



Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru Countryside Council for Wales

National Assembly for Wales Sustainability Committee

Scrutiny of Assembly Government Sponsored Bodies: Countryside Council for Wales

11th February 2010

The Countryside Council for Wales is an Assembly Government Sponsored Body (AGSB), established as Wales' Nature Conservancy Council under the Environmental Protection Act 1990¹, which brought together the Nature Conservancy Council and the Countryside Commission into a single organisation in Wales. CCW has advisory and executive functions, providing advice, grounded in science, to Government and others on terrestrial and marine nature conservation, enhancement and management of the environment for the benefit of present and future generations, in the context of sustainable development. CCW has a range of statutory and non statutory functions/ duties set out in European, UK and Welsh legislation and policy. Whilst our focus is on environmental legislation, now largely emanating from Europe, our strategic agenda is guided by the priorities identified by the Welsh Assembly Government in One Wales: A Progressive Agenda for the Government of Wales 2007-2011², within the overall framework of the Sustainable Development Scheme³. Integrating social, economic and environmental objectives is fundamental to our work.

Evidence⁴ tells us that a healthy environment and ecosystems are fundamental to our existence, to supporting social and economic development and quality of life. Our land and sea are finite resources with many competing uses. The pressures on our environment are increasing, leading to conflict and competition as tourists, farmers, rural residents and conservationists all vie for space. Added to these existing pressures, addressing climate change means that we need to find room for renewable energy development, water storage and managed retreat. Meanwhile recreational pressures steadily grow along with the need to find land for housing and transport infrastructure. In delivering its advisory and executive functions, CCW works at local, regional and national levels with tiers of

¹ Part 7 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990: Nature Conservation in Great Britain and Countryside Matters in Wales:

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1990/Ukpga_19900043_en_1.htm

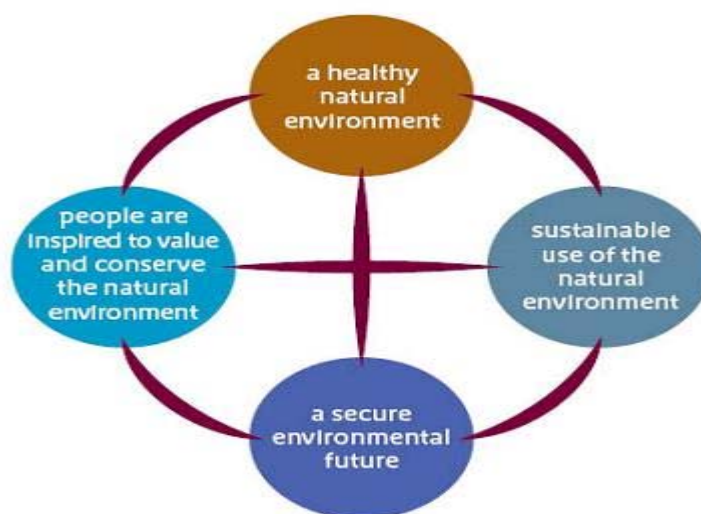
² One Wales: A Progressive Agenda for the Government of Wales (27th June 2007):

<http://wales.gov.uk/strategy/strategies/onewales/onewalese.pdf?lang=en>

³ The Sustainable development Duty, as set out in Section 79 of the Government of Wales Act 2006: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2006/ukpga_20060032_en_6#pt2-pb5-11g79

⁴ Evidence e.g. The Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change (2006): <http://www.occ.gov.uk/activities/stern.htm>; The Economics of Ecosystems & Biodiversity (TEEB): <http://www.teebweb.org>; and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005): <http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/About.aspx#>

Government, the public, and partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors, to ensure that environmental considerations are taken into account in policy and planning.



1. CCW performance 2007-2011

For the purpose of the Sustainability Committee's scrutiny of CCW, this paper provides an overview of CCW delivery on its Remit Letter Targets 2009-2010, Wales Environment Strategy actions⁵, the Sustainable Development Scheme⁶, and reducing our Carbon Emissions. The information is provided under key headings and focuses in particular on performance during the last year so that it is relevant. Further information can be provided upon request.

1.1 CCW structure

CCW's Council comprises 12 members, including the Chair. Council Members are accountable, individually and collectively, to the Welsh Assembly Government and National Assembly for Wales. The Council is responsible for setting organisational policy and ensuring delivery of its duties within the statutory, policy and financial framework. Members are accountable to the National Assembly for Wales, users of services, individual citizens and staff, for the activities of Council, its stewardship of public funds and the extent to which key performance targets and objectives are met. Meetings are open to members of the public and details of meetings are available on our website.

⁵ Wales Environment Strategy:

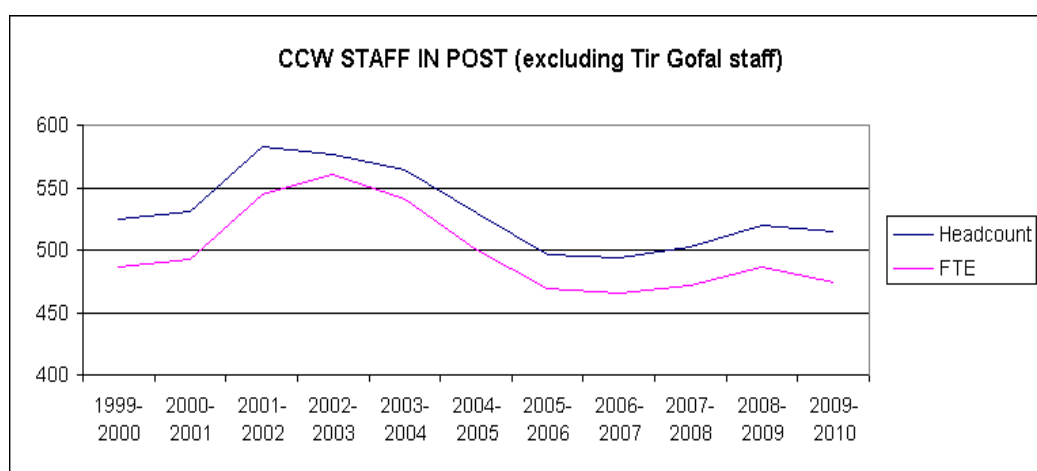
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/epq/envstratforwales/?lang=en>

⁶ Sustainable development Scheme, One Wales, One Planet (2009):

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/sustainabledevelopment/publications/onewalesoneplanet/?lang=en>

1.2 CCW currently has 515 members of staff. The organisation consists of Science, Policy and Corporate Services Directorates, and three regions, North, West, and South and East. CCW comprises staff with expertise in areas including marine and terrestrial science, land use, planning, climate change, access and rights of way, legislative and policy transposition and implementation.

	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
Headcount	525	531	583	576	564	530	496	494	503	520	515
FTE	487	493	544	560	541	500	469	466	472	486	474



1.3 Performance against Remit Letters: May 2007- present day

In addition to our statutory and non statutory duties, CCW delivers against targets, set by the Welsh Assembly Government in annual Remit letters. CCW has achieved all of the remit letter targets from 2007 to date, within timescale and budget, as acknowledged in Citizen Centred Governance Review of CCW (2009) (paragraph 2.3). CCW has regular meetings with the Minister and Officials from the Department for Environment, Sustainability and Housing, and internal and external reporting mechanisms are in place, to ensure that progress is monitored, evaluated and reported throughout the year.

1.4 Outcome Based Reporting

CCW is currently finalising the development of an Outcome Based Reporting System, consistent with the strategic outcome framework and direction of the Welsh Assembly Government, under themes including Biodiversity, Marine, Access and recreation, Ecosystems, and internal efficiency and improvement. CCW already monitors performance and has mechanisms in place to report to the Welsh Assembly Government on delivery. CCW also undertakes scientific research, monitoring and evaluation to assess its work to protect and enhance the natural environment on land and sea. Examples include data for national

reporting to the WAG, UK Government and European Commission on Habitats Directive and other requirements, and reviews of planning casework advice to local planning authorities to assess outcomes.

1.5 New duties

CCW ensures that new statutory and non statutory duties are taken into account in its corporate and business planning process by undertaking an analysis exercise on an annual basis. This informs priorities for delivery and resource requirements in terms of staff and funding for implementation. As is evident from the requirements for CCW advice in relation to legislation and policy implementation, an evidence based approach is required. CCW has many years of expertise in advising on implementation requirements of legislation, using robust science to inform our advice. Examples include the Habitats Directive, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and more recently, the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

1.6 Making the Connections

CCW fully supports the integrated model policy and public sector delivery as set out in *Making the Connections*, the Welsh Assembly Government's public sector reform programme, and welcomes the revised Sustainable Development Scheme, One Wales, One Planet (May 2009)⁷, which now establishes sustainable development as the central organising principle for the Welsh public sector. An integrated approach to policy and delivery is required to deliver sustainable development, taking account of social, economic and environmental considerations. As an Assembly Government Sponsored Public Body, CCW is fully engaged in Public Service Management Wales, and has a role to play in facilitating the shift towards a more integrated approach to delivery as outlined in *Making the Connections*⁸ and the wider Public Service Reform programme. CCW is committed to putting the citizen first in public service provision by making its services more responsive to its users, while balancing the need for efficiency.

1.7 A Citizen Centred Governance Review was undertaken as a joint initiative between the Welsh Assembly Government and CCW between February and April 2009, and was the first of such reviews involving an AGSB. The Review was part of the wider Governance in Wales Programme established in 2008 by the Welsh Assembly Government, and was a commitment in One Wales to 'review the governance of public service bodies in Wales to

⁷ The Sustainable Development Scheme of the Welsh Assembly Government, One Wales, One Planet (May 2009):
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/sustainabledevelopment/publications/onewalesoneplanet/?lang=en>

⁸ Making the Connections:
<http://wales.gov.uk/about/programmeforgovernment/strategy/makingtheconnections/;jsessionid=1LwjLMvGGmZj3C4KMrpjPbwvG4ppVVL8LJRrPyB1T1F071N9fOpW!-330498905?lang=en>

ensure their alignment with this improvement agenda'. CCW's work was reviewed against the core principles for citizen centred governance, namely:

- Putting the Citizen First
- Knowing who does what and why
- Engaging with others
- Living Public service values
- Fostering innovative delivery
- Being a Learning organisation
- Achieving value for money

1.8 Putting the Citizen First, Knowing who does what and why, Public Engagement

Examples of CCW's work in 'Putting the citizen first' and public engagement are included in Chapter 3 of the Report on the Citizen-Centred Governance Review of the CCW (June 2009), including community engagement and education work. In addition, CCW publishes details of its work, including research, on its website.

1.9 Living public service values: Being a value-driven organisation/ Nolan principles

Information on CCW's work in relation to Equality, Diversity and the Welsh Language are covered under Chapter 6 of the Report on the Citizen-Centred Governance Review of the CCW.

1.10 Working together as the Welsh Public Service

CCW's remit in relation to the terrestrial and marine and environment requires a partnership approach, with a wide range of stakeholders from the private, public and voluntary sectors, from local to European level. For example, working with landowners, the voluntary sector, local government, the private sector e.g. developers or Utilities Companies, the Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, our sister Agencies (Scottish Natural Heritage, Natural England, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee) and tiers of Government. Examples of and an assessment of CCW's partnership work are included in Chapter 5 of the Report on the Citizen-Centred Governance Review of the CCW, which found overwhelmingly that our advice is held in high regard by partners, and that working relationships are generally positive.

1.11 CCW interacts with the Assembly Government's policy frameworks at a national, regional and local level, with a focus on achieving environmental outcomes. The organisation's input is underpinned by its knowledge of the Welsh environment and experience of working at different geographic scales and with different partners and facilitated by the network of CCW offices throughout Wales. CCW's broad remit, its expertise, its experience of delivering with others and its legal powers to experiment and find new solutions, enable CCW to be a strong collaborator for Assembly Government and

other organisations such as the Third Sector, Local Authorities, National Parks, the private sector and AGSBs. Our partnership work, including interaction with national, regional and local policy frameworks, is also explored in more detail within this paper.

1.12 Value for Money

CCW continually works with partners to identify opportunities for shared service delivery and resource efficiencies, and has a good track record on delivering value for money. For example, the Wales Audit Office undertook a value for money study⁹ on public access to the countryside¹⁰, which demonstrated that provisions in the Countryside and Rights of way Act 2000 were implemented successfully and effectively in Wales, and at considerable lower cost than in England. Chapter 9 of the Report on the Citizen-Centred Governance Review focuses on CCW's work to achieve value for money, including greening measures. CCW has also been proactive in seeking efficiency savings in recent years, and made savings of £1 million during the last financial year. CCW will continue to make further efficiency savings by delivering:

- an annual Value for Money plan to reduce costs;
- the results of a Business Process Review to create greater efficiencies;
- the results of a strategic workforce plan to help match staff resource to external drivers and priority areas of work;
- a revised Accommodation Strategy to reduce the number of offices and therefore costs over the next four years;
- potential efficiency savings identified by staff in a organisation wide consultation exercise; and
- Continued carbon reductions and cash savings from CCW's environmental management systems.

1.13 The Report on the Citizen-Centred Governance Review of the CCW¹¹, published in June 2009, states that the evidence contained within it demonstrate that *'CCW is a well respected organisation, made of highly committed staff and acknowledged experts. The organisation is active in promoting partnerships, delivering on its remit letter and is engaged with national strategies.'* It highlights some examples of good practice under

⁹ Wales Audit Office Report on public access to the countryside (2006):
http://www.wao.gov.uk/assets/englishdocuments/WAO_Public_Acc_Eng_web.pdf

¹⁰ Further information on the Wales Audit office value for money study on public access to the countryside:
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/countrysidecoastalaccess/?lang=en>

¹¹ Report on the Citizen-Centred Governance Review of the CCW (June 2009):
<http://www.ccw.gov.uk/about-ccw/newsroom/latest-news/idoc.ashx?docid=fb5e972c-9491-48f9-9a70-4851686f6686&version=-1>

all of the core principles outlined above, and also includes some reflections for CCW's consideration.

1.14 CCW is currently developing a **Governance Review Action Plan** to address the issues identified in the review report. In reference to Reflection 5.28 of the report on the Governance review, CCW and the Welsh Assembly Government also held a workshop to consider improvements to working arrangements in October 2009, the outcomes of which will also inform the action plan. CCW is also considering the Hampton Principles¹² for better regulation, with the aim of achieving greater proportionality and appropriateness in relation to the delivery of our statutory duties.

1.15 Working with AGSB partners

CCW works closely with the Environment Agency Wales, Forestry Commission Wales at all levels, from on the ground delivery, to strategic matters such as engaging with national policy processes. CCW is working with the Environment Agency Wales (EAW) and Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) on a shared Evidence Plan, to avoid duplication in developing the evidence base for policy and legislation development and implementation. Quarterly meetings with the EAW, FCW and WAG have been reinstated to further support joint working to deliver key outcomes and efficiencies.

1.16 The UK Conservation Bodies

CCW works closely with its sister Conservation Bodies across the UK, both at a strategic level, primarily through the JNCC, and through direct engagement between specialist staff on specific work areas. This allows for greater collaboration in providing advice to the UK Government and EU, sharing research and data resources, and in identifying challenges and solutions for cross-border working.

1.17 Working with Local Government

CCW engages with individual local authorities in several ways, including our role in the planning system (Local Development Plans and Planning Casework), community planning (Community Strategies and Local Service Boards), access and rights of way, and grant aid. Our partnership with local government is covered in the Report on the Citizen-Centred Governance Review of the CCW. In relation to the planning system, for example, CCW has regular meetings with senior local authority staff and members to review and agree levels of service between CCW and the local planning authority and to identify future

¹² Information on the Hampton Review and Principles can be found at:
<http://www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/bre/inspection-enforcement/assessing-regulatory-system/page44042.html>

issues/anticipated major development requiring significant input from CCW. CCW also works closely with the WLGA, particularly the Environment and Regeneration Directorate.

2. Sustainable Development

Whilst there are no specific actions for CCW within the Sustainable Development Scheme, our remit has long been acknowledged by the Welsh Assembly Government as an integral part in achieving its vision for sustainable development. The basis of this vision is the integration of environmental management with economic and social development to enhance people's quality of life. This means safeguarding biodiversity, and the ecological functions of our environment to ensure continued and enhanced provision of ecosystem goods and services to people in Wales and beyond. The delivery of our advisory and executive functions contributes towards the following outcomes within the Sustainable Development Scheme:

- Living within environmental limits;
- Reducing our ecological footprint;
- Resilience to climate change (adaptation and mitigation);
- Achieving healthy, biologically diverse and productive ecosystems that are managed sustainably;
- A resilient and sustainable economy that is able to develop whilst stabilising then reducing its use of natural resources and reducing its contribution to climate change;
- Has a communities which are safe, sustainable, and attractive places for people to live and work, where people have access to services, and enjoy good health; and
- A fair, just and bilingual nation, in which citizens of all ages and backgrounds are empowered to determine their own lives as, shape their communities and achieve their full potential;

CCW is also on target to deliver level 3 of the sustainable procurement assessment framework.

2.1 Green Economy

As stated, evidence such as the Stern Review of the Economics of climate change and the global study of the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity (TEEB)¹³ confirm that natural capital is the ultimate source of economic prosperity i.e. clean air and water, healthy soil, and biodiversity. Research commissioned by the Valuing our Environment Partnership in 2001¹⁴ demonstrated that the management and use of the Welsh environment directly

¹³ The Global study of the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity:
<http://www.teebweb.org/>

¹⁴ Valuing Our Environment - Economic Impact of the Environment of Wales; 2003: National Trust, CCW, EA, RSPB, WTB, WDA, HLF: Further information available at:

contributes £6bn pa to Welsh GDP. CCW contributes to the green economy by undertaking its advisory and executive functions on terrestrial and marine nature conservation, enhancement and management, and access and recreation, for the benefit of present and future generations, in the context of sustainable development. CCW is proactive in working with partners across sectors and through local, regional and national frameworks to support sustainable economic development that takes account of environmental considerations. Some examples of our work include the following:

2.2 Working with Developers

CCW is working on an initiative to improve working arrangements with developers, regulators, planners and industry, to improve the sustainability of economic development proposals throughout Wales, in relation to CCW's core responsibilities around biodiversity, landscape, marine, and access. The objectives are to:

- Work to ensure that environmental issues and priorities are addressed in the implementation of regional/ local plans and strategies such as LDPs, health plans, spatial plan, local service boards and community strategies.
- Enable Local Authorities, government regulators, developers, business and industry to make decisions that comply with environmental legislation and contribute in a demonstrable way to sustainable development
- Ensure that CCW's advice on planning cases is consistent, transparent, efficient, effective and fair

CCW is currently working with the **British Wind Energy Association** to develop a Memorandum of Understanding.

2.3 The Cambrian Mountains Initiative

The Prince of Wales founded the Cambrian Mountain Initiative to promote rural enterprise and add value to local Welsh products and services. The partnership includes Ceredigion, Powys and Carmarthenshire local authorities, CCW and the Welsh Assembly Government. Detailed information about the Cambrian Mountains Initiative and CCW's role in its development and delivery has been provided to the Rural Affairs Sub Committee as part of its Inquiry into the Future of the Uplands in Wales 2009-2010.

2.4 The Heads of the Valleys Initiative

Through our secondment arrangement with the HOV Strategic Regeneration Area CCW continues to support the delivery of the Regeneration Programme. This includes supporting communities to engage in outdoor activities as a way of developing skills and confidence

http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-wales-valuing_our_environment-review-english.pdfhttp://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-wales-valuing_our_environment-review-english.pdf

and improving health as part of pre-employment routes, through programmes such as Cleaner Greener Communities and the Family Employment Initiative.

2.5 Valleys Regional Park

CCW is a partner in the Valleys Regional Park initiative, which aims to co-ordinate, activities related to the environment, tourism and heritage across the South Wales valleys. CCW has helped secure 20 million euros of ERDF and ESF funding for project implementation. This project is an example of the Making the Connections agenda in practice, with over 12 LA's, CCW, FCW, EAW and others working together and pooling resources to deliver a ore integrated approach. (The VRP area covers over 570 sq miles, over 1 million inhabitants (1/3 of the welsh population) and approximately 60% of all community first areas. The project places environmental quality at the heart of all regeneration projects and provides a clear strategic delivery mechanism for collaborative working.

2.6 Working with the Police to tackle wildlife crime

CCW is part of the Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime (PAW)¹⁵, a multi-agency body comprising representatives of the organisations involved in wildlife law enforcement in the UK. It provides opportunities for statutory and non-Government organisations to work together to combat wildlife crime, and its main objective is to promote the enforcement of wildlife conservation legislation, particularly through supporting the networks of Police Wildlife Crime Officers, HM Revenue and Customs officers and UK Border Agency officers. Three Police Officers are seconded to CCW to work on wildlife crime across Wales, such as illegal off-roading, and damage to protected species and sites.

2.7 Shared Services - Audit Services

The management of CCW's Internal Audit has been undertaken by Denbighshire County Council Audit Service since 2007. Other examples are included in the Report on the citizen-centred governance review of CCW (2009) and within this paper.

2.8 CCW Grant Aid

CCW is working with strategic grants partners to develop longer term partnership agreements, providing stability and focussing more clearly on joint environmental outcomes whilst sharing resources wherever possible. These partners range from Local Authorities to Wildlife Trusts to organisations with a more social remit such as Ground Work Trusts and the Black Environment Network. In total, we will be investing £6m into CCWs grant aid in 2010/11. The split in the grant budget is as follows:

¹⁵ Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/paw/>

Type of Grant	2010/11 £s million
GR1 (Local Authorities, National Parks, National Trails, non Local Authority Community Strategy Partnerships)	2.5
GR2 (Third Sector Strategic Grants Partners)	1.85
GR3 (Third sector small, fast track Regional/ HQ grants - with a £5K ceiling)	0.1
GR4 (Third Sector one year grants only with a £50K ceiling)	1.55
Total	6.0

3. Delivering via local, regional and national frameworks: Moving towards an Ecosystem Approach

Our natural heritage supplies direct economic benefits or ecosystem services, which are of major economic significance and essential to the survival of human societies. These ecosystem services include the provision of food, clean water, a stable climate, resources for energy and industry, flood alleviation, crop pollination, recreational opportunities and amenity. Taken together the ecosystem features which supply these services form our green infrastructure, made up of natural capital assets which are of fundamental value to human societies and irreplaceable by artificial alternatives.

3.1 In the past our environment supplied ecosystem services in such quantities that they were regarded as being free and infinitely renewable. As development pressure has increased, however, demand has started to outstrip the 'carrying capacity' of the natural environment to the point where the green infrastructure that provides ecosystem services is degraded, leading to the loss of ecosystem services, and in some cases even the collapse of ecosystems.

3.2 The United Nations 'Millennium Ecosystem Assessment'¹⁶ (2001) recognised the multiple benefits provided by ecological systems, and identified that policy and planning decisions should take account of ecosystems to deliver sustainable development. The ecosystem approach provides a framework to ensure integrated planning and management for environmental, social and economic well-being. CCW together with WAG is currently

¹⁶ Millennium Ecosystem Assessment: <http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/index.aspx>

participating in the DEFRA's Natural Environment Programme¹⁷ and ecosystem assessment, and is advising the Wales Environment Research Hub, which is currently producing the synthesis Wales chapter. This will help provide spatial evidence on the ecosystem services in Wales. CCW is also involved in the Welsh Assembly Government's Technical Project Group on Ecosystem Services, providing advice on the application of the ecosystem approach in relation to terrestrial and marine environments, and its integration with the policy framework in Wales. This work will also inform the development of the Welsh Assembly Government's Natural Environment Framework for Wales¹⁸. The aim is to develop an approach to local, regional and national scale planning that includes ecosystem assessment, and identifies the benefits that ecosystems provide to society.

3.3 Wales Spatial Plan

CCW is working with the Environment Agency, CADW, the Forestry Commission, the voluntary sector and the Rural Affairs and Department for Environment, Sustainability and Housing Technical Services division to identify environmental challenges and opportunities in each spatial plan area. CCW is working to take forward the Networked Environment Regions concept in the Wales spatial planning regions, using our own evidence, and applying the findings of the low carbon regions study. CCW is responsible for providing advice as a consultation body to the Spatial Plan area groups on **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** and as the appropriate body in relation to **Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)**. CCW has also undertaken a review of its **Outdoor Recreation Survey 2008** in each WSP area.

3.4 Local Development Plans and Community Strategies

CCW is a statutory consultee on Local Development Plans, and is also works with Local Authorities across Wales to deliver Wales Environment Strategy outcomes via the Community Planning Policy and delivery framework.

3.5 Planning

The main purpose of CCW's involvement in the planning system is to minimize the environmental impact of development, by directing it to the right place, or reducing unavoidable consequences. CCW is involved in the planning process at local, regional and national level, in its role as a statutory consultee. At a local level, CCW provides advice on local development plans, and individual development proposal cases, where appropriate. For example, CCW has a statutory duty to advise local planning authorities on European protected sites. Early CCW involvement is crucial, both at a strategic level and on

¹⁷ Further information on DEFRA's Natural Environment Programme can be found at: <http://www.ecosystems-services.org.uk/>

¹⁸ Refer to Written Cabinet Statement on Biodiversity, dated the 18th January 2010: <http://wales.gov.uk/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2010/100118bio/?lang=en>

individual cases. This requires close working relationships with local planning authorities and developers. At a regional level, CCW is a partner in delivering the Wales Spatial Plan, and at a national level, we provide advice to Government on planning legislation and policy and proposals.

3.6 Environmental Assessment

There are several kinds of statutory and non-statutory Environmental Assessment processes which are required by organisations delivering plans, programmes and/or projects. CCW acts as a statutory consultee and provides a range of guidance on four main statutory types of Environmental Assessment:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
- Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA)
- Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA)
- Review of Consents (RoC)

3.7 Land Use - Rural Development and Agri-environment

CCW is continuing to support the work that the Welsh Assembly Government is doing to review land management measures under Axis 2 of the Rural Development plan, the development of Glastir, and the Land Use and Climate Change Group with appropriate advice on ecosystem services and on landscape management. For example, CCW is undertaking a Wales-wide vulnerability assessment of climate change impacts on Welsh habitats, including marine, by March 2011. CCW is giving evidence to the Rural Development Sub Committee's Inquiry into Glastir on the 16th of February, and provides evidence to the Assembly and others on land use policy on a regular basis.

3.8 Climate Change - CCW's remit, and reducing our Emissions

Climate change is a major threat to our vision for the Welsh environment. Serious impacts are projected to arise from warming and acidification of our seas, erosion and inundation of coastal areas and changes in rainfall will impact on freshwaters. Climate change is expected to drive significant changes in the mix of wildlife and appearance of the landscape. Some impacts are already evident. CCW's work to support **sustainable management of land, water and soil and water** is important to climate change adaptation, for example through preserving natural carbon stores such as peatland, and reducing green house gas emissions from changes in land management or land use. CCW also provides advice to the Climate Change Commission in Wales.

3.9 Our framework for action focuses on where CCW can most effectively make a difference by focussing on those actions where we are best placed to act and where without our involvement they would be unlikely to be delivered. CCW has identified five key objectives

that provide a comprehensive framework for our action to address climate change. They are in order of importance:

- **Enhancing resilience**
Supporting the development of practical actions and policies that improve the environment's resilience to climate change;
- **Monitoring**
Monitor climate change and its impacts as they happen to inform action;
- **Projecting change**
Project future changes in climate and its environmental impacts to inform action;
- **Understanding and awareness**
Raise awareness of climate change, its impacts and potential responses among CCW staff, our partners and the wider public, to provide the impetus for action;
- **Reducing emissions**
Establish an integrated approach to reducing emissions from our own business, and facilitating others to do so.

Information on CCW's work to reduce its own Carbon footprint can be found in an Annex to this paper.

3.10 Water

CCW has been working with the Environment Agency to provide advice to Government, and engage in any processes that directly affect the management of the aquatic environment, such as implementation of the **Water Framework Directive**, and to promote greater responsible access and use of the environment, and to foster public stewardship and awareness of the value of water. Water policies are a key component in delivering the Wales environment strategy target on **designated sites**. CCW has provided advice based on robust evidence on designated sites affected by water based impacts, in particular diffuse pollution, physical damage and drainage, and to be proactive in supporting the development of measures that are practicable, achievable and demonstrate real improvements. CCW works with water companies in Wales (Severn Trent, Welsh Water and Dee Valley Water) to deliver their water resource management plans. CCW is also involved in the periodic reviews process and is a member of the Wales Water Forum.

4. Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

In 2002, the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity committed themselves to achieve a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level by 2010, as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth. The Stromstad meeting of the European Union held in September 2009 confirmed that the European Union would not meet its 2010 biodiversity target. National reports have demonstrated that biodiversity continues to be lost at an unprecedented rate. The Convention on Biological Diversity is now developing a new

Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2020, which will include a 2050 biodiversity vision, 2010 targets and sub-targets, and means of implementation and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

4.1 The Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing Jane Davidson AM, issued a Written Cabinet Statement on Biodiversity on the 18th of January 2010, outlining the Welsh Assembly Government's approach to achieving the outcomes for biodiversity in the Wales Environment Strategy, in support of the above. The statement confirms that Biodiversity enhancement and protection is a key part of the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to sustainable development and outlines the key areas of work where CCW is involved in delivery. The Cabinet Statement is included as an Annex to this paper.

4.2 CCW has a range of statutory and non statutory duties relating to biodiversity and nature conservation, and aims to protect and enhance the natural richness of the land, rivers, lakes and surrounding seas and their plant and animal life by, including:

- Continuing the implementation (through research, survey work and the preparation of management schemes) of Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs)
- Responsibility for notification of Wales' most important biological and geological areas - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) - which merit the benefits of this protection; monitoring the condition of such sites; and advising on activities affecting them and preventing damage to them.
- Continuing to survey the marine and terrestrial habitats to provide advice to tiers of Government and partners to inform policy and planning
- implementing management works (for example, woodland, water or sand dune management) and surveillance arrangements in Wales' 63 National Nature Reserves (NNRs) to ensure that their habitats and species are in good health;
- Undertaking an ecosystem assessment across Wales to inform policy and planning processes

4.3 CCW's Special Sites Project

Within the broader ecosystem approach and sustainability framework, CCW is working to achieve favourable condition of designated sites, in line with the targets outlined in the Wales Environment Strategy, European targets, and those of the convention on biological diversity. The Environment Strategy sets targets ('Outcome 21') for getting designated sites (SAC, SPA, Ramsar, SSSI and 'local sites') into favourable condition. Action on these targets is co-lead by CCW and WAG, with partnership inputs expected from a wide range of other organisations in the public, voluntary and private sectors. The Wales Biodiversity Partnership coordinates action, and a WBP subgroup chaired by the Welsh Assembly Government has been established to oversee delivery. CCW monitoring of SAC and SPA features shows that only 44% are in favourable or recovering condition.

4.4 CCW 's Special Sites Project has spanned financial years 07/08, 08/09, 09/10. The WBP subgroup concluded that our highest short-term priority was to share practical information about the state of individual sites and the actions needed to get them into favourable condition.

Special Sites Project: progress 2007-2010	
Year	Achievements to date
07/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Plans for all Natura 2000 sites (SACS and SPAs) written and published on CCW's website¹⁹ • Divided SAC and SPA into practical 'management units' (e.g. landholdings, or marine units) to enable more precise communication about the needs of different parts of these often large sites. All this data captured in CCW Actions database.
08/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database of the actions required on all units within SSSIs managed by public and voluntary sector bodies, to enable all partner organisations to understand, negotiate and plan their contribution to meeting the WES targets. • Spreadsheet information on actions shared with partner organisations to facilitate work programming and budgeting.
09/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data on all remaining SSSIs currently being captured • Collaborative database (Extranet view) being developed and is close to launching to partners. • Data used to inform planning and policy e.g. River Basin Management Planning process.

4.5 National Nature Reserves

A report published by CCW on the current state of knowledge about 69 NNRs and Wales's one Marine Nature Reserve in May 2008²⁰, shows that 40% of the habitat and species features are in a favourable state whilst another 34% are improving.

4.6 Funding mechanisms for biodiversity

CCW is currently developing a project plan for appropriate funding mechanisms for biodiversity, in conjunction with partners.

¹⁹ <http://www.ccw.gov.uk/landscape--wildlife/protecting-our-landscape/special-sites-project.aspx>

²⁰ CCW report on National Nature Reserves, May 2008: <http://www.ccw.gov.uk/landscape--wildlife/protecting-our-landscape/special-landscapes--sites/protected-landscapes/national-nature-reserve/what-are-nnrs.aspx>

4.7 Invasive Non-Native Species

CCW is working with the Welsh Assembly Government to develop a Non-native species Strategy for Wales, in the context of the Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain 2008²¹. This work will involve an audit of non-native species in Wales and will be supported by a sub-group of the Wales Biodiversity Partnership

4.8 Local Record Centres

CCW provides support for the operations of Local Record Centres through financial support and data supply to encourage other parties to engage with LRCs and maximise benefits of the National Biodiversity Network (NBN)

5. Marine and Fisheries - Marine Spatial Planning - Delivering an ecosystem approach in the marine environment

The Countryside Council for Wales is working closely with the Welsh Assembly Government and other stakeholders to deliver an ecosystem approach to managing the marine environment. The Marine and Coastal Act 2009²² is now in place, and work is ongoing to develop new regimes for marine planning, including marine nature conservation. CCW is developing tools for Marine Spatial Planning, including marine sensitivity mapping for zoning e.g. identifying highly protected marine conservation zones, and fisheries management. CCW worked with the Welsh Assembly Government on the development of the Wales Fisheries Strategy 2008²³, and will continue to work on implementation, and provide advice on emerging issues such as scallop dredging. CCW provides advice to Government on meeting European obligations under the marine thematic strategy and common fisheries policy in relation to nature conservation and management.

6. Energy

CCW provides advice to Government on energy policy and frameworks, and on associated planning Guidance, such as Technical Advice Note 8: Renewable Energy. CCW also advises and works with national and local government, regulators and developers on the development and delivery of renewable energy proposals in Wales, to ensure renewable technologies are sensitively sited. For example, we work closely with offshore renewables companies to minimise environmental impacts and advise the Assembly Government and

²¹ The Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain 2008:
http://www.nonnativespecies.org/documents/Invasive_NNS_Framework_Strategy_GB_E.pdf

²² The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009:
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2009/ukpga_20090023_en_1

²³ Wales Fisheries Strategy 2008:
<http://wales.gov.uk/strategy/strategies/walesfisheriesstrategy/walesfisheriesstratjuly08.pdf?lang=en>

local planning authorities on which landscapes have the greatest capacity for absorbing wind farm developments. CCW is currently providing advice on National Policy Statements on Energy, and will have a formal role in the environmental permitting for proposals to the Infrastructure Planning Commission.

6.1 In advising government on energy generation we will stress the need for a strategic, sequential approach, seeking to lower environmental impacts, through:

1. Energy efficiency & demand management,
2. Cleaning up conventional generation &
3. Expanding renewable energy: the right technology in the right place

6.2 Renewable Energy in the Marine Environment

Both the UK and Welsh Assembly Governments have set ambitious targets for the amount of electricity to be produced from renewable energy sources and Marine renewables are expected to contribute significantly to these targets. We are fortunate in Wales to have a large resource suitable for all types of marine renewables. This resource has been mapped in the UK Marine Renewable Energy Atlas²⁴ under a project funded by the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform. CCW provides advice to the Welsh Assembly and UK Governments on the development and siting of offshore marine renewable energy developments and their potential impacts on the marine wildlife, habitats, and seascapes and landscapes of Wales. In addition we work closely with others, including the marine renewable energy developers and key stakeholders in the maritime environment to ensure that Wales' coasts and seas have the appropriate management frameworks and policies in place to secure their future.

6.3 Severn Tidal Power Feasibility Study

The Severn Tidal Power (STP) Feasibility Study (FS) started in January 2008, to inform a decision on renewable energy proposals in the Severn Estuary. The focus of CCW's involvement has been to ensure that environmental impacts and issues are fully taken into account in the STP FS to create a robust evidence base on which decisions can be made. CCW has been working with the Welsh Assembly Government, Environment Agency and Natural England and is represented on the majority of the FS work streams, SEA Steering Group and Project Board.

7. Landscape and Seascape

The **European Landscape Convention** is the first international treaty specifically on landscape. This Council of Europe initiative provides a broad framework for the planning and management of all landscapes across member states. This now includes the UK, who

²⁴ UK Marine Renewable Energy Atlas: <http://www.renewables-atlas.info/>

signed and ratified the ELC effective as of 1 March 2007. 30% of Wales' land and waters has been designated as 'special' - either by UK, European or International law.

7.1 CCW has developed a number of tools to assess the landscape. **LANDMAP is the main source for landscape assessment information.** It is being used in a consistent and comprehensive way in all our local authorities and will eventually cover the whole of Wales. In 2008, CCW won a **Landscape Institute Strategic Landscape Planning Award** for developing a map of Wales that shows character areas, capturing geology, landform, biodiversity and other features.

7.2 CCW has a significant number of powers of duties in relation to Protected Landscapes and landscape management in Wales, especially in terms of management, designation, governance and advising WAG on related issues. In line with 'Delivering the Connections', CCW is working with the Protected Landscapes to maximise our effectiveness through close collaboration across a wide range of issues including optimising the exchange of expertise and information. We are also working with Protected Landscapes to ensure that they are effective mechanisms to address climate change, energy and transport provision, changing socio-economic issues and agri-environment schemes.

7.3 In November 2009, a conference was held in Cardiff to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of 1949 Act, and more importantly to discuss how Protected Landscapes can meet the challenges of the next sixty years. In summary it was agreed that CCW should work with Protected Landscapes on the:

- sustainable land management and use of soils, air, water and biodiversity;
- sustainable production of food, fibre, timber and energy in accordance with high environmental standards
- action to mitigate and adapt to climate change;
- management to enhance ecosystem services such as the storage of carbon and the regulation of water;
- action to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity
- action to protect and enhance landscapes, historic and geological features

7.4 CCW is working to take forward the recommendations of the **Clwydian Range Pathfinder project** at a local and national level.

7.5 Seascapes

CCW has recently completed an assessment of the seascapes of Wales, together with an assessment of their sensitivity to accommodate renewable energy development. This work also won the **Landscape Institute Strategic Planning Award for 2009.**

8. European Funding: The Communities and Nature Project

The Communities and Nature (CAN) project is a strategic project to be funded under Priority 4 Theme 3 'Environment for Growth' of the Convergence Programme for West Wales and the Valleys 2007 - 2013, managed by CCW. CAN aims are to:

- To maximise the economic value of natural assets through increasing the economic benefits derived from visits to the countryside.
- To ensure that the benefits of project activities are shared with disadvantaged groups through providing employment, on the job training and volunteering opportunities.

9. Access and Recreation

CCW has a statutory remit in relation to outdoor access and recreation, which is important for regeneration, health and well being, environmental quality, and quality of life - all key components of sustainable development. CCW works with local planning authorities on a range of access and recreation issues, such as Rights of Way Improvement Plans, access routes such as national trails, green-space assessments, and the Coastal Access Programme. CCW has been responsible for implementing access legislation, such as the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000²⁵ on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government, an issue considered by the Assembly's Audit Committee in 2007. The Audit Committee's investigation into access to the countryside found that the Assembly Government, the Countryside Council for Wales and local access authorities implemented the new legislation effectively and on time.

9.1 Wales Outdoor Recreation Survey 2008

The Wales Outdoor Recreation Survey was commissioned jointly by Countryside Council for Wales and Forestry Commission Wales to inform the delivery of the Welsh Assembly Government's policy and strategy relating to walking and cycling and outdoor recreation. As well as preparing a policy interpretation of the headline results, CCW is currently analysing all the relevant data to provide a robust quantitative evidence base to inform approaches to walking and cycling, woodland recreation, inland water recreation, and marine and coastal recreation. CCW has also undertaken a review of its **Outdoor Recreation Survey 2008** in each Wales Spatial Plan area.

9.2 Walking and Cycling

CCW works to deliver open access improvement, and encourage greater participation in walking and cycling, particularly by those in socially excluded or disadvantaged groups.

²⁵ Information on the Assembly Audit Committee's investigation into access to the countryside <http://www.assemblywales.org/newhome/new-news-second-assembly.htm?act=dis&id=39339&ds=4/2007>

CCW is using evidence collated from its Outdoors Recreation Survey to develop Indicators for the Walking and Cycling Action Plan and will also be delivering specific actions within the plan.

9.3 Coastal Access Programme

Work has been progressing on the Coastal Access Improvement Programme. The programme is supported by £2 million of Welsh Assembly Government Funding for 2009/2010, and CCW has also been successful in obtaining **£3.89m additional EU convergence funding** to support the delivery of the All Wales Coastal Path by 2010 over the next 4 years.

9.4 **Updated Local Coastal Access Improvement Full Programmes** have recently been submitted to CCW and are currently under consideration. These are the plans produced by local authorities setting out the work required for the Programme and are updated regularly, and subject to agreement with CCW. It is expected that a full list of eligible projects for the remainder of the project will be available early in 2010.

9.5 Rights of Way Improvement Plans

CCW continues to manage the ROWIP funding programme in its second year of operation. The [3 year] £1.7m p.a. programme was fully spent last financial year and is fully allocated for the 2009/2010 financial year. Funding is allocated according to the priorities authorities' themselves identified in ROWIPs. Feedback from local authorities on the way this programme has been run has on the whole been very positive.

9.6 Access to Inland Water

Welsh rivers, lakes and reservoirs attract many who seek to escape to the countryside for recreation. The Welsh Assembly Government wants to increase responsible access to water for a range of activities, which can improve our health and give an economic boost to local communities²⁶. CCW is working with the Welsh Assembly Government, Environment Agency Wales, and others to implement the Action Plan for Recreational Access to Water Strategy. CCW is providing advice to the Welsh Assembly Government on an evaluation of exemplar projects carried out in 2008, and the recreation survey work. CCW is also working with the Environment Agency to promote water based recreational opportunities. CCW has also

²⁶ Further information on the Welsh Assembly Government's approach to access to inland water can be found at:
<http://cymru.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/countrysidecoastalaccess/coast/wateraccess/?jsessionid=mWPfKT9GB8kvTZM5MZZxThfnh6nHMkpL8fLjPHdkjQWzSD7IGdwp!514291769?lang=en&ts=4>

recently given evidence to the Sustainability Committee's Inquiry on access to inland water²⁷.

9.7 Climbing Higher

CCW is represented on the Ministerial Advisory group for the Physical Activity action plan, and has a clear role in its delivery. The outdoor recreation survey work will provide an evidence base on which to take actions forward.

9.8 Access to greenspace

CCW developed a Green space assessment planning tool²⁸, launched in 2006, which has now been rolled out to all Local Planning Authorities to utilise for their local development plans and community strategies. The majority of local authorities have received CCW grant aid and have either completed a greenspace assessment or are due to complete one by the end of March 2010 (the end of the 2009/2010 financial year).

9.10 Green Flag Awards Wales

CCW is part of the Steering Group for the Green Flag Awards. 13 unitary authorities took part in 2009, winning 30 Green Flags, demonstrating that these parks, country parks and nature reserves meet the highest standards for the provision of excellent, accessible and high quality public green spaces in the UK. Communities are coming forward with greater regularity for the Green Pennant Award, with 20 awards being made to grass roots groups, some in Communities First areas. Wales continues to lead the way on the Green Pennant Awards with 20% of all Awards in the UK.

9.11 Motorised recreation

CCW is working to improve the management of motorised recreation in Wales through better enforcement to tackle illegal activity, education for responsible use and appropriate provision to help off-roading problems at a community level. CCW is working with the Forestry Commission and partners in the Wales Off-Road Motors Steering Group to explore opportunities for structuring and managing off-road motorcycling. CCW is working to implement actions stemming from key recommendations in the report of the joint FC/CCW led group on off-road motorcycling in Wales as well as work with partners and local authorities to deliver projects on 3 new suitable sites or routes in Wales. CCW is already supporting the following projects with partners in Wales:

²⁷ The National Assembly for Wales' Sustainability Committee Inquiry into access to inland water: http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-scrutiny-committees/bus-committees-third-sc-home/inquiries_sd/sc_3_-_access_to_inland_water_-_main.htm

²⁸ Information on CCW's Green-space Toolkit can be found at: <http://www.ccw.gov.uk/about-ccw/newsroom/press-releases/green-space-toolkit.aspx>

- Elan Valley Enforcement and Education Initiative - Rural Crime Police Community Support Officer
- Cambrian Mountains Partnership Pilot

10. Countryside Council for Wales Carbon Footprint

Following external audits in December 2009 CCW has attained Carbon Trust Standard Certification. Since 2005 CCW has maintained both ISO14001 registration and Level 5 of the Green Dragon Environmental Standard.

10. 1 CCW has already reduced its carbon footprint by:

- In partnership with the Carbon Trust reducing energy use in our buildings estate
- Installation of renewables in our buildings estate
- Improving the sustainability in the location and management of our offices through our accommodation strategy
- Purchased lower emitting vehicles for our pool fleet
- Ensuring staff travel using the best environmental option
- Increasing the use of video conferencing
- Increasing the use of biodiesel

10.2 During 2009/10 CCW has developed a specific **Carbon Reduction Plan**. On 6 July 2009 CCW Council approved a 24% reduction target by 2012 based on 2007/08 as the baseline year. CCW's plan includes the impacts of waste, materials and assets. This goes beyond the Carbon Trust Standard which we attained in December 2009, which only currently includes utilities and transport emissions. The benefits of achieving the Carbon Trust Certification includes independent confirmation that we have genuinely measured, reported and reduced our carbon footprint. We have also signed up to the Guardian 10:10 pledge to reduce our carbon emissions by 10% in 2010.

Carbon savings to date

Total Energy Emissions

2005/06	1006	tCO ₂ e
2006/07	911	tCO ₂ e
2007/08	866	tCO ₂ e
2008/09	864	tCO ₂ e

142 tonnes carbon saved (14% reduction)

Grey Fleet Emissions

2005/06	85	tCO ₂ e
2006/07	63	tCO ₂ e
2007/08	51	tCO ₂ e
2008/09	42	tCO ₂ e

43 tonnes carbon saved (51% reduction)

Pool Fleet Emissions

2006/07	408	tCO ₂ e
2007/08	394	tCO ₂ e
2008/09	381	tCO ₂ e

27 tonnes carbon saved (7% reduction)

CCW - Carbon Trust Certification Data

Emissions	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
	KgCO ₂ e	KgCO ₂ e	KgCO ₂ e
Stationary Sources			
Gas	234083	234784	245671
Oil	20018	11789	15584
Gas (Cylinders)	8844	9430	8991
Owned Transport			
Diesel	371591	374419	371071
Petrol	36463	19558	9958
Imported Power			
Electricity	648524	609817	594146
Business Travel			
Grey Fleet	63452	50986	42481
Hire Car	2549	2472	3940
Taxi	669	632	781
Rail	18539	21724	31391
Air - Long Haul	0	1022	943

Air - Short Haul	3289	3330	6755
Air - Domestic	1231	457	1022
CARBON	1409252	1340420	1332734
FOOTPRINT tCO₂e	1,409.3	1,340.4	1,332.7

Carbon Reduction Plan Summary 2009/12

	Carbon Reduction Scenario	Carbon Te Saving
CR01	Support electricity use behaviour change - 15% load savings	92
CR02	CCW fleet size to be reduced by 10%	5
CR03	Office pool fleet - Average vehicle spec to be 109 gCO2/km	50
CR04	Lease fleet & Hire Car emissions to be capped at 134 gCO2/km	3
CR05	Grey fleet emissions to be capped at 140 gCO2/km	8
CR06	Grey fleet cap return trip distance at 161km - use pool fleet	12
CR07	NNR fleet - 12.5% of vkm to be shifted to office pool	9
CR08	Office pool fleet - Specific Trips over 300km (return) done by train	7
CR09	Grey fleet - 20% of vkm to be done by train	6
CR10	Office fleet - Shift 25% of internal meeting vkm to videoconferencing	21
CR11	Lease fleet - 20% of vkm shifted to videoconferencing	5
CR12	75% of office vkm driven by defensive / eco-drivers	7
CR13	75% of reserve vkm driven by defensive / eco-drivers	6
CR14	100% of Lease fleet driven by defensive / eco-drivers	1
CR15	Office fleet - HQ vehicles run on 20% biodiesel	40
CR16	10% reduction in paper-product consumption	5
CR17	75% of office vkm driven with speed limiters	20
CR18	100% of reserve vkm driven with speed limiters	25
CR19	Office fleet - 75% travel to conferences vkm to be shifted to trains	4
CR20	Office fleet - 12.5% of external meeting vkm shifted to trains	2
CR21	Improve lighting efficiency by 10%	30
CR22	25% of office energy / heat to be provided by renewables	68
CR23	NNR fleet - 100% of vkm to be done using 20% biodiesel	23
CR24	Improve IT efficiency by 20%	60
CR25	15% reduction in consumables consumption	17
CR26	10% reduction in waste to landfill	3
CR27	Continue to ban domestic flights & expand use of international ferry and rail	1
	TOTAL	530

Annex 1: Written Cabinet Statement on Biodiversity, Welsh Assembly Government. 18th
January 2010



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

**WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE
WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT**

Title: Biodiversity

Date: 18 January 2010

By: Jane Davidson, Minister for the Environment, Sustainability and Housing

The UN has declared 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB). Throughout the year countless initiatives will be organized to disseminate information, promote the protection of biodiversity and encourage organizations, institutions, companies and individuals to take direct action to reduce the constant loss of biological diversity worldwide. Details can be found at: <http://www.countdown2010.net/year-biodiversity>.

The Environment Strategy for Wales includes three key outcomes for biodiversity:

Outcome 19 The loss of biodiversity has been halted and we can see a definite recovery in the number, range and genetic diversity of species, including those species that need very specific conditions to survive

Outcome 20 The wider environment is more favourable to biodiversity through appropriate management, reduced habitat fragmentation and increased extent and interconnectivity of habitats

Outcome 21 Sites of international, Welsh and local importance are in favourable condition to support the species and habitats for which they have been identified.

Alongside these outcomes the Assembly Government has committed itself to two international and one national target in relation to 2010:

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) commitment significantly to reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010
- EU commitment to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010
- ESW Target 32: Sites of international, national and local importance in Wales should be in favourable condition to support the species and habitats for which they have been identified. By 2010, 95 per cent of international sites in favourable condition; by 2015, 95 per cent of Welsh SSSIs in favourable condition and by 2026, all sites to be in favourable condition.

Biodiversity enhancement and protection is a key part of our commitment as a Government to sustainable development.

The Welsh Assembly Government has taken a positive stance to promoting action on biodiversity, working with all partners who have a role to play. In particular, we have made considerable progress in our Biodiversity Action Planning Process and we have new legislative powers through the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (which places a Biodiversity Duty on all public bodies) and the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. Real progress has been made on the ground for important habitats and species such as Arable Field Margins, Aquifer-fed Fluctuating Water Bodies, Deptford Pink, Sand Lizard, and Lesser Horseshoe Bat.

Existing positive actions including the following have been taken:

- **Environment Strategy for Wales**
Working towards the Environment Strategy target to bring designated sites into favourable condition by putting in place an Actions Database for international sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and other protected sites. During 2008/09, actions data has been entered for further sites, including all those sites/units identified as being in public or voluntary sector ownership, the extranet infrastructure and software development has been completed to enable key partners to view site 'action' data and respond to develop and agree work programmes and spreadsheets have been shared with the National Trust, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, National Parks, RSPB, Wildlife Trusts

and a number of WAG departments. Implementation of key actions has begun for a wide range of actions

- **Biodiversity Action Plans Wales**

The Wales Biodiversity Partnership (WBP) has developed and implemented structures and processes to identify actions to meet its new BAP targets for Wales (post UK BAP review) and this information is being shared through the Biodiversity Action Recording System (BARS). Nine new ecosystem groups have been established, with involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, supported by specialist groups for Species, Policy and Non Native Invasive Species. A number of organisations are improving their use of BARS and LRC services including FCW, CCW and EAW.

- **Local Area Biodiversity Network**

Wales has complete coverage from both Local Biodiversity Action Plan Partnerships, which implement the action above, and Local Record Centres, which hold, process and disseminate the biodiversity data needed to support this work. All BAP Partnerships are supported by Local Authorities and National Park Authorities and Wales also has Biodiversity Champions at Cabinet level in each Local Authority and National Park Authority, who lead and champion a range of biodiversity action.

- **Existing agri-environment schemes**

In 2010 the Sustainable Land Management scheme Tir Gofal will have a total area of 417,725 hectares under positive management, of which 198,480 hectares is identified as Biodiversity Action Plan habitat, under restoration, management or creation management. In addition 435km of hedgerows are under positive management. The area of land farmed organically in Wales has increased to nearly 10% in 2008 supported by the Welsh Assembly Government. The prohibition/reduced use of chemical pesticides and inorganic fertilisers, sympathetic management of non-cropped habitats and the preservation of mixed farming have numerous benefits to include contributing to populations of rare weeds, habitat for wild birds associated with hedgerows and field margins and greater floral diversity and sheltering habitat.

- **The 'Works' project at Ebbw Vale**

Following the closure of the Ebbw Vale Steel Works the former Welsh Development Agency and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council commissioned a masterplan. This set out how the 75 hectare site could become a vibrant new urban quarter for Ebbw Vale, creating new opportunities, raising aspirations and creating a step change in the social and economic prospects for Blaenau Gwent. At the outset of the masterplanning process, sustainable development was established as an

overarching principle for the project. This included in the reclamation design which has become a zero waste project, and will create a new wetland park through the centre of the site, receiving water from the development areas. The reclamation of this site has already turned a barren steelworks site into a series of wetlands, species rich grasslands and new woodland areas. This was designed and implemented in collaboration with CCW, Environment Agency Wales, Gwent Wildlife Trust and other local stakeholders.

- **Valleys Regional Park**

This vision provides an integrated approach to the planning and delivery of environment, heritage and tourism activity across the Valleys of South Wales. Biodiversity protection and enhancement is a fundamental element of the programme within the wider sustainable approach. Specific examples of the work includes: an agreed collaborative action plan developed and “owned” by more than 30 separate organisations (including 14 local authorities) which have agreed to work collaboratively across the Valleys, which includes a range of biodiversity objectives; 42M secured for tourism enhancement related to the natural environment, including significant match funding from the Heads of the Valleys and Western Valleys SRA Programmes; all projects approved as part of the programme are required to submit a sustainable development appraisal which must identify potential risks to biodiversity and actions to reduce the risks, and also biodiversity opportunities.

However, despite all this positive action, it is clear that the work to date has not been enough to enable us to reach the important and challenging targets set for biodiversity. We are not alone in struggling with the challenge of biodiversity. No other country will meet the targets set by the Convention on Biological Diversity and the European Union for 2010.

The Welsh Assembly Government is therefore taking the opportunity over the coming year fundamentally to refresh our approach to Biodiversity and Nature Conservation by reviewing the ways in which we are currently tackling these aims and objectives.

Our habitats face especial challenges going forward, not least from the changing climate. Our traditional focus on small sites and species protection will need to develop to look at the wider habitat as a whole and creating places that are resilient to change or which enable species to move or adapt. A truly sustainable approach will be to address climate change and habitat together, managing land for the services it provides. For example, almost all the actions that need to be taken to keep carbon in soil or to arrest flood pressures will also benefit biodiversity, while healthy eco-systems have more potential to

adapt to climate change and ensure continued provision of critical ecosystems services such as crop pollination. This holistic approach is the basis for much of the work we have developed over the past year, most notably the proposals contained in the Glas Tir scheme.

I want to work with all our partners to develop a new Natural Environment Framework. In order to carry out this work we will build on existing strong and positive collaborative partnerships by working closely the public, business and voluntary sector. In September 2009 I launched, with the Wales Biodiversity Partnership, a review of the targets and our successes and failures so far and the reasons behind them. I will be hosting a major conference on biodiversity in September 2010 which will bring together ideas and best practice and consider both the positive actions achieved so far and what needs to be done differently.

By that time we will also have seen progress with the following actions due to place during 2010:

- **Marine Protected areas**

During 2010 we will develop site selection criteria and methodology, incorporating ecological, social and economic information to ensure that sites are chosen to maximise ecological and socio-economic benefits while minimising conflicts with different uses of the sea as far as possible. Data collection and collation has already begun.

- **Fisheries**

The vision of the Wales Fisheries Strategy will support the development of viable and sustainable fisheries in Wales as an integral part of coherent policies for safeguarding the environment. The Welsh Assembly Government and the Commercial Fisheries, Aquaculture, Recreational Sea Angling and Inland Fisheries sectors, in partnership with fisheries management and nature conservation representatives, have developed an Implementation Plan to achieve the goals of the Strategy.

The Strategy and the Implementation Plan endorse an ecosystem-based approach to managing Welsh fisheries, to ensure that the benefits from fishing are high while its direct and indirect impacts upon aquatic ecosystems are low and not detrimental to ecosystem functions and biodiversity.

The Implementation Plan commits stakeholders to undertaking research on stock levels, movements and lifecycles for the main target species for the Welsh industry, as well as on the level and impact of current fishing effort. The results of this research will be vital in implementing effective, ecosystem-based fisheries management. This research has begun and will continue over the coming years.

- **Glastir**

The new scheme will have two elements, an all-Wales element and a higher level, focused element. The all-Wales element will be open to all farmers whose land is IACS registered (minimum eligible area is 3 hectares) and who have control over the land for the scheme period (5 years). Farmers who make use of common land as part of their farm enterprise will be able to enter this land into the all-Wales element of Glastir. The new scheme will provide opportunities for land managers to change their current practices in a way that will enhance the delivery of ecosystem services outputs in addition to ensuring that they maintain and enhance the biodiversity and visual value of the land that they manage. The overall objective of the basic scheme is to maintain and improve the environmental value of 80% of farmland in Wales.

The entry scheme is intended to provide an entry level agri-environment scheme, with a simplified administrative framework and output or outcome based prescriptions, which will allow far larger numbers of farmers and far greater areas of farmland to be brought under agri-environmental management. It provides support for farmers to protect wildlife habitats and landscape features.

The targeted element will be spatially or thematically targeted. It will be a part farm scheme, providing capital and maintenance payments. It will seek to deliver actions such as soil carbon conservation and the sequestration of carbon, water quality improvement, flood risk management and strategic access delivery which are better delivered, and deliver optimal outcomes, at a landscape or catchment rather than individual farm scale. In general terms, issues that require a complex management response will tend to be dealt with through the advanced scheme. Additionally, actions to increase biodiversity value and maintain the historic environment, either collaboratively or on an individual farm will also be supported.

- **Economy and Transport**

DE&T recognises Sustainable Development as a central organising principle within its policies and activities. To embed the necessary cultural change and ownership at all levels of DE&T, we are putting in place the Sustainable Development Management Group. The Sustainable Development Management Group will lead on developing and mainstreaming sustainable development across their business areas. This group will be supported by a team of Environmental and SD practitioners.

The Department for the Economy and Transport is very aware of its duties under the NERC Act 2006. There will be revised and re-issued detailed guidance on biodiversity to ensure that all our actions work towards the protection and enhancement of species and habitats. The Guidelines are supported by the

Sustainable Development Delivery team, two of whom are professional ecologists, available to provide project managers with advice on how best to integrate SD, environmental and biodiversity issues into their projects.

- **Spatial Plan**

DE&T, CCW, the Environment Agency and other WAG departments are currently involved in the development of work on green infrastructure under the Welsh Assembly Government Spatial Plan colleagues. This approach seeks to look at the economic, social and environmental functions of the natural environment at a landscape scale, looking at ecosystem services including; carbon sequestration and storage, management of flood risk and ecological connectivity to help biodiversity adapt to climate change. We are currently looking for opportunities to demonstrate this approach within our Infrastructure, Property and Regeneration activity.

- **River basin management Plans**

I today launched the River Basin Management Plans for which a key aim is the ensuring good water quality to support healthy ecosystems and biodiversity. In Wales we are surrounded by approx 1600km of coastline with 70% already within a Special Area of Conservation! To add to this we have a network of approx 7700km of rivers complemented by our lakes and groundwater. Key actions have been included in the River Basin Management Plans to help bring internationally protected nature conservation sites into favorable condition.

- **FRM/ Shoreline Management plans**

The Water Framework Directive requires Member States to aim to meet good status in all water bodies by 2015. As the Water Framework Directive is a framework Directive, it incorporates measures and standards from within other Directives. These include standards and objectives for "Protected Areas". There are two key issues relating to water dependent N2K protected areas not achieving favourable conservation status or their WFD objectives which have implications for Flood and Coastal Risk Management operations. These issues relate to loss of intertidal habitats on sections of the coast where the movement of the shoreline is constrained (Coastal Squeeze) and water level issues on rivers and wetlands (Water Levels). Before Christmas I approved the following actions aimed at addressing the above: the creation of a National Habitat Creation/Remediation Programme for Wales to be led by Environment Agency Wales to develop proposals to offset the impacts of the implementation of Flood and Coastal Risk Management policies on N2K sites, the funding of compensatory habitat and site remediation identified in the Programme from the Assembly Government's flood and coastal risk

management budget and that the Environment Agency, as the responsible drainage authority, implement actions to achieve favourable condition for 10 sites.

By the end of 2010 I will, in collaboration with other Ministers, publish a *Natural Environment Framework*, which will outline the new ways in which we will be addressing these challenges especially in the light of climate change.