
National Landscapes: Realising their Potential

The Review of
Designated Landscapes
in Wales

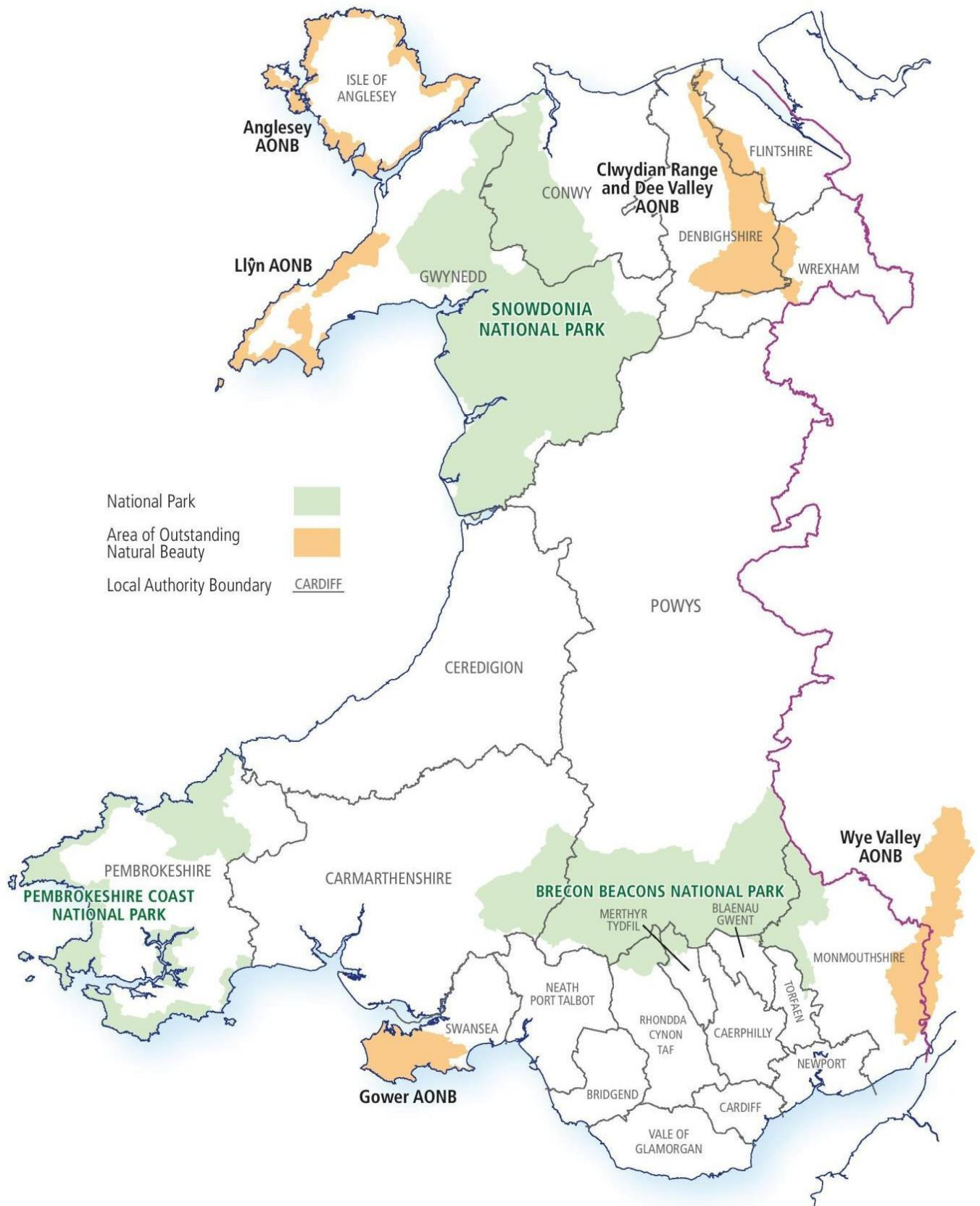
Final Report

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Map 1: The Statutory Designated Landscapes of Wales



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Chair's Foreword

Over the past year I along with panel members Dr Ruth Williams and John Lloyd Jones have been working for the Minister for Natural Resources to undertake an independent review of the Designated Landscapes of Wales. The Minister wants to “ensure that our designated landscapes are best equipped to meet current and future challenges while building upon their internationally recognised status”.

We were tasked with and encouraged to create a visionary and lasting approach which enables these nationally important areas to meet the radically different challenges and conditions compared to when they were first established in the immediate post-war era. The very fact that they are still there and so highly valued by so many is indeed testament to the vision and innovation displayed by their founders of that period; and whilst there have been some technical modifications regarding their status over the proceeding period, it is important to respect the durable success of the designations over the full sixty or more years since their inception.

Despite their success, and indeed partly because of it, we have agreed with the Minister that it is important and timely to take an independent, fresh, longer term and visionary approach to the purposes that underpin their protected status, and their overall governance at this particular juncture. Balancing their twin original objectives of preserving their natural beauty and encouraging their public access, are just as important now as in the immediate post-war period; a time when it was clearly recognised that it was necessary to extend and protect public rights of access to our most cherished and distinctive landscapes. These public rights and demands have not diminished in significance, but designated landscapes face new additional, and one can argue, more complex challenges that simply did not exist seventy years ago.

These are encapsulated in this final report and found within the wide range of evidence we received in writing and in person; and clearly encompass the wider role of these places as internationally recognised environmental and natural landscape assets, their living and vibrant cultural and socio-economic significance, and their potential role to continue to meet the public and well-being needs of future generations. Together with the Welsh Government's clear commitment to sustainable development and well-being, we need to ensure that our most

cherished landscapes have the tools to maintain and enhance their role for succeeding generations, such that they can equally experience and benefit from these.

In the course of the review, the panel has found that a fresh approach to the purposes and governance of Wales' designated landscapes is overdue. This is for at least three reasons. First, the scale and complexity of the environmental challenges (such as climate change and bio-diversity loss) now facing us in the 21st century are of a completely different order to those recognised in the immediate post-war period, when these designations were first established. The designated landscapes must play a leading and innovative role in order to deliver and restore a low-carbon, then post-carbon, world which needs to evolve over the coming few decades (see Royal Society, July 2015). Second, the scale of the relative spatial and social inequalities in well being, health, education and access to outdoor recreation demand far more from the designated landscapes in improving a wider and more diverse consumption of their natural and physical assets. Third, and in direct relation to the first two points, these areas need to be the home of far more vibrant rural communities, where the young can be retained, trained and attracted by sustainable homes and jobs.

The designated landscapes are now far more than passive 'green lungs' for the urban populations; they are as we state in our vision, the new, dynamic and productive ***'factories of well-being'***.

It is with this in mind that the panel embarked on its work and produced the report you are reading now. This final report presents all of the findings and recommendations of this review, compiling the stage 1 findings and recommendations associated with the nature of the Designations and their Purposes and Duties; and stage two, which has reviewed governance arrangements, planning functions and effective representation and accountability.

Over the past year we have taken a wide range of evidence upon which to basis our findings and recommendations, locally, nationally and internationally. In this report we have distilled a suite of Principles which have informed the changes to the Purposes. We have then set out a new Vision for the National Landscapes, which represent 25% of the land area of Wales. The final sections set out in detail the recommended Governance arrangements for delivering this Vision.

We propose a new and comprehensive National Landscape Governance Framework for our internationally recognised National Landscapes. We commend these recommendations to the

Minister, and believe that they will enhance the performance of the landscapes in contributing more fully to the Welsh Government's policy agenda and ambitions across the environmental, health and well being, economic and community development and educational fields. They will also enhance participation and accountability both nationally and locally and across a wider range of diverse groups.

Throughout the course of the first stage of the review we have been struck by the enthusiasm for this endeavour from a wide variety of stakeholders. They have also echoed the unique and distinctive position that the designated landscapes hold in the cultural life of Wales and the UK.

Acknowledgements

I would, once again, like to commend the collegiate spirit, work commitment and experienced judgement displayed by my colleagues, Dr Ruth Williams and John Lloyd Jones in arriving at the collectively agreed recommendations.

The Review, in its totality, has benefitted greatly from the public interest it has generated and the written and spoken contributions from across Wales, and beyond. The panel wish to thank all of the contributors for their knowledge, experience and passion for all of our designated landscapes.

The panel also wishes to acknowledge the excellent secretariat support it has received from the Welsh Government's Designated Landscapes team, consisting of Greg Pycroft, Ieuan Llŷr Jones and Emily Kennedy. We also wish to thank Dr Marc Adams for the research support he provided during the course of the second stage and the Sustainable Places Research Institute (PLACE) at Cardiff University which has hosted the majority of our meetings.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T Marsden', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Professor Terry Marsden
Chair

The Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales

Executive Summary and Recommendations

The Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales was commissioned by the Minister for Natural Resources, Carl Sargeant AM in 2014 to “ensure that our designated landscapes are best equipped to meet current and future challenges while building upon their internationally recognised status”.

He also wanted us to consider the governance and management arrangements of Wales’ eight designated landscapes; how any future governing body/bodies would best promote collaboration and joint working while avoiding duplication and how any future governing body would best reinforce local accountability and decision making. We were also asked to consider the future role of National Park Authorities as planning authorities and to consider the promotion of diversity on the boards of bodies managing these areas.

Over the past year we have taken a wide range of evidence, locally, nationally and internationally, upon which to basis our findings and recommendations these are set out in greater detail in the following Chapters.

Figure i: Governance from principles to delivery

This report presents a set of recommendations that meet the requirements set by the Minister and are interconnected (see Figure i). We have produced a suite of guiding **Principles** which have, in turn, informed the changes we have made to the **Purposes** of designated landscapes in Wales. We then set out a new **Vision** for the National Landscapes, which represent 25% of the land area of Wales, and finally set out our recommended **Governance Framework** for delivery.

Our perspective of our designated landscapes has changed, they remain, in some sense the passive ‘green lungs’ for the urban populations, but they also have the potential to become



dynamic and productive ‘factories of well-being’. Our recommendations help our designated landscapes realise that potential and we look forward to the support of the Welsh Government to allow this ¼ of Wales deliver for the Nation as a whole.

The Principles

Recommendation 1

Our guiding principles are:

- **We need to examine the refreshed purposes within a medium to long term time frame, so as to give equivalent continuity in the future to that achieved over the past sixty years.**
- **It is important, however, not to be too reliant on the past in formulating a new and refreshed vision for the designated landscapes which recognises the significant challenges they face in the future.**
- **To align the purposes such that they recognise that both designations have over some considerable time been operating de-facto and to varying degrees beyond their original remits.**
- **That any changes in purposes and accompanying duties should be lasting, clear and likely to ensure and embody the precedence placed under ‘the Sandford Principle’, giving priority to the first purpose. It also became clear that if there were to be an increase in the actual number of purposes then the others would (a) need to give priority to the first if there were clear conflicts; and, as importantly, (b) the rest would be mutually reinforcing and binding on delivering the first. This “Sandford Plus” approach needs to link and integrate any additional purposes.**
- **There was also a strong argument for revisiting the statutory duties on related bodies, to clarify and strengthen them. This should ensure that the designated landscape bodies themselves and the relevant national and local organisations – including utility companies and the Welsh Government comply with both the purposes and duty.**
- **To realise the importance of international obligations; lessons and the opportunities they provide for Wales.**

- To ensure the purposes can continue to meet and encourage their relevant bodies to maintain, and exceed, international obligations and standards of nature conservation and landscape protection e.g. IUCN categories and the European Landscape Convention.
- To strive for purposes which are both enduring and have the ability to be applied to other candidate areas, including marine areas, at some future date.
- Any recommended changes made to the direction and/or wording of the purposes should be made in the context of them being: (a) clear, precise, unambiguous and consistent; (b) able to be clearly understood and convey clarity of direction; and (c) legally and technically robust.
- Any changes recommended should strike a judicious balance between providing overall consistency of purpose, and encouraging and celebrating the natural and cultural diversity of the family of protected landscapes themselves.
- To remain mindful of the strength and value of the National Parks and AONBs, and not to undermine their benefits across Wales.
- Avoid compromising these places through any unnecessary additional burden on the public purse; and enhance the efficiency of public funding where possible.
- To interpret the purposes and duties in ways that deliver across the whole Welsh Government policy agenda.

The Welsh Government should adopt these guiding principles.

Recommendation 2

There should not be a single designation.

The Purposes

Recommendation 3

There is **ONE** set of statutory purposes and an associated single statutory duty for both designations.

Recommendation 4

The Welsh Government should retain the names of “National Parks” and “Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty” (AONBs) as the key designations of the “National Landscapes of Wales”.

Recommendation 5

The Welsh Government should establish a consistent and resilient nomenclature, such that both designations collectively become:

“The National Landscapes of Wales”

“National Park” and “Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty” which are “The Equivalent Designations”

The Equivalent Designations would possess identical statutory purposes and duties

Recommendation 6

There should be **THREE INTERLOCKING** statutory purposes for both the National Parks *and* AONBs.

These are:

“To conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape and seascape qualities of the area¹.”

(the Conservation Purpose)

“To promote physical and mental well-being through the enjoyment and understanding of the landscape of the area.”

(the Human Well-being Purpose)

“To promote sustainable forms of economic and community development based on the management of natural resources and the cultural heritage of the area.”

(the Sustainable Resource Management Purpose)

Recommendation 7

The Sandford Principle, confirming the primacy of the conservation purpose, will be applied across all the designated landscapes.

Recommendation 8

There should be a new single Statutory Duty that removes the weak “have regard to” prefixes in the current duties on relevant public bodies, and replaces them with a single and clear duty:

“To contribute to the delivery of the three purposes of the National Landscapes.”

¹ Where ‘landscape’ incorporates the total natural environment of the area, together with its biodiversity, human settlements and cultural aspects. It is particularly important to stress the significance of progressing bio-diversity protection and restoration in the Conservation Purpose and to promote progress towards international standards relating to the International Biodiversity Convention so far unattained in Wales. This also incorporates the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe, 2000) definition as ‘an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors’ (Article 1a.). And it assumes the enhancement of ‘actions to conserve and maintain the significant or characteristic features of a landscape, justified by its heritage value derived from its natural configuration and/or from human activity’ (Article 1d.).

The Vision

The vision needs to preside and give direction to the dynamic and multi-level governance for these special places. The National Landscapes can then be positioned as leading and innovative places for capturing and integrating the environmental economy, and the well-being and sustainability goals, and installing them as regional hubs for sustainable rural development and the providers of ecosystem services.

Recommendation 9

A Vision for the National Landscapes of Wales

The National Landscapes of Wales are valued by the nation as important “factories of well-being”, improving the lives of current and future generations through their three purposes. Their special qualities are maintained, enhanced and widely appreciated. They are areas for innovative, place-based collaborations that address the economic, social and environmental challenges facing Wales, and are recognised internationally as leaders in the delivery of sustainable development.

Recommendation 10

As the 'factories of well-being' which we envision, the National Landscapes of Wales should develop and stimulate more local enterprise partnerships, sustainable affordable housing, green energy and retailing ventures.

Recommendation 11

Building on the community development initiatives in National Landscapes will require continuity of seed-corn funding for integrated projects which contribute to their three integrated shared purposes.

Recommendation 12

Welsh Government should empower the National Landscapes of Wales to become official centres for innovation and catalysts for regional development in rural Wales, within their environmental limits.

Recommendation 13

The Welsh Government should ensure that the National Landscapes of Wales can and do contribute to the Welsh Government's 'Partnership for Growth: Strategy for Tourism 2013-2020' – both collectively, and individually.

Recommendation 14

The Welsh Government should ensure that the National Landscapes are involved in all infrastructure planning and development in Wales such as the National Infrastructure Investment Plan, the Green Growth Strategy and the National Planning Framework.

Recommendation 15

The National Landscapes need to better understand their local and regional economies, and especially their tourism economies.

Recommendation 16

The Welsh Government should empower the National Landscapes to deliver its 'Green Growth' agenda, founded on a marriage of exceptional landscapes and sustainable development.

Recommendation 17

The Welsh Government should champion the National Landscapes as international flagships for Wales in the fields of sustainable development, health and tourism in particular.

Recommendation 18

The National Landscapes of Wales upgrade their health and well-being policies to align with the new second purpose. This can be linked to wider, deeper access and sustainable tourism dimensions.

Recommendation 19

The National Landscapes of Wales undertake more health and well-being related experiments in developing and reaching challenged urban and rural communities and sections of the population. These could be delivered jointly with local health boards.

Recommendation 20

The Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales should extend the coastal National Landscapes to cover adjacent sea areas and take an integrated approach to coastal resource management in these areas.

Recommendation 21

The National Landscape managers should ensure that coastal users are at the centre of their coastal management planning processes.

Recommendation 22

The successful Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum model should be applied more widely across the coastal areas of the National Landscapes.

Recommendation 23

The National Landscapes of Wales should interpret and incorporate recommendations 9 to 22 above into pan-Wales indicators and targets for management planning purposes and well-being reporting.

The Governance Framework

A New Framework for Wales' National Landscapes

In order to 'realise the potential' of the National Landscapes of Wales, to address the barriers and weaknesses and to attain an optimum fit between the reorganisation of purposes and duties - we recommend a new framework of governance. The framework encompasses all eight of the designated landscape management bodies and we hope they will all see its worth and contribute to its success.

Recommendation 24

The Welsh Government should adopt the following new Framework of Governance for the National Landscapes of Wales, as portrayed in Figures 16 (p.130) and 19 (p.164) and described in detail in all our following Recommendations 25 to 69.

National Park Authorities and AONBs: A Model for Delivering National Priorities Locally

We believe that a modified statutory identity based upon the Single Purpose Authority model for National Parks and the flexible multi-model governance approach for AONBs is the most effective approach for fostering greater local and regional representation, management and accountability. They are recognised internationally for effectively balancing national objectives

with local considerations. This approach should also provide the designated landscape bodies with further opportunities to draw in additional external funds and resources.

Recommendation 25

Retain the single purpose local authority model for National Park management.

Recommendation 26

Retain and develop flexible AONB management models.

Recommendation 27

National Park Authorities and AONB bodies will need to consider how they restructure themselves in order to deliver the three new purposes.

Recommendation 28

The Welsh Government should reduce the disproportionate regulatory burden on National Park Authorities that is designed for larger and more complex local authorities.

Recommendation 29

The Welsh Government should give National Park Authorities and AONB bodies the means of applying for and drawing down funding from a wider range of sources.

Leadership: A Radical Change in Institutional and Inter-agency Culture and Working

We want to shift the institutional culture of governance of the designated landscapes from one of “deference” to a more accountable and innovative one that enhances existing “soft” powers to convene.

Recommendation 30

The Welsh Government should establish a 'National Landscapes Partnership Board' as per Figure 17 (p.138).

Recommendation 31

The 8 National Park Authorities and AONB bodies should establish a light-touch 'National Landscapes of Wales Committee' as per Figure 18 (p.139).

Recommendation 32

The Welsh Government should work with the National Landscapes bodies and the relevant stakeholders through the Partnership Board and the National Committee to agree, and keep under review an over-arching 'Strategy for the National Landscapes of Wales'.

National Landscapes and National Government

Given the national importance of the designated landscapes to Wales we envisage a far higher profile for them within the National Assembly for Wales. We also envisage direct Ministerial engagement with the National Landscapes Framework.

Recommendation 33

The statutory Partnership Plans of each of the National Landscapes of Wales should be scrutinised by the National Assembly for Wales prior to adoption.

Recommendation 34

The National Assembly for Wales, as it evolves its own internal architecture, should consider the relationship between itself and the National Landscapes of Wales to maximise scrutiny and accountability.

Recommendation 35

The Welsh Government should set performance targets and indicators for the National Landscapes of Wales that derive from and align with the Well-Being Goals.

Integrated Planning and Reporting

It is both timely and more efficient to integrate the planning requirements of recent legislative developments into ONE statutory Partnership Planning exercise which embodies, at its centre, the statutory Partnership Plan, but also embraces plans concerning well-being and natural resource management.

Recommendation 36

There should be One statutory partnership planning exercise for each of the designated landscapes.

Recommendation 37

The statutory Partnership Plan for an area should integrate the current management plan, well-being plan and natural resources area statements.

Local Partnerships

Successful management of the special areas depends on productive partnerships with all those who have an impact on them. We want them to be even more relevant economically, socially and culturally, which will require enhanced and effective local engagement between all relevant stakeholders.

Recommendation 38

Formally constituted 'Partnerships' should be established in each National Park which are closely involved in the preparation and delivery of the statutory Partnership Plan.

Recommendation 39

The National Park Partnership should be chaired by the Chair of the National Park Authority.

Recommendation 40

There should be a formally agreed relationship between the National Park Partnership and the National Park Authority.

Recommendation 41

The AONBs should continue to develop their trusted partnership-working models, however we do not feel a 'one size fits all' would benefit the AONBs.

Fostering lateral relationships with Natural Resources Wales and local authorities

NRW will be a major source of professional advice on the sustainable management of natural resources from which the designated landscapes should benefit. As larger local authorities emerge existing links between them and their AONBs may prove too fragile, it is therefore essential to ensure continued strong links between local authorities and AONBs. We wish to reinforce and spread existing good practice across all eight designated landscapes.

Recommendation 42

Natural Resources Wales should build and make available to the Welsh Government an exhaustive list of their statutory duties and powers in relation to Wales' designated landscapes.

Recommendation 43

Natural Resources Wales will involve and champion the national landscapes on the relevant Public Service Boards.

Recommendation 44

Natural Resources Wales and local authorities will have regard to the statutory Partnership Plans in the conduct of their planning exercises in their area.

Recommendation 45

Natural Resources Wales will share data and provide professional advice on the sustainable management of natural resources to the National Landscapes.

Recommendation 46

Local authorities should reinforce and spread the best practice of their joint working in the AONBs across all eight National Parks and AONBs.

Forward Planning and Development Management

We found the case for removing planning powers from the NPAs unpersuasive, based on dated examples that did not reflect contemporary experience and largely based upon perception. The National Park Authorities, which manage the landscape of 20% of Wales, will need to be more integrated in the delivery of their three purposes. While planning will remain one tool amongst the several required to deliver the new purposes, it will serve a key function delivering consistency across our National Parks.

Recommendation 47

The National Park Authorities should retain their strategic planning policy and planning development control functions.

Recommendation 48

The Welsh Government should reinforce and support the provision of pre-application planning advice from the National Park Authorities.

Recommendation 49

The National Landscapes Committee should co-ordinate and help share the costs of training and education in land use planning matters especially for delivery of the new purposes.

Recommendation 50

The AONB bodies become a statutory consultee on planning applications with a potentially significant impact on the special qualities of their area.

Recommendation 51

A system of independent planning advice for AONBs across Wales is developed and resourced.

Recommendation 52

A suite of indicators on planning outcomes in the National Parks and AONBs is developed for the National Landscapes of Wales.

Local Representation and Diversity

We want to further harness the potential and passion of both the national importance and local opportunities in National Parks and AONBs, to ensure greater diversity in decision-making, and to build stronger bridges between the designated landscapes and their constituent local authorities.

Recommendation 53

Each National Park Authority should comprise: $\frac{1}{2}$ nominated County Councillors, $\frac{1}{4}$ representatives of the national interest appointed by Welsh Government via open competition, and $\frac{1}{4}$ representatives of the local interest appointed via open competition by the members listed above.

Recommendation 54

The recruitment and appointment processes for the 'national interest' and 'local interest' members of National Park Authorities should include best practice to ensure diversity in the Authority's membership.

Recommendation 55

To develop and embed in all three National Parks the positive steps already piloted by the National Park Authorities to increase diversity on their Authorities i.e. the Mosaic, mentoring and Ambassador approaches.

Recommendation 56

The Welsh Government should remove the requirement for political balance of local authority members on National Park Authorities, to increase local representation. Thus Councillors appointed to National Park Authorities should represent wards within, or straddling, the National Park boundary. [Section 15 of the Local Government & Housing Act, 1989 and Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.]

Recommendation 57

There should be formal reporting arrangements between the Councillors on the National Park Authority and their parent local authority.

Recommendation 58

The Welsh Government should place a statutory duty on local authorities to establish a formal committee to oversee the management of the AONB and to delegate the local authority's responsibility for preparing the AONB Management plan to this Committee (but not delegating its responsibilities under the duty to the AONB purposes and delivering its aspects of the Management Plan). We recommend this be renamed the 'AONB Delivery Committee' rather than the usual name: Joint Advisory Committee.

Recommendation 59

The Welsh Government should direct each AONB Delivery Committee to include at least one Cabinet member from each constituent local authority, at least two representatives of the national interest appointed by the Welsh Government via open competition, and at least two representatives of the local interest appointed via open competition by the rest of the members.

Recommendation 60

The Welsh Government should remove the requirement for political balance of local authority members on AONB formal committees, to increase local representation. Thus the Councillors appointed to AONB formal committees (in addition to the Cabinet members in Rx above) should represent wards within, or straddling, the AONB boundary. [Section 15 of the Local Government & Housing Act, 1989 and Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.]

Recommendation 61

The appointment processes for the 'national interest' and 'local interest' members of AONB Delivery Committee should incorporate equalities best practice to ensure diversity of Committee's membership.

Recommendation 62

The AONBs should actively learn from, and apply, the NPAs' pilot programmes to increase diversity on their Delivery Committees. (This learning can be facilitated by the National Landscapes of Wales Committee.)

Recommendation 63

Natural Resources Wales should continue to be a key adviser to the AONB Delivery Committee.

Recommendation 64

There should be formal reporting arrangements between the Councillors on the AONB Delivery Committee and their parent local authority.

Funding Arrangements

We believe that funding arrangements for the designated bodies need to be streamlined and simplified. Effective performance requires sufficient support, including financial support, to deliver for designated landscapes. In the current economic climate the AONBs are especially vulnerable to having their base-line funding undermined due to the discretionary nature of their local government and NRW funding.

Recommendation 65

The Welsh Government should provide the annual core grant allocation to all National Landscapes of Wales, thereby removing NRW and local authority levies.

Recommendation 66

The Welsh Government should top slice the core allocation for specific strategic, collaborative and national initiatives (as currently allocated through SDF and competitive grants such as the Nature Fund).

Recommendation 67

The Welsh Government should manage accountability of core funding through an annual review process administered by an agreed performance criteria linked to the Well-Being Goals and to the statutory Partnership Plans of the National Landscape bodies.

Recommendation 68

The National Landscape bodies should have greater flexibility to leverage external funding sources. This will require a shift in the internal management structures and function of these bodies and, in the case of the AONBs their relationships with their partner local authorities.

Recommendation 69

The National Landscape bodies should have greater flexibility to generate their own revenue streams through developing a wider range of Payments for Eco-system services, in line with delivering their purposes. Their ability to use and draw down rural Development Plan and related EU funding will be important.

The New Governance Framework for Wales' National Landscapes

The new governance framework is an outcome of the evidence received and the careful deliberation of the panel over the past year. We believe that in its structures and processes it delivers a robust framework for more effectively delivering performance, leadership and direction, voice, accountability and public efficiency of the landscape areas, and in this it embodies a far more partnership-based approach with greater representation. It allows for the clear delivery of the revised set of purposes and, in our opinion will deliver the Welsh Government's ambitious legislative programme on the ground in the National Landscapes.

Chapter 1.

Introduction

1.1 The Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales

- 1.1.1 We were commissioned to undertake this review by the Minister for Natural Resources, Carl Sargeant AM in a written cabinet statement (Welsh Government, 2014f). The Minister stressed within that statement that he wanted “to ensure that our designated landscapes are best equipped to meet current and future challenges while building upon their internationally recognised status”.
- 1.1.2 The review panel comprised of Professor Terry Marsden (the Chair), Dr Ruth Williams and John Lloyd Jones.
- 1.1.3 The eight statutory designated landscapes of Wales: the National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Beauty (AONBs) were created by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. The economic, social and environmental context has changed over the decades since the original Act. The Minister said that change had occurred to such a degree that it is timely, in the context of other policy developments in Wales, to;
- “Appraise and better understand whether the designations, purposes, management arrangements and governance of Wales’ designated landscapes are best-placed to meet the challenges of today, as well as those in the future.” (Welsh Government, 2014f)*
- 1.1.4 The Minister also indicated that he wants the designated landscapes to become:
- “International exemplars for sustainability, living landscapes with vibrant, resilient rural communities; extensive outdoor recreational opportunities; thriving ecosystems and rich biodiversity.” (Ibid)*
- He also expressed his belief that Wales’ designated landscapes have the potential to test new solutions to deliver sustainability in fragile rural communities.

- 1.1.5 From the very beginning the review was divided into two stages. The first stage examined the functions of the designated landscapes, while the second stage considered the vision and governance for designated landscapes in Wales.

1.2 Stage One Report

- 1.2.1 The stage one report (Marsden et al, 2015) was delivered to the Minister on the 31st January 2015 and the Panel met with him on the 2nd February to discuss the findings.
- 1.2.2 The stage one report contained six recommendations concerning the role and function of Wales' designated landscapes. The executive summary and recommendations is contained within this report as Appendix i.



Connecting local communities and schools with local landscapes and wildlife through the Awel Môn project in Anglesey AONB.

1.3 Stage Two Remit

- 1.3.1 The second stage was commissioned by the Minister in a letter to the Chair dated the 3rd March, and a second written statement was issued the following day (Welsh Government, 2015f).
- 1.3.2 The letter and statement set out the remit for stage two:

“The remit for your next stage is to consider:

- the governance and management arrangements of our designated landscapes;*
- how any future governing body/bodies would best promote collaboration and joint working while avoiding duplication*
- how any future governing body would best reinforce local accountability and decision making. “(Welsh Government,2015f)*

Along with these three broad issues concerning the governance of designated landscapes the Minister wanted the review to focus in on two additional issues within the second stage:

“your consideration of governance must encompass the future role of National Park Authorities as planning authorities.” (Ibid)

And

“in your consideration of representation and accountability you should have regard to board balance in terms of gender, disability and ethnicity.” (Ibid)

- 1.3.3 As well as considering the vision and governance arrangements of designated landscapes this final report reconsiders the six recommendations set out in the stage one report, and in light of this second stage evidence, considers whether they require amendment.

1.4 The Final Report

- 1.4.1 Mirroring the stage one report, our final report sets out the wider context in which the National Parks, AONBs and their governance arrangements exist. We have updated the legislative and policy developments reported earlier this year and include in our report the piece of research we commissioned to set out the existing governance model for designated landscapes in Wales. As far as we are aware it is a unique piece of work, it presents us with the status quo - a means of comparison with other national and international governance models and a base line against which we can compare and contrast our recommendations.

- 1.4.2 We set out our multi-method methodology for stage two before presenting a short analysis of the written evidence we received between March and June this year.
- 1.4.3 This approach has informed our final chapters where we set out our recommendations. Chapter 6 returns to the recommendations we made in stage one which we revisit in light of the evidence we received in the second stage. The penultimate Chapter 7 sets out our vision for designated landscapes in Wales, and the final Chapter 8 provides the means with which the vision can be achieved.
- 1.4.4 In total we set out an elevated, refreshed and integrated approach to designated landscape management in Wales. An approach that recognises their local, national and international importance of these special places and ensures that their governance are able to meet the multiplicity of demands expected of them.

How We Evidenced Stage Two

2.1 Our approach

- 2.1.1 A multi-method methodology was favoured that featured desk-based research; a call for evidence; meetings with stakeholders and Welsh Government officials, and attendance at meetings within the designated landscapes.
- 2.1.2 The second stage of the review was conducted between March and July 2015. The stage two evidence gathering phase was conducted between late March 2015, when the call for evidence was sent to a wide range of stakeholders, and mid June. From late May onwards the work of the review panel became increasingly dominated by the analysis of evidence, reaching our conclusions and recommendations, and the production of this report.
- 2.1.3 In addition we also commissioned a piece of research, presented within Chapter 5 that presents the “extant position”, the current model of designated landscape governance in Wales. This was needed as we soon became aware that there was a lack of a coherent picture of the current governance arrangements in Wales; and that there was an objective need to set a baseline of evidence as to how present governance systems were working. The extant position primarily utilised desk based research, gathering material from a wide range of web based sources including the designated landscapes of Wales and the rest of the UK, the Welsh Government, and NGOs. Further enquiries for evidence in addition to the written and oral submitted by stakeholders were also requested, primarily from the Designated Landscape family. Specifically, these requests included: case studies of best practice, information regarding representation on AONB partnership/joint advisory committees as well as details of the financial situation of AONBs. This data was synthesised in a number of ways in addition to being discussed within the chapter and includes: relational flow charts which show organisational/inter organisational governance relationships, and tabulated analysis of financial and other key aspects of designated landscapes.

- 2.1.4 Chapter 5 set out the evidence in the following key sections: financial governance, planning governance, governance of the natural environment, and representation in designated landscapes. The chapter also contains sections that provide: a summary of the evidence received from designated landscapes on their case studies of best practice, presentation of the alternative models of governance highlighted in the written evidence the panel received and a discussion of the evolving legislative landscape in Wales and its possible effects on the governance of designated landscapes. The conclusion to the extant section utilises the IUCN principles of good governance as a framework to highlight the key themes and issues emerging from the reviewed evidence.
- 2.1.5 A call for evidence was sent to stakeholders and was open to responses from the general public. This mailing list grew between early October 2014 and mid March 2015 as new stakeholders, with an interest in designated landscapes and our work, made themselves known to us.
- 2.1.6 Stakeholders had 9 weeks (between the 24th March and 29th May) to provide a written response to our stage two call for evidence which took the form of correspondence from Professor Terry Marsden, a note setting out the remit of stage two, the questions informing this stage, set out in Table 1, below, and the written statement from the Minister.
- 2.1.7 The deadline of the call for evidence was set to allow the panel to consider and reflect on the written contributions prior to agreeing the final list of invitees to the stage two stakeholder evidence sessions.
- 2.1.8 A similar approach to stage one was also reflected in our decision to hold policy and legislation briefing sessions with Welsh Government officials. A number of sessions were arranged throughout the evidence gathering period and covered a far broader range of policy areas than stage one, reflecting the cross-portfolio role of designated landscapes to Wales. The sessions, policy areas and officials are referred to within Appendix iii.
- 2.1.9 The panel met with designated landscape officials early in the evidence gathering phase and again, under their respective National Parks Wales and National Association of AONBs banners upon receipt of their written submissions.

- 2.1.10 Early on in the evidence gathering phase it became clear that the Scottish model for National Parks was a highly regarded model for designated landscape governance. Therefore the panel held videoconferences with representatives from the Scottish Government, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland and the two Scottish National Park Authorities (the full list is within Appendix iii). These were held in order to discuss and better understand the more recently established Scottish model, its achievements, relative strengths and weaknesses.
- 2.1.11 A teleconference with the Executive Director of Europarc, Carol Richie was also held to discuss pan-European governance models and approaches. The panel also met with the highly qualified and experienced Symonds Group, which included past and present leaders from the designated landscape sector.
- 2.1.12 As stage two progressed it became clear that we would want to comment on the role of the National Assembly for Wales and its relationship with the designated landscapes. Therefore a meeting was arranged with Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM who as a former Presiding Officer and sitting Assembly Member was able to inform us of potential constitutional vehicles and pathways for reform.
- 2.1.13 A second meeting with the Sustainable Futures Commissioner, Peter Davies was arranged. The last meeting had taken place in late November. The meeting, in mid July provided us with an opportunity to discuss and test our draft findings.
- 2.1.14 The Panel also wanted to experience the governance arrangements of National Parks and AONBs first-hand and individual members attended meetings within all but one of the designated landscapes between early May and mid July 2015. In total, seven meetings were attended across Wales, allowing panel members to meet with, address and take questions from those individuals involved in designated landscape governance at the local level. The full list of meetings is set out within Appendix iii.

2.2 Questions to Contributors

- 2.2.1 These questions derive from and are aligned to the specific remit for stage two set by the Minister; and they provide a framework for more specific questioning.

Table 1: Questions and prompts to contributors for written submissions

1	<p>What are the most effective governance arrangements for designated landscapes that allow them to lead on and meet ambitious outcomes within and for Wales?</p> <p><i>In order to answer this question you may want to consider and respond to these additional, related questions:</i></p>
2	<p>In light of the Review's stage one report and recommendations and the Minister for Natural Resources' written statement (dated the 4th March) what is your vision and ambition for the direction of Wales's designated landscapes in the medium to long term?</p>
3	<p>From a governance perspective, what factors are preventing and/or likely to prevent designated landscapes from achieving the vision and ambition you set out in response to question 2?</p>
4	<p>From a governance perspective, what factors will allow designated landscapes to achieve the vision and ambition you set out in response to question 2?</p>
5	<p>Are there other designated landscape/protected area governance models/approaches you wish to bring to the attention of the Review Panel?</p>

Responses to the Call for Evidence

3.1 Written Evidence

- 3.1.1 By the end of the call for evidence period, including a fortnight's grace for late responses for which we received prior notice, the review received 96 written responses in total.
- 3.1.2 Nearly half of the total, 42 responses, came from or were related to the Gower, and were written in reaction to a single recommendation in our stage one report – Recommendation 3 to change the name “Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty” to “National Landscapes”. These respondents appeared to believe that our recommendation was in fact Welsh Government policy and they stated their opposition to the proposal.
- 3.1.3 The Welsh Government had received our stage one report and had not expressed an opinion on any of its stage one recommendations; including recommendation 3. Any contrary belief is based upon misunderstanding. However, these responses have been brought to the attention of the Welsh Government as we wanted the Welsh Government to be aware of the level of feeling on this matter.
- 3.1.4 A further 54 written submissions were received, responding in full or in part to the questions set by the review during the stage two call for evidence. The full list of written contributors can be found in Appendix ii while the breakdown by sector is within Table 2.
- 3.1.5 While fewer in number than in stage one the Table illustrates the broad range of sectoral interests that responded to our call for evidence. There are far fewer local government representations in stage two, 9 instead of the 21 in stage one. This is not a complete surprise since a large number of community council representations in stage one already touched upon issues of governance and planning.

Table 2: The proportion of written consultation responses from different sectors (corresponding breakdown of stage one responses in brackets)

Public Sector	10	(12)
3rd/Charitable Sector	10	(17)
Agricultural/Private Sector	5	(5)
Private Individuals	14	(8)
Local Government	9	(21)
Other	6	(10)
Total	54	(73)

“Local government” denotes responses from the constituent local authorities, town and community councils and the Welsh Local Government Association. “Other” includes professional associations and the archaeological trusts.

- 3.1.6 This may also be the reason for the reduced number of responses from the 3rd/Charitable Sector and “Other” category. The governance-related content of those responses were noted at the time, and these views informed the development of the stage two questions, as well as being considered along with the rest of the stage two evidence.
- 3.1.7 In this second stage we also received a larger number of responses from private individuals than stage one, up to 14 from 8, which is perhaps indicative of private interest generated by our stage one findings and the content of stage two.

A Changing Context for the Designated Landscapes in Wales

4.1 Update since Stage One

- 4.1.1 This chapter builds upon - and in several instances is an update of - the related chapter in our stage one report. The designated landscapes in Wales exist within a multi-layered, constantly changing context. Contextual factors have influenced the development of the designated landscapes since their founding legislation in 1949 and will continue to influence their development in the future. These factors have informed and shaped our conclusions and recommendations.
- 4.1.2 Reflecting the multi-method approach set out within Chapter 2, this chapter has been informed by a wide range of sources, including the remit and terms of reference set by the Minister; advice from Welsh Government officials; our background reading and evidence provided by stakeholders and members of the public during the call for evidence period. Further contextual information on the current model of designated landscape governance in Wales follows as Chapter 5.

4.2 Historic Legislative Context

Table 3: The existing National Park Purposes - s62(1) The Environment Act 1995, and the AONB Purpose - s82(1) The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROWA) 2000

The National Park Purposes
“conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the areas...”
“promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of those areas by the public.”
The AONB Purpose
“conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area.”

- 4.2.1 The statutory designated landscapes: the National Parks and AONBs are a product of the same post World War Two political era that led to the creation of the National Health Service and the Town and Country planning system.
- 4.2.2 The founding legislation for statutory designated landscapes in England and Wales is the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act which received royal assent in 1949. The first National Park in Wales: Snowdonia was designated in 1951 – amongst the first tranche of three national parks in England and Wales. The first AONB to be designated in Wales and England was the Gower peninsula in 1956. Table 3, above sets out the purposes of both designations, the National Parks have two purposes, while the AONBs have one.
- 4.2.3 Though it has since been amended, the 1949 Act remains the foundation on which the structure of National Park purposes and duties are laid and have endured. Amendments to the legislation, of which there have been several, have usually followed in the wake of “milestone” reviews and based upon their recommendations. Historically reviews have applied to the National Parks of England and Wales. Lord Sandford’s review of 1974 led to the establishment of the “Sandford Principle”, which asserted the primacy of the first National Park purpose. The principle was given statutory effect via s.11A(2) the Environment Act 1995 (Bell and McGillivray, p.739, 2008).
- 4.2.4 “Fit for the Future: Report of the National Parks Review Panel” is regarded as the second milestone review and was chaired by Professor Ron Edwards (Edwards, 1991). This review reconsidered the appropriateness of the National Parks' purposes in a context that had changed from 1949. Environmental issues were much better understood and a lack of commitment to National Park purposes from public bodies was evident at that time. The Edwards Review informed amendments to the National Park purposes, introducing the concept of cultural heritage to the first purpose and amending the second purpose to include “understanding”. The review also led to the creation of the economic and social well-being duty, s.62(1) in the 1995 Act and the establishment of National Park Authorities (NPAs) as independent, free-standing authorities.

4.2.5 The Silkin Test (another significant historic development for designated landscapes) applies to both National Parks and AONBs. Also known as “the major development test” it asserts that major developments should not take place within designated landscapes unless it is absolutely necessary, especially whether it is in the national interest. The test was originally set out in Planning Policy Statement 7 which has now been superseded by Planning Policy Wales (Welsh Government, 2014) in Wales and the National Planning Framework in England. Both national planning frameworks set out the test in the same way, requiring that major development proposals need to include an assessment stating:

- *the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- *the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- *any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated...” (Welsh Government, p.77, 2014)*

4.2.6 Since the 1997 devolution settlement and the creation of the National Assembly for Wales, there has been one review of National Parks and National Park Authorities by Land Use Consultants et al in 2004. The review was prepared for the Welsh Assembly Government and its objectives were:

- i. assess the overall role of the Parks in undertaking their two main statutory purposes and the effectiveness of their duty,
- ii. consider how the Parks’ contribution to the delivery and promotion of sustainable development may be maximised
- iii. consider what further steps the Park Authorities might usefully take to reach out to communities beyond their boundaries in support of social inclusion
- iv. examine what steps the Park Authorities might take to engage more effectively with their local communities

4.2.7 AONBs, originally designated under the 1949 Act are now designated under s.82 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW Act) 2000. Unlike National Parks they are designated for a single purpose: to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. They have no statutory recreation purpose (Bell and McGillivray, 2008).

There have been fewer reviews and fewer changes to the legislative framework underpinning AONBs since 1949, making their inclusion within this review, in our opinion, an important milestone for this designation.

4.3 Policy Context

4.3.1 The terms of reference given to us by the Minister provided a clear policy steer. The Welsh Government wants to develop and enhance their strategic, policy making and operational delivery abilities in the designated landscapes. These include:

- Deliver on designated landscape purposes.
- Ensure the special qualities of designated landscape are protected.
- Maximise the potential of these areas.
- Support the application of Natural Resource Management.
- Be exemplars particularly in landscape management and sustainability.
- Develop clear and consistent ways of collaborating
- Secure national leadership and yield the most effective use of resources.
- Avoid duplication and maximise the use of scarce expertise.
- Reinforce local accountability and decision making.

4.3.2 Prior to this review, the short to medium term strategic guidance for National Parks, though not for AONBs, was derived from the then Welsh Assembly Government “Policy Statement for the National Parks and National Park Authorities in Wales: Working together for Wales” (Welsh Assembly Government, 2007). This replaced the Welsh Office Circular 13/99, published in 1999 it updated guidance to take into account and better integrate the National Parks into the strategic agenda of the Welsh Government. Importantly, “Working Together for Wales” set a vision for National Parks in Wales that made clear their place in 21st Century Wales and provided goals for the NPAs:

“The Welsh National Parks are protected landscapes of international importance which capture much of what is distinct and special about rural Wales, environmentally and culturally. Although predominantly rural in nature, the Parks contain a resident population of over 80,000, are close to important urban communities and have significant potential to enrich the lives of the people of, and visitors to, Wales and to contribute positively to public health and well-being and to the Welsh economy. They

are living landscapes, moulded by their communities over thousands of years. They are places where sustainable development is promoted for the benefit of the environment, the economy and for Park communities. They are places that experiment with new approaches in sustainable development and environmental conservation, providing exemplars of best practice for wider Wales, and helping to shape and lead future rural policy and practice. They are also places where all who can influence the future of the Parks work together to conserve and enhance their natural beauty, biodiversity and cultural identity, in line with sustainable development principles. Guided by the Park Authorities, these special areas are becoming progressively richer and more diverse in terms of landscape, wildlife and heritage and are enjoyed and cherished by a full cross-section of society.” (WAG, 2007, pg3)

4.3.3 The production of an updated, Policy Statement by the Welsh Government has been put on hold while this review took place. Rather than focus on one statutory landscape designation that draft policy statement related, for the first time, to National Parks and AONBs. Like the 2007 policy statement it seeks to further integrate the designated landscapes to enable them to deliver on their purposes and Welsh Government outcomes.

4.3.4 *The Commission for Public Service Governance and Delivery*

4.3.5 The 2014 Commission for Public Service Governance and Delivery, the Williams Commission, made several recommendations concerning the National Park Authorities, though not the AONBs. These are set out in Table 4, below.

Table 4: 2014 Commission for Public Service Governance and Delivery - recommendations concerning the National Park Authorities

NPAs must develop clear and consistent ways of collaborating with each other / local authorities/ Natural Resources Wales / Visit Wales on the ground to avoid duplication and maximise the use of resources and scarce expertise.

Welsh Government and NPAs should secure national leadership and co-ordination and the most effective use of resources and expertise.

Welsh Government should consider doing so through a single authority whilst retaining the distinctive identities of the three Parks.

Accountability and membership of NPAs requires reform. To reinforce local accountability and decision-making, recommend that local authority-nominated NPA members must represent wards which fall wholly within the Park area, or if that is impossible, partly within the Park areas.

Welsh Government should also consider whether directly electing NPA members would strengthen such accountability.

4.3.6 While the above recommendations are clearly relevant to the NPAs, and are due for consideration within the second stage. The review also examines these issues with regard to AONBs. There are several governance principles, which transcend the two statutory designations, which are relevant in assessing the effectiveness of existing and proposed governance:

- Leadership
- Collaboration and partnership
- Operating at an appropriate scales
- Improved performance, process and procedure
- Communication and engagement
- Governance, accountability and scrutiny

4.4 Current Legislative Context

4.4.1 As a panel we are well aware that designated landscapes face significant change as a consequence of primary legislation that has recently been enacted; or currently progressing through the National Assembly for Wales

4.4.2 Through meetings with the Welsh Government officials responsible we wanted to better understand the policy drivers and intent behind each piece of legislation and the potential and multiple impacts on the designated landscapes.

4.4.3 The Welsh Government's legislative plans encompass an ambitious agenda of reform of public service delivery that is both wide ranging, and deep, in its approach.

Currently spanning five pieces of legislation, this agenda represents a significant new legislative context within which the designated landscapes will have to integrate.

4.4.4 The panel received evidence from officials in the relevant departments of the Welsh Government who were involved with the development of each piece of legislation. The panel also reviewed the explanatory memorandums where they were available for public scrutiny (the Local Government Reform (Wales) Bill has yet to be introduced). Figure 1 provides a diagrammatic representation the key aspects of three of the pieces of legislation and how they will interrelate, and it is drawn from the evidence received from the Welsh Government officials and explanatory memorandums for each Act and/or Bill.

4.4.5 *The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*

4.4.6 The Act is intended to make the public bodies listed within the legislation think about and plan for the long term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and adopt a more joined up approach.

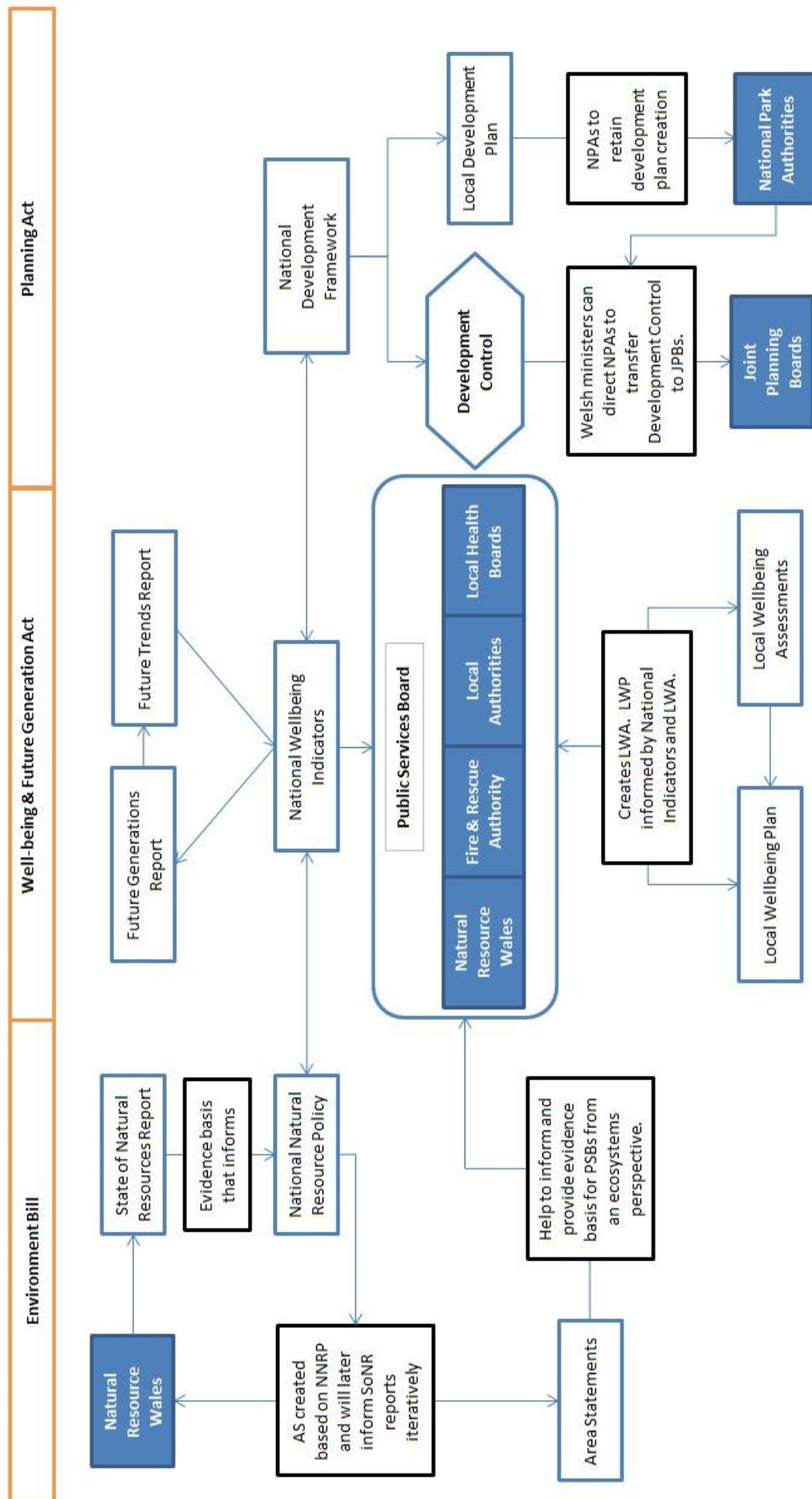


Figure 1: Showing the interaction of the key public reform legislative Acts/Bills

4.4.7 The legislation puts in place seven well-being goals which all the listed public bodies will work toward. The goals are set out within Table 5.

Table 5: the Well-being Goals, s.4. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Goal	Description of the goal
A prosperous Wales.	An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.
A resilient Wales.	A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).
A healthier Wales.	A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.
A more equal Wales.	A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).
A Wales of cohesive communities.	Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.	A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.
A globally responsible Wales.	A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

- 4.4.8 From the discussions we have had with Welsh Government officials from across a range of policy agendas we understand that these overarching goals will significantly influence the Welsh public sector over the medium to long term.
- 4.4.9 The Act also sets out a national reporting framework for well-being (s.10 to 13) and a local delivery mechanism, the Public Service Boards (PSBs). The PSBs are composed of four statutory members – local authorities; Welsh fire and rescue; Local Health Boards and Natural Resources Wales and can invite other partners to join the board, which could include National Park Authorities. It is unclear at this stage whether or how AONBs will interact with their local PSB. Guidance to PSBs is in development so this may become clearer as a consequence. The PSBs will be required to produce an assessment of local well-being, which represents the local evidence base that informs the creation of local well-being plans, setting out the objectives for local delivery of sustainable development and the well-being goals.

4.4.10 *The Planning (Wales) Act 2015*

- 4.4.11 The Planning (Wales) Act was recently enacted, receiving royal assent in early July 2015. This piece of legislation introduces a range of measures aimed at modernising the planning system in Wales, that:
- Provide a modern delivery framework for the preparation of development plans and planning decisions, including allowing Welsh Ministers to decide a limited number of planning applications.
 - Reaffirm the Welsh Government commitment to the plan-led system. Addressing identified deficiencies at national and strategic levels by replacing the Wales Spatial Plan by (sic) a National Development Framework and introducing provisions which would allow the preparation of Strategic Development Plans where needed.
 - Ensure that Local Development Plans are delivered and reviewed regularly so that they remain relevant to the planning decisions.
 - Improve the operation of the development management system so it complements the implementation of Local Development Plans including the introduction of provisions to promote greater consistency and availability of pre application advice.
 - Enhance engagement by making it easier for citizens to influence the future of their communities through the introduction of statutory pre application consultation for significant planning applications.

- Overhaul arrangements under which planning decisions are made including introducing provisions which would allow for the standardisation of planning committee arrangements and procedures and delegation to officers across Wales.
- Modernise the planning enforcement system to ensure that breaches of planning control can be remedied efficiently.
- Streamline the planning appeal process.

4.4.12 The principal aspect of the Act that has the potential to affect National Park Authorities is the power given to Ministers under s.41 to allow joint planning boards to undertake the development control function within National Parks areas, following the affirmative procedure in the National Assembly for Wales (s.41(7)).

4.4.13 Another aspect of note, s.14(2) alters s.72 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which had in the past prevented Welsh Ministers from being able to direct National Park Authorities to draw up a joint Local Development Plan with another local authority.

4.4.14 The Act has no direct affect upon the AONBs except for any changes resulting from the tightening of the National Planning Framework and its interactions with other legislation discussed in this chapter.

4.4.15 *The Environment (Wales) Bill*

4.4.16 At the time of writing the Bill has been laid before the National Assembly for Wales and is undergoing stage one scrutiny by Assembly Members. The Bill comprises a number of measures regarding the reporting and creation of policy regarding the management of natural resources in Wales and sets out to do this using an ecosystems approach.

4.4.17 The key duty change contained within the Bill is to replace s.40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 which requires public bodies to have due regard for conserving biodiversity as they carry out their duties. This duty will be replaced by an ecosystems duty under s.6(1) of the Bill.



Working in collaboration with local businesses to develop sustainable innovations. The Tŷ Solar affordable housing prototype developed in Pembrokeshire Coast National Park.

- 4.4.18 The Bill also intends to impose a statutory duty upon Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to produce a State of Natural Resources report providing an evidence baseline assessment of the state of natural resources in Wales, which will then inform the national Natural Resources Policy (NRP) to be drawn up by the Welsh Ministers in the ten months following a Welsh general election. It is intended that the NRP will provide the strategic direction for sustainable natural resource management to be carried out through Area Statements that will be produced by NRW.
- 4.4.19 Area statements are the key mechanism of the Bill. They can be drawn up for any spatial scale suitable to define the ecosystem to be managed. Area statements will also be used to help NRW “integrate rationalise and simplify any plans, programmes or strategies produced where this is consistent with any specific statutory duty” (Welsh Government, p.31, 2015b). Area statements are also being seen as sources of information to inform the well-being plans of public service boards and as a tool to help better coordinate collaboration and action from different bodies to deliver sustainable resource management.

4.4.20 *The Local Government (Wales) Bill*

4.4.21 The Bill allows for certain preparatory work to enable the programme of local government mergers and reform. The evidence the panel received, confirmed by an announcement by the Welsh Government suggests that the number of local authorities in Wales will reduce from the current 22 to either 8 or 9. This will create larger councils and larger council wards. This is expected to result in fewer Councillors on NPA boards who are elected by residents within the National Parks due to legislation requiring NPAs to maintain a party political balance in their membership (s.15 Local Government and Housing Act 1989).

4.4.22 *The Historic Environment (Wales) Bill*

4.4.23 This Bill was introduced to the National Assembly for Wales in April 2015 and is currently at stage one. The legislation contains measures that:

- Allow the Welsh Ministers to put an immediate halt to unauthorised works to scheduled monuments and make it easier for action to be taken against those who have damaged or destroyed monuments;
- Enable authorities to act quickly if a listed building is under threat from unauthorised works and give them greater flexibility in dealing with historic buildings that require urgent works to protect them from further decay;
- Make it easier for owners or developers to create sustainable new uses for unlisted historic buildings by relaxing the conditions for applications for certificates of immunity from listing;
- Create a statutory register of Wales' historic parks and gardens;
- Allow owners of historic assets to negotiate partnership agreements with consenting authorities for a period of years, eliminating the need for repeated consent applications for similar works and encouraging more consistent and coherent management of the buildings or monuments;
- Secure a more stable future for Wales' historic environment records, which provide detailed information and advice on the historic environment to local planning authorities and the public;
- Make existing structures for the designation of nationally important historic assets more open and transparent by introducing formal consultation with owners and establishing a mechanism to review decisions; and

- Establish an independent panel to advise on historic environment policy and strategy at a national level in Wales.

4.5 International Context

- 4.5.1 The Minister has expressed his wish to see the designated landscapes of Wales become international exemplars for sustainability. In order to do so, an appreciation of the international context has been included in this review. In our evidence gathering we have sought out, examined and learned lessons from recommended models of best practice from beyond Wales.
- 4.5.2 The international recognition of protected and designated status, overseen by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the European Union set important benchmarks for the continued status of Welsh designated landscapes, especially but not exclusively in the areas of conservation, landscape and biodiversity.
- 4.5.3 *Scotland*
- 4.5.4 When it came to the designation of its landscapes Scotland took a different path to England and Wales. They have National Scenic Areas, which are an equivalent to AONBs and their National Parks were an early creation of the Scottish Parliament in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. While the National Parks in Wales and England have two purposes, the Scottish National Parks have four purposes, called “aims” – these are listed within Table 6 below. These two additional purposes promote the sustainable use of natural resources and promote the sustainable economic and social development of the area.

Table 6: The 4 Scottish National Park Aims, National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000

To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;
To promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area;
To promote understanding and enjoyment, including enjoyment in the form of recreation, of the special qualities of the area by the public;
To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

4.5.5 Further Afield

- 4.5.6 Wales' designated landscapes exist within a developing global and European context. In their report "Putting Nature on the Map" (2014) the IUCN explains that international obligations have, more recently, influenced the development of protected areas. Some derive from UK Government membership of United Nations (UN) Conventions and other agreements, notably: the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme, the Ramsar Wetland Convention and the UNESCO Geoparks programme. International obligations concerning the identification, designation and protection of sites also derive from membership of the EU. Many of the Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Birds Directive, and the Habitats and Species Directive are found within the designated landscapes.
- 4.5.7 As recently as 2014 the designated landscapes of Wales were formally classified by the IUCN as category V protected areas, ensuring their place within a global system of land and water managed for conservation. The IUCN has identified six benefits from this system of classification set out within Table 7, and may offer a means of measuring and reporting on whether the designated landscapes meet the Minister's challenge to become international exemplars for sustainability.

Provides a framework for data collection and handling, leading to better data, more credible reporting and more reliable measurement of progress towards international targets.
Helps in delivering nature conservation at the national level in many ways, such as supporting national strategies for wildlife protection, designing landscape-scale approaches to conservation, and integrating nature into development plans.
Helps to reveal the variety of approaches to protected areas management and how they can complement each other within a national protected areas system.
Provides a globally consistent approach to the protection of land and sea based on management objectives.
Helps identify the full range of stakeholders involved in protected areas ownership and management, including state protected areas and other forms of ownership and governance.
Improves communication and understanding between all those involved in conservation.

Table 7: The benefits of the IUCN Protected Area Management Categories system. Source: IUCN.

- 4.5.8 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) is another international development which the UK Government ratified in 2007. The significance of the ELC is its definition of “Landscape” as:

“An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.”

(Council of Europe, Chapter 1, Article 1a.)

- 4.5.9 The ELC recognises the importance of all landscapes, but it also provides an international framework for promoting landscape protection, management and planning of nationally important landscapes as well as the exchange of information and mutual assistance across Europe. It offers a people-centred means of reconciling environmental management with contemporary socio-economic challenges, helping people and communities to reconnect with place.
- 4.5.10 The designated landscapes of Wales operate within and contribute to a wider European-wide network of protected areas and associated organisations, known collectively as the EUROPARC Federation. The Federation works, to improve the management of Protected Areas in Europe through international cooperation, exchange of ideas and experience, and by influencing European-level policy.

4.6 Other Significant Contextual Issues

- 4.6.1 We include here additional contextual issues which are of particular significance in reviewing the Welsh designated landscapes and which have featured in deliberations with stakeholders; with members of the public, and between panel members.

4.6.2 Coastal issues

- 4.6.3 The majority (5 of the 8) of Wales’ designated landscapes contain coastal areas and the interaction of land and sea create and enhance many of their special qualities. However, the designation of landscape and seascape remains a terrestrial affair. Depending upon where you are in Wales this may end at either the mean high water or mean low water level. Thus the governance the designated landscapes need to address coastal issues.

4.6.4 *“Unfinished Business”*

4.6.5 While the remit of the panel does not extend to the designation of new designated landscapes, or the modification of boundaries, several stakeholders have asked how the panel's review relates to what they regard as “unfinished business”. This phrase implies that the process of landscape designation in Wales is by no means settled and that instances remain which still need to reach a satisfactory conclusion.

4.6.6 *Cross-border issues*

4.6.7 A reflection of their original nature as England *and* Wales designations, one of the designated landscapes, the Wye Valley AONB straddles the border. Approximately one third is designated within Wales, while a separate designation order applies to the English side of River Wye between Hereford and Chepstow.

4.6.8 *Technology*

4.6.9 Technological trends and the growing accessibility of relatively sophisticated communications equipment have overcome the remoteness of the designated landscapes to the people of Wales. Technology will have an expanding role in the areas of rural development; environmental monitoring; promotion and access and it is also likely to influence the future development of the designated landscapes in ways that we are unable to predict.

4.6.10 We are aware of the significant contribution designated landscapes already make to the following policy areas. We took evidence from the Welsh Government officials responsible to understand policy; to ascertain the interaction between government and their the bodies responsible for delivering the Welsh Government's policies in the National Parks and AONBs and to determine the potential for designated landscapes to deliver for their area, especially in the context of three new purposes.

4.6.11 *Health and Well-Being*

4.6.12 Wales' population with regard to a range of health and well-being measures has been deteriorating, and the spatial inequalities and risks have been increasing. It is estimated that physical inactivity costs Wales £650 million per year. One in four adults

experience mental health problems or illness, and the annual cost of mental health is £7.2billion. Passive or less strenuous, active contact with green spaces can be psychologically and physiologically restorative, reducing blood pressure and stress levels.

4.6.13 *Green Growth*

4.6.14 The Welsh Government wants Wales to become a world leader in green growth; using natural resources in ways that drive economic growth and deliver sustainable development. It wants to create an environment where businesses are able to invest, creating the conditions to nurture and drive the green growth agenda and the green economy as a whole.

4.6.15 *Agriculture and Rural Development*

4.6.16 The changing EU Common Agricultural Policy in Wales is still a major driver for land management practices in the designated landscapes, and the Welsh Government has recently announced its first round of Rural Development (Pillar Two) funding packages. These cover, rural community development, sustainable production grants, food business investment funds and cooperation grants. Glastir is also a major agri-environmental scheme likely to affect the landscapes. There is currently a consultation on a new national agricultural strategy and framework for Wales. Currently there seems to be little linkage between policy discussions concerning agriculture and food and the designated landscapes.



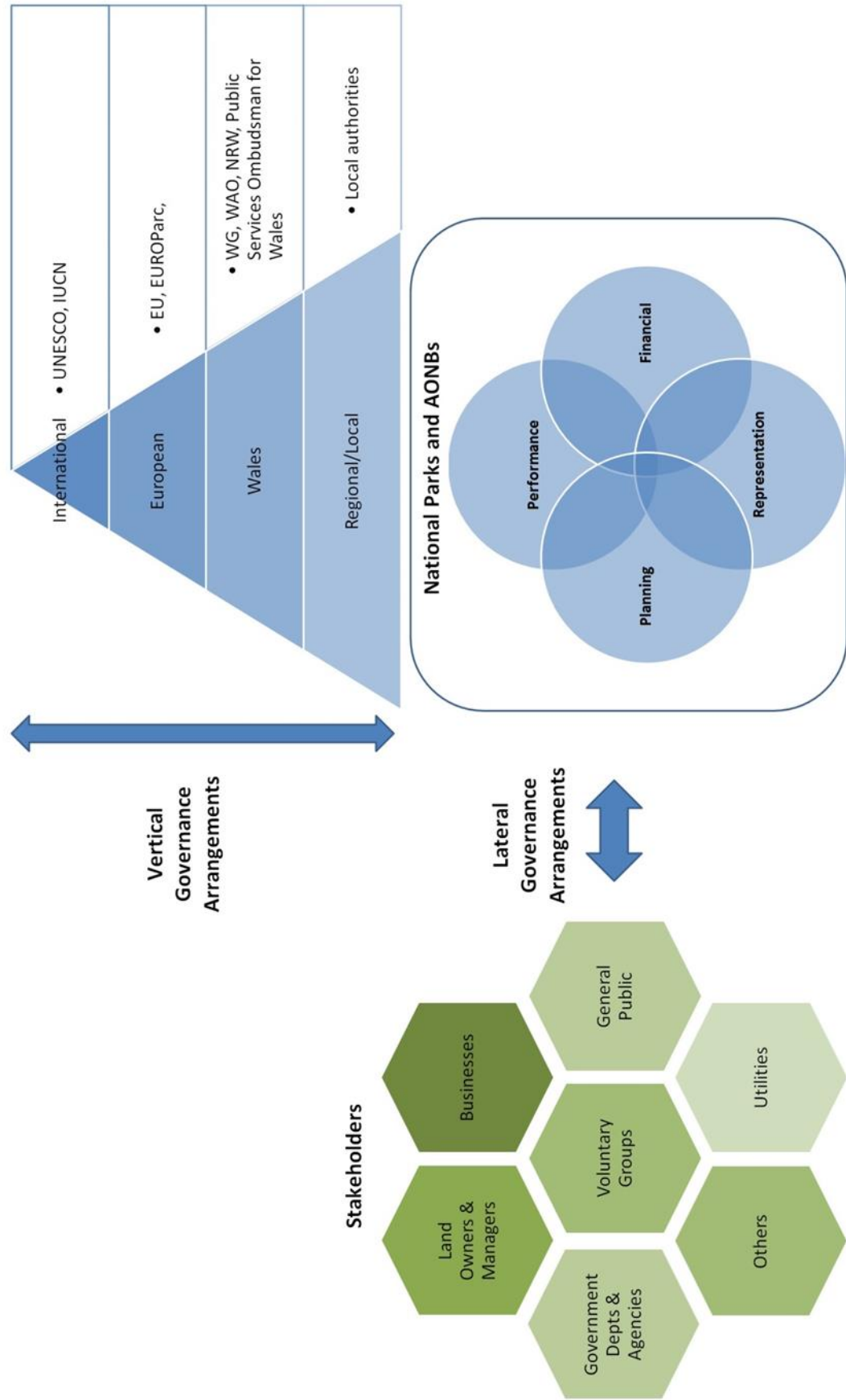
Working with the agricultural community to demonstrate that well-managed moorland has a value in terms of agricultural productivity through the Clwydian Lamb project in the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB.

The Existing Model of Designated Landscape Governance in Wales

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The three National Parks and five Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have immense value deriving from various factors including their importance as part of the cultural fabric of Wales, their unique beauty, their diverse species and ecosystems of national and international importance and their use as working landscapes for a range of businesses and local communities. Figure 2: shows a representation of where designated landscapes in Wales sit within the broader local contexts and the hierarchy of governance that exists with regard to designated landscapes.
- 5.1.2 In order for us to make recommendations about the governance systems of the designated landscapes, it was necessary first to have a thorough understanding of the status quo. Therefore this chapter describes the current governance arrangements for managing designated landscapes in Wales. It covers a range of aspects including the configuration of the financial arrangements that fund work by representatives for designated landscapes, the nature of representation in designated landscape organisations, how land use is managed in designated landscapes and how the management planning process that sets the agenda for action and provides the vision for managing these landscapes is undertaken.
- 5.1.3 This chapter also showcases exemplars of good governance in designated landscapes in Wales. Good governance is demonstrated through the positive outcomes that this wide range of projects have produced through successful collaboration with other organisations and local communities which extend beyond delivering on the statutory purposes of designated landscapes.
- 5.1.4 This chapter also summarises examples of other governance models that were recommended to the panel in written and verbal evidence together with further salient points that arose during the review of online information.

Figure 2: The governance context of designated landscapes



5.2 What is governance of designated landscapes?

- 5.2.1 Governance is a multifaceted term that encompasses the institutions, rules, norms and arrangements between actors that shape how something, in this case designated landscapes in Wales, are managed. Managing these landscapes for the enduring benefit of all of the Welsh people requires governance that reflects and balances the needs and desires of diverse groups of people, whilst ensuring that their special qualities are not denude and are protected/improved for future generations.
- 5.2.2 Designated landscapes and their governance involve a wide range of actors. They are of national importance to all the people of Wales and are therefore of interest to a range of policy stakeholders at national level within the Welsh Government.
- 5.2.3 This review of designated landscapes is founded on the premise that good governance of these areas is essential given the quality and importance of the National Parks and AONBs. Their role and importance transcends the lines of their boundaries and yet these are lived in landscapes with communities and industries that sustain and shape these landscapes. Good governance means more than preserving these landscapes for future generations; it also means improving them and ensuring that they have pre-eminent importance for the Welsh Nation for years to come. These principals are already acknowledged internationally by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) which classes both National Parks and AONBs as class V protected landscapes and seascapes which are described as:

“Where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced a distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value: and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values.” (Day et al, p. 10, 2008)

Table 8: IUCN principles of good governance for protected areas

Principles	Considerations related to the principles
Legitimacy and voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing and maintaining governance institutions that enjoy broad acceptance and appreciation in society Ensuring that all rightsholders and stakeholders concerned receive appropriate and sufficient information, can be represented and can have a say in advising and/or making decisions Fostering the active engagement of social actors in support of protected areas, upholding diversity and gender-equity Extending special support to vulnerable groups, such as indigenous peoples, women and youth, and preventing discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, gender, social class, financial assets, etc. Maintaining an active dialogue and seeking consensus on solutions that meet, at least in part, the concerns and interest of everyone Promoting mutual respect among all rightsholders and stakeholders Honouring agreed rules, which are respected because they are "owned" by the people and are not only because of fear of repression and punishment As much as possible attributing management authority and responsibility to the capable institutions closest to natural resources (subsidiarity)
Direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and following an inspiring and consistent strategic vision (broad, long-term perspective) for the protected areas and their conservation objectives, grounded on agreed values and an appreciation of the ecological, historical, social and cultural complexities unique to each context Ensuring that governance and management practice for protected areas are consistent with the agreed values Ensuring that governance and management practice for protected areas are compatible and well-coordinated with the plans and policies of other levels and sectors in the broader landscape/seascape and respectful of national and international obligations (including CBD PoWPA) Providing clear policy directions for the main issues of concern for the protected area and, in particular, for contentious issues (e.g., conservation priorities, relationships with commercial interests and extractive industries) and ensuring that those are consistent with both budgetary allocations and management practice Evaluating and guiding progress on the basis of regular monitoring results and a conscious adaptive management approach Favouring the emergence of champions, generating new ideas and carefully allowing/promoting the testing of innovations, including governance and management innovations for protected areas
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieving conservation and other objectives as planned and monitored, including through on-going evaluation of management effectiveness Promoting a learning culture for protected area policy and governance practice on the basis of mechanisms, tools and partnership that promote on-going collaborative learning and cross-fertilization of experience Engaging in advocacy and outreach for the benefit of protected areas Being responsive to the needs of rightsholders and stakeholders, including by providing timely and effective response to inquiries and reasonable demands for changes in governance and management practice Ensuring that protected areas staff, and rightsholders and stakeholders, as appropriate, have the capacities necessary to assume their management roles and responsibilities and that those capacities are used effectively Making an efficient use of financial resources and promoting financial sustainability Promoting social sustainability and resilience, i.e., the ability to manage risks, overcome the inevitable crises and emerge strengthened from the experience
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upholding the integrity and commitment of all in charge of specific responsibilities for the protected areas Ensuring transparency, with rightsholders and stakeholders having timely access to information about: what is at stake in decision-making; which processes and institutions can exert influence; who is responsible for what; and how these people can be made accountable Ensuring a clear and appropriate sharing of roles for the protected areas, as well as lines of responsibility and reporting/answerability Ensuring that the financial and human resources allocated to manage the protected areas are properly targeted according to stated objectives and plans Evaluating the performance of the protected area, of its decision makers and of its staff, and linking quality of results with concrete and appropriate rewards and sanctions Establishing communication avenues (e.g., web sites) where protected area performance records and reports are accessible Encourage performance feed-back from civil society groups and the media Ensure that one or more independent public institution (e.g., ombudsperson, human rights commission, auditing agency) has the authority and capacity to oversee and question the action of the protected areas governing bodies and staff

Principles	Considerations related to the principles
Fairness and rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Striving towards an equitable sharing of the costs and benefits of establishing and managing protected areas and fairness in taking all relevant decisions • Making sure that the livelihoods of vulnerable people are not adversely affected by the protected areas; that protected areas do not create or aggravate poverty and socially-disruptive migratory patterns; and that the costs of protected areas—especially when born by vulnerable people—do not go without appropriate compensation • Making sure that conservation is undertaken with decency and dignity, without humiliating or harming people • Dealing fairly with protected area staff and temporary employees • Enforcing laws and regulations in impartial ways, consistently through time, without discrimination and with a right to appeal (rule of law) • Taking concrete steps to respect substantive rights (legal or customary, collective or individual) over land, water and natural resources related to protected areas, and to redress past violations of such rights • Taking concrete steps to respect procedural rights on protected area issues, including: appropriate information and consultation of rightsholders and stakeholders; fair conflict management practices; and non-discriminatory recourse to justice • Respecting human rights, including individual and collective rights, and gender equity • Respecting the rights of indigenous peoples, as described in the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples²⁸⁴ • Ensuring strictly the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples for any proposed resettlement related to protected areas • Promoting the active engagement of rightsholders and stakeholders in establishing and governing protected areas

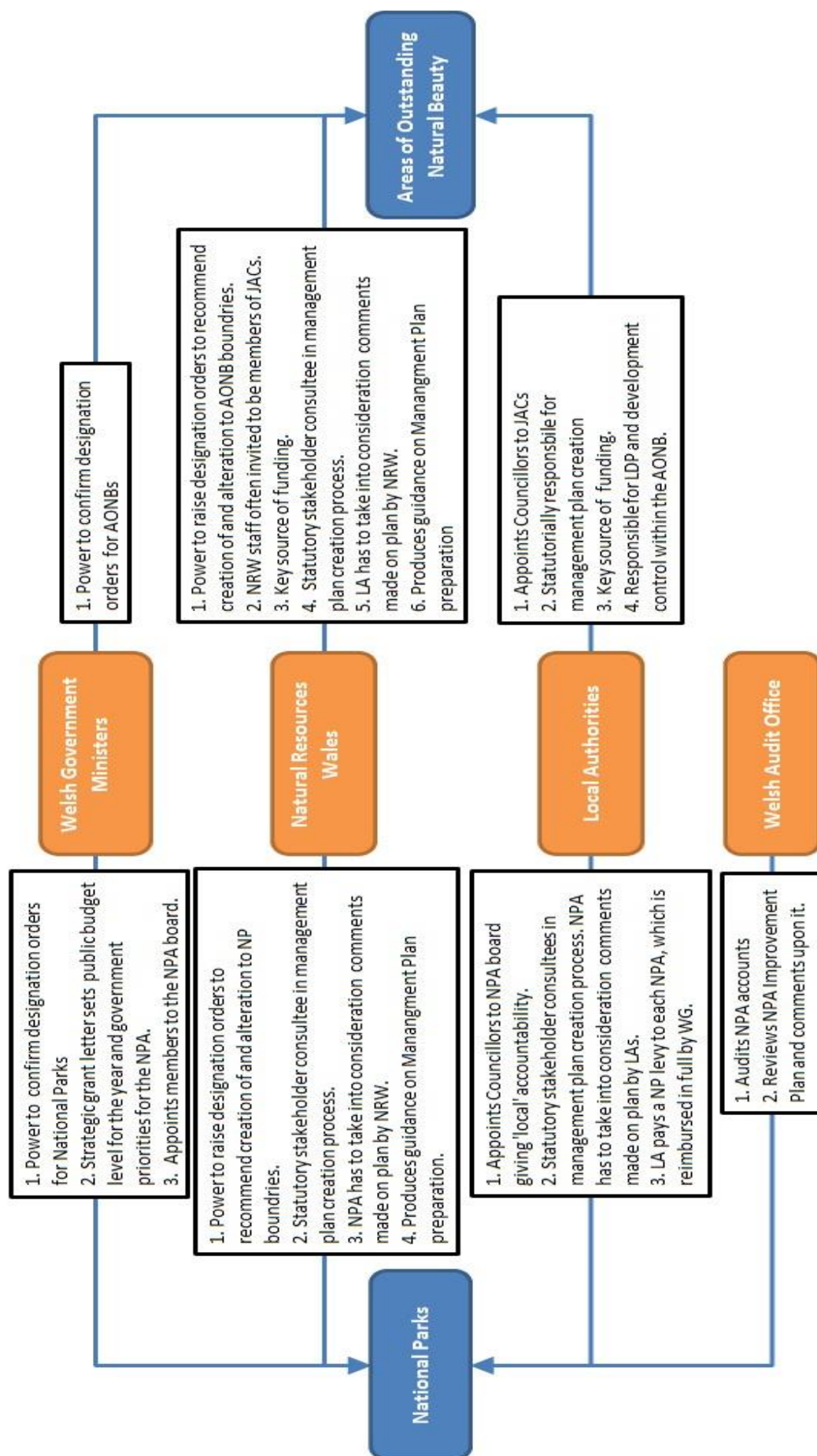
5.2.4 The ICUN report for the governance of protected areas, (Borrini-Feyerabend et al, 2013) sets out the principles of good governance. These principles span five broad areas of: legitimacy & voice, direction, performance, accountability and fairness & rights. Table 8 is extracted from the IUCN report that shows the key distinguishing features of the five principals and shows some of the dichotomies that agencies operating the governance of designated landscapes need to navigate in order to function effectively.

5.3 Key connections between Welsh Government bodies and designated landscapes in Wales

5.3.1 Section 4.2 sets out the purposes and duties of National Parks and AONBs. This explains how any potential conflicts over the application of National Park purposes are reconciled through the Sandford Principle and how the Silkin Test, as codified through Planning Policy Wales, sets out the assessments that need to be made with respect to major development proposals in designated landscapes.

5.3.2 Designated Landscapes are part of the Welsh Government infrastructure. Figure 3 sets out the key relationships between the two landscape designations and the Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales (NRW), local government and the Welsh Audit Office.

Figure 3: Key responsibilities of national and local government bodies for Designated Landscapes of Wales



5.3.3 The Welsh Government delegates a number of statutory duties and responsibilities for designated landscapes to Natural Resource Wales (NRW). Article 5A of the NRW Functions Order 2013 imposes a general responsibility for NRW to: 'further nature conservation and the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and amenity' in the exercise of its duties. Figure 3 shows the key responsibilities delegated to NRW by the Welsh Government. These align with the duties NRW inherited when the Countryside Council for Wales, Forestry Commission and Environment Agency in Wales were merged to form NRW. The aspects relating to funding, membership of designated landscape boards and the preparation of management plans are discussed in later sections of this chapter.

5.3.4 NPAs are deemed to be single-purpose local authorities they are also designated as Welsh Improvement Authorities under Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (LGM, 2009). Under LGM 2009, NPAs are required to make arrangements for the continual improvement in the discharge of their duties, which has to be done on an annual basis. The Welsh Audit Office determines whether the NPA has discharged its duties to improve. If an NPA is deemed to be failing to improve then Welsh Ministers through WAO can intervene and direct the NPA to:

- Prepare or amend an improvement plan,
- Carry out a review of its specified functions,
- Enter into specified collaboration with another improvement authority, and
- Set specified improvement objectives. (Welsh Government, p.5, 2011)

5.4 Financial governance

5.4.1 The governance of how public funds are spent is a key aspect of how designated landscapes operate. Designated landscapes require careful management to conserve and improve them. Without sufficient resources targeted in the right manner this cannot be done effectively. Consequently, the financial governance of designated landscapes is of critical importance in ensuring their ongoing successful management.

5.4.2 The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) is one aspect both NPAs and AONBs in Wales share in common. SDF is a Welsh Government fund that 'encourages individuals and communities to find sustainable ways of living and working, whilst

enhancing and conserving the local culture, wildlife and landscape' (ANPA, 2013). SDF is administered by the designated landscape family on behalf of Welsh Government. Anyone can apply for between 50-75% of the total costs of a project, providing they meet certain criteria. All of the designated landscape family articulate these criteria slightly differently; however the aims of the SDF are broadly similar for all designations with Pembrokeshire Coast National Parks aims being:

- 'To explore innovative ways of contributing as far as practicable to the Welsh Governments' vision of a sustainable Wales, and of breaking down barriers that can act as obstacles to sustainability
- To integrate sustainable development with the special qualities of the Park, and demonstrate the contribution of a strong sense of place and local identity to sustainable living
- To build capacity in local communities and to develop and support community-based projects promoting sustainable development objectives.
- To generate greater awareness and understanding of sustainability amongst residents and visitors, and facilitate positive behaviour change.'

(PCNPA, 2015b)

5.4.3 *National Park Authorities*

5.4.4 National Park finances and expenditure are governed by a number of statutory provisions that place duties on both the NPA as an organisation and specific officers. This governance structure can be broadly defined into two aspects: the budgeting, financing and audit function and the tendering function. Detailed flowcharts of these two aspects are set out in Appendices vii to viii and are based on the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority's approach². BBNPA governance frameworks are used only as an exemplar of the types of governance framework required to operate the financial operations of a NPA in line with currently legislative requirements. There are differences in exact construction of each NPA's governance arrangements however they all broadly deliver the same function and outcomes.

² BBNPA governance frameworks are used only as an exemplar of the types of governance framework required to operate the financial operations of a NPA in line with currently legislative requirements. There are differences in exact construction of each NPA's governance arrangements however they all broadly deliver the same function and outcomes.

- 5.4.5 Appendix vii shows that, as a statutory body, each NPA is bound by a range of local government legislation that places duties upon it and its officers, most chiefly the section 151 officer who is more commonly known as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO). The CFO, together with their financial manager, the monitoring officer and the Chief Executive, are responsible for the budgeting, financial management and organisation of audits of the NPA. The accounts are externally audited and checked by the Welsh Audit Office.
- 5.4.6 NPAs are funded from four broad sources: nationally from a Welsh Government grant, locally through a local authority levy (albeit that local authorities are recompensed for this levy by the Welsh Government), successful grant applications to carry out projects aligned to their duties and from income arising from assets the NPA owns. Each year the Welsh Government Minister responsible for National Parks³ issues a strategic grant letter that sets out the NPAs' priorities for the coming year and also provides the level of the National Grant and the level of Local Government levy for the year. The National Grant accounts for 75% of the direct government funding with the other 25% being met from local government levies. These local government levies are agreed in accordance with S.71 of the Environment Act 1995 and the National Park Authorities (Levies) (Wales) Regulations, as amended. If a National Park boundary overlays more than one local authority, the proportion of the levy due by each local authority is raised on a pre-agreed formula. This applies to the Brecon Beacons and Snowdonia National Park Authorities (SNPA, 2014).
- 5.4.7 The NPAs are successful in raising funds through grant applications. The level of grant finance clearly varies annually depending on the range of funding opportunities available and the degree of success that each NPA has being awarded those funds. In 2013-2014 the NPAs secured between 14-25%⁴ of their total funding from grant funding sources. Some of the grant funding sources directly from the Welsh Government via NRW, Visit Wales or the Sustainable Development Fund. The range of sources can be found in table 9:

³ It should be noted that the department responsible for National Parks has changed overtime and hence the Minister responsible has changed in response to shifts in Ministerial legislative portfolios.

⁴ Snowdonia NPA amalgamated their grant funding with other fee income and so their percentage is inflated as a result. It should be noted that Brecon and Pembrokeshire both reported grant funding of approximately 15%.

Table 9: Sources of grant funding acquired by National Park Authorities based on 2013/14 accounts

Natural Resources Wales	European Convergence Grant Aid
National Trust	Historic Town Grants Scheme
Welsh Government - Planning	OFGEM/Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme
Welsh Government - Visit Wales	Ramblers
Heritage Lottery Fund	Big Lottery Fund
Food & Environment Research Agency	EU Collabor8 Scheme
Cadw	Other Local Authority Grants

Sources: BBNPA (2014), SNPA (2014), PCNPA (2014)

5.4.8 Grant funding can be received for projects spanning more than a single year and as a result NPAs run reserve accounts that allocate funds as income against expenditure incurred for that year. The pie charts in figures 4-6 show the splits between income and expenditure types for the three NPAs for the 2013/14 period. These show that the NPAs broadly spend similar ratios, albeit with subtle differences such as BBNPA spending more as a proportion on development control in 2014 or SNPA on historic building conservation⁵.

⁵ The higher development control costs in BBNPA are potentially due to the higher proportion of urban population living in the National Park. SNPA has an ongoing project that involves developing and conserving the poet, Hedd Wyn's home, Yr Ysgwrn.

Figure 4: Pie charts of income and expenditure for Brecon Beacons National Park Authority for 2013-2014.

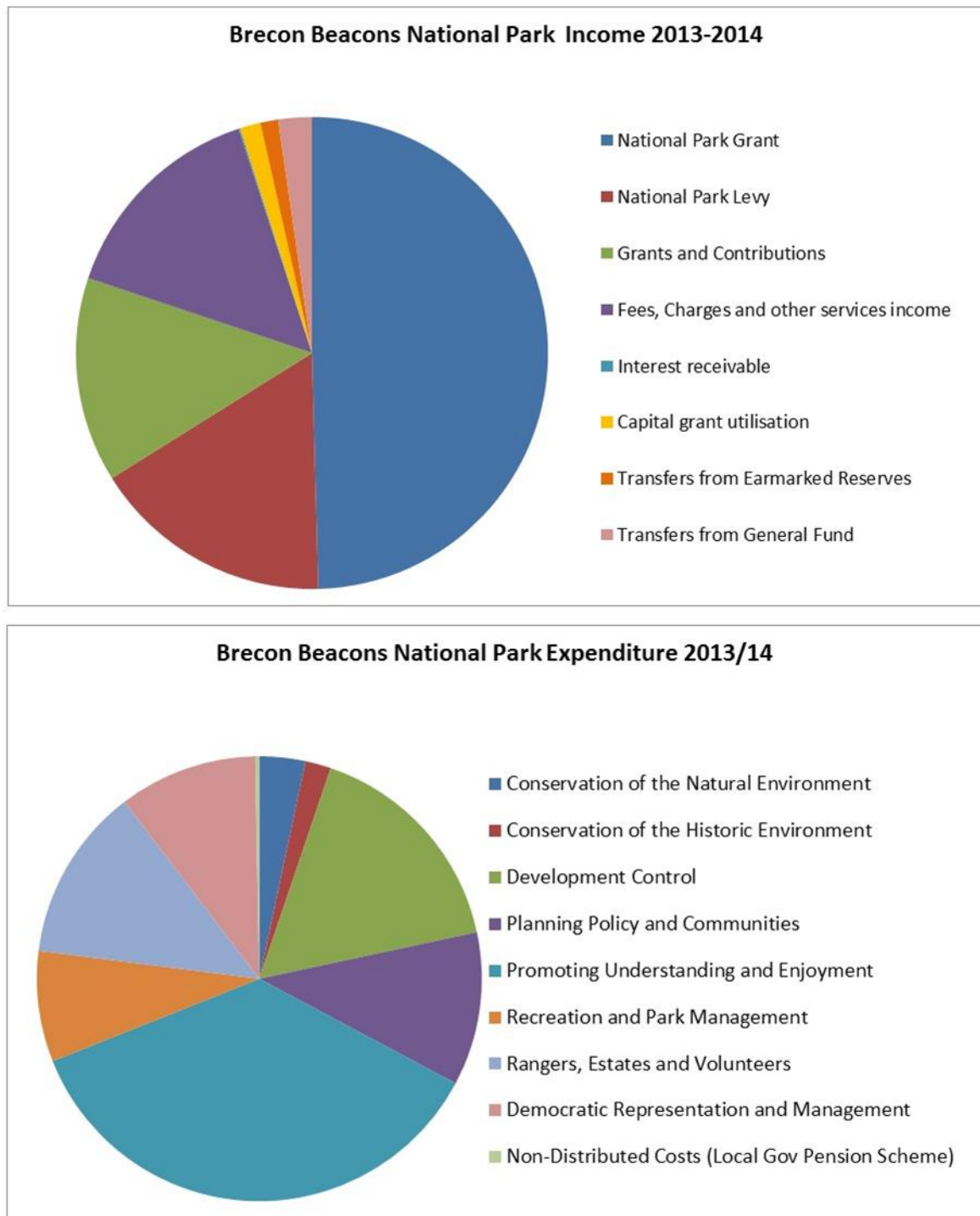


Figure 5: Pie charts of income and expenditure for Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority for 2013-2014.

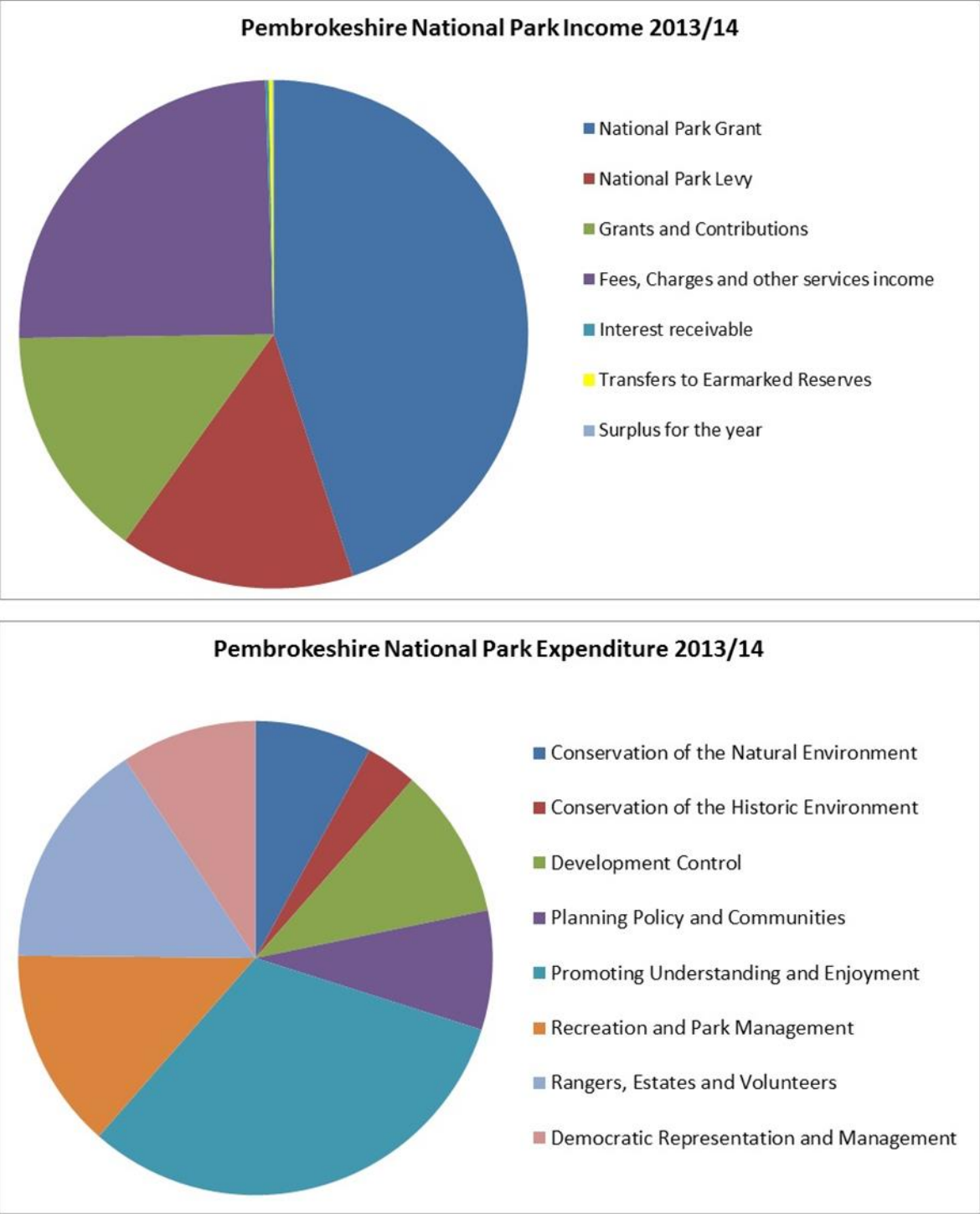
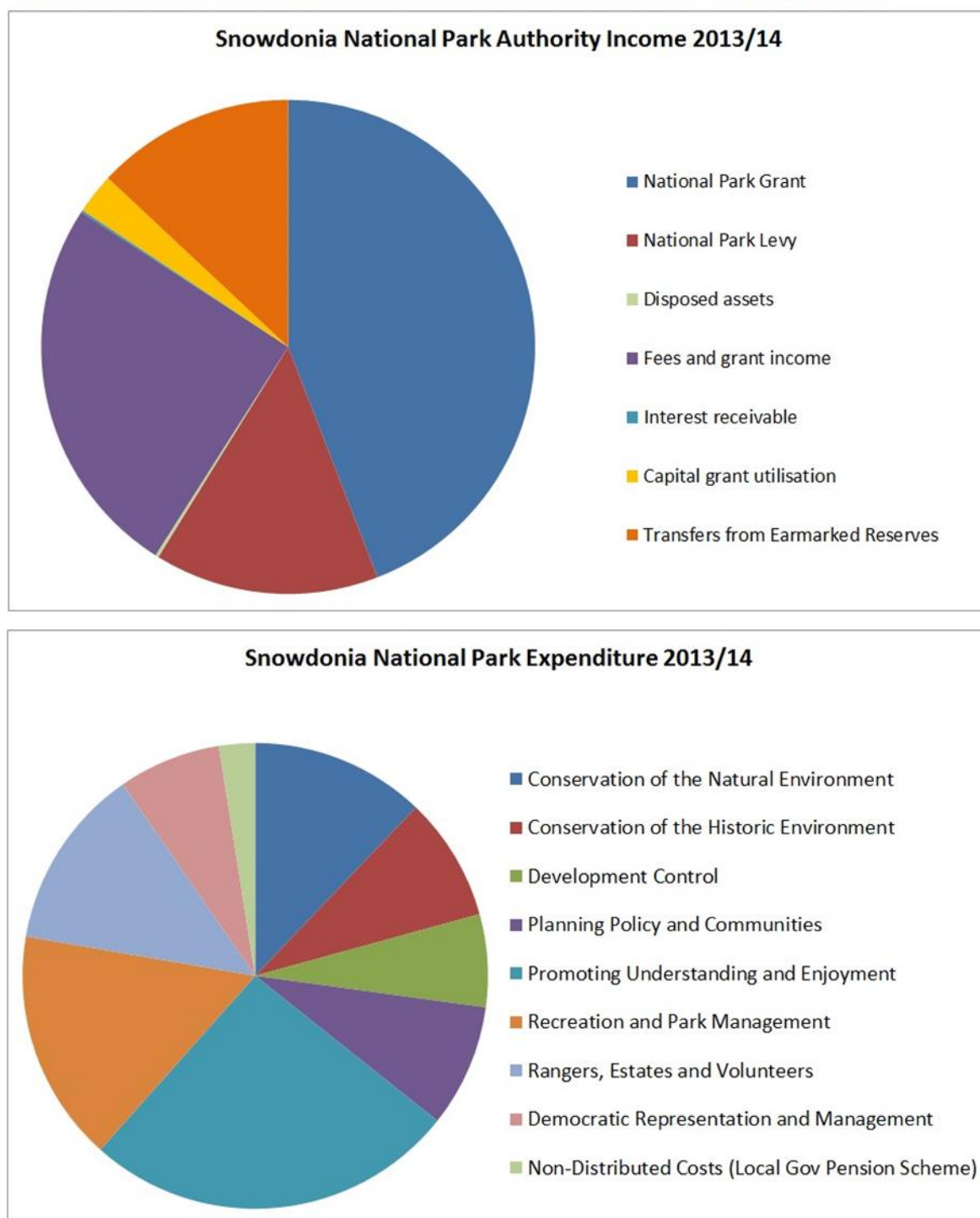


Figure 6: Pie charts of income and expenditure for Snowdonia National Park Authority for 2013-2014.



5.4.9 NPAs' tendering function is set out in Appendix viii can be defined into three key sections: compliance with statutory legislation, defining suitable parties (as either contractors or advertisers) and the tendering process itself. NPAs, as public bodies using public funds, have to comply with the Treaty of Rome, sections of the Local Government Act, 1988 (LGA, 1988) and the Local Government Planning and Land Act (1980). The NPAs are able to define the suitable outlets to advertise contracts in addition to the approved list held by the public tendering body, Value Wales.

5.4.10 One of the routes the NPAs use is a selective tendering process that invites tenders from contractors who are on a pre-approved list. This pre-approved list of contractors comprises contractors who are on the Framework Agreement Contractor list approved by Welsh Government's Value Wales service via their approved procurement list, or are on an approved contractor list drawn up by an NPA themselves. The NPA approved list is advertised and potential new contractors have the right to apply to be added to it as well as the right to a written explanation of refusal, should their application fail. The tendering process itself is split between higher and lower value contracts. Lower value contracts are able to be awarded on a less formalised basis where as higher value contracts have to be awarded via more formalised procedures. The values for contracts that define which type of tendering process is to be used differ between NPAs, but the processes are essentially similar.

5.4.11 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

5.4.12 AONBs, being part of the local authorities in whose areas they are located, derive their discretionary core funding from these local authorities. Additionally AONBs apply for grant funding from a range of sources. AONBs are not subject to the same level of direct scrutiny of their financial position, they do not report directly to the Welsh Audit Office, nor do they produce accounts demonstrating the sources of income and how this income has been expended.

5.4.13 The sense given to the Panel in evidence received from AONB officers is that their financial position is fragile and generally one of flux, which poses significant challenges in planning their work on improving and conserving AONBs. Table 10 shows a summary of AONBs' funding and expenditure which the panel requested from AONB officers during the evidence gathering phase:

Table 10: Discretionary funding and expenditure summary for AONBs for 2013/14

	Minimum	Maximum	Number of AONB with this funding source
Discretionary Funding Sources			
NRW	41,300	113,021	5
SDF	70,000	99,315	5
RDP	33,325	286,400	2
ERDF	2,620	2,620	1
HLF	2,539	71,600	2
LA	15,692	208,405	5
Visit Wales	10,000	10,000	1
DEFRA	116,449	116,449	1
SDF (England)	5,552	5,552	1
Partnerships contributions	201,415	201,415	1
	171,000	550,700	
Expenditure			
Staff & travel	38,000	296,860	
Operational Budget	8,967	26,597	
Project work	61,033	448,000	
	108,000	550,700	

5.4.14 The variations in overall funding is partly explained by differences in the scale of operation/size of individual AONBs, but it is also as a result of differences in the number and scale of active projects⁶. Three funding sources (local authority, NRW and Sustainable Development Fund) are common to all five AONBs, whereas others are unique to a single AONB with the ERDF being received for a project in Anglesey AONB and Wye Valley AONB receiving funding from DEFRA and SDF England due to its split between England and Wales.

⁶ It is also conceivable that there are activities/projects occurring within AONBs that are connected/aligned with AONB purposes which are not directly managed by the AONB team and so are not accounted for as income and expenditure in their evidence.

5.4.15 The data on expenditure is more difficult to summarise as each AONB accounts for their activities in slightly different ways, with some using a project allocation basis, whereas others operate on a more traditional accounting basis. Staffing and project costs are, to a certain extent, interchangeable as officers' time could be allocated to project work or project expenditure on staffing could be stated as a staff cost rather than project based expenditure. Specific details regarding some of the AONBs' projects can be found in the selection of case studies in Appendix iv, which are discussed in section 8.

5.5 Governance of Land Use Planning

5.5.1 Governance of Land Use is broadly divided into the two key areas of development planning and development management. Development planning pertains to the creation of a Local Development Plan (LDP) that provides guidance regarding what types of development are permitted. Development management deals with planning applications and enforcement, which are determined in accordance with the LDPs.

5.5.2 National Park Authorities and Land Use Planning

5.5.3 The governance of Land Use is one area where there is significant difference between National Parks and AONBs. National Parks are deemed to be local authorities for the purposes of planning, with their powers in this regard being delegated to them under S.101 of Local Government Act 1972 by local authorities. The result of NPAs being responsible for planning has three key implications regarding designated landscape management:

- The NPA is required to have all of the infrastructure and staffing required to carry out its duties in terms of development control;
- The NPA is responsible for the creation of the Local Development Plan in collaboration with other stakeholders; and
- The duties and purposes of the NP are able to be fully articulated through the local development plan and the development control process.

5.5.4 The legislative frameworks upon which the planning system in the UK and Wales is based help shape the governance frameworks for National Park Authorities in terms of planning and planning enforcement. Appendices ix and x sets out the governance

framework and was prepared using Brecon Beacons National Park Authority documentation. It is split between the general planning framework in Appendix ix and an enforcement framework in Appendix x. The planning frameworks shown in Appendix ix essentially guide the discharge of the NPA's planning responsibilities, with members either delegating planning decisions to planning officers or making decisions on planning applications based on reports they receive from planning officers. The planning protocol upon which Appendix ix is based also includes measures dealing with the duties of members regarding undue influence from third parties or from themselves upon planning officers, quality assurance procedures aimed at improving planning decisions as well as outlining, for members and officers, when third parties such as the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales or the Welsh Government may become involved in the planning process (BBNPA, 2014b).

5.5.5 AONBs and Land Use Planning

- 5.5.6 The creation of Local Development Plans and development management within AONBs is wholly the responsibility of the local authorities they are situated within. National Guidance through Planning Policy Wales sets the context for decision making affecting AONB's by local authority planning departments. These statements in Planning Policy Wales in effect elevate AONB's to almost the same level of protection afforded to National Parks in Wales:

'Development plan policies and development management decisions affecting AONBs should favour conservation of natural beauty, although it will also be appropriate to have regard to the economic and social well-being of the areas.'
(Planning Policy Wales, p.73, 2014)

- 5.5.7 'National Parks and AONBs are of equal status in terms of landscape and scenic beauty and both must be afforded the highest status of protection from inappropriate developments. In development plan policies and development management decisions National Parks and AONBs must be treated as of equivalent status. In National Parks and AONBs, development plan policies and development management decisions should give great weight to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of these areas' (Planning Policy Wales, p.73, 2014)

- 5.5.8 The AONB officers typically have no direct say in planning decisions, except in Llŷn & Anglesey AONB where their AONB officer is also a planning officer for the local authority. What we see in the remaining three AONBs is a range of engagement processes between the AONBs JACs or Partnerships and their respective planning departments.
- 5.5.9 Minutes from Gower AONB meetings show that the Gower Partnership Group discusses changes to the Swansea LDP, for example focusing upon social housing plans in and around the edge of the AONB (Gower Partnership Group, 2014). The Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB ran a joint advisory committee (JAC), which acted as '*a consultee on applications*' within the AONB (Clwydian & Dee Valley AONB IJAC, p.2, 2014a)⁷ and made comments directly to the relevant local authority planning department. Whereas a review of the available meeting minutes suggests that the JACs of both the Wye Valley and Anglesey AONB's do not comment directly upon planning proposals⁸. This differentiated engagement between JACs and planning was noted as a planning issue by the 2012 Planning Review (Welsh Government, 2012). One further issue noted by that review is that the independence of AONB officers' decisions on planning applications may be affected as they are employed by the local authority. It said it '*is a worry that they will be sticking 'their neck out' against the views of their employers*' (Welsh Government, p.50, 2012).

5.5.10 *Planning effects beyond the designated boundary*

- 5.5.11 Planning policies for National Parks and AONBs can in certain circumstances apply to developments proposed beyond the borders of the designated landscape because they impinge in some way upon the designated landscape's quality. These impacts could potentially be wide ranging in nature, for example evidence gathered from the review relates to visual and noise related impacts. In the case of Gower it was found that there were complaints regarding neighbouring areas' developments of a golf driving range and a motor racing facility that impacted the North Gower area in terms of light pollution and noise respectively (Gower AONB Partnership Group, 2015). The Clwydian & Dee IJAC minutes discuss the visual impact of a wind turbine application

⁷ The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB moved to a slightly different model of governance from 2014. The minutes this information was taken from relate to an interim JAC. The new governance model is discussed further in the section on representation.

⁸ Albeit that Anglesey AONB JAC has been part of discussions regarding the power infrastructure developments on Anglesey (Anglesey AONB, 2012).

upon views from Snowdon and the Clwydian range (Clwydian & Dee AONB IJAC, 2014).

5.5.12 Evaluation of Planning within designated landscapes

5.5.13 There is a perception that gaining planning permission within NPAs is sometimes difficult due to their specific statutory duties. This was communicated to the Review during evidence sessions with representatives of business in particular. However, the Welsh Government Planning Department's officials and the NPAs representatives stated that this is an impression and not really a reality within planning in Wales. This is born out from evidence showing that NPA's approved 73%-85% of applications (Welsh Government, 2012) and typically had 69%-88% of their decisions upheld on appeal based on 2008/09 statistics (PWC, 2011, in Welsh Government 2012).

5.5.14 The report into Planning Services in Statutory Designated Landscapes (Welsh Government, 2012) recommended that Welsh Government reports nationally on planning outcomes across National Parks and AONBs. This type of reporting will improve the transparency of planning decisions both to Welsh Government and the general public. The report suggested the following types of outcome indicators:

- Percentage of successful planning applications;
- Percentage of successful commercial (economic) planning applications;
- The quality of the planning outcomes, i.e. the suitability of development taking place within National Parks and AONBs with their statutory landscape purposes; and
- Percentage of planning decisions that:
 - Have gone against Community Council recommendations, &
 - Within AONBs, the percentage of planning decisions that have gone against the recommendation of the JAC / AONB officer.

5.6 National Landscape Governance

5.6.1 The wider governance of designated landscapes is directed through their management plans. These plans are key documents that utilise both horizontal and vertical governance interactions with stakeholders in their formation. Section 61(1) the Environment Act 1995 requires NPAs to produce a management plan and local authorities have the same duty with respect to AONBs under the CROW Act 2000.

Because of the difference in statutory purposes and duties between NPAs and AONBs the processes and nature of their management plans differ slightly.

5.6.2 *National Park Management Plans*

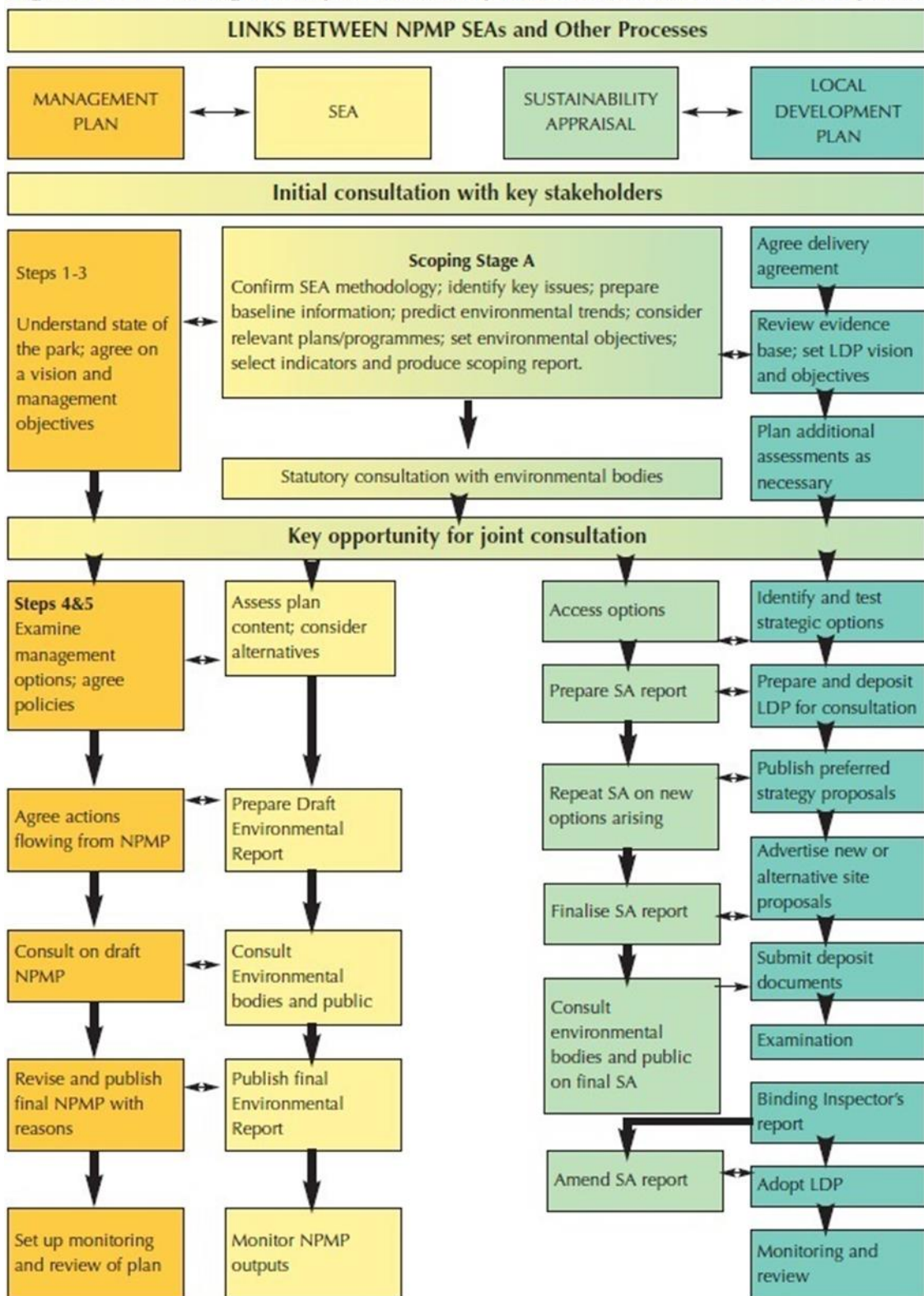
- 5.6.3 Management plans are key documents within the framework of National Park governance that inform other strategies and plans such as the Local Development Plan. The creation of the Management Plan for a National Park is a complex process that requires different strands of consultation, evaluation and reporting before it can be adopted and it must be reviewed on a five yearly basis (CCW, 2007). Part of this complexity arises from management plans being subordinate to a number of higher jurisdictional regulations, in particular EU Directive 2001/42/EC which requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be carried out and 92/94/EEC that requires an evaluation of the management plan's impact on Natura 2000⁹ designated sites.
- 5.6.4 CCW¹⁰ in 2007 produced a detailed guidance document that sets out clearly the process and expected contents of the various reports required. Figure 7, part of guidance in CCW (2007), shows a flowchart that illustrates the links and processes involved as well as the points at which stakeholders are to be consulted.
- 5.6.5 Furthermore, the guidance lists the key stakeholders to be consulted during the plan preparation process which is a wide ranging group including: Departments/Agencies of the Welsh Government, Associations (One Voice Wales, WLGA etc.), NGO's (CPRW, FUW, National Trust, Soil Association etc.), other Local Government bodies (Community Councils, local authority Economic Development departments etc.), local communities/interest groups, commercial companies (public utilities, chambers of commerce, local tourism groups etc.) and advisory institutions (Food groups, Farming Connect) (CCW, 2007).
- 5.6.6 The NPAs have to consider the advice they receive from stakeholders and, in the latter stages of preparation, it is suggested in CCW (2007) that they explain how comments from stakeholders are reflected in the management plan. Figure 8 is an extract of the

⁹ SACs, SPA's and RAMSAR sites.

¹⁰ CCW has subsequently been merged into the new body Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The expectation is that the responsibility for any updated guidance for the production of Management Plans rests with NRW.

report on consultations undertaken by PCNPA as part of its 2015-2020 management plan creation process and shows the how officers of the NPA reflect and respond to comments received from stakeholders.

Figure 7 : NP Management plan creation process and context with other plans



Source: CCW (2007)

Figure 8: Extract from PCNPA report on stakeholder consultations (PCNPA, 2015a)

Stakeholder	Stakeholders comment	PCNPA response to comment
NPMP/2708/09 Pembrokeshire County Council	5.1 PCNPA may wish to reference commitment to PBP partnership working in relation to functioning ecosystems.	The text at 5.1 relates to outcomes; mechanisms for achieving the outcomes are addressed elsewhere in the chapter. <i>It is considered that the references to the importance of the Pembrokeshire Biodiversity Partnership at 5.2.3, 5.3.1.2 and 5.3.3.2 are sufficient and no change is recommended.</i>
NPMP/2708/10 Pembrokeshire County Council	5.25 PCNPA may wish to reference work on connectivity in mid-Pembrokeshire.	<i>It is recommended that a sentence is inserted in para 5.2.5.2 to read “A nature value mapping exercise was carried out for Pembrokeshire in 2012.”</i>
NPMP/2708/11 Pembrokeshire County Council	Policy B1 PCC suggests reference to the Pembrokeshire Biodiversity Partnership role here in relation to work on invasive non-native species.	Policy B1 includes a note that Policy B3 (manage invasive species) also applies. <i>Recommendation: no change.</i>

5.6.7 The Environment Act, 1995 s.67-8 (as amended) requires NPAs to:

- Notify NRW and all local authorities which are wholly or partly within the National Park of the management planning process;
- To provide copies of the management plan to these bodies together with any amendments made to the plan during its preparation;
- To take ‘into consideration’ any observations made by the local authorities and NRW
- To send the management plan along with any associated documentation to the Welsh Government.

5.6.8 There appears to be no obvious direct response to or oversight of the management plans by Welsh Government but rather that NRW represent the interface between Welsh Government and the NPAs with regard to the creation and design of NPA management plans.

5.6.9 Appendix vi contains a categorised list of the data/indicators included in the State of the Park Reports (SOPR) for the NPAs¹¹. Much of the data used within these reports is not directly collected by the NPAs themselves. It arises from a range of sources including local authorities, national statistical data; other government department's collected data (such as that from Cadw¹² or NRW) and third party reports. Some of the data used in these reports does not map directly on to National Park boundaries. However, considering that the activities carried out within the National Parks can lead to positive impacts beyond the border, this data issue is may not be significant.

5.6.10 Once the National Park management plan is formally adopted by an NPA the document then goes on to shape all the activities, strategies and plans undertaken by the NPA and, ideally, by stakeholders. Figure 9 shows the management plan in context for an NPA. Figure 9 shows the iterative nature of the process whereby the management plan informs strategies and actions that, in turn, inform a State of the Park report which itself then shapes the creation of the next management plan. Management plans are not created as plans for the NPA but for managing the National Park for the benefit of all, in line with the National Park purposes, a principal expressed in SNPA's 2010-2015 plan:

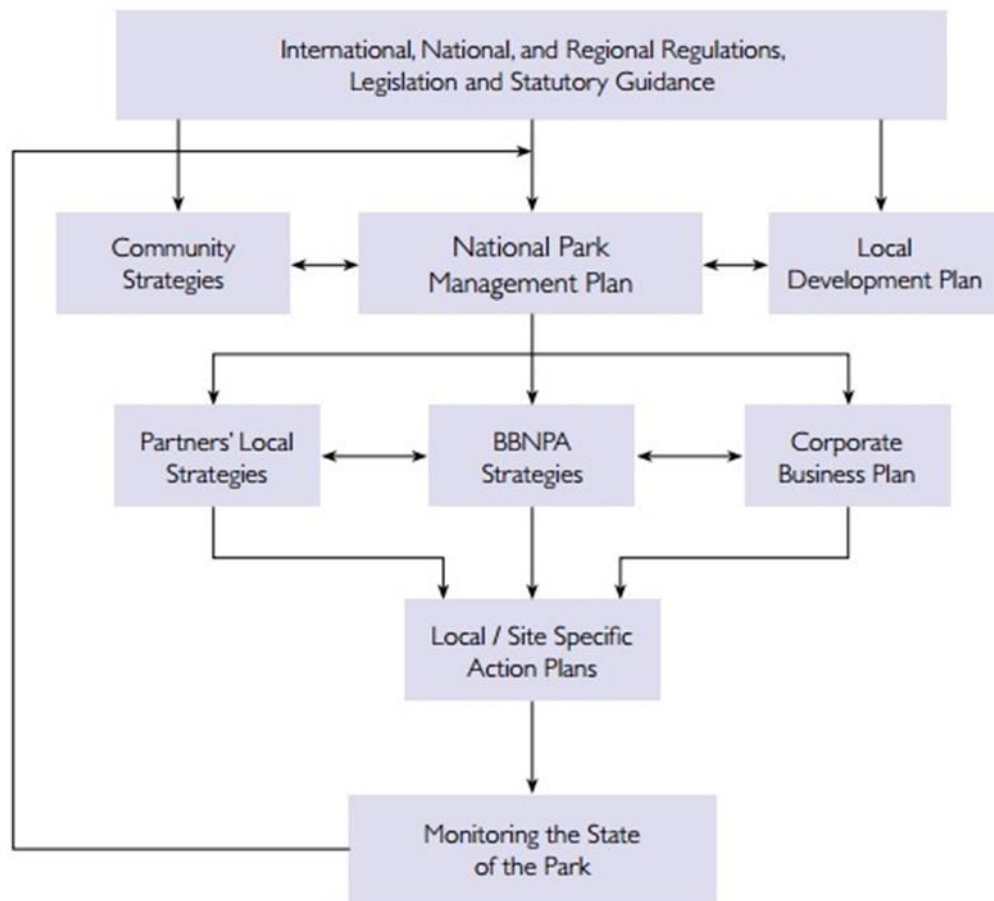
'Although the National Park Authority prepares the Plan, it is a document for all who have a stake in its future, be they public, private or third sector organisations or individuals interested in the future of Snowdonia. In essence, ensuring a sustainable future for Snowdonia is our shared responsibility.'

(Ibid, p.4)

¹¹ Except Pembrokeshire National Park which combines its Management Plan and SOPR.

¹² The Welsh Government's historic environment service

Figure 9: Flowchart showing NPA Management Plans in context



Source: BBNPA, 2010

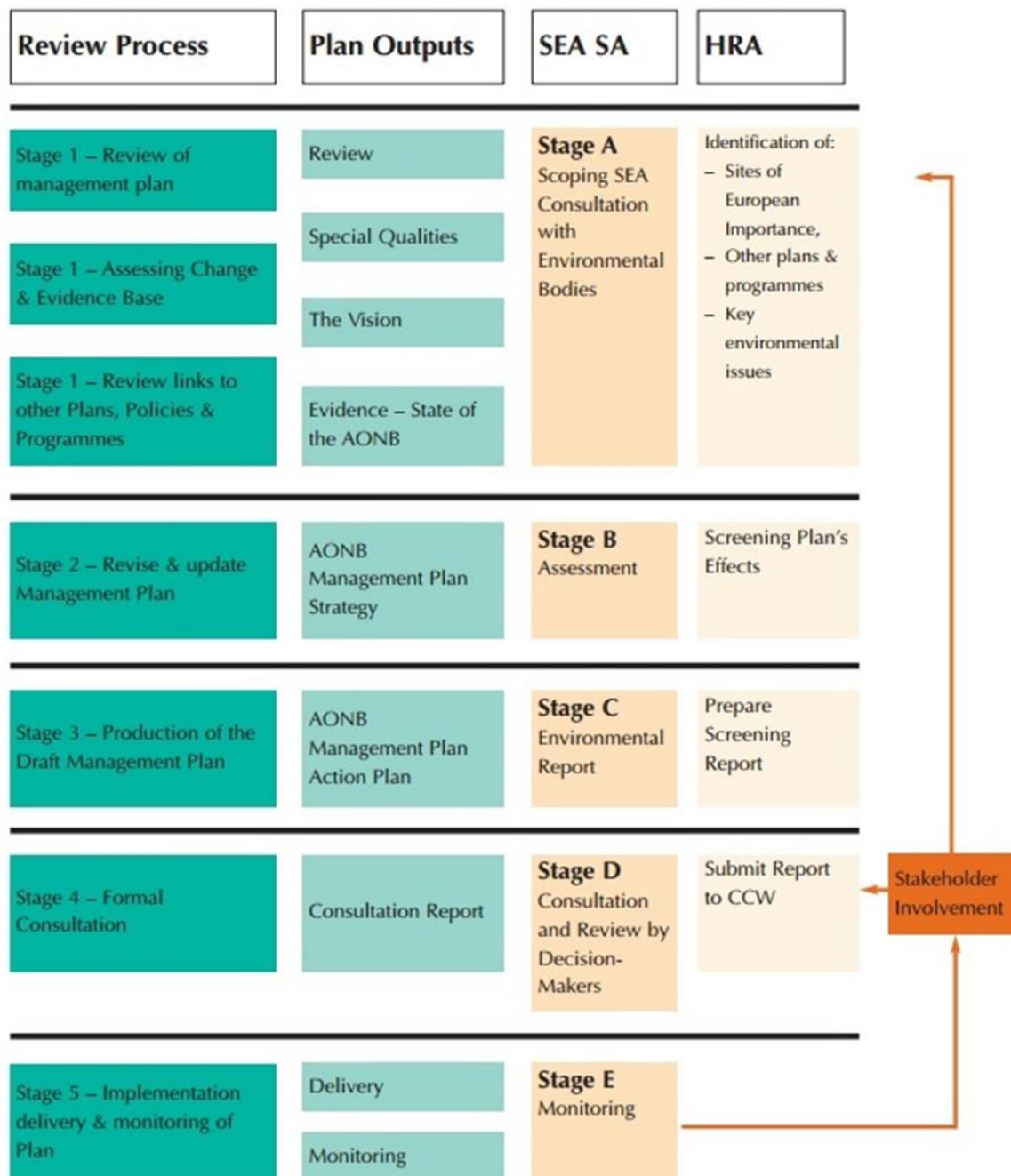
5.6.11 AONB Management Plans

5.6.12 The process for the creation of AONB management plans has many of the same requirements as that of National Park Management Plan creation. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires:

- local authorities to update their management plans on a five yearly basis;
- To inform and submit the report for comment to NRW;
- To take into consideration any comments NRW makes on the plan &
- To submit final copies of the report to the Welsh Government.

5.6.13 Additionally AONB management plans also require SEAs to be carried out on the potential impacts of their plans and Habitat Regulation Assessments (HRAs). Figure 10 is an extract from the guidance for the management plan creation from CCW that sets out both the plan creation process and the interaction between the creation of the AONB management plan, the SEA, HRAs and consultation with key stakeholders.

Figure 10: Management plan creation process for AONBs



Source: CCW (2008)

5.6.14 The key significant difference between the NP and AONB management plans is that with development planning and development management not under direct control of the designated landscape body there is not a direct consideration of the AONB management plan when the local development plan is created. Instead CROW 2000, S84 directs local planning authorities to:

‘take all such actions as appears to them expedient to the accomplishment of the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty or so much of it as is included in their area.’ (CCW, 2008, p.4)

5.6.15 A review of the current AONB management plans and the AONB management plan guidance from CCW shows that the responsibility for review of previous management plans lay with the local authorities themselves albeit with assistance from other stakeholders (CCW, 2008). There is clearly some reflection of the status of specific aspects of the AONBs within state of the AONB sections of the AONB management plans, as shown in Figure 11, from the current management plan for Anglesey AONB. However, specific evaluation of previous plan action points is less apparent. Moreover, as with National Park management plans, there is similarly no obvious direct response to, or oversight of, the management plans by Welsh Government but rather that NRW represent the interface between Welsh Government and the local authorities with regard to the design of AONB management plans.

Figure 11: Extract from Anglesey AONB's Management Plan 2009-2014, State of the AONB report showing condition assessments.

SPECIAL QUALITIES	EXTENT OF RESOURCE	CONDITION	WHY IMPORTANT?	FACTORS AFFECTING CONDITION
Coastal Landscape Features: • Sea Cliffs and Rocky shores • Sand Dunes • Sandy Beaches • Saltmarsh	Sea cliffs are prominent on the west and north coasts, in particular at: • Rhoscolyn • South Stack • Ynys y Fydlyn • Ynys Llanddwyn	Variable	The AONB is a landscape designation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in land management practices • Changes in legislation • Inappropriate development • Economic pressures and threats • Sea level rise, and the subsequent need for sea defences tied into this is managed retreat • Development pressures • Recreational pressures • Pollution • Decline of traditional light grazing • Scrub development • Conifer planting • Common Agricultural Policy (European, National and Regional policy implications) • Non-native Invasive Species
	Large dunes systems are located at Newborough and Aberffraw. Dunes also located at Traeth Dulas, Red Wharf Bay and Rhosneigr	Variable	The coastal landscape helps to define the character of Anglesey	
	Sandy beaches are located throughout the AONB. Includes beaches at Lligwy, Aberffraw, Llanddona and Llanddwyn	Variable	These features are distinctive, appealing and integral elements of the coastal landscape	
	Saltmarshes are located throughout the AONB that includes: Traeth Melynog, Cefni Estuary, Cymyran Strait and Inland Sea, Traeth Dulas and Traeth Coch	Good	Beaches are an important economic asset for Anglesey Saltmarshes are an important buffer zone between land and sea and provide coastal protection.	
Traditional Agricultural Landscape Features: • Ancient Hedgerows • Stone Walls • Cloddiau	Ancient hedgerows are more concentrated in the south and east of the AONB. Associated with boundaries (parish, estate and farm) country lanes and trackways.	Declining	<p>The AONB is a landscape designation</p> <p>The agricultural landscape helps to define the character of Anglesey</p> <p>These features are a valuable wildlife habitat and are link corridors for flora and fauna</p> <p>These features are an integral element of the AONB's landscape</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in land management practices • Changes in legislation • Inappropriate development • Economic pressures and threats • General neglect • Removal to increase field sizes • Road widening • Inappropriate cutting regimes • Changes in grant schemes • Non-native Invasive Species

Source: Isle of Anglesey CC, 2009

5.7 Representation in designated landscapes

- 5.7.1 The oversight of activities carried out pursuant to the running, maintenance and conservation of designated landscapes is critical to ensuring that those who manage designated landscapes are doing so in an effective and transparent manner. Representation in designated landscapes has two strands of importance. The first strand is that as locally based landscape assets have national significance to all the people of Wales their representation needs to reflect the balance of local and national interests. The second strand relates to the inclusion of different members of society; for good governance of designated areas, the representation within their governance structures must necessarily include the full range of interested communities. How these two strands are articulated in Wales varies between the AONBs and National Parks.
- 5.7.2 Embedded within the second strand is also the requirement for the management and representation of designated landscapes to have due regard to the equality duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010. The equality duty means public bodies need to:
- 'Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.'
- (Home Office, 2010, p.4)
- 5.7.3 One key distinction that needs to be made within both types of landscape designation is between 'members' and 'officers'. 'Members' are, in the case of AONBs, the elected Councillors of local authorities and, in the case of NPAs, both elected local authority Councillors and Welsh Government appointees. Officers are employees of the National Park or local authority. 'Members' help shape the decisions that affect the running of the designated landscape, whereas the 'officers' carry out the day to day operation of running the designated landscape.

5.7.4 Representation on National Parks Authorities

- 5.7.5 National Parks all have member boards which guide the direction and work of the NPAs. These boards comprise Councillors appointed to them from their constituent local authorities and members appointed by Welsh Government. There is a formal public appointments process for Welsh Government appointees who are to represent national interests at board level as well as providing specialist skills to assist the NPA board in the discharge of its duties (Welsh Government, 2011).
- 5.7.6 Local authority appointees represent the local interest on NPA boards. Where local authorities appoint three or more members to a board, section 15 of LGHA, 1989 applies, which insists that the party politically balance of elected councillors in the local authority is reflected in their appointees. This can create a situation where some Councillors who represent wards far outside the boundaries of the National Park are appointed to the NPA board. There is a perception that this disconnect between the location of the local authority members and the National Park boundaries, leads to a lack of local accountability for the residents and businesses in National Parks.
- 5.7.7 Table 11 shows the current gender balance of local authority Councillor Members and Welsh Government Appointee Members appointed to the three NPA boards. BBNPA confirmed that the three externally recruited members were appointed to sit specifically on their scrutiny committee.

Table 11: Split between LA and WG appointed members of the three NPA by gender.

	LA		WG		Externally recruited	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Brecon	13	3	4	3	2	1
Pembrokeshire	11	1	3	3	0	0
Snowdonia	10	2	4	2	0	0

Sources: BBNPA (2015), PCNPA (2015), SNPA (2015).

- 5.7.8 National Park Authorities are engaging in activities to foster greater inclusion and knowledge of the National Park through Mosaic and mentoring schemes. The Mosaic schemes aim to recruit National Park Champions from minority groups living in Wales to learn and then promote National Parks within their communities by organising trips and educational events (SNPA, 2014b). The mentoring programme is pilot scheme

that sees members of the public from less represented groups (young, disabled, female and ethnic minorities) mentored by NPA members and assisted by officers to help them gain skills to help them engage in local government (CNP, 2015).

5.7.9 Representation on AONB Committees

5.7.10 There is a range of models of 'governing authority' used by the AONBs. The Anglesey, Llŷn and Wye Valley AONBs have Joint Advisory Committees (JACs) which bring together a wide range of stakeholders from public, private and voluntary sectors to assist in the management of each AONB, including delivery of the AONB's management plan. Each JAC is constituted differently, reflecting the individual needs of the area. In some cases, such as the Wye Valley AONB, some members of the JAC have voting powers (Monmouthshire County Council, 2014). The Gower operates a partnership group structure, which comprises 6 local authority members, 2 NRW officer members and 10 members who are elected during an annual partnership group meeting, which is open to the general public. Table 12 shows the range of organisations that are represented on one or more JAC's and / or Partnership Groups in Wales.

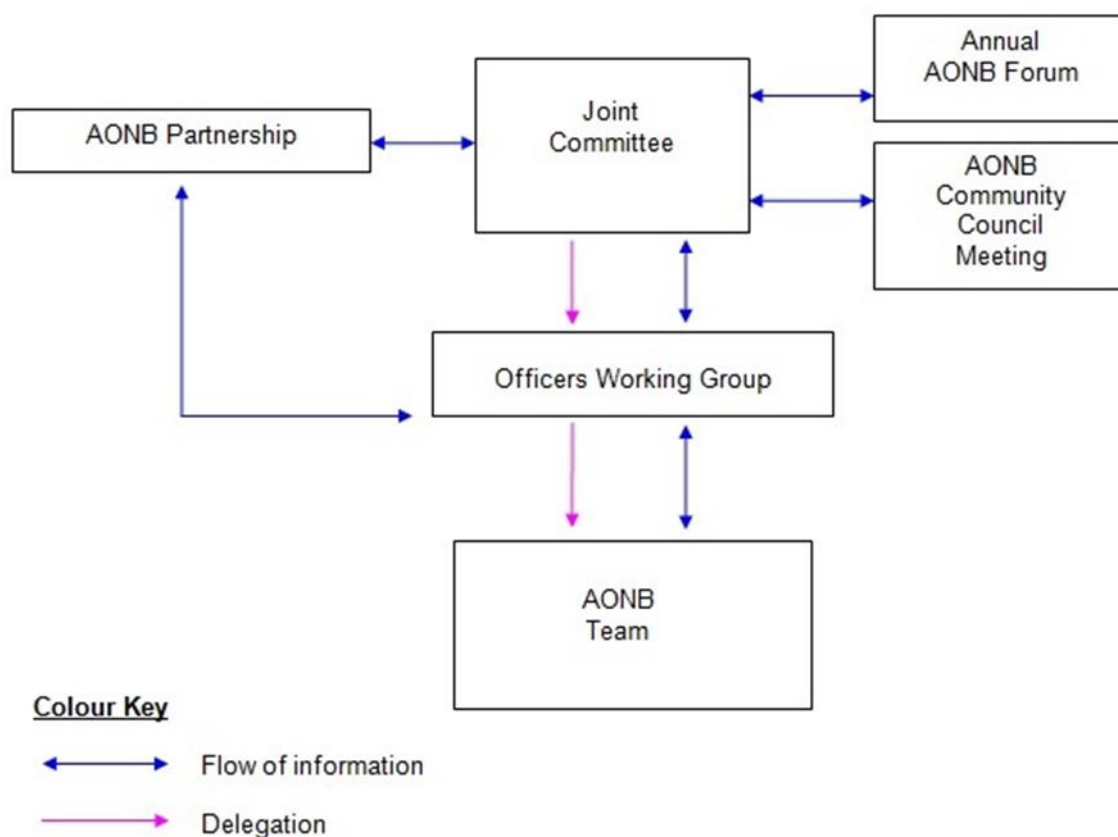
Table 12: Range of organisations with membership of one or more JACs in Wales

Natural Resources Wales	Local Wildlife Trusts	Local Community Councils	One Voice Wales
National Trust	NFU Cymru	Unllais Cymru	RSPB
CLBA	FUW	Coed Cymru	Menter Môn
Local conservation / preservations	Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales	Local Archaeological Trusts & Societies	Other Local Authority Department Officers
Federation of Small Businesses	Outdoor groups	University departments	Tourism Partnership Groups

5.7.11 The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB has begun to operate a slightly different model of representation from the other four Welsh AONB's. Its model has a two tier

structure shown in Figure 13. The first tier is the joint committee which comprises six local authority cabinet level Councillors, being two members from each of the local authority within which the AONB is located. The second tier is a partnership group, which has an advisory role much like that of a JAC. The partnership group's composition is specifically designed to include representatives that cover all four aspects of their AONB management plan, namely: Access and Recreation, the Natural Environment, The Built Environment and the Historic Environment. The partnership group has representatives of land management, rural community, urban community, business interests and up to three special interest partners who are appointed through an application process that is open to the general public.

Figure 13: Structure for the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB management and governance



Source: Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB, 2013

- 5.7.12 This model has been chosen for the Clwydian & Dee AONB as it is felt this brings top level support from the local authorities and enables decisive action to be taken. This model, by having cabinet level local authority members, brings valuable expertise to the management of the AONB which is often aligned to the Councillors' wider local authority portfolio, whilst the wider partnership group, with its special interest members is designed to provide inclusivity and innovation for the management of the AONB.

5.7.13 Table 13 shows the gender balance within each AONB structure. The table is split between local authority elected members including community councillors, local authority officials including the AONB team, Welsh Government and other parties which includes NGO representatives from a broad spectrum of groups as shown in Table 12.

Table 13: Gender balance in the membership of JACs/Partnership groups of AONBs as at 2014

AONB	LA ¹		Government Agencies		Non-elected LA ²		Other parties	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Anglesey	5	0	5	0	6	1	12	7
Clwydian	6	0	-	-	3	2	12	4
Wye Valley	8	4	0	2	4	1	11	1
Gower	6	2	0	2	3	0	6	2
Llŷn	6	4	1	0	2	0	6	2

Notes

- 1 Include community councillors where appropriate
- 2 Includes AONB officers and other local authority officials (e.g. planning officers etc)

5.8 Designated Landscapes in action: Case studies

5.8.1 During the course of gathering evidence, the panel requested case studies of good practice in the work that designated landscape family are doing. The panel asked specifically for case studies that showcased projects that demonstrated: improving biodiversity, developing the local eco-economy, showcasing good governance with other stakeholders, delivering on social justice, providing health benefits, schemes combating poverty, building community cohesion, engaging with future generations or any combination thereof. The panel directed that each case study should provide the following information:

1. Name of the project/activity.
2. Names of participatory organisations.
3. Location and duration of the scheme.
4. Description of the background on the scheme including its aims and objectives.
5. Description of the outcomes. This should include how successfully the objectives were met and also any further learning points that your organisation has discovered as part of delivering the scheme/activity.
6. Description and/or quantification of long term benefits/implications.

7. Funding sources and amounts.
8. Photograph illustrating the project.

5.8.2 The panel received thirty six case studies from the designated landscape family in Wales; seventeen from the NPAs and nineteen from the AONBs. The case studies are wide ranging in terms of their scope, funding and engagement with other partners. These case studies can be found in full in Appendix iv. Table 14 sets out a thematic analysis of the key benefits delivered through the projects described in the case studies.

Table 14: Thematic analysis of benefits arising from the project case studies

	Anglesey	Brecon Beacons	Clwydian	Gower	Llyn	Pembrokeshire Coast	Snowdonia	Wye Valley	Brecon Beacon and Pembrokeshire Coast joint project
Tourism	1	4	1	1	1	2	3	2	0
Local business	1	4	2	2	1	4	3	1	0
Education	4	3	1	2	1	1	2	4	1
Social Inclusion	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Recreation	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	3	0
Conservation	4	2	2	3	0	1	3	4	0
Wellbeing	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	1
Partnership Working	1	4	2	2	0	0	1	1	0
Number of projects submitted	5	6	4	4	1	5	5	5	1

- 5.8.3 There are schemes within the case studies that exemplify the conservation and management of the environment. For the NPAs, these examples include the Brecon Beacons' *Glastir project*, Pembrokeshire's *Conserving Coastal Slopes* and Snowdonia's *Climate Change & Invasive Species project*. The delivery of these sustainable land management projects was achieved by working together with graziers and other agencies. From the AONBs the case studies range from the landscape management approach of the Alyn and Chwiler Living Landscape Project in the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB to the broad range of over 170 projects involving multiple organisations and 8000 participants of Anglesey AONB's voluntary conservation activities and events.
- 5.8.4 Whilst many of the case studies demonstrate how the designated landscapes deliver on meeting their purposes and duties there are also clear examples of how the AONBs are working to wider agendas than their single purpose 'to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.' For example they are delivering initiatives which bring benefits to the local businesses and communities. Here again there is a broad range of examples including: tourism and festival based work which is evident in all eight of the designated areas for example: the Wye Valley River Festival or Llŷn's Coastal festival as well as other beneficial schemes such as: the Halen Môn Visitor centre on Anglesey, Clwydian Lamb and Llanmadoc Community Shop on Gower.
- 5.8.5 There is also evidence that the AONBs and National Parks are already delivering projects that should contribute towards the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The *mindSCAPE* in the Wye Valley AONB, *Landscapes for Health* in the Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB, *Social Inclusion projects* in Pembrokeshire Coast NPA, the *Skills in Action project* run jointly by Brecon Beacons & Pembrokeshire Coast NPAs and the *Down to Earth project* in the Gower AONB all present excellent examples of fostering greater social well-being and health benefits.
- 5.8.6 Engagement with other partners ranges from 3 or 4 key delivery partners to over 30 different organisations. The breadth of these partners includes: NRW, international partners, local land owners associations, local authorities, the National Trust, other conservation NGOs, health NGOs, education establishments and community groups. Furthermore, the evidence from these case studies shows just how innovative and successful the designated landscape bodies in Wales are at attracting and bidding for

funding from a wide range of sources and, in doing so, converting relatively small amounts of their core public funding into the delivery of much larger schemes and projects within their local communities. Table 15 shows a list of the funding partners specifically mentioned in the case studies set out in Appendix iv. However, it should be noted that in some cases the designated landscape respondent did not specify all, or any of the funding partners.

Table 15: Sources of grant funding specifically mentioned in the case studies provided by the designated landscape family

Adventa	Finance Wales	Pembrokeshire County Council
Arts Council England	Gower Society	Private resources
Big Lottery	Heritage Lottery Fund	REF
Big Lottery - Reaching Communities	LEADER RDP	Rising Tide (Interreg Project)
Communities and Neighbourhood Scheme	Let's Walk Cymru	Ross Town Council
City & County Council of Swansea	Llŷn Landscape Partnership	Rural Development Plan
Coastal Communities Fund	Milford Haven Port Authority	Shire Hall Monmouth
Council of Arts Wales	Monmouth Town Council	SITA Trust
Dŵr Cymru	National Theatre of Wales	Swansea RDP
Environment Agency	National Trust	Visit Wales
ERDF	Natural Resources Wales	Walking with Offa
European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund	Nature Fund	Welsh Government - Invasive Non Native Species fund
European Social Fund	NWWT Fund	WREN

- 5.8.7 There are two encouraging examples of NPAs and AONBs working together in partnership. Snowdonia NPA has come together with Anglesey, Llŷn and Clwydian Hills & Dee Valley AONBs in the North Wales Designate Landscapes – Naturally Different Project. The project aims to forge improved links between the four designations, the public sector and the tourism sector, specifically to engender a sense of ownership of these landscapes for the businesses in these areas.

Additionally the project hopes to improve the awareness visitors have of the four designations to encourage repeat visitation and greater visitation to all the designated areas by visitors. The other partnership project is the Skills in Action initiative which brings Brecon Beacons, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authorities and Torfaen County Borough Council together to provide targeted traineeships in environmental management for young people, including NEETs.

- 5.8.8 Therefore these designations and the teams that manage them provide unique spaces to convene projects involving a multitude of groups and funding sources. These case studies show how important designated landscapes can be in terms of delivering an incredible array of sustainable development benefits for the people, businesses and environment of Wales.

5.9 Alternative models

- 5.9.1 Question 5 of the second stage call for evidence from the Designated Landscape Review asked for contributors whether there were any other designated landscape/protected area governance models or approaches that they wanted to bring to the attention of the Review. A number of useful suggestions were put forward in the evidence, along with suggestions as to why these models may or may not be more appropriate for the Welsh Designated Landscapes.

5.9.2 US National Park Service

- 5.9.3 The US National Park Service model has a centralised service that manages all 407 National Parks within the United States. The Service provides the opportunity to employ experts within central directorates which advise and manage the national parks. The national parks are then organised into seven regional directorates (NPS, 2015a). The other point of note is that 128 of the National Parks charge entrance fees to visitors, ranging between \$5-\$25 a week, which are then used to improve the facilities and services for National Park visitors (NPS, 2015b).

5.9.4 Scottish National Parks

- 5.9.5 Scotland currently has designated two national parks, one in the Cairngorms and one around Loch Lomond and the Trossachs. The Scottish national parks were raised in

multiple submissions to the panel and were the subject of a full day of evidence sessions with experts from across the Scottish designated landscape sector. The Scottish national parks differ in four key ways from national parks in Wales.

- 5.9.6 Firstly the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 sets out the key aims of the National Parks. Scottish National Parks have four aims, which are set out in the Act as follows:
- (a) 'To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area,*
 - (b) To promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area,*
 - (c) To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public, and*
 - (d) To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.'*

(National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, s.1)

- 5.9.7 These aims are broadly similar to the purposes of National Parks in Wales with the forth aim (d) being additional to the Welsh National Parks purposes. Where there is conflict between the four duties, section 9(6) of the Act places aim (a) above all other national park aims in much the same way as the Sandford principle does for national parks in England and Wales (Scottish Government, 2008).
- 5.9.8 Secondly, there are three types of NPA board member in Scotland: those appointed by local government, those appointed by the Minister and those who are elected by the population living within the National Park. The National Park areas are split into 4-5 wards and non-party political affiliated election is run by postal ballot. The CEO's of both National Parks reported that the elections were not typically uncontested and all evidence from the Scottish stakeholders suggested that these locally elected members were driven, innovative and helped provide community level engagement. Although many respondents in Wales through direct elections would be costly, this was not the view of the Scottish experts.
- 5.9.9 In terms of planning Scottish National Parks operate two different models with the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Authority having responsibility for creating the local development plan and development management. The Cairngorms National Park Authority also has responsibility for the local development plan but does not have full development management powers, instead having a right to call-in applications where it considers that they may have implications for the National Park's duties. The

Cairngorms CEO estimated that they typically call-in approximately 10% of all applications within the National Park each year.

5.9.10 National Parks in Scotland are managed through a partnership plan which brings together key partners to shape the decisions and delivery of actions within the National Park. Once a year, the Minister for Environment chairs a partnership group meeting for each of the National Parks that helps place importance on the delivery of the partnership plan from all partners and aids dialogue.

5.9.11 *French Regional Nature Parks (Parc Naturel Regional)*

5.9.12 The French regional nature parks (PNR) are IUCN category V protected landscapes that have similar governance arrangements to those of National Parks in England and Wales. There are 49 PNR's which are publicly funded bodies that implement sustainable development projects and protect the natural environment. This is achieved through a charter which '*defines goals for the park's protection, enhancement and development*' (Guignier & Prieur, p.50, 2010) and is delivered by co-operation between locally elected municipalities.

5.9.13 It is interesting to note that the PNRs are universally viewed as having IUCN category V status whereas the less numerous National Parks in France have three types of zones: strict reserves, park core areas and areas of adherence, which correspond broadly to IUCN I, II and V categorisations (Guignier & Prieur, 2010). One other issue is that the PNRs can have their status removed¹³. PNR designations are renewed over a twelve year period and can be removed prior to this if the park is not being operated in line with its current charter or if it fails to meet the criteria upon which it was established (Guignier & Prieur, 2010).

5.9.14 *Danish National Parks*

5.9.15 Danish National Parks are, like Scottish National Parks, relatively new with the first being opened in 2008. Their governance structure comprises a board, a National Park

¹³Only one of France's Regional Nature Parks, Marais Poitevin, has had its status revoked twice and subsequently reinstated. Pollution of the marsh and discord with the agricultural industry were the central issues for the revocation of the designation. Its reinstatement in 2014 has seen 93 municipalities come together under the current Regional Nature Parks' new charter. (Ouest France, 2014)

council and a secretariat, with the board being appointed by the Minister of the Environment (Denmark National Parks, No Date).

5.9.16 The Danish experience of creating national parks was the reason this model of governance was cited as an interesting case for the panel. A national advisory group was convened in 2004 comprising members from Ministries, NGOs and the chairmen of the seven steering committees (Rigsrevisionen, 2013). This advisory group provided a national leadership role in disseminating and providing recommendations to the Minister for the Environment that ultimately led to the Act that created the first national parks.

5.9.17 *Conservation Board Model*

5.9.18 Conservation boards are a potential model for the AONBs in Wales and England. They attract more direct funding from the UK government via DEFRA. There are currently two conservation boards in England situated in the Cotswolds and Chilterns AONBs. The boards are considered to be a particularly appropriate method of managing AONBs that span multiple local authorities as the board has powers delegated to it by local authorities upon whom it can act independently, without consulting each local authority (DEFRA, 2008).

5.9.19 A second purpose is placed upon conservation boards under s.87(1) CROW Act 2000 to increase the understanding and enjoyment of the general public in relation to the special properties of the AONB area. Furthermore, as this adds a second duty, s.87(2) CROW Act 2000, sets out a form of the Sandford Principle to place conservation above the recreation purpose for conservation boards, should there be a conflict between the two purposes (DEFRA, 2008).

5.9.20 Taken together with all the other AONB's in England, the two conservation boards receive the 1st and 2nd highest funding direct from government and yet are the 7th and 10th in terms of overall turnover. The discrepancy can be explained by the relative fund raising activities of the other AONBs and is coupled with evidence from the written submissions that conservation boards tend to be somewhat less innovative than other AONBs. The higher public funding is partly to recompense the conservation boards' obligation to pay VAT which, as part of a local authority, AONBs are not required to do (DEFRA, 2008).

5.9.21 *Canal & River Trust Model*

5.9.22 The Canal & River Trust was constituted in 2012 and moved control of British waterways away from being publicly owned, transferring all the associated assets into the charity. The government, in addition to transferring assets, committed to £800 million of funding for 15 years and an additional capital grant of £460 million (DEFRA, 2012a). The expectation is that the charity will become self-funding over time and not be in receipt of an annual public grant. The National Parks submit that there would be a number of issues with this model arguing:

5.9.23 ‘Moving to such a model would also require many National Park services to become fee-paid, with charges applied to use of rights of way and access to the National Park. This would have major implications for the public, as it would threaten the long-standing principle that National Parks are free to use at the point of delivery.’

5.9.24 *Reflections on the suggested alternative models*

5.9.25 All the alternative models suggested by stakeholders in their evidence to the panel are recommended because they, in some way, address perceived issues with the current governance of designated landscapes in Wales. None of the alternative models exactly fits the needs we have identified in Wales. The conundrum of simultaneous national and local management is a feature in many of the examples. Some models locally constituted designations allow for governance that is firmly rooted in the context of each particular locality. While others operate at the national level, employing dedicated experts in designated landscape management who can provide direction and drive performance across the whole of a designated landscape family.

5.9.26 The other key issue arising from these examples is the question of how they should be funded. If a cardinal principle of designated landscapes is that they are to remain free for all to access, then charging visitors for access clearly contravenes this principle and yet the context of shrinking public finances raises the question of how these designations will continue to be effectively managed.

5.10 Governance in designated landscapes: successes and opportunities for improvement

5.10.1 This section of the chapter discusses the evidence of successes and where there are opportunities for improvement in the governance of designated landscapes. The IUCN framework for the principles of good governance as set out in table 8, is used as an analytical lens to frame the evidence within the context of what is 'good governance' of designated landscapes. The discussion is split between the five key principles of: legitimacy & voice, direction, performance, accountability and fairness & rights and terms highlighted in bold and italics link the discussion to some of specific key points found within each of the five principles set out in table 8. It should be noted that aspects of designated landscape governance such as the role of management plans span one or more of these principles of governance and so aspects are highlighted across the relevant principles. The section concludes with a SWOT analysis of current governance of designated landscapes in Wales.

5.10.2 *Legitimacy & Voice*

5.10.3 The principles of legitimacy & voice require designated landscapes to be managed by institutions that have a ***broad acceptance in society***, which are transparent in terms of the ***dissemination of sufficient information*** to stakeholders and provide mechanisms that allow for ***active engagement*** by all stakeholders in support of the designated landscapes that ensures inclusivity of ***diversity*** in its stakeholders. ***Subsidiarity*** is a key component in the governance of designated landscapes through which there is active ***dialogue*** between local stakeholders that ***seeks consensus*** on how solutions can be achieved within the local context.

5.10.4 The management of natural resources requires an intimate and detailed knowledge of the local context, ***subsidiarity*** to each designated landscape team, be it as a NPA or an AONB JAC/partnership helps ensure that this is achieved with both providing opportunities for ***active engagement*** by a broad range of stakeholders. There are steps to ensure greater inclusion of a ***diverse*** range of citizens within designated landscapes management through Mosaic and mentoring projects which need to be continually evaluated as part of the management of designated landscapes.

- 5.10.5 Most bodies responsible for designated landscapes have a good track record in **disseminating information** pertaining to the management of these landscapes (minutes of meetings, management plans, strategies etc.). There are some inconsistencies in publishing of documentation, which will be simple to address and provide greater legitimacy through improved transparency how designated landscapes are managed.
- 5.10.6 **Broad acceptance in society** needs to address the fact that designated landscapes are assets of national importance which means every citizen in Wales has a stake in these areas. The challenge for legitimacy & voice is ensuring the balance between the needs of local stakeholders with the needs of managing natural assets of national importance, the two are not mutually exclusive but there is nevertheless the potential for tensions to exist between them. The best forum to provide legitimacy for this voice and direction for priorities is the Welsh Government level.
- 5.10.7 *Direction*
- 5.10.8 Designated landscapes are places where landscapes, people and the relationships between them are constantly changing. Furthermore designated landscapes are regions that effect and are affected by people and areas beyond their boundaries. The governance of these landscapes necessarily requires direction which requires **clear policy directions** on how designated landscapes are to be managed which allow for **inspiring and consistent strategic vision** that embraces the **complexities of specific places** and are firmly rooted on **agreed values** on how designated landscapes should be managed. Any direction for the management of designated landscapes needs to be **compatible** with policies of other related sectors whilst ensuring that any plans for **adaptively managed** responding to evaluation or new **innovations** proposed by **champions** of designated landscapes.
- 5.10.9 Within each designated landscape in Wales management plans are drawn up by either the NPA or local authorities, as is statutorily required, that provide the **strategic vision** for each designation. These plans are all tailored to their areas, mindful of not only of the special environmental qualities of these **complex** landscapes, but also their social and cultural qualities. The plans are drawn up in consultation with statutory and non-statutory consultees, whose opinions are considered by the plans' authors and where relevant changes are made to the plans in the drafting stage. These plans are

compatible with wider international obligations, particularly the need to carry out SEA and also show evidence of considering other strategies relevant to the area, when the designated landscape officers are aware of them.

5.10.10 Based on the evidence received from stakeholders and desk based research there are some issues with national level policy guidance and leadership which pose a challenge to ensuring **clear policy directions** for the role of designated landscapes in Wales. Ownership of the Welsh Designated Landscapes, at a national policy making level is, at times, disjointed and is reflected in part by the movement of responsibility for them in Welsh Government between departments and the merger of CCW in to the new body: Natural Resources Wales. Part of the challenge is to recognise the contribution designated landscapes have in delivering on the vision of Welsh Government across departmental lines, whilst ensuring that they receive clear leadership from national government.

5.10.11 One issue of key concern for the management of designated landscapes in the near future is the interaction with the emerging legislative agenda of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Environment (Wales) Bill and the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 as discussed earlier in this report. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and Environment Bill will both create additional reporting requirements for designated landscape areas, with the potential to either create duplication in reporting, or more concerning, lead to **incompatibility** between management plan, area statements and well-being plans aims.

5.10.12 Performance

5.10.13 Effective performance ensures delivery of the desired **direction** for designated landscapes through management plans and other strategies. Performance in delivering for designated landscapes requires **advocacy and outreach** with other organisations and stakeholders in order to foster the right **capacities** needed for **sustainability and resilience** in designated landscapes, environmentally, socially and economically. Consistent performance does not just happen; it is fostered through promotion of a **learning culture** which ensures that resources are used effectively and promotes **financial sustainability**.

- 5.10.14 Throughout the evidence gathering phase designated landscape officers and members from Wales and the wider area have consistently reiterated that the management plans are plans for the management of the parks and just the body that created plans. The successful delivery of the objectives contained within management plans can, therefore, only be achieved through **advocacy** of the plan and partnership with other stakeholders. Evidence of partnership working across many different organisations is clear throughout the case studies that demonstrated the range of positive outcomes achieved within designated landscapes. One of the areas where both designations consistently commented on having issues is with the S.82/S.65 duties on public bodies '*to have due regard*' to the purposes of National Parks and AONBs. This duty is seen as being insufficient to ensure collaboration and liaison between the bodies managing designated landscapes and other public bodies to foster more effective **capacities** for delivery. Moreover it is also argued that the S.62/S.85 duties do not ensure that the activities of other public bodies in designated landscapes are necessarily conducted in harmony with the nature of these places.
- 5.10.15 Effective performance requires sufficient support, including **financial support** to deliver for designated landscapes. The role of designated landscapes as places where funding can be co-ordinated towards outcome based projects is well evidenced from the range of funding sources shown in the case studies and financial data provided to the review. There were, however, concerns over the base level of funding for AONBs, which causes concern over the discretionary nature of local government funding and therefore the **financial sustainability** of AONB operations.
- 5.10.16 A good **learning culture** is central to the development of improved future outcomes in designated landscapes and beyond that is based on sound evaluation of prior experience. In NPAs part of this learning culture is articulated through the improvement plans they are required to submit to the WAO. However the **learning culture** also extends into the management plans of the designated landscapes, here the National Parks and AONBs themselves evaluate the performance of previous iterations of their plans through their own data in addition to **feed-back** they receive from stakeholders. What is not as apparent is the existence of a forum that allows designated landscapes of Wales to come together and reflect as a group on their **management effectiveness** thus providing a space for the cross-fertilisation of best practice across the designated landscape family.

5.10.17 Accountability

- 5.10.18 Being accountable assures stakeholders at all levels that designated landscapes are being managed effectively, delivering performance which is aligned with the stated desired direction for designated landscape governance and supports the legitimacy of the designation. Achieving accountability requires **transparency** and **performance evaluation** of designated landscape governance that encourages **feed-back** from stakeholders/wider society. Accountability also means that a clear answer is needed to the question of who is accountable and what **roles and responsibilities** they have in managing protected areas. A key part of delivering accountability for public bodies that govern designated landscapes is the need for sufficient oversight from one or more public institutions that have the **capacity to oversee and question** their work.
- 5.10.19 The representation on NPAs and AONB JACs/Partnership groups ensures that there is some balance between the national and local interests in the management of designated landscapes in Wales. How this balance is achieved differs between each designation, particularly in AONB management, which in part reflects the particular situation of each designation. Where there is a gap in accountability is in the appointment of local authority members to NPA boards and AONB JAC/Partnership. The political balance requirement set down in S.15 of LGHA, 1989 and Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 creates a situation where local representation within designated landscapes is occasionally lacking which leads to gaps in the **responsibility and accountability** of designated landscapes to their local communities and stakeholders. This is likely to become more rather than less pronounced based on the proposals for local government reform in Wales.
- 5.10.20 What is more absent from these processes is independent scrutiny of designated landscapes that has the capacity to **oversee the work** of designated landscape organisations and provides them with fair and reasonable reflection on all of their performance including the delivery of management plans. This oversight needs to be based on dialogue between the designated landscape members and the overseeing body which not only provides **feed-back** on the work of designated landscapes but also develops an understanding of the evolving environment within which they operate and the need to adapt management of designated landscapes to meet emerging challenges.

5.10.21 Furthermore there is an expectation that designated landscapes are to be places for **innovation** for delivery on the green economy, Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and future flagship policies, with National Parks volunteering to be early adopters for some of the delivery of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Therefore, the scrutiny of the designated landscape governance needs to accommodate the potential for learning from unsuccessful projects without recriminations from the wider governance family, which also touches upon the last principle of **Fairness & Rights**.

5.10.22 *Fairness & Rights*

5.10.23 The legitimacy of designated landscapes and the success of delivery through effective performance depends in part upon the activities of designated landscape organisations being seen to be carried out in an equitable manner for all of society. Being fair in the management of designated landscapes means the **procedural rights** of stakeholders are respected in the governance of designated landscapes and thus stakeholders should receive relevant **information** and be **consulted** on decisions. Fairness also means that there is **equitable sharing of the costs and benefits** of managing designated landscapes. Essentially, the principle of fairness cuts across the basis of all four of the other principles.

5.10.24 The public finance arrangements for the management of designated landscapes are complex. NPAs receive a direct grant from Welsh Government along with discretionary grant funding for specific projects, whereas ANOBs funding is all completely discretionary, including any funding they may receive from their local authorities. There is a necessary debate as to how both designated landscapes are to be funded. These are national landscapes of Wales that deliver benefits to both the 25% of the area that is designated and to Wales as a whole, both of which receive some level of funding directly from Welsh Government or its delivery agencies (NRW etc.). Whilst all public funding is essentially discretionary, AONB funding, without a direct grant from the national government is subject to a greater degree of uncertainty, which impacts their ability to act.

5.11 SWOT analysis of current designated landscape governance

5.11.1 Figure 14 presents a SWOT analysis of the current governance of designated landscapes in Wales. The SWOT analysis shown in figure 14 represents a summative analysis of the available data on designated landscape governance and the oral evidence given to the review panel from a range of stakeholders. It links the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to designated landscapes with the five principles of good governance as set out by the IUCN, which are shown in parenthesis.

Figure 14: SWOT analysis of the current governance of Designated Landscapes in Wales

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ability to convene productive partnerships (LP)- Clear legislative basis for designations and their purposes (LD)- Proven track record in delivering wide ranging projects (P)- Wealth of natural and social assets that can be harnessed sustainably (P)- Established cluster of expertise (DP)- These landscapes are highly valued by the public and visitors to Wales (L)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Tensions between stakeholder groups e.g. recreational users, residents and landowners- Limited national leadership (LDA)- Limited opportunities for generating income e.g. from fixed assets (P)- Public misperceptions of planning delivery (LF)- Weak legislative basis for other bodies to have regard for the purposes and management plans (LPAF)- The 'political balance' requirement in local authority appointments to DL boards / committees reduces the number of locally based Councillors (LA)- Fragile funding agreements, especially for AONBs (P)
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- To be key deliverers of well-being for future generations (LDPAF)- To be successful drivers of the green economy in 1/4 of Wales. (DP)- To show case innovative world leading approaches to managing protected landscapes for all (LDAF)- To harness the existing access infrastructure for economic and social benefits (PF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Shrinking overall public finance (P)- Higher exposure to discretionary funding cuts (P)- Losing confidence of local communities/stakeholders (LAF)- Increasingly marginalised in national and regional policy agendas (LD)- Risk of marginalisation within local government objectives (LP)

Notes

L = Legitimacy and voice, D = Direction, P = Performance, A = Accountability, F = Fairness & Rights

- 5.11.2 What the analysis shows is that the strengths and opportunities of designated landscape governance lay in their ability to guide and deliver performance for these parts of Wales, both now and in the future. This ability to deliver upon their current purposes and duties arises from a strong legislative basis that applies to the bodies who manage designated landscapes and the immense value that the public places upon these landscapes. There are, however, significant opportunities to be captured given the overall direction of Welsh government policy, and in placing the landscapes more centrally as delivery agents for the range of future generations and well-being parameters. This analysis reinforces the justification for extending and deepening the purposes of the designated landscapes, such that they continue to have the best available legislative and statutory tools to deliver these wider objectives. There is indeed some current urgency in doing this given the current pace and direction of change in the wider governance frameworks (especially local government reform and environment bill). We will be addressing these issues systematically in the following chapters of this report.
- 5.11.3 The overall conclusion in this analysis is then that the current governance arrangements are falling somewhat short of meeting and exceeding the overall IUCN good governance principles, especially when we look prospectively at this. There is significant room for constructive and reflexive improvement in overall governance, such as to address the weaknesses and threats, through creating a more resilient basis for optimising existing strengths and opportunities.
- 5.11.4 The weaknesses and threats within the current designated landscape governance framework stem primarily from issues of legitimacy and voice. However, these factors are inhibiting performance and leadership. The current accreted and somewhat fragmented governance arrangements for both designations is currently reducing their ability to contribute to the wider Welsh policy agenda. In many cases they are currently marginalised in this regard, or have not been party to the policy developments (e.g. Green growth, RDP, health and well-being, economic development strategy and the currently proposed strategic framework for Welsh Agriculture). These issues arise from the wider legislative context of designated landscapes within Wales and ownership of these designations by other public bodies rather than with the legitimacy of the bodies that manage the designated landscapes.

The Principles and Purposes of Wales' Designated Landscapes

6.1 Revisiting the Stage One Recommendations and Their Rationale

- 6.1.1 Before we move on to consider the vision and governance arrangements we have revisited our stage one recommendations in light of the second stage evidence and reflecting on the feedback we received since we delivered our first, interim report to the Minister in early 2015.
- 6.1.2 Our revised findings are as follows and should be read as replacing the recommendations within Chapter 8 from our stage one report. The original 6 recommendations are presented in their original form within Appendix i.

Improving access for all through building multi-user routes in the Snowdonia National Park.



6.2 The Guiding Principles Underpinning the Purposes

- 6.2.1 In the course of the panel's overall evidence gathering and our related deliberations it has become clear that there was a series of important principles emerging with which we were in agreement.

Recommendation 1

Our guiding principles are:

- **We need to examine the refreshed purposes within a medium to long term time frame, so as to give equivalent continuity in the future to that achieved over the past sixty years.**
- **It is important, however, not to be too reliant on the past in formulating a new and refreshed vision for the designated landscapes which recognises the significant challenges they face in the future.**
- **To align the purposes such that they recognise that both designations have over some considerable time been operating de-facto and to varying degrees beyond their original remits.**
- **That any changes in purposes and accompanying duties should be lasting, clear and likely to ensure and embody the precedence placed under ‘the Sandford Principle’, giving priority to the first purpose. It also became clear that if there were to be an increase in the actual number of purposes then the others would (a) need to give priority to the first if there were clear conflicts; and, as importantly, (b) the rest would be mutually reinforcing and binding on delivering the first. This “Sandford Plus” approach needs to link and integrate any additional purposes.**
- **There was also a strong argument for revisiting the statutory duties on related bodies, to clarify and strengthen them. This should ensure that the designated landscape bodies themselves and the relevant national and local organisations – including utility companies and the Welsh Government comply with both the purposes and duty.**
- **To realise the importance of international obligations; lessons and the opportunities they provide for Wales.**
- **To ensure the purposes can continue to meet and encourage their relevant bodies to maintain, and exceed, international obligations and standards of nature conservation and landscape protection e.g. IUCN categories and the European Landscape Convention.**
- **To strive for purposes which are both enduring and have the ability to be applied to other candidate areas, including marine areas, at some future date.**

- Any recommended changes made to the direction and/or wording of the purposes should be made in the context of them being: (a) clear, precise, unambiguous and consistent; (b) able to be clearly understood and convey clarity of direction; and (c) legally and technically robust.
- Any changes recommended should strike a judicious balance between providing overall consistency of purpose, and encouraging and celebrating the natural and cultural diversity of the family of protected landscapes themselves.
- To remain mindful of the strength and value of the National Parks and AONBs, and not to undermine their benefits across Wales.
- Avoid compromising these places through any unnecessary additional burden on the public purse; and enhance the efficiency of public funding where possible.
- To interpret the purposes and duties in ways that deliver across the whole Welsh Government policy agenda.

The Welsh Government should adopt these guiding principles.

6.2.2 They underpin the purposes and provide a foundation for all of the recommendations in this report. They are also important in that form the basis for making what we regard as long lasting and durable changes which are resilient and capable of adapting to existing and future challenges.

6.2.3 We are well aware that the language we propose under Recommendation 6 and 8 is subject to legal advice, but we would expect any modification, were they to occur to reflect these guiding principles.

6.3 A Single Designation?

6.3.1 It has been made very clear to us by the vast majority of stakeholders that there is little appetite, and indeed considerable opposition to the idea of a single designation for both National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We do not believe that this is a conservative position, instead it relates to the current and future potential for international branding of the designated landscapes. It also recognises the need to keep a diversity of place-based management, and to celebrate and promote them as

such. Taking account of these representations and applying our guiding principles has led us to agree with this position.

Recommendation 2

There should not be a single designation.

6.3.2 However, we do feel there are grounds for, and future strengths in, recommending the **same set of statutory purposes** and an associated single statutory duty for the two designations. This is particularly in view of their equal international and national legal status and the need to foster more consistent national status, within the overall National Landscapes Framework (see Chapter 8) for the two designations. At the same time this will provide consistency of purpose while celebrating the distinctive diversity of these landscapes.

Recommendation 3

There is ONE set of statutory purposes and an associated single statutory duty for both designations.

6.4 The National Landscapes of Wales

6.4.1 It is our view that the distinctive character and value of the two statutory designated landscapes can best be achieved by: (i) having a single and clear set of statutory purposes, and (ii) by reaffirming their national importance as the leading, statutory protected **National Landscapes of Wales**, within an integrated National Landscapes Framework (see Chapter 8) amongst a more connected and networked wider set of designations.

Recommendation 4

The Welsh Government should retain the names of “National Parks” and “Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty” (AONBs) as the key designations of the “National Landscapes of Wales”.

6.4.2 This modification, creating an umbrella term “National Landscapes of Wales” is timely so that the two types of designated landscape acquire national and international status and progress albeit in their different landscape contexts. It has been made clear to us that making explicit the national status of the AONBs and National Parks will enhance their local, regional and international status, whilst retaining their distinctive brand. National recognition and collective ownership of the designation is an important dimension and link to the public sense of place and belonging.

Recommendation 5

The Welsh Government should establish a consistent and resilient nomenclature, such that both designations collectively become:

“The National Landscapes of Wales”

“National Park” and “Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty” which are “The Equivalent Designations”

The Equivalent Designations would possess identical statutory purposes and duties

6.4.3 Whilst it might be more challenging, at least under current governance circumstances, to achieve all of these goals and aims in the smaller scale AONBs, we feel that they have much to learn and to gain by being far more effectively networked with the current National Parks.

6.5 New Statutory Purposes and a Statutory Duty for the National Landscapes of Wales

Recommendation 6

There should be **THREE INTERLOCKING** statutory purposes for both the National Parks and AONBs.

These are:

“To conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape and seascape qualities of the area¹⁴.”

(the Conservation Purpose)

“To promote physical and mental well-being through the enjoyment and understanding of the landscape of the area.”

(the Human Well-being Purpose)

“To promote sustainable forms of economic and community development based on the management of natural resources and the cultural heritage of the area.”

(the Sustainable Resource Management Purpose)

6.5.1 The primacy of the conservation purpose (purpose 1) will continue to be vital and a distinctive element for the current and future development of the National Landscapes of Wales. This purpose must have primacy over the others, when they appear to be in conflict. This is a renewed application of the ‘Sandford Principle’.

6.5.2 This would be the first time in which the Sandford Principle applies to AONBs and by doing so their internationally recognised status as IUCN Category 5 protected landscapes is enhanced and strengthened.

¹⁴ Where ‘landscape’ incorporates the total natural environment of the area, together with its biodiversity, human settlements and cultural aspects. It is particularly important to stress the significance of progressing bio-diversity protection and restoration in the Conservation Purpose and to promote progress towards international standards relating to the International Biodiversity Convention so far unattained in Wales. This also incorporates the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe, 2000) definition as ‘an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors’ (Article 1a.). And it assumes the enhancement of ‘actions to conserve and maintain the significant or characteristic features of a landscape, justified by its heritage value derived from its natural configuration and/or from human activity’ (Article 1d.).

- 6.5.3 The second and third purposes have been specifically designed to bind into and interlock with the delivery of the first purpose, we call this the ‘Sandford Plus’ approach. The Scottish model of National Parks is based upon four aims (purposes), yet is subject to a modified Sandford Principle, which is legislated within the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000

“In exercising its functions a National Park authority must act with a view to accomplishing the purpose set out in subsection (1); but if, in relation to any matter, it appears to the authority that there is a conflict between the National Park aim set out in section 1(a) and other National Park aims, the authority must give greater weight to the aim set out in section 1(a).” (National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 s.9(6))

Recommendation 7

The Sandford Principle, confirming the primacy of the conservation purpose, will be applied across all the designated landscapes.

- 6.5.4 Currently all relevant public sector bodies (including local authorities, Natural Resources Wales, and the Welsh Government) and statutory undertakers (i.e. the utilities companies) have legal duties to take full account of the purposes of National Parks and AONBs in the conduct of their business (s.62(2) of the Environment Act 1995 for National Parks and s.85(1) of the CROW Act 2000 for AONBs).
- 6.5.5 However we have received overwhelming evidence that in practice full delivery of the existing purposes is weakened by the vague wording “to have regard to” in the current statutory duty. This has included: public bodies not having to give serious consideration of how they contribute to the purposes; a low level of awareness of the duty amongst relevant authorities, with no reporting of implementation e.g. local authority highways departments may focus on the utility of highway maintenance at the expense of visual amenity.
- 6.5.6 We therefore recommend that it is very important to accompany the revised and extended statutory purposes with a revised, clearer and more strongly worded binding duty.

Recommendation 8

There should be a new single Statutory Duty that removes the weak “have regard to” prefixes in the current duties on relevant public bodies, and replaces them with a single and clear duty:

“To contribute to the delivery of the three purposes of the National Landscapes.”

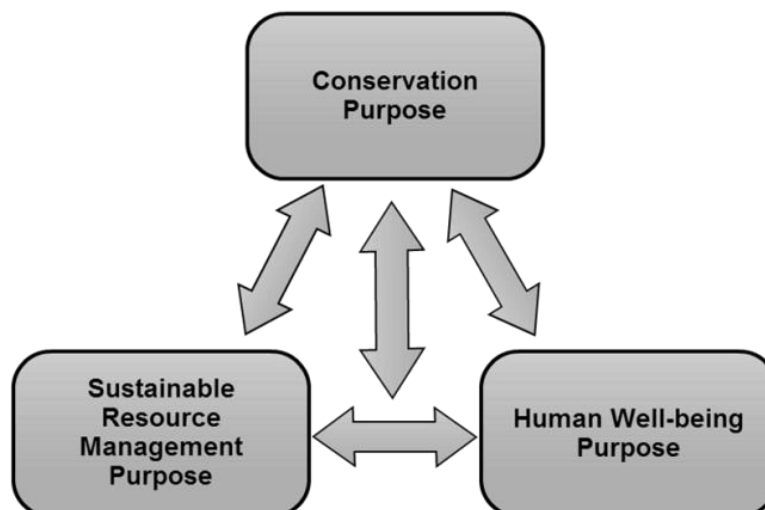
6.5.7 This has the advantage of creating consistency, clarity and simplicity, while also strengthening the statutory duty, which emanates from the single set of purposes. This duty will apply to relevant public bodies and all statutory undertakers.

6.6 Our Rationale for the Reformed Package of Purposes, the Duty and Their Operational Integration

6.6.1 We have specifically designed this interlocking mechanism (see Figure 15) to place a stronger emphasis upon binding the three purposes together, so that they become mutually reinforcing. When conflicting issues arise, the first purpose will have primacy.

6.6.2 In reality we expect this to prove exceptional. We anticipate more proactive management planning and processes to monitor, shape and deliver developments in the National Landscapes which provide mutually reinforcing benefits across all the three purposes (the case studies provide good practice examples). Developments within the National Landscapes should be required to demonstrate how they deliver the triumvirate of benefits. This could be considered a third modification of Sandford - ‘the Shared Purpose benefit’ - encouraging developments at the initial stage to aim for and deliver all three purposes in the design of their proposals.

Figure 15: The Three New Interlocking Statutory Purposes.



- 6.6.3 Based upon a large body of evidence the panel prefer the wording in the first purpose: **“distinctive landscape and seascape”** to “natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage” as this embodies these dimensions as well as overall nature and biodiversity. In this instance, landscape and seascape are based upon an internationally agreed standard definition found within the European Landscape Convention, its acceptance and incorporation into Welsh legislation would be welcome and would distinguish Wales from the rest of the UK.
- 6.6.4 We include the word **“seascape”** as well as landscape since the majority (5 of the 8) of the National Landscapes of Wales contain coastal areas and the interaction of land and sea create and enhance many of their special qualities.
- 6.6.5 We recommend a stronger and clearer focus upon **physical and mental well-being, linked to enjoyment and understanding**, as we conclude that it is important to link directly to the Welsh Government legislative agenda regarding well-being and future generations. We see the National Landscapes of Wales as having a unique, creative and more proactive role in delivering on the well-being agenda in the future given changing societal needs – for instance, the alleviation of poverty.
- 6.6.6 This is not only associated with the question of access, but also links to the role played by the National Landscapes of Wales in continuing to attract wide and diverse groups of visitors and in playing a more proactive educative and life-enhancing function both

formally and informally. They will face wider and more intense public demands in the future, and it is important that these demands are managed in ways which enhance, overall, the public utility and welfare benefits for a more diverse and increasing population.

- 6.6.7 We propose a new, **distinctive and inter-locking** third purpose which promotes **integrated natural resource management with economic and community development, and which supports the overall cultural heritage of the area**. We strongly believe that the National Landscapes of Wales need to be vibrant economic and community places. Given their geography and other purposes they are uniquely placed in Wales to deliver and promote the landscape-led green economy by harnessing their distinctive natural and landscape assets. This includes expanding the provision of national and regional, multifunctional and ecologically based services from their different water, agriculture, tourism and forestry land and biosphere resources. Hence it is important to link these components in a third and distinctive purpose.
- 6.6.8 It should be also noted that the set of purposes recommended are designed to align the distinctive role of the designations to the delivery of the seven goals of the current Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, in that they provide a basis for delivering distinctive contributions to these wider goals (i.e. **prosperity, resilience, health, equality, cohesion, culture and global responsibility**) for the benefit of the people and future generations of Wales as a whole.

A Vision for the National Landscapes of Wales: What should Wales expect from the 25%?

7.1 A Vision for the National Landscapes of Wales

- 7.1.1 Our vision and our expectations for this significant quarter of the land area of Wales is based upon the evidence we have received, the changing context faced by our National Landscapes and their new set of purposes. We propose this new, unified vision for the eight National Landscapes in Wales:

Recommendation 9

A Vision for the National Landscapes of Wales

The National Landscapes of Wales are valued by the nation as important “factories of well-being”, improving the lives of current and future generations through their three purposes. Their special qualities are maintained, enhanced and widely appreciated. They are areas for innovative, place-based collaborations that address the economic, social and environmental challenges facing Wales, and are recognised internationally as leaders in the delivery of sustainable development.

7.2 A Vision for Adaptation

- 7.2.1 In order to achieve this Vision, the overall governance of the designated landscapes of Wales, as defined earlier in Chapter 5, now needs to be arranged in ways which:
- Promote a transition and adaptation of their functions and outcomes which allows for the effective and continuous delivery of their new purposes.*** Hence the governance processes, relationships and structures need to be adapted to follow from the principles, and the new statutory purposes and duty we recommend in this report (see Chapter 6). Form and process needs to follow function clearly, transparently and effectively; and in ways which enhance the performance of the National Landscapes and their bodies in delivering the wider national and international priorities set by the Welsh Government and the National Assembly of Wales, for the people of Wales.

- 7.2.2 Their governance needs to be positioned within the National Policy Framework for designated landscapes (hereby termed the National Landscapes Framework, specified in Chapter 8). It is important to recognise that this is not just an environmental policy framework (although clearly the latter will facilitate and provide a basis for the former). It provides a far wider foundation for the National Landscapes to contribute to national policies associated with economic development, health, education and community development, and we discuss these drivers below.
- 7.2.3 The vision needs to preside and give direction to the dynamic and multi-level governance for these special places. The National Landscapes can then be positioned as leading and innovative places for capturing and integrating the environmental economy, and the well-being and sustainability goals, and installing them as regional hubs for sustainable rural development and the providers of ecosystem services.
- 7.2.4 Here we set out some of the main expectations and drivers which inform and evidence our vision for this significant quarter of the land area of Wales. In the next chapter (Chapter 8) we will specify the new governance arrangements we feel are required to maximise delivery.

7.3 Rural governance including sustainable regional development

- 7.3.1 In Chapter 6 we presented strengthened and broadened purposes for the designated landscapes. In stage two an important principle underpinning our consideration of designated landscape governance concerns the effective delivery and development of the three purposes.
- 7.3.2 As a consequence governance processes and forms have had to follow function, vision and desired outcomes, and these outcomes need to apply to the medium and long term. In this regard we sought, received and synthesised a wide range of evidence concerning rural governance, including regional development more generally, and examined the most effective types of governance models developed elsewhere.
- 7.3.3 As well as reviewing the extensive literature relating to Protected Area management, there are several important and relevant sources of international research evidence on

rural sustainable development. This empirical evidence is important in setting the dynamic context in which current protected landscapes sit. It is also important as it begins to demonstrate how these areas can most effectively contribute to wider sustainable rural development goals. Indeed we can argue that for the current designations to develop their legitimacy and “buy-in” with their local and surrounding populations, it will be essential that they are seen to deliver wider rural and urban-based benefits.

7.3.4 We have therefore summarised a large amount of scientific literature on rural development below, and drawn upon our active knowledge and experience of international comparative research over the last 20 years in these fields.

7.3.5 *Turning Vulnerability into Resilience*

7.3.6 Rural regions in Europe are facing diverging pathways of development. In many ways rural regions are becoming more vulnerable, rather than resilient, as their agricultures become either more marginalised or intensified. Many regions also have to compete globally for mobile capital, investment and labour.

7.3.7 *Place-based Rural Multi-Functionality*

7.3.8 On the other hand, as a counterbalance to this global ‘race to the bottom’ logic, new strategies, which are more place-based, are being developed and promoted (Horlings and Marsden, 2014). These strategies can be seen in the context of the ‘New Rural Paradigm’ for European rural regions which was advocated by the OECD in 2006, based upon four key characteristics. These are:

- i. A new multi sector and multi-functional, place-based approach to rural development, with closer links between the rural and urban economy;
- ii. seeing and enabling rural areas as part of more dynamic and smart regions;
- iii. adapting to a shift from subsidy-driven to more variably sourced and leveraged investments;
- iv. making the most of a wider set of hitherto unused resources - such as approaches now espoused in terms like ‘ecosystem services’ and ‘integrated natural resource management’.

7.3.9 *Developing and Enhancing “Rural Webs”*

7.3.10 There has been considerable empirical research conducted around this shift in approach over the past decade (van der Ploeg and Marsden, 2008; Milone and Ventura 2010), especially around pathways to establish new and more sustainable rural development for adapting several key dimensions: social capital, sustainability, institutional arrangements, the governance of markets, using and redefining local resources, novelty production - such that the density of the rural webs and hubs are increased. In short, through re-grounding, broadening and deepening strategies, evidence points to increased rural resilience, with a stronger emphasis upon local and regional innovation, especially new forms of social innovation.

7.3.11 *The Need for Effective Multi-level Governance*

7.3.12 The multi-level state plays a key, if historically different, role in this process of mobilising the rural webs and hubs. It encourages web development and multifunctional activity which, in turn, develops a wider vector of economic activity based upon social capital, networks and skill development. The state, in our case, the Welsh Government, can help provide the physical and social infrastructure around which sustainable rural development can be take forward by the civic/third and private sectors.

7.3.13 *Stemming the Loss of Rural Infrastructure*

7.3.14 There is another important feature of this evidence which shows that for a long historical period rural areas have been net losers of such infrastructures (whether associated with services, health and education services, shops, food and forestry processors etc). In addition, the current city region focus upon macro economic development tends often to take for granted the further concentration of infrastructures away from rural areas.

7.3.15 *Understanding the Distributed Economy*

7.3.16 Rural development, however, needs to foster a more distributive and distributed set of services and economic activities which are geared to it playing a fuller role in delivering the goods and services emanating from the green economy - an economy which will be again based upon land, natural and biological resources from the

countryside. Our current Designated Landscapes are net suppliers of a range of highly distributed goods and services (for example, water, food, fibre, health and well-being benefits). Hence the new rural paradigm has a lot to offer rural areas in harnessing the new green economy and in creating more distributed systems of economic activity, fully exploiting digital and virtual media. The absence of broadband in many rural areas is still a major constraint, just as this becomes an expected service for both providers and consumers of rural services.

7.3.17 Moving Towards More “Full Cost Accounting” of Rural Goods and Services and the Green Economy

7.3.18 It is important from the outset, to see the synergies between the green-economy of the countryside and its ‘environment’ as the central part of its economic and social asset base. Thus, lying at the heart of the new rural paradigm, is the integrated nature of the green-economy; an economy which is directly reliant upon the active and sustainable management of the bundles of natural resources at its potential utility. These bundles of resources differ from place to place and so will the nature and pathways of green, sustainable economic development. Designated landscapes as *place-based managed landscapes* are therefore key arenas for progressing this integrated green-economy, and it falls on their governance mechanisms to find the most effective ways to harness and stimulate place-based practices.

7.3.19 The recent UK National Eco-system Assessment (2014) holds a powerful message about needing to integrate scarce and vulnerable natural assets into the accounting of overall national economic performance. It recognises their consistent undervaluation in conventional economic analyses and decision making. In Wales the confluence of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and the Environment (Wales) Bill espouse the principles of integrated resource management as key concepts underpinning decision-making and resource planning.

7.4 Realising our expectations of the National Landscapes of Wales

7.4.1 National Landscapes as “factories of well-being” for Wales:

7.4.2 We have taken evidence about the many ways the National Landscape managers are working to improve the well-being of people in Wales, including through: local

economic development, broadening access for people in poverty or ethnic minorities and young people, skills and confidence-building.

- 7.4.3 The National Parks Wales report ‘Valuing Wales’ National Parks’ (NPW et al, 2013), the National Association of AONBs report, “The Value of AONB Partnerships” (LUC, 2013) and the NRW commissioned report ‘Welsh Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: SDF 5 Year Review’ (Resources for Change, 2015), demonstrate clearly that these areas are already delivering economic development opportunities, and have within them the potential to do more. The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority for example already has an understanding of payments for ecosystems services (PES), which include:
- carbon offsetting
 - investing in hydro-electric power
 - carbon and water storage in the uplands, and
 - collaborating with Local Health Boards and Local Service Boards
- 7.4.4 We understand that three-quarters of the population of Wales visit a National Park each year. Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority spends £250,000 per year on managing the Coast Path, but it attracts £25 million into the local economy. The Land Use Consultants report (LUC, 2012) stated the important correlation between high landscape value and ecosystem services.
- 7.4.5 The Sustainable Development Fund (see Chapter 5 and the case studies) can leverage in additional funding at a ratio of 1:4, which is significant investment in the context of rural, and sometimes deep-rural, Wales.
- 7.4.6 Many of our case studies demonstrate how more sustainable forms of economic and community development can be also based upon aspects of environmental management e.g. Snowdonia Climate Change and Invasive species project; Clwydian Range Lamb, Gower Landscape project.



Helping to support sustainable local communities, the Llanmadoc Community Shop received SDF funding for solar PV and energy efficiency measures in the Gower AONB

7.4.7 As a CEO of a Scottish National Park put it to us: they are “delivering a lot for not a lot.” At a time of fiscal restraint these are the social entrepreneur skills we need, to harness and further develop Wales’ rural areas.

7.4.8 Building social capital, skills and enterprise needs to be a central role of the National Landscape bodies to fulfil our new purposes and vision. As the new, dynamic and productive ‘factories of well-being’ which we envision, they should be tasked with developing and stimulating local enterprise partnerships, sustainable affordable housing, green energy and retailing ventures.

Recommendation 10

As the 'factories of well-being' which we envision, the National Landscapes of Wales should develop and stimulate more local enterprise partnerships, sustainable affordable housing, green energy and retailing ventures.

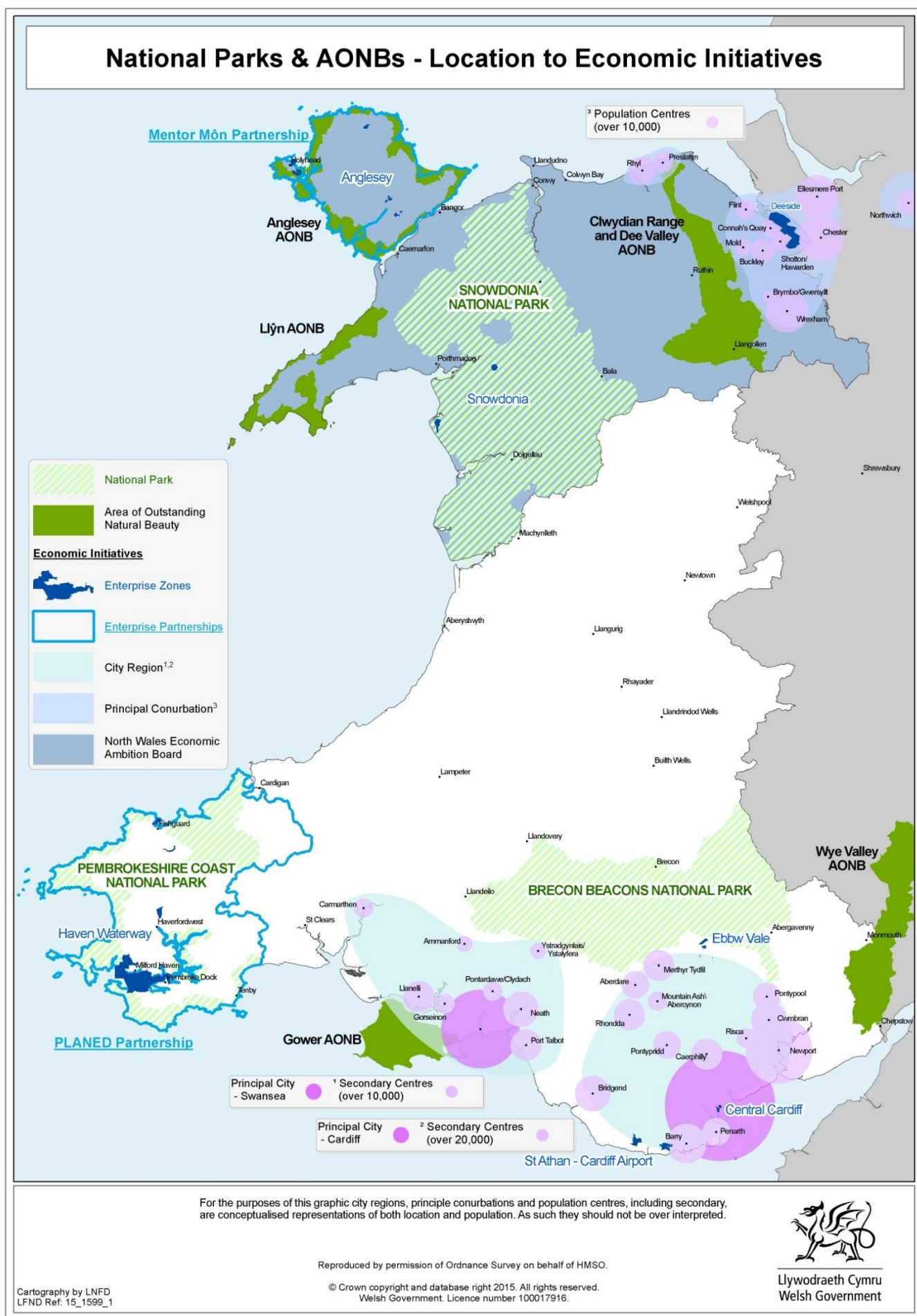
Recommendation 11

Building on the community development initiatives in National Landscapes will require continuity of seed-corn funding for integrated projects which contribute to their three integrated shared purposes.

- 7.4.9 The eight bodies co-ordinating the management of the National Landscapes already help foster aspects of rural and regional development both within their boundaries and beyond. The case studies we have collected in Appendix iv illustrate a wide range of successful activity in this arena, but they do not have a duty to fulfil this role and therefore they are doing so in fragmented and inconsistent ways. However, we understand from the evidence we have received that they are vulnerable to resource pressures and that they may retrench to core delivery as finances are re-prioritised.
- 7.4.10 In the absence of regional rural development agencies and with the fragmented nature of rural development funding, we recommend the National Landscape bodies are enabled to “realise their potential” in this regard. With our three new inter-locking purposes, they should become significant engines for rural development and innovation. This follows the current EU smart specialisation platform model (Afonso, 2010; EU,2010) whereby regional innovation systems and clusters are created, bringing together the quadruple helix concept, around a collaboration and co-evolution of economic, environmental, scientific and private/community sectors.
- 7.4.11 The National Landscape bodies should be given the role of mobilising their regional hubs and forming strong partnerships with wider economic development bodies, neighbouring local authorities, universities and colleges, and relevant business associations. Map 2 portrays the geographic relationship of the National Landscapes to the main economic development initiative areas in Wales at the moment. This clearly shows the National Landscapes are well placed to take the lead in forming wider environmental–economic platforms to which further “pump-priming” funding can be attracted.
- 7.4.12 The National Landscapes of Wales already play a big role in tourism in Wales. However, they can do more to contribute to the Welsh Government's 'Partnership for Growth: Strategy for Tourism 2013-2020' – both collectively, and individually.
- 7.4.13 They can also play a much bigger role as key part of Wales' green infrastructure, so the Welsh Government needs to ensure that the National Landscapes are involved in all infrastructure thinking and development in Wales such as the National Infrastructure Investment Plan, the Green Growth Strategy and the National Planning Framework.

- 7.4.14 This development will require more formal, collaborative relationships and shared professional capacities between National Parks and AONB bodies, and relevant local authorities. One major framework for this will be the development of the statutory Partnership Plans (see Chapter 8) where we expect expertise to be shared between the bodies, as well as the effective engagement of local authority and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) staff. We envisage this approach facilitating the development of landscape-scale regeneration, biodiversity corridors and other natural resource restoration projects, joint and collaborative funding applications.
- 7.4.15 This new formalised role will also allow for the creation of platforms for local enterprise and community development, social enterprises, the development of rural alliances between the community, business and public sectors, and the enterprise-community alliance initiatives (see Rural Alliances, 2015; Thijs de la Court, 2015). The approach will aim to develop a dense web of community based alliances across the rural regions of Wales, with the designated landscape bodies serving as hubs and coordinators.

Map 2: The geographic relationship of the National Parks and AONBs to the main economic development initiative areas in Wales



- 7.4.16 An exemplar of this approach which we envisage being scaled up and out under these new facilitative governance arrangements is the INTERREG Rural Alliances Project run by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. It has created and supported 76 such Alliances including 30 local/regional networks set up between Alliances, 10 projects completed to increase employment and 40 to develop new products and markets (Rural Alliances, 2015). It is vital that the revised governance structures mainstream this type of activity beyond individual and project specific initiative funding. As we also see from the case studies of good practice referred to throughout this report, there are many examples of locally based partnership working where environmental and economic and social development is being delivered. Such initiatives are highly vulnerable to resource and staffing changes. The new governance structures proposed here (around the quadruple helix model – see the following paragraph) will provide a sound institutional platform for such initiatives to breed from each other, cluster, and generate medium and long term rural development benefits. There is significant evidence from other European countries that supports the need for more institutional support for such ‘web’ type developments (Ventura and Malone, 2012).
- 7.4.17 The Quadruple Helix model emerges out of regional innovation theory whereby knowledge and innovation systems (which can combine economic and ecological dimensions) are place-based and actively combine and co-produce new knowledge systems and practices. This explicitly links and provides platforms (often termed ‘Living Labs’) for the interaction of government, industry, higher education and community interests. This also incorporates the EU policy initiatives regarding ‘smart specialisation’, whereby these key stakeholders come together in localities and regions to experiment and innovate in new firm and service formations. In a rural context this is especially relevant in capturing the related variety and multifunctional activities especially around land-based firms, new forms of tourism and eco-services developments. In rural regions where population densities are low, and access impaired, it is recognised that it is increasingly important to create institutions or hubs which can bring together these four components. The designated landscape bodies (both NPAS and AONBs) provide these opportunities now under their third and shared set of purposes.

Recommendation 12

Welsh Government should empower the National Landscapes of Wales to become official centres for innovation and catalysts for regional development in rural Wales, within their environmental limits.

Recommendation 13

The Welsh Government should ensure that the National Landscapes of Wales can and do contribute to the Welsh Government's 'Partnership for Growth: Strategy for Tourism 2013-2020' – both collectively, and individually.

Recommendation 14

The Welsh Government should ensure that the National Landscapes are involved in all infrastructure planning and development in Wales such as the National Infrastructure Investment Plan, the Green Growth Strategy and the National Planning Framework.

Recommendation 15

The National Landscapes need to better understand their local and regional economies, and especially their tourism economies.

7.4.18 Covering a quarter of its land surface, Wales' eight designated landscapes contains the potential to provide leadership and a flagship role contributing to the (s.4) well-being goals set out within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The revised purposes (as discussed in stage one and within Chapter 6) properly reflect the demands on these areas now and for future generations. These nationally important assets will contribute to the national green growth infrastructure which is increasingly measured and accounted for. We anticipate this providing a sustainable

basis for Wales' green economy to build upon and to prosper, to the benefit of the private and voluntary sectors.

- 7.4.19 The public sector, led by the Welsh Government and the National Assembly for Wales, provides the means by which this partnership approach to the development of the green economy can be taken forward. We expect the National Landscapes to be championed as international flagships for Wales by many parts of Welsh Government including the economic development, health, and tourism departments.

Recommendation 16

The Welsh Government should empower the National Landscapes to deliver its 'Green Growth' agenda, founded on a marriage of exceptional landscapes and sustainable development.

Recommendation 17

The Welsh Government should champion the National Landscapes as international flagships for Wales in the fields of sustainable development, health and tourism in particular.

7.4.20 National Landscapes Improving the Health and Well-Being of the Nation

- 7.4.21 The physical and mental health benefits of the outdoors, even relatively minor exposure, are well known and documented. The evidence, from outside Wales, grows and a number of targeted projects run within the National Parks and AONBs that aim to maximise these benefits, and improve the access opportunities for individuals with chronic conditions or disabilities.
- 7.4.22 The current and future benefit to the health and well-being of the nation is considerable, but poorly monitored and could be better resourced.



Using the environment to help cope with health and other social issues through the MindSCAPE project in the Wye Valley AONB.

Recommendation 18

The National Landscapes of Wales upgrade their health and well-being policies to align with the new second purpose. This can be linked to wider, deeper access and sustainable tourism dimensions.

Recommendation 19

The National Landscapes of Wales undertake more health and well-being related experiments in developing and reaching challenged urban and rural communities and sections of the population. These could be delivered jointly with local health boards.

7.4.23 Realising the Benefits to the Nation of Linking Land and Sea

7.4.24 Coastline features in five of the eight National Landscapes, as described in Chapter 5. These National Landscapes are inseparable from their seascapes, and the land-sea interface is continually changing, especially due to climate change. In the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park the islands including Caldey, Skomer, Skokholm,

Ramsey and even the far flung Grassholm are all designated parts of the Park, but the intervening sea and seascapes are not.



Connecting people to their coastal heritage at the Llŷn Coastal Festival

7.4.25 The Welsh Government is seeking to promote an integrated approach to natural resource management through the establishment of Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and through the current Environment Bill (see Chapter 5). Therefore there is a timely opportunity to take an integrated approach to managing the National Landscapes with their marine and coastal areas which should help achieve the multiple benefits to the nation of integrated coastal zone management in these special areas.

Recommendation 20

The Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales should extend the coastal National Landscapes to cover adjacent sea areas and take an integrated approach to coastal resource management in these areas.

Recommendation 21

The National Landscape managers should ensure that coastal users are at the centre of their coastal management planning processes.

Recommendation 22

The successful Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum model should be applied more widely across the coastal areas of the National Landscapes.

Recommendation 23

The National Landscapes of Wales should interpret and incorporate recommendations 9 to 22 above into pan-Wales indicators and targets for management planning purposes and well-being reporting.

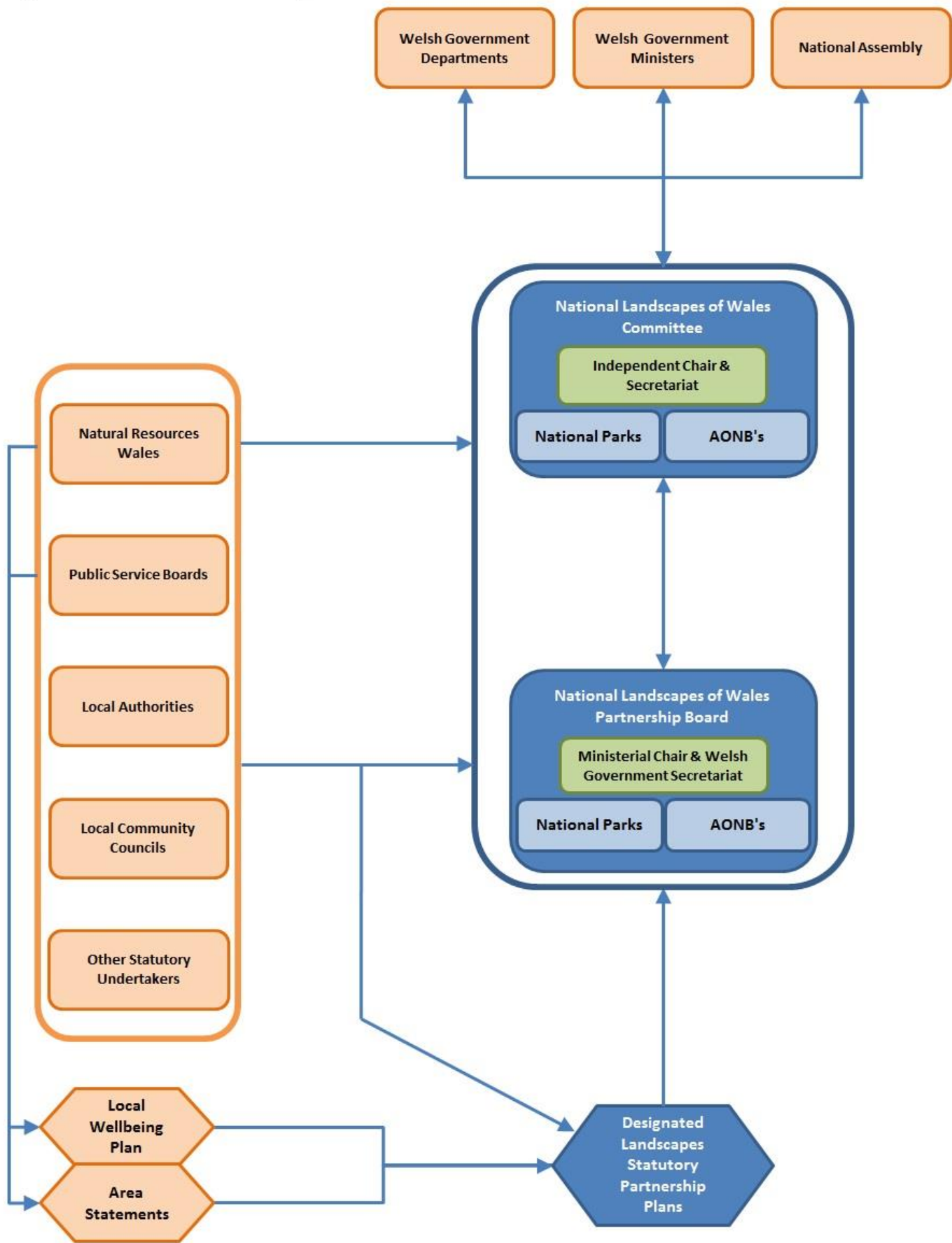
7.4.26 In the next chapter we make the key recommendations arising from our vision and the above expectations detailing the overall national framework we propose, along with an in-depth treatment of its principal components and relationships.

A New Framework for the Governance of Wales' National Landscapes

8.1 Recommending a New Framework for Wales' National Landscapes

- 8.1.1 Our examination of the extant governance arrangements in Chapter 5, our detailed evidence gathering throughout this year long review, and our analysis has led us to propose a new, more integrated and multi-level model of National Landscape governance which encompasses structures and processes, and aligns these more effectively to the principles of good governance outlined by IUCN (Day et al, 2012) and within the Welsh Government White Paper on 'Reforming Local Government: Power to the People (Welsh Government, 2015k).
- 8.1.2 In order to 'realise the potential' we have identified of the National Landscapes of Wales to address the issues we identified in the SWOT analysis in Chapter 5 and to attain an optimum fit between the reorganisation of purposes and duties - we recommend a new framework of governance for them. The framework encompasses all eight of the designated landscape management bodies and we hope they will all see its worth and contribute to its success.
- 8.1.3 The approach will deliver more effective connections: vertically - from local communities in the designated landscapes to national and international governing bodies; and horizontally - with local authorities, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and statutory undertakers e.g. utilities companies. This is designed to provide ONE SINGLE governance framework for the National Landscapes of Wales, effectively replacing the current model (as outlined in Chapter 5, Figure 3) which we consider more fragmented, less consistent and less coherent.
- 8.1.4 All participants in the new framework would be expected to act in ways which remove the governance barriers identified in Chapter 5. We have designed the new model (Figure 16) to enable and enhance the joint leadership roles of the designated landscape bodies themselves, their relationship with the Welsh Government and the National Assembly for Wales.

Figure 16: Recommended National Landscapes of Wales Governance Framework



- 8.1.5 Our new framework is especially designed to enable the Welsh Government to involve the distinctive National Landscapes of Wales in national policy development, particularly given that they cover and influence 25% of Wales and in light of the well-being goals within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- 8.1.6 Vertically, accountability and communication (of the bottom-up and top-down partnership processes) will be delivered to BOTH the Welsh Government (Cabinet and relevant departments) and the National Assembly for Wales, via a new National Landscapes Committee and the National Landscapes of Wales Partnership (as described below).
- 8.1.7 Horizontally the National Landscape bodies will work with local authorities, public service boards and NRW to develop integrated planning.
- 8.1.8 The statutory duties of the National Landscapes will be demonstrably delivered by all organisations via these vertical and horizontal connections in the Framework. The National Landscapes will play a leading role locally, as well as nationally, providing their own customised contributions to the delivery of their purposes and the wider well-being and natural resource management planning processes.

Recommendation 24

The Welsh Government should adopt the following new Framework of Governance for the National Landscapes of Wales, as portrayed in Figures 16 and 19 and described in detail in all our following Recommendations 25 to 69.

8.2 National Park Authorities and AONBs: A Model for Delivering National Priorities Locally

- 8.2.1 During this review the panel has considered, alternative models for the designated landscapes. The Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery (Williams Commission, 2014) recommended that consideration was given to the creation of a single National Park service or agency, operating across Wales rather than separate, locally based authorities and bodies (p.43). We have considered this model and also

looked in some detail at alternative models; including the setting up of trusts, agencies, as well as more centrally controlled models, this is discussed in Chapter 5. .

- 8.2.2 We have been made clearly aware of the need for a stronger and more effective national role for the areas, and we have addressed this by recommending the establishment of a National Landscapes Committee and a National Landscapes Partnership Board (see Recommendations 30 and 31 below).
- 8.2.3 We are also conscious of two other key factors: (i) the need to foster greater local and regional representation, management and accountability; and (ii) to provide the bodies with more opportunity and powers to draw in external funds and resources from a wider variety of sources, and to leverage additional resources into the designated landscapes.
- 8.2.4 We believe the most effective approach for doing this is to retain a modified statutory identity base upon the Single Purpose Authority model for National Parks and the flexible multi-model governance approach for AONBs that suits the myriad of local circumstances. While the models need modernisation (the NPA model can be traced back to the Edwards Report in the mid 1990s), the overwhelming body of evidence cautions against tearing down the current structures. We recommend that these should be retained and reformed within a broader governance framework (illustrated in Figures 16 and 19).
- 8.2.5 The National Park Authority is a unique hybrid model, being accountable to the local government measure and to the Welsh Government as a sponsored body. As we set out below we are proposing a significant degree of renewal and recalibration of these relationships in the proposed new framework, which we feel addresses the earlier concerns of the Williams Commission (p.43), and the more recent white paper on the future of local government in Wales (Welsh Government, 2015k).
- 8.2.6 The model for National Park and AONB delivery in Wales is recognised internationally for effectively balancing national objectives with local needs and accountability. While we are proposing changes to the membership and recruitment of their strategic management boards (see below), we wish retain the strong links with (what are likely to be far larger) local authorities for both NPAs and AONBs, and to foster closer working through the delivery of the new purposes and modified duties.

8.2.7 Having proposed the retention of the two core models, there are several areas which need modifying so as to allow bodies to achieve their outcomes more efficiently and effectively. These include:

- Reducing the regulatory burden on NPAs to meet the same auditing and reporting requirements as the much larger local authorities. This needs to be reformed and linked to our recommendation below for the development of integrated reporting to the Welsh Government and the National Assembly for Wales.
- Enhancing the role of the bodies as enterprise and rural economic development bodies. This needs to be achieved by creating enterprise functions within the bodies, in collaboration with local councils and community groups. The bodies need to organise themselves and to develop the capacity (partly created by efficiencies created under the reduced regulatory burden) to lead and create new innovation and enterprises in their areas. We believe that this requires the Welsh Government and local authorities recognise the bodies (both NPAs and AONBs) as rural enterprise agencies which can act as key catalysts for economic and social enterprise development both within and beyond their boundaries.
- The bodies need to be able to apply for, and draw down, RDP funding and related Welsh Government and EU regional funding.

8.2.8 We envisage the NPAs and AONB bodies will want to reorganise their operations especially in response to our recommended new purposes for them (Chapter 6, Recommendations 6 to 9). There is a variety of AONB organisational structures both in Wales and England, and in Scotland their two National Park Authorities have developed different internal organisational arrangements (see Chapter 5). Therefore we have deliberately proposed a Framework of Governance which permits evolution of the governance within each National Landscape. We feel they will be more resilient and robust if they continue to diversify in response to local needs and opportunities.

Recommendation 25

Retain the single purpose local authority model for National Park management.

Recommendation 26

Retain and develop flexible AONB management models.

Recommendation 27

National Park Authorities and AONB bodies will need to consider how they restructure themselves in order to deliver the three new purposes.

Recommendation 28

The Welsh Government should reduce the disproportionate regulatory burden on National Park Authorities that is designed for larger and more complex local authorities.

Recommendation 29

The Welsh Government should give National Park Authorities and AONB bodies the means of applying for and drawing down funding from a wider range of sources.

8.3 Leadership: A Radical Change in Institutional and Inter-agency Culture and Working

- 8.3.1 Many of the responses to our call for evidence (and influential reports, such as the Williams Commission Review of Public Service and Delivery, 2014) focussed upon the need for stronger, more effective national leadership to be developed by all the agencies with a responsibility for the designated landscapes.
- 8.3.2 The main thrust of the problem concerns the need, without criticising or prejudicing any of the key agencies, to shift the institutional culture of governance of the designated landscapes from one of “deference” to a more accountable and innovative one that enhances existing powers to convene, which we did not want to lose. We envisage a more proactive, structured, partnership-based approach in which the

designated landscape bodies (the NPAs and AONB bodies) and their partners have clear ownership, and awareness of the delivery mechanisms and are constantly held to account. In some respects (and especially with some of the perceptions concerning the inconsistent role of the NPAs around planning) change is necessary such that it draws a line under past experience and creates new inter-agency working.

8.3.3 The issue of leadership in this context is multifaceted; therefore we had to separate out the key dimensions of this issue:

- The need for a collective national voice for all eight protected landscapes, which together cover $\frac{1}{4}$ of Wales
- The need and opportunities for the 8 National Landscapes of Wales to collaborate and “realise the potential” for more synergy in their work
- The need to provide locally distinctive, yet consistently presented place-based contributions to the goals in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- The need for Wales-level engagement:
 - with Ministers – especially Environment, Economic Development, Public Services, Health
 - with the National Assembly for Wales
 - with NRW Board & Directors
- The need for collaboration and partnership with national stakeholders including:
 - Government Departments such as Visit Wales; Cadw; Highways and Economic Development
 - Wales level business organisations
 - Wales level voluntary sector
 - statutory undertakers
- The need for engagement with, and between, Chairs & members of the governance bodies of the AONBs & National Parks
- The need to enhance and strengthen the “power to convene” which is a valuable “soft” power resulting from the national status and statutory duties of the designated landscapes.
- The need to give the public opportunities to input to the future of the Family of Protected Landscapes at the Wales level
- The need to promote the achievements and potential of the Wales Family of Protected Landscapes within Wales, UK and internationally
- The need to identify opportunities and needs for collaboration across the Family

- The need to co-ordinate the liaison and the sharing of best practice with and from other protected areas in the IUCN family, in the UK and internationally
- The need to negotiate with Welsh Government the funding settlements for the Family of Protected Landscapes
- The need to lead rural enterprise and place-based innovation for green growth and to connect and enhance the green economy to their areas' special assets via ecosystem services
- A major leadership role, in partnership with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and local authorities, in delivering sustainable natural resource and land management principles, as specified within the Environment Bill 2015
- The need to be leading exponents of Wales' cultural distinctiveness and language
- The need to input to policy and programme formulation across Welsh Government
- The opportunity to co-ordinate funding applications at the Wales level, to create synergies and best value for all 8 National Landscapes.

8.3.4 *A Truly National Voice for National Landscapes*

8.3.5 The current key responsibilities of national and local government bodies for the designated landscapes in Wales are described in Chapter 5 paragraphs 5.3.1 to 5.3.4 and illustrated in Figure 3.

8.3.6 Many respondents also felt the designated landscapes partnerships are 'hiding their lights under a bushel' and not promoting their achievements widely or loudly enough, and that they are not making their benefits to Wales obvious and relevant, despite these areas covering ¼ of the land area of the country.

8.3.7 We found during our investigations that the designated landscape managers are seldom at the focal point of either the design or delivery of all-Wales policy and initiatives.

8.3.8 We noted the current collaborative working arrangements between the three Park Authorities via a forum called 'National Parks Wales' and we attended as observers a meeting of the chief officers of all the National Landscapes convened by NRW, who chaired the meeting and also provided the secretariat. Helpfully, the leaders of the National Parks and AONBs told us they would welcome further collaboration.

8.3.9 Mechanisms to address these issues that were suggested to the Panel included the establishment of: a Commission, or a charitable Trust, or a National Governance Board - accountable to both the Welsh Government and the National Assembly of Wales.

8.3.10 Taking all the evidence we have received into account, we recommend the following:

Recommendation 30

The Welsh Government should establish a 'National Landscapes Partnership Board' as per Figure 17.

Recommendation 31

The 8 National Park Authorities and AONB bodies should establish a light-touch 'National Landscapes of Wales Committee' as per Figure 18.

Recommendation 32

The Welsh Government should work with the National Landscapes bodies and the relevant stakeholders through the Partnership Board and the National Committee to agree, and keep under review an over-arching 'Strategy for the National Landscapes of Wales'.

8.3.11 This set of national level recommendations is designed to enable the National Landscapes to deliver more than the sum of the eight areas for the nation, and to develop a positive culture of collaboration for the national good. All eight National Landscapes will be working together strategically, effectively and efficiently and will be championed effectively by the Chair of the National Committee. They will be better able to represent their quarter of Wales and to become a strategic partner at the Wales level via overt leadership, for example within the Rural Development Plan. We envisage in the future more examples of positive delivery by national partners such as the current programme of undergrounding of power lines in designated landscapes by

power companies, funded by a one-off levy sanctioned by the industry regulator, Ofgem. There will be increased awareness, especially across Welsh Government departments, of the potential for the National Landscapes to deliver multiple benefits for Wales.

Figure 17: Recommendation 30, we recommend the following operation of the 'National Landscapes Partnership Board'

Purpose:

To foster and enable two-way collaboration between the National Landscapes, the Ministers and departments of Welsh Government, and wider stakeholders at the Wales level including utilities companies, business organisations and third sector organisations.

What the Partnership Board would DO (inter alia.):

- annual meeting chaired by the relevant Minister. The appropriate Minister could be asked to chair the meeting according to the main theme of the agenda, for example if it was focusing on natural resources management, green growth, learning, access for all, tourism.
- to meet a further two times per year, coinciding with the annual National Landscapes conference and a meeting of the National Landscapes Committee
- Identify opportunities for collaborative action to help deliver actions in the individual statutory Partnership Plans on an all Wales basis
- showcase delivery of the statutory duties on partner bodies to have due regard for the purposes and plans of the National Landscapes
- provide a focus on the National Landscapes for Welsh Government departments including Environment &, Economic Development & Tourism, Public Services, Agriculture, Health, Culture & Heritage
- provide an opportunity for top level dialogue with NRW Board & senior officers, Wales level business organisations, Wales level voluntary sector, statutory undertakers
- help to set agendas and arrange venues for Partnership Board meetings

What it would NOT do:

- the Partnership Board would not take any executive action - that would always be the

role of the individual National Landscapes

Composition of the Partnership Board:

- Chair: the relevant Minister (could be a different Minister according to the agenda)
- The Chair of the National Landscapes Committee
- The 8 Chairs of the governance bodies of the AONBs & National Parks
- The 8 lead officers of the AONBs & National Parks
- Welsh Government officials from a range of departments – relevant to each agenda
- Natural Resources Wales – a Board member plus a senior officer
- Welsh Local Government Association
- Wales level business organisations
- Wales level voluntary sector
- Utility companies (the Statutory Undertakers)
- Future Generations Commissioner (other Commissioners may be invited depending upon the composition of the agenda)
- Other stakeholders to be invited for specific agenda items.

Secretariat & Funding:

Provided by the Welsh Government – who would ensure regular communication between the national partners on the Board and with the National committee.

Location :

Meetings to be held in which ever of the National Parks or AONBs best illustrates the items on the agenda, so that site visits can also be made to relevant case studies.

Figure 18: Recommendation 31, we recommended the following operation of the 'National Landscapes Committee'

Purpose:

To enable the National Landscapes of Wales to deliver for Wales more than the sum of the eight areas, and to develop a positive culture of collaboration for the national good.

What the National Committee would DO (inter alia.):

- always strive to add value to Wales by creating synergies between the individual National Landscapes
- to provide a national voice for the 25% of Wales in the eight National Landscapes
- identify opportunities and needs for collaboration across the Family
- set up thematic task and finish groups for topics such as: data sharing, coast and seascapes, health and well-being
- to help increase equality and diversity within National Landscape bodies by sharing and developing best practice
- involve stakeholders in national level scoping workshops and working groups including: Natural Resources Wales, Government Departments such as Visit Wales, Cadw, Highways, Economic Development & Tourism, Agriculture, Culture & Heritage; Wales level business organisations, Wales level voluntary sector, utilities companies
- use video-conferencing as much as possible to reduce travel costs and time
- organise an annual conference to promote engagement with, and between, Chairs & members of the governance bodies of the AONBs & National Parks and wider stakeholders
- co-ordinate (not deliver) training & skills development for members & officers (of both National Landscape bodies and wider authorities) via regular needs assessments
- give the public opportunities to say what they want from the Family of Protected Landscapes by commissioning public surveys every Assembly term
- help promote the achievements & potential of the Wales Family of Protected Landscapes within Wales, UK and internationally – especially a role for the Chair
- co-ordinate the liaison with, and the sharing of best practice with and from other protected areas in the IUCN family, in the UK and internationally
- negotiate with the Welsh Government the funding settlements for the Family of Protected Landscapes
- input to policy and programme formulation across the Welsh Government – the Policy Officer would carry out the research and intelligence gathering while the Chair would lead on the advocacy, in tandem with the members of the National Committee
- co-ordinate funding applications at the Wales level, to create synergies for all 8 National Landscapes – the Fundraising Specialist would advise at the Wales level and assist staff in the National Landscapes' teams
- assist the eight National Landscapes to produce a consolidated annual report for the Welsh Government and the National Assembly for Wales every four years, in the same time frame as the four year management planning cycle for the statutory plans.

What it would NOT do:

- the National Committee would not take any executive action - that would always be the role of the individual National Landscapes

Composition of the National Committee:

- The 8 Chairs of the governance bodies of the AONBs & National Parks
- The 8 lead officers of the AONBs & National Parks
- NRW Representation (we propose a Board Member, plus a senior officer)
- Other stakeholders to be invited for specific agenda items
- Chair:
 - An independent chair of the Committee - appointed by the First Minister after public competition
 - Chair to drive the internal and external leadership and ensure there's a 'race to the top' amongst the eight National Landscape teams
 - Time commitment to be confirmed – estimate 4 days per month
 - Chair to be remunerated at a benchmarked daily rate

(To meet quarterly with one meeting on the same day as the annual National Landscapes Partnership Board and one meeting the same day as the annual conference.)

Staffing:

- Co-ordinating Manager (not to conflict with the CEOs of the National Parks)
- Communications Officer (bilingual – essential)
- Policy officer
- Fundraising Specialist – possibly a free-lancer on a retainer
- Administrator – part-time, possibly shared with the hosting body
- All specialist and legal advice that becomes necessary to be provided from within the National Landscapes Family

Funding:

We estimate modest core funding of circa £275,000 for staff, chair, on-costs, travel, rent, publications and maintaining the website.

The National Parks already allocate circa £75k for collaborative working.

Additional costs of any agreed initiatives to be funded via external fundraising and with grants from the National Parks & AONBs.

8.4 National Landscapes and National Government

- 8.4.1 Given the national importance of the designated landscapes to Wales we envisage a far higher profile for them within the National Assembly for Wales. National Assembly Members and their relevant committees should scrutinise and debate the statutory plans of each area, as well as monitor and scrutinise the performance of the National Landscapes in the public and national interest.
- 8.4.2 The National Landscape Governance Framework will generate additional accountability and transparency, and provide the National Landscapes with more direct and clear visibility in the policy, political and cultural life of Wales. All of these processes will be connected and contribute to relevant international bodies and partnership working will be embedded within this approach.
- 8.4.3 The Welsh Government, advised by National Resources Wales (and other relevant advisory bodies) and in consultation with the National Assembly, will set performance targets for the National Landscapes which derive from and align with the well-being goals from within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. These performance targets and indicators will be drawn up for the National Landscapes of Wales, recognising their role as leading innovators in integrated landscape management. We would expect them to be reviewed in line with the Integrated Management Planning Process.
- 8.4.4 We also envisage direct Ministerial engagement with the National Landscapes Framework by annually chairing one of the meetings of National Landscapes Partnership Board (set out within our Recommendation 30, Figure 17). Within Scotland, Ministers chair each of the two National Parks' partnership boards once a year, maintaining close association with the areas and facilitating dialogue around the table. We were taken with this approach, but feel it is more appropriate at the national, all-Wales level rather than locally.

Recommendation 33

The statutory Partnership Plans of each of the National Landscapes of Wales should be scrutinised by the National Assembly for Wales prior to adoption.

Recommendation 34

The National Assembly for Wales, as it evolves its own internal architecture, should consider the relationship between itself and the National Landscapes of Wales to maximise scrutiny and accountability.

Recommendation 35

The Welsh Government should set performance targets and indicators for the National Landscapes of Wales that derive from and align with the Well-Being Goals.

8.5 Integrated Planning and Reporting

- 8.5.1 The National Landscape bodies are currently involved in a variety of overlapping planning exercises, in addition to their duties of producing their own bespoke management plans. This proliferation of planning exercises will only increase with the protracted and incremental process of developing and implementing new plans associated with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Bill, once that is enacted.
- 8.5.2 Therefore it is both timely and more efficient to integrate these planning exercises into ONE Partnership Planning exercise which embodies, at its centre, the designated landscape management plan, but also embraces plans concerning well-being and natural resource management. The key mechanism for integrating both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the framework will be a substantially enhanced and statutory Partnership Plan for each of the eight National Landscapes. Its preparation, delivery and enactment will be the responsibility of ALL of the contributing bodies and stakeholders. Leadership would be vested in the National Landscape bodies.

- 8.5.3 This will be delivered and reported through operating statements built into the integrated statutory partnership planning process, which will incorporate existing designated landscape management plans. We expect the statutory Partnership Plans for each area to be integrated with the new Well-Being Plans and Area Statements, and make significant contributions to the Local Development Plans covering the area. The National Landscape bodies, in partnership with their key stakeholders, will take overall responsibility for creating and designing this plan in ways which harmonise it with the other spatial planning processes. This will reduce duplication of plan-making processes as well as augment the plan as the main vehicle for realising the achievement of the distinctive purposes and duties of the National Landscapes. Other stakeholders, in undertaking and carrying through their revised duties to the National Landscapes, will also be expected to have ownership of the statutory Partnership Plan as the coherent place-based expression of Well-Being Plans, integrated environmental area plans and Local Development Plans.
- 8.5.4 This will be an integrated planning exercise which will be the duty of the National Landscape body and its partners to produce; monitor and deliver. This will mean that all the relevant bodies (designated landscape bodies, stakeholders and statutory undertakers) will be bound in practice as well as in principle to the management plan due to their own contribution and buy-in at the start of the plan-making process, and not limited to the adjudication of particular development proposals or management arrangements after the Plan's adoption. The Partnership Plans will be statutory, but also facilitative with a strong emphasis upon sustainable development, as embodied with in the three interlocking purposes we proposed in stage one, and revisit in Chapter 6.
- 8.5.5 We are well aware that the widening of purposes, together with resource constraints, and the proliferation of planning exercises and their related administrative burdens, means that there needs to be a strong and focussed emphasis upon integrated planning, coordination and integrating performance reporting. Indeed, this should form the central communication mechanism which flows along the vertical and horizontal channels in our governance model (Figure 16). The partnership planning process should aim to:
- Provide clear engagement of relevant stakeholders (private, public and community) in the plan preparation process;

- Provide a basis for agreement on its content which abides by the delivery of the three new interlocking purposes;
- Be an integrated spatial plan for the area which leads and meets the criteria of well being plans, LDPs, Future generations goals and environmental area statements;
- Contain a key set of national and local targets, action plans and performance targets, which can then be monitored;
- Can be communicated in a variety of media, locally and nationally to a broad range of audiences;
- Provide an appended operating statement which provides a clear basis for collaboration and partnership working (together with clear roles and responsibilities) to deliver the plan.

Recommendation 36

There should be One statutory partnership planning exercise for each of the designated landscapes.

Recommendation 37

The statutory Partnership Plan for an area should integrate the current management plan, well-being plan and natural resources area statements.

8.6 Local Partnerships

- 8.6.1 The designated areas are managed landscapes, mostly privately-owned, which are shaped by agriculture, forestry and tourism in particular. Therefore successful management of the special areas depends on productive partnerships with all those who have an impact on them.
- 8.6.2 AONBs and National Parks have a long and largely successful track record of positive engagement with local partners. The Land Use Consultants report into AONBs (LUC, 2013) showed there is a high level of trust in the AONB approach to local partnership working. This was borne out by much of the evidence we received, but some business representatives were more sceptical, which was especially coloured by some of their

members' experiences with planning applications from time to time in the National Parks.

- 8.6.3 The range of approaches to local partnership working is described in Chapter 5. The Gower AONB has a formal Partnership whose members are elected at the annual AONB forum meeting, while the Wye Valley AONB badges all its types of engagement under the umbrella of their 'Partnership'. The Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB have recently held a competitive recruitment process for certain defined roles on their AONB Partnership. The National Parks too operate a wide range of types of partnership working such as the Agriculture Liaison Section of Snowdonia National Park Authority which has been instrumental in drawing down European funding to enable farmers to undertake a number of land management projects. However, the chairs of the National Park Authorities told us: "it's time to change for our communities". While several respondents told us that behavioural change is what's needed, rather than structural change around governance in terms of partnership working.



Developing local, national and international partnerships through the Rural Alliances Interreg Project in Brecon Beacons National Park.

Raising the profile of our cultural heritage as part of the Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme.



8.6.4 We sought examples of good practice from around the world and were recommended the Parc Naturel model in France which has a more community based approach to management. Europarc told us of good governance models in designated areas in Norway and Switzerland which are founded on building trust and resilient relationships. They said the German model was the best in terms of management effectiveness where they clearly categorise all their benefits to society, and Finland leads the way with an ecosystems services approach. However, they also said a small nucleus of resistance to the protected area approach is normal.

8.6.5 Taking all the evidence into consideration we wish to improve local partnership working across each of the National Landscapes as follows:

Recommendation 38

Formally constituted 'Partnerships' should be established in each National Park which are closely involved in the preparation and delivery of the statutory Partnership Plan.

Recommendation 39

The National Park Partnership should be chaired by the Chair of the National Park Authority.

Recommendation 40

There should be a formally agreed relationship between the National Park Partnership and the National Park Authority.

Recommendation 41

The AONBs should continue to develop their trusted partnership-working models, however we do not feel a 'one size fits all' would benefit the AONBs.

8.6.6 This set of recommendations is designed to build on the positive relationships in the designated landscapes and to forge new ones, in ways which address their current strengths and weaknesses. The National Landscapes will be more relevant economically, socially and culturally. There will be enhanced and effective local engagement between all relevant stakeholders. Local tourism operators and other business interests, in particular, will find it easier to have a voice. All parties, including the staff managing the designated landscapes teams, will feel there is good, two-way, meaningful communication, and crucially, delivery of the statutory Plans for the areas will be more effective.

8.7 Fostering lateral relationships with Natural Resources Wales and local authorities

8.7.1 The current duties upon Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and local authorities with regard to the designated areas need now to be aligned to the new purposes and duty set out in Chapter 6.

8.7.2 The main responsibilities of NRW as currently set out in the Environment (Wales) Bill are to:

*“Seek to achieve sustainable management of natural resources in relation to Wales, and
Apply the principles of sustainable management of natural resources in the exercise of its function, so far as consistent with their proper exercise.”*

(Environment (Wales) Bill, s. 5(2))

8.7.3 In particular in carrying out these purposes NRW should take account of the duties of Designated Landscapes, especially in the taking of account of the resilience of eco-systems and its specified components:

- The diversity between and within eco-systems
- The connections between eco-systems
- The condition of eco-systems;
- The adaptability of eco-systems
- The combinative role of eco-systems as contributions to the place-based landscapes.

- 8.7.4 Currently there is a series of advisory roles that NRW perform on behalf of Welsh Government which specifically relate to the Designated Landscapes. What is not clear is whether NRW is discharging their statutory duties toward designated landscapes in full since we did not receive an exhaustive list in the time we set NRW to respond. At present the picture is not fully complete, we hope that will change once the Environment Bill becomes enacted.

Recommendation 42

Natural Resources Wales should build and make available to the Welsh Government an exhaustive list of their statutory duties and powers in relation to Wales' designated landscapes.

- 8.7.5 In light of the changes taking place within NRW and their statutory responsibilities for landscape this exercise may prove enlightening and may assist with the setting up of the National Landscapes Framework
- 8.7.6 NRW was able to provide us with a short list of duties in their stage one evidence. These include duties to advise Ministers on the appointment of the Chief Executives to NPAs; financial matters, and the assessment of potentially new designations or changes to the boundaries thereof. We believe that these should remain but relate only to their revised purposes of achieving the sustainable management of natural resources. Ministers could and should consult with other agencies and departments for advice concerning the wider Welsh Government policy portfolio in respect of the designated landscapes.
- 8.7.7 Both NRW and the constituent local authorities will be full members of the National Landscapes Partnership Board, and we recommend that NRW will also join the National Landscapes Committee. Conversely we expect NRW to involve and champion all of the designated landscapes, National Parks *and* AONBs, on their respective Public Service Boards. The experience of NPAs on Local Service Boards has been mixed, so we hope that lessons can be learned and delivery opportunities maximised. NRW would also involve the designated landscapes in the development of the State of the Environment Reporting and the relevant Area Statements.

Recommendation 43

Natural Resources Wales will involve and champion the national landscapes on the relevant Public Service Boards.

Recommendation 44

Natural Resources Wales and local authorities will have regard to the statutory Partnership Plans in the conduct of their planning exercises in their area.

8.7.8 NRW will be a major source of professional advice on the sustainable management of natural resources from which the designated landscapes should benefit. The sharing of expertise and data in the landscape and biodiversity fields is crucial, especially for the AONBs.

8.7.9 We applaud the positive and proactive role that relevant local authorities play in supporting the work of AONBs. It was clear from the evidence we received that a number of the case studies we highlight in Appendix iv would not have happened were it not for local authority support. However, as local government and public service delivery change, and larger local authorities emerge, we are fearful that these linkages and support mechanisms may prove too fragile to sustain. We wish to reinforce and spread the good practice across all eight National Parks and AONBs in the light of the anticipated changes and advise local authorities to embed:

- The revised set of purposes and duties;
- The sharing and collaborative role of staff between local authorities and AONBs
- The sharing and collaborative role with regard to Joint Management and Steering Boards;
- The sharing and collaborative role with regard to the production, monitoring and delivery of the revised Partnership Management Plans;
- The greater role and contribution of AONBs in delivering the corporate roles of current and newly constituted local authorities.
- The quality of representation of local authority elected representatives and officials in the local and national management of AONBs.

Recommendation 45

Natural Resources Wales will share data and provide professional advice on the sustainable management of natural resources to the National Landscapes.

Recommendation 46

Local authorities should reinforce and spread the best practice of their joint working in the AONBs across all eight National Parks and AONBs.

8.8 Forward Planning and Development Management

- 8.8.1 The status of planning in terms of development management within the National Parks was an issue on which opinion was undoubtedly polarised; we found that very little middle ground was given by either side.
- 8.8.2 The rationale for removing planning powers, and instead giving them to local authorities varied. It was sometimes based upon local anecdotal experience and sometimes perception. For example, Marloes and St Brides Community Council's strong opinion was based upon its experiences of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority.
- 8.8.3 There was another view, shared by a number of contributors that, "some of the Parks have been unable to provide an acceptable level of service in this area" and that justified removal. The contemporary evidence we collected does not support this perception. While it may have applied in the past, the conclusions of Land Use Consultants' report, "Delivery of Planning Services in Statutory Designated Landscapes in Wales" (LUC, 2012) and the findings of the Williams Commission on Public Service and Delivery (2014) have found significant improvement across all three NPAs which are now amongst the highest performing local planning authorities in Wales.
- 8.8.4 The written evidence we received from the agricultural and land-owning sectors was dominated by the perceived failings of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority,

and this was emphasised to us on when their representatives addressed us in person. Across the sector, which has at least an ambivalent attitude toward NPAs, views can differ if you dig down to the local/regional scale. One of the NFU representatives we spoke to expressed considerable support amongst the farming community for Snowdonia National Park Authority.

- 8.8.5 The Federation of Small Business made an interesting observation: they expressed their concern at the lack of capacity within planning departments to understand the needs of the private sector. This contrasted with a contribution from a representative of the Wales Tourism Alliance who felt that this was not found in local authorities either, and cautioned against change.
- 8.8.6 There was greater consensus within the voluntary sector. The Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales submitted a case for NPAs to retain their planning functions. They were particularly concerned that if planning functions were transferred to local authorities, especially the proposed larger authorities, then the understanding and experience of the NPAs planning staff would be diluted, and over time, lost. This concern was shared across the sector.
- 8.8.7 NRW stated clearly “that retention of the planning function for National Parks Authorities is essential to enable the NPA’s to deliver existing requirements and the proposed future purposes”. The Royal Town and Planning Institute (RTPI), representing the profession also supported the retention of planning in its totality by NPAs. They expressed concern that “where a single National Park is split between two or more LPAs; the opportunity for a different interpretation of policy within a single NPA would be high, leading to inconsistency”.
- 8.8.8 Several contributors suggested that National Parks could be made statutory consultees to the proposed Joint Planning Boards, while keeping a strategic planning policy function (however others would remove this function too). We found on discussing this matter with the CEO of the Cairngorms National Park Authority that doing so adds another level of complexity to the planning process, and saves little in terms of resource since the NPA has to retain capacity and planning expertise to consider applications within its area.

8.8.9 We went into this stage of the review with open minds, especially given the contextual changes taking place within Wales. However we found the case for removing planning powers from the NPAs unpersuasive, based on dated examples that did not reflect contemporary experience and largely based upon perception. While problems at the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority occurred in past years, we are convinced the systemic issues have been addressed and resolved. The evidence presented within the Land Use Consultants report; the recommendations of the Williams' Commission; from NRW and the RTPi is persuasive. The evidence we received from Scotland further strengthened in our minds the need for NPAs to retain all of their planning functions, including their planning development management function. Doing so allows the NPAs, which manage the landscape of 20% of Wales, to be more integrated in the delivery of their purposes. While planning will remain one tool amongst the several required to deliver the new three purposes, it will serve a key function delivering consistency across our National Parks.

Recommendation 47

The National Park Authorities should retain their strategic planning policy and planning development control functions.

Recommendation 48

The Welsh Government should reinforce and support the provision of pre-application planning advice from the National Park Authorities.

8.8.10 We heard evidence of a high level of turnover of the planning officers and elected members of the local authorities determining applications in AONBs, and therefore the constant need for training about the national importance and special requirements of National Landscapes. For the National Parks and their Authorities to play an enhanced, co-ordinated and consistent role in delivering all three proposed purposes then their planning officials will need sufficient support to meet the professional development needs. This also applies to AONB Delivery Committee members who will require further training and education to better reflect the changes to the purposes. We would expect this to be co-ordinated by the National Landscape Committee.

Recommendation 49

The National Landscapes Committee should co-ordinate and assist with sharing the cost of training and education in land use planning matters especially for delivery of the new purposes.

8.8.11 While the Minister specifically directed us to look at the planning function of NPAs, the role of AONBs was raised in the evidence we received. We state in Chapter 5 that while the areas are afforded the same level of protection as National Parks, there are differentiated engagement processes between AONBs and their respective local authority planning departments. This was noted as an issue in the 2012 report:, “Delivery of Planning Services in Statutory Designated Landscapes in Wales” (LUC, 2012), as was the issue of the independence of AONB officers, whose decisions concerning applications may be affected by their status as employees of the local authority.

8.8.12 We wish to enhance the status of AONBs within the planning system, and in order to do so we want AONB bodies to become a statutory consultee on planning applications with a potentially significant impact on the special qualities within their area. We also believe that the current approach of the Wye Valley AONB to jointly-procure and commission (with the Malvern Hills AONB) planning advice independent of their local authorities, is a model of collaborative working we wish to see resourced and developed across Wales. These two approaches will collectively improve the quality and quantity of scrutiny and advice concerning the most significant developments within AONBs, ensuring that decisions are better informed and the outcomes are enhanced.

Recommendation 50

The AONB bodies become a statutory consultee on planning applications with a potentially significant impact on the special qualities of their area.

Recommendation 51

A system of independent planning advice for AONBs across Wales is developed and resourced.

8.8.13 We also wish to comment upon one of the recommendations of “Delivery of Planning Services in Statutory Designated Landscapes in Wales” (LUC, 2012). The authors recommended that the Welsh Government report nationally on planning outcomes across both National Parks and AONBs in order to ensure that future criticism of decisions is based on fact. We wish endorse this recommendation. There is considerable merit in it being actioned in the activity generated post Planning (Wales) Act 2015. The National Parks and AONBs would have, for the first time, a suite of planning outcome indicators that reflect their status in the planning system. We believe that this could be drafted by the National Landscapes Committee (referred to in Recommendation 30 above) as a piece of collaborative work.

Recommendation 52

A suite of indicators on planning outcomes in the National Parks and AONBs is developed for the National Landscapes of Wales.

8.8.14 Having made the above recommendations, we wish to end this section with an observation made to us by a Chief Executive of one of the Scottish National Parks. We were reminded that planning development control is adversarial, with losers and winners and that changing the planning authority of an area did not solve the decision concerning a contentious planning application, it merely moved it from one authority to another.

8.9 Local Representation and Diversity

8.9.1 The relevant sections of the Minister's brief to this review on representation and local accountability were to consider:

- *The governance and management arrangements of our designated landscapes*

- *How any future governing body would best reinforce local accountability and decision making, and*
- *In your consideration of representation and accountability you should have regard to board balance in terms of gender, disability and ethnicity.*

- 8.9.2 To help us fulfil this part of our brief we sought advice from the Equalities & Human Rights Commission in Wales. We have benefited from their report 'Appointments to Boards & Equality Law'(2014). Although this guide specifically covers the issue of women on boards, it states that much of its content is also relevant to the consideration of wider objectives to increase the diversity of boards. One of its main messages is that the law provides scope for companies to address any disadvantage or disproportionately low participation on boards by enabling or encouraging applications from such parts of society, provided selection is made on merit.
- 8.9.3 The Welsh Government believes that public bodies should reflect Welsh society - people from all walks of life - to help them understand people's needs and make better decisions. Their Diversity Statement encourages a wide and diverse range of individuals to apply for their public appointments. Applications are particularly welcome from all under-represented groups including women, people under 30 years of age, members of ethnic minorities, disabled people, lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people.
- 8.9.4 In terms of disability, the Welsh Government operates a 'Positive About Disabled People' scheme and welcomes applications from people with disabilities. The scheme guarantees an interview to disabled people if they meet the minimum criteria for the post. Their application form also enables applicants to detail any specific needs or equipment that may be needed if they are invited to attend an interview.
- 8.9.5 *Composition of National Park Authorities*
- 8.9.6 We were pleased to see the positive steps that all three National Park Authorities are taking to increase diversity on their boards. We have heard good results from the pilot programmes: the Mosaic, mentoring and Ambassador approaches - which are described in Chapter 5 and the case studies within Appendix iv.

- 8.9.7 The current model of representation on the NPAs is described in Chapter 5 comprising two thirds Councillors nominated by the constituent local authorities and one third appointed by the Welsh Government after open competition under Nolan Principles.
- 8.9.8 Some responses to this Review have suggested consideration of greater local accountability of National Park Authorities, possibly including a proportion of directly elected members, as per the Scottish National Parks, while many other respondents cautioned against direct elections, fearing hi-jacking by single issue protesters, and because of the additional cost to the NPA budget of running direct elections in bespoke wards set up within the National Parks.
- 8.9.9 Many respondents to our Review were concerned that there are instances where Councillors representing wards a long distance outside the National Park have been appointed to the NPA because of the political balance rule. The Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery recommended that Councillors appointed to National Park Authorities should live in or close to the National Park boundary (Williams Commission, p.43, 2014). This issue was also highlighted in the review into planning services in 'Statutory Designated Landscapes' in Wales in 2012.
- 8.9.10 Taking all the evidence we have received into account, we recommend the following to improve representation and local accountability:

Recommendation 53

Each National Park Authority should comprise: ½ nominated County Councillors, ¼ representatives of the national interest appointed by Welsh Government via open competition, and ¼ representatives of the local interest appointed via open competition by the members listed above.

- 8.9.11 This recommendation simultaneously achieves greater local representation within the boundaries of the National and a mechanism for ensuring greater diversity via the recruitment process.

Recommendation 54

The recruitment and appointment processes for the 'national interest' and 'local interest' members of National Park Authorities should include best practice to ensure diversity in the Authority's membership.

Recommendation 55

To develop and embed in all three National Parks the positive steps already piloted by the National Park Authorities to increase diversity on their Authorities i.e. the Mosaic, mentoring and Ambassador approaches.

Recommendation 56

The Welsh Government should remove the requirement for political balance of local authority members on National Park Authorities, to increase local representation. Thus Councillors appointed to National Park Authorities should represent wards within, or straddling, the National Park boundary. [Section 15 of the Local Government & Housing Act, 1989 and Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.]

Recommendation 57

There should be formal reporting arrangements between the Councillors on the National Park Authority and their parent local authority.

8.9.12 Composition of AONB formal committees

8.9.13 The range of models of representation on AONB formal committees is described in Chapter 5, paragraph 5.7.9 to 5.7.13. Most have a main committee comprising Councillors nominated by the constituent local authorities with voting powers, plus representatives of interested parties, who in some instances also have voting powers.

- 8.9.14 Responses to this Review showed that the current arrangements are 'remarkably effective and resilient' (Wye Valley AONB).
- 8.9.15 We have considered the new committee structure in the Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB as described in Chapter 5, paragraph 5.7.11, with a Joint Committee comprising two Cabinet members from each of the three constituent local authorities and their appointment of some members to their AONB Partnership via open competition. However, we are aware their Joint Committee model may need to be revised once the proposed reorganisation of local government takes place, as the AONB may well be within one, or at most two, local authorities.
- 8.9.16 Taking all the evidence we have received into account, we are not prescribing the overall membership of the Committee. Instead we recommend specific required appointments to the Committee to strengthen the connections to the decision-makers in the (often geographically remote) constituent local authorities, to strengthen representation of the national importance of the designation, and to ensure greater diversity of representation, while continuing to maintain strong local representation.

Recommendation 58

The Welsh Government should place a statutory duty on local authorities to establish a formal committee to oversee the management of the AONB and to delegate the local authority's responsibility for preparing the AONB Management plan to this Committee (but not delegating its responsibilities under the duty to the AONB purposes and delivering its aspects of the Management Plan). We recommend this be renamed the 'AONB Delivery Committee' rather than the usual name: Joint Advisory Committee.

Recommendation 59

The Welsh Government should direct each AONB Delivery Committee to include at least one Cabinet member from each constituent local authority, at least two representatives of the national interest appointed by the Welsh Government via open competition, and at least two representatives of the local interest appointed via open competition by the rest of the members.

Recommendation 60

The Welsh Government should remove the requirement for political balance of local authority members on AONB formal committees, to increase local representation. Thus the Councillors appointed to AONB formal committees (in addition to the Cabinet members in Rx above) should represent wards within, or straddling, the AONB boundary. [Section 15 of the Local Government & Housing Act, 1989 and Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.]

Recommendation 61

The appointments processes for the 'national interest' and 'local interest' members of AONB Delivery Committee should incorporate equalities best practice to ensure diversity of Committee's membership.

Recommendation 62

The AONBs should actively learn from, and apply, the NPAs' pilot programmes to increase diversity on their Delivery Committees. (This learning can be facilitated by the National Landscapes of Wales Committee.)

Recommendation 63

Natural Resources Wales should continue to be a key adviser to the AONB Delivery Committee.

Recommendation 64

There should be formal reporting arrangements between the Councillors on the AONB Delivery Committee and their parent local authority.

8.9.17 This suite of recommendations is designed to further harness the potential and passion of both the national importance and local opportunities in National Parks and AONBs, to ensure greater diversity in decision-making, and to build stronger bridges between the designated landscapes and their constituent local authorities.

8.10 Funding Arrangements

8.10.1 We believe that funding arrangements for the designated bodies need to be streamlined and simplified. The evidence we have received, plus the evidence gathered to inform Chapter 5 indicates that effective performance requires sufficient support, including financial support, to deliver for designated landscapes. In the current economic climate the AONBs are especially vulnerable to having their base-line funding undermined due to the discretionary nature of their local government and NRW funding. In addition we note that many of the most innovative initiatives being developed currently are based on relatively small amounts of project funding. AONBs have been especially active and entrepreneurial in this regard.

8.10.2 However, at present, core funding from government (which is crucial to their continued success) has accreted into a labyrinthine Gordian knot of revenue streams, passing through local authorities and NRW in various ways. We propose a simpler and more incentivised system of funding which we believe will significantly reduce the overhead and administrative burdens whilst enhancing individual and collaborative performance. These are:

Recommendation 65

The Welsh Government should provide the annual core grant allocation to all National Landscapes of Wales, thereby removing Natural Resources Wales and local authority levies.

Recommendation 66

The Welsh Government should top slice the core allocation for specific strategic, collaborative and national initiatives (as currently allocated through SDF and competitive grants such as the Nature Fund).

Recommendation 67

The Welsh Government should manage accountability of core funding through an annual review process administered by an agreed performance criteria linked to the Well-Being Goals and to the statutory Partnership Plans of the National Landscape bodies.

Recommendation 68

The National Landscape bodies should have greater flexibility to leverage external funding sources. This will require a shift in the internal management structures and function of these bodies and, in the case of the AONBs their relationships with their partner local authorities.

Recommendation 69

The National Landscape bodies should have greater flexibility to generate their own revenue streams through developing a wider range of Payments for Eco-system services, in line with delivering their purposes. Their ability to use and draw down rural Development Plan and related EU funding will be important.

8.11 The New Governance Framework for Wales' National Landscapes

- 8.11.1 Figure 19, on the following page, adds a layer of detail to Figure 16 to show the interrelationships in the new governance framework for Wales' Designated Landscapes as proposed in Chapters 7 and 8, and it reflects all of the associated recommendations. The new governance framework is an outcome of the evidence received and the careful deliberation of the panel over the past year. We believe that in its structures and processes it delivers a robust framework for more effectively delivering performance, leadership and direction, voice, accountability and public efficiency of the landscape areas, and in this it embodies a far more partnership-based approach with greater representation. We have also considered the cross-border implications for the Wye Valley AONB and feel this approach will work there too.
- 8.11.2 We believe that this new governance framework allows for the clear delivery of the revised set of purposes. In this sense it addresses the analysis of weaknesses explored in chapter 5 and addressed in detail in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. It will also deliver the Welsh Government's ambitious legislative programme on the ground in our National Landscapes, allowing them to realise their potential for the whole of Wales.

Figure 19: Recommended National Landscapes of Wales Governance Framework

