Landscapes priorities to enhance and accelerate nature recovery delivery, supported by updated policy, resources and guidance to build capacity and expertise and to target activity.
- Develop the evidence and mapping tools to enable Designated Landscapes to baseline, target and monitor areas of high nature value that could be secured as their contribution to 30 by 30.
- Ensure Designated Landscapes bodies are funded adequately, sustainably and flexibly to deliver nature recovery at a transformational landscape scale.

- Ensure that the potential designation of a new National Park in northeast Wales affords opportunities for climate change mitigation and nature recovery as key delivery priorities for the new Park.
- Consider the need for legislation in the next Senedd to reform the statutory purposes, duties and governance arrangements for Designated Landscape bodies to equip them better to drive nature's recovery.

The Designated Landscapes Deep Dive Sub-Group

In mid-2023 individuals with relevant expertise, knowledge and capacity to allow a rapid and robust response to the recommendation came together from across the National Parks, National Landscapes, Natural Resources Wales, Tirweddau Cymru, the National Landscapes Association, Welsh Government and Wales Environment Link (WEL). An independent Chair was appointed and the Terms of Reference of the Group were agreed (Annex 1).

Significant collective consideration had already been given to the recommendation by Welsh Government and NRW, supported by Designated Landscape bodies, resulting in an action plan published in April 2023 (Annex 2).

The action plan focused attention on a number of foundational actions

- Support the National Parks and AONBs to develop prioritised action plans for nature restoration embedding these in strategic planning
- Realign Designated Landscapes priorities to enhance and accelerate nature recovery delivery, supported by updated policy, resources and guidance to build capacity and expertise and to target activity
- Develop the evidence and mapping tools to enable Designated Landscapes to baseline, target and monitor areas of high nature value that could be secured as their contribution to 30 by 30

These actions were further developed into individual steps to which actors and measures of success had been attributed.

The action plan also identified secondary activities to be considered in the future.

- Ensure Designated Landscapes bodies are funded adequately, sustainably and flexibly to deliver nature recovery at a transformational landscape scale
- Ensure that the potential designation of a new National Park in northeast Wales affords opportunities for climate change mitigation and nature recovery as key delivery priorities for the new Park.
- Consider the need for legislation in the next Senedd to reform the statutory purposes, duties and governance arrangements for Designated Landscape bodies to equip them better to drive nature's recovery.

The group was asked to

- Help steer the implementation of the Action Plan
- Provide a strategic steer for the development of a coherent, evidence-based approach to prioritise nature recovery work by the two strategic leads within all eight Designated Landscape bodies by the end of 2024. Support embedding of this approach in strategic management and implementation from that point onwards.
- Provide a strategic steer for bodies tasked with realigning Designated Landscapes priorities to enhance and accelerate nature recovery delivery, supported by updated policy, resources and guidance to build capacity and expertise and to target activity.
- Explore ways for key bodies such as NPAs, AONB partnerships NRW, Welsh Government and Local Authorities to improve joint working to accelerate delivery.
- Recommend any additional strands of work required to accelerate delivery.
- Provide clear advice to Welsh Government and others on the resource implications of implementing the Action Plan.
- Carry out proactive stakeholder engagement.
- Ensure alignment with other Biodiversity Deep Dive activities, including those relating to Protected Sites, Evidence and Monitoring, and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) and Nature Recovery Exemplar Areas (NREAs) Expert Working Groups.

Key interdependencies

Given the range of policy initiatives, the wider context of the GBF and other recommendations coming out of the deep dive, a number of dependencies were also identified which the group would need to take account of during their work. Key dependencies were:

- The work of the 'Other Effective Area Based Conservations Measures (OECM) and Nature Recovery Exemplar Area (NREA) expert Group' established in response to the deep dive recommendations.
- The work of the Monitoring and Evidence Expert Group for Wales again established in response to the deep dive recommendations.
- Development of Nature Recovery Targets for Wales.
- Natural Resources Wales' emerging Management Plan Guidance for Designated Landscapes
- The outcome of the Welsh Government's consultation on the Sustainable Farming Scheme
- GBF indicator development at a UK level ([JNCC: GBF overview](#)).
- The suite of wider targets established under the GBF.
- Nature Recovery Action Plan refresh.

Outline programme

Between September 2023 and March 2024, the Group met monthly with additional ad hoc meetings, as it refined its thinking and developed a series of clear thematic workstreams for future activity. It is proposed that a second phase, as outlined in the next steps section, is now undertaken to take these workstreams forward.

Seven themes

The programme for the first phase identified the following seven key themes, which evolved further as meetings progressed:

Theme 1. International perspective	• The role of Designated Landscapes within a global suite of Protected Areas • The landscape approach as a delivery tool for CBD and Sustainable Development Goals • The relationship between these and the WBFG Act and SMNR • Global good thinking around management effectiveness, equitable governance, and accreditation and standards (IUCN's Green List)
Theme 2. Legislative context	• The statutory element - Strengthened duty of regard to the purpose of designation • The behavioural element - Recognising that having regard is as much a behavioural attribute as a statutory duty ◦ Building participatory dialogue through the management planning process ◦ Recognising the instrumental value in co-development ◦ Generating more equitable governance and buy in at the local level
Theme 3. Wales Strategic framework	• Integrated State of the Landscape Reporting to better provide baselines and identify target areas for improving the functional capacity of natural systems • Scenario planning applied to this information to help guide the timing of incentives, support, and advocacy. • Leading social change – Designated Landscapes as a point of contact from which to facilitate beneficial nature connection and advocate wider social change.
Theme 4. Team Wales	It is universally accepted that in order for transformational change to take place across large areas of Wales, organisations and agencies should act in a more integrated and coherent way, pooling resources and expertise and working to a single set of objectives. Specifically • Meeting the ambition of Tirweddau Cymru with adequate energy and capacity • Developing Communities of practice – breaking down silos • Embracing cross cutting themes from other BDD groups • Improving processes to enable organisations to be more agile • Optimising collaborative, multiyear grant programmes (SLSP Fund example) • Addressing capacity and fixed term staff issues • Creating a more strategic partnership between NRW and National Park and National Landscape teams.

Theme 5. Mapping and monitoring nature	• Marrying local knowledge and existing datasets (Primarily NRW Priority Ecological Networks (PENs), NRW Habitats Network and Living Wales DataCube) • Producing a series of prioritised Nature Recovery opportunities maps for each Designated Landscape to identify the areas of greatest need for intervention or the areas of greatest potential to focus partnership working. Developed in partnership with the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley (CRDV) National Landscape (AONB) team and rolled out to five of the eight Designated Landscapes at the time of writing.
Theme 6. Developing the role of Designated Landscapes in supporting SFS	• Utilising deep, well established and trusted connections in the farming community to effect change • Co-producing a Vision for food and farming at the landscape level • Providing a Strategy for delivery through the management planning process that fosters the economic and social well-being of local communities • Nurturing and supporting collaborative action at a landscape scale
Theme 7: Access, diversity, and inclusion	• The importance of diversity and inclusion in driving innovation • The role of behavioural change • Nature connection and its role in delivering for nature, climate and people • The importance of voices of local communities in landscape-scale change

The group asserted the importance of ensuring issues of inclusion and diversity were considered within and across every theme.

The group worked closely with the other expert groups, recognising that their work is of equal importance to the delivery of recommendation 3.

Theme 1: An international perspective

Protected Areas

‘Protected areas are the fundamental building blocks of virtually all national and international conservation strategies, supported by governments and international institutions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity. They provide the core of efforts to protect the world’s threatened species and are increasingly recognised as essential providers of ecosystem services and biological resources; key components in climate change mitigation strategies; and in some cases also vehicles for protecting threatened human communities or sites of great cultural and spiritual value’.⁵

The National Parks and National Landscapes of Wales form part of the UK’s suite of Protected Areas. The term ‘Protected Area’ is defined in Article 2 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as “a geographically defined area, which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives”. This broad

definition of a protected area has been further refined by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to include a global classification system based on management objectives.

Unlike the wilderness parks in some other countries, the Designated Landscapes of Wales are Cultural Landscapes, moulded by human influence over millennia. Most of the Designated Landscape area is under private ownership and their landscapes are the product of human intervention with natural processes. It is for this reason that the Designated Landscapes are classified as Category V Protected Areas by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Category V protected areas are defined in the 1994 Guidelines of Protected Area Management Categories (IUCN) as:

“An area of land, with coast and seas as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance, and evolution of such an area”.

Management Guidelines for IUCN Category V Protected Areas includes twelve principles for the management of Category V Protected Areas

- Conserving landscape, biodiversity and cultural values are at the heart of the Category V protected area approach.
- The focus of management should be on the point of interaction between people and nature.
- People should be seen as stewards of the landscape.
- Management must be undertaken with and through local people, and mainly for and by them.
- Management should be based on co-operative approaches, such as co-management and multi-stakeholder equity.
- Effective management requires a supportive political and economic environment.
- Management of Category V protected areas should not only be concerned with protection but also enhancement.
- Where there is an irreconcilable conflict between the objectives of management, priority should be given to retaining the Special Qualities of the area.
- Economic activities that do not need to take place within the Protected Landscape should be located outside it.
- Management should be business-like and of the highest professional standard.
- Management should be flexible and adaptive
- The success of management should be measured in environmental and social terms.

In a Welsh context this is articulated through the concept of ‘Bro’ - the bond between people and place. It provides a framework to articulate the role of large scale social, economic and environmental trends in fragmenting communities and natural systems alike whilst also providing a framework for engagement and participation to identify integrated and equitable outcomes.

Management Effectiveness

Whilst it is important to define protected area objectives and understand the role they can play in contributing to wider global targets, the central issue is their effectiveness. The effective management of Wales’s protected areas is a fundamental precursor to nature recovery. The value, therefore, of the international status of National Parks and National Landscapes is possibly best realised through global access to shared learning and experience, internationally verified tools and processes, and accepted and emerging global standards rather than their global classification. This has been brought into sharper focus following the UK’s exit from the European Union, which has arguably reduced opportunities to collaborate with, and learn from, European partners.

Learning from global good practice

In exploring how best to deliver on the Biodiversity Deep Dive ambition to unlock the potential of Designated Landscapes to deliver more for nature, a number of challenges have arisen of which there is a clear international angle.

- Strengthening the regard that stakeholders have for Designated Landscape objectives
- Developing further collaborative working across and between the Designated Landscapes and forming more strategic partnerships with key stakeholders; an issue critical to the delivery of ⁶S62 and ⁷85 duties
- Adopting a more unified approach to monitoring effectiveness
- Effectively engaging in food and fibre production systems
- Working in a way that is more equitable, fair, and just.

Each of these challenges is currently the subject of global debate, and much work is taking place to develop good practice. The current Welsh Government consultation ‘Securing a Sustainable Future’ may also help reach conclusions on environmental principles, governance and biodiversity targets for Wales – all of which will be optimised if considered within a global context.

Designated Landscapes in Wales are in a prime place to learn from the thinking surrounding two United Nations programmes - the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), both of which are naturally brought together through the Protected Landscape Approach⁸, framed in Wales by the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act and for which the IUCN’s Category V Protected Area management guidelines provide the governance mechanism.

The Convention on Biological Diversity

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has three main objectives: the conservation of biological diversity; the sustainable use of the components of biological diversity; and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources.

The integrated approach to protected area management adopted by National Parks and National Landscapes is ideally suited to advancing these objectives recognising that they are interdependent and inextricable. Indeed, the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act provides a policy framework within which these objectives can be effectively pursued, supported by the IUCN's wider Category V Protected Area management guidelines.

However, the domestic agenda has tended to place greater weight on the first objective than the others, the second has been pursued largely from a neoliberal, market orientated perspective, and delivery of the third has so far been inconsistent.

There is little focus on the current international consensus that seeks to promote an ecocentric and rights-based approach to the delivery of CBD objectives which enables the implementation of actions towards harmonic and complementary relationships between peoples and nature, promotes the continuity of all living beings and their communities and ensures the non-commodification of environmental functions.

Additionally, much can be learned from the wider global protected area network on the principle of 'free, prior and informed consent', and how this plays out in domestic protected area management.

If we are to effectively unlock the potential of Wales' Designated Landscapes to deliver more for nature, we should engage, learn from, and contribute to global good practice around the delivery of the CBD. Significant development is happening in many areas, all of which are directly related to the efficacy of Wales' Designated Landscapes, including:

- Governance and rights
- Collaboration and participatory dialogue
- Management effectiveness
- Nature-based Solutions for Climate Adaptation and Mitigation
- Transformation of food systems
- Accreditation standards for Protected Areas

In the case of management effectiveness alone, the UK CEH Environment and Rural Affairs Monitoring and Modelling Programme could consider replicating the United States National Park Service's Inventory and Monitoring Programme at a domestic level. BBNPA is already in a good position to take the lead on this. Other solutions probably already exist across the breadth of identified challenges, but without active international engagement they may remain invisible.

Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

There are 17 SDGs, and all are integrated - they recognise that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must integrate social, economic and environmental sustainability.

There is intentional read-across from the SDGs to the CBD, and where thinking can be combined, it is. Examples of this include work to promote opportunities for gender equity, women's empowerment, and leadership during national biodiversity planning, monitoring, and reporting, and work to develop green financing strategies at a landscape scale for protected areas in South Africa.

Of particular importance to Wales' Designated Landscapes is work taking place around the following SDGs:

- Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems and halt biodiversity loss
- Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources
- Combat climate change and its impacts
- Make human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth
- Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Reduce inequality within and among countries.

If we are to effectively unlock the potential of Wales' Designated Landscapes to deliver more for nature, we must engage, learn from, and contribute to global good practice around the delivery of the global Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, it is imperative that Wales' new Environmental Governance Body frames its targets within this context, and provides a robust mechanism by which the public sector will report against.

The European Landscape Convention

The UK is a signatory of the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention (ELC). The convention recognises that landscape contributes to the formation of local cultures and that it is a basic component of natural and cultural heritage and contributes to human well-being. It acknowledges that the landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere: in urban areas and in the countryside, in degraded areas as well as in areas of high quality, in areas recognised as being of outstanding beauty as well as everyday areas.

In signing, the UK government has committed to

- recognise landscapes in law
- establish and implement landscape policies
- establish procedures for participation in landscape policy development
- integrate landscape into its planning, cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies

The ELC highlights the role of landscape as a universal integrating mechanism and seeks to ensure that environmental, societal and economic policies are considered as interdependent and agreed through participatory processes. The ELC is therefore a useful springboard from which global good practice can be interpreted in a locally relevant way. Maintaining the profile of this convention is therefore paramount.

Conclusion

There are many global initiatives that either directly or indirectly can help realise Welsh Government's ambition for Designated Landscapes. The focus in this report on the work of the IUCN, and that surrounding the CBD, the SDGs, and the ELC is important but not exhaustive. Expanding our global perspective on Protected Area management will support innovation, challenge cultural biases, and ultimately improve the effectiveness of Designated Landscapes in Wales.

Key Messages

- Multistakeholder dialogue and participatory decision making should be central to the way Designated Landscapes operate.
- Designated Landscapes should engage with, contribute to, and learn from global good practice in defining, planning and monitoring protected area management effectiveness.
- Wales' Designated Landscapes, given adequate resourcing, are well placed to replicate good practice already tested elsewhere in the world
- The three main objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are interdependent and inextricable, and should be reflected in the planning and management of Designated Landscapes
- Designated Landscapes should engage, learn from, and contribute to global good practice around the delivery of the global Sustainable Development Goals in parallel with those of the CBD.

Theme 2: Legislative context

The purposes of Designated Landscapes are set out in legislation. They differ for National Parks and National Landscapes (AONBs), although conserving and enhancing natural beauty is universal for both. 'Natural beauty' has no legal definition but legally consideration must be given to the 'flora, fauna, geological and physiographical' features of the designated area.

The main factors relating to National Parks are broad and include:

- Landscape quality
- Scenic Quality
- Relative wildness
- Relative tranquillity
- Natural heritage features
- Cultural Heritage

Designated Landscapes are landscapes of national importance with designation conferring the highest status for the conservation of landscape and scenic beauty. They are also homes to communities who live and work within Designated Landscapes. These communities and millions of visitors enjoy these qualities every year.

The central role of National Park Authorities and National Landscape (AONB) bodies is to take the action needed to put into practice the purposes of National Parks and AONBs.

Designated Landscapes Purposes

National Parks

National Parks are guided by their two purposes as set out in Section 61 of the Environment Act 1995. These are underpinned by the Sandford Principle which is enshrined in law and asserts the primacy of the first purpose over the second in cases of obvious conflict.

National Parks are also cultural landscapes with a resident population, and National Park Authorities also have a socio-economic duty under Section 62 (1) of the Environment Act, in taking forward National Park purposes, to:

(a) ‘to **conserve and enhance** the natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage of the National Parks’

(b) ‘to promote opportunities for the **understanding and enjoyment** of the Special Qualities[of the Parks] by the public.’

They also have a duty to ‘foster the **economic and social well-being** of local communities within the National Park...’.

This socio-economic duty should be fulfilled within the context of the two National Park purposes. This means that National Park Authorities (NPAs) should integrate social and economic objectives with the conservation and enhancement of the Special Qualities of the designated area.

To put the socio-economic duty into practice, NPAs need to work closely with those who have primary responsibility for these concerns. This includes the relevant local authorities, Public Service Boards (PSBs) and other public bodies.

National Landscapes (AONBs)

Section 82 (1) of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 states the purpose of AONBs as:

‘...conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area...’

These functions are defined in the CROW Act as:

The purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty.

Planning Policy Wales sets out that National Landscapes (AONBs) are of equal importance to those of National Parks in landscape terms. The primary purpose of designation is for the conservation and enhancement of their ‘natural beauty’ which includes protecting flora, fauna, and geological features as well as landscape features. National Landscapes (AONBs) do not have a socio-economic duty to foster economic and social well-being of communities. Their host authorities however do have a Well-being duty under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. In Wales, local authorities are responsible for National Landscapes (AONBs) within their area. Section 86 of the CROW Act 2000 provides for the establishment of conservation boards, transferring specific functions of the local authority to the conservation board. These functions are defined in the CROW Act as:

- The purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty, and
- The purpose of increasing the understanding and enjoyment by the public of the Special Qualities of the area of outstanding natural beauty.

There are currently no conservation boards in Wales.

Duty to have regard

In seeking to deliver the Designated Landscape purposes, NPAs and National Landscapes (AONB) Authorities are not expected to work alone – this is a shared task and should be delivered in partnership. This will require working both at a strategic, national level to enable the systemic transformational change required to the large scale social, economic and environmental trends impacting on the Designated Landscapes, and at a local level specific to each Designated Landscape. Certain organisations have duties with regards to Designated Landscapes in Wales which are set out below

Relevant authorities include:

- Any Minister of the Crown.
- Any public body (including government agencies, local authorities and parish councils).
- Any statutory undertaker.

- Any person holding public office

National Parks - Section 62 (2) Duty

‘In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Park, any relevant authority shall have regard to the purposes specified in subsection (1) of section five of this Act and, if it appears that there is a conflict between those purposes, shall attach greater weight to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area comprised in the National Park.’

This means relevant authorities in Wales have a duty to ‘have regard to’ the purposes of the National Parks when carrying out their work in relation to National Parks.

National Landscapes (AONBs) Section 85 (1) Duty

‘In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty [in Wales], a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty.’

AONB - Section 85 duty

This means relevant authorities in Wales have a duty to ‘have regard to’ the purposes of conserving and enhancing natural beauty when carrying out their functions in relation to National Landscapes (AONBs).

Relevant authorities should be able to demonstrate that they have taken account of their duty to ‘have regard’ to National Park and National Landscape (AONB) purposes in their work. This should include:

- Showing regard to National Park and National Landscape purposes in decision making at national, regional and local level.
- Working closely with National Park and National Landscape Authorities.
- Considering National Park and National Landscape purposes in Section 6 and Section 7 biodiversity reporting and well-being reporting.

This might be implemented by relevant authorities taking the following actions

- Issuing a statement setting out how they will take into account the purposes of Designated Landscapes. This might include measures adopted to ensure the duty is communicated and understood by all relevant staff across local authorities, government agency partners and relevant statutory undertakers.
- Working collaboratively and in partnership with Designated Landscapes to further the vision, objectives, and implementation of the Designated Landscape management plan;
- Working collaboratively and in partnership with Designated Landscapes to align well-being objectives and identify positive solutions to challenges;

- Reviewing any policy, plan, programme or project likely to affect land within, or the setting of a National Park or National Landscape, and considering the impact and any appropriate mitigation;
- Highlighting good practice and setting out contributions to Designated Landscapes in annual reporting, including Section 6 biodiversity reporting and well-being reporting.

Management Plans

Designated Landscape management plans are a key tool to ensure that public bodies are meeting their duty to 'have regard'.

National Park and National Landscape (AONB) management plans are **the single most important policy document for each Designated Landscape**. They are the principal vehicle for ensuring that the statutory provisions of the Environment Act 1995 and CRow Act 2000 are met, including the duties imposed on all public bodies under Section 62(2) and Section 81 (1).

Engagement with key stakeholders, including relevant authorities provides the basis for joint and integrated action to deliver the policies of the management plan. This engagement needs to ensure that the policies and actions within or affecting the Designated Landscape meet both the aims for the Designated Landscape and the aims / objectives of partner organisation(s). National Park and National Landscape (AONB) designation provides an important stimulus for pro-active joint working on behalf of the environment.

Designated Landscape management plans should present an integrated approach to the planning and management of the Designated Landscape at a strategic level. It is a plan for the geographic area of the National Park or National Landscape designation and not for any one authority. They are important policy document for each Designated Landscape and no major decisions should be taken affecting the future of a Designated Landscape without reference to its management plan.

The central role of the management plan is to guide the delivery of the Designated Landscape purposes and, for National Parks, the Section 62 (1) socio-economic duty, assisted by the statutory planning function of both National Park Authorities and local authorities for National Landscapes.

Designated Landscape management plans are for all those who have an influence over the future of each Designated Landscape. Achievement of the management plan will be dependent on the actions of a wide range of organisations and communities who have influence over the future of the National Park or AONB. This includes:

- Relevant Authorities
- Those whose day-to-day activities have been responsible for creating and managing the landscape of today: the farmers, landowners, conservation

- Government Organisations (NGOs), local businesses and local communities of the Designated Landscape.
- Members of National Park Authorities and relevant local authorities for National Landscapes

Designated Landscape Management Plan Guidance

NRW is currently working to provide updated guidance on Designated Landscapes Management Plans (Interim Guidance March 2024, due to be finalised Autumn 2024) the purpose of which is to ensure management plans:

- guide, plan and manage transformational change in response to the nature and climate emergencies.
- align with relevant policies and legislation
- engage key stakeholders and partnerships throughout the process.

The management plan and process provide a key integrating framework to deliver across the range of recommendations set out in the Biodiversity deep dive action plan.

The legislative framework set out by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016

The WBFG Act places seven Wellbeing goals into law and requires public bodies to apply the sustainable development principle through 6 ways of working.

The Environment (Wales) Act puts in place a statutory process to plan and manage our natural resources in a joined up and sustainable way and sets out nine Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR), based on the UN Ecosystem Approach principles.

The five ways of working and SMNR principles have been developed to work together recognising that Wales' natural resources underpin cultural, economic and environmental well-being.

Twelve principles for the management of Category V protected areas	Five Ways of Working	Principles of SMNR
1. Conserving landscape, biodiversity and cultural values are at the heart of the Category V protected area approach 2. The focus of management should be on the point of	1. Long-term 2. Prevention 3. Integration 4. Collaboration 5. Involvement	1. Adaptive management 2. Collaboration and engagement 3. Evidence 4. Long-term 5. Multiple benefits 6. Public participation

interaction between people and nature 3. People should be seen as stewards of the landscape 4. Management must be undertaken with and through local people, and mainly for and by them 5. Management should be based on co-operative approaches, such as co-management and multi-stakeholder equity 6. Effective management requires a supportive political and economic environment 7. Management of Category V protected areas should not only be concerned with protection but also enhancement 8. When there is an irreconcilable conflict between the objectives of management, priority should be given to retaining the special qualities of the area 9. Economic activities that do not need to take place within the Protected Landscape should be located outside it 10. Management should be business-like and of the highest professional standard 11. Management should be flexible and adaptive 12. The success of management should be measured in environmental and social terms		7. Scale 8. Preventative Action 9. Building resilience
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Figure 1. The twelve principles for the management Category V protected areas, the five ways of working and SMNR principles

Applying these principles should

- Emphasise the Special Qualities of a place (Bro)
- Link nature based and socio-economic solutions
- Place climate resilience and nature recovery at the centre of decision making and engagement
- Help to identify the root cause of challenges including those requiring actions at a strategic scale by Relevant Authorities

NRW's SoNaRR report assesses Wales's sustainable management of natural resources and sets out a range of opportunities for action. The Bridges to the Future section proposes a transformational approach for how Wales can bridge the gap between where it is now and where it needs to be to achieve a sustainable future with an initial focus on

- Transforming the food system
- Transforming the energy system
- Transforming the transport system

In addition to the duty to have regard all public bodies have a legal requirement to apply the five ways of working in taking forward their wellbeing objectives.

This provides further impetus for the Relevant Authorities to work collaboratively at a strategic national scale.

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023

This Act came into force on 26 October 2023 and makes changes to previous legislation on Protected Landscapes in England (National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

Section 245 places a duty on relevant authorities (including local planning authorities) to seek to further the statutory purposes of a National Park, the Broads or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England in exercising their functions. This duty also applies to proposals outside the designated area but impacting on its natural beauty.

The duties remain unchanged in Wales. Changing in the wording through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023) means that rather than 'have regard to', relevant authorities must 'further' the purposes of Designated Landscapes. This is particularly relevant for the Wye Valley National Landscape which is in both England and Wales.

Securing a Sustainable Future: Environmental Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets for a Greener Wales

The Welsh Government Consultation White Paper proposes placing a duty on Welsh public authorities which requires them to contribute to the delivery of the statutory

biodiversity targets. NPAs are specifically referred to whilst National Landscapes (AONBs) would be covered through their constituent Local Authorities.

Key Messages

- Designated Landscape Management Plan Guidance provides the integrated framework for taking forward the recommendations of this report.
- The Designated Landscape management plan and process provides a key integrating framework to deliver across the range of recommendations set out in the Biodiversity deep dive action plan.
- The existing s62/s85 duty to have regard, together with provisions for all public bodies to have a legal requirement to apply the five ways of working in taking forward their wellbeing objectives, provides further impetus for the Relevant Authorities to work collaboratively at a strategic national scale. This will help drive the systemic change required to address key challenges at a national strategic level and provide context for individual Designated Landscapes management plans.
- The Bridges to the Future section of SoNaRR proposes a transformational approach for how Wales can bridge the gap between where it is now and where it needs to be to achieve a sustainable future. Designated Landscapes are well placed to take this approach forward.
- The group recommends setting up a National Relevant Authorities Forum supported by an update of the current s62/s85 guidance in order to coordinate a more strategic response to exercising the duty

Theme 3: Wales Strategic framework

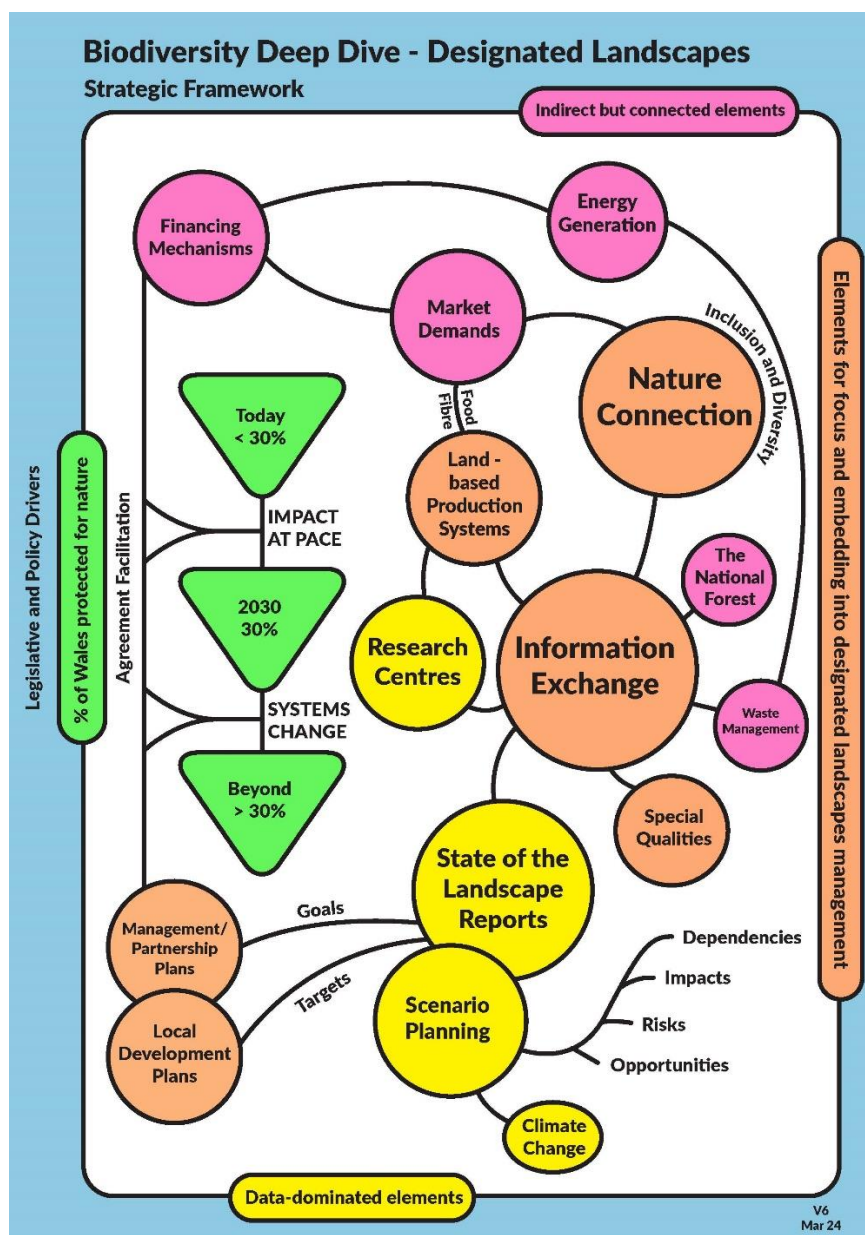
In planning to deliver more for nature and 30 by 30, focus is primarily given to rural landscapes, mainly due to the opportunities offered by non-urban land to nature. Ninety percent of land in Wales is used for agriculture⁹ and so the sector is an important feature of the strategic framework discussed here. Rural landscapes also provide a multitude of other benefits aside from food production, some brought about simultaneously, and others currently considered separately. This profusion of activity is complex, and a better understanding of relationships would highlight areas to focus available resource and effort.

Of the agricultural land in Wales, 79%⁹ is designated Less Favoured Area (LFA) indicating inferior productive potential and associated economic value. However, the lens through which we value land is changing and LFAs, which often form a significant part of our Designated Landscapes, may start benefiting from higher economic potential independent of food production. National Park and Local Authorities have a role to support this development as part of a socio-economic duty while also supporting systems of sustainable food production.

Climate is also changing¹⁰, and according to the *Welsh Soil Evidence Review*¹¹ is “expected to impact soil functionality and the agricultural potential of Welsh agricultural soils” adding another force for change affecting food production and land management more generally. Soils that function well support diverse biological organisms, effectively circulate greenhouse gases, and store carbon; it is vital that we support their functionality. Indeed, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) describes soil biodiversity as the foundation for human life. Functional natural systems and our relationship with them also underpin many of the Special Qualities of the Designated Landscapes including their natural beauty - the reason for their designation.

A strategic framework is presented to aid decision-making in this concentrated period of change. The overarching principle of the strategic framework is: **“To support the creation of a socio-economic environment where land-based food and fibre production systems that recover nature and better regulate climate are viable, and advance a culture where they are desired and accessible.”** It has been designed to highlight key considerations, relationships, and tools to assist with the strategic planning and delivery of work by the National Park and Local Authorities.

Figure 2. Strategic Framework Diagram
A visual representation to highlight relationships and aid understanding:



Some key elements of the strategic framework are considered below in further detail:

State of the Landscape Reports and scenario planning – an evolution to guide what to do where

The development of State of the Park Reports and State of the AONB Reports would better provide information about the characteristics of our Designated Landscapes, highlighting the challenges they face to help target a response. They could also better provide baselines and repeated measures to report on the effectiveness of interventions. National Park and Local Authorities currently lack the resource to

provide this information in a way that could adequately inform integrated and strategic planning or give a clear picture of the state of each Special Quality. Developing 'State of the Landscape Reports' to include more innovative measures and integrated interpretation could help improve the functional capacity of natural systems in harmony with the needs of local communities.

Many global frameworks, such as the Taskforce for Nature-related Financial Disclosures, encourage businesses to use information on natural asset and ecosystem service dependencies and impacts to populate risk registers and highlight opportunities. There may be benefits to using this approach with the management of a landscape. Findings would help steer Management/Partnership Plans by reinforcing goals and highlighting groups with which to engage. They would inform Local Development Plans so that they facilitate beneficial decision-making and development. Furthermore, progressive State of the Landscape Reports would give guidance to landowners and those who manage land, and to investors and lenders that is in line with the Designated Landscapes' priorities.

To draft such a report, spatial data on the natural characteristics of land should form a basal layer upon which natural beauty, wildlife, cultural heritage, and socio-economic attributes should be added. Geographical Information Systems (GIS) have an increasingly significant role to play here with modelling and interfaces used to make data meaningful and to direct action. The Special Qualities serve as useful representations of local attributes to aid communication and as a measure of 'state'. There lies an opportunity in the drafting of each State of the Landscape Report to review the GIS capabilities potentially available.

Ultimately, the information provided by a State of the Landscape Report could help model systems change and unify action at landscape scale. Predictions for the future could be applied to the data collated to form a scenario planning bolt-on. Again, GIS modelling would be central here. Beneficial land use changes could be triggered by scenario planning in this way with timely incentives, support, and advocacy provided.

Where land management systems are to undergo significant change, transition costs could be high. Furthermore, even when transition can be financed, support to sustain the beneficial system needs to be adequate and long-term. This could be provided by the market but in all probability trade income will need to be underpinned by support from the public purse. There is opportunity to marry up the State of the Landscape Reports with the Sustainable Farming Scheme by using the National Park and National Landscape teams to facilitate clusters of co-ordinated action under the optional and collaborative layers. Financing mechanisms will likely involve private investors, lenders, and philanthropists, each an area of specialism. The National Park and National Landscape teams do not currently have this type of specialism in-house. However, the current expertise of the National Park and National Landscape teams

could help with sharing guidance, facilitating agreements, and affecting beneficial social change. Most importantly, they have localised socio-economic and cultural understanding that could help steer investors towards the most beneficial, and least damaging, models of delivery. They also have extensive knowledge and experience of beneficial projects which could appeal to investors seeking to invest in the 'tried and tested' at scale as opposed to more innovative actions with less certain outcomes.

Accountability

Where the public purse is being used to fund the activities supported by the strategic framework, measures of effectiveness and accountability are important. The State of the Landscape report can help this by providing a baseline and assist in priority targeting. These reports could be framed by strategic goals that seek to integrate the legislative purposes of the authorities that manage the National Parks and National Landscapes, reflect their role in fostering the economic and social well-being of local communities, and national targets set in response to the climate and nature emergencies declared in April 2019 and June 2021. Strategic goals will help deliver impact at pace and reflect necessary systems change. A timeframe could be applied to those under 'impact at pace', but those proposed as a measure of beneficial systems change are much longer-term goals and as such assigning specific timeframes would be difficult .

Information exchange and nature connection - a strategy for engagement and accelerated progress

Communication and engagement strategies should stimulate behaviour change where the State of the Landscape Reports indicate change is needed, and promote wider social change in support. Key messages should be relayed in unison with others where appropriate and financial and social impact assessments are considered. All citizens need to be/feel connected to nature to benefit from nature, to care about nature, and to create a market demand for 'nature-positive' produce including food and fibre. Collectively, the Designated Landscapes of Wales attract 19 million visitors per year¹² and so offer a significant point of contact from which to advocate wider social change. Additional resource should aim to make the most of this established point of contact. Better connection to nature could result in useful datasets being generated through 'citizen science', more pro-environmental behaviours, and a reduction in anti-social behaviour. It could result in nature being better represented at 'board level' in all areas of society. Physical connection with nature can be realised through volunteering as part of a strategic programme or through 'purposeful adventure'. Both can improve physical and mental health and well-being as well as completing much needed tasks on the ground

There is also a potential role for those who manage the Designated Landscapes to facilitate a better understanding of current land management systems so that interventions are more likely to succeed. National Park and National Landscape teams should engage effectively with research centres to ensure the most pertinent questions are answered and to assist with ground truthing research findings in distinct localities.

Key Messages

- The Welsh Government in collaboration with the Designated Landscapes should support the creation of a socio-economic environment where land-based food and fibre production systems that recover nature and better regulate climate are viable, and advance a culture where they are desired and accessible.
- ‘State of the Landscape Reports’ could be developed to provide more integrated baselines and targeting. A scenario planning ‘bolt-on’ could trigger timely incentives, support, and advocacy.
- Geographical Information Systems have an increasingly significant role in delivering more for nature. National Park and National Landscape teams should be enabled to do more to keep abreast of developments.
- The Designated Landscapes offer a significant point of contact from which to encourage and support wider social change.

Theme 4: Team Wales

Introduction

Collaboration at all levels of government and across the public and voluntary sector is crucial to realising the Welsh public sector’s ambitious 2030 net-zero carbon target and simultaneously support action for nature’s recovery. The ‘Team Wales’ approach exemplifies activity based on collaboration, collective action and co-operation. However, collaboration is not automatically sustainable. It requires energy, effort, and vigilance.

‘Team Wales’ requires measures to self-organise, self-govern, work adaptively and build interdependencies. Behavioural rules and standards must be derived by consensus, and the beliefs and values that underpin collaboration must be constantly reinforced. ‘Team Wales’ has structural and behavioural components; both are equally important.

Team Wales – working together

Tirweddau Cymru Landscapes Wales

Tirweddau Cymru Landscapes Wales (TCLW) combines the strengths of the eight Designated Landscapes, working together for the benefit of Wales and its people, securing the long-term resilience of the landscapes and their communities. This

partnership was established by Welsh Government in 2019, reflecting recommendations in previous reviews. The partnership continues to be funded by Welsh Government and has two officers hosted by Pembrokeshire Coast NPA and three dispersed, shared officers hosted by each NPA.

TCLW has the following vision, which frames all of its activity:

Tirweddau Cymru Landscapes Wales unlocks the potential of Designated Landscapes working together for the benefit of Wales, delivering more for climate, for nature, for culture and heritage and for people, securing the long-term resilience of the landscapes and their communities.

TCLW offers

- a structured and supportive way of working across Wales' Designated Landscapes
- a platform for shared learning, understanding and responsibility
- a mechanism to work strategically towards a shared vision
- the ability to report to Welsh Government on targets collectively
- a mechanism to integrate the concept of 'Landscapes for Everyone' across Designated Landscapes in a consistent way.

However, to deliver on the ambition of the Biodiversity Deep Dive, the breadth of effective collaboration needs to be widened beyond the Designated Landscapes.

Team Wales – working fairly

TCLW places the concept of 'Landscapes for Everyone' at the heart of their activity. Valuing and empowering collective action by communities, understanding and respecting the perspective of others, including farmers, landowners, and academics. TCLW seeks to reduce inequalities and maximise the fair and equitable sharing of benefits that flow from Designated Landscapes. The partnership is actively committed to integrating Welsh Government policy on equality and inclusion into climate and nature recovery work. TCLW embraces the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and the Just Transition framework and is seeking to drive forward a "Just Nature Transition".

A Just Nature Transition

The Just Transition Call for Evidence¹⁵ highlighted collaboration between public sector, businesses, workers, unions and communities as a fundamental principle for all decision-making regarding the Just Transition. It follows that a Just Nature Transition will also require this stakeholder engagement as an extension of our wider Team Wales approach.

The impact of climate change, habitat changes, unequal access to nature, and just transition approaches have a complex and intersectional effect on a number of our more marginalised communities when we think about nature recovery. . It will be crucial for Designated Landscapes to look at the evidence base from the consultations

re Just Transition and from the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan for the environment, rural affairs and climate change to improve our understanding of how our communities in Wales will be impacted by a just climate and nature transition and integrate any policy actions into our nature recovery work. To build on this understanding, it is essential we maintain and further develop the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders and partners in our approaches and work. This includes involving people with a diverse range of protected characteristics and from all socio-economic backgrounds.

The unique experiences and perspectives of our diverse communities has the potential to add great value to what we do. Those that could be affected by a Just Nature Transition including, but not limited to, marginalised groups and communities, should have equal opportunity to influence how risks and opportunities are defined, the vision for transition, and the planning and the strategies needed. By bringing the challenge and perspectives from all of society we can drive creativity and innovative, leading to better decision making and more effective solutions.

The expert group suggest that consideration of equity and justice forms an integral element of a Team Wales approach and the Just Transition Framework consultation document¹⁶ is an effective guide to approaching a Just Nature Transition. This approach considers

- Distributive justice, which seeks to share the burden and benefits of the transition's impact in a fair way and to recognise and address existing disparities between groups;
- Procedural justice, which aims to provide fair inclusion in decision-making;
- Restorative justice, which attempts to repair the injustices of the past and harness the benefits to boost communities;
- Recognition justice - considers the socio-cultural differences between people and between groups of people, their different positions in society, and specific needs and vulnerabilities; and intergenerational justice.

Team Wales – working effectively

In addition to broader issues of developing Team Wales, the group highlighted a number of specific technical challenges to working in partnership with others.

Consenting and Permitted development

A number of nature and natural resource positive projects and actions across Wales have faced effective delivery difficulty due to time, cost and resource intensiveness of the consenting processes.

NRW and Local Authority consents may be needed for a variety of works where the consenting body has a duty of oversight. The planning system is the most obvious example of this, but in relation to nature recovery actions it can become a convoluted mixture of consents from different teams within different bodies. For example some NFM works may require OWC from the RMA, planning consent from the LA or NPA, a felling license from NRW forestry, a small scale impoundment license from NRW

flood risk, a SSSI consent from NRW and thus the scrutiny of numerous officers, all of which comes as a time and resource burden on officers for whom most of these consents were implemented to avoid environmental harm, the exact opposite of what the project is aspiring to achieve. This time and resource cost reduces the scale and pace at which nature recovery officers can work, while burdening consenting officers with higher volumes of work which are often duplicating consents submitted for subtly different areas or time frames, and as they're often written by different project officers each application needs full scrutiny with little familiarity for consenting officers to enable them to process consents more swiftly. A more streamlined approach has been developed and proved successful in Powys.

The resource spent on consents, including repeated or multiple consents for similar works sometimes on the same site, is hampering delivery of nature recovery and net zero actions across Wales, creating uncertainty for project funders and staff and leading to frustration and associated consequences between organisations who are natural allies working to the same goal.

Scotland has shown there can be solutions (through permitted development rights) for unlocking nature-based solutions work without the burden of repeated planning consents. The group recommends that the same approach is considered in Wales as part of a wider approach to Team Wales development. This would enable measures such as the installation of small scale leaky woody debris dams and nutrient management scrapes and ponds, the blocking of peatland grips and a myriad of other low impact, low risk, low-cost, sustainable nature positive actions to progress.

Pace of change within organisations

To effectively deliver on the ambition of the Biodiversity Deep Dive, change needs to happen quickly. In exploring a Team Wales approach, the group recognises that the capacity to do this will vary according to the scale and complexity of the organisations involved. However, the ability to change is not only dictated by the complexity of existing processes and policies, but the level of trust that exists between delivery partners.

Internal organisational processes surrounding procurement, consenting, establishing partnerships and agreements, and the release of funding can be slow and cumbersome, with a one-size-fits-all approach to due diligence applied to all partners. Skilled and experienced conservation bodies with aligned objectives are treated the same as those stakeholders with potentially conflicting objectives.

A simplification and reduction in processes and costs for nature and climate based projects (including access to funding, consenting and permitting) delivered by pre-approved trusted partners, with clearly aligned objectives, would enable partners to deliver more, at pace.

Similarly, grant giving organisations facing challenging funding constraints could, by working through trusted partners, make existing resources go further, avoid duplication

and speed up delivery. Designated Landscape teams are well-placed to utilise existing relationships with land managers and communities to deliver actions faster with less resistance than other bodies

A Team Wales approach to shared governance, streamlined delivery, and risk management is essential if we are to unlock the potential of designated landscapes to deliver more for nature and 30 by 30. Designated Landscapes are increasingly working collaboratively to deliver Sustainable Landscapes, Sustainable Places funded programmes, where one body has led and co-ordinated overall management for a flexible portfolio of projects across multiple landscapes. An example is Eryri NPA managing a £500,000 programme for traditional field boundaries across a consortium of 6 Designated Landscapes. Lessons learned from this example could be usefully used to further the Team Wales approach.

Capital funding support for focused work in DLs through the Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places (SLSP) fund

New capital investment was introduced for both NPAs and NLs (AONBs) via the Sustainable Landscapes, Sustainable Landscape (SLSP) Fund in 2020-21 and moved to a three-year grant in 2022-23. The timescale of the funding programmes has been supported by all recipients.

Three year programmes are now running across all eight Designated Landscapes and currently includes three collaborative programmes with Designated Landscapes working together and with outside agencies to deliver project outputs and outcomes.

All of the SLSP funded programmes across the Designated Landscapes are linked to Welsh Government priorities and the statutory purposes and key responsibilities of the AONBs and NPAs; including promoting biodiversity and nature recovery and accelerating decarbonisation.

Having a 3-year programme has allowed a much improved and coherent delivery structure with timings across years no longer being impacted negatively by project planning at the outset. This has been in comparison to the previous iterations of both SLSP and SDF which delivered funding over a single year. Additional benefits include staff retention and developing of institutional knowledge.

With so many calls for funding being heard by Welsh Government, there is a case in future funding models to ringfence amounts or proportions of the total allocations for specific actions against shared priorities. The nature and climate crises call for priority to be given to these areas, while being mindful of the wider requirements of Designated Landscapes around sustainable tourism, heritage and community support. A future recalibration of capital funding would allow this greater focus.

This can be illustrated by analysing the percentage of spend within each grant stream on biodiversity and climate change. Whilst it is difficult to set an optimal amount or proportion that should be spent when Designated Landscapes have such a broad

remit, the urgency for action on nature and climate does necessitate some difficult decisions. Experience of operating capital schemes over this period highlights that many bodies will continue to spend on historic priorities without firmer parameters and direction from Welsh Government to align to new priorities.

Led by Tirweddau Cymru Landscapes Wales, the collaborative SLSP Fund has demonstrated it can be a powerful tool to enable pan-Wales working on agreed shared priorities. This should be continued, and the Fund expanded where possible, in future. Recalibration of capital funding would help Designated Landscapes further align their priorities to nature recovery and climate change mitigation.

This Fund could also play a role in bridging the gap between the end of the SMS and Glastir land management programmes, and the Collaborative layer of the new Sustainable Farming Scheme post 2029 through a focus on piloting a collaborative scheme delivering nature recovery through sustainable farming in Designated Landscapes.

Competitive bidding for grants

Where Designated Landscapes are in competition with each other (e.g. when working with their associated Risk Management Authority bidding for NFM accelerator grant funding) there is a conflict of interest in supporting each other's applications. The Group recommend that a coordinated, strategic funding forum approach would help here. A forum including Designated Landscapes teams, NGO staff, academia and other stakeholders as appropriate would enable a collaborative response to funding with the aim of securing support for action at scale and at pace.

Loss of fixed term staff from projects

Project delivery with staff employed on fixed term contracts are regularly impacted by those staff leaving early to pursue other employment before the end of their contract or the end of the project.

Consideration could be given to the ability of organisations to pool resources or to increase the secondment or job swapping ability so that we further the development of a Team Wales concept.

This approach could provide and maintain a competent pool of people available regionally that could be parachuted into organisations for short periods to finish off projects or provide effective continuation of projects until a longer-term solution could be found. This requires resource for organisations to develop capacity and skilled people and or a long-term fixed funding package that can allow effective planning of resource and actions.

Progress to date

Despite the challenges there are good examples of progress, including:

- Streamlining **Natural Flood Management** through a universal method statement and standardised planning policy notes in BBNPA.
- Designing a collaborative approach to Dark Skies - **Project Nos**, leading to an All-Wales Dark Skies Good Practice guide promoting best practice and encouraging action for nocturnal wildlife and to help save carbon.

Local Development Orders

Some Planning Authorities, currently facing the challenges of nutrient neutrality, planning backlogs, and wider lack of resources have suggested pursuing Local Development Orders (LDO) as their only viable option for acting legally on the nature emergency, at an expected cost of £10,000-£15,000 per LDO and expected to take around a year to get in place. While this presents a possible solution it comes with an unhelpful time and cost burden.

Other solutions might include

- Policy notes from the chief planner providing, for example, written guidance to Planning Authorities on those nature conservation and climate change mitigation and adaptation works that should be regarded as ‘de minimis’.
- Multi-year consents
- MOUs with trusted organisations
- Contracts that minimise funding uncertainty for fixed term projects and their staff

Key Messages

- Collaboration is already effective between Designated Landscapes, but to deliver on the ambition of the Biodiversity Deep Dive, the breadth of collaboration needs to be widened.
- Consideration of access, inclusion, equity and justice forms an integral element of a Team Wales approach
- Technical challenges, specifically consenting and permitting, is hampering the delivery of nature recovery and net zero actions across Wales
- A Team Wales approach to shared governance, streamlined delivery, and risk management is essential if we are to unlock the potential of Designated Landscapes to deliver more for nature and 30 by 30.

Theme 5: Mapping and monitoring nature

In 2018, Welsh Government acknowledged the rich geological and biological diversity of the Designated Landscapes and their potential value in supporting nature recovery¹⁷. The Designated Landscape bodies responded to this statement with a collective commitment to develop their thinking across three integrated areas of work:

- developing large-scale landscape and biodiversity work together such that it has greater measurable positive impact

- developing understanding of local economic resilience and economic opportunities
- building a consensus to inform the direction and measures emerging from EU Transition, in particular future opportunities to support farmers and landowners in their delivery of public goods.

While good progress has been made as landscape bodies have gradually recalibrated their approach from a conservation to a nature recovery one, this has been hampered by lack of funding, lack of data and evidence, and lack of a coherent methodology and approach. This has to some extent led to a piecemeal approach, with lack of clarity on where, how and why nature recovery projects at a landscape scale needed to be focussed.

This led to, linked to the Deep Dive process, the creation of strategic posts to work across NPAs and AONBs to develop and deliver more coherent thinking and an evidence-led methodology.

Prioritised action plans for nature

Designated Landscapes often contain or adjoin designations including Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, National Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, World Heritage Sites and non-statutory designations like Heritage Coasts. Such protected sites are widely regarded as being central to local, regional and global strategies for the conservation of biodiversity. The health of Designated Landscapes will be inextricably linked with the improvement of neighbouring landscapes and sites.

Throughout 2023, Tirweddau Cymru explored the use of freely accessible datasets to better understand how nature recovery mapping can be used by Designated Landscape teams to target nature recovery activity as efficiently as possible.

This work, piloted by the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park team and the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape team, generated nature recovery maps for their respective areas. The pilot recognised the different staff capacities and data available in each landscape and sought to explore how a nature recovery mapping exercise could offer best value to all Welsh Designated Landscapes regardless of scale.

The initial series of maps created for review were based primarily on the NRW Habitat Networks, Priority Ecological Networks (PENs) mapping and Woodland Opportunity Maps (WOM21) with additional datasets alongside to help inform and give other important information. This iterative and highly collaborative process explored proposed maps and datasets, reviewing them and developing them using local knowledge, until a finalised series of Prioritised Nature Recovery action maps were agreed, covering conservation priorities, landscape scale nature recovery opportunities and priorities, and targeted nature based solutions.

Key outputs

Primary map series

- Conservation Priority Map 1 (CPM1) – using the NRW Habitat Network Local layer this map identifies small parcels of land that are important for immobile species. Cross referencing this data with the Protected Sites Network and the land ownership / project delivery map of Designated Landscapes teams and their partners allows for quick identification of sites of the highest conservation priority and the targeting of resources onto those sites of greatest need.
- Conservation Priority Map 2 (CPM2) takes the same methodology as CPM1 but using the larger areas of land identified in the NRW Habitat Networks Core layer, modelled to represent relatively immobile species that exist in larger parcels of habitat. Again by combining this data with the Protected Sites and local land ownership / project delivery areas, sites that are of high importance for conservation can be identified to avoid degradation of condition or extent.
- Landscape Scale Nature Recovery Map 1 (LSNR1) uses the NRW Habitat Networks focal layer to explore the wider landscape scale actions that can help achieve DECCA across the five habitat types. By cross referencing this with the Protected Sites Network and local land ownership / project delivery data areas for conservation (natural habitats / unimproved farmland) and nature recovery actions (improved / semi-improved farmland and urban fringe) of greatest need or potential can be identified. This map has been produced in two parts for some landscapes where multiple habitat types overlap so they can identify the areas that support the greatest variety of species / habitat types as these sites offer the greatest gains for nature recovery interventions.
- Landscape Scale Nature Recovery Map 2 (LSNR2) applies a similar methodological approach the LSNR1 but uses the NRW Priority Ecological Networks data to identify the areas of greatest need for nature recovery actions to support the protected sites network across the 7 habitat types. Both LSNR 1 and 2 were needed as some areas of important habitat in Designated Landscapes are not Protected Sites, while the Habitat Network does not model for Sand dune or Marine habitat needs.
- Targeted Nature Based Solutions 1 (TNBS1) uses a variety of datasets to identify appropriate nature-based solutions and priority delivery areas for them to improve a variety of metrics around water, including quantity (flood and drought), quality (nutrients and pollutants) and biodiversity (freshwater and riparian). This map is in the final stages of development using slope gradient, soil type and surface flow path modelling to inform decision making.
- Targeted Nature Based Solutions 2 (TNBS2) is a developing mapping exercise to help Designated Landscapes geospatially represent what they mean by 'right tree right place'. The map builds on the work of NRW through the Woodland Opportunities Mapping (WOM21) and the Landscape and Nature Recovery in a Changing Climate guide produced by Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape to explore what areas of land and habitats DL's support tree regeneration / planting in, which areas they see more trees as potentially harmful to priority habitats / species and how more trees of the right type and density can be incorporated into our landscapes. This work is linked to the

EcoserveR work being conducted as part of the Small World Consulting carbon baselining and carbon sequestration work and it is hoped that during 2024 this map can be refined toward a version that is publicly accessible to inform and support natural tree regeneration and planting decisions in the Designated Landscapes.

Key Messages

- The extensive nature of landscape designation provides a mechanism to secure healthy, resilient and productive ecosystems that are managed sustainably and contribute to connectivity between habitats.
- A strategic, analytical, and systematic approach to nature recovery across the Designated Landscapes is as key to effective management as the efficacy of activity at the local level.
- Capacity for delivery varies across Wales, and this has a significant bearing on the ability of Designated Landscapes teams to engage and co-develop strategic maps, thus a series of maps that can be either used prescriptively, or can be added to with local knowledge and resources are needed.
- Delivery of Nature Recovery actions is proposed as being focused toward areas of greatest need and areas of greatest potential in the short to medium term. The mapping work to date has established an important baseline from which to build on, but ongoing investment in the strategic co-ordination of this work for all Designated Landscapes is needed in the immediate to medium term.

Theme 6: Designated Landscapes and the Sustainable Farming Scheme

In Wales, the mountainous terrain, steep slopes and high rainfall mean 79% of land is designated as Less Favoured Area (LFA), where the challenging conditions constrain productivity and make farming more difficult. Cattle and sheep farming is best suited to this environment and consequently dominates agriculture in Wales, but yields below average farm incomes. The majority of Welsh farms are small (under 20 hectares) with relatively few large farms compared to Scotland and England¹⁸.

The designations of landscapes in Wales recognises their national importance for nature, landscape, culture and heritage. They encompass the highest, wettest and driest places, as well as a high proportion of designated sites than anywhere else in Wales. They have been shaped by farmers and land managers for generations and the majority of land within our Designated Landscapes continues to be farmed.

NPAs and National Landscape partnerships have worked collaboratively with farmers since their creation. Through projects such as support for traditional field boundaries¹⁹ running across six of the eight Welsh Designated Landscapes and the current Connecting the Coast²⁰ scheme running in PCNPA, Designated Landscape teams

have continued to build on the quality of this relationship and maintain a close and practical working relationship with farmers.

Farming has an impact, both positive and negative, on key natural resources and processes such as water and its quantity, soil and its productivity, and the type of wildlife society enjoys and needs to thrive. It both reflects the local landscape and creates and shapes it. It can produce places of distinctive character, and places devoid of character. Farming is one of the central contributors to landscape character and quality.

Designated Landscapes continue to be shaped by farmers with agriculture the dominant land use and a key delivery mechanism for action on both the nature and climate emergencies. A resilient and sustainable incentive system for farming is crucial for the future. Alignment with the work of the Designated Landscapes will support the agricultural sector and secure long term integrated and collaborative ways of working, which is required in achieving action on both the nature and climate emergencies.

Designated Landscape Management Plans provide a locally led, strategic assessment of the character and Special Qualities of places recognised as national assets. The plans articulate what constitutes valued and valuable landscape, endorsed by expert input and public opinion. Where high quality landscape is coincidental with sustainable land management, this provides an ideal framework within which to invest agri-environment and rural-development funding.

The development of the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) provides an opportunity for a farming scheme to integrate the purposes of Designated Landscapes with incentives for positive farming practice, reflect the importance and value of investing in their special qualities, and support the delivery of the socio-economic and well-being duties placed on Designated Landscape bodies.

Developing the role of Designated Landscapes in Welsh farming support

Given the proven track record of Designated Landscape teams as collaborators and facilitators such as the Black Mountains Land Use Partnership²¹ and the Usk Catchment Partnership²² the potential for developing their role in providing support for farming is significant.

Vision - Through the management planning process Designated Landscape staff can facilitate local conversations with farmers and land managers to co-create a compelling vision for future food and farming.

Strategy - Designated Landscape teams can offer a strategic approach to achieve this vision, aligning positive land management with nature recovery and other components of natural beauty. Their detailed understanding of the area, coupled with strong local relationships provides the ability to guide and optimise the relationship between SFS outcomes and delivering on the 30 by 30 target. Designated Landscape teams are well placed to identify how enablers such as the INRS, Nature Networks

Fund, philanthropic givers, green finance and blended finance can best help develop momentum for change.

Specifically, Designated Landscape teams could

- Embrace and promote agro-ecological principles
- Actively promote the development of a socio-economic environment where land management that recovers nature is viable and desirable.
- Embed improvement to Diversity, Extent, Condition, Connectivity and Aspects of ecosystem resilience (DECCA) in Designated Landscapes Management Plan priorities.

Delivery - Specialist advisors, embedded in Designated Landscapes but working in partnership through TCLW, would enable a more consistent approach to farmer and land manager engagement. They would facilitate sharing of knowledge and expertise to enable action to be tailored to individual landscapes. Local knowledge, tailored support, prescription, and intervention that translates national priorities into locally relevant opportunities is key.

Specifically, Designated Landscape teams could

- Clarify partner activities – identify what falls outside the activity of others where Designated Landscapes can add value
- Stimulate increased knowledge and capabilities in Designated Landscapes around understanding and access to Green Finance and develop joint capacity to take forward green finance initiatives at a collaborative landscape scale
- Identify the gaps between SFS and what is required to deliver on 30x30.

Focus – Staff in Designated Landscapes bring together a detailed understanding of sites and the tools, techniques and lessons learned from past management is essential to improving their condition. They have experience of a range of delivery mechanisms, knowing what works well and what does not, informed by involvement in previous support mechanisms and funds including ESA, RDP and LIFE, and at a range of scales from thousands to multi million-pound schemes.

Specifically, Designated Landscape teams could

- Embed specialist advisors in each Designated Landscape with associated budget. This will enable a more consistent approach to engagement with farmers across the Designated Landscapes in Wales
- Define and demonstrate the benefits of farming within a Designated Landscape
- facilitating collaborative projects and programmes, acting as brokers, programme managers and in some cases funding applicant / lead body
- Maintain and promote a diversity of landscape/ habitat relevant at the local and national level
- Provide mechanisms to incentivise improved management of commons

Culture - Designated Landscape teams recognise the importance of individual and collective rights, cultural rights and identity, and work to enable full and effective participation in all initiatives within the Designated Landscape. Similarly, they respect the knowledge, values and traditions associated with particular places and communities. Understanding this cultural element of landscape is key to supporting farmers and land managers to make positive decisions, build an appreciation of the relationship between the sustainable management of natural resources, nature connection, and recovery, and generate support for the development of a shared understanding and responsibility to deliver for nature.

In some cases, there is a perception amongst farmers and rural communities that nature recovery is in conflict with and seeks to replace traditional farming. Designated Landscapes can and should take a greater leadership role in facilitating conversations, training and demonstrating the value of nature recovery within and alongside traditional farming and drawing closer integration between conservation, nature recovery and agroecology, reducing the polarisation of the discussion, promoting the shared values and the benefits nature can bring to the sustainability of rural livelihoods and communities. Many agroecological farmers, nature recovery practitioners, conservationists and rewilders share far more than they disagree on, and many principles and practices are common across all groups. Designated Landscapes are one of the sectors that can make the greatest contribution, marrying their existing land management liaison and positive working relationships with conservation expertise

Traditional skills are broadly in decline, with fewer younger people investing in learning skills where the pay does not reflect the skill or investment to achieve it, while older practitioners find their careers winding down. This is starkly evident in the poor condition of our hedges across Wales, with very few isolated pockets of good hedge laying occurring, usually at a community or project level, rather than at a landscape scale. To revive traditional skills for the benefit of ecosystems and communities will take a national approach to valuing, supporting and promoting high quality, low impact, nature positive approaches to land management such as scything, hedge laying, coppicing and wider Nature Based Solutions. It's beyond the scope of this report to explore the form that national approach should take, but the creation of a nature service, engagement of youth, mental health and community payback services or creation of more apprenticeships and placing greater value on vocational skills over higher education may all need serious consideration.

Specifically, Designated Landscape teams could

- Develop a programme of communications and engagement linked to nature recovery and farming

- Develop a joint strategy for skills, including traditional agricultural skills where these are aligned to the Special Qualities and DECCA principles

Scale – Designated Landscape Management Plans guide the integration of policies and priorities at a landscape scale. They enable the identification of spatial and thematic priorities and opportunities which, when coupled with a detailed knowledge and understanding of the community and individual actors, support meaningful collaboration at a landscape scale. Staff are well placed to advise on and trial emerging the optional and collaborative actions of a Sustainable Farming Scheme and support pilot farm clusters.

Specifically, Designated Landscape teams could

- Define and support the collaborative element of SFS
- Use their convening power to develop stronger, more equitable partnerships
- Identify shared special qualities, using the 8 Designated Landscapes to showcase these through pilot farm clusters
- Demonstrate and trial optional and collaborative actions in SFS

Innovation - Designated Landscape staff have a track record in new ways of thinking, fresh approaches and partnership support e.g. the all-Wales Dark Skies partnership which has enabled farmers and land managers to change their lighting, save money and save carbon while delivering benefits for biodiversity. Designated Landscapes are actively developing links with academia to improve the knowledge and evidence base from which innovation can better emerge.

Specifically, Designated Landscape teams could

- Explore payments for results as a way to complement the SFS scheme
- Support/ stimulate innovation/ experimentation into farming practices that enables further improvements in DECCA in habitats and species (both natural and farmed)
- Stimulate diverse and innovative land management that produces exemplars for achieving functional, healthy, effective habitats and species responsibly

Key Messages

- Designated Landscapes have been shaped by farmers and land managers for generations and the majority of land within our Designated Landscapes continues to be farmed
- Farming is one of the central contributors to landscape character and quality.
- National Landscape partnerships have worked collaboratively with farmers since their creation and maintain a close and practical working relationship them.
- The development of the SFS provides an opportunity to integrate the purposes of Designated Landscapes with incentives for positive farming practice

- Given the proven track record of Designated Landscape teams as collaborators and facilitators the potential for developing their role in providing support for farming is significant.
- Designated Landscape staff can facilitate local conversations with farmers and land managers to co-create a compelling vision for future food and farming.
- Specialist advisors, embedded in Designated Landscapes but working in partnership through TCLW, would enable a more consistent approach to farmer and land manager engagement

Theme 7: Access, diversity, and inclusion

To meet climate and nature emergency targets we need behavioural change as well as legislation. We need an inclusive approach to decision making to drive innovative solutions and a people centred approach to nature connection²³ at scale.

To effectively address the climate and ecological crises, innovative thinking is needed. This can only be achieved by involving a diverse range of people from all backgrounds in our work. The experiences and perspectives of Wales's diverse communities have the potential to add great value to what we do, with new ideas and challenge leading to better, more informed decision making.

Our relationship with the natural world determines the way we interact with it. Developing a connection to nature is an important key to driving pro-environmental behaviour.

Nature connection and access are inextricably linked. Well-designed access opportunities have the potential to increase nature connectedness, improve mental wellbeing, and drive pro-environmental behaviour.

Designated Landscapes can play a key role in inspiring and driving forward a sense of nature connection and stewardship. For example, the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape's Nature for Health Programme²⁴ which combines the teaching of traditional skills and volunteering in nature with an offer to healthcare professionals to refer service users through social prescribing pathways. However, we cannot do this alone – we need effective collaborative working with Welsh Government (across sectors, including health and education), local authorities, communities, private businesses, the third sector and many other stakeholders, to commit to improving and prioritising equitable and inclusive access to nature for everyone.

Promoting responsible access to the countryside

Responsible access to the countryside is a critical aspect of nature recovery work. The Countryside Code is a well-established set of guidelines designed for use by both the public and land managers across Wales and England. It was established in 2004 as a

relaunch of The Country Code, which existed since the 1930s. In Wales, NRW has a statutory duty to promote the Code. There are also other examples of simple messaging around responsible access promoted by e.g. Miles Richardson, Trash Free Trails, the Right to Roam campaign (commonly referred to as ‘purposeful adventure / responsible access’), and the Adventure Smart campaign.

Welsh Government provided funding in 2022/23 for NRW to undertake non-legislative work in relation to responsible recreation. This included updated media content and branding guidelines for the Code as well as the development of a strategic promotion plan and action plan.

NRW has adopted the Promotion Strategy, but is seeking the support of other organisations in this area. NRW has proposed establishing a Countryside Code core group to assist in this regard.

While this work is helpful, and we recognise that individual landscapes and Welsh Government do lots of great work on communicating protection and access, from our impact reports, Code promotion, work of ‘Friends’ groups etc, we need to ensure that we are reaching further; outside of those who ‘know’. Co-designing our approaches with our diverse communities to reach new people is key: extending programmes such as the YHA’s Generation Green and the Mosaic project to listen and shape the future of those who want to protect and use our landscapes. It may also be worth considering approaches from other countries who’ve invested heavily in social science around behaviour change, and work with those who have a long-standing national awareness of the principles of responsible access (Norway, Sweden, Finland etc). Whichever route forward is taken, nature recovery goals will be challenging to meet without raising the nature connectedness of the nation and taking people with us on the journey as inclusively as possible.

Increasing Access

We know that inclusive and equitable access is an important element in creating a culture of respect, cooperation, and connection with Wales’s natural environment and landscapes, fostering a sense of stewardship and pro-conservation behaviours - driving nature connection at scale. Access in its widest sense isn’t just about being physically present in a landscape, although this is an important element, it extends to how we more widely provide information and promote connection to our Welsh landscapes, including our culture, heritage, and countryside. Even the language we use is important and can affect access and alienate communities: it’s much harder to value, protect and benefit from something you don’t understand. How we as Designated Landscape staff think more widely about access and access reform involves taking this more holistic and inclusive approach. Particularly, how our changing and diverse Welsh communities define their own connection and relationship is key to the relevance and successful future of our Welsh Designated Landscapes, and this resulting innovation must be integrated into our future work. —.

Wales's Designated Landscapes acknowledge the potential benefits which could arise from simplifying some access laws and processes, which can create confusion, frustration and conflict among landowners, land managers and users, and the introduction of new access rights; particularly access to greenspaces in more urban settings which can act as a gateway to nature connection and help to encourage interest in accessing the wider countryside. We want to enable more people to enjoy the natural beauty and diversity of our landscapes, fostering a sense of connection and stewardship towards our environment.

Currently, however, most visits to Designated Landscapes are repeatedly made by the same people. Those less well represented include the older, the young – especially adolescents – those from lower socio-economic groups, disabled people, and black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. If you are from an ethnic minority, you're twice as likely to live in a nature poor neighbourhood. (The Children's People and Nature Survey for England, Natural England, November 2022).

Ensuring diverse voices are involved and represented in all Access eform Programme planning and wider access initiatives is fundamental to the success and relevance of any access improvements. An increase in representation from disabled people, those from lower socio-economic backgrounds and minority ethnic people is particularly encouraged.

The findings and actions from the consultation research for the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan for the environment, rural affairs and climate change with regards to access to green spaces could be formally integrated into the ARP and wider access initiatives. Findings are likely to be intersectional and include inequity of access due to multiple, well documented barriers such as limited awareness about the countryside, lack of accessible / essential facilities, transport barriers, the free access of dogs and concerns over rural racism and discrimination

Addressing social and cultural barriers to access and recreation by representing, collaborating, and engaging with our diverse communities, improving existing access rights and information provision, and providing consistent recreational and responsibility campaigns with a focus on nature connection messaging, should be a top priority for Welsh Government, irrespective of changes to access legislation.

Focusing on these priorities in collaboration across the public sector will ensure that any further increase in access has the potential to drive social change and improve nature connection, with resultant positive benefit to the environment, nature, and people.

Key messages

- To meet climate and nature emergency targets we are dependent on behavioural change as well as legislation
- Innovation is necessary, but will only be achieved by involving a diverse range of people from all backgrounds in our work.

- Developing a connection to nature is an important key to driving pro-environmental behaviour. Well-designed access opportunities have the potential to increase nature connectedness, improve mental wellbeing, and drive pro-environmental behaviour.
- Designated Landscapes can play a key role in inspiring and driving forward a sense of nature connection and stewardship through raising awareness of landscapes and nature, the promotion of responsible access and purposeful adventure, and bringing communities together over their shared values. For instance, new educational resources linked to the new Curriculum for Wales are being developed as part of a collaborative project between all eight Designated Landscapes. The accessible resources will be centred around nature connection: promoting learning, understanding, appreciation and stewardship of designated landscapes and the wider environment.
- Increased promotion of the Countryside Code, building on the new Countryside Code Strategy and Action Plan for Wales, and Welsh Government's Access Reform Programme have important roles to play in creating a culture of respect, cooperation, and connection with Wales's natural environment and landscapes, fostering a sense of stewardship and pro-conservation behaviours - driving nature connection at scale

Next Steps

Over the course of mid to late 2023 the group explored ways to unlock the potential of Designated Landscapes to deliver more for nature and 30 by 30. Central to this was the delivery of actions set out in the Designated Landscapes Biodiversity Deep Dive Action Plan.

The group proposes to continue building on the work undertaken to date, by focusing on several workstreams outlined below. The group will consider if wider representation is required to undertake the workstreams and will continue to work closely with the other Deep Dive expert groups. A final report, with a full suite of recommendations, will be produced.

Proposed workstreams

9. Defining a role for Designated Landscapes in the Sustainable Farming Scheme

Recognising the fundamental importance of supporting farmers and land managers deliver for nature and the climate, Designated Landscapes intend to define their role in SFS and work to optimise their input. This will involve a collaborative bid to the Integrated Natural Resources Scheme.

10. Realigning National Park and AONB Management Plans with the nature and climate emergency

In response to emerging Management Plan guidance, the group intends to look at how the Management Planning process can better reflect the nature and

climate emergencies, how State of the Landscape reports can better inform objective setting, and how best to define and promote effective management, robust monitoring and reporting mechanisms

11. Nature Mapping

The group intends to continue working closely with NRW to explore how best to roll out nature mapping work across all Designated Landscapes. Work will include further consideration of datasets, SSSI condition mapping, targeting and prioritisation.

12. Building Collaboration

Building on the Team Wales approach, the group will explore how to promote Designated Landscapes as 'Landscapes for Everyone', to include strategic and tactical proactive communications around nature and climate to support positive behavioural change. Work will include training and learning in climate and nature literacy and a programme of work to raise awareness with PSBs and other strategic bodies

13. Resourcing action

Work will include exploring Green Finance opportunities and gearing up to embed this in resource streams. Providing evidence and argument to NRW and Welsh Government to ensure Designated Landscapes bodies are funded adequately, sustainably and flexibly to deliver nature recovery

14. Improving processes

Work will continue with NRW to consider issues around consenting and permitting, and Welsh Government around updating national planning policy guidance and permitted development.

15. Working fairly

The group will consider how the 'Just Nature Transition' concept might be more formally incorporated into the wider Just Transition to net zero decarbonisation framework. Additionally, the group will explore how the forthcoming Anti-racist Wales Action Plan for the environment, climate change and rural affairs and other wider assessments, actions or reporting requirements are better integrated and simplified.

16. Considering legislation

The group will consider the need for legislation in the next Senedd to reform the statutory purposes, duties and governance arrangements for Designated Landscape bodies to equip them better to drive nature's recovery

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Appendices

Annex 1. Group membership

Name	Organisation	Role
Howard Davies	Chair	Chair
Keith Davies	Designated Landscapes, NRW	Member
Carole Rothwell	Designated Landscapes, NRW	Member

Jim Latham	Nature, NRW	Member
Emma Story	Eryri NPA / Shared DL Officer	Member
Tom Johnstone	Bannau Brycheiniog NPA / Shared DL Officer	Member
Anna Jones	Pembrokeshire Coast NPA / Shared DL Officer	Member
Rhys Owen	Eryri NPA	Member
Paul Sinnadurai	Bannau Brycheiniog NPA	Member
Michelle Webber	Pembrokeshire Coast NPA	Member
Andrew Blake	Wye Valley National Landscape	Member
Graham Berry	CRDV National Landscape	Member
Llyr Jones	National Landscapes Association	Member
Alan Sumnall	Wales Environment Link (Butterfly Conservation)	Member
Tom Cosson	Welsh Government, Designated Landscapes	Member
Simon Pickering	Welsh Government, Designated Landscapes	Member
Steve Spode	Welsh Government, Ecosystems	Member
Karen Stothard	Welsh Government, Biodiversity	Member
Ruth Lovell	Tirweddau Cymru	Secretariat
Elinor Roberts	Tirweddau Cymru	Secretariat

Annex 2. Terms of Reference

Status

The Designated Landscapes Working Group reports to the Core Biodiversity Deep Dive Group, which reports to the Minister for Climate Change.

Purpose

Focused on Recommendation 3 of the Biodiversity Deep Dive ‘Unlock the potential of Designated Landscapes (National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) to deliver more for nature and 30 by 30’.

The principal purpose of the group is to take forward and implement the action plan developed by the Designated Landscapes, NRW and Welsh Government.

The group will undertake this work with reference to the targets contained within the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, especially Target 3 which seeks to:

*‘Ensure and enable that by 2030 **at least 30 per cent** of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are **effectively conserved and managed** through **ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures**, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable, and **integrated into wider landscapes**, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories.’*

The remit of the group is to:

1. Help steer the implementation of the Designated Landscapes Deep Dive action plan, finalised in March 2023.
2. Provide a strategic steer for the development of a coherent, evidence-based approach to prioritise nature recovery work by the 2 strategic leads within all eight Designated Landscape bodies by the end of 2024, and for their embedding in strategic management and implementation from that point onwards.
3. Provide a strategic steer for bodies tasked with realigning Designated Landscapes priorities to enhance and accelerate nature recovery delivery, supported by updated policy, resources and guidance to build capacity and expertise and to target activity.
4. Explore ways for key bodies such as NPAs, AONBs, NRW, WG and Local Authorities to improve joint working to accelerate delivery.
5. Recommend any additional strands of work required to accelerate delivery.
6. To provide clear advice to Welsh Government and others on the resource implications of implementing the Action Plan.
7. Agree reports and updates for the Biodiversity Deep Dive core group.
8. Carry out proactive stakeholder engagement.
9. Ensure alignment with other Biodiversity Deep Dive activities, including those relating to Protected Sites, Evidence and monitoring, and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) and Nature Recovery Exemplar Areas (NREAs) Expert Working Groups.
Ensure consideration is given to the Management guidelines for IUCN category V protected areas of which all National Parks and AONBs in Wales are categorised.

Membership of the group

The chair of the group is agreed by the Minister of Climate Change and is Howard Davies.

Secretariat will be provided by Ruth Lovell and Elinor Roberts of Tirweddau Cymru – Landscapes Wales, supported by Tom Cosson, Welsh Government.

Policy officers will be Tom Cosson, and Emma Story and Tom Johnstone, shared DL Nature recovery officers.

Members should have sufficient expertise, knowledge and capacity to allow rapid and robust development of the outcomes.

Additional specialist expertise may be brought in as and when required including eNGOs, Stakeholders may also be invited to participate in the group, including the network Wales Environment Link (WEL).

Ways of Working

These will be aligned to the Five Ways of Working outlined within the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

- Work collaboratively across organisations, and with other stakeholders and sub-groups;
- In proposing future actions and solutions, take account of relevant evidence and/or identify any key evidence gaps in respect of uncertainties;
- Seek to achieve integrated long-term solutions and take account of the short, medium and long term consequences of actions;
- Work with integrity and respectfully challenge each other to consider how we can do things differently/better; and
- All outputs and recommendations from this group should be justified by reference to a sound evidence base or draw attention to the limitations of the evidence where this not available.

Meeting arrangements (incl. Timing)

Meetings will be held online using Teams or on occasion, face to face.

Meetings should take place every month and should fit with the reporting deadlines and schedules of the Core Biodiversity Deep Dive Group.

Proposed agenda items and papers should be sent to the Chair and Secretariat two weeks prior to the meeting. The agenda and papers will be sent to the group one week prior to the meeting.

The Secretariat will circulate the draft minutes within two weeks of the meeting.

The group will maintain a risks and issues log in line with arrangements as followed by the Core Deep Dive Group.

Any decisions or issues the group cannot resolve should be escalated to the Core Deep Dive Group.

Responsibilities and Reporting

The chair will report to the Core Biodiversity Deep Dive Group on a quarterly basis, and feed into the six-monthly reporting schedule.

Members are there to proactively develop joint solutions for the good of the wider sector in Wales rather than simply to represent the interests of their own organisation.

Members are expected to be proactive in keeping their own and other organisations updated on progress of the group, and to make links with other working groups as appropriate.

Members are expected to take on and progress agreed areas for action within their own organisations rather than simply fulfilling a reporting/advisory role.

Annex 3. Action Plan

Designated Landscapes Biodiversity Action Plan