



Natural Resources Wales

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# UNESCO DYFI BIOSPHERE REVIEW

Forward Look





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Forward Look

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was prepared by BRO Partnership and contributes to the Periodic Review undertaken by WSP and BRO on behalf of the Dyfi Biosphere Partnership and contracted by NRW. It summarises findings from a desktop review and stakeholder engagement sessions in relation to the future of the UNESCO Dyfi Biosphere Reserve.



The Periodic Review and this Forward Look should act as a stimulus for discussion between the Partnership, NRW and Welsh Government. The discussion needs to confirm whether the Biosphere is considered a national priority and central to the delivery of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015) and Environment Act (2016), or whether it has been superseded by other mechanisms. The stakeholders must work together to ensure there is a clear mechanism for co-ordinating and driving action on the ground. The ambitions laid out in this report can only be achieved with dedicated staff, a strong governance structure and appropriate financial resourcing.

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In response to a UNESCO requirement, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) commissioned WSP and the BRO Partnership (BRO) to undertake the ten-year Periodic Review of the Dyfi Biosphere. The work was completed in March 2019 and undertaken on behalf of the Dyfi Biosphere Partnership.

The Periodic Review is by its nature a structured process within the constraints set by UNESCO. Therefore, to assist the Dyfi Partnership NRW commissioned this additional report which takes a forward look and assesses the challenges and the opportunities to enhance the governance and effectiveness of the Biosphere's management.

Much of the research needed for this forward look had already been collected as part of the Periodic Review, however additional interviews were undertaken to plug any gaps in our understanding of the issues. A 'Forward Look' workshop was also organised on the 28th February in Machynlleth and this was particularly useful in testing out ideas and options for future governance.

The Periodic Review highlighted the many achievements of the Biosphere during the last ten years, particularly in terms of delivering education, tourism and art-based projects. The Biosphere has been less successful in developing and delivering land management schemes, and yet, there are several large initiatives which are taking place within part of the Dyfi Biosphere, but do not acknowledge that they are contributing to its overall aims. This dilutes the impact of the Biosphere.

The Biosphere Partnership is not a constituted body and does not employ staff or have a bank account. To deliver its vision and aims it therefore relies on the good will of the members of the Partnership - and in particular the commitment of ecodyfi. In this report we set out four scenarios for the management of the Biosphere:

- End of the road
- Business as usual



- Consolidated governance and funding
- A national treasure and international icon

Our analysis is that the 'Business as usual' scenario is not sustainable in the long term and that a new governance structure is needed, otherwise the Partnership may well cease to operate. This was also the conclusion that emerged at the Forward Look workshop held on the 28th February.

The Partnership is therefore at a crucial turning point. If it is to develop its work and increase its effectiveness the time has come for it to move from a cooperation model to one where the management of the Biosphere is the responsibility of a separate entity, which is able to make decisions and act. Such a body would still work closely with a wider partnership.

There are several governance models that could be looked at in going in this direction: from the delivery being part of central and local government, through to it being charged to an independent body. The last ten years have seen significant public-sector changes and cuts in public sector budgets. This has prevented any of the public-sector bodies taking on the full responsibility for delivering the Biosphere and therefore a new independent body may be the only viable option going forward.

To get such an entity established though will require two things from the public-sector partners:

- A one-off injection of finance, of the order of £30,000, possibly shared between the 6 the public-sector organisation who are part of the Partnership;
- the secondment of three part-time staff to work on: admin/coordination, marketing/branding and external funding.

This would enable the newly formed Dyfi Biosphere organisation to appoint a Director for 12 months and to embark on a 'Foundation Year' to establish the new body and plan its growth.

To justify this investment, the Biosphere needs to demonstrate its contribution towards delivering Wales' policy objectives, particularly the sustainable management of natural resources under the Environment Act (2016) and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015).

In the report we have identified several sources of finance which could be used to help grow the organisation. By the end of the first five-year period, the Dyfi Biosphere could have achieved scenario three in full i.e. it would have a solid structure and would be employing 4 Full Time Staff. At this point the Biosphere would be widely recognised and respected within Wales, but if it is to truly achieve its own vision of being of international significance, it will need to grow further.

Scenario four paints a picture whereby the Dyfi Biosphere has expanded to have its own visitor centre, perhaps covering all the UNESCO designations in Wales. Such a network of UNESCO designated sites could provide a stronger voice in securing financial support from the Welsh Government and other funding bodies. Using this profile, the Dyfi could become an international destination for ecotourism and learning about the practical delivery of sustainable development. The local community would be at the heart of this and provide the energy and commitment required to manage the Biosphere in a way which not only reflects the vision and aims, but also inspires others throughout Wales, the UK and internationally.

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# 1 BACKGROUND

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In October 2018 Natural Resources Wales (NRW) appointed WSP and the BRO Partnership to undertake the Periodic Review of the Dyfi Biosphere. The review requires the Biosphere to report on progress against the three functions of: conservation, development and logistics (research and education). The work was completed by the end of February 2019 and involved:

- Stakeholder engagement
- Community consultation
- e-surveys
- Desktop analysis of existing datasets
- Analysis of documentation provided by the Partnership, including previous minutes and reports.

Although the Periodic Review was commissioned by NRW, it was undertaken for, and in close collaboration with, the Dyfi Biosphere Partnership.

The Periodic Review was undertaken within a very structured format, as set out by UNESCO, and included three parts:

- A State of the Biosphere Report which presents summary information in relation to the natural environment, economy and society. This information was largely collected from existing data sets and the review of documentation provided by the Partnership.
- The Periodic Review Report itself, which assessed the changes that had occurred during the last 10 years, set out what has been achieved, as well as the role the Biosphere Partnership had played in contributing towards the conservation, development and logistics functions that the designation is expected to provide.
- An interactive 'StoryMap' to present high level information about the Biosphere reserve in an accessible and visually appealing way. This drew from the two reports above and collated images and video previously produced on the Biosphere and projects within it.

In undertaking the Periodic Review, the consultation and engagement process generated a wide range of objective and subjective information, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the Biosphere's management and the commitment of agencies, institutions, communities, landowners and residents in improving the area. As well as looking back at the achievements and challenges of the last 10 years, the engagement process also provided ideas on possible improvements to the future management of the Biosphere. However, the structured nature of the UNESCO review process did not allow the inclusion of much of this information and insight.

The Coordination Plan for the Dyfi Biosphere runs until 2019 and it is therefore timely to produce a forward-looking report which sets out a roadmap and timetable to help the Partnership focus its plans and reinvigorate its activities for the next 5 years.

This additional report was commissioned by NRW to build on the Periodic Review and set out opportunities to improve the effectiveness, buy-in, funding and awareness of the Biosphere. It relies heavily on the Mid Term review of the Coordination Plan (2017) but also puts forward specific additional steps which would increase the effectiveness of the Biosphere and ensure its long-term future.

## 2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BIOSPHERE TO WALES

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The Dyfi Biosphere Reserve contributes to a global network of 686 Biosphere Reserves across 122 countries. It is Wales' only UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and one of only six Biospheres in the UK. As such, it is an important site for illustrating the great value that the Dyfi landscape has for Wales' natural heritage and people.

The Biosphere has a purpose to “inspire people and organisations to work together in creating sustainable futures we can be proud of. It connects people with nature and cultural heritage while strengthening the local economy.” This vision closely aligns with the Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFGA, 2015) and the Environment Act (Wales) 2016. In fact, the objectives of the Dyfi Biosphere cover all aspects of the well-being goals identified by the WFGA.

There are also other relevant national, regional and local policies in Wales for which the Biosphere has an opportunity to be a flagship initiative. These include:

- Planning Policy Wales 10, (December 2018)
- Ceredigion Local Development Plan 2007 - 2022 (adopted 2013)
- Powys Local Development Plan 2011 – 2026 (adopted 2018)
- Gwynedd Local Development Plan 2011 – 2026 (adopted 2017)
- Ceredigion Wellbeing Plan (2018 – 2023)
- Powys Wellbeing Plan Towards 2040 (launched 2018)
- Gwynedd Wellbeing Plan (under development)

The Periodic Review report presented a strong case for the continuation of the Dyfi as a Biosphere, highlighting the strong local enthusiasm for the designation and the achievements during the last 10 years - despite the lack of core funding or dedicated staff. This was based on detailed information and accurate records of activities carried out by the Biosphere Partnership and their impact and achievements to date.

That said, in a Welsh context the significance of this international designation is clearly not being fully realised or cherished by the main public-sector organisations, namely: The Welsh Government (WG), NRW, the three Local Authorities and Snowdonia National Park Authority. There are many reasons for this, including of course the severe cuts in public sector expenditure and the ever-increasing pressures to meet new social, economic and environmental challenges. Since support for the Biosphere is not a statutory requirement, it is inevitable that public sector bodies must prioritise other work.

The Mid Term Review of the Coordination Plan and the Strategy Workshop organised in 2017 highlighted the challenges and opportunities available to the Biosphere Partnership. Whilst much of the information generated during these exercises is still highly relevant, since then there has not been a significant change in awareness of, or support for, this international designation within Wales.

This report takes a fresh look at some of these issues and begins to plot a roadmap towards a more coherent and sustainable management regime for the Biosphere. The focus being delivery of the 7 Goals and 5 Ways of Working set out in the WFGA and the contribution it can make to sustainable management of natural resources through the Area Statements, a statutory requirement and one of NRW's main priorities over the next 5 years.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

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Much of the required background information needed for this forward look had already been collected as part of the Periodic Review process. Additional insights were provided through follow up meetings and discussions with key stakeholders. An extensive literature search was undertaken to look at sources of funding, case studies and operational practice examples which could add value to the way that the Dyfi Biosphere is managed. These are included in Appendices B and C.

A 'Forward Look' workshop was organised in Machynlleth for the Dyfi Biosphere Partnership and other key stakeholders on the 28<sup>th</sup> February. This half day session included:

- Considering future trends, challenges and opportunities for the Dyfi area
- Looking at the sustainability of the Dyfi Biosphere Partnership
- Undertaking a visioning exercise
- Considering four scenarios for the future management of the Biosphere.

The event was advertised on Facebook and 18 attended, with a good cross section of public sector, voluntary and community groups, as well as local residents.

A note of the workshop is set out in Appendix A.

## 4 KEY FINDINGS

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### 4.1 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

When the Biosphere was extended and adopted in 2009 to its present coverage there was considerable optimism that it would quickly establish itself as one of the most innovative and relevant designations in Wales. Here was an opportunity to fully charge an area with the responsibility to be a test bed for sustainable development, bringing different agencies and organisations together across the public, private and third sectors, connecting North and South Wales and using a river catchment approach to stimulate new ways of thinking and working. There was an excitement about the approach and the timing of this new way of encouraging collaboration and integration across sectors and regions.

Ten years on, remarkably, some of that optimism and enthusiasm is still highly visible amongst the Biosphere's Partnership - and the individual members can collectively look back at achieving significant gains in terms of:

- Widespread community awareness of the Biosphere and environmental issues, largely achieved through events and local activities.
- A strong education group and connections with several schools in the Biosphere.
- A range of innovative tourism initiatives, which have raised the profile of the area as an eco-friendly, green destination.
- A series of arts-based programmes which have had a lasting impact.
- The impact of high-profile research projects, such as COBWEB and hydro-citizenship.

This has generated a wealth of local awareness, knowledge, and commitment.

The above achievements have been secured through a governance structure based on collaboration, good will and project-by-project delivery.

It is also worth highlighting that the Partnership has had less success in terms of influencing land management regimes, and supporting local economies and job creation. It is therefore relevant to speculate on whether the Biosphere's Partnership could have had a wider impact if the governance structure had been different.

### 4.2 MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

During the last 10 years, as well as some notable successes, there have also been some significant missed opportunities and some of these are listed below.

#### **The Cambrian Mountains Initiative**

Was initially set up to promote greater connection between agricultural producers and local tourism businesses. The area covered included part of southern portion of the Biosphere.

Today, "*Dyfodol Cambrian Futures*" is an RDP-funded project delivered by the Cambrian Mountains Initiative and part-funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, Ceredigion County Council, Powys County Council and Carmarthenshire County Council. The project also receives support from the Cefn Croes Windfarm Community Trust, Aberystwyth University and the Elan Valley Trust.

<https://www.thecambrianmountains.co.uk/prosiect-dcf-project>

Working with local communities in the Cambrian Mountains the project is aimed at:

- Increasing the profile and understanding of the region with local residents and visitors
- Increasing the use of Cambrian Mountains branding on marketing materials and platforms
- Researching opportunities for gaining official status for the landscape.

The Cambrian Mountain Initiative shares common objectives with the Biosphere, as well as significant geographical overlap. However, there would appear to be relatively little coordination of resources, projects and branding between the two initiatives.

### **Dyfi Sustainable Natural Resource Management Trial**

NRW undertook three 'river catchment' trials, which included the Dyfi. These trials were to feed into future Area Statements, as required under the Environment (Wales) Act. The trial offered the opportunity to bring different agencies together to discuss land management regimes and to share information and approaches. This process was very useful and produced a lot of data about the area, but no real connection was made to the work of the Biosphere Partnership - and ultimately the decision was taken by NRW to develop Area Statements at a larger and more regional scale. There is still an opportunity though to use much of the information generated under the trial to feed into a future land management approach for the Dyfi, connecting biodiversity, landscape, sustainable tourism, recreation and flood management.

### **Access Improvements**

Between 2007 and 2012 the then Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) and the WG invested substantial sums in improving public access to the countryside and coast. These improvements included: the establishment of the Wales Coast Path, Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) funding for Ceredigion, Powys and Gwynedd County Councils and further improvements of the Glyndwr's Way National Trail. These access improvements helped boost sustainable tourism in the Biosphere. Unfortunately, they were developed and implemented largely independently of the Biosphere Partnership and this was a missed opportunity in terms of community engagement and involvement.

### **Visitor centres and interpretation**

There are several sites which represent missed opportunities in terms of increasing awareness of the Biosphere, including:

- The Dyfi National Nature Reserve covers 2,000 ha and is located midway between Aberystwyth and Machynlleth. There are three main areas: the Dyfi estuary, Ynyslas sand dunes and the raised bog of Cors Fochno. The NRW website makes no reference to the Biosphere.

<https://naturalresources.wales/dyfiynyslas?lang=e>

- Montgomery Wildlife Trust have been running the Dyfi Osprey Project at Cors Dyfi Reserve for 10 years and managed its growth from a small reserve to one of the leading osprey conservation, engagement and research projects in the world. Over this period visitor numbers have increased from 2,000 to 40,000, with many more watching live streaming and accessing digital platforms. In June 2018 the Trust secured Heritage Lottery Fund to develop a new visitor centre which will include new toilets, café, shop and seating areas, interpretation and osprey screens. The Centre

plans to highlight its position and contribution to the Biosphere, but perhaps more could be made of this connection?

<http://www.dyfiospreyproject.com/dyfi-wildlife-centre>

- The Ynys-hir RSPB Reserve covers an area of 800 ha with a wide mix of habitats including: mountain, lowland wet grassland, reedbed, bog, woodland and saltmarsh. The website and interpretation available on site highlight the area's high conservation status including: SSSI, SAC, RAMSAR designations, and whilst reference is made to the fact that it's within Wales only UNESCO Biosphere, again, more could be made to highlight this aspect.

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves-and-events/reserves-a-z/ynys-hir/>

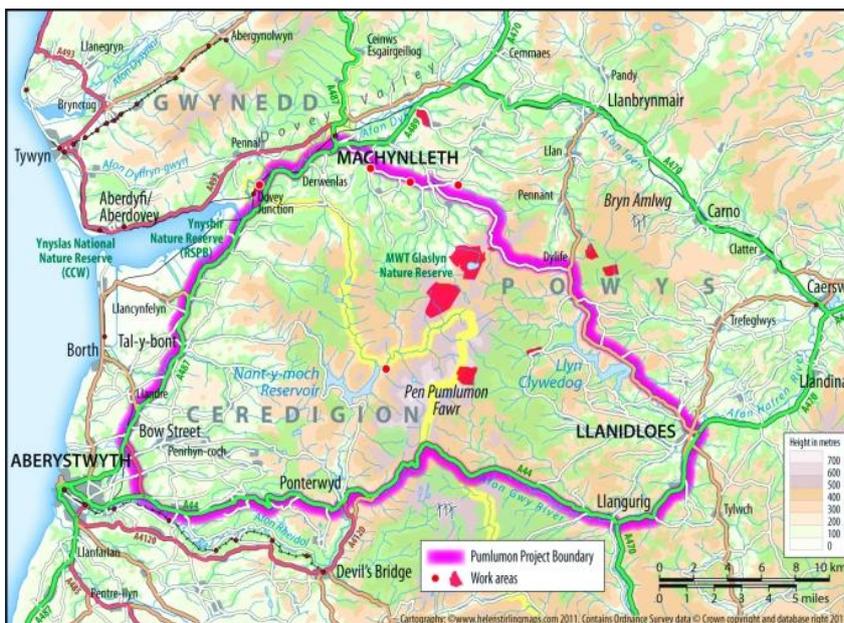
- The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) is an education and visitor centre demonstrating practical solutions for sustainability. The Centre covers all aspects of green living: environmental building, eco-sanitation, woodland management, renewable energy, energy efficiency and organic growing. The website makes no mention of its location within the Biosphere.

<https://www.cat.org.uk/>

### The Pumlumon project

Was established by the Montgomery Wildlife Trust in 2007 and represents a radical new approach in the management of the upland landscapes, connecting wildlife ecology, tourism and farming across 40,000 ha of the Cambrian Mountains. The project encourages and supports local farmers, foresters and tourism businesses to do things a little differently, so that over time the whole landscape comes back to life, benefiting a far wider area. There is no mention on the website of how the work is contributing to the vision and aims of the Biosphere.

<https://www.montwt.co.uk/projects/pumlumon-project>



## Summit to Sea

More recently, the Summit to Sea initiative developed by Rewilding Britain is another example of a large and potentially very important scheme being developed in the area. This is one of only eight projects across Europe to receive funding from the Endangered Landscape Programme. A core group of partners were involved in providing practical expertise plus areas of land and sea that are already managed for nature conservation. The development phase also involved discussions with a range of organisations including: the NFU, FUW, CLA, local farmers, Business Wales, Dyfi Biosphere Partnership, Cambrian Mountains Initiative, Ceredigion and Powys County Councils, NRW and Welsh Government.

<https://www.rewildingbritain.org.uk/blog/welcoming-summit-to-sea>

Whilst the initiative has many merits, it is noteworthy that it has had some negative press coverage and that some farmers are suspicious of the rewilding aspects of the project.

The project is not directly linked or integrated into the action plan of the Dyfi Biosphere. Could the Partnership have bid for this money themselves and developed an initiative which was fully embedded into their strategy? If they had, it would have complemented and built on the achievements set out in section 4.1. As it is, the Summit to Sea project is seen as an opportunity for conservation, but also as a potential threat by farmers who are suspicious that the initiative will accelerate the reduction in the number of family farms.

## Funding for raised bogs, including Cors Fochno.

In 2017 NRW, with support from Welsh Government and Snowdonia National Park, secured £4m of LIFE+ funding for a major conservation project to improve raised bogs - one of Wales' rarest and most important habitats. The project will improve the condition of seven of the most important sites in Wales, including Cors Fochno, which is within the Biosphere's core area.

<https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/our-projects/nature-projects/new-life-for-welsh-raised-bogs/?lang=en>

The LIFE funding that NRW have received for Cors Fochno, as part of this wider initiative, is another wonderful opportunity with substantial funding. And although this project is still at a relatively early stage in terms of delivery, there is already a slight disconnect with the vision and aims of the Biosphere.

## Other gateway opportunities

There are other examples as well: Machynlleth is very much at the heart of the Biosphere and yet visitors arriving by train would see no visible notification that they were now entering an international designation. On their departure from the railway station one of the first things they would see if an 'Edible Mach Town Trail' and planting area, which reflects the ethos of the Biosphere. But again, any reference to the Biosphere designation is missing.



Just down the road from the station visitor will find 'Parc Eco Dyfi Park', which provides business units including local renewable energy companies. But again, this eco park makes no reference to the Biosphere designation.



The question that must be posed therefore is:

*What would the impact have been if the above land-based conservation programmes, visitor information projects and other initiatives were fully integrated into the Coordination and Action Plans of the Biosphere?*

Certainly, there would be far greater awareness of the role and importance of the Biosphere amongst politicians and senior officials in the public sector and therefore possibly more financial resources to deliver the aims of the Biosphere. There would also have been far greater awareness amongst local residents, business interest and visitors.

What the above illustrates is that, whilst the individuals who are members of the Biosphere Partnership are fully committed to support projects and actions included in the Coordination Plan, their own organisations are delivering other major initiatives which are somewhat disconnected and which have been devised and delivered to separate agendas.

This might simply be a branding issue. If the Biosphere Partnership had officially endorsed these individual schemes, and each one had referred to and highlighted the contribution they were making to the Biosphere, then a very different picture would have been presented to wider stakeholders.

## 4.3 THREATS AND RISKS

4.3.1 The 2017 Mid Term review of the Coordinating Plan included a useful Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis.

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diversity: of organisations involved; of characteristics of the area</li> <li>▪ Uniqueness in Wales – levers awareness</li> <li>▪ Partnership</li> <li>▪ Brands: Biosphere; UNESCO</li> <li>▪ Resilience of the community, seen in reactions to flooding events and to loss of April Jones</li> <li>▪ Natural beauty</li> <li>▪ Strong local identity, community</li> <li>▪ Local food markets</li> <li>▪ Aberystwyth – University &amp; other national organisations</li> <li>▪ Operates bilingually - helps to support high level use of Welsh in all sectors</li> <li>▪ Other 'local' UNESCO brands: University Chair, Memory of the World</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diversity – difficult to cohere</li> <li>▪ Partnership – lack of significant collaborations; low level of ongoing commitment and involvement by public sector</li> <li>▪ Brands are weak; little higher-level effort to promote Biosphere brand</li> <li>▪ Awareness amongst general population</li> <li>▪ Lack of core/dependable/realistic funding and dedicated time</li> <li>▪ Poor transport infrastructure</li> <li>▪ Failure to make Biosphere as relevant to Aberystwyth town as to the rest of the area</li> <li>▪ Low population density</li> <li>▪ Straddles 3 Local Authorities and other institutional boundaries e.g. NRW</li> <li>▪ Failure to attract significant interest of farmers</li> <li>▪ Failure to realise potential of CAT</li> <li>▪ Overdependence on (underfunded) ecodyfi</li> <li>▪ Mid Wales 'off radar' of Welsh Government</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Well Being of Future Generations and Environment Acts</li> <li>▪ Well Being Plans of Public Service Boards</li> <li>▪ Area Statements to be developed</li> <li>▪ Natural beauty &amp; attractiveness</li> <li>▪ Sparky people and other local initiatives</li> <li>▪ Capacity of local people; use of brand</li> <li>▪ Brexit</li> <li>▪ Aberystwyth: University; 'cultural capital'</li> <li>▪ Local food markets</li> <li>▪ Cross border &amp; international partnership working</li> <li>▪ Greater involvement of voluntary sector</li> <li>▪ Strong sense of community in Bro Dyfi</li> <li>▪ Influence values of younger generation</li> <li>▪ Work for wider aims of UNESCO</li> <li>▪ CAT linkages</li> <li>▪ Summit to Sea</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Taking wrong or too broad a focus; superficial activities</li> <li>▪ Not delivering tangible &amp; sustainable outcomes</li> <li>▪ No long term or consistent funding/capacity that would allow strategic action</li> <li>▪ Climate &amp; sea level changes and flooding – to Core Area</li> <li>▪ Loss of youngsters</li> <li>▪ Money leaking out of local economy</li> <li>▪ Brexit</li> <li>▪ Over-dependence on ecodyfi</li> <li>▪ Loss of key champions / staff turnover</li> <li>▪ UNESCO 10-year review</li> <li>▪ Lack of core funding</li> <li>▪ Summit to Sea</li> </ul>

The following table takes the identified Threats (noting that some of these are also opportunities) and incorporates these into a Risk Log, which stipulates the Likelihood (L) and Impact (I) of each issue. The matrix also includes commentary on each Threat, as well as possible mitigating action.

It should be noted that the risks are a mixture of environmental change, such as the flooding of the core zone of the Biosphere, as well as more immediate challenges in terms of core funding to sustain the work of the Partnership.

By colour coding the Likelihood (L) and Impact (I) with a traffic light system, whereby High (H) is red, Moderate (M) is amber and Low (L) is yellow, it becomes clear that the fundamental and urgent issues which the Biosphere Partnership needs to address is its own governance and sustainable core funding.

Threat or risk	L	I	Comment	Mitigating Action
Taking wrong or too broad a focus; superficial activities	M	M	With no core funding there is inevitably a tendency to tackle easier actions and avoid the more challenging ones	Secure core funding
Not delivering tangible & sustainable outcomes	M	M	This has been largely the case over the last 10 years	Increase profile of action taken in the Biosphere  Embed initiatives into decision making of organisations operating in the Biosphere
No long term or consistent funding/capacity that would allow strategic action	H	H	This is the crucial stumbling block to taking the Biosphere forward	Secure core funding
Climate & sea level changes and flooding – to Core Area	M	M	In the long term this may be inevitable, but the Biosphere Partnership can only encourage mitigating action in terms of flood control. It will be difficult to argue for this if few properties are affected	Monitoring and advocacy  Manage land to reduce flooding

Threat or risk	L	I	Comment	Mitigating Action
Loss of youngsters	M	M	There are few job opportunities locally, outside Aberystwyth.	<p>Explore opportunities to improve sustainable travel between Aberystwyth and rest of Biosphere encouraging people to remain living in the Biosphere and commuting</p> <p>Develop timber processing in the Dyfi area</p> <p>Further development of ecotourism</p>
Money leaking out of local economy	M	M	It is difficult to gauge to what degree this is an issue and whether the trend is increasing.	Consider local economy with planning decisions particularly in relation to tourism development
Brexit	M	M	There will be an impact on farming, particularly in the uplands and for sheep farmers	Develop local markets as much as possible
Over-dependence on ecodyfi	H	H	If ecodyfi withdrew from the Partnership it would possibly be the end of the Biosphere	Consideration needs to be establishing the Biosphere as an independent and sustainable organisation to provide consistent strategic direction
Loss of key champions / staff turnover	M	M	To a small degree this has happened already and it is also being associated with changing priorities with key organisations notably NRW.	Establishing the Biosphere as an independent organisation will make it less dependent on input from others, which may occasionally wane.
UNESCO 10-year review	L	M	There is strong evidence to show that despite the lack of core funding the Biosphere has achieved many things over the last 10 years	To build on the knowledge gained during the Periodic Review
Lack of core funding	H	H	This is the crucial issue and the hinderance to taking the Biosphere onto a more sustainable and effective level	Establish the Biosphere as an independent body with core funding

Threat or risk	L	I	Comment	Mitigating Action
Summit to Sea	M	L	It is unfortunate that the original bid could not have been more closely aligned to the work of the Biosphere.	<p>Work closely with the Summit to Sea team to explore tangible benefits which reduce the impact of some of the negative publicity received to date.</p> <p>This also relates to other landscape initiatives such as the Cambrian Mountains</p>

#### 4.4 GOVERNANCE ISSUES AND FUNDING

The above Risk Log illustrates that the identified Threats are a mixture of long term environmental challenges, mid-term social change such as demographic imbalances, through to the more immediate and obviously crucial funding of the core work of the Partnership itself.

Whilst in the early days of the Biosphere's existence it was entirely appropriate to establish the Partnership as a neutral mechanism for cooperation and collaboration, with no one organisation in the lead. During a period when public sector resources were more plentiful this was certainly easier. In the present economic climate, and with ever-increasing financial pressures within the public sector, there has been an inevitable decrease in the priority given to the Biosphere and its work. Equally, other projects which have overlapped with the Biosphere have not acknowledged the contribution they are making towards its functions.

What seems to have transpired over the years is that the secretariat role, which was shared between the public-sector partners on a rotational basis, has recently been undertaken by ecodyfi for an annual fee of £5,000. Powys CC will pick up the baton in April 2019 and take their turn to undertake the secretariat role.

Recently, the role of the secretariat has become confused with project management and delivery, whereby ecodyfi prepare the agenda, take the minutes and report on most items since they are often the delivery agency. The lack of dedicated staff is preventing the Biosphere Partnership being able to fully coordinate and integrate the activities of its membership.

In 2014, whilst going through their own periodic review, North Devon Biosphere Partnership reviewed the management and governance of several other Biospheres across the world. One of their key findings was the reserves that have the greatest impact have a team that both coordinates and delivers projects, and that effective teams were at least 3 strong, often larger. Indeed, North Devon have a team of 7 people, working across their Biosphere and on its various projects, see Appendix C.

The Dyfi Biosphere does not have its own governance structure, or its own bank account. It therefore only exists as a loose connection of dedicated organisations and committed individuals, who through their good will and hard work endeavour to see the work of the Partnership flourish.

But, under the financial pressures faced by all and notably the public sector, is this governance arrangement still the best model and will it survive going forward?

There are five issues here:

- The overlap and possible confusion between the role of ecodyfi and the Biosphere.
- The lack of money for project coordination. This goes far beyond a secretariat role to support the Partnership's meetings.
- The lack of resource for forward planning and project development, including securing future funding and delivering against the long-term vision.
- The inconsistency in the way that projects located in the Dyfi reference and acknowledge their connection to the Biosphere.
- The lack of a general awareness of the Biosphere and its international status, particularly amongst politicians and senior civil servants.

Taking these issues into consideration, the following section sets out four possible scenarios for the Biosphere.

## 4.5 FUTURE SCENARIOS

### End of the road

The worst-case scenario is that the Biosphere Partnership ceases to meet and that the legacy of the work over the last 10 years fades into memory. It may be that in considering the 2019 Periodic Review UNESCO conclude that insufficient progress has been achieved in terms of meeting the Biosphere's conservation, development and logistics functions. The decision on this won't be known for several months.

However, assuming that UNESCO confirms the status of the designation for another 10 years, there is still an issue in that the Dyfi Biosphere is no longer seen as being relevant in Wales, and that the legal obligations for the public sector through the WFGA have overtaken the need for such a designation.

Of course, there is also a strong counter argument in that losing such a valuable international designation would be a sad reflection on Wales' commitment to deliver real examples of sustainable development in practice and a missed opportunity to put into practice the practical action which reflects the theory and legislation already in place.

How the demise of the Biosphere would be viewed is open to question, but if this scenario did come about, then it would be a sad loss of the momentum that has been generated over the last 10 years, despite the lack of core funding.

### Business as usual

The second scenario is one whereby the work of the Partnership carries on much in the same way that it does now. This might have appeal to many - and in some respect, this would be a mark of success. In other words, whilst financial pressures mount up and environmental social and economic challenges gather pace and intensity, to be able to 'weather the storm' and still be operating would in many eyes be regarded as remarkable endurance and resilience.

The risk log in section 4.3 shows that the Biosphere is heavily dependent on good will, and particularly the hard work and commitment of ecodyfi. What would happen if, for whatever reason, this was removed?

It is therefore important for the Partnership to reflect on whether 'business and usual' is a long-term sustainable option.

## Consolidated governance and funding

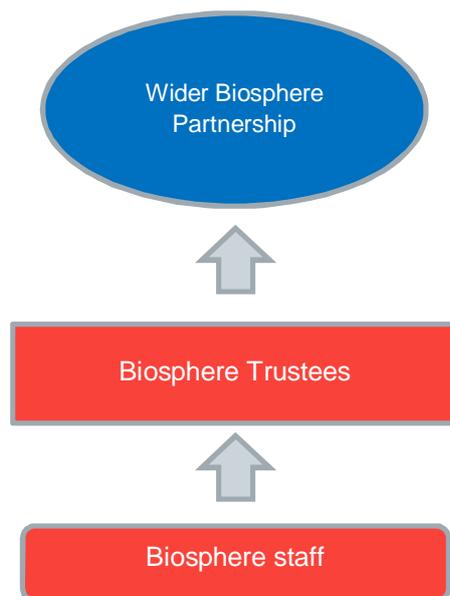
The third scenario paints a more positive picture, whereby the Biosphere is an independent organisation, possibly a Trust or Foundation, which is in turn supported by a core team with the skills and expertise to:

- Coordinate existing activity, including project management
- Provide a secretariat for the Partnership
- Identify and secure future funding and development opportunities
- Raise the profile of the Biosphere, at local, regional, national and international levels.

Based on the operational practice notes set out in Appendix C it is envisaged that this would need to be a core team of four staff:

- Full time Director
- Part time Project Branding and Marketing Officer
- Part time Project External Funding Officer
- Part time Project Admin and Coordination Officer

The project team would then report to the Biosphere's independent Trustees and they in turn would report to the wider Partnership on a quarterly basis.



This scenario might seem optimistic and even beyond reach, but the resources needed to establish such a structure and team are not uncommon, indeed many of the initiatives listed in section 4.2 have secured similar levels of resources for core staff. In most cases this has been achieved through relatively short-term project funding, of say three to four years.

For this scenario, there would need to be on a sustainable financial model established from the start, whereby the posts of Director and the External Funding Officer had the skills and time to generate funding to enable the whole team to be employed indefinitely.

How the funding for establishing and then sustaining such a team could be achieved is set out in section 5.2 and 5.4; with additional background information in the external funding sources included as Appendix B.

## A national treasure and international icon

The Fourth Scenario is even more ambitious. Under this option the Biosphere has a national and international reputation as a test bed for practical ways of delivering all aspects of sustainable development on the ground. It has become the 'go to area' to develop new ideas, test them and then see them mainstreamed in Wales and further afield. Furthermore, the Biosphere's logo and identity strengthens the work of individual organisations and initiatives, such as CAT, Ynys-hir Reserve, Ynyslas National Nature Reserve and the Osprey project, and local businesses are increasingly aligning themselves to the UNESCO designation.

Also, under this Scenario, Plas Machynlleth has become a centre for the wider Biosphere Partnership, and the adjoining derelict coach houses have been refurbished as bunk house accommodation. The town of Machynlleth is at the heart of the Biosphere and draws eco-friendly tourists and visitors to an extensive programme of cultural, environmental and learning opportunities.

The Biosphere is also central to the WFGA and is widely recognised and appreciated by politicians and senior officials. When international delegations come to Wales they are taken to the Biosphere. Wales' international reputation for being at the vanguard of sustainable development is extensive, and the Biosphere is central to this.

The staffing of the Biosphere has now reached over 30 - 50 staff covering all aspects of coordinating action on the ground, through to managing Plas Machynlleth as an international focus for eco-tourism and research studies for universities and schools through the UK and wider. The funding from these private sector activities has created sustainable jobs for local people, and in particular for younger people wishing to remain in the area.

The Biosphere's activities are also boosting the profits of: CAT, the RSPB, Montgomery Wildlife Trust, as well as a host of local tourism businesses. These promote the Biosphere on their website and other publications.

This the only Scenario which fully reflects the current vision of the Biosphere Partnership.

*"The Dyfi Biosphere will be recognised and respected internationally, nationally and locally for the diversity of its natural beauty, heritage and wildlife, and for its people's efforts to make a positive contribution to a more sustainable world. It will be a self-confident, healthy, caring and bilingual community, supported by a strong locally-based economy."*

The question is: how can it be realised?

## 5 ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

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### 5.1 SCENARIOS

The findings set out above reflect much of the content included in the Mid Term evaluation of the Coordination Plan (2017) and whilst that document also highlighted the critical point relating to the lack of core funding, it is noteworthy that no progress has been made to address this urgent issue. No doubt the escalating and deepening cuts in public sector budget have been a major barrier in achieving this.

With the Periodic Review completed and dispatched to UNESCO, there is real urgency to focus on the four scenarios set out above and to consider what needs to happen next.

The first question for the members of the Partnership to consider is whether they agree with the following:

*The 'Business as Usual' scenario is almost certainly going to lead to the end of the Biosphere, as resources slowly dwindle and there is no longer any mechanism to coordinate action?*

This was the broad conclusion at the Forward Look workshop, but it is now up to the full Partnership to see if there is a consensus that this is the case.

If there is the will amongst the members of the Partnership to put the Biosphere on a more solid and sustainable basis, then action needs to be taken and urgently. The following are a list of issues that need to be considered and addressed:

### 5.2 GOVERNANCE

The main barrier in progressing from the 'Business as Usual' scenario to the Third Scenario of 'Consolidated governance and funding' is the confusion and overlap between the work of the Biosphere and ecodyfi.

Whilst it made sense for the work of the Biosphere to be set up originally on a partnership based on goodwill and collaboration, it is now clear that this model is no longer appropriate, and the time has come to set up a new legal entity to manage the core work of the Biosphere. This could be a Charity, Community Interest Company (CIC), a Trust or Foundation. The mechanism set up for the Biosphere could be independent of all other partners, able to employ staff, have its own bank account, able to make and receive grant funding and to trade.

If this step is not taken, the work of the Biosphere will continue to rely on the goodwill of ecodyfi and its staff, and at some point in time, this will inevitably run out.

Therefore, the second proposition to the Partnership is:

*Do you agree with this view and the necessity to establish the Dyfi Biosphere as an independent entity in its own right?*

At the Forward Look workshop there was a discussion of different governance structures, which drew partly on the Periodic Review of the North Devon Biosphere (see Operational Practice review in Appendix C).

It is now up to the Dyfi Partnership to consider whether a new legal entity should be set up and, if so, what form it should take.

There is also the question as to what work is attributed to a Biosphere organisation i.e. a newly established legal entity, and the wider work carried out by members of the Partnership within the area. Branding and awareness are covered more thoroughly later in this section, but if the Biosphere is set up as an independent body then there needs to be two levels of branding:

- The core work of the Biosphere team itself
- Contributory work undertaken by other agencies which meets the objectives of the wider Partnership.

This distinction is explored further below.

## 5.3 CORE FUNDING

It is clear that the Biosphere requires core funding to operate. The public-sector bodies have in turn either been providing the secretariat for the Biosphere or contributed £5,000 for ecodyfi to undertake this function on their behalf. This arrangement simply perpetuates the frustration that the Biosphere is not breaking out of the tight boundaries of the 'Business as Usual' scenario.

What is required is one-off funding for a 'Foundation Year.'

A proposition:

*Could the public bodies who are members of the Partnership, i.e. the 3 local authorities, SNPA, Welsh Government (WG) and NRW collaborate and provided a one-off sum of £30,000 for one year?*

This could be split equally with each providing £5,000, or in a proportional way to reflect the size and budgets of the 6 public sector partners.

This proposition may not be possible due to rules regarding core funding, but discussions between the 6 public sector organisations are needed to see if there is a way that, between them, such a sum could be generated.

To justify this investment, the Biosphere will need to demonstrate how, through coordinated action, it will address local and national priorities. This includes delivering benefits to the economy, society and environment in line with Local Development Plans, Local Wellbeing Plans (under the WFGA) and the Area Statements under the Environment Act (2016).

The budget of £30,000 would be sufficient to employ a part-time Director. If this budget could be secured, there is scope to use this as match funding and applying to various Trusts and Foundations to generate perhaps an additional 25-50%. Examples of possible Trusts are set out in Appendix B.

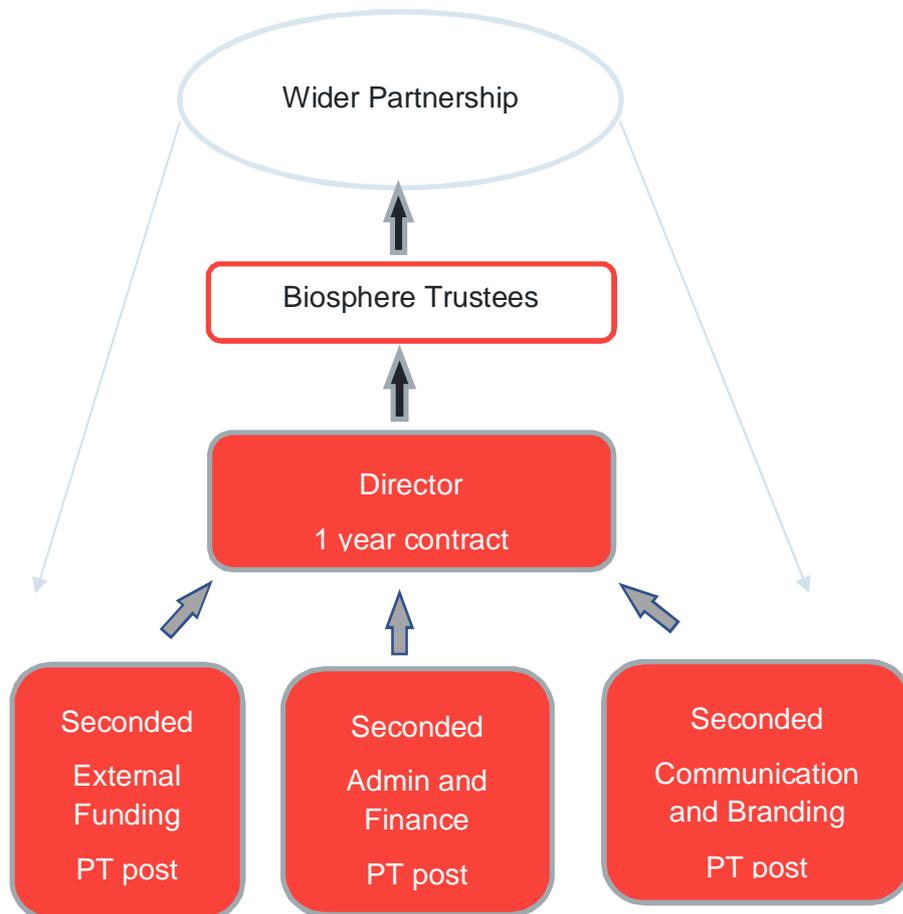
Therefore, there is the potential to secure at least a part-time Director, working to a board of Trustees or Directors of a new entity. However, for this to work, the public-sector bodies need to go

one step further and commit to short-term secondments of staff to the Biosphere’s core team. This could include:

- Admin and finance support, which would free the Director to do other work
- Support to develop external funding applications
- Support on communication, marketing and branding.

These would be part-time staff seconded to the Biosphere to support the Foundation year and could be a minimal commitment, of say 2 days/week, or they could be concentrated into a period of time, say a four-month intensive period for instance to write funding applications in the case of the External Funding post. These would be excellent learning and career development opportunities for the seconded staff.

The structure of the Biosphere’s team would now look like this:



Therefore, for a nominal one-off contribution of £30,000 between 6 public sector bodies and an agreement to second staff into these three posts for a 12-month period, the newly formed Biosphere could have a core team in place.

Consideration would need to be given to where the team was based and the logical location would be Plas Machynlleth. Negotiations would therefore be needed with the Machynlleth Town Council to agree a low rent for this Foundation Year period.

The newly formed team would need to be tightly managed and their work prioritised on securing the necessary funds for years 2 and beyond. In Appendix B we have provided an indication of some of the sources of funding which could be used to achieve this.

Essentially, the Admin and Finance and the Communication and Branding posts would relieve the Director of much of the day to day work in establishing and running the new organisation, so that more time can be devoted to work with the External Funding post to secure future revenue streams. There would be a need to secure approximately £60,000 for year 2 to maintain the momentum for the new organisation.

In this context it will also be important to consider additional support that the WG could provide for co-design and networking. The WG encourages people to use co-production to work together to develop communities and continuously improve public services. This is supported through working closely with the Coproduction Network Wales<sup>1</sup>, Academi Wales<sup>2</sup> and the Audit Office<sup>3</sup>, all of whom provide face-face training or events and self-service materials via their websites. In addition, the WG have access to free online courses from MIT<sup>4</sup> and the Presencing Institute<sup>5</sup>.

## 5.4 THEORY OF CHANGE APPROACH

The activities undertaken during the workshop held on the 28<sup>th</sup> February helped to highlight the risks and challenges facing both the Dyfi area and the Partnership itself. The group then used a 'Postcards from the Future' visioning exercise to consider the sort of outcome and outputs they would like to see in 7 years' time.

These exercises demonstrated that there is a clear disconnect between the wish list of the participants and the level of resources and commitment currently being provided for the Biosphere. The workshop also showed that many of the activities that have been carried out by the Biosphere partners have not been balanced across all aspects of their vision statement. In other words, progress has been made on some areas, such as education and wildlife, but for other sectors notably the local economy and social issues the Biosphere has had very little impact. This

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<sup>1</sup> <https://info.copronet.wales/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://academiwales.gov.wales/pages/quick-tips-awgrymiadau-cyflym>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.audit.wales/good-practice>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.edx.org/course/u-lab-leading-change-times-disruption-mitx-15-671-0x>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.presencing.org/>

imbalance in approach distorts how the Biosphere is viewed and leads some to conclude that it's a designation with no value to their interests.

Following the workshop on the 28<sup>th</sup> February, one option would be to take this information and start to build up a Theory of Change / Logic model<sup>6</sup> along the following lines:

Issues	Input	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
e.g. lack of awareness of Biosphere	e.g. funding for communication and branding officer	e.g. Boost Friends of membership scheme  Brand Biosphere on partners websites	e.g. 'Friends of' scheme reaches target membership  All major projects refer to their contribution to Biosphere	e.g. increased awareness of the Biosphere leading to more engagement

From the Vision, plan backwards to define Outcomes, then Outputs, activities and finally the resources or inputs needed.

## 5.5 AWARENESS AND BRANDING

The part-time Communication and Branding Officer would be charged with leading on much of this work.

### Branding of projects undertaken by Partners

As listed in section 4.2 there are several land management or visitor facilities projects which are taking place within the geographical area of the Biosphere but which at present do not reference the contribution they are making to the UNESCO designation. It should be relatively easy to agree which projects fall into this category and then with the approval of the relevant organisation to insert a form of wording and logo on websites to show that each of these initiatives is contributing to the vision and aims of the Dyfi Biosphere.

### Website, social media, events and publications

The Communication and Branding Officer could make enormous inroads in terms of increasing local awareness and buy-in for the work of the Biosphere. The lack of core funding has not allowed the full potential of social media channels to be realised. There is an opportunity therefore to re-create excitement about the work of the Biosphere.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/>

## **Friends of the Dyfi Biosphere membership scheme**

Generating new followers through social media platforms could be a good way to capture interest and enthusiasm, which could boost membership of a new revamped version of the 'Friends of the Dyfi Biosphere' group. Other organisation, such as the South West Coast Path, have used such mechanisms to generate both interest and valuable unrestricted core funding.

There is potential over time to recruit something like 5,000 friends to sign up, and if each were making an annual contribution of £12 this would provide a reliable core budget of £60,000. It may take say three or four years to get to this total, but with the support of all the members of the Partnership and extensive deployment of social media channels and established networks, other examples show that this is a realistic target.

## **Charter and business members**

Other Biospheres have been very successful in getting local businesses to acknowledge and celebrate the Biosphere. This greatly enhances the public awareness of the area and the aims of the Biosphere. There are one or two good examples of tourism branding within the Dyfi Biosphere, notable the Dyfi Distillery.

The existing initiative to offer businesses the opportunity to sign a charter in support of the Biosphere could also be revamped. There is scope to have a corporate membership scheme which would connect the suppliers of goods and services with direct links to the Friends of the Biosphere members, and perhaps in a way that they have a platform to offer discounts or other incentives. This approach might increase the appeal for both individual Friends, as consumers, and local businesses, as suppliers. The use of digital platforms can enhance the scope and flexibility for such loyalty and special offer schemes.

To take this forward what is required is a simple toolkit that businesses can use to promote their products and their connection to the uniqueness of the Dyfi and its UNESCO designation. If 50 businesses promoted the Biosphere in this way, then the overall impact in terms of raising awareness would be enormous

## **Ambassadors**

Who speaks for the Biosphere? In the case of trying to secure PR for key events this would probably be ecodyfi or the chair of the Partnership. But in an ever-crowded and noisy world of communications and public information it is becoming increasingly difficult to convey messages and to get media interest. The press, more often than not, prioritise bad news stories, and the task of getting newspaper or TV coverage for a positive story is often challenging.

Some charities have been able to overcome this by signing up a high-profile celebrity to act as their ambassador. For example, once Keep Wales Tidy secured the help of Michael Sheen as their ambassador, getting PR coverage became a lot easier!

Thought needs to be given therefore to identify a high-profile celebrity who is known internationally, and not just within Wales, and who has an affinity for the area. This is not always easy, but if a suitable person can be found then knowledge of and interest in the Biosphere will go into a new level.

## **Political interest**

Awareness of the Biosphere amongst the National Assembly and Welsh Government is low; it has fallen below the radar and this is a stumbling block in terms of securing future support and interest. Inviting local assembly members to local events and to project activities would gain momentum and political support which could be complemented by a high-profile event in the Senedd building in Cardiff. Sponsorship by an Assembly Member or other high-profile ambassador would create an impact and significantly raise the profile of the Biosphere amongst politicians and senior civil servants. Particular emphasis could be placed on the important role that the Biosphere could and should provide in terms of showcasing Wales to international audiences. The success of the event would depend on effective organisation and imaginative approaches to attract the audience.

The Biosphere would also benefit from more interest and involvement from the Future Generations Commissioner. The Commissioner provided a foreword for the State of the Biosphere Report as part of the Periodic Review.

## **Road and other gateway signs**

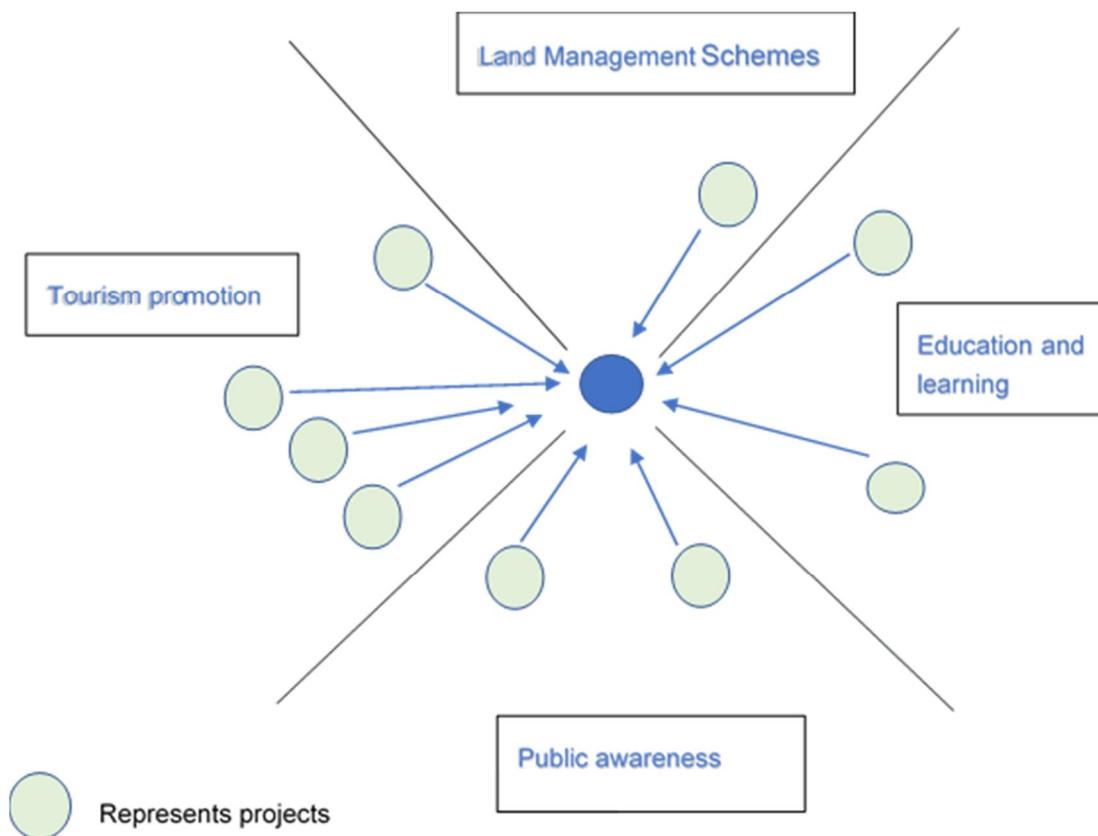
The Biosphere Partnership has explored the possibility of placing road signs at the entry points to the designation. This hasn't been progressed to date, and no doubt this is due to the lack of core funding and the procedural steps needed to progress the idea. Nevertheless, with a core team in place some initial steps could be taken to get this idea off the ground. It will take a while to be developed and funded, but there is considerable merit in the proposal and an early start would pay dividends in the long run. In particular, it will raise awareness of the Dyfi as a unique tourist destination and this in turn will help galvanise efforts in getting buy-in from local businesses.

Discussions are also needed with Network Rail and Transport for Wales regarding the potential for signage at railway and bus stations.

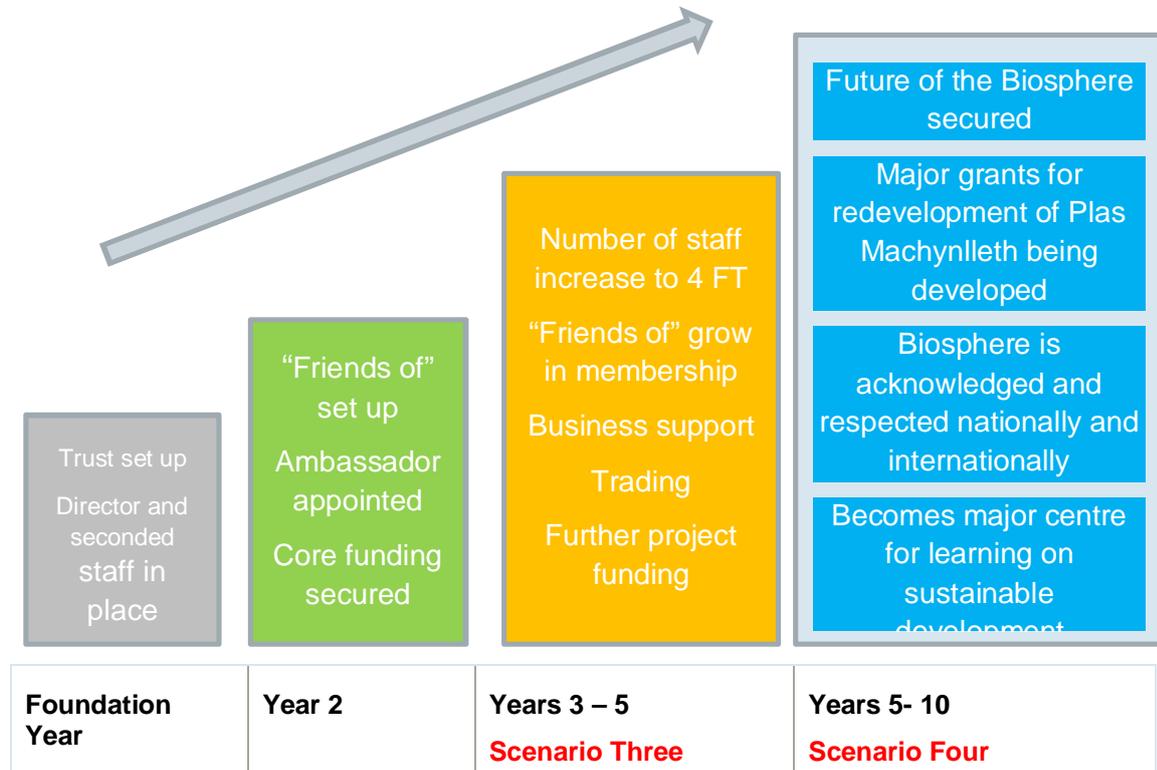
## 5.6 EXTERNAL FUNDING APPROACH

The proposals set out in this report aim to develop a far stronger central core to coordinate action and to increase both the number of projects directly delivered by the new Biosphere team, as well as highlight that land-based projects delivered by the wider Partnerships are also contributing to and under the umbrella of the UNESCO designation.

The existing structure of the Biosphere could be depicted as follows:



The approach to grow the influence of the Biosphere therefore needs to be viewed in stages, or incremental steps, as depicted in the following diagram.



During the Foundation Year enough momentum should be generated to sustain effort in Year Two, which would involve:

- Establishing a ‘Friends of the Dyfi Biosphere’, with an initial target of 2,000 members generating an annual budget of £20,000. To achieve this target, the scheme would need to be actively promoted by all Partnership members.
- Securing other core costs from a combination of public sector grants and support from Trusts and Foundations (see Appendix B).
- Additional project funding which would pay for the some of the time of the Director.

In Year Two, the emphasis would be on developing more substantial grant applications. The most likely source here would be the People and Places Programme funded by The National Community Lottery Fund (TNCLF, previously the Big Lottery Fund), but there are other options, and these are set out in Appendix B.

Three-year funding, secured in Year Two, would cover the period for Years 3, 4 and 5. This would inevitably be focussed on project delivery, since any grant secured for this period would need to include tangible outcomes. However, as other aspects of the Biosphere’s work are expanded and its

supporters are extended, there is considerable scope for undertaking more development work on specific project delivery during this three-year period.

By Year 5, Scenario Three, as set out in section 4.5, will have been achieved in full. The Biosphere will have a core staff of around four full-time employs and its reputation will have been enhanced considerably, particularly within Wales.

From this platform there is an opportunity to grow the Biosphere's work to a totally new level and see it become a major employer in Machynlleth, establishing its reputation as one of the most innovative on a global scale.

There is no doubt that the setting and character of Plas Machynlleth is outstanding, and that its current use and management does not do justice to its potential. There is scope to use the Biosphere designation to provide the stimulus for a major redevelopment programme which would include a total refurbishment of Plas Machynlleth and the renovation of the adjoining coach houses to provide high-end bunk house accommodation which would complement the existing provision in the town.

Machynlleth would therefore be the centre from which visitors and students accessed the Biosphere. The Plas would link with and promote the other attractions within the Biosphere, including: CAT, Ynys-hir, Ynyslas, the Dyfi Wildlife centre, as well as private sector attractions and products. The University in Aberystwyth would be a key player and the whole of the Biosphere would have an international reputation for environmental science and rural development.

After 10 years there would be no doubt that the Biosphere had reached Scenario Four and fulfilled its Vision in full. Including the core team and those now managing the Plas the Biosphere Trustees would be employing between 30 and 50 full-time and part-time staff. The Biosphere team would be running a wide variety of courses and attracting visitors and students from across the globe.

The Biosphere would be on a very sound financial footing and planning for its second UNESCO decadal review in 2029 with great confidence.

# Appendix A

NOTES FROM THE WORKSHOP



## In Attendance

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation/Interest</b>
1	Paul Allen	Centre for Alternative Technology
2	Meleri Richards	Rural Communities Coordinator Ceredigion
3	John Cantor	ecodyfi
4	Chris Higgins	COBWEB project
5	Jane Powell	Partnership member
6	Ann MacGarry	Machynlleth Town Council
7	Richard Wells	Partnership member
8	Shelagh Hourahane	Café Cletwr and local resident
9	Allan Wynne Jones	Former Partnership Chair
10	Iolo ap Gwynn	Partnership member
11	Desmond George	Need Dyfi
12	Andy Rowland	ecodyfi and Partnership secretariat
13	Mike Winstanley	Montgomery Wildlife Trust
14	Owain Wynn	SNPA
15	Ray Quant	Ceredigion Councillor and Partnership Chair
16	Romi Shuvleton	Partnership Tourism group
17	Chris Worker	WG
18	Diana Reynolds (Last item only)	WG

## Apologies

Name	Organisation/Interest
Rob Bullen	CAT
Gwawr Price	Visit Wales
Patrick Green	NRW
Christian Servini	FG Commissioner's Office
Charlie Falzon	Café Cletwr
Pete Frost	NRW
Mike Bailey	NRW
Bev Dinnock	RSPB
Amanda Smith	CAT
Jane Rigby	Freelance educator
Judith Alfrey / Ian Halfpenny	Cadw
Fiona Evans	Resident
Sue Wolfe	Wales Wildlife Breaks
Naomi Davis	Resident and Partnership member
Linda Ashton	NRW
Alun Williams	Ceredigion CC councillor

## Session One: Risks and Challenges to the geographical area of the Dyfi Biosphere

### Economic

Main risks and challenges	Mitigating Action
Low Income (historically) and tourism benefits not realised e.g. visitors tend to stay on sites and not contribute to local economy	Need to add value and encourage longer stays so that the area benefits, thus creating more economic benefits for local businesses and better incomes
Raw materials leave area e.g. livestock, timber and wool	Need to add value to the area, maybe through branding these products as being from the Biosphere
Climate change is a risk to agriculture e.g. loss of feed in 2018	Use land differently. The Biosphere could be a living lab to test out new approaches
Lack of investment in all-weather, cutting-edge attractions	Mid Wales growth deal to support innovation in the area, particularly for tourism and agriculture
Lack of joining up attractions	Examples include the Discovery trail which can link attractions and promote the area as a whole
Buy-up of land by corporations not based here	Examples from Slovakia, for instance, where the authorities have bought land for future development, safeguarding it for future generations
Lack of awareness of the Dyfi Biosphere	Better branding and badging of activities and attractions

### Social

Main risks and challenges	Mitigating Action
Sectoral approach to looking at economic/social and environmental issues	The Biosphere can promote better integration of the three spheres
The gap between communities is increasing	The Biosphere can link smaller communities linking up geographical and interest groups. This approach could be demonstrated to the Welsh Government and help shape policies within the Mid Wales Growth Deal
Outward migration of young people and talent and incoming older and retired population	Creating jobs for young people and helping people to return to the area
An ageing population	(none identified)
Brexit and potential impact on farming, leading to a decrease in the Welsh language	(none identified)

## Environmental

Main risks and challenges	Mitigating Action
Climate Change	The Biosphere is a small area but we could promote the importance of taking small actions and show cumulative effects
Rise in sea levels and coastal erosion	Withdrawal may be only option in some place. Need to think carefully about siting new development. Coastal management plan needs to tie in with other actions
Run-off into rivers	Improve land management and farm practices
CO2 emissions	Carbon capture, tree planting and provision of electric charging points
Loss of biodiversity	Increased monitoring to understand threats and trends and greater protection for habitats and species
Increase in plastics and debris	Better recycling

## Session two: Risks and Challenges to the Dyfi Partnership

Main risks and challenges	Mitigating Action
<b>Table One</b>	
<b>Lack of coordination capacity</b>	
<b>Lack of support and participation from public bodies, WG reluctance to either take on liability or support without controlling</b>	Write to new First Minister with the results of the Periodic Review Use WFGA as a focus and highlight that joint delivery will benefit partners
<b>Everybody will lose faith – why bother?</b>	Need to achieve impact
<b>UNESCO National Commission fears devolution</b>	Keep up the pressure / gentle persuasion
<b>Not enough momentum/progress</b>	(none identified)
<b>Farmers not taking it seriously</b>	(none identified)
<b>Designation not given recognition and respect at a national level</b>	(none identified)
<b>Finance</b>	(none identified)
<b>Table Two</b>	
<b>Lack of awareness and clarity on the role of the Biosphere</b>	Promote wider Biosphere movement Differentiate from National Park Increased promotion – definition of the area e.g. road signs Consistent messages - encourage inclusion Prominent information – strong brand
<b>Funding</b>	New income streams (tourism and ecosystem services) Public funding
<b>Environmental deterioration</b>	Sustainable landscape management Improved community involvement
<b>Lack of power/profile</b>	Increased staff numbers
<b>Lack of representation in group</b>	Increasing number of farmers/landowners Inclusive representation
<b>WFGA</b>	Encouraging sustainable thematic development – need to raise profile of Biosphere as a place to showcase best practice
<b>Table Three</b>	
<b>Lack of core resources for development officers etc</b>	Provision of core funding via agency or WG with an emphasis of being a live lab for sustainable development
<b>Biosphere becomes irrelevant and forgotten – falling behind the curve of innovation</b>	Core staff develop vision to get buy-in.



	Biosphere declares “climate and biodiversity emergency” and develops action plan for key players
<b>Lack of accessible transport for Discovery Trail</b>	Transport for Wales becomes a Biosphere Partner, better integration between buses and opportunities for cycling and bike hire
<b>Resources and engagement reduces further</b>	Partners develop and share a bold, ambitious, positive vision for the area
<b>Lack of funds to develop the project and support team</b>	Call for support for ecodyfi e.g. from WG or other funder



### Session Three: Postcards from the future

Dear Fred, remember the Biosphere project – well maybe you don't, but trust me what a difference it has made to the area. From the farming communities, schools to the local pubs, restaurants, golf and yacht clubs – all have embraced the designation which has helped strengthen their local economy, enhancing the social fabric and protecting the local environment. Do come and visit soon!

Since you left, the Biosphere area has had a wonderful new lease of life – the WG have recognised that the Biosphere designation can offer so much to the health, skills and prosperity of the area by managing the land more sustainably and improving transport links for local communities to get out and about – no more smelly diesels, we have electric buses and cars on the road – the air is cleaner and the area less noisy. Best of all the area is full of wildlife - since the farmers have been paid to protect land for wildlife, we are seeing far more bees and butterflies, many more wild flowers and several new woodlands have been created. We even have beavers on the river now and some of those parts of the river that used to flood are fine now. There's more salmon and even more of our fabulous ospreys are breeding. We are seeing less sheep grazing and more of the old breeds of cattle – so we have a wonderful range of quality organic meats. This is helping the environment – a win/win! Groups from the communities are using their local greenspaces more and more and GPs are prescribing visits to the wildlife Trust's nature reserves to help their health and wellbeing. Good back home, it's all good!

Dear son, it's 7 years since you left the Dyfi area and how things have changed! The Dyfi Biosphere changed its business model and set up a range of social enterprises, all generating profits going back to the area to help create a vision of a truly sustainable society. What's interesting is the range of social enterprises: ecotourism and food systems, but also IT and data related. The area is much more of a model of the world we want, a thriving local food economy, diverse small-scale agriculture and jobs for young people.

Annwyl Aled, I've come to stay in the Ynys Hir hotel for a long weekend. I had a good night's rest since every car is quiet and runs on electricity. The organic breakfast was delicious and all from local produce. I'm going on a trip later to see a new centre for young people. I'm pleased to see that all the local children speak Welsh and that a number of cooperative businesses have been established selling local produce. I'm going on the bike tomorrow to see an example of a hill farm which is rearing lamb and looking after the local environment.

Dear Dafydd, you left here 7 years ago to study economics and then found work in a number of businesses around the world. Well – now is the time for you to come home! Because of the series of economic growth plans that the WG has introduced our part of Wales now has the potential for setting up new small and medium businesses. Also, because the WG has stuck to its principles in terms of environmental safeguards all businesses have to operate in a sustainable fashion. These developments have made an impact on how the Dyfi Biosphere is regarded. Because we already had a vision in place of an integrated area of social, environmental and cultural practice, we have

benefit able to take advantage of funding and policies. We are now recognised as somewhere to look for in Wales as an example of good practice. We have also managed to encourage the establishment of more social enterprises so that communities are empowered and included. Health services are better too!

Dear Tomos, in the past 7 years there have been amazing changes in the Dyfi Biosphere area. Nearly all vehicles here are now electric and are charged from local renewable generators. This saves not only CO2 emissions but also money as we pay considerably less for our generated energy through Local Energy Co-ops, also because the generators get more money, more schemes become viable and many more have been built. These Local Energy Co-ops have also had a huge consciousness raising effect making people proud of the area and generating a new and vital confidence and economy which did not exist before.

Things have changed greatly. The Biosphere is planting apple trees everywhere and other fruit trees, and you can buy local bread, vegetables and other products. Farmers are growing food for local schools, hospitals and hotels, and there are less sheep and cattle than there used to be. The new transport system is working well and there are far less cars on the road. Besides, there are so many things happening in the countryside and locally there less need to travel, which is good because of the high costs as a result of 'personal carbon accounts.' Young people in the area are creating new jobs and supporting local communities and boosting culture and the arts. It's very exciting and things are so different from how they used to be.

I've just come back from the opening of the Dyfi Biosphere Centre where there was an exhibition and events for local people and visitors to convey the attractions of the area. This is the Biosphere's new office. They are doing exceptional work in renovating the farm outbuildings which overlook the Dyfi Valley. It was a pleasure to take a trip on the local electric bus service which is charged from the micro hydro generator on the farm.

Annwyl Iago, here's an opportunity to get an interesting job in the area your dad lived in.... Andy Rowlands is looking for support in developing the Biosphere, using an EU grant with WG support. The Biosphere is running projects to influence:

- school children and encouraging behaviour change to support the environment
- young farmers to develop new sustainable land management practices
- young parents to make more use of the natural environment and to take more exercise outdoors
- older and middle-aged people to take an interest in UNESCO's activities which promote peace.

There's certainty regarding the post, with commitment from local authorities and the WG, at last. Good luck with the application.

In 2019 every town and community council in the Biosphere area declared a Climate Emergency and the Biosphere acted as a facilitator to bring them together so that they could coordinate their

activities. These activities got a variety of people, who wouldn't usually meet, together to discover what we could and would do. People were helped to make their homes more energy efficient, car club and lift sharing schemes were set up, many householders joined the Ynni Lleol scheme which encouraged more farmers to set up medium size renewable energy to supply it, more people saw the value to the community of buying local produce and using local services including public transport. There has been a boom in weekend festivals drawing people to the area by public transport.

People from different backgrounds and sectors are cooperating, sharing resources and adding value to local produce and the economy. A social enterprise is the backbone of the Biosphere and is a 'one stop shop' for developers and the development of local plans. The ethos of the Biosphere is recognised widely through the area including businesses, schools and social groups. There is continuity regarding funding and local businesses are networking and sharing skills and resources.

Dear Peter, there seems to be a new enthusiasm for working out what it means to be Welsh and to live in the Dyfi Biosphere – not just amongst the 'usual suspects' and not just Welsh speakers, but more broadly. The led walks on landscape integration, the built environment and so on, are attracting all sorts of people – visitors as well as locals, families and retired – and the ones for Welsh speakers and learners are as popular as any. It's great to see farmers involved in the ones that cross their land. Some take real pride in having led the way in managing the land for multiple benefits. Not many have taken the radical step of de-stocking, but most have low impact methods that provide a mix of food produce, rich biodiversity and good public access. Oh – and the First Minister hosted a brilliant event for the Biosphere in the Senedd.

Dear Liz, there's lots of small businesses using local materials and adding value to things in the Biosphere. Lots of visitors buying these produce here and then buying extra on-line. Visitors are spending money on high quality, high value natural food and cultural experiences that are unique to the Biosphere. Lots of people are returning for more and telling others how wonderful it all is.

Dear Fred, thought I'd take the time to update you on the progress we have made in the Biosphere. We now have a permanent office staffed by two persons, plus Andy who continues to drive the organisation forward. This has allowed us to seek and develop many quality projects in terms of many aspects of the Biosphere such as environment, tourism, conservation, through to transport and the provision of broadband to all areas within the Biosphere. The real game changer was when the Welsh Government fully realise the importance of having a UNESCO designation and an environmental gem within Wales.

Hi Kate, you really must come back and see the Dyfi Biosphere! The area is thriving – community supported agriculture is now 90% of the farmland, supporting family farms. 80% of all I eat is local, similarly all my energy is via Dyfi Power. Biodiversity has risen back to 1940s levels following the restorative agriculture program and loads of young folks and in the queue to move here – comedy,



arts, music, walk, zero carbon, spoken word festivals take place most weekends and in most places and the economy is doing very well, once the trains became free to use. Do come visit! PS There is now free bike hire at weekends too!

It's extraordinary what has happened in the Dyfi Biosphere during the past 7 years! Nearly everyone who comes here already knows about some of the impact that the Biosphere is making. The vision we developed has really caught people's imagination – locally, nationally and overseas. We proved that with willingness and the real commitment of local people and national government funding, powerful practical action can be taken. We have proved that our beautiful landscapes can be used differently and productively when agriculture is not the only industry. Our young people are choosing to stay in the area instead of going away to University etc. Our annual Biosphere celebration draws people from around the world to learn from our example. The visitors who used to stay in their caravans now join in life of the Biosphere.

How is life in London? The new cycle routes are great now. They managed to get farmers to 'rent' the narrow strip of land next to hedges. Many people have bought electric bikes and this makes commuting to work more manageable. No doubt the health service benefits too! We are hoping that the trains will soon have a large dedicated bike compartment. Come and visit and bring your bike!

## Session Four: Discussion and Other Points

### Missing Voices

One group highlighted that there were several sectors who were not represented and did not engage with the Biosphere, these include: farmers, young people, key agencies, sectors of Welsh Government, University/academia, businesses and Network Rail/Transport for Wales.

### Vision

The following points were made:

- There needs to be an emphasis on increasing awareness of the Biosphere both within Wales and beyond
- A large project or event would draw attention, in other words a 'big bang' to get interest
- **New cycle routes are needed**
- **A target of 80% of food grown locally could be set**
- **A priority should be action to allow young people to remain in the area**
- **A new centre for the Biosphere, with interpretation and work place units is needed**
- **The overall message should be that the future is better**
- **Local energy generation should be prioritised**
- **The Biosphere offers an opportunity to look at cross sectoral portfolio links and to promote integration**
- **Wildlife and biodiversity are important**
- **The Biosphere can present an achievable picture of the future**
- **There is a need to maintain current diversity of people as well as biodiversity.**
- **The Dyfi is quite a small Biosphere but it can still dream big ideas.**

### Scenarios

The following points were made:

- The ideal would be to go for Scenario Three but with the view to move to Scenario Four. This will require the setting of outputs and outcomes to attract grant funding
- To make anything happen there is a need for better integration between organisations
- Cors Fochno already attracts scientific interest but the Biosphere needs to build on this. This would put biodiversity as an example at the heart of the Biosphere
- There is a need to improve promotion amongst the partners i.e. they do not associate many of their projects with the Biosphere
- Austerity has had a major impact on the commitment to the Biosphere, but collaborative action should be more cost effective and partners need to realise this. This would counteract the current financial pressures and allow partners to deliver their core functions through collaboration. There is a need to put aside individual roles that each organisation fulfils and put an emphasis on a 'can do' attitude
- The Biosphere is now at a cross roads, it can either improve or get worse and disappear
- There is huge interest in the area relating to declaring a climate emergency, but where is the money going to come from to stimulate action?
- The Biosphere seems intangible and an interpretation centre could make it more real, showing the past, present and future. A new centre could also be a focus to promote the others in the area

e.g. CAT, Ynyslas, Ynys-hir, Osprey centre etc. This would be a concrete expression of the Biosphere

- There is also a need to improve information about the Biosphere in smaller places e.g. Café Cletwr
- The Biosphere needs to be less reliant on one organisation and one person
- There isn't even a separate phone number for the Biosphere
- Partners have received money to do work in the Biosphere but none of this goes towards coordination
- There is a need to change the model if the Biosphere is to go forward
- All key elements of the Biosphere are devolved to Wales and therefore this should increase the buy-in from the WG
- There is a need for community ownership, the options could be a legal entity owned by farmers and other local interests. There is also a need to tap into funding from a variety of sources and not to be totally dependent on public sector funding
- There is a need to make the Biosphere a brand that people and organisations want to get behind
- The area could make a huge contribution to UNESCO and its goals, particularly in the context of promoting world peace.

# Appendix B

EXTERNAL FUNDING SOURCES



## Introduction

In this appendix we have provided some additional information on different sources of external funding. We have selected grants from either the Lottery or Trusts and Foundations which would be most applicable to establishing and growing the Dyfi Biosphere as a separate organisation.

## Lottery funding

There are several relevant opportunities here:

### The National Lottery Community Development Fund (TNLCDF)

#### People and Places

Grants are available in three categories:

- Small under £10,000 grants
- Medium £10,000 - £100,000
- Large £100,000 - £500,000

The large grants category would be appropriate for the Dyfi Biosphere. Funds would be available for a project which encourages people and communities to work together and use their strengths to make positive impacts on the things that matter to them the most.

#### Rural Programme

The Rural Programme would be another option for the Dyfi Biosphere. There are two strands to this programme:

##### Rural Futures Programme

This programme is delivered by Severn Wye Energy Agency and BRO and provides support for 20 rural communities to enable them to develop schemes which will alleviate some aspects of rural poverty e.g. isolation, lack of access to services, low incomes, lack of affordable housing etc.

The e-survey undertaken as part of the Periodic Review showed that some of these rural issues are prevalent in the Dyfi Biosphere, impacting severely on certain groups notably the elderly. At the same time there is a feeling that the Biosphere designation is not relevant or useful in terms of addressing these growing social and economic issues.

In the initial tranche of 10 communities, for North Powys the selected community for the 2019 – 2021 period is the **Glantwymyn Ward**. Community-led initiatives in this ward, which are targeted at rural poverty issues, will benefit from a ring-fenced budget from the NLCDF, which could be of the order of £100,000. The Biosphere Partnership could get involved in some of these early discussions, which will take place during 2019.

It is also worth noting that a second ward in the counties of Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Powys will be selected for support for the 2021 – 2023 period and again this could be an opportunity for communities with the Dyfi Biosphere.

##### Main Rural Poverty Programme

The second element of the overall Rural Programme offers grants for projects that will make a positive impact on the lives of people and communities living in poverty in rural Wales. The programme will fund partnerships that understand the connection between the causes and effects of poverty and propose solutions and services which use a joined-up approach to tackle the problem at

its core. Projects will need to focus on helping people who struggle to meet their basic needs or access services, who don't have reasonable living conditions or might be isolated from others.

Successful applicants will have developed their idea by consulting current research and will have considered how their project will integrate with existing activities and services in the area. The NLCDF are aware that there are likely to be multiple solutions, so they're looking for proposals that will test new approaches or combine a range of ideas to achieve the greatest impact.

Projects should be delivered by partnerships who have a collective desire to work together, find the best way to help people and create a lasting difference that goes beyond the funding period.

Projects will empower people to take a lead in tackling rural poverty by being:

- **People led** – meaningfully involving the people and communities that will benefit from your project in its design and delivery
- **Strengths-based** – making the most of, and building on, the skills and experiences of the people you're working with
- **Connected** – developing good working relationships, understanding what other relevant organisations are doing in the local area and how your project will complement or add value to existing activities and services.

The NLCDF have a budget of £4m to allocate to the remainder of this fund and are looking for approximately 8 strategic projects requesting a budget of under £500,000 each.

The main grants programme is therefore another option for the Biosphere Partnership to consider. The second round is currently open, with a closing date of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019, so there is still time to develop a strong application.

#### [National Lottery Heritage Trust \(NLHT\)](#)

There are also opportunities under the grants offered by the NLHT who can offer grants of up to £5 million across all aspects of heritage, including landscape and nature conservation.

For landscape scale initiatives the NLHT can support projects which:

- Improve, expand and connect threatened habitats
- Survey and record endangered species and habitats
- Teach people about local geology, landscape histories and nature conservation
- help people to understand and engage with the conservation of rivers, the coast and our seas
- Regenerate and improve the sustainability of a public park or cemetery
- Learn new skills to sustainably manage the cultural and natural heritage of landscapes.

An example of a landscape scale project funded by the NLHT would be the £1.69 million recently allocated to Neath Por Talbot County Borough Council for the “Lost Peatlands of South Wales” project. This included a Development grant of £205,600 (68% of eligible costs) The project aims to: “Increase the extent and condition of habitats in the Pen y Cymoedd Upland Plateau to support the species that live there. Over 540 hectares of habitats including peat bog, heathland, grassland and native woodland would be restored by reinstating hydrological regimes, removing non-native forestry cover and the introduction of appropriate grazing. Natural retention measures would be installed to reduce the flow of water and reduce the risk of flooding within the valley communities. An associated activity programme for local schools and a training programme for professionals, students and volunteers would be delivered”.

### Trusts and Foundations

There are a large number of Trusts and Foundations providing a variety of different types of funding, including:

- **Start-up funding** – to get a project off the ground
- **Revenue** – to cover running costs, including salaries
- **Capital** – to pay for building costs or equipment
- **Project funding** – to pay for a mixture of items within a project budget, sometimes including a contribution towards overheads and management time
- **Core or long-term funding** – there are a few trusts who provide this kind of partnership funding over a number of years
- **Small grants** – trusts of all sizes often have a small grants programme which involves less paperwork and a faster response time. This is often a good way of getting to know a trust and establishing a working relationship with them.

Generally, Trusts and Foundations like to fund projects with the following characteristics:

- Deploy new methods of tackling problems
- Support disadvantaged and minority groups which have trouble using ordinary services, or which are inadequately served by them
- Include responses to new or newly discovered needs and problems
- Incorporate work which is hard to finance through conventional fundraising
- Include one-off purchases or projects
- Short and medium-term work likely to bring a long-term benefit or to attract long term funding from elsewhere.

The larger Trusts distribute several million pounds each year, but the clear majority are smaller and more likely to give out a few thousand. Some may give funds to any charitable purpose, whilst others are restricted to specific subjects such as education or the arts, or certain beneficiary groups such as children or the elderly).

Most Trusts derive their income from an endowment given by a wealthy individual, family or company. The following is a list of 8 of the more suitable Trusts and Foundations which could be helpful in terms of establishing and developing the Dyfi Biosphere as a viable and separate entity.



## Ashden Trust

The Trust operates several grants which are relevant to the Dyfi Biosphere and could provide funding to help establish the organisation as a separate entity. The funding available is as follows:

### **Sustainable Development UK**

The Trust supports work that can reduce the speed and impact of climate change, including projects that tackle energy efficiency and renewable energy technology. They also support work on aviation and transport policy, and sustainable agriculture. In climate change and sustainable energy, they aim to take a broad approach supporting research, practical action, awareness-raising, education and organisations that aim to influence policy in the field.

### **Sustainable Regeneration**

Funding in this category aims to bring together the themes of social exclusion and environmentally sustainable development in ways which can help local communities make the most of their resources and develop new skills and competencies. In many cases, projects reflect the themes of the Trust's environmental work, such as the promotion of cycling or sustainable agriculture, and its work with people at risk, including support for employment and enterprise. They are keen to support projects which link people to the natural environment in a variety of ways.

### **Arts and Sustainability**

The Trust recognises the critical importance of the arts and cultural sector to explore sustainability issues and communicate these with wider society. They will award up to 10 grants per year to small, effective organisations that are influential/leaders in this field.

### **Low Carbon Fund**

The Trust recognises the importance of bringing about significant action on climate change, within the next five years, to prevent a rise in global temperatures above two degrees Celsius. Given this sense of urgency, they have made additional funding available from capital for projects and social business activities in several areas.

<http://www.ashdentrust.org.uk/>

## Dulverton Trust

The Trust awards both single year and multi-year grants.

Single year grants are typically between £25,000 and £35,000.

Multi-year grants are usually for a period of 2-3 years and are only awarded to charities which have previously received a Dulverton grant.

The Trust considers applications to:

Project costs

Core funding (usually for charities which have previously received a Dulverton grant)

Capital costs (usually under our preservation category)

Scholarships and bursaries (usually under our preservation category)

<https://www.dulverton.org/>



### Ernest Cook Trust

Following a review of their work the Trustees of The Ernest Cook Trust have decided that the focus of their grant giving should be aligned to direct provision of education and to their overall mission of Learning from the Land. Their vision is for the nation, to better understand the environment and our place in it. Over the next few months they will be designing new grant streams that broaden opportunities within this focus.

<http://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/>

### Esmee Fairbairn Foundation

Grants cover arts, young people social change etc. The most relevant category for the Dyfi is environment and here there are various strands.

Since other organisations e.g. Rewilding Britain have received substantial funding for practical conservation projects, the Biosphere Partnership would be better off looking at project ideas which promote engagement and awareness raising activities. For such projects the criteria are:

Initiatives which inspire people to get involved in nature or environmental issues and act to make a difference, or

Make environmental issues relevant to people's everyday lives and what they care about, or

Enable groups that may be disconnected from nature, for example in urban areas, to become more engaged.

<https://esmeefairbairn.org.uk/>

### Garfield Weston

Garfield Weston is a large distributor for funds covering a wide range of topics including: the arts, environment, community, education, faith, health, welfare, museum and heritage and youth projects. Grants vary and can depend a lot on match funding from other sources.

One example is a recent donation of £500,000 to the Alde and Ore Estuary Partnership.

<http://aoep.co.uk/index.php/the-partnership/>

### Greggs Foundation

Greggs offer small scale community grants of under £2,000 and environment grants, with money coming from the Single Use Carrier Bag Levy. These have been largely small- scale community projects. In 2019 they plan to use the funds to deliver larger nationwide projects with some of our key partners which we believe will make a greater impact on both the environment and the communities in which we operate.

<https://www.greggsfoundation.org.uk/grants>

### John Ellerman Foundation

The Foundation has the following aim:

'To advance the wellbeing of people, society and the natural world by focusing on the arts, environment and social action. We believe these areas, both separately and together, can make an important contribution to wellbeing'.



An example of an environmental grant would be the £150,000 or so allocated to Fauna and Flora International for a three-year programme towards the core costs of the Coastal Communities Network in Scotland. The grant enabled community groups to actively collaborate, share experiences and create a united voice on sustainable marine issues.

<https://ellerman.org.uk/what-weve-funded>

#### [Prince's Countryside Fund](#)

The Prince's Countryside Fund has grants of up to £50,000 available for projects that will provide a long-term positive impact to the individuals and communities they seek to benefit. They provide funding towards projects affecting areas of greatest need in rural areas and to sustain rural communities, improve the prospects of viability for farm and rural businesses, and support aid delivery in an emergency and build resilience.

# Appendix C

REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT  
APPROACHES



To determine how to take the management of the Dyfi Biosphere forward, it is important to look at how other Biospheres operate to see what does and doesn't work, both in terms of impact and the need to meet the UNESCO requirements to have a governance and management system in place that the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves considers adequate for the task.

In looking at management systems, it is also worth looking wider than just other Biospheres. The management of designations such as AONBs, Long Distance Footpaths, or community driven projects may also provide ideas for the future of the Dyfi Biosphere.

### Management of Other Biospheres

North Devon Biosphere Partnership undertook a similar management and governance review in 2014 as they were going through their decadal review. As part of this process they reviewed management of Biospheres around the globe to what they could learn from their management.

As part of this review, they found that the management of other Biospheres generally tend to fall into one of four categories:

- **Publicly funded, hosted by a national agency**, such as Lower Morava in the Czech Republic (<http://www.dolnimorava.org/index.php?lang=en>) which is funded by the state conservation bodies and Cévennes in France (<https://www.mab-france.org/en/biosphere-reserve/cevennes/>), which is hosted and managed by the contiguous National Park Authority.
- **Publicly funded, hosted by a Local Authority**, such as Luberon in France (<https://www.mab-france.org/en/biosphere-reserve/luberon-lure/>), Megiddo (formerly Ramat Menashe) in Israel (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/biosphere-reserves/europe-north-america/israel/meggido/>) and Rhön in Germany (<https://biosphaerenreservat-rhoen.de>).
- **Publicly funded, hosted by an arm's length body**, such as Lake Vänern Archipelago in Sweden (<http://biosfaromrade.org>) run by a coordinating body of 5 people, with 50% public funding and a requirement to earn the 50% from other sources, and Wienerwald in Austria (<https://www.bpww.at/en>), where a 9 strong coordinating team are employed by a specifically created company.
- **Blended funding / social enterprise**, such as Manicouagan Uapishka, in Quebec, Canada (<http://rmbmu.com/eng?lang=en>), run by an NGO set up specifically for the Reserve, with some limited state funding and private funding from Alcan, a large local employer; Entelbuch in Switzerland (<https://www.biosphaere.ch/de/>) which has been very successful in promoting tourism as well as product marketing and development.

Interestingly, as part of their research they also looked at Dyfi Biosphere as an example of a publicly funded reserve hosted by an arm's length body. In their report they stated:

*As a UK reserve, this site moves on with largely community-based effort through the ecodyfi charity as the main coordinating body. The local authorities and national agencies donate time to support coordination. Currently the director of ecodyfi is funded as the part time coordinator with a range of projects being funded from different public sources. The projects to date have been quite small and the area suffers from being on the periphery of 2 LEADER regions making it hard to get good area wide projects.*

In conclusion to their research North Devon found that:

- Continued public funding for the coordination is critical to success
- The Reserves that have the greatest impact have a team that both coordinates and delivers projects. Effective teams are at least 3 in number.
- There is a clear relationship between investment in the coordinating body and the impact the Reserve has.
- Of the successful Reserves there appeared to be no necessary link between those embedded in a public body or those managed by an arm's length body.

#### Case study – Entelbuch, Switzerland

The Entelbuch Biosphere in Switzerland falls into the category of blended funding/social enterprise, and is the driving force behind the development of the region. In line with Swiss laws, extensive and specific consultation was required with each canton, or parish, within its boundaries to inform its development and actions. As a result, there has been very high awareness of the Biosphere since it was established.

This awareness has been reflected in the number of businesses that have bought into the vision of the Biosphere. This has allowed the Biosphere team to focus on tourism and the development and marketing of regional produce under the Biosphere banner. Consequently, the Biosphere has become the main destination management body for the area, advertising a full programme of events and tourism information regarding things to do and regional produce in several languages. This success has led to most of the funding for the Biosphere arising from income raised from their marketing and tourism activities.

<https://www.biosphaere.ch/de/>

#### Examples of management structures from outside the Biosphere 'family'

##### **South West Coast Path**

Whilst the physical management of the SW Coast Path is planned and delivered by a team supported by the local authorities through which it passes, the South West Coast Path Association undertake additional fundraising and sit as a member of the South West Coast Path management group.

Initially set up in the early '70s the charity started out campaigning for the completion of the path. Over the years, they have grown from a small lobbying group into an important part of the management of the path. Members are involved in surveying the path and reporting problems, volunteering to help with physically works, and most importantly in raising funding to supplement the cost of maintaining its 630 miles, estimated to be £1000 per mile.

The Association's fundraising includes a successful grant application in 2014 to the Government's Coastal Communities Fund for £1m, submitted in partnership with the Coast Path team. Part of this grant was for footpath improvements with the remainder going towards the development of the Association. As a charity the group can run funding campaigns such as their recent £40,000 for 40 years which raised over £47,000. They also run a membership scheme and have corporate sponsorship from a number of firms such as Cotswold Outdoors and South West Water. As a charity they can access sources of funding not readily available to public bodies.



Because of their success, in 2015 they changed from an unincorporated charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

<https://www.southwestcoastpath.org.uk>

### **Green Valleys**

In 2008, the UK government sponsored National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA), launched The Big Green Challenge. This offered a £1 million prize fund for communities across the UK to develop a plan to reduce carbon emissions. The Green Valleys CIC was created by members of the community in and around the Brecon Beacons National Park coming together to share their concerns for the future of their communities facing spiralling energy costs and the impacts of climate change. From this, they developed a bid for the Big Green Challenge and in 2010 they were confirmed as one of three joint winners and were awarded £300 000 to take their ideas forward.

Their plans were based on the belief that carbon reduction was an opportunity for economic renewal within the community, not an expense and that they could sustainably harness the natural resources of the landscape, as well as the energy, imagination and commitment of the people that live within it.

Part of the Big Green Challenge prize money was used to set up a subsidiary company, TGVHydro Ltd. This company operates commercially to design, gain permissions for and install hydro turbines for both private individual and community schemes. Profits generated by TGVHydro are returned to the Community Interest Company, to be reinvested in further community projects that further their aims, thus making them sustainable in their actions.

<http://www.thegreenvalleys.org/>

### **Mersey Forest**

The Mersey Forest is a growing network of woodlands and green spaces across Cheshire and Merseyside, which has been operating for 25 years.

In the early 1990s, 12 areas of England were chosen to be the focus of long-term tree planting programmes to improve the local environment for the benefit of people, wildlife and the economy. The Mersey Forest, covering more than 500 square miles of Merseyside and North Cheshire is the largest of these designated Community Forest areas.

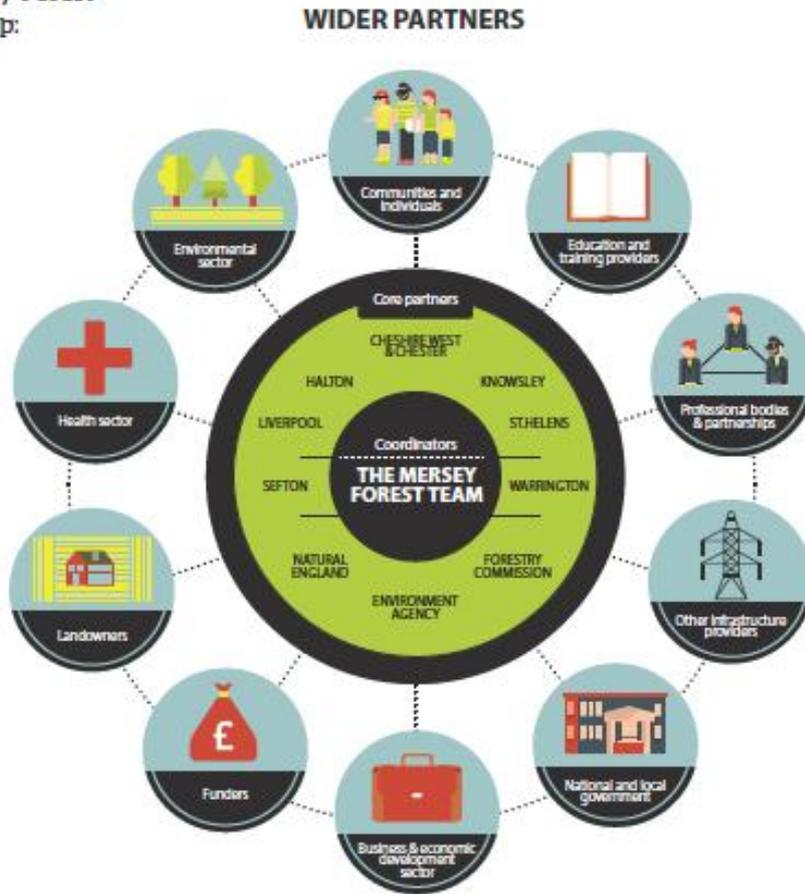
Since its establishment The Mersey Forest Partnership has planted more than 9 million trees – equivalent to five new trees for every person living within the Forest area. The Partnership comprises the seven local authorities covered by the area, along with Natural England, the Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency.

The partnership has developed the Mersey Forest Plan which sets out the combined partnerships vision and policies for the area. Officers and councillors attend Steering and Working Groups to drive forward the delivery of the Plan. They coordinate and champion the Plan within their organisations and encourage others to implement the policies to achieve the 'more from trees' vision.

The local authorities have a partnership agreement with each other and contribute funding to The Mersey Forest team. The team and partners then draw down other funds to maximise the value and impact of all investments. Cheshire West and Chester Council is the host partner, providing

employment, finance and accounting services. Community Forest Trust, a company limited by guarantee with charitable status, provides further support to The Mersey Forest Partnership.

The Mersey Forest Partnership:



<https://www.merseyforest.org.uk>

**Brymbo Heritage Trust**

When the local steelworks closed the area around Brymbo, near Wrexham felt like it had lost its identity. As the land was reclaimed and new housing estates built, the sense of community was being dissipated. Based around an old iron works, during the restoration of the steelworks a 300 million-year-old fossilised forest was found.

Some of the old steelworkers were determined to recreate the community they knew and the Brymbo Heritage Trust was born. From humble beginnings the Trust is now a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with 8 Trustees, 11 members of staff and a Trust Manager. They also have over £3m in funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund (via the Create Your Space programme) to develop the site of the old machine house as a visitor centre, undertake a series of environmental projects in the wider area and preserve the forest as a tourist attraction.

<http://www.brymboheritage.co.uk>



## **Shropshire Hills AONB**

The Shropshire Hills AONB covers a quarter of Shropshire County and is one of 46 such designations in the UK. The main purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty, while also taking account of economic and social needs, promoting sustainable development and meeting the demand for recreation. The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership coordinates this work, and is hosted by Shropshire Council and funded in addition by Defra, Telford & Wrekin Council and project funders.

After some years of research and development of ideas, a newly formed Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) was registered with the Charity Commission in July 2016 with the following objectives:

To promote the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, landscape, wildlife and historic value of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), for the benefit of the public.

To advance understanding, education and awareness, in and around the AONB, of the natural beauty, landscape, wildlife and historic value of the Shropshire Hills AONB, for the benefit of the public.

The principal activity of the AONB Trust is to raise funds and to distribute them in line with its charitable objects. In 2017 the Trust has taken over responsibility for the Conservation Fund previously run by the AONB Partnership, though the AONB team will continue to provide support. This fund is to encourage activities by local people and organisations to support activities which help to conserve the value of the Shropshire Hills area. The Trust also runs the Friends of the Shropshire Hills AONB membership scheme jointly with the AONB Partnership.

As well as running the Conservation Fund and the Friends scheme, the Trust also runs appeals for specific items of work, such as its current appeal 'Fix the Fort' looking to raise £10,000 to repair erosion at Caer Caradoc, a popular view point.

The constitution of the charity has been deliberately widely drawn so that it has the potential to develop a greater range of activities in the future but to do so in a way that will complement the role of the AONB Partnership. The charity structure provides added benefits for fundraising with the prospect of attracting more in donations and the opportunity of maximising their value through the Gift Aid scheme.

<http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk>



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