



Committed to making a difference

Biosffer Dyfi Biosphere
gwerth y byd - world class by nature



Business and Development Planning for the UNESCO Dyfi Biosphere

Final Report
July 2021

www.bro.cymru



BRO partnership



@BROCyrmru

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	5
2. BACKGROUND	7
3. METHODOLOGY	9
4. RESEARCH FINDINGS	11
4.1 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS	11
4.2 WORKSHOPS	20
4.3 E-SURVEYS.....	22
4.4 GIS MAPPING	29
5. BEST PRACTICE RESEARCH	34
5.1 COMPARISONS AND CONCLUSIONS	35
6. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND OPTIONS	39
6.1 OPTIONS	39
6.2 OPTION B: INTERIM GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS.....	39
6.3 SECURING DEVELOPMENT FUNDING.....	42
6.4 STARTING THE JOURNEY	44
7. BENEFITS	49
7.1 STRENGTHENING EXISTING WORK AND LIAISON.....	49
7.2 BENEFITS WITHIN THE DYFI BIOSPHERE	53
7.3 WIDER NATIONAL BENEFITS.....	55
7.4 THE CASE TO THE WELSH GOVERNMENT	55
APPENDIX 1: LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED	58
APPENDIX 2: NOTES FROM TOWN/COMMUNITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP	60
APPENDIX 3: NOTES FROM DYFI BIOSPHERE EDUCATION GROUP (DBEG) WORKSHOP	64

**APPENDIX 4: NOTES FROM TOURISM GROUP WORKSHOP HELD 19TH
APRIL 2021.....69**

APPENDIX 5: QUESTIONNAIRES75

APPENDIX 6: BEST PRACTICE RESEARCH87

**APPENDIX 7: MINUTES OF THE FIRST TWO INTERIM EXECUTIVE
GROUP MEETINGS 110**

1. Introduction

The BRO Partnership (BRO) was commissioned by ecodyfi, on behalf of the UNESCO Dyfi Biosphere Partnership, to prepare a Business and Development Plan. The work was initiated in March 2021 and completed by July 2021.

The brief issued by ecodyfi set out two Lots:

Lot 1. Lead consultant with business planning and partnership working experience, who will liaise with partners and key stakeholders and coordinate closely with the other Lot in drafting the Business and Development Plan. Lot 1 will provide recommendations for how to formalize a coordination and delivery arm of the informally constituted Dyfi Biosphere, so the consultant needs expertise in governance and constitutions, amongst other expertise.

Lot 2: Communication and engagement with the wider community, including businesses.

BRO bid for both Lots and therefore the overall project has been delivered as a single piece of work. The combined aims were therefore as follows:

- Undertake a communications and engagement role with existing partners, with the Summit to Sea, Pumlumon Project and Cambrian Mountains initiatives, and with the wider community, including farmers and other businesses. In particular, to understand people’s aspirations for nature and the environment that would contribute to a green recovery.
- Work with partners, especially the three County Councils and Snowdonia National Park Authority. Aims include identifying commonalities in green recovery plans that could be delivered on a pilot basis through the Dyfi Biosphere. The Decarbonisation Plan for Wales as well as the emerging Area Statements, regional Economic Frameworks and local land management plans such as Cynllun Eryri (Park Management Plan) will similarly be taken into account, as will the material from the 10-year review of the Biosphere (2018/19).
- Close attention should also be paid to the December 2020 reports “Green Recovery: Priorities for Action” published by Natural Resources Wales and “Green Recovery: supporting the environmental sector in Wales” published by the Funding Centre.
- Liaise with Summit to Sea (S2S) so as to draw on the findings of their current engagement process, rather than duplicating this within their project area. The consultants will also help all concerned clarify the relationship between the Dyfi Biosphere and S2S.
- To focus on three geographic areas not covered by S2S, while ensuring we base our plans on the heritage of the whole Biosphere area. The areas are:

- Aberystwyth, which has a large transient population of students. The project will increase engagement of this urban population with the heritage of the wider Biosphere area.
- The five communities that are just joining the Dyfi Biosphere: Tywyn, Brynchrug, Carno, Llanbadarn Fawr and Faenor.
- North of the estuary and of rivers Dyfi and Twymyn (A489/470).
- Liaise with the Pumlumon Project managed by Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust on behalf of Wildlife Trusts Wales and with the Cambrian Mountains CIC in order to ensure coherence of messaging and interventions in the overlapping areas.
- Map out the steps required to create or adapt a third sector body to become the coordination and delivery arm of the informally constituted Dyfi Biosphere, drawing on experience in other Biospheres, such as Galloway and Southern Ayrshire.
- Create a Business and Development Plan that identifies future priorities, actions, joint working, governance and funding mechanisms and articulates the likely benefits.
- Work with and feed into the ongoing project evaluation in terms of any learning related to the process and any outcomes.

The work has been commissioned as part of the Dyfi Biosphere capacity building project, which is a five-month project supported by the Welsh Government / National Lottery Heritage Fund's Green Recovery Capacity Building Scheme.

2. Background

The Dyfi Biosphere was formally recognised in 2009 as a UNESCO ‘Biosphere Reserve’. It is the only one in Wales. It inspires people to work together in creating a future we can all be proud of, connecting people with nature and cultural heritage, while strengthening local economies and community pride and ownership.

It is managed by a Partnership whose membership is drawn from the statutory sector, voluntary, community and farming organisations, and businesses. Welsh Government are partners and as such support the project, recognising that the Biosphere delivers a number of Welsh Government policy objectives.

The Business Development Plan is a direct follow up to the Forward Look report, which was commissioned by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) on behalf of the Dyfi Biosphere and provided a separate analysis to the UNESCO Periodic Review which was undertaken in 2018. The Forward Look report identified a number of risks, challenges and opportunities for the Dyfi Biosphere.

Four possible scenarios were presented:

Scenario 1 End of the Road	Scenario 2 Business as usual
Scenario 4 Internationally recognised at the vanguard of sustainable development in practice	Scenario 3 Independent organisation employing core staff and raising external funding

The Forward Look report highlighted that the ‘Business as Usual’ scenario was not sustainable and that if no action was taken then the future of the Biosphere designation was in doubt, despite the good-will and enthusiasm that was still evident. The core of this argument was based on the fact that the Biosphere has never had dedicated staff, or its own budget. It only exists as a partnership based on collaboration and good-will. And whilst this was appropriate during the early years of the Biosphere’s existence, as budgetary constraints have deepened there has been less financial input and support from the public sector partners.

The Forward Look report also highlighted that there was an opportunity to put the Biosphere on a more stable and effective footing, and the first steps in doing this required setting up a separate organisation with its own staff, budget and ability to raise funds. If this could be achieved, then it could be a springboard to Scenario

4, which is based on the Biosphere extending its work, influence, staffing and budgets. It is only this Scenario which reflects the Dyfi Biosphere's vision of being:

“a national treasure and an international icon, acting as a test bed for the new Ways of Working in Wales, applied at a landscape scale across statutory and Area Statement boundaries and contributing towards the target of one million Welsh speakers”.

The Forward Look report was presented to the First Minister, alongside a briefing/bidding paper from the Partnership itself, in early 2020 and received a favourable response. The Covid pandemic has prevented further consideration of the resources required to put the governance of the Biosphere on a more effective footing and therefore the Business Development Plan sets out the issues, opportunities and costs of taking this agenda forward.

In late May 2021 the key findings were shared with the steering group who are overseeing the work. Further discussions were held with the full Dyfi Biosphere Partnership in June 2021 and a final presentation was given to the Biosphere's AGM on the 22 July.

3. Methodology

The methodology has been based on the following steps:

No	Stage	Description
1	Inception meeting	A Zoom meeting to agree: scope, timetable, targets and outputs and to share contacts, background information and other information.
2	Scoping and stakeholder analysis	Review and analysis of all background information. Working closely with the client in sharing contact details for stakeholders.
3	Interviews with key stakeholders	One-to-one interviews with key individuals drawn from the most important stakeholders. 40 Interviews were conducted. A list of the individuals and organisation who participated in set out in Annex 1.
4	Consultation and engagement with 5 Town Council	Invites were sent out and a zoom meeting was arranged for the 21 st April. 4 participated from 3 Councils.
5	Dyfi Biosphere Tourism Association	A workshop was held on the 19 th April for the tourism association. 10 participated and these were a mix of business owners and tourism officers from public sector bodies.
6	Dyfi Biosphere Education Group (DBEG)	A meeting of the DBEG was held on the 22 nd April and 7 participated.
7	Publicity and awareness raising	Awareness of the study and the opportunity to participate in an e-survey was publicised through a number of media outlets, including articles in local papers, social media and posters.
8	E Survey	Two bilingual e-survey were issued with one focussing on the public and the other focussing on all Town and Community Council in the Biosphere.
9	Best Practice research	Desk top analysis was undertaken of 3 other UK Biospheres. Additional analysis of other landscape partnership initiatives in Wales was also undertaken.

10	Meetings with Dyfi Biosphere Partnership	<p>The Dyfi Biosphere Partnerships held on the 29th March provided an opportunity to set the scene for the work and to ask for support from members.</p> <p>Interim findings were presented to the Steering group for the project on the 24th May. And the findings were subsequently presented to the Dyfi Biosphere Partnership in June and the AGM in July.</p>
11	Development of Business and Governance Plan	<p>Instead of writing a Business Development Plan it was agreed that BRO would work collaboratively with a newly formed Executive Group for the Dyfi Biosphere Partnership. The results of this phase are summarised in section 6.4 of this report.</p>

4. Research Findings

4.1 Stakeholder Interviews

Emerging Themes

Existing governance

- There is an acknowledgement that the Biosphere Partnership has been heavily dependent on ecodyfi, and on the commitment of Andy Rowland in particular. Without this, the Partnership would almost certainly have withered.
- There is a perception that ecodyfi and the Biosphere are one and the same, which can be confusing. There is an assumption that ecodyfi have executive and strategic authority on behalf of others.
- There is a need for succession planning, so that ecodyfi and Andy's knowledge and contacts are not lost.
- The Partnership's capacity to plan strategically has been hampered by the lack of a core team. Partnership meetings tend to focus on what has already happened. They have become a networking event and not a forward-looking strategic discussion.
- Funding for Biosphere projects has tended to be smaller and piecemeal, dictated by the availability of grants and by the willingness of constituted organisations to develop proposals, obtain funding and to brand activities as the Biosphere. This hinders the ability to plan for the Biosphere in a more strategic and long-term way. One analogy is that these projects have been '*leaves without a tree.*'
- The Partnership meetings are run in a traditional format and there is scope to look at more innovative approaches that will encourage buy-in and a fresh dynamism.
- There is a gulf between the Biosphere Partnership and the wider rural and farming community, despite some championing from key stakeholders. There is a perception that the Biosphere is not relevant to farmers in the area.

Future governance

- All agree that now is the time for the Biosphere to secure funding for a small team to coordinate activities and develop new links.
- A strong case should be made to the Welsh Government to secure funding for a small team for at least three years. This needs to include upto 5 staff including:
 - a Biosphere Manager/Coordinator
 - Project Coordinator for existing activities
 - Development officer, looking for new opportunities
 - Comms/marketing officer

- Admin/finance support (PT)
- One option would be for the costs to be shared, with the WG providing 50% and the remainder coming from the 3 LAs.
- After the meeting with the First Minister, Mark Drakeford MS, over a year ago, the momentum was lost due to Covid, but the door is still open and there is an opportunity to make a case for care funding. This needs to be cast within the wider Green Recovery agenda. NRW do not provide core costs and their grants programme is currently frozen. There is a possibility that they could provide funding at some stage in the future.
- Ultimately, the governance of the Biosphere should be an independent entity, such as a Community Interest Company (CIC). However, in the short term a transition period could be the best way forward. This will need to include:
 - A host organisation for the core staff
 - An Executive Board of the key organisations involved in delivery and responsible for making decisions and managing budgets. This needs to be limited to around 6 or 10 members and to be able to make quick decisions. It will be essential that local stakeholders and especially farmers are included in the Executive Board, otherwise it will be seen as management from a distance.
 - There would be value in having regular meetings with key staff from the public sector partners, say 4 times/ year. This will ensure all are playing their part in taking the Biosphere's management forward. It will also develop further links with Public Service Boards (PSBs).
 - The wider Biosphere Partnership who would have ultimate responsibility and provide further steer and support.
- Any new governance structure needs to be seen as a fresh start and to overcome any confusion between the roles of ecodyfi and the running of the Biosphere.

WG policies

It will be important to present a case for core funding for the Biosphere in terms of the WG's existing legislation and emerging priorities, including:

- The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (WFGA) and the Environment Act, particularly the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR). The Biosphere could act as a demonstration area, highlight new ways of working and promoting innovation.
- The Welsh Government (WG) priority for establishing a National Forest could impinge on part of the Biosphere and here the proposed new governance structure would help to ensure liaison and buy-in from landowning and community interests. There are very good opportunities for working with the Woodland Trust on this issue.

- The Biosphere has considerable potential in terms of the WG's Green recovery plans.
- Equally, the Biosphere Partnership, particularly through CAT and ecodyfi, are well placed to contribute and showcase Carbon Zero concepts. The work of S2S and the Pumlumon project is also worth highlighting here.
- Linking public sector procurement with local suppliers could be developed in line with the WG's Foundational Economy proposals.
- There are also opportunities under the WG's Circular Economy agenda.
- Cadw's move towards a more people- based approach - increasing interest in historic landscape - could also be tried and tested in the Biosphere.
- The recent White Paper on the funding of farming did not mention support for landscape scale collaborative projects. However, in the context of a new Rural Development programme and a successor to the Sustainable Management Scheme (SMS), there could be potential for using the Biosphere to be used as a testbed and in particular to look at catchment approaches which link terrestrial and marine environments.
- The area could also contribute towards the WG'S target of increasing the number of Welsh speakers.
- The post Covid trend of more people working from home could lead to an influx to a rural area such as the Dyfi, and this would push up house prices and dilute the Welsh language and culture, especially if it occurs over a rapid period of time. The Dyfi Biosphere would be a good location to assess these pressures and devise innovative solutions.
- The funding of a core staff for the Dyfi Biosphere could be looked as a rural version of the Valleys Regional Park (VRP). There are also obvious links and opportunities for shared learning with the family of protected landscapes in Wales, particularly Snowdonia National Park (SNP), which overlaps with part of the Biosphere in the North.
- There could be opportunities for funding through the Mid Wales Partnership, as well as other Wales wide grants. The WG has a key role in securing such funding, in parallel with the leadership shown in reinvigorating the VRP through the Valleys Task Force.
- The influence of the FG Commissioner will be a key factor in encouraging the next WG to take action and contribute suitable core funding to give the Biosphere a re-boot.

Role of NRW

- Some felt that NRW should show greater interest and show leadership. Under their experimental powers they could develop the Biosphere as an area to test innovative ways of working.
- The Biosphere spans two Area Statements, but there is no mechanism to coordinate these in a meaningful way.

- There is also a major opportunity to link the two Area Statements with the Marine Spatial Plan, with the Biosphere being a suitable test bed for integration.
- The potential development at Ceinws on the NRW estate could involve the Glantwymyn community and Coed Cymru. This is within the Biosphere and offers potential for further promotion. It could become a centre for rural skills and volunteering, and this would reflect the Area Statement for the NW. Prior to NRW, the Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) were in the process of developing the Dyfi Forest as a centre of learning and sharing best practice; this could be revived.

Relationship with Summit To Sea (S2S)

Background

- S2S did initially receive very bad PR and a high level of resistance from local farmers and Welsh speaking communities. It was viewed as a form of “environmental imperialism.”
- The current work though, which does not include Rewilding Britain, has to a degree rescued the initiative. There are still strong negative feelings, but these are slowly diminishing. They are currently halfway through a two year consultation phase which is based on listening to what the community want. Upon completion of this, they will be in a position to submit the full application to the Endangered Landscapes Programme, which would potentially draw down around £3.4 million over 5 years. It should be noted though that one person interviewed was of the opinion that S2S was too damaged by the previous bad PR and that none of the established farmers in the area would get involved. This was not the common message, but it should be noted as a strong warning of the strength of feeling.
- Some felt that the language used in engaging with farmers was academic and too complicated.
- There is a considerable overlap between the Biosphere and the geographical area that S2S is currently working in. The boundaries of S2S are not fixed and these will be determined by the current co-design phase.
- The emerging themes from the S2S consultation also reflect the aims and principles of the Biosphere.
- A proportion of the funds from S2S will go to farmers for positive management, and this will help to alter perceptions.

Potential for linking S2S with the management of the Biosphere.

- Almost everyone interviewed agreed that there was a strong case to link Summit To Sea with the Biosphere. Indeed, the case for securing funds for the Biosphere continuing is diminished if S2S develops its own governance structures which are operating in parallel.

- A strong link between the S2S and the Biosphere could be used as a lever to encourage the WG to provide the necessary funding for a small team.
- It will be important though to be clear that S2S is a project and that the Biosphere is there for a very long time, subject to Periodic Review by UNESCO.
- Any link between the Biosphere and S2S will require very careful PR and stressing the positive benefits.
- The combined governance would have to include local representation and particularly local farmers from Welsh speaking communities. This will be a crucial factor.
- Linking S2S and Biosphere would increase the sustainability of the approach, i.e. it will embed the land management works into a permanent governance structure.
- By taking forward the Blas Dyfi Taste initiative there is a good opportunity to link S2S with food labelling within the Biosphere. This is not straightforward, but if developed over time it could provide much needed additional local income for the rural community.

Relationship with Cambrian Mountains

Background

- There is some confusion and overlap between the Cambrian Mountains Initiative (CMI) and the Cambrian Mountains Society (CMS).
- CMI is funded through LEADER until January 2022 and has two PT officers. They focus on tourism activities including recreational routes, Dark Sky events and food labelling.
- CMS is focussed on a long term campaign to see the area designated as an AONB. Not everyone is in favour of this, and some are wary of additional planning controls.
- About 10- 15% of the Cambrian Mountains is within the Biosphere.

Potential for linking CMI and the Biosphere.

- There is a need for greater clarity on marketing, the Dyfi Valley and the Cambrians are distinct areas, even though there is geographic overlap.
- In the short term, much could be gained through closer collaboration between the Biosphere and CMI, particularly on tourism and food labelling.
- It will be important that CMI and the Biosphere are not in competition for funds, this would be to the detriment of both initiatives.
- The work of CMI and the emphasis on a bottom-up approach is identical to the Biosphere's aims.
- In the longer term, perhaps by the next UNESCO Periodic Review scheduled for 2028, there could be a case for a larger "Dyfi and Cambrian Mountain Biosphere". This would create sufficient critical mass to attract substantial

funding and to promote the whole area. This agenda of merger could be progressed more quickly if there was an appetite for it.

Links with Pen Llyn A'r Sarnau (PLAS) SAC

Background

- The SAC is managed by a Project Coordinator based in Gwynedd County Council, who reports to a project board of Responsible Authorities (3 County Councils, NRW, WG and Trinity House). They also have a wider partnership, drawing in user groups, local communities and fishing interests.
- They regularly liaise with other SAC teams in the UK and databases have been established to support exchange of expertise and knowledge.
- They are a member of the Biosphere Partnership and S2S.
- PLAS has a very small core funding budget from partners, with the majority of their budget then coming from projects.
- There is also a strong link with the Tir a Mor, the Llyn Landscape Partnership, which is also managed by Gwynedd CC and funded through the SMS.

Potential for further links

- There is potential in developing stronger links with the Biosphere. To enable this to happen a team needs to be established to run the Biosphere. If this was in place, then there would be considerable scope to plan together and look at joint delivery where possible.
- This would enable closer collaboration between terrestrial and marine management. The Biosphere would be an ideal place to test out new approaches, and this would reflect its role as a test bed and demonstration schemes. This reflects discussions with NRW.

Other Land Management Schemes

- There are several large land management schemes currently operating, at least in part, within the Biosphere. These include four projects funded through the Welsh Government's SMS, namely:
 - Pumlumon - £267k, Mont. Wildlife Trust
 - Dolau Dyfi - £467k, PONT
 - Pennal 2050 - £848k, Pennal Partnership CIC
 - Cambrian Wildwoods - £566K, Wales Wild Land Foundation CIC
- These represent a total investment of just over £2 million into the management of the Biosphere. However, they have not been developed or implemented in a way which ties them directly with the management needs of the area; rather they are largely opportunistic initiatives driven by separate organisations who just happen to be operating within the Biosphere.

- The funding of future landscape scale collaborative initiatives involving landowners, environmental NGOs and the public sector is under debate. The SMS programme is still ongoing, but the recent Welsh Government White Paper on the future funding of farming made no mention of support for partnership and landscape scale approaches. However, the WG are in the process of developing a successor to the SMS programme.
- The Woodland Trust are very active in the area through their Dyfi to Dwyfryd project. This is one of ten UK priority areas for them and their main interest in Wales. They are therefore actively seeking funding for a mixture of tree planting, hedgerow renovation and improved management. There are therefore considerable opportunities for the Biosphere to work closely with the Woodland Trust.

There is a case therefore that the Biosphere could be developed as a test best for further collaborative and large scale land management initiatives, drawing upon existing best practice and the emerging lessons from the SMS.

Visitor Facilities And Tourism

- The Tourism Group had not met for a while and the Biosphere Tourism Action Plan, which is very comprehensive, dates back to 2018. There is a need to review and refresh this.
- CAT is one of the largest visitor attractions in the area, and they have plans to expand their offer.
- The new Visitor Centre developed by the Montgomery Wildlife Trust is now open. This is at the heart of the Biosphere and there are opportunities to include interpretation. The centre could also accommodate Biosphere staff and this would help to forge links and increase profile.
- The feasibility study on the possible renovation of the Old Kennels at Plas in Machynlleth is another opportunity to forge a link with the Biosphere. Further discussions are needed with Machynlleth Town Council on this.
- Café Cletwr has recently put up some interpretation up on the Biosphere - and they are keen to do further promotion.
- A lot has been done through the Dyfi Biosphere Tourism Association (DBTA), but these initiatives have been piecemeal and fragmented. There is a 'chicken and egg' situation in that they can't grow the Association without showing the benefits it would bring. Biosphere staff to help on marketing and promotion would make a massive difference.
- Mid Wales Tourism (MWT) now has over 100 members in the Biosphere, but most are not members of the DBTA. MWT is actively promoting the Biosphere as a destination, focussing on eco-tourism and active sports. The area has huge potential for sustainable rural tourism based on the high quality landscape and wildlife, as well as the strong historical and cultural aspects.

- The public sector tourism teams promote the Biosphere, but it's difficult to coordinate across three Counties. There is a challenge in describing what the Biosphere is. That said, there is a growing trend to promote the Biosphere and stressing the UNESCO angle - which is better understood by visitors from outside the UK. More emphasis though needs to be put on marketing the experiences that the area offers and encouraging staying visitors and pre-booked trips.

Economic And Business Activity

- Most business are very small and there is considerable scope to promote a cluster, as operated by Bro Ffestiniog for social enterprises.
- There could be some possibilities for capital support under the Mid Wales Growth Deal. This will require private sector investment, but further down the line there could be a link to the Biosphere.
- The area has enormous potential for wildlife tourism and this could feature in any funding under a green growth agenda.

Farming

- There is a huge degree of uncertainty in the industry. Despite that, there are still enthusiastic young farmers coming forward who wish to be part of the industry.
- Many farmers do not see the Biosphere or the green agenda (of CAT for instance) as being of relevance to them.
- There is also a fear of 'environmental colonialism' and the voice of the farming community not being heard. This was the main cause of the bad press associated initially with S2S.
- There is a strong link between farming and the Welsh speaking communities and associated culture. The area could therefore play a significant part in the WG's target of a million Welsh speakers.
- To win over the wider rural community there would be merit in the Biosphere undertaking more projects related to the Welsh language, culture and traditions of the area.
- There are pockets of innovation on diversification amongst many farmers, who are exploring new income streams.
- The lack of certainty on the future of landscape scale collaboration is an important issue, especially if there is to be a greater emphasis on a catchment approach. Of note is the Mixed Farming and Tyfu Dyfi projects since they represent a policy direction of interest to WG and other Welsh organisations; both are Biosphere-branded and collaborative.

Community Awareness and Involvement

- Although the Biosphere has been going for over 10 years there is still a poor level of awareness amongst the public. Some think that it's a dome of some kind, a bit like the Eden Project in Cornwall or the National Botanic Garden!
- There is more awareness of S2S, since in some ways it's less nebulous than the Biosphere.
- There are several green groups in Aberystwyth that are interested in the Biosphere. There is a large untapped population here, but it will need dedicated staff time to encourage more to get involved.
- Much could be gained through the recruitment of high-profile patrons or ambassadors for the Biosphere. Several ambassadors could be recruited, appealing to different ages and interest groups.
- There is an axis between Aberystwyth and Machynlleth. The Biosphere spans the area, but many residents only look in one direction.
- Some stakeholders from Dyfi felt that including Aberystwyth has weakened the Biosphere's influence in their area.
- The 5 Town and Community Councils who recently joined the Biosphere were ambivalent in the first instance. Since becoming part of the Biosphere they have not had any communication or seen any benefits. It should be noted that UNESCO have yet to formally sign-off the extension. The survey sent to all the Town and Community Councils in the Biosphere, but only one responses was received - and this is a strong indication of dis-engagement.

Education and Links with Aberystwyth University

Dyfi Biosphere Education Group (DBEG)

- The DBEG had not met for a while and their Action Plan was out of date. They are still active, but operating either independently or in small groups. There is a need to review and update the action plan.
- The Education Group currently focus on primary school activities, and these can be a very good way to raise awareness amongst the wider public. Schools are usually at the heart of rural communities.
- The work of the Education Group has dwindled, partly down to lack of time and resources. If funding for Biosphere staff was in place, they would be re-invigorated. The potential is enormous.
- More could be done to develop activities for older age groups, including secondary schools, further education, colleges and apprenticeships.
- There is also a lot that could be done for adult education, particularly in terms of traditional rural skills. This would develop links with the farming community.

CAT and new approaches to Sustainable Development(SD)

- The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) has been around for a long time. They are one of the biggest visitor attractions in the Biosphere, and they have further plans to expand, possibly receiving capital grants through the Mid Wales Growth Deal.
- They have also received £1 million for a Zero Carbon initiative and this is helping them to switch their emphasis from SD technology towards social issues and behaviour changes. This ties in closely with the Biosphere's aims and objectives. They also want to strengthen their links with local communities. CAT is a keen supporter of the Biosphere and willing to help as required.

Aberystwyth University

- The University undertakes a varied and expansive range of research and other activities which impinges on the Biosphere.
- There hasn't been a strong and deliberate connection though between the research needs of the Biosphere and the planned activities in the University. The overlaps are therefore coincidental rather than being developed jointly. This is in contrast to the largest Biosphere in Germany, where there is a dedicated research liaison officer forging links. This provides mutual benefit to both organisations.
- One of the University's former Presidents, Sir Ben Bowen Thomas, was also chair of the UNESCO Executive Board. There are therefore historical ties between the University and UNESCO which are not being realised or celebrated.
- If the Biosphere had a team of staff, then a formal link with the University could be developed. Aberystwyth is one of the few Universities located within a Biosphere and this offers them a strong selling point. A formal link in this way would greatly increase the amount of research undertaken in the Biosphere, by students and staff.
- The development of the Old College Buildings at Aberystwyth also offers opportunities to promote the University.

4.2 Workshops

Three workshops were conducted via Zoom. The relevant points from each discussion are set out below:

The five Town/Community Councils that have recently joined the Biosphere

Three Councils were represented and 4 participated in the workshop held on the 21st April. The key themes discussed were:

- Two of the Councils were not sure why they joined the Biosphere, they were largely ambivalent and, as of yet, had not received any tangible benefit from joining. The exception was Tywyn, who thought they should have been included in the Biosphere from the start.
- The key challenges for them are: planning issues, the lack of affordable housing, footpath maintenance, litter and anti-social behaviour. They also want to do more on climate change, but need support and guidance on this.
- Individual Councils have been successful in getting initiatives off the group, often working with local groups.
- They could do a lot more though if they had support from a central team in the Biosphere. This would be useful in encouraging collaborative action and devising new ways of working. Sharing resources would be very helpful.
- A regular newsletter for the Biosphere would be very useful and keep everyone informed.

Dyfi Biosphere Education Group (DBEG)

There were 7 participants at the workshop held on the 22nd April and most were freelance education specialists. The key themes to emerge were:

- The Group had not met for a while and had lost momentum, largely due to a lack of capacity.
- In the initial few years of the Biosphere they were able to do so much more due to additional resources.
- The Action Plan for the Group is very comprehensive but out of date. It would be useful to review this.
- They have concentrated largely on primary schools, who are often at the heart of rural communities. Engagement with these schools is therefore a good way to get messages out.
- There is a lot more they could do with other age groups, including secondary schools and colleges. There are also opportunities for Lifelong Learning.
- More could be done to increase the skills and capacity of teachers.
- The Group has a number of exciting initiatives which could be taken forward e.g. on water and food mapping.
- If there was a central Biosphere team supporting them and helping with bids they could do so much more.
- Most of the partners in the Biosphere, e.g. NRW, RSPB and the MWT, have lost capacity on delivering environmental education - and this has again reduced the overall support available for the work of the DBEG.

Tourism Group

There were 10 participants for the workshop which was held on the 19th April, with a mixture of Tourism officer from public sector organisations and local business operators.

The key issues raised were:

- The Action Plan for the Tourism group is very comprehensive but out of date by now. It would be useful to review this and assess what has been achieved and what remains a priority.
- In the first few years of the Biosphere they had more resources and were able to do more. A few highlights were the Story Bus for instance.
- Now the lack of capacity is an issue, especially since bids to Visit Wales have been for 'bigger and better' projects. They don't have the time and resources therefore to develop new initiatives.
- Mid Wales Tourism is promoting the Biosphere and now has over 100 members in the Biosphere.
- There hasn't been a parallel increase in the membership of the Dyfi Biosphere Tourism Association, and the low annual income hinders them doing more to show the value of being a member.
- The fact that the Biosphere is split between 3 Counties is a problem and makes it harder to draw attention to the area. They have a much lower profile than the 3 National Parks.
- There is a lack of understanding of what a Biosphere is and why it's important.
- The area does have a lot of strengths in terms of wildlife, landscape, history and culture, so more could be done if there was better coordination and increased capacity.
- There would be value in recruiting a number of high-profile celebrities to increase awareness of the Biosphere and the area.

4.3 E-Surveys

Two surveys were distributed:

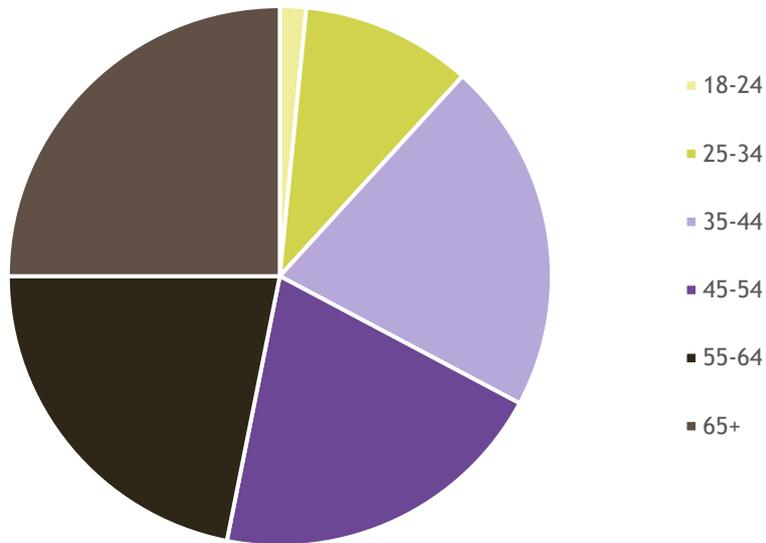
- One was aimed at the public and collected general views about the Dyfi and whether the concept of a Biosphere is well understood.
- The second survey was targeted at members of the community and town Councils within the Biosphere.

Both questionnaires are included in Appendix 5.

Online Public Survey

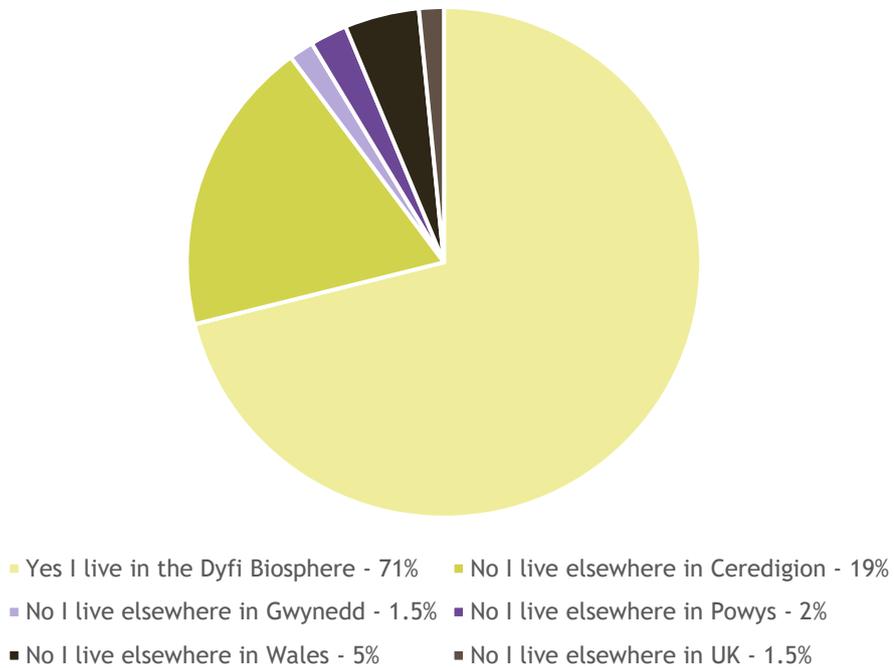
The bilingual online survey was live from 17 May to 9 July 2021. During this time 137 people responded, 25 in Welsh and 112 in English. There was a fairly even balance of responses from all age groups over 35, but only 12% were 34 or under and no one under the age of 18 responded to the survey.

Age of Respondents



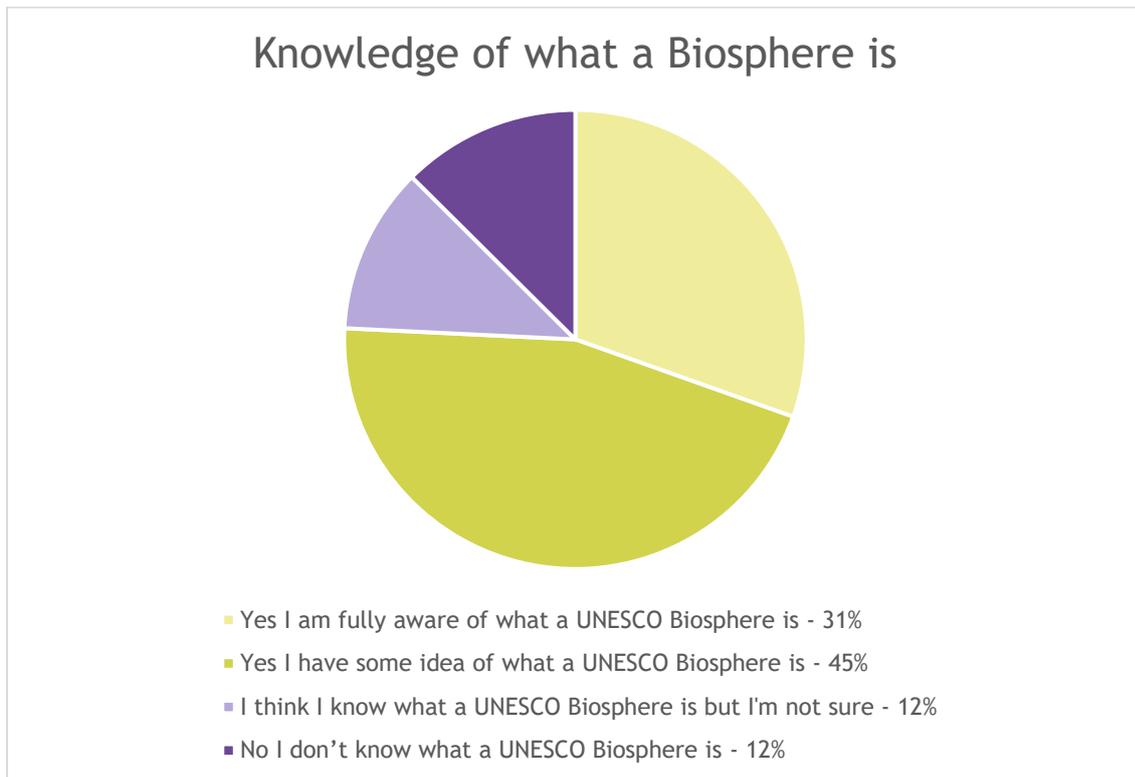
71% lived within its boundaries and 46% had previously attended a Biosphere event.

Location of Respondents

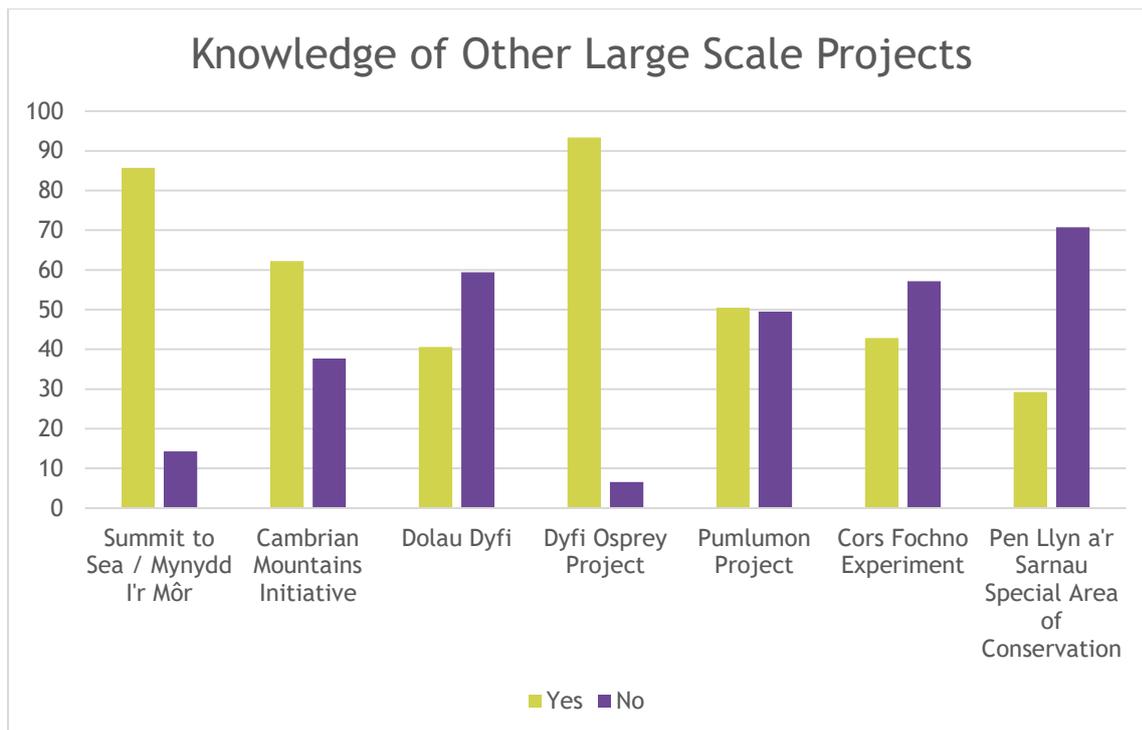


When considering other UNESCO designations, 88% of people had heard of World Heritage Sites but only 28% of Geoparks.

95% thought that it was critically important to look after and protect the environment of the Dyfi and 55% to look after and protect its cultural heritage. 93% of respondents had previously heard of the Dyfi Biosphere, however, when asked if they knew what a Biosphere was, almost 25% of respondents either weren't sure or didn't know.



The Dyfi Osprey Project, Summit to Sea and Cambrian Mountains Initiative were the most well know large scale projects within the local area with 93%, 86% and 62% of respondents respectively. The least know was the Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau Special Area of Conservation with only 29% of respondents. In addition, 89% of respondents thought that such projects should work closely together to solve problems is they have similar aims and objectives.



When asked to identify the biggest challenges facing the Dyfi area in the next 5 years responses fell into the following broad categories:

- Climate change, including sea level rise and reducing carbon emissions, the need to develop in a sustainable manner, building resilience to deal with changes that will arise, flooding (and mitigation) and developing sustainable forms of transport.
- The impact of Brexit particularly in terms of a new agricultural payment scheme, the effect this may have on the viability of farming businesses and the need to resist intensive farming methods.
- Concern for the environment, habitat restoration, nature recovery.
- Tourism, both in terms of a negative impact of an increase in the number of people visiting and the potential positive impact on rural businesses in encouraging eco-tourism.
- Development and in particular the lack of affordable housing for local people.
- The need to ensure that local voices are heard in the work that the Biosphere delivers and the importance of ensuring consensus, avoiding the polarisation associated with some projects and finding common ground.

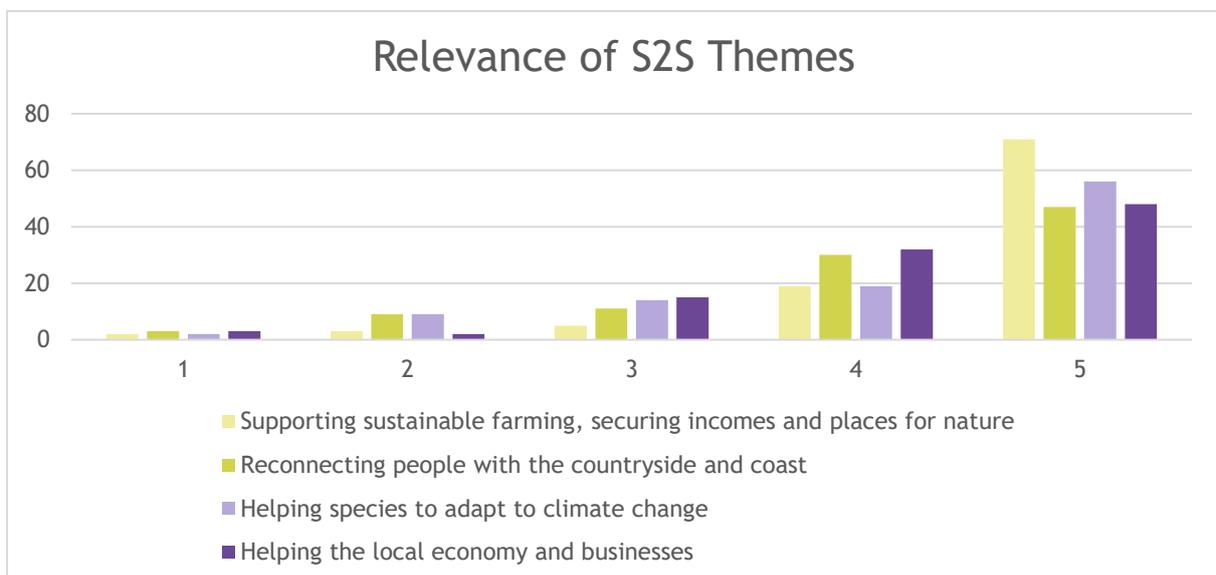
In terms of what people liked most about the Dyfi area the most common response was the scenic beauty of the area and its diverse landscape ranging from mountains to the sea. This was closely followed by the diversity and quality of its habitats and species. People also appreciate the people and diverse communities within the area, its tranquillity and remoteness, culture and uniqueness.

As part of the survey we also tried to establish how well the four key themes emerging from the S2S community conversations matched with the work respondents felt the Biosphere should be delivering. The four themes were not included directly as it was felt that they were not concise enough for inclusion in the questionnaire. However, they were translated as follows:

S2S Theme	Questionnaire Wording
<p>1. A nature rich and sustainable production system</p> <p>Many natural resource production agendas are driven by economic policy, markets and grants / subsidies which don't allow for the local nuances and the different needs of different owners, users and managers. This theme seeks to find ways that national needs can be satisfied but with greater scope for local control and solutions which benefit nature within a productive system.</p>	<p>Supporting sustainable farming, securing incomes and places for nature</p>
<p>2. Connectivity between wildlife rich habitats for greater collective benefit</p> <p>As environmental degradation and loss of wildlife continues, it is clear that humanity needs to think bigger - more ambitious, more optimistic and, crucially, more joined-up. This aims to enhance a mosaic of interconnected landscape to allow wildlife to move, migrate and interact and to restore and maintain ecosystem functionality and the benefits this provides society.</p>	<p>Helping species to adapt to climate change</p>
<p>3. Re-connecting people</p> <p>Nature and culture are closely interwoven in the uplands, lowlands and coastline of the area, developed through a long history of people working closely with the land and sea. However, a disconnect between people and the land and nature has been</p>	<p>Reconnecting people with the countryside and coast</p>

<p>highlighted in our workshops. This would aim to reconnect people to nature and explore ways to improve accessibility to the many benefits experienced from these opportunities. The Covid-19 pandemic has, more than ever, taught us how important and intrinsic our need to be connected to the natural world is.</p>	
<p>4. Re-connecting the economy</p> <p>The current economy in the area is reliant on natural resources but many of the benefits are not realised locally. A combination of reasons have driven a loss of diversity, such as large supply chains, remote processing, large scale remote markets. New opportunities are constantly developing to rebuild local supply chains and rebuild business' nature connections. These need to be intuitive and recognise the value of local entrepreneurs, micro-enterprise and social business in identifying and developing new products which benefit nature.</p>	<p>Helping the local economy and businesses</p>

Respondents were asked to rate the relevance of each theme with 1 being not at all important and 5 being a perfect fit.



From the chart above we can see that most people thought the themes were generally a good fit, with 71% agreeing that supporting sustainable farming, securing incomes and places for nature was a perfect fit for the work that the Biosphere should be delivering. When asked what else the Biosphere should be undertaking the following key themes emerged:

- Being more open about what they do, talking to and being relevant for ordinary people and undertaking a greater advocacy role.
- Working to bring communities together, playing a facilitating role and working to develop greater community cohesion.
- Being an exemplar of landscape scale collaboration and delivery.
- Providing more formal and informal education opportunities.
- Working with all age groups, particularly younger people.
- Working to develop more sustainable transport opportunities.
- Working with the farming community to help facilitate opportunities to adapt to a new funding environment.

Town and Community Council Survey

A bilingual questionnaire was sent to every Town and Community Council within the Biosphere area via email on 20 May 2021 with responses requested by 25 June 2021. The email requested they either discuss the questions as part of a formal Council meeting (five weeks were given for responses to be returned in order to fit with monthly meeting schedules), or if this was not possible for the Clerk or Chair to complete it instead. The questionnaire comprised 5 questions.

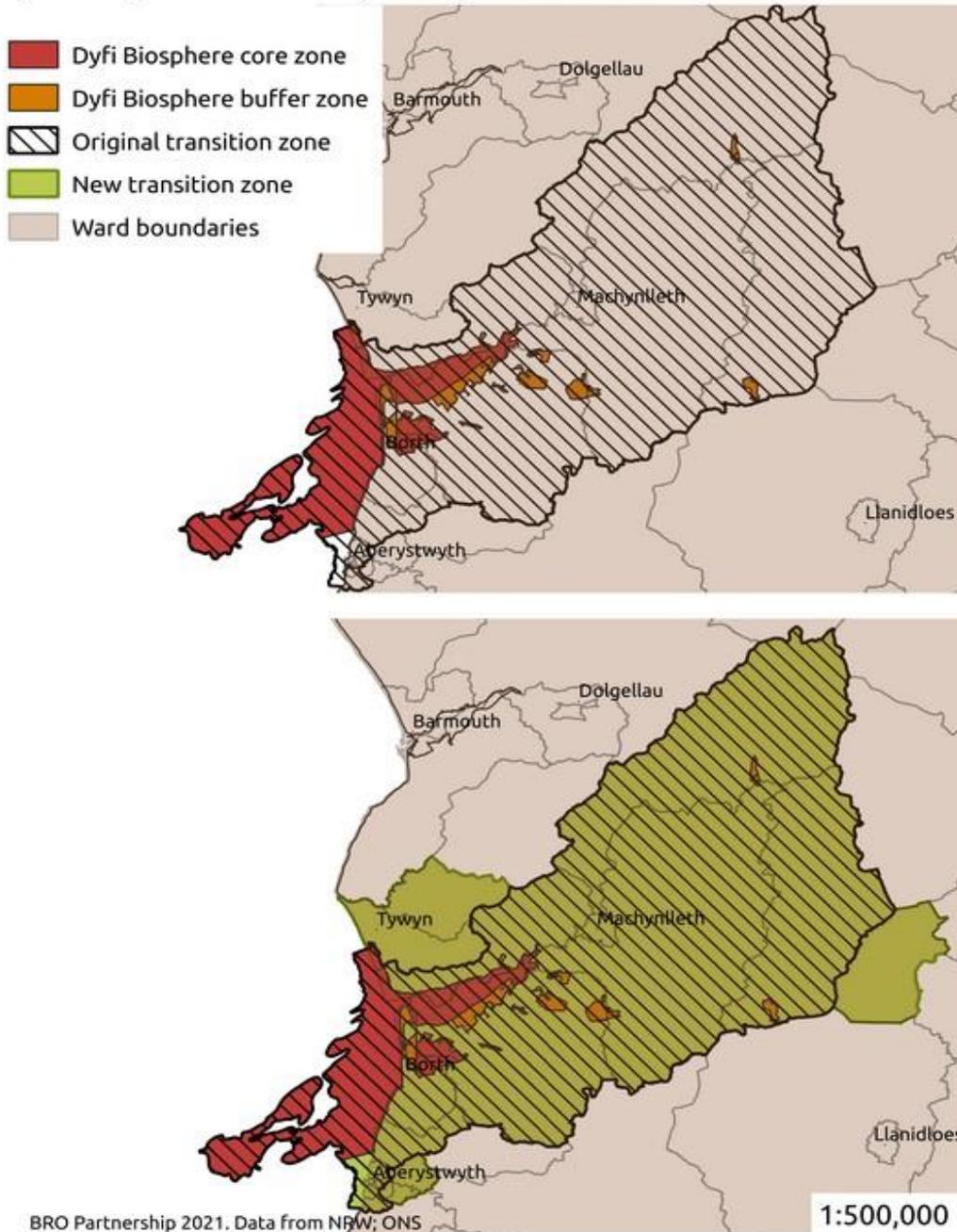
It is quite telling that of the 13 Council's contacted only one response was received. It would seem to show that the Councils do not consider the Biosphere of particular importance or relevance to their work. This would reflect some of the findings from the online workshop held with the five new Councils.

4.4 GIS Mapping

Mapping was carried out to explore the relationship between the boundaries of the Dyfi Biosphere and the boundaries of other designated sites and landscape scale projects in the area, as well as environmental factors that define the area.

The transition zone boundary of the biosphere was extended around the 2019 periodic Review, as shown in the map below.

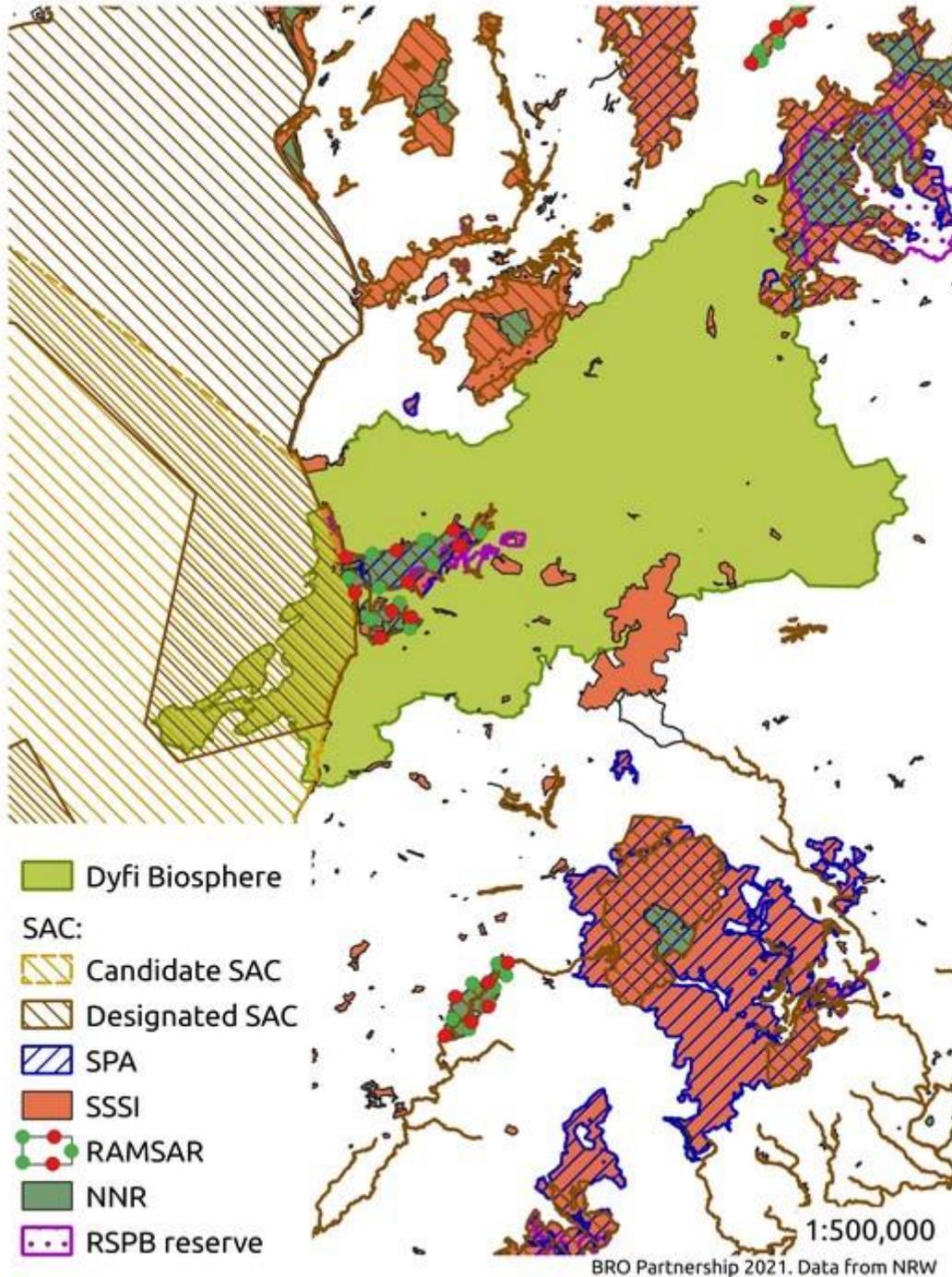
Dyfi Biosphere boundary changes and zonation



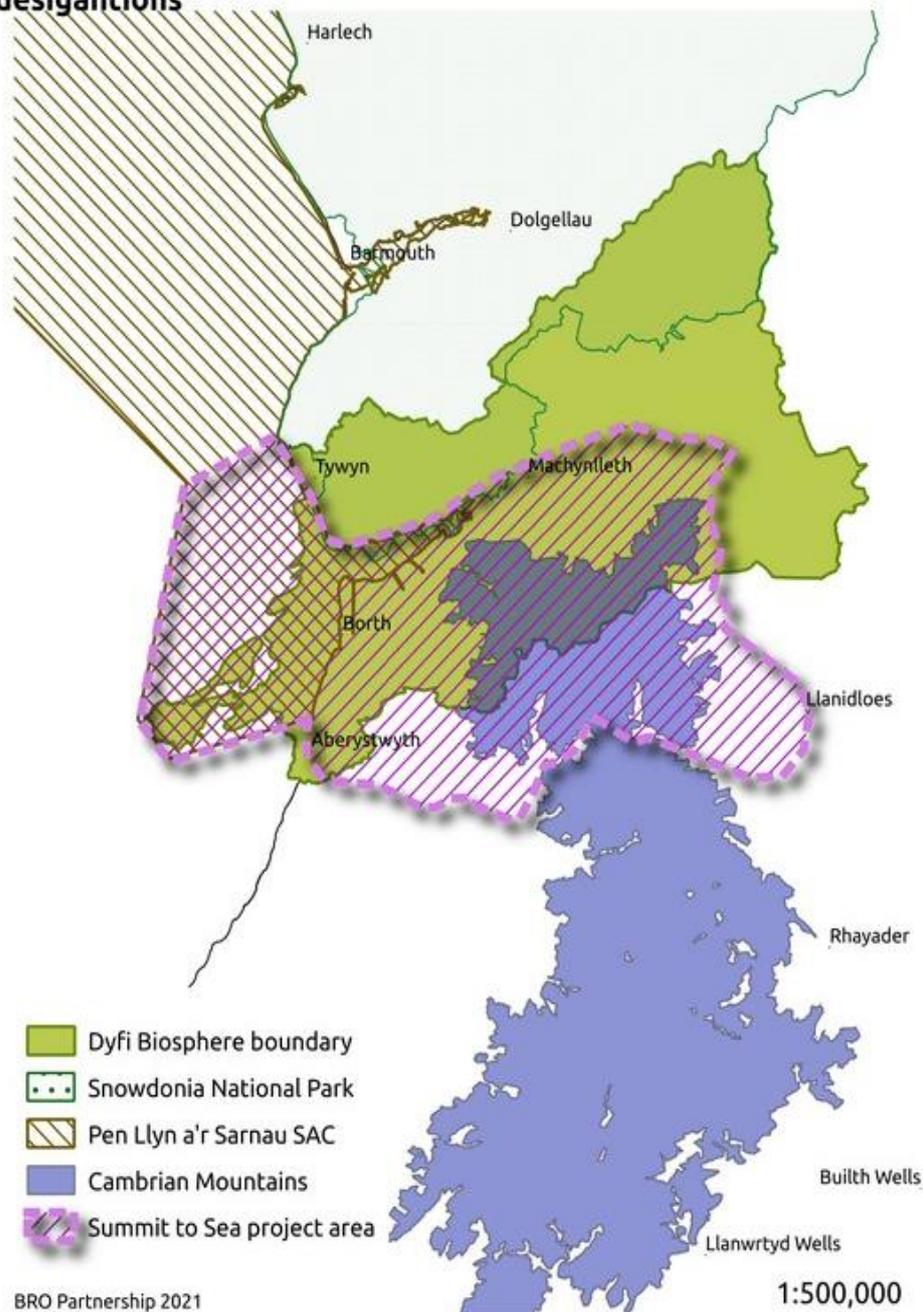
The core area of the Biosphere is based on a cluster of important sites around the Dyfi estuary and Cors Fochno, under several international designations (SAC, SPA

and Ramsar). A network of other SSSIs in the Biosphere forms the buffer zone. The Biosphere is also bordered by a number of other upland sites of national and international importance, e.g. Pumlumon, Cadair Idris and the Berwyn Mountains. The marine core area is part of the much larger Pen llyn a'r Sarnau SAC.

The Dyfi Biosphere and designated sites



The Dyfi Biosphere and other Landscape-scale projects or designations



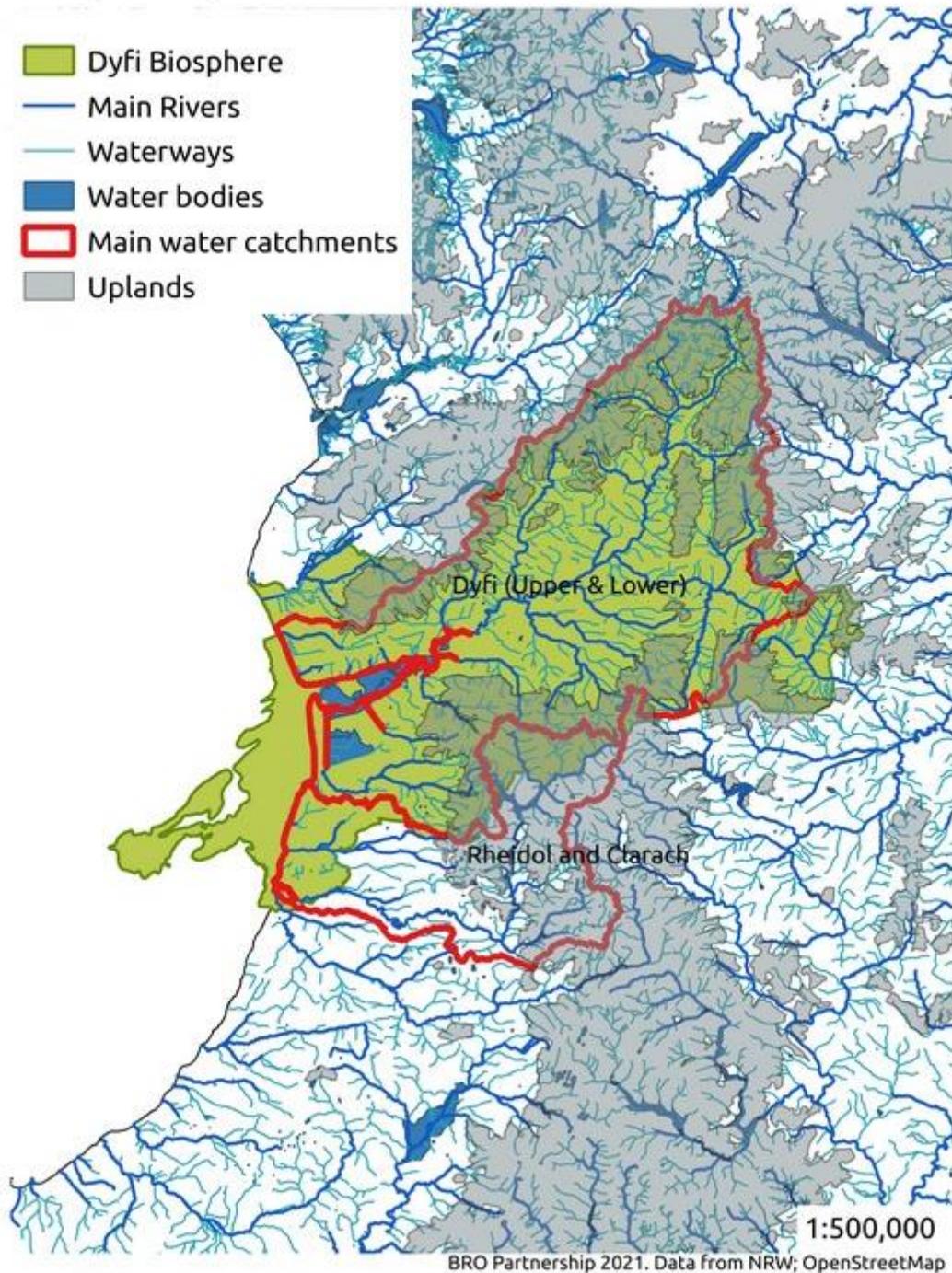
The overlap between the Biosphere and the S2S's original proposed area are significant, highlighting potential for further integration or co-ordination. High proportions of the Biosphere are also included in the Cambrian Mountains Initiative area, Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau SAC and Snowdonia National Park - whereas the Biosphere forms only a small proportion of their respective areas.

Most of the Dyfi Biosphere is within the catchment area of the river Dyfi, split into upper and lower catchment reaches.

New areas in the transition zone include parts of the Rheidol catchment, as well as a small part of the Severn uplands, and the Dysynni catchment, which leads down

to the Mawddach estuary. The designation of the Biosphere around a catchment is significant ecologically and brings into focus the influence of the surrounding uplands and their management.

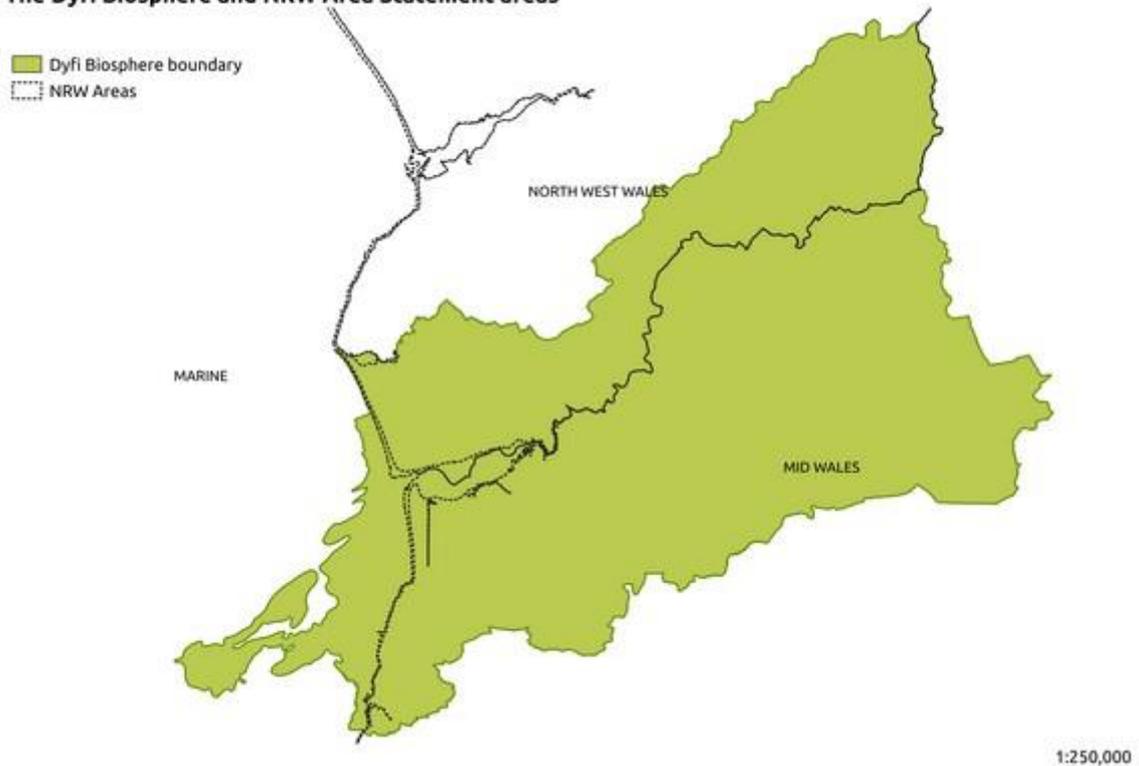
The Dyfi Biosphere and main waterways & catchments



The map below shows how the Dyfi Biosphere is split between 3 different Area Statements: North West Wales, Mid Wales, and Marine. In the same way as strong cross-border collaboration is required to co-ordinate between the 3 County

Councils involved in the Biosphere, a way of working needs to be figured out that takes into account the confluence of the 3 Area Statements. This highlights another dimension in which the Biosphere is an interesting testbed for the ways of working set out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

The Dyfi Biosphere and NRW Area Statement areas



5. Best Practice Research

The key purpose of considering “best practice” in other partnerships is to check whether Dyfi Biosphere’s current and possible trajectory is supported by experience elsewhere. This provides something of a reality check on next steps, how feasible various options are in practice. It also gives confidence to the decision-making on which option or options to pursue now.

So, this is a ‘whistle-stop tour’, ‘pen-portraits’ from experiences elsewhere. Details of each partnership are set out in Appendix 6. The information has been mainly compiled from public-facing documents, so the story of the partnerships in their own words. The similarities, or contrasts, of these other initiatives have been considered from the standpoint of:

- Broad aims of the partnership
- Size of area and types of landscape in scope
- Composition of the partnership
- Longevity
- Lead organisation
- Finance and Income streams
- Trading arm or related company
- Levels of Government support (e.g., local, regional, national)

Three other Biospheres have been considered: Wester Ross (Scotland), Galloway & South Ayrshire (Scotland) and North Devon (England). And these are then compared to the Dyfi.

All UNESCO Biospheres share three main functions:

- **Conservation:** promoting the preservation of wildlife, habitats and landscape.
- **Learning:** supporting a better understanding of nature and global issues.
- **Development:** fostering a sustainable economy and society.

They also share a commitment to address **Climate Change**, supporting mitigation and adaptation in a changing global environment.

When considering geographical boundaries, each Biosphere Reserve contains three elements:

- **one or more core areas**, which are protected sites for conserving biological diversity, monitoring ecosystems, and doing research and educational use.
- **a clearly identified buffer zone**, which surrounds or adjoins the core areas, and is used for activities compatible with sound ecological practices, including environmental education, recreation, ecotourism, and applied and basic research.
- **a flexible transition area**, or area of co-operation, which may contain a variety of agricultural activities, settlements and other uses and in which

local communities, management agencies, scientists, non-governmental organizations, cultural groups, economic interests and other stakeholders work together to manage and sustainably develop the area's resources.

Other landscape partnerships considered in some detail are:

- S2S (Mid Wales)
- Tir a Mor
- Llyn Peninsula (North Wales), and
- Welcome to Our Woods (South Wales Valleys).

These share the same broad aims as a Biosphere, without any official designation. In the case of S2S the physical area is mostly shared with the Dyfi Biosphere as well.

There is some consideration of other community partnerships which are not specific to Biosphere aims (or landscapes in general), but do have a story to tell about how partnerships evolve, and what delivery mechanisms or legal structures they “adopt to adapt” e.g.:

- Partneriaeth Ogwen, Bethesda (North Wales),
- Cwmni Blaenau Ffestiniog (North Wales), and
- Cambrian Mountains Initiative.

They are also possible methods of advancing the Biosphere's Sustainable Development theme.

Consideration has also been given to a couple of landscape partnerships which mobilised considerable funding in the recent past:

- Forgotten Landscape Partnership Torfaen (South Wales Valleys), and
- Valleys Regional Park (South Wales Valleys).

All of this scoping, from different angles, offers relevant background to the more detailed discussions of options, particularly governance, delivery mechanisms and legal structures, which will be developed as part of the co-design work in Part Two of this report.

5.1 Comparisons and Conclusions

By definition, each Biosphere is bound by the main tenets, themes and work-strands of a Biosphere - **conservation, knowledge-sharing and sustainable development (in the context of the climate crisis)** - and must report to UNESCO every 10 years. In practice, the priorities and progress in each Biosphere are uneven. This partly reflects local circumstances, but it is also guided by what funds may be available in any one period. Opportunities tend to arise in concert with government or other investors' priorities.

Biospheres have **flexible transition areas**, or area of co-operation, which may contain a variety of agricultural activities, settlements and other uses where

stakeholders work together to manage and sustainably develop resources far beyond core or buffer zones. Here, the focus may be more on sustainable development and skill-sharing, not so much on conservation.

The level of Government support, particularly financial, for the Biospheres we have considered, shows a markedly lower level of engagement for Dyfi, compared with the three other Biospheres examined. In the other Biospheres, Government support at several levels is very apparent. Biospheres are recognised as contributing not just to Government policies aimed to combat the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency, but also economic regeneration and health and wellbeing policies.

Biospheres Comparison

	Wester Ross	Galloway & South Ayrshire	North Devon	Dyfi
Size	5,299 sq.kms	5,268 sq. km	3,300 sq.kms (excluding maritime reserves)	726 sq.kms (excluding maritime reserves)
Delivery organisation	Wester Ross Biosphere Ltd, not-for-profit, community-led company limited by guarantee, with no shareholders	Registered as a charity, with Trustees from the Biosphere partnership. This is a recent change and prior to this the hosting was undertaken by the Southern Uplands Partnership	Hosted by Devon County Council, North Devon Biosphere Foundation is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee with no shareholders. The Biosphere Partnership has established an Executive Board to take forward initiatives.	Local Development Trust ecodyfi, on behalf of the Biosphere Partnership. A not-for-profit, community-led company limited by guarantee, no shares
Core funding	10k/year from Natural Scotland plus project funding	Yes, from local authorities and central Government, e.g. South of Scotland Enterprise agency have	Yes, mainly by Devon County Council (£70K/year) plus additional support from North Devon	None, other than £5k/year to provide a secretariat.

		committed to a five-year funding agreement worth £1.9M. Their annual budget has recently gone from £70k/year to £520k/year	Council, and Torridge District Council. The Foundation has just secured £50 million under Venture Capitalism.	
Staffing	0.5 FTE plus 3 FT project staff	10 (some of which are to be recruited)	They have 2.2 FT staff and an additional 6 project staff some of which are PT.	No core staff
Government support	The Biosphere continues to receive public support from all Local Authorities, government agencies and the Scots Government itself. Such support has included elements of core and project funding + publicity.	The new 5-year funding support from Scottish Enterprise support comes on the back of long standing funding commitments to the Biosphere by Dumfries & Galloway Council, South Ayrshire and East Ayrshire Councils, Natural Scotland and Scottish Forestry.	The partnership includes all the relevant local government bodies and agencies, e.g. Devon County Council; North Devon Council; Torridge District Council; West Devon Council. Environment Agency, Forestry Commission and Natural England, Fisheries and NHS.	The composition of the partnership demonstrates engagement from local and national government. However, this does not extend to direct, core funding or other substantial income to develop the Biosphere.

A brief look at the Visit Wales (VW) information on the Dyfi Biosphere suggests no particular priority, compared to promotion of World Heritage sites, castles, etc. And the profile in Scotland and England looks higher. Indeed, the Valleys Regional Park is promoted better in Wales. However, the Biosphere was only eligible to bid for some of the VW grant funding because of its status as a (sub) Destination in

earlier VW strategies - and this was largely because of the joint working around the UNESCO status.

The need for longer-term, core funding is apparent

EU Structural funds underpinned many of the Dyfi Biosphere Partnerships' budgets, in terms of projects and activities, if not core-funding. Mainly, such funds were time-constrained, no more than 3 years and with various Welsh Government, or Local Authority tranches of funding were often aligned accordingly. The future of replacement funds remains unclear in Spring 2021.

All the partnerships described in Appendix 6 have something useful to tell us, in terms of how to go about delivering on one or more of the Biosphere's key themes. And all tell a story of organic growth, adapting their organisation as needed, to continue taking care of their strategy and key activities.

Non-Biosphere partnerships are typically more community driven, and have more experience of the "people business side" of the UNESCO Sustainable Development theme. Wester Ross may be developing a different approach to this, long term.

When considering legal structures, delivery mechanisms, "form follows function" - therefore there are several options, and it is a case of selecting which vehicle suits best for the next stage of the journey. The aims and role of the Dyfi Biosphere Partnership will therefore be a key factor - what it seeks to achieve will determine governance, as well as accountability to executive action. Governance can mean how the Partnership is organised to consider more strategic aims and progress, and that is typically quite broadly comprised.

Governance can then be more specific to a legal delivery entity, or funded programme. From within a wider Partnership, that typically comprises organisations (and individuals) who are willing and able to operate, one option would be to establish an executive committee, a programme/grant management board, or the board of directors of a company.

It is possible and entirely normal to start with one set of legal delivery structures and evolve the scope and the governance over time. This can often include using one format for a time limited transition to a longer-term structure. Flexibility has become essential in a rapidly changing world.

6. Key recommendations and options

The following recommendations are based on the research undertaken and subsequent discussions with the Biosphere Partnership on the 3rd June.

6.1 Options

Three broad options were presented to the Dyfi Biosphere, namely:

Option A: Business as usual.

Option B: Establish interim arrangements.

Option C: Set up an independent organisation to run the Biosphere.

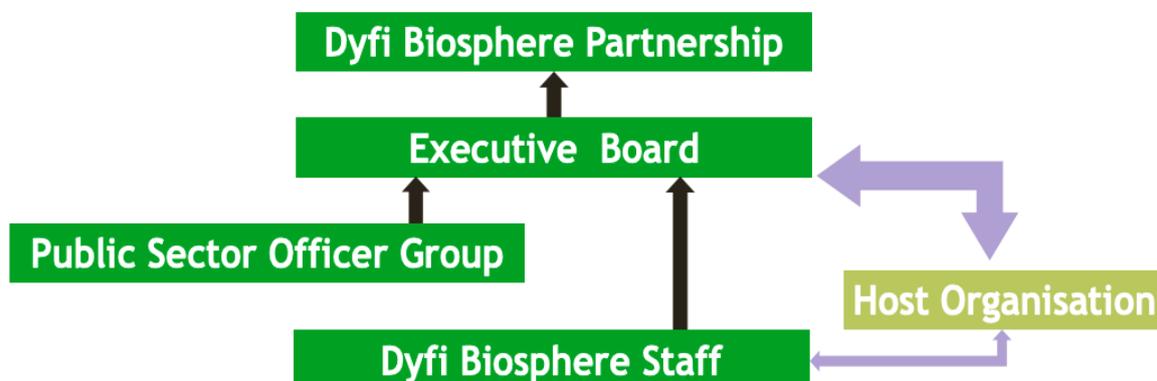
It was agreed that Option A was not sustainable and unless the governance and the funding situation could be put on a more effective and sustainable basis then the long term future of the Biosphere was at risk.

It was also agreed that going from the present set up and establishing an independent Organisation, Option C, would be difficult and time consuming to take forward. And whilst this Option remains the direction of travel that the Biosphere Partnership want to take, the most logical way to get there is through an interim arrangement, as indicated by Option B.

6.2 Option B: Interim Governance Arrangements

In taking Option B forward, there is an urgent need to:

- Agreeing a host organization.
- Establish a small decision-making group with authority to act on behalf of the Biosphere Partnership.
- Employ sufficient dedicated staff to take action and secure future opportunities.



Taking each of these elements in turn:

Host organization

The most logical and practical option would be for ecodyfi to act as the host for any finance that is secured and in turn any staff that are subsequently employed. In some ways this arrangement builds on the current arrangements whereby ecodyfi provide a secretariat role for the Dyfi Biosphere.

For ecodyfi to take on this role its Board of Trustees will be responsible for:

- The payroll and terms/conditions of the staff
- Handling the finance of projects, within the direction set by the Executive Board.

In taking on these duties there will be a need for clearly defined and agreed contracts between the Dyfi Biosphere Partnership, the Executive Board and the Board of Trustees for ecodyfi.

It should be noted that the ecodyfi Board of Trustees have considered this issue and agreed in principle to act as host. The ecodyfi Board has also indicated that if Option C is pursued in the future, and there is a need to set up an independent governance structure to manage the Biosphere, then they would be open to considering how their present membership could be adapted to fulfill this role.

This agreement in principle is a vital stepping stone for moving forward. If new funds for staff are secured, then will be important that a host organization is already agreed and ready to take on the role. There will therefore need to be an agreement on the administrative charge that ecodyfi will receive for acting in this capacity.

It should be noted that in discussions with stakeholders, other options for a host organization were possible, but these are secondary. It is clear that ecodyfi is the key stakeholder in the Biosphere and there is a clear advantage in capturing the institutional memory that has been created over the last 12 years or so.

It is also worth mentioning that in the interviews carried out for this report, there was a feeling, which was shared by many, that there was some confusion between ecodyfi and the Biosphere. This is somewhat inevitable in that ecodyfi has done so much to keep the Biosphere going. However, as this new phase hopefully gets under way, then there will a need for greater clarity on who is responsible, and for what. The new Executive Board, representing the wider Partnership, needs to be promoted as the lead body for the Biosphere.

Executive Board

Turning now to the Executive Board. Firstly, it should be stressed that this is just a working title. At the Biosphere Partnership meeting held on the 3rd June names were put forward to attend the first meeting of the Executive Board - and this is a vital first step.

We are recommending that the Executive Board has between 6-10 members and that at least half of these live or work in the Biosphere. It is vitally importance that the farming and landowning sector are represented on the Executive Board.

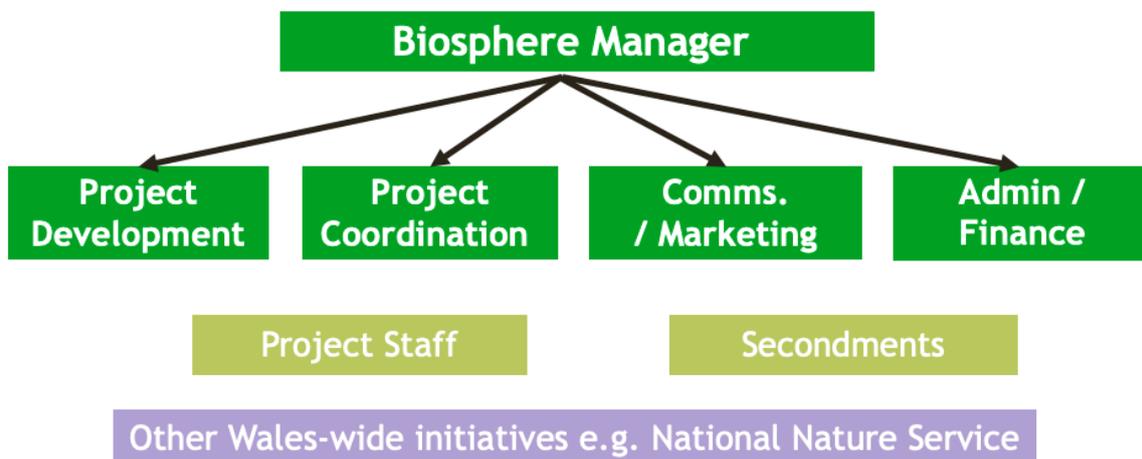
The role of the Executive Board is centered on the need to provide a focus for the forward planning of the Biosphere, to set a strategic direction and, if necessary, make quick decisions. The exact role of the Executive Board and its specific relationship with: the Dyfi Biosphere Partnership, employed staff and the ecodyfi Board of Trustees, will need careful consideration and to articulated precisely.

The Chair of the Executive Board would in effect be the line manager of the Biosphere Manager/Coordinator.

Staffing

Finally, in terms of the staff to be employed, having looked at the resources available to three other Biospheres in the UK, it is clear that the Dyfi is some way behind. To create new inertia, strengthen existing relationships with existing organisations, build new partnerships, coordinate existing projects and at the same time develop new initiatives, there is a strong case for establishing a small team of up to 4.5 members of staff.

Our proposed structure is therefore as follows:



The role of each of the team is set out below:

The Biosphere Manager/Coordinator will be the executive officer for all aspects of the Biosphere. The role would report to the Executive Board and be line-managed by its Chair. The Manager/Coordinator would in turn manage the other staff and run all projects associated with the Biosphere, as well as providing the secretariat for the Partnership.

The Project Development Officer would be responsible for identifying new opportunities, establishing partnerships and securing new finances. This is therefore a vital role in securing the long term sustainability of the Biosphere and its management - and the person appointed will need to focus entirely on generating new work, and not get drawn into managing existing projects or activities.

The Project Coordinator would take on the role of managing all existing work and strengthening existing arrangements, such as supporting community and town councils, working with the Dyfi Biosphere Education Group, forging links with Aberystwyth University etc. This role is needed to free up the Director/ Coordinator to undertake more strategic initiatives, and not to get drawn into detailed implementation.

The Communication /Marketing Officer would play a vital role in increasing awareness and buy-in for the Biosphere. The role would work closely with the Tourism Association and Undertale further business engagement. Securing several high-profile ambassadors for the Biosphere would also be a key task for the person appointed.

There is clearly a degree of overlap between the three main officers and with the Manager/ Coordinator, and this will require flexible working. The key point is that the Manager/ Coordinator has a much more high-level and strategic role and is able to liaise with senior politicians and other key decision makers.

Admin/Finance would be a part time role to provide support across all functions. The role would also allow the other four officers' time to be used as effectively as possible.

There could be an argument that going from the present arrangement of no core staff at all to a team of 4.5 is a bit of a leap, but the findings of this report have shown that in order for the Biosphere to seriously get going and to play a significant role, in local, regional and a national context, then it needs a significant fresh impetus.

6.3 Securing Development Funding

If the full team, as proposed, is to be put in place there will be a need to secure development funding. It is envisaged that the main avenue for this will be a follow up request to the Welsh Government, building on the initial approach made to the First Minister just before Covid.

It is envisaged that the revenue costs to employ the team in full will be approximately £150k/year. It will be vital to have security of funding for at least three years and therefore the likely budget for staffing will be around £500k. There will be other expenditure as well and this will include some project work to stimulate further activities. The overall required budget over three years is therefore of the order of £600k.

The starting point therefore is to make this request in full to the Welsh Government, stressing the value of the Biosphere and what it can deliver in terms of direct benefits and as an exemplar to demonstrate innovative approaches. In that context the request is not reasonable.

Securing this level of support over three years will allow the management of the Biosphere to be put on a sustainable footing. In section 6.4 of this report we set out an initial roadmap for achieving this.

If the request to the Welsh Government is not agreed, then it is worth considering some alternative scenarios. These are set out below:

- The Welsh Government state that they are supportive, but will only foot half of the request, suggesting that the remainder should come from the three Local Authorities and NRW. It will be important for the Executive Board to be prepared if this is the response from the Welsh Government. In effect, it would require the 3 Local authorities and NRW, as well as possibly the Snowdonia National Park to find £100k/year between them for three years. On an even split this would amount to £20k/year, or £60k in total. It will be important therefore to gauge the reaction of the public sector partners to this possibility. And to do this quickly. If there is a strong appetite to do this from each of the partners, then an alternative approach would be to present a scenario to the Welsh Government which is based on the fact that half the money has already been secured and the request is to match it. This would improve chances of success, but this all depends on how committed the public sector partners are. Clearly in a time of severe budget cuts this is not an easy conversation to have. But, as set out in Section 7 the benefits from this investment will be very significant.
- If both the Welsh Government and the public sector partners are reluctant to invest to this degree in the future of the Biosphere, then the only alternative will be to scale back the request. One option here would be to just ask for the costs to cover the employment of 1 FT Coordinator. Whilst this would be an improvement on the present situation, in many ways it would still mean that the Biosphere was severely underfunded, and as such it will take a long time to get initiatives going and particularly to be in a position to be sustainable. In other words, funding just 1 FT officer for three years will mean that more gets done, but the profile of the Biosphere and its long term future will still be at risk. Nevertheless, it is worth exploring what this position would entail in practice. The revenue costs for one FT equivalent will be approximately £50k/year and therefore a total budget of £150k over three years. Again, if we consider that the Welsh Government is only prepared to put up half, then there would be a need to find £25k/year from the public sector partners or £75k over the three years. Whilst this scenario is not ideal by any means, it does allow scope for applying for further grants to secure project funding. This is a difficult

balancing act though and replicates the *leaves without a tree* situation, whereby project staff come and go and overall momentum is based on a 'start, stop and start again' cycle. This is never a good use of public money.

- The third possible scenario is that neither the Welsh Government nor the public sector partners are willing to put forward any funds. This would be extremely disappointing, and there could be some political fall-out in terms of a failure to fund Wales' only UNESCO Biosphere. However, it is necessary to prepare for this situation if it arises. In effect the only course open to the Executive Board then would be to try and secure funding from a charitable trust or other funder. This would be a long road and a decision would need to be taken on who would invest the development time to put forward such a proposal. This would have to come from the public sector partners and in that respect any charitable foundation would assess support for the Biosphere in terms of the amount of match funding local agencies were willing to put on the table. This takes us back to question of the degree to which the public sector are able and willing to kick start a new phase in the development of the Biosphere.

6.4 Starting the journey

During the latter stages of this assignment it was realised that there was a window of opportunity to approach Welsh Government for funding. The formation of a new administration after the election gave some urgency to this strategy.

Consequently, it was agreed that instead of completing a full written report with the "next steps" described in detail for mid-July, it would be better to use the consultancy time still available to start delivering on the recommendations.

It was agreed that Option B (section 6.2 above) namely the adaption of existing structures with a view to eventually establishing a new organisation, should be adopted.

This required the establishment of an interim Executive Board. Two meetings of the Executive Board have been held (1st and 16th July). The first meeting was chaired by Chris Blake, the second by Jane Powell as chair of the Partnership.

The initial membership of the interim Executive Board included members of the Partnership willing and able to commit time to the new group (in total 8 attended the first meeting). It was agreed that there will be a review of membership in due course to ensure it fully represents the Partnership and the Biosphere stakeholders. It was agreed that the immediate task of the group was to make a funding request to WG.

It was also agreed that ecodyfi would continue to act as the host organisation of the Biosphere until such time as the Biosphere Executive Board believed it was appropriate, and had the funding, to justify establishing an independent organisation. For an initial period, it was agreed that the Executive Board needed

to meet on a fortnightly basis, although a move to regular monthly meetings may be appropriate after the initial work required by the funding bid. It was also agreed that a number of working groups should be formed to take forward the key priorities. The initial working groups were:

- WG funding - preparing and making a funding proposal to WG with the intention to create another sub-group specifically to link the funding proposal to current WG policy and legislative priorities.
- Partnership working - to look at the overlap and areas of potential collaboration in aims, objectives and priorities.
- Farming relationships - It was acknowledged that the relationship with farmers was crucial to the success of the Biosphere.

The second meeting on the 16th July re-emphasised the need for an initial approach to WG (via Chris Worker) that would focus on establishing an independent body and appointing staff. The case for funding a 3-year development phase should be made in order to put the Biosphere on a similar standing to other UK Biospheres and allow for the development of projects that would benefit the whole community. Once WG have agreed in principle that funding can be granted, it will then be necessary to work with relevant policy staff within WG to develop the final case for funding and how it will help to deliver the Government's policy agenda.

BRO's involvement in the Executive Board has come to an end as we approach the termination of the contract. However, we set out below our thinking for the future development of the Executive Board and the future for the Biosphere.

The Executive Board

Governance and operation

The Executive Board (EB) is, and is likely to remain, a voluntary structure. In the current interim arrangement, operating within hosting arrangements to be established with ecodyfi, the EB will report to the full Biosphere Partnership. In the absence of paid Biosphere staff, the EB will have both a strategic and an operational role - setting direction and priorities as well as delivering on specific actions, such as funding bids.

If funding is secured, and operational staff employed, then the role of the EB will migrate towards that of a Governance Board, setting strategic direction and priorities, reporting to the wider partnership although they are likely to retain the role of overseeing the work of the paid managers. However, in small organisations it is not uncommon for the Board to have a blend of both strategic and operational roles.

Should the EB elect to establish the Biosphere as a separate, limited liability organisation then it will need to become the Board of Directors of the new organisation. Setting the direction and priorities, overseeing staff and operational

management, reporting to the wider Partnership that may, depending on legal structure selected, become the Members of the new social enterprise.

For now, the EB is both the key decision making and delivery body for the Biosphere and vital to its future success and we are hopeful that the commitment and energy shown in the first two meetings can be maintained.

Membership

It has been agreed that a formal review of membership of the EB will be carried out when appropriate.

We recommend that the EB should include:

- A member of the ecodyfi Board
- The Chair and/or Vice Chair of the wider Partnership
- Representatives of other local groups and stakeholders, notably the farming community and tourism businesses
- Other appointed specialists chosen for their expertise on specific issues eg education and research
- Representatives of organisations who are currently implementing initiatives in the Biosphere.

This is an Executive Board and the number of members should not exceed those found on executive management boards - perhaps 6-12.

It is important that the key stakeholders are represented on the EB. Exclusion at this critical point could undermine the legitimacy of the EB and its ability to implement the emerging strategy.

Relationship to ecodyfi

The relationship between ecodyfi, the interim host organisation, and the Biosphere EB, needs to be discussed and understood by both parties.

The principal objective of the Biosphere EB is to promote and develop the Biosphere. Although the objectives of the Biosphere are compatible with the broader remit of ecodyfi, it should be acknowledged that the originations' objectives do differ - and this could lead to potential conflicts in the future.

We recommend that the Biosphere drafts terms of reference for the Biosphere EB that can be shared with and accepted by the ecodyfi Board. These terms of reference should include:

- The objectives of the Biosphere - drafted in a way which would also serve as the objects of the future independent organisation.
- Membership of the EB, the principles governing the appointments to the EB. It might be appropriate to limit the initial terms to 2 years requiring a re-evaluation and the reappointment of existing members, or the appointment of new members, if a new organisation has not emerged.

- The role of the Partnership - in agreeing the Objects, the Terms of Reference, and the appointments to the EB. The Partnership may evolve into the Membership of the future independent organisation.
- Making explicit the obligation for the decisions of the Biosphere EB to be compatible with the agreed policies and procedures of the host organisation.
- Confirming that any funds secured by the Biosphere for the delivery of their objectives will be held on trust by the host and that decisions about how those funds are spent are to be made solely by the Biosphere EB, although a charge for the services provided by the host will be agreed.

Relationship with the Public sector

With a new emphasis on the involvement of local stakeholders there is a danger that the public sector partners in the Biosphere Partnership drop off the agenda, and this would result in missed opportunities. It is therefore suggested that a new forum, which could be a subgroup of the Biosphere Partnership, is established with the view of ensuring that public sector partners, including the three Local Authorities, Snowdonia National Park and NRW are fully engaged and committed.

This sub group could be chaired by a representative from the EB and meet say quarterly. It will become increasingly important in the context of the Wellbeing Plans of the three Local Authorities and their respective PSBs. It will also play an important part in terms of the Area Statements produced by NRW.

Relationship with Town and Community Councils

The research undertaken by BRO clearly showed that there is hardly any connection between the Biosphere and the Town and Community Councils in the area - and given the lack of resources available this is to be accepted. If the Biosphere is successful in securing funding therefore it will be important to bridge this gap and therefore it is suggested that an additional mechanism is developed to liaise closely with the Town and Community Councils. It will take time to develop these grass root relationships, but nevertheless there is considerable merit and long term potential in establishing such links.

Relationships with other projects and partners

A working group of the EB has been established to review relationships with other projects.

The Biosphere has the potential to play a significant role in the development of the region for many decades to come. Other projects, including Summit to Sea, are typically funded for a few years. The role of the Biosphere will be to encourage and support any project which supports the Biosphere's objects. Any formal delivery links will need to be considered very carefully as they may carry risks. The Biosphere should certainly be well placed to support the delivery of the legacy of

projects when their funding has ceased. This may require an extension of the Biosphere area.

Key actions and provisional timetable

These dates are only estimates and may change.

Deadline	Task
End August 2021	Outline funding proposal to WG - justification for 3 year funding
End September 2021	Draft Terms of Reference of Biosphere EB prepared
End October 2021	ToR of EB approved by ecodyfi and Biosphere Partnership
End December 2021	Detailed funding proposal to WG, and/or development of bids to other funders.
End Q1 2022	If funded, decision on formation of independent organisation or a consideration of current/ new hosting arrangement. Establish a public sector sub group Establish forum for Town and Community Councils
End Q2 2023	If Biosphere still hosted by ecodyfi, then a formal review of strategy and the Terms of Reference should be undertaken

7. Benefits

The following section sets out some of the benefits that would be delivered if the management of the Biosphere was placed on a more stable and effective basis. For this we have assumed that sufficient funding is secured for the employment of 4.5 FT staff for three years.

7.1 Strengthening existing work and liaison

Having Biosphere staff will provide a much needed boost to existing partnership working and enable new plans to be developed more rapidly, and existing plans and initiatives to be implemented more effectively. There are several examples that fall under this category:

Tourism

From the point of view of the Tourism Group and Dyfi Biosphere Tourism Association, it is clear that there is a need to boost existing efforts. The starting point on this would be to review the existing action plan, which is by now out of date. This would allow a refresh of planned activities and engagement with local businesses. Within the context of Green Recovery proposals therefore this would be very timely.

There is also the connection with the Cambrian Mountains Initiative (CMI) which has looked at recreation routes and food labelling. As the section on maps shows, there is a geographical overlap between the Biosphere and the Cambrian Mountains - but also much to be gained in terms of sharing resources and approaches. The hindering factor to this is of course of resources. The Dyfi Biosphere has no core staff and the CMI has only two PT staff.

There are also considerable opportunities for linking up with CAT who are going to be developing a whole series of initiatives on sustainable tourism, and some of these will be linked to Aberystwyth University.

Dyfi Biosphere Education Group (DBEG)

Equally, a Project Coordination Officer could devote some time to support the DBEG. The Group has been somewhat dormant over the last few years and now operate either as individual practitioners or through small groups. The Action Plan needs to be reviewed and refreshed.

The work of the DBEG contributes significantly towards awareness of the Biosphere and through the support of additional resources for coordination their efforts could be extended to secondary schools and colleges. This would have very significant positive impacts across the whole of the Biosphere.

Penllyn A'r Sarnau SAC (PLAS)

The governance arrangement for PLAS and its management objectives overlap with those of the Biosphere. At the moment, liaison between the management of the Biosphere and PLAS is sporadic. Dedicated staff working for the Biosphere would be able to work closely with PLAS and identify projects which could be delivered jointly, attracting new funding to the area and improving the marine environment. This could be based on linking terrestrial river catchment planning with water quality. This would have a marked improvement on the marine environment and water quality on the Dyfi coastline.

Town and Community Councils

From the workshop that was staged for the 5 Town and Community Councils who recently joined the Biosphere, as well as the e-survey that was issued to all the councils in the area, there is clearly a need to forge more meaningful and effective liaison arrangements. The fact that no Town/Community Council completed the e-survey speak volumes.

The vast majority of the Town and Community Councils do not see tangible benefits from being part of the Biosphere and this is not surprising given the lack of resources that have been devoted to detailed community development work. There is a huge potential here in liaising with Town and Community Councils, finding out what their issues are and where there is potential for new projects and initiatives. This would encourage and facilitate action between Town and Community Councils, building up a critical mass for larger and more strategic actions and the pooling of resources.

The potential of this approach has been demonstrated by *Partneriaeth Ogwen Partnership* in North West Wales, where the initial pooling of resources across a number of Community Councils resulted in a wide range of initiatives and benefits for local residents.

Health and wellbeing

Through being able to offer more volunteering opportunities and linking the efforts of several organisations active in the area, the Biosphere has enormous potential to increase outdoor recreation and to boost social cohesion. This could also be developed into a social and green prescribing model, particularly for larger settlements such as Aberystwyth and Machynlleth. The Dyfi Biosphere is well placed to trial and develop such initiatives in a rural area.

Landscape scale initiatives

To date the Biosphere has only been able to develop and implement a relatively small number of landscape related projects and activities. Meanwhile, other organisations have developed large land management initiatives within the geographical area of the Biosphere, but more often than not they are not branded

as such. For instance, there are four projects funded under the Welsh Government's SMS which are either wholly or partially located within the boundary of the Biosphere. None of these are branded specifically as Biosphere initiatives.

There is then the question of S2S. This is now half way through its consultation and co-design phase and much of the negative publicity associated with the re-wilding element has been ameliorated. That said, there are clearly some in the landowning community who hold on to negative impressions of the scheme and will not want to be involved.

There is an important role for the Biosphere here - and with added resources it should be possible to assess how these different projects are contributing towards the overall sustainable management of the terrestrial area of the Biosphere. What contributions are these initiatives currently providing, or could provide in the case of S2S? And how will the sustainable management of the land improve the environmental state of the adjoining marine zones? In other words, the Biosphere has the network and contacts to pull together an overall land and marine plan that draws together two Area Statements and the Marine Plan into a single coherent catchment scale assessment. This could be a framework for planning future action in the area and coordinating the actions of several agencies.

The same point can be made in the context of the work being undertaken by the Woodland Trust through their Dyfi to Dwyryd project. This extends further to the North and as far as Blaenau Ffestiniog, but there is a very significant overlap with the Biosphere and a significant opportunity for collaboration.

Developing this land use framework would also tie in perfectly with the Welsh Governments' priority of developing a national forest. The Dyfi catchment area could play a key role in this and as such the Biosphere needs to be a significant player in any discussions that are taking place. The danger is that any work taken forward is done so through individual organizations, and not within the collaborative framework that the Dyfi Biosphere Partnership could provide. In other words, activities would take place in the Dyfi but they would not be associated with the Biosphere as such. This is largely what has happened in the past.

The interviews revealed that the farming community, on the whole, do not see much benefit from the Biosphere. They do not think that in its current form that it is relevant to them and their interests. This is a situation that should be reversed and key to this will be having strong representation from the farming community on the Executive Board. The Biosphere should be central to landowning and farming interests, both in terms of sustainable land management as well as food labelling. Clearly there is a long way to go before this can be realized, and this reinforces the importance of securing a core funding for a team of at least 4.5 FT staff for the management of the Biosphere. There is much to do.

As a final thought on this section, it is worth noting that several of the projects funded through the SMS in Wales have looked at the potential of Paying for Environmental Services (PES). This is a new way of thinking which draws in money from the private sector to pay for environmental management. In North Devon the Biosphere Foundation have secured a Venture Capital investment of £50 million towards environmental management. It is beyond the scope of this study to look at this in detail, or to assess the implications for the Dyfi Biosphere, but clearly there are huge opportunities emerging within the scope of PES, and therefore it is imperative that this is considered as soon as possible.

Increased awareness of the Biosphere

It is apparent that general awareness of what the Biosphere is, and does, is relatively low and somewhat marginalized. This needs a step change if the Biosphere is to make its mark and achieve its vision of being a national treasure and be internationally recognised. There is a key role for a dedicated communication and marketing officer to reverse this situation and give the Biosphere a much higher public and therefore political profile.

There are a number of things that will help in this. Reference has already been made to strengthening the relevance of the Biosphere to the rural farming community. This could be reinforced by a new emphasis on Welsh culture, history and language. The Biosphere has touched on some of these aspects, but there needs to be a concerted and longer term approach - and clearly this has not been possible through project by project funding.

Another aspect that will help involves strengthening the connection between the Biosphere and the residents of Aberystwyth. It was certainly the right move to extend the Biosphere to include at least part of the town of Aberystwyth, since this increases the potential number of beneficiaries and helps to create critical mass. But to date there has not been much Biosphere related activity to take advantage of this, and again this is down to lack of dedicated core staff. There are several active green groups and initiatives in Aberystwyth, so there is a potential to connect with these and develop more collaborative and strategic approaches.

The opening of the Dyfi Wildlife Centre also offers new possibilities for interpretation and as a base for any staff employed by the Biosphere. A series of talks and events could be organized there which are branded as Dyfi Biosphere initiatives - and this would increase the profile considerably, both for residents and visitors to the area.

Further down the line there is also the possibility of the renovation of the Plas building in Machynlleth, or at least the conversion of the former kennels into bunk house accommodation. Plas is a splendid building and offers huge potential as a community facility for Machynlleth, as well as a base and interpretative centre for the Biosphere. This will require significant capital investment, and therefore considerable effort to get off the ground. If it does happen, then it is imperative

that it is done under the banner of the Dyfi Biosphere - otherwise a golden opportunity will have been lost.

And lastly, the Biosphere should consider securing the support of a number of high profile ambassadors to increase awareness of its work and the value of the area. In this respect it may be worth considering having say up to four such ambassadors that would appeal to different ages and interests, and not exclusively focused on wildlife.

Research and learning

Whilst there have been one or two initiatives which have brought the Biosphere and Aberystwyth University together, notably the COBWEB citizen science project, on the whole the connections are weak. But from discussions with senior official within the University here is a massive potential for further collaboration. The University already does a very large amount of research which is located within the Biosphere - but this is not planned in a strategic way. In other words, the Biosphere doesn't have a research framework that the University can plug into. If there was such an approach, then this would set out a more effective way of planning future research and enable the University to use the Biosphere as a spatial laboratory for much of its work, particularly on sustainable land management. The obvious question is 'why hasn't this happened already?' and of course the answer is equally apparent in that the Biosphere has lacked the necessary dedicated staff resources to engage in this way.

From discussions with senior staff at CAT they are planning a number of very exciting new ventures and aim to develop a new identity in terms of innovation, moving away from technological fixes to a more people orientated approach. This is yet another fantastic opportunity for collaboration with the Dyfi Biosphere.

Finally, in discussions with Cadw they have indicated that they too are shifting some of their priorities away from conservation of buildings and structures towards a more people orientated approach based on sharing traditional skills and encouraging awareness of the historic environment. The Dyfi Biosphere would be well placed to test out approaches here and fine-tune future initiatives.

The above section is intended to demonstrate the crucial urgency for the Dyfi Biosphere to secure enough funding for at least 4.5 staff for three years. There is an enormous amount that needs to be done and quickly, otherwise significant opportunities will be lost and the relevance of the Biosphere will continue to diminish.

7.2 Benefits within the Dyfi Biosphere

To summarise therefore, if funding of around £600,000 over three years can be secured, this would allow the Dyfi Biosphere to employ upto 4.5 staff. Such a resource would be able to better coordinate existing networks and partnership and at the same time develop a new series of projects and initiatives which will secure

the long term sustainability of the Biosphere. It would, in effect, be a stepping stone towards the Dyfi Biosphere fulfilling its long term vision.

It is therefore relevant to highlight the impact this would have locally and within the Dyfi Biosphere itself. Whilst at this stage it is not possible to put down definitive targets, the range of benefits will include:

Better environmental management:

- Improved water quality through reducing run-off
- Reduced flood prevention through sustainable land management upstream
- Improved biodiversity through connecting habitats and increasing green infrastructure
- Carbon capture through habitat management.

Creating jobs in a rural area:

- Boosting sustainable tourism
- Creating new conservation and land management jobs
- Improving traditional building skills
- Creating volunteering and training opportunities.

Improving social and wellbeing:

- Improved community cohesion through more activities, networks and volunteering opportunities
- Improved health through promoting more activities in the outdoors and with the potential to develop social and green prescribing initiatives, particularly in Aberystwyth
- Boosting the Welsh language
- Highlighting Welsh culture and identity.

Research and learning:

- Developing a research framework and a formal link with Aberystwyth University
- Extending the work of the DBEG to secondary schools and colleges.

Partnerships:

- Enhancing existing and fostering new collaborative partnerships at a regional and local which span public, business and voluntary sectors
- Enabling agencies to work across boundaries in an effective way, particularly across two Area Statements, the Marine area and the work of three Public Service Boards.

7.3 Wider national benefits

Whilst the local benefits easily justify the necessary investment in the Dyfi Biosphere, there is also a very strong case in terms of the wider benefits for Wales as whole. The Dyfi is the only Biosphere in Wales and as such it offers enormous potential to be a testbed for the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (WFGA) and on particular to demonstrate how the 5 ways of working should be applied in a rural setting.

If the Biosphere is developed in this way that its sphere of influence will extend across the whole of rural Wales. It has the potential to be a focal point for sharing experiences, learning new approaches and developing innovative solutions.

This could be applied in particular to the delivery of:

- The Nature Recovery Plan
- Sustainable land management
- Sustainable tourism
- Active travel
- Climate change resilience
- Food labelling and promoting local produce
- Increasing the number of Welsh speakers

7.4 The case to the Welsh Government

Putting the development and future funding of the Biosphere into a political context therefore, it is worth considering the Labour Manifesto pledges which correspond very closely with the Biosphere's aims. These include:

- Creating a National Forest to promote Wales' landscape, boost sustainable tourism and support Wales' green economy.
- Delivering nature-based flood management in all major river catchments to expand wetland and woodland habitats and relieving pressure on hard defences.
- Creating a new farm system of farm support that will maximise the protective power of nature through farming.
- Developing a Wales Community Food Strategy to encourage the supply of locally sourced food in Wales.
- Establishing a targeted scheme to support restoration of seagrass and saltmarsh habitats along our coastline.
- Using materials with low levels of embodied carbon, such as Welsh timber.
- Promoting good quality skills in the areas where the economy will grow.

The Dyfi Biosphere could also make a significant contribution towards other manifesto pledges including:

- Taking forward the Economic Resilience and Reconstruction Mission for Wales.
- Investing for the long-term in the green and modern infrastructure Wales needs to thrive.
- Supporting young people affected by Brexit and the pandemic, by developing a young person's guarantee, giving everyone under 25 the offer of work, education, training or self-employment.
- Creating 125,000 all-age apprenticeships during the next Senedd term.
- Introducing an all-Wales framework to roll out social prescribing to tackle isolation.
- Address pay gaps based on gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability and other forms of discrimination.
- Help the most financially vulnerable in our communities.
- Expanding the successful scheme supporting community groups across Wales to create or significantly enhance green spaces.
- Introducing a tourism levy, ring fenced to improve visitor experiences and boost local economies.

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Stakeholders Interviewed

Organisation	Individual
ecodyfi	Andy Rowland Ann MacGarry (also Machynlleth Town Council
Biosphere Partnership	Ray Quant (also Ceredigion CC) Iolo ap Gwynn Jane Powell Alun Williams (also Ceredigion CC) Meleri Richards (also LEADER with Ceredigion CC)
CAT	Peter Tyldsley Rob Bullen
NRW	Rachel Jarvis Linda Ashton Kirsty Lindenbaum Ruth Jenkins/Gavin Bown
Welsh Government	Chris Worker Diana Reynolds
Cadw	Judith Alfrey
Future Generation Commissioner's Office	Christian Servini
Ceredigion CC	Carwyn Jones Evans Diana Davies/ Lynne Waters (PSB)
Gwynedd CC	Dylan Rhys Griffiths Cllr John Pughe Roberts
Penllyn A'r Sarnau SAC	Alison Hargrave
Snowdonia National Park	Owain Wyn
Powys CC	No response
Aberystwyth University	Elizabeth Treasure Prof. Neil Glasser

	Prof Colin McInnes
Mont. Wildlife Trust	Emyr Evans Clive Falulkner
RSPB/Summit To Sea	Sian Stacey Dave Anning Neil Lambert
Woodland Trust	Laura Shewring
Dolau Dyfi	Julie Korn
Cambrian Mountains Initiative	Dafydd Morgan/Ester Wakeling
FUW	Emyr Wyn Davies
NFU	Aled Griffiths Iestyn Pritchard
Glantwymyn Community Council	Sion Ifans
Severn Wye	Mark Gahan
Café Cletwr	Charlie Falzon Shelagh Hourahane
German Biosphere	Dr Volker Haring

Appendix 2: Notes from Town/Community Council Workshop

Present

Jeremy Barnes, Carno Community Council
Gareth Davies, Llanbadarn Fawr Community Council (and Ceredigion CC)
Matthew Cooling, Tywyn Town Council
John Pugh, Tywyn Town Council
Rob Owen, BRO
Sue Rice, BRO

Notes

What attracted you to join the Biosphere?

Llanbadarn Fawr

They struggled in the beginning to find a valid reason for joining because their Community is a very small area and they have little green open spaces left in the village boundary. Their population is about 1500 residents. Gareth was approached by Ray Quant who asked why they hadn't joined, and he explained he couldn't see the reason to join, but also couldn't think of a reason not to! As the Periodic Review on the Biosphere was taking place, the Community Council agreed to sign up.

Carno

Jeremy was previously Chair of Green Holidays Wales and they tried to join the Biosphere, but were told they were outside the designated area so they couldn't join. Carno is generally a farming area and most people are not interested in the Biosphere. He is unaware of why they joined, as they haven't discussed it.

He is also involved in the Carno Station Action Group, and they are close to getting funding to reopen the old station. They will be taking over the old station building and other buildings. Therefore, now, being part of the Biosphere brings opportunity for them to make the project a success.

Tywyn

Felt that they should have been asked to join at the beginning and felt left out and didn't know why they couldn't join. Aberdovey is integral to the Dyfi valley at the mouth of the river. They have a rich natural heritage and seaside resort. They are keen to get involved. When they were told there was a chance to join, they agreed willingly. There is so much in their area that lends itself to the Biosphere, they are therefore a natural fit.

What do you think your Council's priorities and challenges are in the next few years?

Llanbadarn Fawr

- Planning issues, loss of green spaces and residents concerned with development.
- Trying to get more trees planted (working with Greener Aberystwyth).
- Litter / Dog fouling.

Tywyn

- Can echo these for their community.
- Council has signed up to the Climate Emergency motion and they could and should be doing more in relation to that. It is difficult to know what you can do to help though, as they might have some powers but not necessarily the money.
- Greener Tywyn a priority.
- They have beach wardens, but there are problems with youth starting fires and leaving litter in dunes.
- Adre Housing Association can build on sites not open to general buildings and some have been built on the floodplain.

Carno

- Again agrees with general points.
- Getting (and keeping!) footpaths open.
- However, biggest problem is Powys CC and planning issues. The County Council have lost so many appeals that they generally allow all applications/ The Community Council feel they are being ignored and there is no point in commenting. They have good relations with the local County Councillors, but planning rules are ridiculous,

Summary of common issues

- Loss of green space.
- Planning.
- Anti-social behaviour - litter, fires and dog fouling (especially locals as problems have continued during lockdown).

If the governance of the Biosphere was strengthened how would this help them to achieve their goals?

Llanbadarn Fawr

Doesn't really know. If there was an officer who could visit the Community Council to tell them what services might be available to them and how they could benefit. They are a small urban area on the outskirts of Aberystwyth and they would be interested to see what sorts of thing could be available to them and how they could take advantage of them.

Tywyn

Everyone has identified they have similar issues which raises an opportunity to band together to bid for a collaborative project across the area. Working with the Biosphere could help them to do this, stimulating a partnership approach and pooling resources. Important that the community councils work together.

Tywyn grows from 3000 to 9000 people in the summer. They have tried to work with their neighbouring Community Councils, but they don't want to work together. There is a need to encourage a change of attitude, since they will be stronger working together. A dedicated officer in the Biosphere could help with this.

About 10 years ago the Town Council used to look after the village hall and didn't do a very good job of it. The Trustees applied to take it over and got a grant of £750,000 to renovate the hall. Opinion in the area was they would never succeed, but they did it. Gwynedd CC grant funding team were excellent, helping them to write the bids and get the funding

Carno

They did a village plan two years ago setting out plans to reopen the station etc, but nobody else has input into it - there is a lot of apathy in the area to get involved. They are developing their plans for the station building and one of their plans is to open a Laura Ashley museum (funding has been promised from the Laura Ashley Foundation).

People don't understand the Biosphere think it is a giant dome and don't think that it's for them! There is a need to get the farmers on board. Their population is 675.

Summary

Lots of common problems. some of which are difficult to tackle, and there's a mix of short term and longer term challenges. If the Biosphere was stronger, then they could facilitate the Community Councils coming together, advising where funding might be available and helping to implement projects that local people want.

The role of Biosphere staff would therefore be facilitation, advocacy, sharing best practice and innovation, bringing people together and generating momentum.

There's lots of potential energy in the communities, and individually they have had success in getting things done locally. The label of the Biosphere could help to keep this going and do a lot more through collaboration.

Final thoughts

Llanbadarn Fawr

It would be good if there was a monthly or bi-monthly communication to the community councils, a newsletter or similar. Since they have joined they haven't had any communication from the Biosphere that Gareth is aware of.

Carno

It would be good to get Transport for Wales (TfW) involved? They have Line Liaison Officers who work to ensure people enjoy their journey on the railway and perhaps they could be involved.

Could do with some more money for footpaths - The Powys CC's footpath officer only has £8 per mile to spend! Paths are mainly used by locals, and there are constant problems keeping them open. An adjoining Community Council has excellent signposting and waymarking of paths, and they want to replicate this. Unfortunately farmers often remove waymarkers and try to keep paths closed.

Tywyn

They used to have two men who walked all of the paths four times a year to keep them open. It is expensive for Community Councils to keep them open. All Community Councils should be working together to improve the whole area. TfW would be a good partner, as the train is a way that a lot of people enter the area. They could help with publicity and marketing. Trains are a good way of travelling around the area, with the new stations and the ability to change at Dyfi Junction. It will also be important to think about how they could improve sustainable transport across the area.

Sustainability is important and will be increasingly so. Community Councils will struggle to make a difference on their own but they should work together and the Biosphere umbrella could be a good way to do this and improve things.

The planned National Forest for Wales will also potentially bring benefits. There are so many different environments within the Biosphere, they are very lucky to have it on their doorstep.

Affordable housing is an issue. A house sold at £150,000 isn't affordable for Tywyn's local people. Covid has exacerbated the problem with more people working remotely. The other Community Councils agreed that this is a problem everywhere with lack of suitable housing stock for local people. This is something else that needs to be resolved collectively.

Appendix 3: Notes from Dyfi Biosphere Education Group (DBEG) Workshop

Present

Jo Munton, Vagabondi Puppets

Jane Powell, Freelance

Ann MacGarry, ecodyfi

Jenny Dingle, Freelance - used to work for RSPB

Jo Clanfield, Dyfi Beach School

Fiona Moran, Freelance - used to work at RSPB and MWT at Osprey Project

Andy Rowland, ecodyfi

Rob Owen, BRO

Sue Rice, BRO

Notes

What have been the main achievements over the last few years for the Education Group?

Jane

The Dyfi Biosphere Education Group was very good at the beginning when it was set up in 2010/11. It was new bringing together different education providers to work together. Previously people were all fighting for their own projects and priorities. Instead they looked at similarities and overlaps and supported each other. It was a fun and supportive time and they did some good work (packs etc.)

Jenny

The collaborative approach at the time the group was set up was good. It focused their work and allowed them to work to the benefit of the Biosphere. The work they do now is as a result of this. However, originally the work was funded but now they collaborate naturally.

Ann

Agrees that this was good. The sharing improved what they all did, looking at how what they were doing linked with climate change etc.

Fiona

There seems to be more of a community led approach to education and what they want and we need to do more of this.

Jo C

Beach School is for local people but they also get a lot of tourists as well during the holidays. It's about letting people know about the area and how to look after it and what it has to offer. They also look at the myths and legends of the area as well.

Jo M

Hasn't been involved in much in the Dyfi recently she works mainly in Newtown area. She has been running things that could easily be replicated elsewhere. She uses puppetry for education. She's particularly interested in water. She has done creative schools stuff and Cymerau.

Andy

Cymerau was a Dyfi branded project and interesting that Jo M mentioned this but didn't associate it with the Biosphere. The earlier years were particularly good especially the packs they created and were put on the Hwb for teachers.

What would you have liked to achieve but didn't or couldn't? What stopped you?

Jane

Would have liked to develop some food mapping work that she had started and having each school creating a local food map and meeting local farmers and shops. Some of this has happened at Bro Hyfgren ? school but lock down stopped things. She would like to create a local food map and oral histories of farms and maps and linking food and culture. Covid has been the problem and reason it hasn't happened. Time and money are the other issues for not doing things.

Also something about general awareness of the biosphere would be good to educate everyone about it.

The group hasn't really been a functioning group since about 2016. No one has really been funded to participate in the group anymore and it would all have to been on a voluntary basis.

Jenny

Oral history is something that she would like to do more of especially with older people. Its valuable and should be captured. The river project idea could happen next year, taking children from the source of a river and following it down to the sea. Travel is very expensive for schools and the main cost of trips. There was a scheme to get a free bus to places but it wasn't really taken up and was stopped. Public transport is difficult and something she wishes they could have developed. Their Biosphere hasn't had much funding compared to the ones in Scotland and could do with more support from government.

When the Biosphere first started CCW, RSPB and MWT all had dedicated education officers and invested time in the group and the Biosphere. However when cuts came they stopped doing this work and the momentum was lost.

Most people in the group are teachers and are all passionate about teaching and getting funding isn't their skill set.

Ann

Enabling young people to envision a sustainable future using old maps and photos thinking about how they use resources. Money and time and a structure to do it have stopped it happening. When relatively easy funding sources disappeared no one had the time or energy to put bids together and find funding. CAT used to have a number of education officers that also got involved in a range of projects at the time.

Fiona

She would like to develop training for teachers so they can do more outdoor teaching themselves so they aren't reliant on a teacher coming in but helping them to identify places close by they could use. Time and money are the problem.

Jo C

Giving teachers the skills and confidence to go and utilise their outdoor environment around them. The new curriculum looks at what is around them and how they can use it. Finding out more about what goes on around them what jobs are there and how to preserve them and keep people living there. More about what is the Biosphere, how do we tell people and share with them how special the place is and what it is all about.

Andy

It's a shame the momentum the group had at the beginning wasn't able to continue due to lack of funding. There was lots of potential but it hasn't all been realised. It would be good to be able to have a series of active projects running but needs resources. Also the scope of education work done in and about the Biosphere, deals with primary and secondary education but could do with expanding into FE and University levels.

Jo M

There have been a lot of projects that have been developed but not implemented due to lack of funding. It would be good if there was more sharing of what was going on, especially amongst freelancers to spread ideas and benefits.

Reflection

Still going as a network, still got lots of ideas. Covid has had an impact and resources are harder to come by. But is there an overall strategy and plan? Andy is forwarding the Educations Groups Plan dated 2017. Perhaps this needs to be updated especially in light of the new curriculum.

If there was core staff for the Biosphere covering education what is the potential?

Jane

You could have schools really integrated with the local community. Schools are catalysts as you can have conversations that you can't have outside that environment. It allows a 'we're all in this together' attitude. It's possible to have conversations about what's best for the future and it also brings generations together. Everyone would know what the Biosphere is and what it is all about. You would be able to teach the curriculum in the light of the local environment.

Tyfi Dyfi project will be starting soon - Jane to provide more info.

Jenny

She agrees with Jane about working with schools and the access to a wide range of people. Landowners and Farmers need to be invested in the biosphere and all the strands of it. Farmers need to diversify and there is more tourism development. There would be more links between the various communities and farmers would be more invested in the Biosphere as a whole.

Ann

She likes Jane's vision and also linking with older children and higher educational institutions. Machynlleth is interesting as there are a number of different communities. The link with farmers is important but Mach has a town community that needs to be involved as well. The schools are the place to bring them together.

Fiona

If you were visitor you would get off the train in Mach and you would know you were in the biosphere and you would be able to find out where you could cycle and Where to stay and buy local food. Local people would be proud to live there. Linked up walking and cycling routes. A biosphere wildlife festival, with walks and talks and education activities about the all the different wildlife in the Biosphere.

Jo C

It would be good to know when you are in the biosphere! Know what it is and where the area is and what makes it the Biosphere. For schools she's keen that teachers are given the skills and information to teach children about it so they learn about it and understand it and its links to sustainability and tourism and how they can be successful there in the future.

Andy

All of the above! Worked with PCC and Aber Uni to map out learning pathways to deliver on a pilot for people who might leave at GCSE or before and are not

academic, using the Biosphere to identify skills for people to learn to success in the area including apprenticeships.

LEADER funded projects include:

- Recruit train young people to gain filming and interviewing skills, and getting out to meet local entrepreneurs and create show case films them
- Creating new entrepreneurs

Final thoughts

Ann

It has been interesting to be reminded of the work they did and it would be good to be able to do more.

Jane

Not having thought about it for a long time it's good to refer. Currently working on a fishing project with schools.

Jenny

Feels children in schools should have as much access to this sort of things as possible,

Fiona

One of the good things that happened is working together and this has reminded her that they should talk more often

Jo C

There are some amazing people out there with a lot of skills and we should utilise them more and make the most of what the environment has to offer.

Appendix 4: Notes From Tourism Group Workshop Held 19th April 2021

Attendants

Andy Rowland	ecodyfi
Sadie Porter	DBTA member - looks after membership and treasurer. Runs a small caravan and glamping site north of Dyfi Estuary
Ann Eleri Jones	Tourism Services manager Ceredigion CC - hasn't been actively involved and hasn't attended meetings, but doesn't mean DB doesn't feature in the council's destination marketing.
Val Hawkins	Manages Mid Wales Tourism and Visit Mid Wales. Biosphere straddles the three areas they work with. Membership org. but they do a lot of destination marketing. Biosphere is a core area within the MWT region and products around it. Over 100 businesses within Biosphere area on their website. They are focussing on press and PR at the moment - as recovery from pandemic continues. This includes attracting interested journalists to visit and experience. They have set up a section within Visit MWT specifically on Biosphere. Web link www.visitmidwales.co.uk/UNESCObiosphere
Dana Williams	SNPA sustainable tourism officer. No direct contribution to DBTA since she is relatively new the post.
Beverly Dimmock	RPSB Ynys-Hir reserve Visitor Experience Manager. Involved with DBTA for about 10 years and is a past chair. Interested in marketing of the area.
Sian P Jones	Tourism, Marketing and Events Manager for Gwynedd CC involved in destination management and overseeing social media and website and Snowdonia mountains and coast work. Receives regular info from Andy. Doesn't attend meetings but shares info and gets involved where opportunities arise. Biosphere features on their website.
Wendy Abel	Has been involved for about 4/5 years - initially freelance coordinating tourism participation. Now Tourism Officer for Powys CC and attends in that capacity. Has also joined wider partnership on behalf of PCC regeneration team.
Romy Shovelton	Runs holiday cottages and has been part of DBTA for about 4 years. Is currently vice chair.
Marianne Walford	Business owner leads training rides and treks for more experienced riders from Machynlleth through Trail Rides Wales.
Sue Rice	BRO Partnership
Rob Owen	BRO Partnership

Reflective Look

- What have been the highlights of tourism achievements of the group?
- What might have prevented you from achieving more?

Romy

Main achievements include when they did familiarisation trips to find out more about the other businesses in the area. This enabled them to coordinate and send guests on to others. There was also a fantastic story bus event. They have also done a lot finding out who does what in different activities to create groups such as the food group.

Frustrations are that most people involved are also running other businesses or doing other jobs and there has never been someone responsible specifically for doing the things the group would like to see done. This is the main thing that has held them back. Bids to Visit Wales might have been better and more convincing if they had more time for someone to develop them. VW now want fewer, bigger and better applications, which has made it harder for the group to come up with ideas that are big enough for VW to fund.

Biosphere is so important to business owners and not sure if they have the best ways to promote the area to attract guests.

The Biosphere also covers a relatively small section of each county, so not a top priority for any of them.

Sadie

Main achievements are the work done with CAT regarding Spring and Winter Watch. They are getting a lot of publicity from that and Rob Bullen has been instrumental in getting that message through.

Finance, time and coordination are the biggest issues. With the Biosphere sitting over 3 counties it's an additional challenge in that it's not a top priority for any of them. What they need is finance and someone to coordinate and dedicated to developing it.

The tangibility of the Biosphere is also hard for people to grasp. It should be as easy to understand as SNP. People don't seem to get what the Biosphere is. People want to come and stay in the NP and don't realise the Biosphere is just a special.

Bev

Cooperation has been good with businesses working together as well and the links to and support from, officers from the councils.

In earlier days, when funding was easier, they were able to do lots of things such as getting banners and flags and leaflets to promote attractions. The story bus was

also good. But funding pots have changed and bids need to be ‘fewer, bigger better.’ This puts them at a disadvantage.

Understanding of what a Biosphere is hard for people. Due to lack of continuity of core funding and having a dedicated tourism marketing officer it is hard to put out a constant message about this. This can't carry on being a bit part of their work, it needs core funding for dedicated staff and officers.

Val

A lot has been done to raise the profile of the Biosphere within MWT. It is one of only two smaller area that have separate pages on their website alongside the Cambrian Mountains. It was initially marketed as Dyfi valley, but has now been changed to UNESCO Biosphere. The UNESCO brand seems to be recognised by foreign markets. It's the only Biosphere in Wales so this should be promoted. Marketing of the area has been strengthened with the Spring and Winter Watch programmes.

Wendy

It's a fantastic status to have at whatever scale and something to be proud of. Awareness needs to be raised of this, both locally and further afield especially since it is no mean feat gaining and retaining such a status. It's an area to market going forward. Links and networks that have grown from working together during the past decade has been good. Collaboration on projects is good, but has been sporadic and from the outside, awareness of the action plan and how things link together isn't clear.

Capacity issues have been there for a long time. Awareness of Biosphere both within and outside the area has potential to increase. It's growing at the moment, but everyone needs to get used to referring to it in all conversations and explaining what it is in simple terms to people. Quite often there is a reliance on funding, but not everything needs funding there are still a lot of things we can all do to promote and raise profile at no cost. Funding creates a stop start environment and negative feeling.

Anne

Tourism departments like Ceredigion CC have taken it on board and are using it in their marketing. The status is a mark of quality and something people look for when they choose a destination like seeing a Blue Flag beach. Promoting the Biosphere is difficult as people don't know what it is.

Sian

The regular updates from Andy that she shares with colleagues and destination management partners are very helpful. A lot of work has been done to emphasis the uniqueness of the area and the use of UNESCO and international status has helped to get people to realise its importance. They have linked the site with their

other UNESCO sites in Gwynedd and are working on bid to UNESCO to get recognition of slate valleys as a World Heritage Site (they hope to hear in July). But they still get queries from businesses and visitors what is meant by a Biosphere - is it a dome?? etc. But a lot of work has been done to raise the profile of the area.

Dana

As a national park they share a lot of core priorities with Biosphere. She agrees that people do not understand what it is and there is a need to raise awareness and understanding amongst visitors. They recently set up an Ambassadors Scheme in the NP, since some people don't understand what the NP is for and what it does.

Andy

We can reflect on the way the Biosphere, because of its status and the enthusiasm of the people involved, has punched above its weight for such a small area, but it still struggles to get a critical mass. There either needs to be better penetration of local businesses, or an expansion of the territory to gain this critical mass.

Summary of reflective session

- A lot has been achieved, but it has been piecemeal.
- There is a need for a central team to coordinate and this needs to include a dedicated comms/marketing person.
- Working across three counties and two regions poses additional challenges.
- It's not easy to explain what the Biosphere is and why it's important.

Additional questions

Is there confusion or possible linkages with the Cambrian Mountains and the Cambrian Mountains Initiative (CMI)?

Val

CM and Biosphere are two of the key areas MWT highlights

The MWT themes are:

- Wildlife and Nature
- Leisure and Sport
- Adrenaline and Adventure
- Tours and Itineraries

The Biosphere ticks all of the boxes. CAT also fits nicely, as do the nature reserves and visitor centres.

Romy

Having dedicated staff has helped CMI to achieve a lot recently. They are separate, but similar to the Biosphere in aims.

People go to SNP, as they know what is there - mountains. We need to be able to say clearly in one short sentence what the Biosphere is, so people know why they would come here.

Bev

Although the north bit of the CM is in Biosphere, they are very separate areas, as the CM goes so far south. Great what they have been doing with their staff and this proves the benefit of having a dedicated team.

Summit To Sea is more relevant to the Biosphere - how do we work and sit with that and their aspirations? A lot of the aims are very similar to the Biosphere. There could be confusion, if S2S progresses and we need to be aware of this.

Sian's work has been good with S2S and moving it forward and shaping the project. This has greatly reduced the toxicity associated with S2S.

Biosphere is a status to be proud of and is hard won. It's the only one in Wales and is something to shout about. It needs snappy quick USP.

Wendy

People get confused with what the difference is between the Biosphere and S2S. People need to understand that one is an organisation that is there for the long term and the other is a shorter term project.

Andy

There has been discussions with S2S, but the contract BRO are doing is to help us to move towards closer working and alignment, or even merging. Views of this group will help inform this.

The potential of high profile Ambassadors - should the Biosphere recruit different ones to raise its profile.

There was a consensus that this would be beneficial. Possible criteria include:

- Iolo Williams would be an obvious choice,
- A celebrity chef associated with the area
- Green travel person - adventure cycling side
- Well known celebs with green connections
- Lots of well-known writers, artists, musicians live locally or associated with the area (e.g. Robert Plant)
- Ambassadors should be chosen to be relevant to the audiences we want to attract.

Any other comments

The review is an exciting opportunity to give the Biosphere the prominence and publicity that it deserves. Securing finance for a core team would make a huge difference to what can be achieved.

Value of UNESCO brand - they can't use UNESCO brand logo, but they can use the name. Scotland are developing a UNESCO trail, perhaps this could be done in Wales?

We need to make the benefits of being a member of the DBTA clearer to businesses. But it's hard to do this - why should a business be a member, what does the DBTA do to make it worthwhile? Its chicken and egg situation, the group needs members to pay to join, so they have money to delivery things to prove worth of membership.

Appendix 5: Questionnaires

Online Questionnaire Biosffer Dyfi Biosphere

1. Hoffech chi lenwi'r holiadur hwn mewn Cymraeg neu Saesneg?
Would you like to complete this survey in Welsh or English?
 - Cymraeg / Welsh
 - Saesneg / English

2. Faint yw eich oed chi?
 - 18 neu'n iau
 - 18-24
 - 25-34
 - 35-44
 - 45-54
 - 55-64
 - 65+

3. Ydych chi wedi clywed am Fiosffer Dyfi?
 - Ydw
 - Nac ydw

4. Mae Biosffer Dyfi'n cynnwys cymunedau:
Aberdyfi Glantwymyn
Aberystwyth Llanbadarn Fawr
Y Borth Llanbrynmair
Bryncrug Llangynfelin
Cadfarch Machynlleth
Carno Mawddwy
Ceulan-y-maes-mawr Pennal
Corris Tirymynach
Y Faenor Tywyn
Genau'r Glyn Ysgubor-y-coed

Er mwyn gweld map o'r ardal, cliciwch ar y ddolen hon os gwelwch yn dda:
www.biosfferdyfi.cymru

Ydych chi'n byw yn y Biosffer?

- Ydw, dwi'n byw ym Miosffer Dyfi
- Na, dwi'n byw yn rhywle arall yng Ngheredigion
- Na, dwi'n byw yn rhywle arall yng Ngwynedd
- Na, dwi'n byw yn rhywle arall ym Mhowys
- Na, dwi'n byw yn rhywle arall yng Nghymru
- Na, dwi'n byw yn rhywle arall yn y DU

5. Wyddoch chi beth yw Biosffer?

- Gwn, dwi'n gwybod yn iawn beth yw UNESCO Biosffer
- Gwn, mae gen i beth syniad beth yw /UNESCO Biosffer
- Dwi'n meddwl y gwn i beth yw UNESCO Biosffer, ond 'dydw i ddim yn sicr
- Na, wn i ddim beth yw UNESCO Biosffer

Mae Biosfferau'n lleoedd ar gyfer hyrwyddo cadwraeth bioamrywiaeth a defnyddio adnoddau'n gynaliadwy er budd pobl leol a'r boblogaeth ehangach. Maen nhw'n lleoedd dysgu a phrofi ac arwain y ffordd wrth ddatblygu dulliau newydd o fyw yn ein hamgylchedd a'i reoli.

Mae Biosfferau UNESCO yn parhau i ysbrydoli cymunedau i weithio â'i gilydd wrth greu dyfodol y gallwn oll ymfalchïo ynddo, gan gysylltu pobl â natur a threftadaeth ddiwylliannol, a chryfhau economïau lleol ar yr un pryd.

6. Fuoich chi erioed i unrhyw ddigwyddiadau a drefnwyd gan Bartneriaeth Biosffer Dyfi?

- Do
- Naddo
- Ddim yn gwybod

7. Mae Biosfferau'n ddynodiad rhyngwladol a reolir gan UNESCO, Corff Addysg, Gwyddonol a Diwylliannol y Cenhedloedd Unedig. Ydych chi'n gyfarwydd ag unrhyw ddynodiadau UNESCO eraill?

- Ydw Nac ydw
- Safleoedd Treftadaeth y Byd
- Geobarciau

8. Ar raddfa o 1 i 5, lle mae 1 yn "ddim yn bwysig o gwbl" a 5 yn "hanfodol bwysig", pa mor bwysig, yn eich barn chi, yw diogelu a gofalu am ein:

- Hamgylchedd
 - Treftadaeth ddiwylliannol
9. Beth, dybiwch chi, fydd heriau mwyaf rheoli ardal Dyfi yn y 5 mlynedd nesaf?
10. Beth ydych chi'n ei hoffi fwyaf am Ddyfi?
- Mynydd I'r Môr / Summit to Sea
 - Menter Mynyddoedd Cambrian
 - Dolau Dyfi
 - Prosiect Gweilch y Pysgod Dyfi
 - Prosiect Pumlumon
 - Arbrawf Cors Fochno
 - Ardal Cadwraeth Arbennig Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau
11. Ar hyn o bryd mae sawl prosiect a rhaglen graddfa fawr ar waith neu ar y gweill yn ardal Dyfi. Ydych chi wedi clywed am unrhyw rai o'r canlynol?
12. Ydych chi'n meddwl y dylai cyrff sy'n cyflawni'r fath brosiectau gydweithio'n agos er mwyn datrys problemau, os oes ganddynt amcanion tebyg?
- Ydw
 - Nac ydw
 - Ddim yn gwybod
13. Y weledigaeth ar gyfer y Biosffer yw:
- Cydnabyddir a pherchir Biosffer Dyfi yn rhyngwladol, yn genedlaethol ac yn lleol oherwydd amrywiaeth ei brydferthwch naturiol, ei dreftadaeth a'i fywyd gwyllt, ac am ymdrechion ei bobl I gyfrannu'n adeiladol at fyd mwy cynaliadwy. Bydd yn gymuned hunan-hyderus, iach, ofalgar a dwyieithog, wedi'i chynnal gan economi sydd â sylfaen leol gref. I ba raddau, yn eich barn chi, mae'r themâu canlynol yn adlewyrchu'r hyn y dylai fod y Biosffer yn ei wneud yn y dyfodol?
- Trefnwch nhw ar raddfa o 1 i 5, lle mae 1 yn "ddim o gwbl" a 5 yn "hollol addas"
- Cefnogi amaethu cynaliadwy, sicrhau enillion a lleoedd ar gyfer natur
 - Ailgyylltu pobl â chefn gwlad a glannau'r môr
 - Helpu rhywogaethau I addasu at newid yn yr hinsawdd
 - Helpu'r economi a busnesau lleol

14. Oes yna unrhyw beth arall y tybiech y dylai'r Biosffer fod yn ei gyflawni?
- Nac oes
 - Oes - Rydw i'n meddwl dylai:

15. How old are you?

- 18 or under
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

16. Have you heard of the Dyfi Biosphere?

- Yes
- No

17. The Dyfi Biosphere covers the communities of:

Aberdyfi Glantwymyn

Carno Mawddwy

Aberystwyth Llanbadarn Fawr

Ceulanamaesmawr Pennal

Borth Llanbrynmair

Corris Tirymynach

Bryncrug Llancynfelin

Faenor Tywyn

Cadfarch Machynlleth

Geneu'r Glyn Ysguborycoed

To see a map of the area please click on this link: www.dyfibiosphere.wales

Do you live in the Biosphere?

- Yes I live in the Dyfi Biosphere
- No I live elsewhere in Ceredigion
- No I live elsewhere in Gwynedd
- No I live elsewhere in Powys
- No I live elsewhere in Wales
- No I live elsewhere in UK

18. Do you know what a UNESCO Biosphere is?

- Yes, I am fully aware of what a UNESCO Biosphere is
- Yes, I have some idea of what a UNESCO Biosphere is
- I think I know what a UNESCO Biosphere is but I'm not sure

- No I don't know what a UNESCO Biosphere is

UNESCO's Biospheres are places to promote the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of resources for the benefit of local people and the wider population. They are places of learning and testing and for leading the way in developing new ways of living and managing our environment.

UNESCO's Biospheres inspire communities to work together in creating a future we can all be proud of, connecting people with nature and cultural heritage, whilst strengthening local economies.

19. Have you ever attended any events organised by the Dyfi Biosphere Partnership?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
20. Biospheres are an international designation managed by UNESCO, the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. Are you familiar with any other UNESCO designations?
 - Yes No
 - World Heritage Sites
 - Geoparks
21. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is not important at all and 5 is critically important, how important do you think it is to look after and protect our:
 - Environment
 - Cultural heritage
22. What do you think will be the biggest challenges for the management of the Dyfi area in the next 5 years?
23. What do you like most about the Dyfi?
24. There are currently a number of large scale projects and programmes delivering or in development in the Dyfi area. Have you heard of any of the following?
 - Summit to Sea / Mynydd I'r Môr

- Cambrian Mountains Initiative
- Dolau Dyfi
- Dyfi Osprey Project
- Pumlumon Project
- Cors Fochno
- Experiment
- Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau Special Area of Conservation

25. Do you think that organisations delivering such projects should work closely together to solve problems if they have similar aims and objectives?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

26. The vision for the Biosphere is:

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.

To what extent do you think the following themes reflect what the Biosphere should be doing in the future?

Please rank on a scale of 1 - 5 where 1 is not at all and 5 is a perfect fit

- Supporting sustainable farming, securing incomes and places for nature
- Reconnecting people with the countryside and coast
- Helping species to adapt to climate change
- Helping the local economy and businesses

27. Is there anything else you think the Biosphere should be delivering?

- No
- Yes - I think they should be:

Diolch i chi am gwblhau ein harolwg. Er mwyn canfod rhagor am Fiosffer Dyfi, ymwelwch â'n gwefan:

Thanks you for completing our survey. To find out more about Dyfi Biosphere please visit our website:

www.dyfibiosphere.wales

Biosffer Dyfi Biosphere

gwerth y byd - world class by nature



Holiadur Cyngorau Cymuned Biosffer Dyfi

Dyfi Biosphere Community Council Questionnaire

Y cefndir / Background

Dynodwyd ardal Dyfi'n Fiosffer UNESCO yn ei ffurf bresennol er 2009, a chafwyd adolygiad degawdol yn 2019. Ar yr adeg honno, yn ogystal ag adolygu'r hyn a gyflawnwyd gan y Biosffer dros y cyfnod hwnnw, edrychwyd ymlaen gan ganolbwyntio ar sut y gellid atgyfnerthu'r Biosffer i'w helpu i gyflawni cymaint ag y gallai yn y dyfodol.

Ar hyn o bryd mae Partneriaeth Biosffer Dyfi (PBD) yn ymchwilio i sut y gall addasu ei llywodraethiant a'i chyflawniad er budd y Biosffer a'i drigolion fel ei gilydd. Mae Partneriaeth BRO wedi'i phenodi gan PBD i wneud y gwaith hwn, a byddem ddiolchgar pe medrech gwblhau ein holiadur cwta a rhoi gwybod inni farn eich Cyngor Cymuned. Bydd hyn o gymorth inni â'n gwaith ac unrhyw argymhellion ar gyfer y dyfodol. Allech chi drafod y cwestiynau isod yn eich cyfarfod Cyngor nesaf, os gwelwch yn dda? Oni allwch, yna a allech chi, fel Clerc y Cyngor, gan ymgynghori â'ch Cadeirydd, lenwi'r holiadur atodedig, os gwelwch yn dda? Mae angen dychwelyd yr holiaduron at sue@bro.cymru erbyn 25 Mehefin 2021.

Diolch i chi am eich cyfraniad.

The Dyfi area has been designated as a UNESCO Biosphere in its current form since 2009 and underwent its decadal review in 2019. At this time, as well as reviewing what the Biosphere had achieved over this period, a forward look was also undertaken focusing on how the Biosphere could be strengthened to help it reach its potential in the future.

The Dyfi Biosphere Partnership (DBP) are currently investigating how it can adapt its governance and delivery to benefit both the Biosphere and the people living in it. BRO Partnership have been appointed by DBP to undertake this work, and we would be grateful if you could complete our short survey and tell us the views of your Community Council to help inform our work and any recommendations for the future. If possible could you discuss the questions below at your next Council meeting. If not possible please could you as the Clerk to the Council, in discussion with your Chair, complete the attached questionnaire. Questionnaires need to be returned to sue@bro.cymru by 25 June 2021.

--

Pa fudd i'r Cyngor yw bod yn rhan o'r Biosffer?

What are the benefits to your Council of being part of the Biosphere?

--

Beth yw'r heriau mwyaf y mae eich Cyngor yn eu hwynebu yn ystod y 5 mlynedd nesaf, yn eich tyb chi?

What do you think are the biggest challenges facing your Council in the next 5 years?

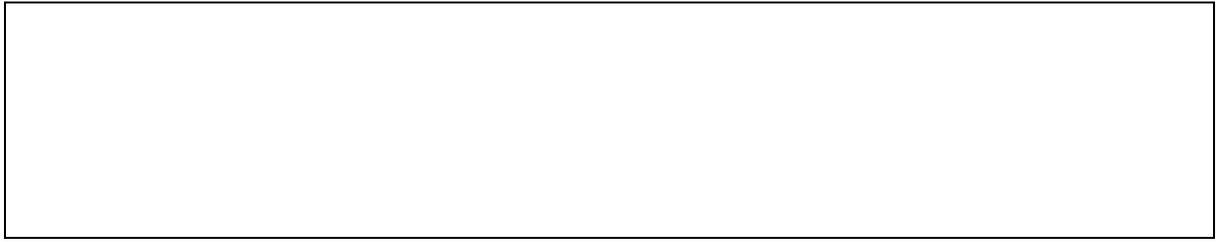
--

Beth, dybiwch chi, fydd eich prif flaenoriaethau i'w cyflawni yn ystod y 5 mlynedd nesaf?

What do you think will be your main priorities for delivery in the next 5 years?

Pa newidiadau y gallai'r Bartneriaeth Biosffer eu gwneud i'ch helpu i ddelio â'ch heriau a chyflawni eich blaenoriaethau?

What changes could the Biosphere Partnership make to help you deal with your challenges and achieve your priorities?



Appendix 6: Best Practice Research

Wester Ross Biosphere (WRB)

Broad aims of the partnership

The Wester Ross Biosphere provides a framework for local people, organisations and businesses to work together for the sustainable development of the area along with the conservation of its natural and cultural heritage. This helps people and communities to work in harmony with the natural and cultural landscape to create a positive future. It focusses around the three key functions of all UNESCO biospheres - conservation, knowledge-sharing and sustainable development.

Size of area and types of landscape in scope

It is dominated by wild, rugged mountains, remote glens and long, steep sided straths (valleys), which extend down to the sea. The coastline features a wide variety of marine and coastal habitats, from exposed promontories and islands to the sheltered heads of long sea lochs. The conditions are exposed and the terrain difficult to navigate and cultivate, so that it remains sparsely populated. Most settlements developed where the land meets the sea and at the confluences of major glens, as people typically combined cultivation of the flatter, less stony ground with fishing and harvesting other products from the sea.

The mosaic of arable croft fields around local settlements, with outlying moorland common grazing, reflects an important land use of the West Highlands. In 2016, the original Biosphere was expanded to cover 5,200 square kilometres of Wester Ross and Lochalsh. It became one of two Biospheres in Scotland.

Composition of the partnership

The WRB is a community-led and owned non-governmental organisation. The goal is to create a forum to share knowledge and best practice by working collectively with communities and stakeholders. Wester Ross UNESCO Biosphere supporters are businesses, schools, communities and groups who already demonstrate a commitment to sustainable development, as well as those who want to do so. There is a Supporters' Charter which is used to solidify commitment and involvement.

Longevity

Wester Ross has been home to a "Biosphere" since 1976, in the form of the Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve, due to its internationally important habitats and use as an 'open-air' laboratory for the long-term monitoring of environmental change. The roots of today's WRB are traceable back through a number of initiatives.

Lead organisation

The Wester Ross Biosphere is administered by voluntary, fixed-term Board members with a broad spectrum of skills and geographical representation. The Board steers the strategic direction and promotion of the Biosphere in order to enhance engagement at local, regional and international levels.

Finance and Income streams

The WRB currently employs three core staff. It will also receive £193,000 from Highlands & Islands Enterprise over the next three years in order to create a more sustainable future for tourism. With leadership from WRB, the funding will support the Wester Ross Tourism Partnership itself made up of community representatives from across the region, alongside industry representation from Visit Wester Ross

Trading arm or related company

Wester Ross Biosphere Ltd was set up as a Not for Profit Company Limited by Guarantee with no shareholders, in order to develop and facilitate the delivery of the WRB Plan, with regard to the three functions of UNESCO biospheres -and to complement, but not compete, with the activities of other local organisations.

So, Wester Ross Biosphere Ltd is a non-governmental organisation that oversees the activities of the WRB, and as such has no statutory authority or role with regard to national, regional and local laws. The Board steers the strategic direction of WRB with contributions from the individual directors, stakeholders, staff, and communities in order to make decisions about project development. Staff manage the projects and present progress reports to the Board at bi-monthly meetings. An annual review of the strategic process is undertaken by the Board, and UNESCO will monitor and evaluate performance every 10 years.

Levels of Government support (e.g., local, regional, national)

The Biosphere continues to receive public support from all their Local Authorities, government agencies and the Scottish Government itself. Such support has included elements of core and project funding, even during times of continuing budget cuts.

Galloway & South Ayrshire Biosphere

Broad aims of the partnership

The Biosphere Reserve is working to demonstrate the importance of landscapes and ecosystems for the future of sustainable development in a region which is undergoing change in traditional livelihoods. The designation recognises the

amazing wildlife, landscapes and culture of South West Scotland, and the commitment of its communities and businesses to live and work more sustainably.

A key objective of the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere is to facilitate the development of projects that use the UNESCO Biosphere designation to draw down funding to the region that will help to deliver a range of social, environmental and economic benefits.

Size of area and types of landscape in scope

Covering 5,268 sq. km, Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Reserve comprises a major bio-geographic region represented by an upland massif centred on the Merrick and the rivers that flow from this upland down through forests and farmland to the sea. Landscape mosaics in the area comprise uplands, moorlands, mires, woodlands and forests, farmland, river valleys, coast and shoreline. The area is characterised by a large number of small towns and villages, but all have fewer than 10,000 residents.

Composition of the partnership

The Biosphere is guided by a Partnership Board made up of representatives of the people who live and work in the Biosphere. It's a 'bottom up' participatory approach that puts local people in the driving seat, a place where decisions are made not by regulation but by discussion and consensus. The Partnership Board comprises representatives from public agencies, private businesses, local communities and environmental NGOs. In practice the Board would be recognised in Wales as a wider partnership, not a Board of Directors, or an executive committee as such. The Partnership Board elects Trustees for that more detailed governance.

The partnership promotes a Biosphere Supporters Charter. Signing up to the charter supports the vision of the Biosphere, and brings a range of benefits for supporters. This includes businesses being able to use the Biosphere brand for marketing. The partnership has around 300 individuals, businesses and organisations committed to the Charter

Longevity

The Biosphere, Scotland's first, was declared in 2012, but the smaller initiatives which led to the designation go back many years.

Lead organisation

The Biosphere Partnership Board is an independent partnership working on behalf of individuals and businesses within the Biosphere. It now has its own Biosphere project team, with funds being handled through a charity established specifically to do so.

Finance and Income streams

The Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere Partnership have announced that the South of Scotland Enterprise agency have committed to a five-year funding agreement worth £1.9M which will see the Biosphere growing its core team and activities across SW Scotland significantly. The new, enhanced funding partnership offers an opportunity to grow the Biosphere team from the 1.5 full time equivalent staff (FTE) it has operated with recently to an aspiration for 12 FTE over the next few years.

Trading arm or related company

Registered as a charity, with Trustees from the Biosphere partnership.

Levels of Government support (e.g., local, regional, national)

The new 5-year funding support from Scottish Enterprise support comes on the back of long standing funding commitments to the Biosphere by Dumfries & Galloway Council, South Ayrshire and East Ayrshire Councils, Nature Scotland and Scottish Forestry. That has been worth c.£70k per year, enabling the original, smaller core staff group. Those relatively modest funding contributions have levered in significant external funding to instigate a broad range of initiatives that would not have taken place without the UNESCO Biosphere team.

North Devon Biosphere

Broad aims of the partnership

The Biosphere is home to about 150,000 people, in a mosaic of trades and industries. Success has depended on the strength of relationships created. The partnership works together to connect people across disciplines, cultures and borders; and to reconnect people to each other and to nature - working together to create a positive future.

The North Devon Biosphere Reserve Partnership is the body responsible for coordinating the management of the Biosphere Reserve, on behalf of the constituent local authorities and stakeholders. The principal purpose of the Partnership is to help the relevant local authorities, to fulfil their commitments to North Devon's Biosphere Reserve. It will also engage with an appropriate range of relevant national, regional and local interests in the management of the area.

As required by the UNESCO Seville 95 Strategy (the statutory framework for Biosphere Reserves) the Partnership develops the vision and strategy for North Devon's Biosphere Reserve, facilitates and coordinates the implementation of it according to an associated Action Plan, which it reviews periodically. It champions

the interests of the North Devon's Biosphere Reserve and its communities, and provides guidance to the North Devon Biosphere Team (staff) about their work.

Size of area and types of landscape in scope

From the highlands of Dartmoor and Exmoor, down the river valleys to the sea and beyond Lundy, the North Devon Biosphere was the first to be designated in the UK. The Core Area is Braunton Burrows which is a sand dune system designated as a [Special Area of Conservation](#) (SAC) and a [Site of Special Scientific Interest](#) (SSSI).

The Buffer Zone largely consists of the Taw Torridge Estuary as far as Barnstaple and Bideford. The Transition Zone is formed by the catchment area of the rivers and streams that drain to the North Coast of Devon. Somewhat unusually, it also includes an area of sea as far out as Lundy. The terrestrial (as opposed to maritime) area of North Devon's Biosphere Reserve is 3,300 square km, of which over 3,000 is transition zone.

Composition of the Partnership includes:

Landowners/managers and marine enterprises, Local Authorities, Government agencies and Statutory bodies, Local Area Partnerships, businesses and networks, academic institutions, voluntary sector and community organisations.

Longevity

Earlier forms of the partnership coalesced around the aim of Biosphere designation, achieved in 2002. The work has been continuous, and the partnership believes the last 6 years has shown measurable and positive changes, establishing real momentum.

Lead organisation

Hosted by Devon County Council, the Biosphere Team's role currently includes:

- Preparing the Management Strategy and coordinating the delivery of the [Action Plan](#) for North Devon's UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.
- Providing biodiversity and visitor added value function on the [Tarka Trail](#) between Braunton and Meeth and on Cycle Way 27 between Willingcott and Ilfracombe..
- Providing biodiversity and visitor added value functions of the North Devon and Torridge sections of the [South West Coast Path](#) alongside the National Trust

Finance and Income streams

The Biosphere Reserve has benefitted from core funding by Devon County Council, North Devon Council, and Torridge District Council. The Biosphere now has 9 people employed (although this is not 9 FTEs), attracting project grant income.

Trading arm or related company North Devon Biosphere Foundation

This is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, registered with [ENTRUST](#) as an environmental body. The Foundation is dedicated to furthering the aims of the UNESCO North Devon Biosphere Reserve Partnership. The Foundation have recently secured £50 million Venture Capital funding towards environmental works.

Levels of Government support (e.g., local, regional, national).

The partnership includes all the relevant local government bodies, e.g. Devon County Council; North Devon Council; Torridge District Council; West Devon Council. It also includes key government agencies, e.g. Environment Agency, Forestry Commission and Natural England, plus Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority. It also includes the NHS North Devon Care Commissioning Group, so making a direct link with the health wellbeing potential of the Biosphere.

Dyfi Biosphere

Using the same comparison points above, currently the Dyfi Biosphere Partnership could be described as follows:

Broad aims of the partnership

To keep and improve the area as a great place to live, work and bring up children - and to create more opportunities for them to stay here. To:

- Place a greater value on our natural environment and on Welsh language culture.
- Increase activity in nature conservation through voluntary means.
- Encourage discussion, agreement and co-ordination between people and organisations with different values and priorities.
- Develop a more self-reliant local economy; less dependent on fossil fuel, with growth driven by local knowledge and resources.
- Develop a more sustainable area; with residents and visitors choosing locally-produced goods more often and reducing our impact on the world.
- Use the Biosphere 'brand' to promote the quality of local agricultural & other products and tourism experiences.

- Ensure education and training in sustainable development, as well as research in the natural and social sciences, in support of the Biosphere vision.
- Take advantage of help and advice from UNESCO and other Biosphere Reserves across the world.

The drive is towards inspiring communities to work together in creating a future all can be proud of, connecting people with nature and cultural heritage, while strengthening the local economy.

Size of area and types of landscape in scope

The total area of the Biosphere (core, buffer and transition zones) now amounts to some 726 sq.kms. The landscapes in this part of Mid Wales run from high peat moorland, through wide estuary to sand dunes and beaches, taking in the wildlife of broadleaved woodland, coniferous forest, farmland, saltmarsh and large lowland peat bogs, making it a haven for wildlife.

Otters swim in the rivers, ospreys come and nest, red kites are easy to spot and dolphin pods regularly visit the beaches. There are nature reserves perfect for bird watching including the Dyfi Osprey project and an RSPB reserve.

Composition of the partnership

This is cast broadly, and includes Ceredigion County Council, Powys County Council, Gwynedd County Council, Snowdonia National Park Authority, Natural Resources Wales, Welsh Government, Dyfi Biosphere Tourism Association, Dyfi Biosphere Education Group, RSPB, Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, Mid Wales Africa Network, and ecodyfi.

There is also a Supporters scheme, where people make a regular monthly contribution towards the cost of coordinating and developing the Dyfi Biosphere initiative. This is very helpful, because the Biosphere does not receive any “core funding” - its aims can only currently be achieved by people and organisations working in co-operation. There is also a Supporters Charter, where organisations demonstrate their support for the Biosphere Vision. They are then allowed to use the Dyfi Biosphere logo to show this.

Longevity

The Biosphere achieved formal status in 2009. But as with the partnerships above, the designation was a success built on earlier landscape partnerships and projects in the area.

Lead organisation

The Dyfi Biosphere’s status is voluntary and there is no regular funding for core activities, so its aims have only been achieved by people and organisations

networking. Because the Biosphere is not an organisation with its own bank account, local Development Trust ecodyfi manages any funds which are attracted on behalf of the Dyfi Biosphere Partnership.

Finance and Income streams

The coordinating Partnership has no dedicated core funding of its own, but partners can act in its name, within the aims of the Biosphere. Sometimes they bring new resources into the area such as funding and expertise, e.g.:

- The Dolau Dyfi Project aims to enhance and create wildflower habitat and help connect people and nature through a range of activities in and near local communities. This project will undertake work to reverse the decline locally and so improve and restore flowering habitat that local people and visitors can enjoy while also benefiting pollinators, farmland birds and other species creating new opportunities to engage with nature. The project will also invest in a programme of led walks and volunteer activities, to benefit health and well being throughout the project period, which is to continue until the end of June 2022.
- *Dyfi Community Energy Fund* - [Bro Dyfi Community Renewables Ltd](#) is an energy generation cooperative that erected two wind turbines behind the Centre for Alternative Technology at Pantperthog. Some of the profits are put into a Community Energy Fund that is managed by ecodyfi, on behalf of the cooperative and the Community Councils for Corris and Glantwymyn. The Fund gives grants to local organisations for projects that reduce carbon emissions, such as the upgraded lighting at Pantperthog Village Hall.

Trading arm or related company

The partnership is not registered as a charity, nor does it operate a trading company. It is a voluntary association of interested parties.

Levels of Government support (e.g., local, regional, national)

The composition of the partnership demonstrates considerable engagement from local and national government. However, this does not extend to direct, core funding or other substantial income to develop the Biosphere. It has been successful with small Government schemes, e.g., ENRAW.

Summit to Sea

Broad aims of the partnership

Summit to Sea is a voluntary partnership in Mid-Wales exploring innovative approaches to working for nature at landscape-scale. The aim is a shared, agreed and inspiring large-scale approach to the use of natural resources, for the good of

nature and people This will mean collaborating across ownership boundaries to develop bold solutions rooted in the heritage and culture of the local land and sea.

A vision of this scale requires a coordinated effort between landowners, communities, farmers, fishers, foresters, public bodies, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), businesses and relevant experts.

Size of area and types of landscape in scope

The Summit to Sea project is working in an area of Mid-Wales, from the rugged uplands of the Cambrian Mountains, down through wooded valleys to the Dyfi Estuary and out into the marine-protected areas of Cardigan Bay. The project area lies across the north of Ceredigion and western Powys.

There are a diverse range of habitat types here, including grazed upland grassland, deciduous woodland, lowland pasture, saltmarshes, dune systems, freshwater lakes and rivers, an internationally important raised bog, an estuary which is home to nesting ospreys, and marine reefs. The communities who live here are rightly proud of this extraordinary but little-celebrated part of Wales.

The project area overlaps very largely with the [Dyfi Biosphere Reserve](#). It includes the [Dyfi National Nature Reserve](#), as well as several Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) like [Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau](#) - to name just three of the many designations of the area.

Composition of the partnership

It had quite a wide range of original partners in the stages building up to the original funding award, and immediately after.. The project partner organisations currently are: RSPB, [Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust](#), Coed Cadw, Whale & Dolphin Conservation, Plas Marine SAC, and the Marine Conservation Society. The partnership will be broadened further. Representatives of each partner organisation sit on a steering group for the project, which meets quarterly.

It aims to work with local communities and landowners in establishing this zone, and work towards a wide range of ecological, economic and social outcomes , including ecological restoration, nature-based enterprise and infrastructure - hence the need for a wide range of partners with relevant backgrounds

Longevity

The Summit to Sea Project began in 2017, as a range of stakeholders came together to explore the possibilities for a large-scale ecological restoration project in the Pumlumon area.

Lead organisation

RSPB currently hosts the Summit to Sea project and staff.

Finance and Income streams

A partnership led by Rewilding Britain applied to the Endangered Landscapes Programme (ELP) for funding. The project was funded for a 5-year period, with a budget of c.£3.4 million pounds. It is currently in a co-design phase, the results of which will be presented to the funder to unlock the balance of the money (c.£2 million).

Trading arm or related company

The project is not registered as a charity or a company. It is not constituted at all, being simply a voluntary association for the purposes of this project.

Levels of Government support (e.g., local, regional, national)

No government bodies or agencies currently attend the partnership, and there has been little tangible support to date.

Cambrian Mountains Initiative

Broad aims of the partnership

To support and create self-sustaining, resilient and environmentally sustainable businesses and communities, enjoying a high quality of life and proud of their place within the Cambrian Mountains - in a high quality environment adapted to the effects of climate change, delivering vital ecosystem services of value to the nation. The initiative wants the region to be nationally and internationally recognised as a distinct produce and tourism destination.

Their current Gweithio Gyda'n Gilydd project works on:

- Increasing the profile and understanding of the region with local residents and visitors.
- Increasing the use of the words Cambrian Mountains on marketing materials and platforms.
- Researching the opportunities possible from gaining official status for this wonderful part of Wales.

Size of area and types of landscape in scope

The area covers 1,968 square kilometres spanning three local authorities (Powys, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire). The local economy relies on agriculture and tourism, reflecting the deeply rural nature of the area. It is an area of exceptional unspoilt upland landscapes. It is an extensive upland plateau cut by deep valleys running east and west, some forming the headwaters of Wales's major rivers, such as the Severn, Tywi and the Wye, as well as feeding into the Dyfi. The area

supports valued habitats and species. Commercial forest plantations cover very large blocks of land, primarily upland, but also large parts of some valleys.

Composition of the partnership

Cambrian Mountains Initiative (CMI) was launched in June 2008 as a broad partnership to deliver Integrated (Sustainable) Rural Development for the landscape area of the Cambrian Mountains and its surrounding communities. It has often worked in tandem with Cambrian Mountains Society, a campaigning body set up in 2005 to promote measures to sustain or enhance the landscape, natural beauty, biodiversity, archaeology, scientific interest and cultural heritage of the Cambrian Mountains, and to raise awareness about these qualities.

Longevity

The Initiative was launched by The Prince of Wales in June 2008 with a mission statement of “Working to ensure a sustainable future for the communities of the Cambrian Mountains area in ways that care for its natural and cultural assets”. The initial intent was to support the marketing and branding of Cambrian Mountains beef, lamb and wool. This expanded through the Dyfodol Cambrian Futures (DCF) project¹¹ into raising the profile of the area, supporting initiatives that promote sustainable development, engaging directly with a wide range of interests including tourism operators., This included producing a list of 11 walks around the area, and promoting the Dark Skies project.

Lead organisation

The Cambrian Mountains Initiative CIC, a company created in 2014 specifically to develop the aims and practical projects of the CMI, acting as an effective conduit for funding.

Finance and Income streams

Much of this work has been supported by all three Local authorities via the EU Leader programme. Specific projects have benefitted from EU funding, e.g., Gweithio Gyda'n Gilydd project is an Rural Development Plan-funded project delivered by the CMI 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. This is sufficient to employ 2 PT staff.

Trading arm or related company

A Community Interest Company (CIC) was established in 2014, originally to run contracts and license branding. Three product-focused CICs, for marketing lamb, beef, and wool, have also been added to the Initiative.

Levels of Government support (e.g., local, regional, national)

As a partnership project, the Initiative has been variously supported by the Welsh Government, local authorities, and NRW. However, the Initiative has not had permanent staff, and has largely relied on pro bono support from partners, although there have been some externally funded capacity-building or delivery positions.

Tir a Mor Llyn Peninsula

Broad aims of the partnership

The work they have been doing recently, funded by the Sustainable Management Scheme, has broadly 5 elements:

- Coastal habitat connectivity improvement.
- Improving water quality through a river catchment approach (the driver for this was the loss of the Blue Flag status for one of their beaches).
- Footpath improvements, to link the Wales Coast Path with a new North/South route, thus creating circular routes.
- Trialling a new payments scheme on three National Trust farms using a paying for Environmental Services (PES) approach.
- Education work, have developing a pack which has been shared with other counties, notably Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire.

Size of area and types of landscape in scope

The area of Llŷn is about 400 square kilometres with a population is around 20,000, with the Llyn AONB being a key focus. It is a popular destination for both tourists and holiday home owners. Large stretches of the northern coast consist of steep cliffs and rugged rocks with offshore islands and stacks, while there are more extensive sandy beaches on the southern coast, such as Porth and Neigl.

North of Abersoch a series of sand dunes have developed. The landscape is divided into a patchwork of fields, with the traditional field boundaries, stone walls, and hedgerows. Communities within the Llŷn Peninsula rely on and benefit from their natural resources, and farming continues to be very important.

Composition of the partnership

The Llyn Partnership is well established and has evolved over the years as it delivered various new project funding. The current partnership is led by Gwynedd County Council, who provide a secretariat and deal with the money, but it is very much an equal partnership.

They meet regularly and there is a strong element of cooperation and trust between the partners themselves. The other main organisations involved include: National Trust, NRW, Keep Wales Tidy, Coleg Menior Dwyfor, Eco Museum Llyn, FUW and the NFU.

Longevity

The Llyn Partnership has been operating for over 20 years, delivering various projects, including:

- Cadw'r Lliw yn Llyn (a coastal heathland project funded under Objective One, Euro-funding 20 years ago).
- Landscape Partnership funding through the HLF.
- Nature Fund, which was a prototype for the current SMS project.

Lead organisation

The project lead is a staff member from the Environment Team in Gwynedd CC, who runs Tir a Mor in addition to other duties. The Partnership could not have operated the SMS unless GCC took the financial lead. The partnership also has some paid time available from a staff member in the Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau SAC.

Finance and Income streams

Current project funding is through the Welsh Government's Sustainable Management Scheme, so largely underpinned by EU funds. The partnership does not receive core funding, except in the sense that Gwynedd's Council's staff member provides practical and essential help.

Trading arm or related company

The partnership is purely a voluntary association, without a legal trading status or charitable status. Funds are applied for and managed by the County Council, or other partner organisations.

Levels of Government support (e.g., local, regional, national)

As above, the local Council has been a staunch supporter of the broad landscape partnership, without being able to allocate many direct resources. This has given the necessary credibility (due diligence) to bid for Welsh Government and EU funds, but that is a fiercely competitive.

Other Partnerships in North Wales

Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau SAC

The coastal area of the Dyfi Biosphere overlaps with this maritime Special Conservation Area in Cardigan Bay. The focus is heavily on nature conservation,

and specific to coastal waters and habitats. The area encompassed by this SAC is extremely important, not only biologically but socially and economically - fishing, recreation and tourism are all key local industries which depend on a thriving natural environment.

SACs are statutory designations, the responsibility of government (particularly local authorities and statutory agencies) to maintain. The three Local Authorities of Gwynedd, Powys and Ceredigion jointly take responsibility, and have a staff member allocated, hosted by

Gwynedd CC. Their role includes delivery, development and coordination - both locally and further afield. The post is part-time, with the current holder also being the Project officer for the Tir a Mor project described above.

NRW and Trinity House are key stakeholders and partners, but the highly-focused nature of the SAC work means that the partnership is also quite simply comprised. As well as a

steering group in the form of the 3 local authorities, they have a wider network group of about 20 groups and organisations, e.g., Whale and Dolphin Conservation.

The project team engages widely, and although nature conservation is paramount, their work is also consistent with the other two Biosphere themes.

Core funding is small, coming principally from government sources. In effect, the core group and staff member have to bid for project funds. Some of these also derive from public funds, but it is a competitive process. They have been relatively successful in this so far.

Ogwen Partnership. Bethesda (North Wales)

The Partnership is a community-based local enterprise network, and as such it has some lessons for the Sustainable Development strand of the Biosphere's vision.

Dyffryn Ogwen is a place with a strong sense of local character, which includes the town of Bethesda and a string of villages along the valley, associated with a history of slate quarrying industries. Although it has areas of higher deprivation, as with many post industrial areas, it is also rich in natural beauty and heritage, as well as a strong community spirit, and a vibrant arts scene.

Partneriaeth Ogwen was established as a social enterprise in 2013, working for the benefit of the economy, society and communities of Dyffryn Ogwen. It began as an innovative collaboration between Bethesda, Llanllechid and Llandygai Community Councils in order to provide a joint clerking service to the 3 councils. In the process of creating a vehicle for collaboration, these communities found they had unlocked a far greater potential to develop joint projects.

It now develops community, economic and environmental regeneration projects; manages properties & develops community asset transfer projects; and generally supports and incubates diverse projects that create a healthy, vibrant and sustainable community.

Partneriaeth Ogwen led on the development of the Ynni Ogwen community hydro scheme, from the initial concept to raising nearly half a million pounds through a local community share offer. Ynni Ogwen Cyf was set up as a community benefit company and has now been generating renewable energy for over three years. As well as the 100KW hydro scheme, Ynni Ogwen has now gone on to develop a 21KW community solar scheme, erecting PV panels on 6 community buildings. Surplus profits are reinvested in local environmental and community projects.

At the same time as developing the community hydro scheme, Partneriaeth Ogwen led on the community engagement for setting up the first Energy Local club in Wales. The Energy Local club helps members to match their electricity use with power from the local National Trust hydro plant, enabling people to take control of electricity bills while supporting local renewable energy. Successful events, e.g. an Energy Saving Fair, have also been held to provide energy saving advice to locals.

Partneriaeth Ogwen has also lent itself naturally to taking over the management of community assets, such as the Dyffryn Ogwen Community Library. This was due to be closed, but with the support of Gwynedd Council is now in the hands of the community, and still open as a valuable resource for local people to access information, entertainment, and the internet.

Another recent project, 'Cadwyn Ogwen', has brought together local businesses under a partnership, working together to sell and deliver their products locally. Independent businesses in the area supply a range of produce including veg boxes, cheese, fish, and mushrooms, which are delivered using the community electric vehicle - reducing food miles and carbon footprint whilst supporting the local economy.

This has come about recently in order to help local people access home deliveries during the Covid-19 outbreak, but it aims to support local businesses to develop local supply chain resilience well into the future.

Dyffryn Gwyrdd is Partneriaeth Ogwen's newest initiative and builds on their strengths and experience in developing sustainability projects in the valley. With the support of a half a million pound grant from the National Lottery's Community Fund, the new project will tackle poverty through community led environmental action. This includes tackling fuel poverty through promoting energy efficiency, and the purchase of another community electric vehicle to tackle transport poverty. Additional initiatives being developed are environmental wellbeing

projects such as sustainable food growing, and coordinating volunteering opportunities outdoors to reduce isolation and improve health.

Cwmni Blaenau Ffestiniog

In a similar vein, the Ffestiniog area has a community of vibrant and successful social enterprise and businesses. The diverse activities of these ventures include running two hotels, shops, restaurants, cafes, tourist information centre, leisure centre, arts and crafts workshop, mountain biking centre, retail, horticulture, energy saving projects, developing allotments, educational and cultural activities, environmental projects, energy saving promotion, reducing food waste, recycling and river cleaning,

They have come together in order to cooperate for the benefit of the whole area, under the umbrella of a social enterprise company, called Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog. The company operates in the communities of Blaenau Ffestiniog, Trawsfynydd and Penrhyndeudraeth and nearby villages, which between them have a population of about 8,000 people

The aims of Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog are to:

- Promote cooperation between community enterprises in the area.
- Improve cooperation between community enterprises, charities, voluntary bodies, and public and private agencies operating in the area.
- Support and promote the growth and development of existing enterprises.
- Increase the participation of the community and promote community activity and enterprise.
- Initiate, nurture and promote new ventures in the area.
- Contribute to the development of individuals as well as to the economic, environmental, social, cultural and educational development of the area.

The company was originally established under the Welsh Government's Communities First programme, with roots traceable back to the early 2000s (with various previous organisation structures). In 2012, the Welsh Government ended the C1st programme. But the local community decided to find ways to continue the work of regenerating the economy, environment, society and community life of Bro Ffestiniog., and inherited the existing company, changing its name only.

Each member of the network is an equal partner and retains their independent status. The board of the company is drawn from active network members. Collectively, it has been effective in attracting investment, which is often channelled through network members, rather than the network company.

Partnerships in South Wales

The Wales examples we have looked at so far come from rural Mid and North Wales. The next three come from the South Wales Valleys. Although Welsh Government policies and funding tend to categorise areas somewhat rigidly, much of this was driven by European structural fund definitions of rural, agricultural or forestry. The reality is far more fluid.

In practice, Valleys areas have de-industrialised. Indeed, some wards in boroughs like Rhondda Cynon Taf did receive EU Rural Development Plan funding, particularly the upper valleys wards. The landscape has now become very important to local wellbeing, including economic. So, regeneration in the natural and in the financial sense.

Landscape partnerships and projects are now as common there as in Mid-Wales, particularly where the Upper Valleys meet the Brecons. Very similar sustainable business ideas are emerging, e.g., local food, outdoor visitor experiences, renewable energy, and including collaborative and network approaches. So here we look at three landscape partnerships based in the South Wales Valleys.

Welcome to Our Woods Partnership - Upper Rhondda - RCT

The Partnership describes its vision as to increase, year on year, the ability of the local community to influence, design, develop and lead the transformation of outdoors spaces to benefit the economic, social and environmental regeneration of the Upper Rhondda - a genuine transformation leading to a natural future through a co-produced Community Landscape Plan.

- Improve health and wellbeing through better woodland access, recreation facilities and more health activities made available to people of all abilities in the outdoor setting.
- Develop skills and create jobs and economic opportunities from the local landscape such as timber and woodland products; local food production; and community renewable energy.
- Address fuel and food poverty through enterprise and cooperative models.
- Involve the whole community, reach out to seldom heard groups and connect and strengthen existing community networks and associations.
- Develop individual and community capacity to be involved in, plan and manage the local landscape to plan for a natural future.

The landscape area in scope focusses in the upper Rhondda Fawr area - roughly Treorchy to Blaenrhondda, but sometimes settlements further south like Pentre or Gelli. The landscape is characterised by extensive public forestry plantations

either side of the river Rhondda, with settlements continuously along the valley bottom.

In fact, something like 70% of the open land locally is in public ownership, managed by diverse bodies - mainly NRW and then the local Council, but others including the NHS and Coal residuary authority. The total area could amount to 50 square kilometres, much being forestry, but with a wide range of other habitats - a river runs through it.

The Welcome to Our Woods Partnership first came into being around 2010-11, in response to the Forestry Commission Wales (now part of NRW) calling together local agencies to discuss how the woodland areas around Treherbert could be managed to greater public benefit. This approach originated in a Welsh Government requirement for the management of Valleys woodlands to be reconsidered. The new strategic purpose of the Treherbert was designated as for community enterprise, and outdoor exercise/wellbeing.

Ironically, after the merger to form NRW in 2012-3, NRW played much less role for quite a while, and the development of both partnership and projects has thereafter been led by voluntary sector agencies and the local community. So the Partnership started with a focus on forestry and its community benefits, and business activity. But it broadened its aims/vision in 2015. It recognised physical assets as key to the future, and therefore embarked early in its development on acquiring community management agreements with the public sector on various strategic land or buildings. Outright ownership of assets is not so much a priority, with so much land already in public ownership, but has been used tactically - two key sites are now in community ownership.

The partnership comprises representatives from all the major statutory agencies, e.g. Police, Fire and Ambulance, schools, NRW, NHS, and the Local Authority; a number of local community groups, e.g., Blaencwm Chapel, Treherbert Boys & Girls Club, High St Strollers (walking group), Rhondda Tunnel Society; voluntary sector organisations including Keep Wales Tidy, Valleys Kids, and Interlink RCT Voluntary Services Council; local businesses and support agencies, e.g., Job Centre Plus, Purple Shoots, Dunraven Hotel, Rhondda Housing Association. And individuals active in the community without a formal organisation also participate regularly, including representatives from volunteer groups specifically attached to the programmes and projects underway at any one time.

The partnership resolved quite early on that a community business would be the best vehicle to progress long term, and so established a private company limited by guarantee, without shareholders, in 2014. WTOW Ltd is a registered not for profit company, designed to be the vehicle which progresses community programmes and businesses, e.g., holds the lease and other legal agreements on the Treherbert Community Micro Hydro Scheme and handles larger grants awarded.

It works as a partner, or supporter, of any enterprise that shares the overall ideas, and helps with smaller grant bids for partner organisations locally, where those help to deliver the overall Community Landscape vision.

In practice, some ideas within the overall vision develop through the private sector; others through community enterprises; whilst others will be private/community sector partnerships. WTOW ltd is a “development and enabling” hub company, in the same way as the Partnership is the “think tank”, directing overall strategy. Board directors are drawn from the wider partnership. WTOW Ltd is in now its next phase of development, looking for more directors from the community involved in the wider partnership; and aiming to establish a Community Land Trust particularly to develop forestry plans with NRW, with very inclusive local membership.

The partnership received funding from 2013 to 2016 to develop one strand of a borough-wide, Lottery-funded, “Community Voice” programme, which was led and managed by Interlink, the local Voluntary Service Council mentioned earlier. This employed one staff member. This led to the award of seven-year National Lottery funding from their “Create Your Space” programme, running 2017-2024. This secured the necessary core funding to carry out ideas produced in the development phase, and aiming to generate more workplans and businesses. The total grant was £1 million, so effectively some £110k per year, mainly devoted to maintaining a core staff team.

At the time of the Lottery application, WTOW ltd had insufficient trading history to acquire or manage a grant of this size, so Interlink applied on behalf of the partnership. It remained accountable to the Lottery until mid-2019, when the grant was transferred to WTOW ltd. Since 2017, it has also been successful with grants from the Co-op Foundation; from the Welsh Government for Foundational Economy work (in partnership with Skyline and Rhondda Housing Association); and for the first stage of the new Lottery Climate Action Fund. At the end of a development phase (2021-22), it is hoping to receive a further sum of c.£2 million. It is also now hosting a worker for the Valleys Community Rail Partnership. Its annual, directly-managed budget has grown steadily from next to nothing in 2015-6 to c.£300,000 today.

Forgotten Landscapes Project - Torfaen

The Forgotten Landscapes Project (FLP) was established in 2008 to help develop the Blaenavon World Heritage Site (WHS) as an internationally recognised visitor destination. It came to an end formally in May 2015. The World Heritage Site is 33sq km but the FLP covered an area of 71sq km, establishing a buffer zone for the area formally designated.

The aims of the project included the protection of the area's industrial heritage as the world's major producer of iron and coal in the 19th century, conservation of the important industrial archaeology, extensive heather moorland and the red grouse, and to raise awareness of the area's global importance through high quality interpretation, school visits, guided walks and talks. The Forgotten Landscapes area is made up of 48% of common land and includes parts of 10 common land units. The area is grazed by about 4,000 sheep, plus small numbers of cattle and ponies.

As a World Heritage Site there was a need for continual conservation and improvement, but there were limited financial resources. Following a consultation period in 2008 the FLP was developed and was awarded £1.6 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund to. Through match funding, at least £2.5 million in total was attracted to the project, with much of the balance coming from Welsh Government and EU Structural funds.

The grant programme commenced in June 2010.

FLP set out to create links with communities, highlight the area as a visitor destination, offer education opportunities to create an understanding of the local area, create volunteering opportunities within the landscape and help crack down on illegal activities like off-road traffic. Projects undertaken, much by community volunteers and trainees, included dry stone walling, conservation and monitoring of habitats, species and industrial structures and land management such as bracken bashing, controlled burning of mature heather, creating reedbeds, and stock fencing.

The project was led and administered throughout by Torfaen County Borough Council, who also employed the staff team through the external funding. But the project area also extended into the neighbouring Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire County areas. The FLP partnership grew to some 130 organisations, building on the success of existing Blaenavon Partnership, which steered the early development of the WHS.

One very early task for the HLF bid was to clarify the relationship between that long-standing partnership, and this expanded version, which was, in effect a partnership designed to oversee a specific grant programme. There were also issues to resolve quickly of geographical boundaries, and small projects potentially overlapping competitively. By clarifying the purpose and scope of each partnership, the potential issues dissolved as follows, before the HLF bid was even submitted.

The Blaenavon Partnership aimed to conserve, present and promote the Blaenavon Industrial Heritage WHS. The Partnership did not employ staff directly. Instead they were hosted and managed by the lead partner, Torfaen CBC under the

supervision of the Blaenavon Partnership Project Board. The Project Board met, and continues to meet periodically to monitor and review progress against the WHS Management Plan.

Blaenavon Partnership members recognised that FLP was an opportunity for the next stage in the evolution of the WHS. As all of the members of the Blaenavon Partnership were also members of the emerging FLP there was no difficulty imagining a holistic, connected management style being adopted. And in practice, many local organisations, and statutory agencies, were active in both throughout.

The Forgotten Landscapes Partnership was created to follow the HLF criteria for Landscape Partnerships during 2007 - 08. The FLP was therefore specific to developing and managing the many and various work-streams of the grant. The partnership became a more inclusive body with over 130 members. These ranged from the Welsh Assembly Government to the Blaenavon Town Womens' Guild, with all kinds of organisations operating locally joining in, at least from time to time.

The Blaenavon Partnership has continued to deliver enhanced conservation of the industrial heritage of the formal WHS area; and this includes the wider buffer, or transition zone adopted in the FLP. Many of the activities tested and delivered in the grant phase, continue in some form through that partnership, and with the continued active support of the County Borough Council.

The FLP project has left one particular lasting legacy, which echoes the Biosphere Knowledge Transfer theme: through education outreach, over 5,000 school children were engaged, partly deploying Torfaen Council's Community Heritage Development Officer who offers educational walks and materials. It also created ten new trails, treasure markers, trail leaflets, and interpretation, while the World Heritage Centre in Blaenavon continues to act as an enhanced information point for visitors. The Blaenavon landscape is no longer quite so forgotten.

Valleys Regional Park - South Wales Valleys

The Valleys Regional Park (VRP) traces its roots back to the mid-1990s, when local authorities and the environmental voluntary sector came together to consider the landscape and employment options as the coal and steel industries collapsed. The basic vision was set out in a 1997 document, "Greening the Valleys". After the first Senedd elections, the multiple benefits of using the natural landscape differently began to receive Welsh Government policy, and then later, financial support. Funding also began to arrive in the first round of major EU Structural Funds (Objective One 2000-2007), which favoured the South Wales Valleys and West Wales.

The core coalition of government and environmental groups continued to develop ideas over the next decade, largely sustained through government finance. The

broad purpose of developing a Regional Park across the South Wales coalfield became, and still is today:

- Providing and sustaining the improvement and management of a highly-visible network of uplands, woodlands, nature reserves and country parks, rivers, reservoirs and canals, heritage sites and attractions across the Valleys, linking with Valleys towns and villages.
- Helping safeguard and create jobs and training opportunities, supporting local businesses and inward investment.
- Providing accessible high-quality green space for improved health and wellbeing
- Developing community resilience, developing local economic opportunities based on the landscape, making our towns and villages more liveable place.
- Supporting climate change adaptation by maximising the role of green infrastructure
- Improving biodiversity and habitat connectivity.
- Changing perceptions of the Valleys, internally and externally.

Between 2009 and 2013, this approach was piloted through two parallel and linked European-funded VRP initiatives that focused on improving tourism infrastructure, community involvement, and business links - more emphasis on sustainable development than purely nature conservation.

It has been estimated that some £20 million was mobilised over the 4 years. The administration of those grant programmes offers an interesting approach, elements of which we can also see in other landscape partnerships.

The partnership was always very broadly constituted and had to resolve various agenda conflicts - although all 12 South Wales Coalfield local authorities wholeheartedly supported the aims, there were many issues of differing priorities - this had been basically managed in the statutory sector. However, the grant itself was operated efficiently by one of the environmental voluntary sector partners (Groundwork Wales). The workplans were as set out in the grant applications; the wider partnership nominated two grant programme management boards; they decided on strategic financial or operational matters. This included a competitive process whereby projects proposed by any of the core partners for funding were selected or rejected. The Welsh Government was content for this to be hosted by the voluntary sector, although in effect it guaranteed all the funding.

After funding finally expired, the VRP went into a period of reflection, and adjustment to much reduced funding. The broad partnership continued to stay in touch, and the upshot was a renewed commitment to the VRP at Welsh Government and local authority levels

The key point with VRP is that it always had Government backing. It continues today as a very broad partnership, involving all sectors, led and funded by government. The current VRP is supported financially through the Valley Taskforce, a Welsh Government regeneration initiative. More than £6.6 million (largely through the last tranche of EU money) has been allocated to projects to realise the plans, through to 2023.

These focus on the 11 Discovery Gateways, including a new visitor centre at Parc Penallta , a programme of improvements at Dare Valley Country Park, Bryngarw Country Park, Blaenavon World Heritage Centre, Cyfarthfa Park, Cwmcarn Forest Drive, Caerphilly Castle, Parc Brynbach, Parc Slip and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, and Cefn Coed Mining Museum will also receive funding. Funding includes support for Gateway Guardians, effectively local ambassadors for the VRP.

These projects will help to put the Valleys Regional Park on the map nationally and internationally as a place which can inspire, excite and attract visitors from near and far. The focus continues to be on Landscape, Culture and Identity, Recreation and Wellbeing, Communities and Enterprise, all these being familiar priorities in Biospheres.

Appendix 7: Minutes of the First Two Interim Executive Group Meetings



Dyfi Biosphere Interim Executive Group Meeting

1 July 2021

Present:

Jane Powell

Rachel Jarvis

Ray Quant

Sian Stacey

Andy Rowland

Chris Blake, BRO Associate

Iolo ap Gwynn

Rob Owen, BRO

Rob Bullen

Sue Rice, BRO

Alison Hargrave

Notes

Purpose of Meeting

The work undertaken by BRO identified a need for a Biosphere Executive Group who are committed to the Biosphere and who can take action to get things moving forward. Now is a good opportunity to obtain funding in terms of: current and emerging Welsh Government policy, environmental issues, the establishment of a new Climate Change Minister. There is also evidence to show that other UK Biospheres who receive core funding are able to generate considerable benefits.

This is the first meeting of the Executive Group, comprising those Partnership members who volunteer to take part. In future, there will be a need to review membership to ensure it fully represents the Partnership and the Biosphere, but for the purpose of this interim group the immediate task is to pull together a request in to WG for funding and take the first steps in establishing a legally constituted Biosphere administrative body.

The interim Executive Group will work closely with ecodyfi (who are willing to act as hosts for the transition period) and report to the Biosphere Partnership; but it is a semi-autonomous group that can make its own decisions in the interest of the Biosphere. Importantly it must be remembered that the interim Executive Board is separate to the interests of ecodyfi.

Activity - Tweets “from the future” and “confidential” Texts

Tweet	Text
Ray Quant	
At long last we have a road route map that has proved to be successful towards achieving the main aims of the Biosphere	We seem to be going over the same things time and time again. How to break the mould?
Rachel Jarvis	
Biosphere status increases tourism economy in Mid Wales by 50% in 5 years thanks to new funding support from WG	How are we ever going to engage landowners to work differently when there is no funding from SFS until 2025 and no pilot projects in the interim?!
Jane Powell	
Biosphere is holding its first conference to invite people from around Wales to see how it created a people + environment plan that involves 200 civil society groups and all levels of government	I am so fed up with explaining to people what the Biosphere is, if they don't know by now what's the point?
Sian Stacey	
Food products from the Dyfi Biosphere now available in all major retailers (Lidl, Tesco) - making it easier for you to eat food which supports nature produced in the award winning Biosphere	
Rob Bullen	
Dyfi Biosphere hailed as a truly environmentally sustainable tourism destination - the perfect break of choice for the conscious traveller.	Yet another ***** expensive coffee shop in Mach. Is there anything left for locals?

Alison Hargrave	
Biosphere and Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau working with local communities to restore species and habitats	Still no money agggg
Andy Rowland	
Dyfi Biosphere proud to host launch of UNESCO National Trail for Wales.	I still don't see any evidence that the Local Authorities are committed to using the Biosphere for their own purposes
Iolo ap Gwynn	
Biosphere - evidence for significant increase in sales of local produce to local people	Will this happen?

Discussion

There was general agreement that everyone in attendance would like to see changes made to the way the Biosphere operates and the impact it can have. People are frustrated by the lack of progress that has been made, and especially in light of the way other Biospheres are funded and the impact this has allowed them to have. Whilst there are issues such as Terms of Reference for the interim Executive Group to be discussed, the immediate focus needs to be on developing the bid to Welsh Government for short term funding, whilst a new Biosphere organisation is established.

Chris Worker has indicated that now is the best time to send a renewed proposal to WG. With the creation of a new Climate Change Minister, they will be actively looking for potential good practice examples and opportunities to take forward the Government's priorities. Chris will advise on the most appropriate way to make the request, which will be a follow-up to the initial discussion with Mark Drakeford MS, in early 2020.

The difficulty of engaging more than one Minister was noted. While the new Climate Change portfolio should help, farming is in Rural Affairs and tourism is in Economy.

Working Groups

Four Working Groups were identified:

1. *Updating Bid to WG*

Jane agreed to lead on this with input from others via email (or online file share such as Google Docs). To be started immediately with the aim of having a draft for agreement at the next interim Executive Group meeting. Update should include reference to the impacts of Covid and our proposed contribution to a green recovery, a better citation/aspiration about helping deliver public sector strategies, and the proposed delivery arrangements with ecodyfi and the several overlapping area-based initiatives. Maybe a bit more on achievements too.

2. *Partnership Working*

Representatives from NRW, Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SAC and S2S, plus someone representing the Biosphere, to look at the overlap and areas of potential collaboration in aims, objectives and priorities. The initial meeting to be held as soon as possible and before the next interim Executive Group meeting. Initial output from this group will feed into WG proposal.

3. *Policy Fit*

Once initial contact has been made with WG and a steer on where any funding may potentially come from, a new group will be formed to consider how the work of the Biosphere and the plans for its development can be framed in terms of the appropriate policy objectives.

4. *Farming Relationships*

This group should be established as soon as possible to work with farmers and counterbalance the rumours that the Biosphere and S2S will take money away from farmers, and to look at how the Biosphere can be of greatest relevance to the farming community in the post Brexit funding arena.

Date of Next Meeting

Next meeting of the interim Executive Group will be held on 16/07/21 at 14.00 via Zoom. Andy to circulate a link.

Dyfi Biosphere Interim Executive Group Meeting

16 July 2021

Present:

Jane Powell, Chair
Ray Quant
Andy Rowland
Iolo ap Gwynn
Rob Bullen
Alison Hargrave
Rachel Jarvis

Sian Stacey
John Pughe Roberts
Thomas Vetter
Chris Blake, BRO Associate
Rob Owen, BRO
Sue Rice, BRO

Notes

This was the second meeting of the interim Executive Group. Since the last meeting a sub group of the place based projects has been held including PLAS, S2S and CMI. Notes have been circulated. Pumlimon will be invited to future meetings.

Notes of last meeting

The notes as amended were agreed. Discussion regarding who hosts in long term will be discussed at a later date but ecodyfi will be host in interim.

Discussion

Whilst there was a desire to identify specific projects that could be developed as part of the Biosphere in future, it was agreed that the main focus at the present time should be the initial approach to Welsh Government. This first request should set out the broad approach the Biosphere want to take, such as establishing an independent body and appointing staff, and set out the case for funding for a 3 year development phase (and be clear that it is not a request for core funding), that would put the Biosphere on a similar standing to other UK Biospheres and allow for the development of projects that would benefit the whole community.

The ultimate end product will be a more vibrant community and more opportunities for local people.

Once WG have agreed in principle that funding can be granted, it will then be necessary to work with relevant policy staff within WG to develop the final case for funding and how it will help to deliver the Government's policy agenda.

Chris Worker is key to this process. Whilst he will not be able to assist in drafting the proposal to WG, he can provide pointers on what to include etc..

Three broad areas for development of future projects include:

Farming

The Biosphere could form a bridge between environmental issues and the farming community. Options such as establishing a Farmer Cluster <https://www.farmerclusters.com/>, which is something NRW are keen to explore linking in with Area Statements, or working with existing sustainable farming schemes within the area were identified.

Tourism

Tourism, and in particular green tourism, has been a big part of the green recovery work so far. There is a new Mid Wales Tourism strategy being developed which is being developed alongside local authorities. The Biosphere needs to feed into this strategy. There is potential to develop a package offer for visitors offering them a range of experiences all within the Biosphere area.

Branding (inc food)

Basic marketing is a key issue that needs to be developed to make sure everyone knows what the Biosphere is about and understands it. This is something that has been on the agenda for a while but there have been no funds to implement.

Links between Biosphere and S2S

Further discussions are needed between S2S and Biosphere to establish the longer term links, and this work can be done in parallel to the WG request. It was suggested that a small sub group could be established to look at this discussing what the relationship will be in the future. It was agreed that the S2S liaison group would be a good place to start considering these issues alongside the Biosphere Partnership meeting in September. Sian to develop some initial wording setting out the direction of travel for inclusion in the first submission to WG.

Next steps

- Jane to contact Chris Worker to set up a meeting to discuss the first submission to the Minister. Jane, Andy, John, Sian, and Ray to attend
- Draft initial submission - Jane to start and circulate asap via Google Docs
- Report on progress to AGM