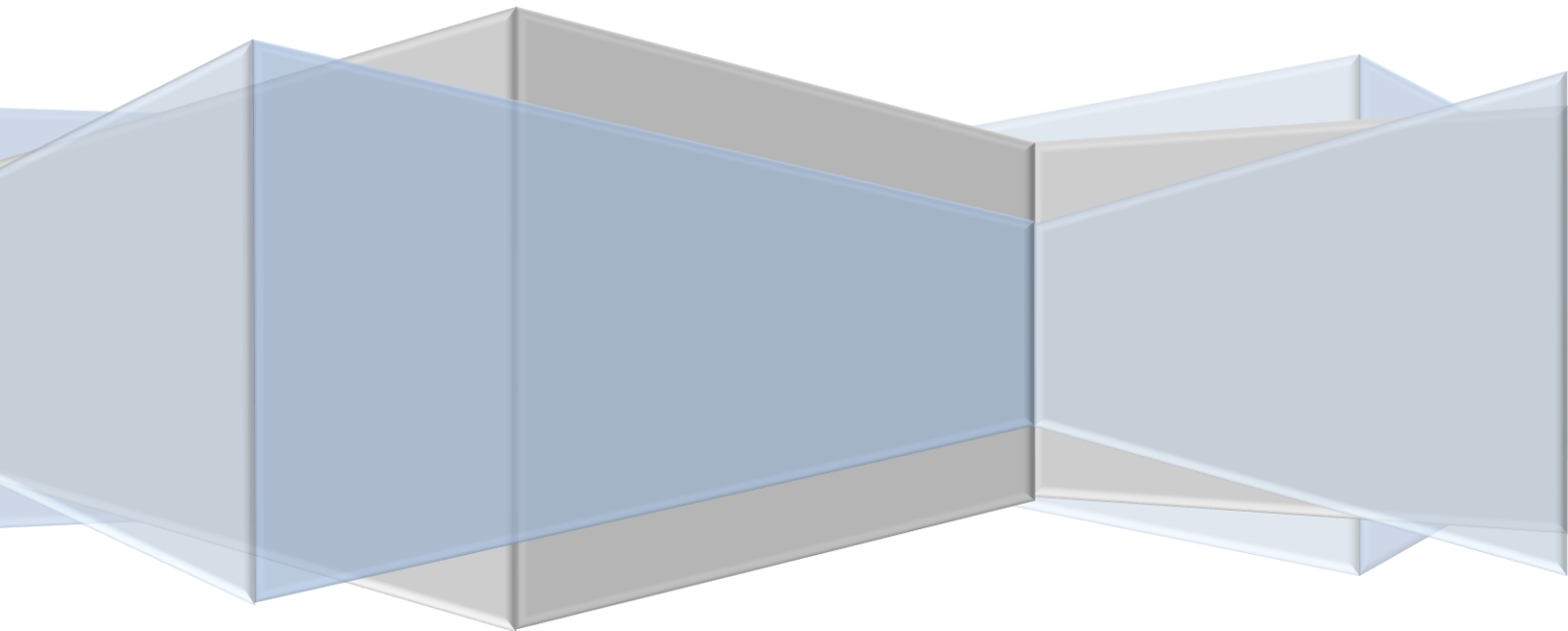


# Future Landscapes Wales

## Briefing Papers

### 20<sup>th</sup> June 2016



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# A VISION FOR THE LANDSCAPES OF WALES

## INTRODUCTION

Landscapes matter to people. The intrinsic link between people and place forms an important component of our well-being, Landscapes in all their forms (rural, urban, coastal, industrial, designated and non-designated) shape our feelings and identity as individuals, as communities and as a nation.

Wales' landscapes are hugely important and valuable; culturally, socially, environmentally and economically. Our landscapes allows us to understand our past; they inform our present and help express our collective hopes for the future. Unlocking the full potential of all landscapes in Wales, will therefore contribute to the quality of public life, the nation's well-being and help to adapt and respond to contemporary and future challenges. Realising the benefits of resilient landscapes involves the sustainable management of their distinctive qualities; the combined value of which is greater than their individually identifiable values.

## DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES

Our designated landscapes, the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks, contribute to the nation's rich diversity, identity and have a vital role to play in the future social, economic and environmental prosperity of Wales.

National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are acknowledged and cherished as important national assets due to their unique combination of distinctive qualities. However, there is an agreed understanding both within and beyond designated landscapes that recent legislative changes provide a platform for these areas to deliver even more; working beyond their traditional remits and boundaries to enhance these distinctive qualities and deliver long-term environmental, social and economic well-being benefits for Wales.

Successive reports acknowledge that designated landscapes provide a pivotal role in Wales. Their designation fosters a distinct management approach that safeguards natural and cultural resources while delivering long-term, well-being benefits, such as prosperity, health and equality. The ethos and management characteristics of the designated landscapes are potential exemplars of how localised involvement, and collaboration can be developed around integrated environmental, cultural and well-being priorities. Through national and local leadership such an approach should be replicated more widely beyond the boundaries of existing designated landscapes to benefit the whole of Wales.

## VISION

**Wales as a nation values its landscapes for what they provide for the people of Wales and elsewhere. The designated landscapes of Wales deliver both within and beyond their boundaries to safeguard their natural and cultural resources and deliver the maximum well-being benefits for present and future generations whilst enhancing the very qualities that make them both distinctive and cherished.**

## PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGING DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES

New ways of working will need to be adopted to unlock the full potential of designated landscapes if they are to deliver long-term well-being benefits for Wales. This requires a means of coordinating collective effort, underpinned by the following principles that respect and strengthen the relationship between people and place and in turn, lead to better shared outcomes.

- Well-being and the sustainable management of natural and cultural resources underpin all outcomes,
- Sense of place and community resilience is strengthened by an integrated approach to policy and implementation,
- Locally accountable management of the Designated Landscapes strengthens their ownership and management,
- Clarity of purposes of the Designated Landscapes guides outcomes,
- Dedicated bodies for the management of the Designated Landscapes coordinate delivery and provide accountability,
- Inclusiveness and engagement inform priorities, develop aspirations and improves understanding,
- Communicating the intrinsic value of Designated Landscapes promotes long term appreciation of their worth,
- Distinctiveness and cultural values are unique and unreplaceable which are to be managed for the benefit of future generations,
- Designated landscapes will act as hubs working collectively and beyond their boundaries, to improve effectiveness and the benefits they provide to society.

These principles can be equally applicable to non-designated landscapes in Wales, provided those areas are able to take ownership of such an approach.

## VISION AND PRINCIPLES: SUPPORTING STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

The vision and principles have been developed and adopted to provide Wales, its landscapes and communities with stronger outcomes which contribute to and underpin the delivery of National priorities:

1. **Principles of Sustainable Management:** Long term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration and Involvement.
2. **Well-being Goals:** Prosperous, Resilient, Healthier, More equal, Cohesive communities, Vibrant culture and Globally responsible.
3. **Sustainable Management of Natural Resources:** Adaptive management, Collaboration and engagement, Evidence, Long-term, Multiple benefits, Public participation, Scale, Preventative action and Building resilience.
4. **Sustainable Management of Natural Resources:** Carbon stores, Maintaining productive capacity, Reduce risk of flooding, Improve health & equity, Quality & availability of water, Quality and connectivity of habitats and Retain the distinctiveness of our places and historic landscapes.

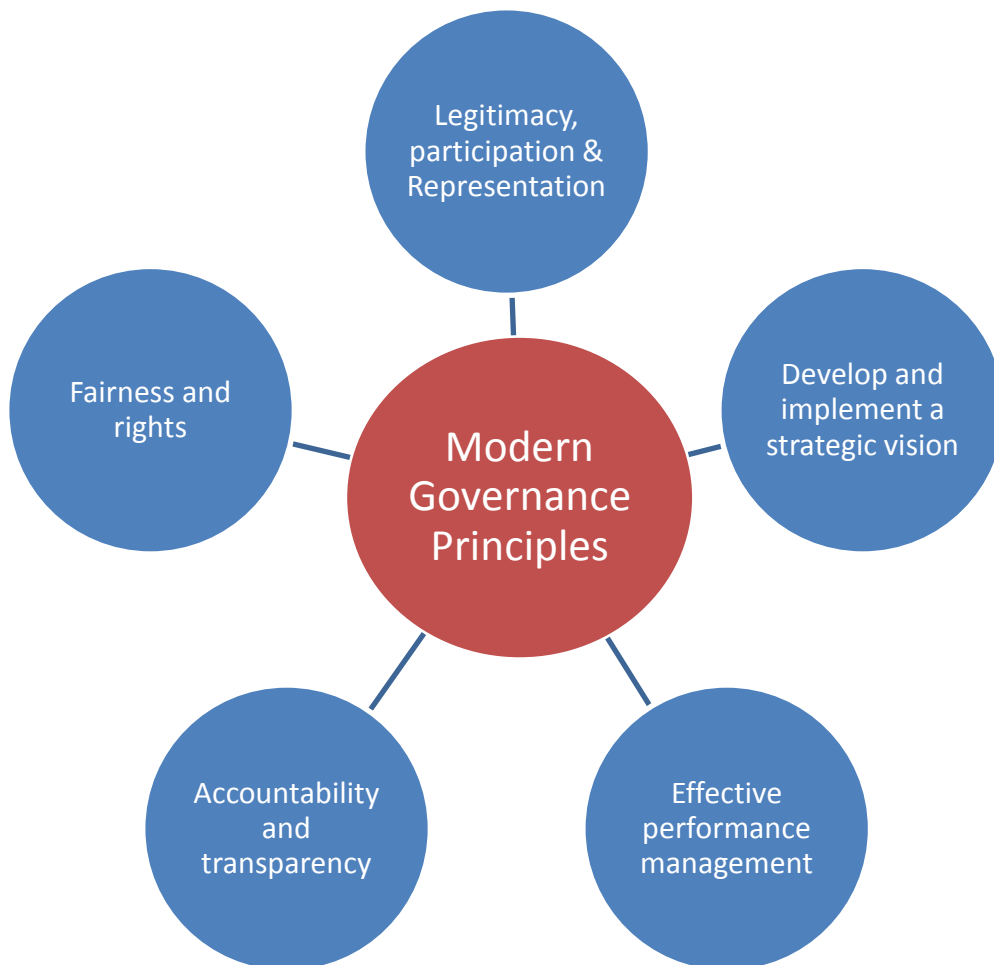
## GOVERNANCE OF DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES

The proposed Vision for Designated Landscapes includes the following *Principles for Managing Designated Landscapes*, which impact on Governance:

- Locally accountable management of Designated Landscapes strengthens their ownership and management;
- Clarity of purpose of the Designated Landscapes guides outcomes;
- Dedicated bodies for the management of the Designated Landscapes coordinate delivery and provide accountability;
- Inclusiveness and engagement inform priorities, develop aspirations and improves understanding.

To evaluate the Governance of Designated Landscapes and any proposed changes we have developed **Principles of Good Governance - Welsh Designated Landscapes**, which are based on the IUCN Principles for Effective Governance, Principles of Natural Resource Management outlined in the Environment Act (Wales) 2016 and the Well-being Goals included in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. These focus on five areas:

- Legitimacy, Participation and Voice;
- Develop and implement a Strategic Vision;
- Effective performance management;
- Accountability and transparency;
- Fairness and rights.



## **Current Governance Models**

Initially we have assessed current models of governance for Designated Landscapes, along with management options for other designated and non-designated sites. The following outlines the main strengths and weaknesses:

### **National Parks**

#### **Strengths**

- A strong governance structure exists, which is clear for all to see;
- Presence of both elected members and expert individuals provides a balance between legitimacy, participation and voice (on both a local and national basis). All need to meet standards outlined in Code of Conduct;
- Consistent approach across all National Parks (with some local variation);
- National Park Management Plan provides a clear strategic vision;
- Requirements for audit of both finance and performance;
- Meetings held in public, with audit and performance reports also in public;
- Clear commitment to fairness and rights through equality plans and other requirements.

#### **Weaknesses**

- Issues relating to Direct Elections not resolved;
- Not all tiers of democracy represented, i.e. Community Councils not represented;
- Regulatory requirements could be considered excessive and expensive;
- S.62 requirement is weak and many stakeholders ignore their responsibilities;
- Key stakeholders such as land-owners and business owners not represented on decision making body (although there is a route for them to be represented via the appointments process).

### **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)**

It is harder to evaluate the Governance structure of AONBs as they are not executive bodies. The host local authorities adopt different partnership models. An assessment of the Governance of AONBs suggests that they operate in a different way to National Park Authorities due to the nature and scale of their responsibilities and areas, therefore many of the governance principles are met through the AONB partnerships and/or their constituent authorities.

#### **Strengths**

- Clear democratic control providing legitimacy, with a Code of Conduct for elected members;
- Participation by a wide range of experts, in an advisory capacity and meeting in public;
- Management Plan provides clear strategic vision;
- Their inclusion in the Local Authority governance framework provides a cost effective framework.

#### **Weaknesses**

- Decision may be restricted to Local Authority Members (often Cabinet members), with other expert and representative groups restricted to an advisory role;
- There is no current provision for representative by the national interest;
- Governance and funding is dependent on decisions of the Local Authority or Local Authorities;
- S.85 requirement is weak and many stakeholders ignore their responsibilities;
- There is a lack of transparency on costs, performance and fairness as relevant documentation relates to Local Authorities, with no requirement of a public audit of the AONB.

## **Other Types of Designation (e.g. World Heritage Sites, Biosphere)**

There is no one model for managing such sites, however, based on examples such as the Llangollen Canal and Froncysyllte Aqueduct World Heritage Site and information available on the Dyfi Biosphere we make the following comments:

### **Strengths**

- Flexible governance structure;
- Opportunity to include expert views;
- Low cost model as governance structure is based on requirements of host;

### **Weaknesses**

- Governance is based on third party requirements (i.e. the designating body, or host body);
- Little or no accountability to residents of designated area, with limited opportunity to influence decision making;
- Limited requirement for public information, e.g. availability of accounts.

## **Charitable Trusts**

While there are no examples of Charitable Trusts managing designated landscapes in Wales, we can assess how the governance requirements of Charitable Trusts can be applied to the management of designated landscapes.

### **Strengths**

- Membership model, with a requirement to submit Annual Report and Accounts to Charity Commission;
- A Code of Conduct for Trustees.

### **Weaknesses**

- No public accountability, with the public's ability to influence based on paying a membership fee;
- Where publically funded, additional governance requirements would need to be set by Government.

Our assessment indicates that the current models for governing National Parks and AONBs are fit for purpose. However, they could be strengthened by considering the following issues.

## **Issues to consider**

### **NPA membership**

Welsh Government to work with Designated Landscapes, NRW, WLGA and other experts to evaluate and consider the impact of following options:

- Direct elections to replace Local Authority members;
- If direct elections are not adopted, consider appointment of representatives of Town and Community Council;
- Restricting political balance rules to wards either wholly or partly within the National Park (this will be particularly important if Local Government is reorganised into fewer larger Councils); and
- Feasibility of appointments to represent land owners and business owners sectors within the National Park.

## **AONB Membership**

Welsh Government to work with Designated Landscapes, NRW, WLGA and other experts to evaluate and consider the impact of the following options:

- Providing opportunities for expert members to make decisions as well as advise; and
- The inclusion of individuals to represent the national interest.

## **Joint Working**

To improve joint working consideration should be given to asking the Designated Landscapes to:

- develop a plan of how to share resources, including staff.
- consider options for developing regional models of shared governance.
- consider ways of working together along the model of National Parks Wales.

## **Strengthening the Management Plan**

Both NPAs and AONBs struggle to get all stakeholders to engage with the process of developing the Management Plan and to take account of the Management Plan once agreed. Consideration needs to be given to:

- sharing good practice on how to engage with a wide range of stakeholders when developing a Management Plan;
- amend s62 / s85 legislation to strengthen the requirement of all stakeholders to take account of the Management Plan.

## **Accountability and Transparency**

Require AONBs to publish an Annual Report and Accounts highlighting performance and expenditure in relation to the AONB, set within a clear audit and reporting framework.

## **Engagement**

All Designated Landscapes to adopt the National Principles for Public Engagement and work together to provide guidance on how to improve engagement in designated landscapes.

## **New Designation**

The Welsh Government and NRW should adopt the Principles of Good Governance - Welsh Designated Landscapes as part of the basis of evaluating the effectiveness of any new designated landscapes. These Principles could also be used to evaluate any proposed changes to their Governance that the Designated Landscapes may wish to propose.



## INNOVATION IN RESOURCING

### GOAL

Resilient Landscapes with resilient services - Nation to recognise the value of protected landscapes and the contribution they make to Wales, UK and wider world.

Provide rigour and challenge to current thinking on the future of landscapes in Wales. Consider the recommendations of the Marsden Report (including any new and innovative thinking) and advise on a way forward.

### REALITY

#### SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT

The sustainable management of the distinctive landscapes of Wales's National Parks and AONBs will enable their natural and cultural resources to be conserved and enhanced for future generation. Successful innovation and resourcing of sustainable land management needs:

- the natural and cultural resources and distinctive qualities to be recognised through consensus
- Landowners and land managers to work collaboratively at a landscape scale

Public, private and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector resources should all allow communities to shape land-use in a way that respects local traditions and the sense of place. However, there is no single or simple solution to resourcing and there are a number of challenges to innovation:

- the short-termism of much public and project funding
- burdensome bureaucracy
- private investment needs better linking to positive change
- stakeholders can have wide ranging and sometime conflicting interests
- 3rd sector resources, especially single issue focused, need more effective distribution at a landscape scale
- Some AONB units do not have the 'critical mass' to facilitate collaboration or invest in winning additional resources

There are plenty of opportunities for viable land management enterprises; those businesses that nurture what makes a place special, and provide for greater well-being, will ensure a more prosperous and cohesive community. Influencing the next Rural Development Programme (RDP) will also help achieve this. Charities and legacies are often already directed towards positive land management, but sharing that good practice and multiplying those benefits will enable more efficient and effective delivery on a wider scale.

#### DEDICATED / EXECUTIVE BODY – PUBLIC FUNDING

We have considered the different delivery and resourcing models for landscape scale collaboration in domestic and internationally important landscapes. Very few models receive either very little public funding (e.g. Scottish National Scenic Areas) or none at all (e.g. Germany's Landschaftsschutzgebiet). The vast majority of models had:

- an organisation responsible for delivering work on the ground or providing a co-ordination role – be it a government department (e.g. National Parks in Iceland) or a multi sector partnerships (e.g. French Regional Natural Parks);
- a substantial amount of public funding as a proportion of overall resourcing along with some of the different sources as outlined below (see Options).

A successfully resourced protected landscape has stakeholders that believe it can deliver for them and with them whilst also delivering its agreed collective mission. The task for the protected landscape organisation is to facilitate collaboration and delivery of the agreed management, whilst avoiding any disenfranchised stakeholders from acting in conflict with the collective mission.

## GOVERNANCE

Consideration of governance arrangements of designated landscapes will affect their resourcing; key points include:

- Audits – The number of internal and external audits undertaken in relation to National Park Authorities is disproportionate to the size of organisation.
- Costs of *status quo* – staying with current governance arrangements will have cost implications going forward
- Efficiency – Whatever executive body model is responsible for the delivery of policy and services, its administration and costs must be streamlined and proportional to delivery
- Sharing learning from good and bad practice – arrangements should enable any learning from good and bad practice to be shared and implemented, through Protected Landscape and other networks

## OPTIONS (see Table 1)

**RDP & Agri-environment schemes** - Major source of funding for land management dependant on criteria set by Europe and Welsh Government. Often requires working with partners in receipt of agri-environment payments on a contract basis. Need to influence outcomes and measures in next round (2020+).

**Collaboration / partnerships** - provides opportunities to reduce overheads &/or provide additional capacity to deliver projects. It also engenders greater 'buy-in' and ownership of shared objectives and outcomes.

**Volunteering** - Volunteering has one of the highest returns on investment and provides a resource multiplier significantly higher than the investment involved. Whilst core funding is required to provide management, recruitment and support, volunteers can reduce cash and staff costs on both small and large scale projects.

**Business Sponsorship** - There are examples of local initiatives with individual suppliers which sponsor services or projects. National Parks Partnerships is a new venture developed solely by UK National Parks for their own purposes.

**Charitable funding / trusts** - Charitable trusts can attract additional funding streams not available to Government bodies. Whilst providing an additional source of funding, managing a trust requires additional administration resource and will remain dependent on the public or other funding providers for financial support. Existing charities, such as the National Trust, Wildlife Trusts and RSPB already channel funds into positive land management.

**Grant funding – e.g. Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)** - An existing source requiring human capacity to prepare bids, seek and develop collaborative partnerships and deliver specific projects. HLF funding is short term (<5 years) and not a sustainable financial model in itself.

**Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)** - A valuable and flexible source of Government project funding which Protected Landscape organisations use with significant leverage to facilitate and support community based schemes. Requires staff resources and finance to promote, administer and monitor the scheme

**Visitor Giving / payback** - An additional source of income usually focused on specific projects; useful source of funds but with limitations due the specific project focus and longer-term sustainability.

**Legacy funding** - A useful source of funding though usually targeted at specific projects. Some of the legacy funding could be used to cover administrative work, but the majority of legacy funding is

used to deliver projects. The Community Foundation in Wales provides a model/vehicle for either individual protected landscapes or a collective fund.

**Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES)** -Requires a landowner and a beneficiary (who is the investor) and needs to meet the 7 principles of PES. Requires development, but may be a potential source of income in the longer term.

**Tourism / Bed tax** - Common in other countries, but adds an additional financial burden on local businesses that may affect the popularity/competitiveness of an area as a tourism destination; changes in tax legislation are also required.

## **WILL**

Future Landscapes Wales stakeholders will need to:

### **Short term:**

- Continue to pursue all the existing resourcing opportunities [PL bodies & partners]
- Continue to invest in collaboration, innovation, efficiencies and sharing good practice [PL bodies & partners]
- Establish more effective ways to share good (& bad) practice between protected landscape bodies and other stakeholders [PL bodies & partners]
- Develop the arguments and strategy to challenge the short-term nature of grant funding [PL bodies & partners with WG and funding bodies]
- investigate charitable and legacy funding opportunities with the Community Foundation in Wales [CFW]
- negotiate to ensure AONB Partnerships are adequately resourced to achieve their functions [WG & NRW]

### **Medium term:**

- Build a consensus to lobby on the direction and measures for RDP 2020+ [PL bodies & partners, especially CLA, FUW, NFU, NRW, WG]
- monitor the effectiveness of the National Parks Partnership [NPs]
- negotiate reduced burdensome bureaucracy for National Parks [NPAs, WG, Audit Office]
- Continue to pursue all the existing resourcing opportunities [PL bodies & partners]
- Continue to invest in collaboration, innovation, efficiencies and sharing good practice [PL bodies & partners]

### **Long term:**

- Secure appropriate measures in RDP 2020+ for sustainable land management in protected landscapes [WG]
- Continue to invest in collaboration, innovation, efficiencies and sharing good practice [PL bodies & partners]

**Table 1- Future Landscapes Wales - Innovation in Resourcing - Options matrix**

<b><u>Funding Resources – Short (S), Medium (M) and Long (L) term</u></b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>L</b>
<b>Sustainable Land Management</b>			
Influencing / securing positive land management	✓	✓	✓
Rural Development Programme (RDP), Agri-Environment & LEADER	✓	✓	✓
Collaboration / Partnerships	✓	✓	✓
Volunteering	✓	✓	✓
Business Sponsorship – funding packages, sponsorship	✓	✓	?
Charitable Funding / trusts	✓	✓	?
Corporate Social Responsibility	✓	✓	?
Grant funding, e.g. HLF	✓	✓	?
SDF	✓	✓	
Visitor Giving / Visitor Payback		✓	
Legacy Funding		✓	
Payment for Ecosystem Services			✓
<b>Dedicated / Executive body</b>			
Collaboration / Partnerships	✓	✓	✓
Central Government	✓	✓	✓
Efficiencies	✓	✓	✓
Commercialisation of services		✓	✓

## CATALYSTS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

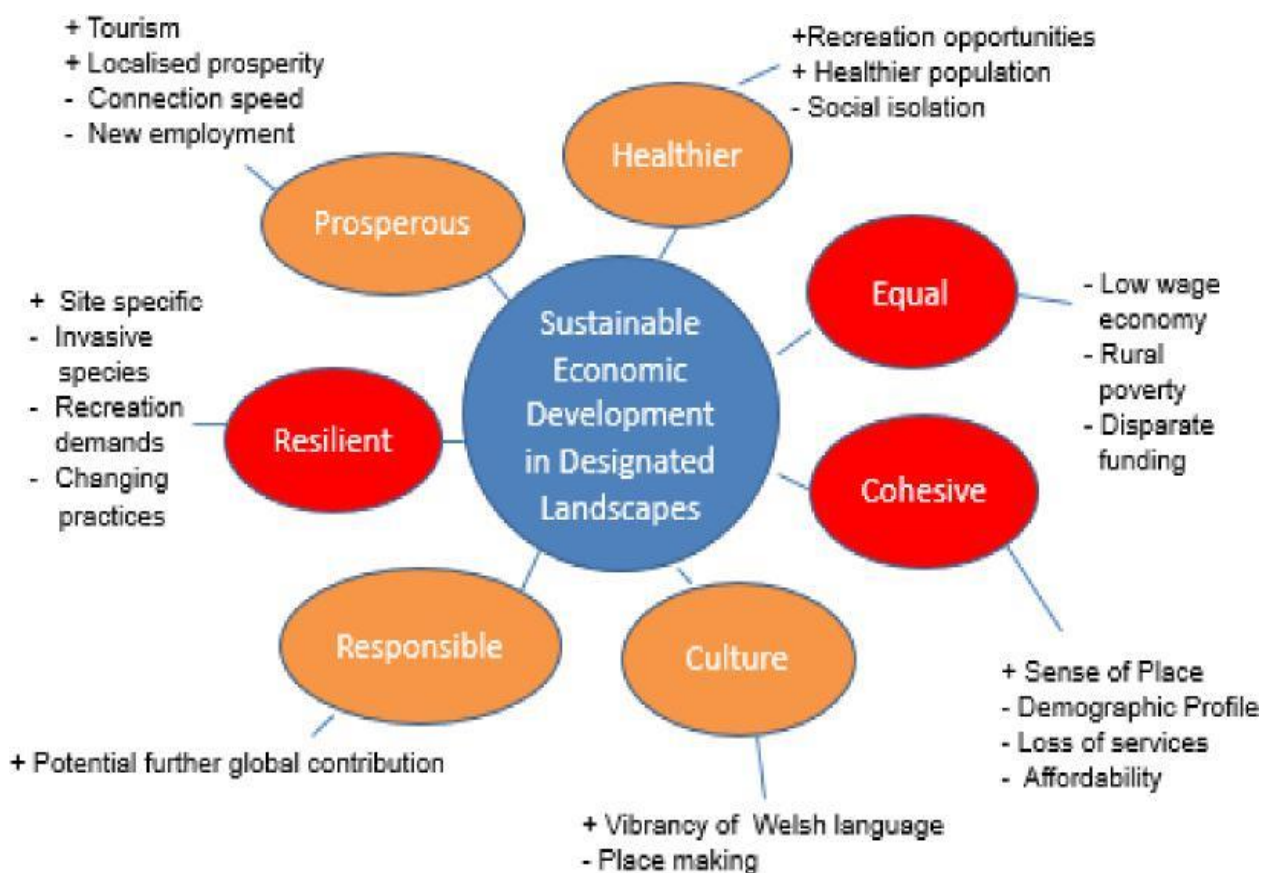
### Goal: Specific outcomes to be achieved

If Designated Landscapes (DL's) are to successfully act as catalysts for sustainable economic development, Communities will be inspired, empowered and supported to:

- Develop their own vision and **long term** goals for the future
- **Collaborate** across the Community and with all stakeholders to develop the skills needed to generate wealth and employment
- **Involve** all sections of the Community develop an **integrated** approach that focuses on the needs of current and future generations
- **Prevent** further rural depopulation by creating opportunities for young people to stay in and return to their Community
- Sustain natural resources and the environment for the quality of life and well-being of **future generations**
- Define how we will know when this has been achieved

### Reality: Where we are now

Considering through a well-being lens (in very broad brush, Red/Amber/Green colour coded), taking examples from designated landscape management plans as a starting point:



## Options:

### **Place Planning**

#### ***Meeting the need for innovative, place based collaboration that address economic and environmental challenges (Marsden)***

- The concept of Place Planning is an acknowledgment that resources and needs differ significantly from area to area. Communities are usually defined by local scale geography
- Place Plans can represent a cultural shift, enabling appropriate development that supports national, local and community objectives for wellbeing.
- The idea is to empower communities to enhance their influence over development sites, local distinctiveness, new green economy ideas and community infrastructure.
- This will be a community-led approach characterised by greater collaboration between authorities and communities, a better understanding of community needs and responsive delivery.

### **Green Growth**

#### ***Helping communities to realise the potential of engaging with the Green Growth agenda***

- Marsden recommends landscape authorities should “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”.
- Need to better understand key elements of work already on going to promote green growth in Wales and how designated landscapes can positively engage in the agenda, including:
  - i. Leverage for green growth projects through the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)
  - ii. Development of local initiatives including the potential for place based agri-environmental schemes
  - iii. Maximise the benefits of the DL / National Park brand
  - iv. Sharing of existing best practice such as developing:
    - \* Local food supply chains
    - \* Community based renewable energy schemes

### **Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES)**

#### ***Incentives for sustainable management of natural resources***

- Local economic opportunities for land managers to benefit from work that maintains and enhances nature's life support services, such as carbon sequestration or upland water storage, and for potential buyers to meet various strategic and operational aims by purchasing them.
- Wales' designated landscapes deliver a complex array of ecosystem services. Bundles of these services may be considered together for investors in natural capital. Public funding will be required to instigate these investments and brokers are also needed. It is an advantage that the DL's have a good understanding of ecosystems and the services they provide locally, and also of the land managers who could benefit from these investments.
- Development of place-specific agri-environment schemes responding to local needs rather than generic pan Wales schemes. This could be by adaptation of the “Glastir” scheme,

operated at local level by DLs or NPAs with a flexibility that would enable focusing on specific ecosystem needs.

## **Tourism**

### ***How communities and the natural environment can better benefit from tourism***

- Focus on engaging with tourism providers to identify how they can contribute to sustain the natural assets on which their businesses rely through:
  - i. Green apprenticeships
  - ii. Visitor payback
  - iii. Adventure tourism
  - iv. Contribution to green infrastructure (e.g. cycle paths and bridleways) and promotional improvements.
- Seek greater uptake of alternative markets such as Geoparks, Dark Skies to make the most of green and heritage tourism.
- Facilitate engagement between local businesses, local authorities, Visit Wales and third sector groups within and outside of the boundaries to better understand demand.

## **Will**

A detailed action plan has been prepared identifying what, when in terms of short, medium and long term and who. A detailed version is appended but in brief it has been broken into 6 key areas:

1. Statutory Purpose
2. Governance
3. Measuring success
4. Place Plans
5. Green Growth
6. Payment for Ecosystems Services (PES)