

## **WYE VALLEY NATIONAL LANDSCAPE WORK PROGRAMME AND FUNDING 2026/2027**

### ***Purpose***

To seek approval for the outline work plan for the Wye Valley National Landscape during the forthcoming financial year, following confirmation of funding from DEFRA, Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales.

### ***Recommendations***

That the JAC

- A. Welcomes the funding commitments from DEFRA, Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales for the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership.
- B. endorses the outline Wye Valley National Landscape Team Work Programme for 2026/2027

### ***Key Issues***

- DEFRA, Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales have all made confirmations of funding allocations for Wye Valley National Landscape for 2026/27.
- Welsh Government have offered a 29% increase in Core Revenue funding for the Wye Valley National Landscape Team whereas all other allocations are the same as 2025/26.
- The outline Work Programme for the Wye Valley National Landscape Team for 2026/2027 is attached, furthering the conservation and enhancement of the area's natural beauty, themed around delivering for Nature, Climate, People and Place.
- Priorities include: the consolidation of the support for farming, through the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) and Ffermio Bro programmes, a proposed in-year extension of the Wye Adapt to Climate Change? Programme; on-going focus on Nature & Climate outcomes through DEFRA and Welsh Government Capital funding, including the Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places (SLSP) programme and Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) in Wales; continued Planning advice shared jointly with the Malvern Hills National Landscape Partnership; the on-going activities and achievements of the Volunteers and Young Adventurers; the delivery of the National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI) projects; the completion of Management Plan review; and continuing a range of existing activities and projects, including continuation of the control of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) and progressing the Lower Wye Tracks & Trails Action Plan; while retaining enough flexibility to pursue new funding opportunities and develop new initiatives.

- The Wye Valley National Landscape Team core budget for 2026/27 as presented to the Steering Group is £575,945 and additional Capital funding programmes, grants and other project funding is anticipated to reach £1,250,000 levered into the National Landscape during the year.

### ***Reasons***

DEFRA, Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) have all been able to confirm allocations for 2026/2027, along with some indicative allocations for up to a further two years. This provides some medium term security and enables more strategic planning of projects and programmes to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the designed Wye Valley National Landscape.

Welsh Government have provisionally made 2 year allocations for National Landscape Revenue support, the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), the Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places (SLSP) programme as well as for the new Welsh Designated Landscapes Farming programme. However, Welsh Government Budgets have yet to be fully signed off by the Senedd. Similarly Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has made a provisional grant funding offer for 2 years, subject to Welsh Government Budget approval.

### ***Implications***

The Wye Valley National Landscape Team core budget for 2026-27 has been calculated at £575,945 based on an effective flat-line budget, apart from a welcome increase from Welsh Government.

DEFRA have confirmed continuation of grant funding for 2026/2027 financial year with a total annual grant award of £426,494, split between Core Revenue Funding of £151,855, and Core Capital and Access Funding of £274,640. Criteria include making land greener, wilder, and more accessible to all, and to increase the contribution that Protected Landscapes make to Environment Act and Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) targets, measured through the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF). Current allocations may be considered indicative of expected allocations for 2027/28 and 2028/29, however final confirmation of subsequent years will follow DEFRA annual business planning process. A further total of £345,390 is allocated to the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme, with similar flat allocations in 2027/28 and 2028/29.

Following the Senedd budget being agreed, Welsh Government have confirmed Core Revenue Grant uplift of 29% to £66,500 for 2026/27, along with flat allocations of General Capital, SLSP Landscape Nature & Carbon grant and Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) totalling £290,000. A further total of £237,000 is allocated to the Ffermio Bro programme, with indicative budgets for subsequent years subject to approval following the Senedd elections.

Natural Resources Wales have confirmed their funding allocations for Wye Valley National Landscape of £49,000 for 2026/27, being the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of a two year agreement.

These commitments considerably help with medium term budgeting and work programming. Consequently it is possible to consolidate the current National Landscape Team at 10.5 FTE and deliver the core functions of the team, and purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area, as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding between the four constituent Local Authorities.

The Work Programme for the Wye Valley National Landscape Team is outlined below, enhanced by projects and partnership initiatives with funding and grants from a variety of sources, such as the National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI) projects between Ross-on-Wye and Whitchurch. Where required National Landscape budgets and grant match-funding are supplemented by drawing on National Landscape reserves.

<b><i>Wye Valley National Landscape Work Programme 2026-27 outline priorities &amp; projects</i></b>
<p><b>Nature</b></p> <p>Farming &amp; land management support: advice, guidance and grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme [England only]</li> <li>• Ffermio Bro programme (tbc) [Wales only]</li> <li>• Wye Adapt to Climate Change? (WACC) Programme</li> <li>• National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI) projects x3</li> <li>• Conservation Grazing</li> <li>• River Friendly Farming</li> <li>• Natural Flood Management (NFM) projects</li> </ul> <p>Species Actions Plans – Finish/publish &amp; deliver actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Habitat Creation/Restoration</li> <li>• Monitoring &amp; public engagement</li> <li>• Support Hedgehog Rescue Centre</li> <li>• Water crowfoot drone filming</li> </ul> <p>Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) control</p> <p>Deer Management</p> <p>Wildlife of the Wye Valley Guide/Leaflet</p>
<p><b>Climate</b></p> <p>Peatland Restoration particularly at Cleddon Bog SSSI</p> <p>Climate Action Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbon &amp; Climate Assessments of Landscape Management Zones (LMZs)</li> </ul> <p>Training &amp; Development</p> <p>Climate Action Network</p> <p>Wye Adapt to Climate Change? (WACC) Programme - extension</p>
<p><b>People</b></p> <p>PR, comms &amp; Social Media</p> <p>Promotion &amp; Events</p> <p>Website update &amp; review</p> <p>Volunteers</p>

**Wye Valley National Landscape Work Programme 2026-27 outline priorities & projects**

Young Adventurers

Training & Development of LPA staff & Cllrs including s85 Training

Governance, including Joint Advisory Committee & National Landscape Partnership (inc. training, Tour & Seminar)

Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) [Wales only]

Farm Clusters

Wye Valley National Landscape Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF)

Local Authority & partner liaison

Local, Regional & National partnerships, collaborations & liaison,

- including National Landscapes Association and Tirweddau Cymru Landscapes Wales

Diversity & engagement

**Place**

Management Plan Review

- Climate Action Plan
- SEA, HRA
- State of the National Landscape Report
- Public Consultation Draft

Lower Wye Track & Trails Steering Group & Action Plan delivery

Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places (SLSP) [Wales only]

Access for All & route enhancements

- Cleddon Falls & Jubilee Walk
- Chepstow Park Wood Access improvements
- Willow Walk launch
- Wye Valley Walk including Piercefield Walk & Wyesham River Bank
- Bridges (large & small)
- Trellech Virtuous Well
- 65 & 69 Bus Routes/Walks

Dark skies

Fixed Point Photos

Undergrounding (low voltage lines)

Planning & Development Control

- Planning applications
- Local Plan reviews
- Position Statements on Tranquillity, Setting & Cultural Capital
- Land use Framework

Cultural heritage projects - Overlooking the Wye legacy & Offa's Dyke Collaboratory

Landscape Connections Bid

PR, communications & outreach activities

Building PR content (inc. photos & videos)

Wye Valley River Festival

Funding, resource management & Monitoring

Work placements

## **Background**

The Wye Valley National Landscape Team consists of 11 staff (10.5 FTE) employed across 3 local authorities with one additional seconded member:-

- Wye Valley National Landscapes Manager
- Business Support Assistant
- Community Links Officer
- Development Officer
- Information Officer
- Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Officer
- Ffermio Bro Officer
- Lower Wye Project Officer
- Lower Wye Nature Recovery Officer
- Planning Officer (shared with Malvern Hills National Landscape)
- Wye Adapt to Climate Change? Programme Officer

The National Landscape Team are based at the AONB Office, Hadnock Road, Monmouth.