

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

## **A Partnership Plan for the National Park 2025-2029**

Approved by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, 26 March, 2025

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## Foreword by the Deputy First Minister

On behalf of the Welsh Government, I welcome the new Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Partnership Plan. The Pembrokeshire Coast has always been a very special place for me, and for countless others. It is our only coastal National Park in the UK, and with the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Park's creation in 2027, this Plan is critical in safeguarding it for the future.

National Parks contain some of the most spectacular and dramatic areas of countryside in Wales. They are landscapes of national importance, with designation conferring the highest status for their conservation, and millions of visitors enjoy them every year. We must enable visitors to have world-class experiences while ensuring the special qualities we seek to protect are not damaged.

We all must continue to focus attention on responding to the climate and nature emergency as an overarching and urgent priority. The Senedd declared a nature emergency in 2021, and we have also committed to the global 30 by 30 targets. Our Biodiversity Deep Dive has set out ambitious recommendations for us to meet these targets, and we will strengthen this through new statutory targets and a new biodiversity framework. National Parks are intrinsic in helping reverse the decline in biodiversity. Working with landowners and other partners to improve the connectivity, condition, extent and diversity of habitats, at scale and at pace, is fundamental.

Our National Parks are unique in that while they are home to incredible wildlife, scenery and geology, they are also home to local communities and have been lived in for millennia. That interaction of nature and people has shaped these landscapes - and balancing these interests and priorities requires genuine partnership.

I welcome the move to a Partnership Plan from a Management Plan. It is vital that this approach to collaboration and co-production is truly embedded in the way the Park Authority works. As guardians of one of Wales's most special places for the future, I also commend the Park's commitment to working with and listening to young people through the National Park Next Generation.

We look forward to supporting the National Park Authority putting this vision into practice.

**Huw Irranca-Davies**

**Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs**

## Introduction by the Chief Executive

National Parks are some of our most special places, designated for their outstanding landscapes. They are also places where people live, work and spend leisure time and so play a critical economic role as well as being spaces with high cultural and social value.

As a society we are facing unprecedented challenges, with both climate and nature emergencies that must be responded to. We also face what may be termed a health emergency. Since the COVID-19 pandemic there have been significant increases in the number of people experiencing anxiety and other mental health challenges. Our lifestyles and wider determinants of health (such as income and housing) are increasingly resulting in poor health outcomes.

We also face considerable challenges regarding the provision of jobs and housing, in particular for young people. House prices and rents in the National Park are significantly higher than the rest of Pembrokeshire and at the 2011 Census the National Park had one of the highest rates of second / holiday home use of its general housing stock in England and Wales, at 26.7%. This impacts negatively on housing affordability and support for local facilities. As at March 2024, there were more than 4,500 people on the Pembrokeshire housing waiting list, excluding transfers.

While there appears to be no shortage of employment opportunities in Pembrokeshire, the jobs available are often low paid and seasonal. In alignment with the Just Transition framework, partners can support job opportunities linked to a sustainable recovery, bringing new opportunities for skills and jobs creation.

The economy, equality and poverty are inextricably linked. There are also strong links between poverty and poorer health and well-being outcomes. Unaddressed, these can exacerbate existing inequalities. The End Child Poverty Coalition analysis of 2021/22 data showed Pembrokeshire as the county with the fifth highest percentage of children living in poverty in Wales after housing costs are considered, at 29%. Child poverty is on course to increase in most of the UK.

There are many ways in which the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park as a place can help respond to these challenges, playing a key role for local communities but also improving outcomes in a way that supports a national response. This might be responding to coastal erosion and adapting the line of the world-famous Pembrokeshire Coast Path National Trail; it can also be by strengthening habitat connectivity to allow movement of species or promoting the Welsh language.

By safeguarding and enhancing the natural and cultural environment, and people's ability to enjoy and understand it, partners are helping to safeguard an economic and well-being resource.

People have always adapted successfully and we can do so now – we can also help ourselves as we help the environment around us. Examples such as the award-winning Roots to Recovery project showcase this – people working to support changes to places and receiving health benefits at the same time.

Responding to these challenges is not something that the National Park Authority can do alone. The challenges are too great and are geographically and thematically wider than the National Park. The challenges need collaborative action. While this document is in legal terms the National Park Management Plan, we call it a 'Partnership Plan', emphasising the need for us all to work together.

This Partnership Plan for the next five years sets out how all of those involved in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park will work together to deliver the best outcomes for the place and its people, now and for future generations.

**Tegryn Jones**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority**

## An introduction from the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Next Generation

We founded the National Park Youth Committee - now known as Next Generation - in 2020, with the aim of making positive changes by working together for the future.

We recognise that to deliver real lasting change we have to work in partnership. We have been excited to input into the development of this Partnership Plan for the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park for the next five years. The Pembrokeshire Coast is our home but we know that other people also love to visit this special place. We want to be able to continue to live here in the future and so how this Plan supports its local communities is a critical issue for us.

Our Youth Manifesto and priorities for action on youth, empowerment, living, learning and working have fed into this Plan and we are pleased to see the importance of young people accessing nature recognised.

Young people have a key role to play in addressing nature recovery and adapting to climate change. We also know that getting out into nature can bring huge well-being benefits.

We hope that you will look commit to working for the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park's future alongside us.

### **Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Next Generation**

Map locating the National Park



# 1 A living, working landscape

## 1.1 UK national parks

Some of the UK's most stunning landscapes are designated as national parks or as national landscapes. In Wales, they cover 24% of the land area.

**The statutory purposes of national parks are:**

- **To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park.**
- **To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.<sup>1</sup>**

If there is a conflict between the purposes that cannot be resolved, the first purpose has greater weight. This is known as the 'Sandford principle'.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park was formally designated in 1952. With an area of 629 km<sup>2</sup>, it's one of the more densely-populated of the UK's national parks, with almost 21,000 people living in 49 community, town and city council areas (2021 Census).

## 1.2 Pembrokeshire Coast National Park is internationally important

**Natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage underpin people's health and wellbeing, prosperity and culture. Landscapes, rivers and coastal waters support the processes that help produce food, regulate climate, reduce flooding and store carbon.**

- Pembrokeshire Coast National Park covers almost all of the Pembrokeshire Coast, every offshore island, the Daugleddau estuary and large areas of the Preseli Hills and the Gwaun Valley.
- Pembrokeshire Coast is the only primarily coastal national park in the UK.
- It's one of the smallest UK National Parks, but has one of the most diverse landscapes.
- This is the only UK National Park which is primarily designated for its coastal landscape.
- The National Park is a distinctive shape with five clear geographical sections: the north, west, and south coasts, the Preseli Hills, and the Daugleddau.
- Nowhere in the National Park is more than 16km from the sea, and at its narrowest is 100m wide.
- The Milford Haven Waterway is the second deepest natural harbour in the world.
- This is ecologically one of the richest and most diverse parts of Wales. It is of international importance for a wide range of habitats and species. For

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<sup>1</sup> The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 provided the framework for the creation of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Pembrokeshire Coast National Park was designated in 1952.

example, Grassholm is home to one of the world's largest gannet colonies, and one third of Britain's nesting pairs of choughs are in Pembrokeshire

### 1.3 The National Park Authority

**The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority ("the National Park Authority") is charged with delivering national park purposes in this National Park.**

**The National Park Authority has a duty to seek to foster the social and economic wellbeing of National Park communities in its pursuit of the purposes.**

Many other organisations also have a legal duty to have regard to National Park purposes, and to the Sandford Principle<sup>2</sup>. In practice the National Park Authority and its partners - organisations, landowners, businesses and individuals - work together to achieve shared and complementary goals. This Partnership Plan sets out the ways in which partners collectively help achieve National Park purposes.

Welsh Government outlines its priorities for national park authorities in Wales in a term of government remit letter<sup>3</sup>. Those priorities are reflected in this Partnership Plan.

### 1.4 About this Plan

The Environment Act 1995 requires the National Park Authority to prepare a management plan for the National Park<sup>4</sup>. This replacement plan, called a Partnership Plan, is for 2025-2029.

**This Partnership Plan sets out the purposes of the National Park, the action to be taken over the next five years, the partners involved and the measures of success.**

It builds on previous plans, takes account of changes in legislation and policy, and incorporates learning from consultation and from ongoing conversations with partner organisations and stakeholders.

In preparing this Partnership Plan, the National Park Authority has collaborated with Natural Resources Wales as new guidance on management planning for designated landscapes in Wales has been prepared.

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<sup>2</sup> This duty is set out in section 62 of the Environment Act 1995 for national parks. A similar duty is outlined in section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 for national landscapes (areas of outstanding natural beauty).

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-08/national-park-authorities-term-government-remit-letter.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Each National Park Authority must prepare a five-yearly Management Plan "which formulates its policy for the management of the relevant Park and for the carrying out of its functions in relation to that Park" (Section 66 of the Environment Act, 1995).

## 1.5 Impact Assessments

The Partnership Plan is accompanied by a set of individual statutory impact assessments. These are:

- Equality Impact Assessment
- Habitats Regulations Assessment
- Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment
- Welsh Language Assessment
- Well-being of Future Generations Assessment

**The purpose of the impact assessments is to ensure that policy proposals do not have negative impacts, and that where possible policies deliver additional value** in terms of, for example, communities, people sharing protected characteristics, health, and internationally important wildlife sites. The assessments are also considered together so as to resolve any conflicts there may be between them.

More information can be found at Annex 2.

## 1.6 Local Development Plan for the National Park

**Development planning policies are set out in the *Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan 2 (to 2031)* for the National Park, prepared by the National Park Authority<sup>5</sup>.**

*Local Development Plan 2* is supported by Supplementary Planning Guidance on a range of topics, many of which are also of direct relevance to this Partnership Plan. Review of the adopted *Local Development Plan 2* began in September 2024.

## 1.7 Pembrokeshire Coast – a timeline

**The Pembrokeshire Coast has a fascinating history stretching back hundreds of millions of years.**

We will begin the story about 500 million years ago (the Cambrian period) when the region was covered by shallow seas. Layers of sand and mud settled on the sea floor, which later became the foundation of the area's rock formations. Some of the oldest rocks in Pembrokeshire, such as the dark shales and sandstones, date back to this time.

Around 400 million years ago (the Devonian period), volcanic eruptions and tectonic movements shaped the landscape. Some of the dramatic cliffs and rugged landscapes seen today were formed during this time.

Around 300 million years ago the area was part of a large mountain-building event called the Variscan Orogeny. This caused rocks to fold and fault, forming the hills and valleys seen today. The area we know as the Pembrokeshire Coast was uplifted, and the forces of erosion began to carve out the coastline.

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<sup>5</sup> *Local Development Plan 2* policy implementation is monitored via an Annual Monitoring Report produced by the National Park Authority. Some of the key trends identified by the Annual Monitoring Report are highlighted in the Partnership Plan.

The last Ice Age in Britain, known as the Devensian glaciation, lasted from around 115,000 to 11,600 years ago. Ice sheets covered large parts of Britain, including parts of Pembrokeshire. The southern most parts of Pembrokeshire remained accessible to humans and evidence from cave sites suggest they were used by humans during the Palaeolithic (or Old Stone Age).

Before the Ice Age ended, there was a land bridge, known as Doggerland, between Britain and Europe. This was a low-lying, marshy landscape, rich in rivers, lakes, and forests, inhabited by Neanderthals - and, later, modern Homo sapiens - together with a rich variety of animals, including mammoth, bear and aurochs.

As the ice sheets retreated, the basic outline of the current coastline was revealed, and the Irish Sea was formed. As we entered the Holocene (9,600 BCE) and the landscape became more accessible, Mesolithic hunter-gatherer communities were present in coastal areas around 10,000 years ago (the Mesolithic period). These communities would have hunted, fished, and gathered food in the rich landscape of the region.

The area now occupied by the Bristol Channel was not fully flooded during the early part of the Mesolithic, and much of what is now the Bristol Channel region consisted of a coastal or open mosaic landscape, of marshes, wetlands, and dry land. As the post-glacial sea level rose, these ancient river valleys were progressively inundated. The area became a drowned landscape of estuaries, inlets, and bays, and eventually became the Bristol Channel. Britain also became separated from mainland Europe and the English Channel formed. The remains of forests submerged around this time may be exposed at low tide at a number of locations around the Pembrokeshire Coast. From time to time, ancient peat, animal remains and footprints also become exposed along the coastline.

During the Neolithic and Bronze Age (around 4,000 - 800 BCE), agricultural practices began to shape the landscape. Field systems, stone circles (such as those in the Preseli Hills), and burial mounds (e.g. Pentre Ifan) reflect a shift from nomadic to more settled life.

The Preseli Hills are famously linked to the construction of Stonehenge following the discovery that the bluestones at Stonehenge originate from the area. Researchers suggest that the stones were quarried from the Preseli Hills (around 3,000 BCE) and transported or relocated to Stonehenge. Others have argued that the stones were deposited naturally via the movement of ice sheets.

Hillforts (e.g. Foel Drygarn and Castell Henllys) and promontory forts built during the Iron Age (around 1,000 BCE - 43 CE), indicate an increasingly complex society with trade and social hierarchies.

In the Roman period (43 - 410CE), coastal settlements expanded, and trade networks grew, although direct evidence of Roman settlements is limited in Pembrokeshire. As Roman legions withdrew from Britain, the region came under the influence of local Celtic tribes once again.

The medieval period (5<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> centuries) saw the establishment of monasteries, such as St. David's, which played a crucial role in early Christianity in Wales. St Davids became a destination for pilgrims from across Britain and Europe. Coastal settlements and religious communities in Pembrokeshire were vulnerable to Viking raids; St Davids – the UK's smallest city by population - was attacked several times in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, and several of the islands (e.g. Skomer, Skokholm and Ramsey) have Norse-derived names.

After the Norman Conquest of England in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, parts of Pembrokeshire became part of Norman-controlled lands. The Normans built castles to secure their dominance, influencing settlement patterns, with farming and fishing communities thriving along the coast. Pembroke Castle was a significant stronghold that later became the birthplace of Henry VII, the founder of the Tudor dynasty. Carew Castle has its origins in the 12<sup>th</sup> century as a Norman motte and bailey, with significant expansion and fortification in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries.

During the Medieval and Early Modern Periods (14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries) the Pembrokeshire coastline grew in strategic importance for trade, fishing, and defence. The area saw conflict, for example during the Welsh uprisings against English rule, and during the English Civil War. Fishing and agriculture continued to be the main livelihoods for many people.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Pembrokeshire saw the development of ports and industries, including coal mining, slate quarrying, and shipbuilding, leading to the establishment of new towns and the development of transport networks. This led to an increase in the population, and the coast became more connected to the rest of Britain. During the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815), the British government reinforced coastal defences, including existing structures, to protect against the threat of a French invasion.

In World War I, defences in Pembrokeshire were strengthened in response to the risk of German naval raids, with the region's strategic importance, particularly due to the Pembroke Dockyard, prompting the construction of additional fortifications<sup>6</sup>. During World War II, the coastline was again fortified due to its strategic location near both the Atlantic and Europe, resulting in the construction of new fortifications and airfields, many of which are still visible today. Some, such as the Castlemartin Training Area, and St Davids Airfield, displaced farms and communities.

In the years following World War II, a proposal to turn almost all of the Preseli upland areas into a training and bombing area was successfully resisted by Pembrokeshire communities. Today, the specific circumstances and access restrictions on the Castlemartin Training Area enable extensive land management to continue, including *hafod a hendre* – the seasonal migration of livestock between Castlemartin and the Preseli Hills.

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<sup>6</sup> Llanion Barracks was originally built to protect the Dockyard and naval assets but was subsequently garrisoned by various units. Today it is head office of the National Park Authority.

In the latter half of the 20th century, tourism to the area grew substantially, with visitors drawn to the coastal scenery, recreational opportunity, wildlife and history. The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park was established in 1952 and the Pembrokeshire Coast Path established in 1970.

**Today, the Pembrokeshire Coast landscape continues to be shaped by natural processes and by human activity, notably agriculture, settlement and transport.**

## 1.8 Who owns the National Park?

**The vast majority of the National Park is privately owned, with about a quarter lying in the public realm or in charitable ownership.**

The National Park Authority leases or owns about 1% of the land area of the National Park, including flagship sites such as Carew Castle and Tidal Mill, Castell Henllys Iron Age Hillfort and Oriel y Parc. In addition, the National Park Authority leases large sections of the foreshore west and north of Giltar Point from The Crown Estate.

Around 7% of the National Park is Common Land, while the National Trust's holdings account for over 6%. Ministry of Defence holdings amount to around 4%; the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales owns or leases approximately 1%, Natural Resources Wales around 0.6% and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds about 0.4%.

Pembrokeshire County Council manages roadside verges throughout the National Park (including some which are managed for particular species), some Common Land<sup>7</sup>, and woodland and hay meadow sites.

These areas are often managed explicitly for (or may to a degree be compatible with) conservation of the natural and / or historic environment. To this list can be added many private holdings, including those managed within agri-environment schemes.

## 1.9 A vision for the National Park

<b>To ensure a vibrant, sustainable future for the environment and for those who live, work and visit the National Park.</b>
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The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park is an evolving testament to the powerful connections between people and the landscape.

Every feature - dramatic coastline, rolling hills and wooded estuary reaches - tells a rich story of natural beauty, culture and heritage.

The purposes of the National Park are clear: to conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, and to provide everyone with opportunities to connect with the landscapes in ways which deepen our understanding. The National

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<sup>7</sup> Under Section 9 of the Commons Registration Act 1965 (unclaimed common land).

Park is for everyone and is a welcoming place, where people can enjoy and help protect its special qualities.

The connection with landscapes also works across time. By joining together to help restore these iconic landscapes and seascapes, a legacy is left to future generations, who can continue to live in, enjoy and be inspired by these breathtaking spaces.

## 1.10 What achieving the vision will look like

Natural processes are enabled and restored, and wildlife recovers as the nature emergency is addressed through broadening sustainable land management and applying conservation effort at scale. Land and seas are managed sustainably, in ways aligned with natural processes, and the National Park is nature-rich and resilient. Habitats are improved, expanded and connected.

This action helps regulate weather and climate, and helps soil formation, carbon storage, pollination, natural flood protection, and water and nutrient cycling.

Diverse, healthy ecosystems provide a buffer against environmental change. They are the basis of people's wellbeing and prosperity, and underpin many other aspects of quality of life, including culture and spirituality.

Historic landscapes and heritage assets are protected and understanding of them develops. Natural beauty and heritage are enjoyed and celebrated by all. The visibility and use of the Welsh language is flourishing in the National Park.

Inclusive access and removing barriers to the National Park is a cornerstone of this vision, enabling everyone, regardless of background, to experience and connect with this unique place.

There is a complementary and fair relationship between visitors, the environment, and local communities. The visitor economy is a means of positive change.

Economic activity helps restore natural processes and landscape value and builds the resilience of the National Park to climate change. The local economy is one of responsible, regenerative practice, with rewarding and satisfying opportunities for people today, and future generations, to live, work and visit here.

## 1.11 The State of the Park

**Detailed information on the state of Park is contained in a separate report<sup>8</sup>.** We present some of the key information and messages from that report in the relevant sections of this Plan.

The information provides an overview of the current state of various elements of the National Park and of the opportunities and challenges. It provides the context for policy and action.

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<sup>8</sup> "State of the Park Report": Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment Appendix B Baseline.

## 1.12 Delivery of the Plan in partnership

Designated landscapes are a national asset and are a key mechanism for delivering Welsh, UK and international environmental, social and economic ambitions. This is therefore a plan for the National Park area, not just for the National Park Authority<sup>9</sup>.

**There are already many effective partnerships helping to deliver National Park purposes.** These include the Pembrokeshire Public Services Board, the Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership, and the Nutrient Management Boards.

Partnerships such as these are key to Plan delivery. However there are additional roles for partner organisations in implementing and monitoring the Plan. These will often align with partners' existing roles and responsibilities.

**Discussions with partners have provided a strong steer that there should also be an overarching partnership or forum to specify, guide and scrutinise Plan achievements.** Such a group met initially in January 2025. It is intended that this should have an inclusive, adaptive membership - involving a wider group of stakeholders - and be able to take an overall view.

The Plan Partnership group will guide and report on the implementation of this Plan and be able to contribute to review of it.

Partners will be encouraged to use the Partnership Plan to inform their own strategies and plans, and to share and celebrate those contributions to National Park purposes. The National Park Authority will publish regular reports on progress and impacts.

The lists of lead and key partners identified in this Plan are not intended to be exhaustive. Many other organisations, communities and individuals are involved in delivery.

## 1.13 Four themes for Partnership action

**The Partnership Plan is based on action across four complementary themes:**

- **Conservation**
- **Cultural Heritage and Connection**
- **Climate and Natural Resources**
- **Communities**

The themes relate directly to National Park purposes and the special qualities. They align with Welsh Government's well-being, climate, natural resource and ecosystem resilience goals<sup>10</sup>. Six missions reflect National Park purposes and the National Park Authority's duty in pursuit of the purposes.

The themes and missions also align with:

- the principles of sustainable management of natural resources

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<sup>9</sup> Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's Corporate and Resources Plan and delivery plans set out in detail the Authority's roles in implementation, and partners involved.

<sup>10</sup> Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015



- priorities identified in the South West Area Statement and the Marine Area Statement prepared by Natural Resources Wales
- key legislation, policy and guidance, current examples of which are listed at Annex 1

Theme	Mission	Links to well-being goals
<b>Conservation</b>	Conserve and enhance landscapes, seascapes, natural beauty and wildlife.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A resilient Wales</li> <li>• A healthier Wales</li> <li>• A prosperous Wales</li> <li>• A Wales of more cohesive communities</li> <li>• A more equal Wales</li> <li>• A globally responsible Wales</li> </ul>

Theme	Mission	Links to well-being goals
<b>Cultural Heritage and Connection</b>	<p>Conserve and enhance cultural heritage, including promotion of the Welsh language.</p> <p>Enhance equitable access to the National Park and promote the enjoyment, understanding and health benefits of its special qualities for all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</li> <li>• A healthier Wales</li> <li>• A more equal Wales</li> <li>• A prosperous Wales</li> <li>• A Wales of more cohesive communities</li> </ul>

Theme	Mission	Links to well-being goals
<b>Climate and Natural Resources</b>	<p>Reduce and adapt to the impacts of climate change</p> <p>Manage natural resources sustainably</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A globally responsible Wales</li> <li>• A resilient Wales</li> <li>• A healthier Wales</li> <li>• A prosperous Wales</li> <li>• A more equal Wales</li> </ul>

Theme	Mission	Links to well-being goals
<b>Communities</b>	Foster the socio-economic well-being of National Park communities in the pursuit of National Park purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Wales of more cohesive communities</li> <li>• A prosperous Wales</li> <li>• A healthier Wales</li> <li>• A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</li> <li>• A more equal Wales</li> </ul>

## 2 The special qualities of the National Park

### 2.1 What are the special qualities?

The Environment Act 1995 refers to “special qualities of the National Park” in the context of the second purpose of the National Park, which is:

***“to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.”***

The National Park Authority maintains a list of special qualities, based on people’s views and on formal landscape assessments. Conservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the National Park is a strategic aim of development planning policy in the National Park.

The list of special qualities is periodically reviewed. In 2024, the National Park Authority asked people what they consider to be the special qualities of the National Park. People were also asked to list the risks to those qualities, and to suggest any extra action needed to protect them.

The survey has resulted in this Plan in a renewed emphasis on Welsh language and dialects, and on the sensory environment of the National Park - including expansive seascapes, the sensitivity of the sea horizon to development, characteristic soundscapes and dark skies.

**The special qualities of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park are:**

- Landscapes and seascapes of exceptional diversity and quality
- Outstanding coastal scenery
- Distant, uninterrupted views and open horizons
- Beaches
- Spectacular geology and geomorphology
- Rich and varied wildlife
- Tranquillity, soundscapes and wildness
- Dark skies
- Rich heritage and culture
- Welsh language and Pembrokeshire dialects
- Historic patterns of settlement and buildings
- Historic patterns of land use and traditional boundaries
- Excellent opportunities to enjoy and experience the National Park
- A comprehensive network of Rights of Way
- The combination of special qualities
- A sense of community and stewardship

## 2.2 Statements of significance

The table below seeks to capture the essence of people's experiences of the special qualities of the National Park.

<b>Landscapes and seascapes of exceptional diversity and quality</b>	<b>The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park is a living, working landscape of outstanding natural beauty and national importance.</b> This unique area of Wales enables people to enjoy and explore many different coastal and inland landscapes, within a relatively small area.
<b>Outstanding coastal scenery</b>	<b>This is the only national park in the UK designated primarily for its coastline.</b> The National Park boundary extends to mean low water, but Pembrokeshire is a maritime county and access to the coast, inshore waters, the waterway and rivers are integral to people's experience of the National Park.  Renowned for its spectacular coastline and big seascapes, the National Park features islands and islets, sandy beaches, dramatic cliffs and rugged headlands.
<b>Distant, uninterrupted views and open horizons</b>	The hills, headlands and islands offer <b>panoramic views and breathtaking vistas of the sea, the county and even the coastlines of north Wales, Ireland and England, including Lundy Island.</b> The Preseli Hills are an open and dramatic ancient landscape of rolling heath and moorland with scattered rocky outcrops.
<b>Beaches</b>	<b>There are around sixty beaches with public access in the National Park.</b> These include extensive, sandy and accessible beaches, small, pebbly and remote bays and coves, and everything in between. On some beaches, such as Tenby North, the townscape and harbour setting is as much a part of the experience as the natural environment is elsewhere.  <b>Beaches are one of the most accessible and accessed features of the National Park, and integral to its character.</b> For the most part - and particularly away from peak visitor times - beaches offer a wild and remote experience where people can be close to, if not actually immersed in, the elements.
<b>Spectacular geology and geomorphology</b>	<b>The area is exceptional geologically. Earth heritage was a key reason for the National Park's designation.</b> Rugged cliffs and rock formations relate the ongoing story of millions of years of geological activity.  The National Park contains evidence of ancient landscapes, fossil remains, and geological processes which are observable today, making it a world-renowned resource for research and education.

<p><b>Rich and varied wildlife</b></p>	<p><b>The National Park is renowned for its biodiversity, including rare habitats and endangered species.</b></p> <p>Coastal birds - such as chough, skylark and stonechat - and a range of small mammals, reptiles and insects thrive in coastal habitat mosaics. Seabirds, such as puffins and razorbills, nest on the islands and on cliffs.</p> <p>The Preseli Hills are a haven for upland birds. Lowland heath supports a rich diversity of insects, including a range of pollinators and the rare Southern damselfly. Dormice are found in north Pembrokeshire woodlands, while the Castlemartin Training Area is one of a few places in the UK where the shrill carder bee is found. Twelve of the UK's 16 bat species can be found in the National Park.</p> <p>The wood-fringed reaches of the estuary and Cleddau rivers are a peaceful sanctuary for waders and waterfowl.</p> <p>The coast, inshore waters and islands include internationally important seabird colonies and are home to a wide range of marine species. Atlantic grey seals give birth on the shores and dolphins and porpoises can be seen in coastal waters. Rarer sightings include basking sharks, sunfish and turtles.</p>
<p><b>Tranquillity, soundscapes and wildness</b></p>	<p><b>The National Park offers a year-round feast of sensory restoratives - peace, birdsong, and the tang of salt air.</b></p> <p>Everyone has their own idea of what tranquillity and wildness mean, but they usually imply a sense of distance or remoteness - from roads, from built-up areas and / or from people.</p> <p>Limitless sea, semi-natural habitats and natural soundscapes add to the impression of tranquillity, and so wildness / remoteness and tranquillity are often, but by no means always, found together.</p>
<p><b>Dark skies</b></p>	<p><b>Darkness reveals the humbling grandeur of the night sky, looking in many respects as it did to those who came before us.</b></p> <p>Large areas of the National Park are relatively free of light pollution, and there are eight Dark Sky Discovery Sites in the National Park. These are accessible sites, with associated parking, which afford good views of the night sky on cloudless, moonless nights.</p>
<p><b>Rich heritage and culture</b></p>	<p><b>The National Park showcases evidence of human activity over thousands of years, in the form of finds, monuments, parks and gardens and entire landscapes.</b></p> <p>These, and the natural environment, serve as a backdrop for</p>

	countless tales, legends, and folklore, reflecting a unique Welsh heritage.
<b>Welsh language and Pembrokeshire dialects</b>	<p><b>The National Park is a melting-pot of language, dialects - both Welsh and English - and slang. The language bears testament to the various collisions of people with place, inspiring literature, poetry, music, art across the generations.</b></p> <p>A higher percentage of people in community council areas in the north of the National Park are able to speak Welsh, while the Welsh language is enjoying a resurgence in the south of the National Park, supported by Welsh language education opportunities county-wide.</p>
<b>Historic patterns of settlement and buildings</b>	<p><b>Settlements within the National Park are distinctive, displaying both local building techniques and more formal architectural styles.</b> In Tenby, Late Georgian architecture predominates within the old town walls, while Newport and Angle still show the influence of planned medieval settlements, evident in both their street layouts and surrounding medieval field patterns.</p> <p><b>Local distinctiveness in building manifests itself at all levels within the built environment;</b> from small architectural details to whole building styles.</p> <p><b>The character of many towns, villages and hamlets is shaped by their historical functions.</b> Solva, for example, has a traditional appearance, with buildings reflecting its history as an industrial harbour settlement and as a key site for the post-medieval lime trade.</p> <p><b>Rural farmsteads, country houses and cottages characterise the landscape, typically of simple and solid proportions and often occupying older sites. There are also many churches and chapels, the former often on ancient sites.</b> The settings of these buildings are often important, including historic boundaries and curtilage structures.</p>
<b>Historic patterns of land use and traditional boundaries</b>	<p><b>The National Park is today essentially a managed landscape, with large areas of the landscape, and wildlife, shaped by farming.</b> Today, this is predominantly dairy farming, with beef, sheep, and some arable.</p> <p><b>Traditional boundaries, including iconic Pembrokeshire hedgerows, hedgebanks and cloddiau, farm woods and trees in the landscape form an intricate patchwork. This is one of the National Park's most distinctive landscape features, and uncommon elsewhere.</b></p>

	Traditional boundaries define, bind and have helped preserve smaller field parcels. Along roadsides and rights of way, traditional boundaries create a sense of enclosure and familiarity. They also provide a network essential to wildlife, while fieldnames hint at former land uses, structures or ownerships.
<b>Excellent opportunities to enjoy and experience the National Park</b>	<p><b>With natural and cultural attractions like these, the National Park is also exceptionally well-served with the recreational opportunities to discover them and to derive benefits to health and well-being.</b></p> <p>Visitors are drawn from near and far, with almost 8 million visitor days in 2023, making Pembrokeshire Coast a top destination for people seeking relaxation, exploration, or adventure.</p>
<b>A comprehensive network of Rights of Way</b>	<p><b>Walking is by far the most significant recreational activity in the National Park.</b> The Pembrokeshire Coast Path National Trail is 300km and an exceptional resource. Inland are secret valleys, ancient woodlands and tranquil rivers to explore and absorb, accessible via an additional 1,000+ km of inland rights of way and 6,600 hectares of access land.</p> <p>Rights of way provide links between communities and enable people to find health, happiness, solace and solitude in the fresh air, wide-open spaces, inshore waters and characteristic soundscapes of the National Park.</p>
<b>The combination of special qualities</b>	<p><b>The combination of these diverse special qualities, in this relatively small area, can be considered to be a special quality in its own right.</b></p> <p>By considering the special qualities in combination as well as individually, partners can maintain, restore and shape the distinctiveness of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park for future generations.</p>
<b>A sense of community and stewardship</b>	<p><b>For all these reasons and more, residents and visitors forge lifelong bonds with the Pembrokeshire Coast. The National Park provides a shared focus and unites people in a sense of community and stewardship, place, identity, and pride.</b></p>

## 3 Conservation

### 3.1 Background

National Park purposes are based on conserving natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage. These three elements underpin landscape quality and function and are often best considered together.

Healthy, connected habitats are crucial to wildlife and to the functioning and resilience of the broader ecosystem. Cultural heritage, including historic land use and field patterns, is also integral to the connectivity and appeal of the landscape.

Land management today is a major factor affecting natural processes, ecosystem health and carbon emissions. Conservation efforts aim to encourage and enable sustainable agriculture and forestry as a means of restoring ecologically rich, historically significant, and economically viable landscapes.

In 2022, the Welsh Government published recommendations for nature recovery, emphasising the need for effective management of designated landscapes, with an immediate action to develop in designated landscapes prioritised action plans for nature restoration.

**A key national commitment, and goal of this Plan, is the 30x30 target: to protect 30% of the planet's surface by 2030. Achieving this will require significant expansion, improvement, and connection of conservation areas based on the principle of resilient ecological networks.**

Beyond 30x30, the ambition is to restore ecosystems and wildlife populations to a thriving, sustainable state by 2050.

Designated conservation sites are only part of the route to recovery; the wider landscape must support these sites and itself be of greater nature value. The Pembrokeshire Nature Recovery Action Plan identifies key issues including habitat loss, climate change and invasive species, and suggests actions to reverse biodiversity decline.

A large area of the National Park is not managed for nature conservation. Welsh Government's Sustainable Farming Scheme and the National Park Authority's local *Conserving the Park* scheme operate on private land and have a key roles to play in enabling 30x30 and subsequent nature recovery targets to be met.

### 3.2 The State of the Park: Conservation

#### 3.2.1 Landscapes and seascapes

There are 28 distinct Landscape Character Areas lying within or partly within the National Park, and 44 Seascape Character Areas for the coast and inshore territorial waters up to 12 nautical miles from the Pembrokeshire coast and up to the tidal limits of the Daugleddau.



Landscape and seascape quality are vulnerable to a number of pressures. Most of the issues identified in this Partnership Plan have implications for the appearance and functioning of the landscape. However, the following are of particular relevance for landscape and seascape quality and for the ecological functions that underpin it:

- Land management practices, which have particular implications for semi-natural habitat and associated wildlife, and for management of natural resources such as soils and water.
- Development, including offshore development, which needs to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the National Park<sup>11</sup>.
- Climate change, which could significantly alter the distribution of biodiversity, crops, farming practice, and the appearance of the coast, low lying areas and hills.

Natural Resources Wales' LANDMAP visual and sensory layer will be reviewed during the life of this Plan. The output will update information on the condition and identification of pressures and trends on these aspects of the National Park.

### 3.2.2 Wildlife

The biodiversity importance of the National Park is reflected in the high number of designated conservation sites. The following lie wholly or partly within the National Park:

- 15 Special Areas of Conservation covering over 9,000 hectares<sup>12</sup>. Based on data collected by Natural Resources Wales, the status of features of Special Areas of Conservation lying wholly or partly within the National Park that are in favourable condition is 36%.
- 5 Special Protection Areas covering 2,400 hectares<sup>13</sup>. The status of features of Special Protection Areas lying wholly or partly within the National Park that are in favourable condition is 75%.
- The boundaries of three marine European Marine Sites<sup>14</sup> overlap 100% of the National Park's coastline.
- 60 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, covering 11,355 hectares. About 80% of the length of the National Park coastline is designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
- 7 National Nature Reserves: Pengelli Forest, Ramsey, Skokholm, Skomer, Stackpole, Ty Canol, and Grassholm
- 1 Marine Conservation Zone: Skomer
- 1 Local Nature Reserve: Freshwater East

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<sup>11</sup> This is of particular relevance in the context of major energy / decarbonisation development - such as offshore wind turbines - and associated infrastructure, which may have a visual impact on the National Park, even if located outside the boundary.

<sup>12</sup> Bristol Channel Approaches, Cardigan Bay, Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries, Cleddau Rivers, Gweunydd Blaencleddau, Limestone Coast of South West Wales, North Pembrokeshire Woodlands, North West Pembrokeshire Commons, Pembrokeshire Bat Sites and Bosherton Lakes, Pembrokeshire Marine, Preseli, River Teifi, St Davids, West Wales Marine, Yrbeston Tops.

<sup>13</sup> Ramsey and St Davids Peninsula Coast, Skokholm and Skomer, Grassholm, Castlemartin Coast, and Carmarthen Bay.

<sup>14</sup> Cardigan Bay Special Area of Conservation, Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries European Marine Sites, Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation.

The state of wildlife remains a major concern going into this Plan cycle. *The State of Nature: Wales 2023* reports that Welsh wildlife has in general decreased by 20% since 1994, and one in six species in Wales is at risk of extinction.

Although 11% of Wales' land is designated for nature conservation, only 35% of assessed features are in favourable condition. Half of Wales' marine area is included in marine protected areas, but fewer than 50% of the features within them are in favourable condition.

The marine environment faces a number of challenges. Climate change is affecting species distribution and the health of marine ecosystems, invasive non-native species may displace native species, while human activities such as fishing and tourism can result in disturbance.

About 60% of the National Park land area is managed for production of food or forage. Around a fifth of the National Park might be said to be managed explicitly for or compatibly with conservation of the natural environment<sup>15</sup>. To this may be added an unknown area of land managed privately for conservation.

The 30x30 target therefore seems achievable, although management for conservation does not necessarily equate to conservation outcomes in terms of favourable condition for habitats and species. Also, despite many success stories, the state of Wales' biodiversity in general suggests that the 30x30 target area should be greater, and that factors such as patch size and connectivity need also to be considered as integral to the target.

### 3.2.3 Tranquillity

Tranquillity is "a state of calm and quietude associated with peace, considered to be a significant asset of a landscape"<sup>16</sup>.

Although a significant area of the National Park can be considered tranquil by most definitions, traffic noise and insensitive or illegal use of vehicles can erode peace and quiet. Military activity generates significant amounts of noise. Wind turbines, electrical and communication infrastructure may be sited in prominent / remote areas and can detract from the semi-natural aspect or perceived wildness of an area.

Tranquillity is rarely about silence. It includes sounds which contribute to sense of place, such as farmland birdsong or the hum of insects. Restoring lost natural soundscapes, a consequence of biodiversity loss, is likely to be a far more challenging issue than that of addressing unwanted noise.

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<sup>15</sup> See section 1.8 in this plan: "Who owns the National Park?"

<sup>16</sup> (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environment Management and Assessment, 2013, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition).

### 3.2.4 Night skies

Based on dark sky mapping commissioned by Natural Resources Wales<sup>17</sup>, large areas of the National Park are relatively free of light pollution.

There are however significant light sources (including sources outside the National Park) as well as light originating from individual agricultural or business sources in what are otherwise dark areas.

There are eight Dark Sky Discovery Sites in the National Park. These are accessible sites, with associated parking, which afford good views of the night sky on cloudless, moonless nights.

### 3.2.5 Earth heritage

There are 51 Geological Conservation Review sites in the National Park, covering an estimated 40% of the Park's coastline (excluding the Milford Haven Waterway, which includes one site) and several inland areas. Many Geological Conservation Review sites are of international significance. 72% of Geological Conservation Review site features are in "favourable / improved / no change" condition.

Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites are a non-statutory designation intended to complement Geological Conservation Review sites. There are 66 candidate Regionally Important Geological Sites in the National Park. Most of these are in coastal locations and are in favourable condition.

## 3.3 Conservation: mission

**Conserve and enhance landscapes, seascapes, natural beauty and wildlife.**

## 3.4 Conservation: results

1. We will conserve and enhance landscape and seascape quality.
2. We will preserve distant, uninterrupted views and open horizons.
3. We will reduce the impact of light pollution on wildlife and people.
4. We will conserve earth heritage sites.
5. We will conserve and improve soil health and enhance natural carbon stores.
6. We will promote ecosystem recovery at scale (the 30x30 target) and improve the state of wildlife on land and in the marine environment (as a milestone to clear recovery by 2050).
7. We will increase the connectivity of the landscape for wildlife.
8. We will achieve favourable conservation status on high nature value sites.
9. We will maintain and enhance species for which Pembrokeshire is uniquely important.
10. We will support a wide range of people to take action for nature.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.landuse.co.uk/projects/dark-skies-map-natural-resources-wales/> Map showing light pollution, commissioned by Natural Resources Wales  
<https://luc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/1cd6ba8a1d7d4a62aff635cfcba4a4ec>

### 3.5 Conservation: policies and measures

Policy	Results	Monitoring
L1: Conserve and enhance National Park landscapes and seascapes.	1, 2	<p>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance against <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policy 8 Special Qualities</li> <li>• Performance against <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policy 14 Landscape</li> <li>• Implementation of suitable controls on camping and caravan development</li> </ul> <p>Natural Resources Wales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LANDMAP visual and sensory layer</li> </ul>
L2: Protect and enhance dark night skies.	3	<p>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance against <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policy 9 Light Pollution</li> <li>• Retrofit projects in the National Park</li> </ul> <p>Natural Resources Wales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LANDMAP visual and sensory layer</li> </ul>

Policy	Results	Monitoring
L3: Protect and enhance earth heritage.	4, 5	<p>Natural Resources Wales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geological Conservation Review site monitoring</li> <li>• LANDMAP physical layer</li> </ul> <p>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance against <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policy 12 Local Areas of Nature Conservation or Sites of Geological Interest</li> <li>• Project data and Conservation Well-being Objective indicators, Operational Review reports and case impact studies</li> </ul>
L4: Protect and enhance natural soundscapes.	6, 7, 8, 9	<p>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance against <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policy 8 Special Qualities</li> <li>• Project data and Conservation Well-being Objective indicators, Operational Review reports and case impact studies</li> </ul> <p>Natural Resources Wales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LANDMAP visual and sensory layer</li> </ul>

Policy	Results	Monitoring
E1: Conserve and enhance biodiversity quality, extent and connectivity at scale.	6, 7, 8, 9	<p>Natural Resources Wales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State of Natural Resources Reporting</li> <li>• Habitats and species monitoring</li> <li>• LANDMAP ecological layer</li> </ul> <p>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 6 reporting<sup>18</sup></li> <li>• Project data and Conservation Well-being Objective indicators, Operational Review reports and case impact studies</li> <li>• Performance against <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policy 10 Sites and Species of European Importance</li> <li>• Performance against <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policy 11 Nationally Protected Sites and Species</li> <li>• Performance against <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policy 12 Local Areas of Nature Conservation or Sites of Geological Interest</li> </ul>
E2: Conserve and enhance marine biodiversity.	6, 8, 9	<p>Natural Resources Wales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State of Natural Resources Reporting</li> <li>• Habitats and species monitoring</li> </ul>

<sup>18</sup> Environment (Wales) Act 2016 section 6: Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty

### 3.6 Conservation: action 2025-2029

See also workstreams under Climate and Natural Resources.

#### Workstream: Natural beauty

Ref	Partner action	Lead	Key delivery partners
L1/A	Protect important visual amenity of the National Park from development, e.g. energy generation and major development, including cumulative and in-combination effects.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Pembrokeshire County Council
L1/B	Ensure that development does not have unacceptable adverse landscape and seascape impacts and delivers high quality design.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	The Crown Estate
L1/C	Manage the impacts of permitted development rights for camping and caravan sites.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Site operators
L1/D	Reduce the visual impact of existing infrastructure, e.g. telecommunications and power distribution networks, for example by undergrounding cables or sharing towers.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Utility companies
L1/E	Manage litter, including seaborne litter, and raise awareness of its impacts.	Pembrokeshire County Council	Keep Wales Tidy  Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

#### Workstream: Dark skies

Ref	Partner action	Lead	Key delivery partners
L2/A	Reduce light pollution from domestic, community, business and industrial premises through awareness and grant assistance.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Prosiect Nos
L2/B	Adopt and promote planning guidance on lighting within the National Park.	Welsh Government	Designated landscapes in Wales  Natural Resources Wales
L2/C	Manage lighting in line with Local Development Plan policy.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	

L2/D	Increase public awareness of dark skies.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	
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### Workstream: Earth heritage

Ref	Partner action	Lead	Key delivery partners
L3/A	Conserve and enhance Geological Conservation Review sites and Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites.	Natural Resources Wales	Land managers

### Workstream: Natural soundscapes

Ref	Partner action	Lead	Key delivery partners
L4/A	Contribute to the delivery of the Noise and Soundscape Plan for Wales 2023-2028.	Welsh Government	Pembrokeshire County Council
L4/B	Share noise monitoring data between relevant authorities.	Pembrokeshire County Council	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

### Workstream: Nature recovery on land

Ref	Partner action	Lead	Key delivery partners
E1/A	Develop a prioritised action plan for nature restoration in the National Park, based on the development of resilient ecological networks and contributing to national statutory targets.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership  Wales Biodiversity Partnership
E1/B	Deliver nature-based solutions and practical conservation land management projects to deliver biodiversity benefits <sup>19</sup> .	Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership	Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park  Pembrokeshire Sustainable

<sup>19</sup> Examples include; collaborate in development and implementation of the Sustainable Farming Scheme; deliver locally-tailored agri-environment assistance (including advice, capital grants, management agreements, help with grazing, access to volunteers, conservation covenants, novel approaches and adaptation) in support of biodiversity restoration (e.g. hay meadows, marshy grassland, semi-natural woodland, wood pasture, trees in the landscape, field boundaries, hedges and stream corridors, including designated nature conservation sites and other high nature value sites).



			Agriculture Network
E1/C	Support farmers, especially the dairying sector, to reduce impacts on soil and water through regenerative practices.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority  Welsh Government	Pembrokeshire Sustainable Agriculture Network
E1/D	Collaborate with other designated landscapes to achieve nature conservation results at scale.	Tirweddau Cymru / Landscapes Wales	
E1/E	Achieve favourable conservation status on high nature value sites.	Natural Resources Wales, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Buglife  Butterfly Conservation  Royal Society for the Protection of Birds  Wildlife Trust South and West Wales
E1/F	Implement specific projects to conserve species for which Pembrokeshire is uniquely important <sup>20</sup> and local places for nature.	Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership	Buglife  Butterfly Conservation  Royal Society for the Protection of Birds  Wildlife Trust South and West Wales
E1/G	Manage invasive non-native and /or harmful species and pathogens.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority  Welsh Government	European Marine Sites Relevant Authority Groups <sup>21</sup>  Land managers

<sup>20</sup> E.g. Southern damselfly, a feature of the Preseli Special Area of Conservation

<sup>21</sup> Cardigan Bay Special Area of Conservation, Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries European Marine Sites, Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation

			Pembrokeshire County Council
E1/H	Manage and mitigate wildfire risks through appropriate public engagement, best practice awareness and practical support.	Pembrokeshire Wildfire Group	
E1/I	Ensure planning applications deliver net benefit for biodiversity.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Developers
E1/J	Directly manage sites of actual or potential nature value, through purchase or lease, where this is a cost-effective conservation management option.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Community groups
E1/K	Reduce wildlife crime and take appropriate action if it occurs.	Dyfed-Powys Police	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
E1/L	Prevent and remediate damage to conservation features of designated sites.	Natural Resources Wales	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
E1/M	Support locally produced, environmentally sound and socially responsible food.	Pembrokeshire Local Food Partnership	Farmers' Union of Wales  National Farmers' Union Cymru  Soil Association
E1/N	Resist proposals which have a likely significant adverse effect (either alone or in combination with other plans and projects) on the UK National Site Network, unless they satisfy the legal tests within the Habitats Regulations.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Natural Resources Wales
E1/O	Develop nature recovery projects which also help increase the range of people able to participate in these activities.	Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership	
E1/P	Reduce lighting impacts on vulnerable species.	Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership	

#### Workstream: Nature recovery in the marine environment

Ref	Partner action	Lead	Key delivery partners
E2/A	Deliver the management schemes for the marine UK National Site Network.	European Marine Sites Relevant Authority Groups	

E2/B	Manage bait-digging and species collection in the intertidal zone.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	European Marine Sites Relevant Authority Groups
E2/C	Improve the environmental state of the Milford Haven Waterway e.g. with regard to water quality standards.	Nutrient Management Boards	Farmers' Union of Wales  Milford Haven Waterway Environmental Surveillance Group  National Farmers' Union Cymru
E2/D	Restore seagrass and saltmarsh habitats.	European Marine Sites Relevant Authority Groups	Dale Seagrass Stakeholder Group  Sky Ocean Rescue  World Wide Fund for Nature
E2/E	Deliver the management objectives of the Skomer Marine Conservation Zone.	Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales  Natural Resources Wales	Skomer Marine Conservation Zone Advisory Committee
E2/F	Reduce lighting impacts on vulnerable species (e.g. Manx shearwater).	Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership  European Marine Sites Relevant Authority Groups	Shipowners / charterers
E2/G	Manage recreational disturbance to wildlife e.g. through codes of conduct, restrictions, awareness-raising and legal enforcement.	European Marine Sites Relevant Authority Groups  Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum	Natural Resources Wales  Recreation providers
E2/H	Maintain and implement marine contingency planning and response procedures.	Pembrokeshire County Council	Contingency planning and emergency

			response partners
E2/I (see also N4/E)	Reduce plastics and microplastics in the environment and at source.	Welsh Government	Keep Wales Tidy  Local authorities, and industry stakeholders  Natural Resources Wales  Waste and Resources Action Programme
E2/J	Manage Wales' Marine Protected Area Network and wider coastal and marine environment sustainably.	Welsh Government	European Marine Sites Relevant Authority Groups  Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum

## 4 Cultural Heritage and Connection

### 4.1 Background

A core purpose of National Parks is to foster enjoyment and understanding of their special qualities by the public.

Encouraging a deeper connection with nature and heritage is essential for people's health and well-being and to ensuring that the environment is understood, valued, and celebrated by current and future generations.

The Welsh Government has in place a national framework for social prescribing. Consultation on the draft Partnership Plan highlighted the role that partners can play in contributing to the social prescribing and the wider well-being agenda in Wales linked to heritage, nature and outdoor activities. Many of the key partners involved in delivery of this Plan are engaged with Public Health Wales's *Hapus* platform<sup>22</sup> in support of mental well-being.

The Cultural Heritage and Connection theme is about enabling people to experience the beauty, tranquillity, and historical and cultural significance of the Pembrokeshire Coast, including the Welsh language - helping to ensure that the special qualities are conserved, enhanced and accessible to everyone. It is recognised that some groups face additional barriers to enjoying, understanding and accessing the National Park. The National Park Authority and partners can play an important role in working together and with others on initiatives to address this.

The Pembrokeshire Coast Path National Trail and other infrastructure features which support enjoyment and understanding require ongoing maintenance and care, and face new challenges as a result of climate change.

### 4.2 The State of the Park: Cultural Heritage and Connection

#### 4.2.1 Cultural heritage

73% of the 286 Scheduled Monuments in the National Park are in favourable condition (September 2021 data). Some are at risk of coastal erosion.

There are almost 11,000 Historic Environment Records in the National Park. The vast majority are not afforded legal protection. Risks stem from a range of activities, including agriculture, recreation, plant growth, animal activity, development and erosion.

There are nine significant historic landscapes in the National Park. Four are Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest (Preseli, St David's Peninsula and Ramsey Island, Skomer Island, the Milford Haven Waterway). Five are Landscapes of Special Historic Interest (Newport and Carningli, Pen Caer, Stackpole Warren, part of the Lower Teifi Valley, Manorbier).

There are over 1,200 Listed Buildings in the National Park. 33 are Grade I (of exceptional interest) and 76 are Grade II\* (particularly important buildings of more

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<sup>22</sup> <https://hapus.wales/>

than special interest). Most are in good condition, but 5.5% are identified as being at risk.

Areas of special architectural or historic interest are designated as Conservation Areas by the National Park Authority. There are currently 15 Conservation Areas within the National Park: Angle, Caerfarchell, Caldey Island, Cresswell Quay, Little Haven, Manorbier, Newport and Newport Parrog, Portclew, Porthgain, Saundersfoot, Solva, St Davids, Tenby and Trefin.

There are 15 Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in the National Park.

Local building character contributes to the distinctiveness of the built heritage in the National Park. The likelihood is that it is in some cases being eroded by neglect and mis-repair.

#### 4.2.2 Language and dialects

The prevalence of Welsh speakers varies significantly across the county. Within the National Park, 23.3% of people could speak Welsh at the 2021 census - a decline since the 2011 Census.

Parts of Pembrokeshire are known as the land of “Wês, wês” due to the dialect of Welsh spoken in these areas. The distinct Welsh dialect of Pembrokeshire can be heard in the northern area of the National Park.

The South Pembrokeshire dialect is highly flavoured by the Anglo-Norman settlement of the area when the Welsh language was increasingly replaced with the English spoken by settlers from the West Country.

#### 4.2.3 Opportunities to enjoy the special qualities

The Pembrokeshire Coast Path National Trail is 300km in length with an additional 30km of managed alternative routes at tidal crossings and military firing ranges. It is part of the 1,400km Wales Coast Path.

The Pembrokeshire Coast is a defining feature of the National Park designation and offers an almost inexhaustible range of experiences for users, including the deliberate retention of more wild and remote sections. The coastal scenery and beach and inshore recreation are the basis of the tourism product of Pembrokeshire.

The National Park Authority manages the Pembrokeshire Coast Path National Trail with funding from Natural Resources Wales in line with the Pembrokeshire Coast Path Strategy. The National Trail is therefore an intrinsic part of Pembrokeshire's tourism offer.

The Pembrokeshire Coast Path National Trail is complemented by 1,000+ km of inland rights of way, including 180km of bridleways, almost all across privately-owned land. Within the National Park these are managed by the National Park Authority under a delegation agreement with Pembrokeshire County Council. While the open network is about 87% of the total, it meets the majority of user demand.

There are about 6,600 hectares of Access Land.

There are more than 50 clearly identifiable beaches in the National Park; on most of them the foreshore is leased by the National Park Authority from The Crown Estate, with beaches east of Giltar Point leased by Pembrokeshire County Council.

The National Park Authority operates about 40 car parks, only 14 of which are charging car parks (March to October). There are approximately 9,400 car parking spaces in coastal areas of the National Park<sup>23</sup>. The National Park Authority manages about 30% of these parking spaces, with Pembrokeshire County Council managing 26%, National Trust Cymru managing 13% and other providers managing the remainder (31%).

There are excellent opportunities for accessing open-water swimming, surfing, kayaking and canoeing, wind-sports and for otherwise enjoying the water, exploring the coast and discovering wildlife. The Pembrokeshire Coast is renowned globally for climbing, and has its own styles and traditions. These opportunities bring benefits to people's health, wellbeing and personal development, as well as providing income to the area.

The coastal strip, Daugleddau and Eastern and Western Cleddau rivers form a key recreational interface in the National Park and the National Park Authority and partner organisations work to promote and manage water-related activities, subject to the achievement of management policies for wildlife, landscape and heritage conservation.

While Pembrokeshire has the highest participation rate in outdoor recreation in Wales, two thirds of residents are underactive. Across Wales, barriers to participation include time, lack of adequate public transport, transport poverty, inadequate facilities and further barriers faced by disabled people, people with health issues, people from different age groups, people from global majority groups, marginalised groups and faith groups.

The National Park Authority and its partners have been engaged in activities to make the National Park more accessible and inclusive. These include accessible walking routes, accessible viewpoints and beach wheelchair and provision of all-terrain equipment. Wider budgetary pressures facing partner organisations means that collaboration is required to develop creative and sustainable solutions in this area.

Negative impacts of recreation on the National Park's special qualities, its communities or other users tend to be localised in space and in time. While they can present challenges, they can also be solved, for example through voluntary agreements and codes of conduct for user groups.

Climate and economic factors will continue to shape visitor season and demand. Wetter winters and increased storminess will make UK holidays less attractive out of the traditional season, but warmer summers might encourage more UK citizens to

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<sup>23</sup> Includes formal car parks, informal car parks, laybys and unrestricted on-street parking in areas close to the coast and popular visitor destinations (2023 figures).

holiday at home, leading to increased seasonality and more concentrated recreational pressures.

Consequences of climate change on people's recreational experience of the National Park could include:

- changing landscape and wildlife (e.g. habitat loss, species loss, land use changes)
- movement inland of some beaches and loss of others; coastal squeeze
- more frequent and/or substantial realignments of coastal and other routes due to erosion
- impacts on rights of way quality (erosion, landslip, flooding)
- impacts on water quality (increased run-off from land, increased frequency of storm overflow operation)

#### 4.2.4 Understanding the special qualities

People's awareness of the purposes of UK national parks is generally good, and national parks are important to them. However, people find it difficult to name specific national parks and there is confusion about who owns and manages them.

While general environmental awareness is increasing, specific knowledge about biodiversity, and possibly other special qualities of national parks, is relatively poor and it is possible that it will get progressively worse, as wildlife itself declines and as inter-generational awareness of nature is lost.

#### 4.2.5 Unequal access and public health benefits

Historically, National Park user groups and audiences have not reflected the breadth and diversity of UK society. Local people also face barriers to inclusion.

Evidence suggests that, irrespective of performance in conventional learning settings, young people derive major benefits from outdoor learning and practical work, in terms of learning outcomes, health and wellbeing, and personal and social responsibility.

There appears to be a progressive separation of children from the rest of nature. This has contributed to childhood weight issues, an increase in asthma, and a decrease in cardiovascular fitness. Lack of contact with nature is also partly implicated in an increase in behavioural and emotional problems. Conversely, exposure to the natural environment, especially through active recreation and outdoor learning, can reduce stress and aggressive behaviour, increase attention span and improve mood and self-esteem.

The National Park is a great asset that can be used to support both mental and physical well-being. Opportunities and projects by National Park Authority and partners within the National Park can support people to experience the National Park's special qualities and the five steps to mental well-being:

- Connect
- Be Active
- Keep Learning
- Give
- Take Notice



The National Park Authority and its partners need to keep innovating in terms of communication and engagement, to work to remove remaining barriers to enjoying and learning about the National Park, and to reach people living within or close to the National Park boundary, as well as those beyond it.

While everyone should be able to enjoy and learn about the National Park, particular audiences will continue to exist. Young people - the next generation - are a vital audience. Other key audiences include people that live in and visit the National Park, and communities who can help achieve specific management goals.

### 4.3 Cultural Heritage and Connection: mission

- **Conserve and enhance cultural heritage, including promotion of the Welsh language**
- **Enhance equitable access to the National Park and promote the enjoyment, understanding, and health benefits of its special qualities for all**

### 4.4 Cultural Heritage and Connection: results

1. We will protect and restore designated and non-designated historic assets.
2. The National Park area contributes to the Welsh target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050<sup>24</sup>.
3. We will remove barriers to outdoor recreation and wellbeing opportunities and promote opportunities to more diverse audiences, e.g. people with visible or hidden disabilities, children and young families from areas of deprivation, people from global majority, faith and marginalised groups.
4. We will deliver projects and opportunities that embed the 5 steps to well-being in their approach, contributing to National Milestones on mental well-being, volunteering and healthy lifestyle behaviours.
5. All designated bathing water beaches achieve “Excellent” status and there is a reduction in recreation and environmental harm from storm overflow sewage discharges
6. More young people will discover and enjoy the National Park.

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<sup>24</sup> Welsh Government “Cymraeg 2050: Our plan for 2021 to 2026”  
<https://www.gov.wales/cymraeg-2050-our-plan-2021-2026>

## 4.5 Cultural Heritage and Connection: policies and measures

Policy	Results	Monitoring
H1: Conserve and enhance landscapes of historic interest, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments, buildings of interest, non-designated heritage assets and their settings.	1	<p>Cadw</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scheduled Monuments number and condition</li> <li>Listed Building number and condition</li> </ul> <p>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance against <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policy 8 Special Qualities</li> <li>Safeguarding Ancient Monument project data</li> </ul> <p>Natural Resources Wales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LANDMAP cultural layer</li> </ul>
H2: Promote the Welsh language and local dialects, and celebrate culture and creativity related to the landscape.	2	<p>Office for National Statistics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of people who can speak Welsh</li> </ul> <p>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance against <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policy 13 Development in Welsh Language-Sensitive Areas</li> </ul>

Policy	Results	Monitoring
W1: Provide and promote sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities for all.	3	<p>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pembrokeshire Coast Path National Trail data</li> <li>Inland Rights of Way data</li> <li>Project data and Connection Well-being Objective indicators, Operational Review reports and case impact studies</li> </ul>
W2: Provide and promote inspiring outdoor learning, well-being and personal development experiences for all.	4	<p>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project data and Project data and Connection Well-being Objective indicators, Operational Review reports relating to the four themes, and case impact studies</li> </ul> <p>Welsh Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National milestones data, e.g. Percentage of people who volunteer, Mean mental well-being score</li> </ul>

## 4.6 Cultural Heritage and Connection: action 2025-2029

### Workstream: Conservation and enhancement of heritage assets

Ref	Partner action	Lead	Key delivery partners
H1/A	Enhance public awareness and enjoyment of the historic environment, including landscapes, buildings and monuments, remove barriers to access and promote opportunities to more diverse audiences.	<p>Cadw</p> <p>Heneb: The Trust for Welsh Archaeology</p> <p>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority</p>	Visit Pembrokeshire
H1/B	Conserve and enhance Listed Buildings by raising awareness and promoting use of planning pre-application services.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	<p>Cadw</p> <p>Heneb: The Trust for Welsh Archaeology</p>
H1/C	Manage development in Conservation Areas in accordance with Conservation	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	

	<p>Management Plans and Article 4 direction requirements.</p> <p>Survey settlements and designate new Areas as appropriate.</p>		
H1/D	Engage and support communities and volunteers in monitoring and conservation activities relating to the historic environment.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	<p>Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park</p> <p>Heneb: The Trust for Welsh Archaeology</p>
H1/E	Stabilise and enhance monuments, including those in unfavourable condition and at risk. Record sites at risk of loss to coastal erosion.	<p>Cadw</p> <p>Heneb: The Trust for Welsh Archaeology</p> <p>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority</p>	Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park
H1/F	Conserve and enhance field boundaries, with a particular emphasis on boundaries in registered historic landscapes and / or of relevance to connectivity for biodiversity.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Pembrokeshire Sustainable Farming Network
H1/G	Implement Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> heritage policies and associated guidance, including review of Tree Preservation Orders.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Heneb: The Trust for Welsh Archaeology
H1/H	Support research and policy affecting the National Park's historic environment.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Research and education partners
H1/I	Reduce heritage crime and take appropriate action if it occurs.	<p>Dyfed-Powys Police</p> <p>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority</p>	<p>Cadw</p> <p>Heneb: The Trust for Welsh Archaeology</p>
H1/J	Celebrate and conserve local distinctiveness in the built environment.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	
H1/K	Protect and promote place names, e.g. field names.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Heneb: The Trust for Welsh Archaeology

			National Trust Cymru  Royal Commission Ancient Historic Monument of Wales
H1/L	Develop a list of local historic assets lacking statutory protection.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Heneb: The Trust for Welsh Archaeology  National Trust Cymru

### Workstream: Welsh language and local dialects, culture and creativity

Ref	Partner action	Lead	Key delivery partners
H2/A	Share and celebrate landscape, cultural heritage, natural history and the arts with more diverse audiences.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Amgueddfa Cymru – Museum Wales  Cadw  National Trust Cymru  Pembrokeshire County Council
H2/B	Implement Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> e.g. Policy 13 Development in Welsh Language-Sensitive Areas.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	
H2/C	Explore new ways to proactively integrate Welsh language promotion with National Park Authority activities.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	
H2/D	Provide guidance on the sympathetic enjoyment of monuments considered sacred and their settings.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Cadw  Faith groups

## Workstream: Enjoying the National Park

Ref	Partner action	Lead	Key delivery partners
W1/A	Deliver programmes and projects that promote an accessible coast approach creating more inclusive experiences in the National Park and helping remove barriers to access for people with specific needs <sup>25</sup> .	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority  Tirweddau Cymru / Landscapes Wales	Local Access Forum  National Trust Cymru  Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum  Pembrokeshire County Council  Visit Pembrokeshire
W1/B	Manage recreational pressures and site and community capacity issues e.g. those arising from unauthorised camping or congestion <sup>26</sup> .	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	National Trust Cymru  Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum  Pembrokeshire County Council
W1/C	Manage the Pembrokeshire Coast Path National Trail, part of the Wales Coast Path, to provide a diversity of experiences, and promote it to new audiences.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park  Local Access Forum
W1/D	Deliver the <i>Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018-2028</i> .	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park  Local Access Forum
W1/E	Collaborate to ensure all designated bathing water beaches achieve “Excellent” status.	Natural Resources Wales	Dŵr Cymru / Welsh Water  Pembrokeshire County Council

<sup>25</sup> E.g. Get Outdoors Scheme, application of the accessibility strategy within the Pembrokeshire Coastal Car Parks Feasibility report 2024.

<sup>26</sup> Sites include Abereiddi, Abermawr, Barafundle and Stackpole Quay, Cwm yr Eglwys, Freshwater East, Freshwater West, Martin’s Haven, Porthgain, Pwllgwaelod, St Justinian, Strumble and Whitesands.

W1/F	Manage the Milford Haven Waterway in line with recreation management objectives and relevant byelaws.	Port of Milford Haven	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
W1/G	Support dog owners / walkers and dogs to enjoy the Park without risk to themselves or to other visitors, farm animals or wildlife.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	National Trust Cymru Pembrokeshire County Council
W1/H	Promote water safety initiatives, e.g. Respect the Water	Royal National Lifeboat Institution	National Trust Cymru Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Pembrokeshire County Council
W1/I	Work with businesses to increase their use of Welsh in a fun, engaging and accessible way for residents and visitors.	Visit Pembrokeshire	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Pembrokeshire County Council
W1/J (see also N4/B)	Significantly reduce environmental harm from storm overflow sewage discharges, including working within the framework of the Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan for Cleddau and Pembrokeshire Rivers.	Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water Natural Resources Wales	

### Workstream: Understanding and promoting the health benefits of the National Park

Ref	Partner action	Lead	Key delivery partners
W2/A	Deliver active outdoor, environmental, heritage and arts-based recreation and learning to young people and families, including targeted projects for those from areas of deprivation or facing inequalities e.g. First 1,000 Days.	Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Pembrokeshire County Council Tirweddau Cymru / Landscapes Wales

W2/B	Deliver programmes that help people experience the 5 Ways to Well-being in the National Park, focusing on nature- and heritage-based social prescribing, e.g. walking programmes, mental health initiatives, and supporting people identified as facing barriers to accessing the National Park's health benefits, e.g. Roots to Recovery.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	<p>Hywel Dda University Health Board</p> <p>Mind</p> <p>National Trust Cymru</p> <p>Public Health Wales</p> <p>Tirweddau Cymru / Landscapes Wales</p>
W2/C	Support and engage with Public Health Wales' <i>Hapus</i> platform to promote role heritage, nature and outdoor opportunities in the National Park can play in supporting well-being	Public Health Wales	<p>Amgueddfa Cymru / Museum Wales</p> <p>Cadw</p> <p>National Trust Cymru</p> <p>Natural Resources Wales</p> <p>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority</p>
W2/D	Offer volunteering / citizen science and formal training opportunities.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services



## 5 Climate and Natural Resources

### 5.1 Background

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park is vulnerable to a wide range of climate impacts, including coastal change, erosion, flooding and wildfire. These may result in risks to people, property, heritage and wildlife. Responding to climate change is therefore an overarching theme of this Plan.

The National Park's coastal and inland ecosystems provide valuable ecosystem services, from clean water to carbon storage and nutrient cycling. Ecosystem services are essential to local communities, the economy and the broader functioning of the environment.

From reducing flood risks through the protection of wetlands and floodplains, to enhancing carbon sequestration via woodland restoration and sustainable land management, to increasing the connectivity and resilience of habitats, the Climate and Natural Resources theme can contribute significantly to Welsh Government's well-being goals, and to addressing the interrelated climate and nature emergencies.

*Local Development Plan 2* for the National Park recognises that there will be a need to help coastal communities prepare for and adapt to coastal change brought about as a result of climate change and sea-level rise.

As the National Park moves towards a low carbon economy it is important that the approach taken is fair and inclusive supporting a just transition.

### 5.2 The State of the Park: Climate and Natural Resources

#### 5.2.1 Climate projections

Climate change is projected to significantly impact Wales, leading to warmer temperatures, altered precipitation patterns, and increased extreme weather events.

##### *Climate projections: Wales*

Warmer, drier summers	By the 2050s, Wales is expected to experience a rise in average annual temperatures by approximately 1.2°C from a 1981–2000 baseline. This trend is anticipated to continue, with temperatures increasing by between 1.3°C and 2.3°C by the 2080s. Summer rainfall is projected to decrease by about 15% by the 2050s and by between 18% to 26% by the 2080s.
Wetter winters	Winter rainfall is expected to increase by approximately 6% by the 2050s from a 1981–2000 baseline.
More severe winter storms	Warmer sea temperatures provide more energy for storm systems, leading to more powerful storms with stronger winds, attendant storm surges and more intense rainfall. Storms, especially those accompanied by high tides, can significantly accelerate coastal erosion and bring large storm surges.

Heatwaves and drought	The frequency and intensity of heatwaves are expected to increase, with summers experiencing more days above 40°C. This, coupled with fuel loads, can increase the risk of wildfires.
Flooding and storm surges	An increase in the frequency and severity of flooding events is anticipated due to higher rainfall and sea level rise.

### 5.2.2 Sea-level projections

The UK Climate Projections 2018<sup>27</sup> provide extended sea-level rise estimates up to 2300. Under a high greenhouse gas emissions scenario (Representative Concentration Pathway 8.5), global mean sea levels could rise substantially by 2300. Sea levels around Wales are projected to rise by between 22cm and 28cm by the 2050s and by approximately 43cm to 76cm by the 2080s, based on scenarios for Cardiff.

Potential consequences of sea-level rise would include:

- Coastal squeeze and loss of coastal land, with beaches, roads, homes, and businesses at risk.
- Flooding of low-lying areas, e.g. at Newgale, sections of the A4319 and B4318 and the railway line between Tenby and Penally.
- Inundation of estuaries and saline incursion into groundwaters, lakes and rivers, leading to habitat loss for various species, and new opportunities for others.

The Pembrokeshire Coast is governed by two Shoreline Management Plans. These set out the policy to manage risks associated with coastal processes to people, development, and the historic and natural environments. The coastal processes considered include tidal patterns, wave height, wave direction and the movement of beach and seabed materials.

Welsh Government advises that for flood and coastal erosion risk management schemes extending beyond 2125, the 2300 sea-level rise projections from UK Climate Projections 2018 should be used<sup>28</sup>.

### 5.3.3 Flooding

Flood risk in the National Park is mostly confined to river valleys and certain low-lying coastal areas. Flood risk data and maps are provided by Natural Resources Wales and include an allowance for climate change.

Around 6% of addresses (residential, commercial and industrial) in the National Park were in 2023 within areas identified as at risk of flooding from rivers or the sea by Natural Resources Wales. An additional 1% of addresses are in areas identified to be at risk from flooding from surface water and small water courses.

### 5.3.4 Bathing water quality

Natural Resources Wales assesses bathing water quality at 29 locations around the Pembrokeshire Coast between May and September each year. The results are used to project an annual rating / classification, based primarily on concentrations of

<sup>27</sup> See also: *UK Climate Projections: Headline Findings*, Meteorological Office, August 2022

<sup>28</sup> *Adapting to Climate Change: Guidance for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Authorities in Wales*, Welsh Government, 2022

faecal coliforms present in the water. In 2024, 27 beaches were classed as 'Excellent' - the greatest number recorded. Amroth was classed as 'Good' and Wisemans Bridge as 'Sufficient.'<sup>29</sup>

There is always a risk that pollution, most commonly from sewage or agricultural sources, can impact quality in specific circumstances.

The volume of storm overflow sewage discharges is of widespread concern in Wales. In 2023 a total of 115,525 discharges were counted in Wales as a whole, with untreated sewage being discharged through storm overflows for over a million hours (data collated by The Rivers Trust).

### 5.2.5 Inland and coastal waterbody quality

Water quality in National Park waters (inland and inshore) is variable, and subject to a number of acute and chronic issues.

Water quality is impacted by issues including diffuse pollution, point source pollution, physical alteration of watercourses and invasive non-native species. The impact of storm overflow sewage discharges is of widespread concern in Wales.

Twenty-three riverine waterbodies fall within the boundary of the National Park. Of these 14 are at moderate status, 7 are good status and 2 are poor<sup>30</sup>.

All 5 transitional waterbodies<sup>31</sup> (Nyfer, Teifi, Solfach, Gwaun and Milford Haven Inner) are at moderate status.

One coastal waterbody is at poor status (Pickleridge Lagoon), 1 at moderate (Milford Haven Outer) and 3 at good (Pembrokeshire South, Grassholm Island and The Smalls, and Cardigan Bay South).

The National Park predominantly overlaps 2 ground waterbodies (1 at good status, 1 poor), although 2 further ground water bodies have very small overlaps (both poor).

The Eastern and Western Cleddau and the Afon Teifi are Special Areas of Conservation and are also assessed for compliance against new targets published in January 2021 to reduce the concentration of phosphorus<sup>32</sup>. They are failing to meet

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<sup>29</sup> Natural Resource Wales runs a water quality prediction model, based on predicted rainfall, for Poppit Sands, Newport Sands and Broad Haven. The model is run every morning. The information can be accessed on Natural Resources Wales' website.

<sup>30</sup> Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017. The Cycle 3 Interim classification will be available in early 2025.

<sup>31</sup> Where freshwater from rivers or streams mixes with seawater, e.g. in estuaries, coastal lagoons, and tidal rivers. The mix of freshwater and saltwater in these areas creates a unique environment that supports diverse ecosystems and often acts as a nursery for various species of fish, shellfish, and other marine life.

<sup>32</sup> Revisions to Joint Nature Conservation Committee monitoring guidance have led Natural Resources Wales to review its conservation objectives for riverine Special Areas of Conservation in Wales, notably with respect to phosphorus, where targets have been substantially tightened. In Pembrokeshire, the Afon Teifi and Cleddau Rivers systems are designated as riverine Special Areas of Conservation.

these more stringent phosphorus targets. The main causes of phosphorous entering rivers are agricultural runoff from use of fertilisers, manure and soil erosion, wastewater discharges and storm water runoff. High levels of phosphorous can lead to algal blooms and oxygen depletion causing harm to aquatic ecosystems. This has significant implications for any proposed new development within the catchment<sup>33</sup>.

Further assessment of compliance in January 2024, against a number of other water quality targets, including dissolved oxygen and total and unionised ammonia revealed the Cleddau Rivers and Teifi were amongst those with most target failures. Water quality impacts upon overall ecological resilience, biodiversity, drinking water provision and recreational activities.

Nutrient Management Boards have been established for the Teifi, Cleddau and Tywi river catchments. These operate in a coordinated way and are organising and enabling the delivery of long-term solutions for whole catchments, both to address the issue of excessive phosphorus in rivers, generated from existing activities and land uses in the wider catchment, and to identify measures which seek to deliver wider benefits and net reductions across the catchment.

New targets do not yet apply to marine Special Areas of Conservation. Should marine water quality targets be introduced it is anticipated that a Marine Nutrient Management Board might be introduced for marine areas.

#### 5.2.6 Water resources

Natural Resources Wales is responsible for ensuring proper use of water resources in Wales and for making sure there is enough water for all needs, including environmental needs. This is achieved by regulating the abstraction of water from our surface and groundwater resources, monitoring the environment and by working closely with the water industry and other abstractors to manage resources.

Water availability for licensing is set out in Natural Resources Wales' Abstraction Licensing Strategies.

River flows change naturally throughout the year, and the objective is to protect flow variability. Resource availability is calculated at four different flows, to provide a realistic picture of the current resource availability within a given water body (sub-catchment surface water unit or groundwater unit)<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> In line with the Habitats Directive, development proposals likely to affect Special Areas of Conservation must demonstrate no adverse impact on their integrity. In line with the Water Framework Directive, developments should not lead to the deterioration of water bodies and should support the achievement of 'good status' for all water bodies. This includes considerations for water quality, resource management, and ecological health. Development proposals must be able to demonstrate that it will at least not add to, or it will reduce, phosphate levels in the receiving waterbody. Since the publication of the 'Compliance Assessment of Welsh River Special Areas of Conservation against Phosphorus Targets' report Natural Resources Wales has sought legal advice in respect of Marine Protected Areas. Following receipt of that advice Natural Resources Wales is reviewing the data on marine water quality within Special Areas of Conservation.

<sup>34</sup> Natural Resources Wales' *Cleddau and Pembrokeshire Coastal Rivers Abstraction Licensing Strategy* (May 2014) sets out resource availability for specified assessment points.

The legal framework provides a very high level of protection to Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas. Ramsar sites and Sites of Special Scientific Interest also carry a high level of environmental importance. All new licence applications near or within these sites are subject to assessment under the Habitats Directive for potential impacts on site features, alone and in combination with other licences. The Habitats Directive Review of Consents led to some licences being changed and the Eastern and Western Cleddau now have a status of 'No Water Available' (rather than 'Over Licensed').

The Water Resources (Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2017 removed most groundwater exemptions from licensing control. Relevant abstractions in Pembrokeshire are covered by the transitional licensing arrangements.

### 5.2.7 Air quality

Air quality objectives applicable to local air quality management in Wales are set out in the Air Quality (Wales) Regulations 2000 (as amended). Local authorities are statutorily required to produce air quality assessments on a three-yearly basis, with annual progress reports. The National Park area is included within Pembrokeshire County Council's Air Quality Updating and Screening Assessments. Air quality objectives apply to benzene, 1,3 butadiene, carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, particulates and sulphur dioxide.

Pembrokeshire County Council carries out monitoring at a range of locations within Pembrokeshire. In the case of an exceedance, an Air Quality Management Area is defined and a strategy to reduce the pollutant is put in place. There are no Air Quality Management Areas in the National Park.

It is not generally possible to comment on ambient air quality away from point (industrial) sources or at roadside sources, however there is a general upward trend of nitrogen dioxide concentrations associated with vehicle emissions across Pembrokeshire as a whole.

Ammonia from agricultural sources is also an issue, and the background concentration of ammonia in the atmosphere in Pembrokeshire exceeds the critical level, above which particularly sensitive biodiversity features, such as lichens and bryophytes, are harmed through nitrogen enrichment.

Welsh Government's Code of Good Agricultural practice outlines how land managers can reduce ammonia losses to the environment by integrating good practice across livestock diets and housing, slurry storage and land application, and application of inorganic fertilisers.

### 5.2.8 Soils and soil carbon

The state of soils in the National Park is not well known but is believed to be generally under pressure from land management practices and at risk from the

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The published resource availability has not been updated since 2014, but Natural Resources Wales updates the source data in order to advise on applications for new abstraction licences and changes to existing ones.

effects of climate change. Management of water (including flooding and drought events) and soil resources are often closely linked and complementary.

The Best and Most Versatile Agricultural land makes up almost 45% of the land in the National Park<sup>35</sup>. Over Wales as a whole, the area of the Best and Most Versatile land is predicted to halve by 2080 in Wales, mainly driven by drought. Increased rainfall intensity and land management practices are contributing to higher soil erosion rates, particularly in vulnerable areas.

Soil biodiversity is affected by land use changes and management practices, with some areas showing declines in key soil organisms.

Peatland habitats cover only 3-4% of Wales yet store in the region of 20-25% of all soil carbon. Peaty soils occupy about 385 hectares (0.6% of the National Park area). Nevertheless, peatlands modified by drainage and cultivation are some of most carbon emitting soils as they lack the peat-forming mosses and high water table to sustain them.

Soils take a long time to form and, on human timescales, may be considered as a non-renewable resource. In some cases management change is likely to be urgently required to prevent loss and degradation of soils and soil biota. Soil conservation will increase resilience to climate impacts, protect future agricultural revenue, soil biodiversity, and functional roles such as those which soils play in the carbon cycle.

Although carbon storage (combined above and below ground) for woodlands is high, conservation grassland is a stable carbon store and meadow restoration is a more appropriate fit over larger areas of the National Park landscape than new tree-planting.

### 5.3 Climate and Natural Resources: mission

- **Reduce and adapt to the impacts of climate change**
- **Manage natural resources sustainably**

### 5.4 Climate and Natural Resources: results

1. We will halve carbon emissions within the National Park area by 2030 (2021 baseline). This is a milestone to the Race to Zero target of achieving carbon-neutrality in the National Park area by 2050.
2. We will proactively respond to climate change impacts on e.g. coastal communities, roads and infrastructure, and rights of way.
3. We will conserve and improve soil health and enhance natural carbon stores (including stores in marine and coastal environments).
4. We will contribute to the Welsh Government commitment to reduce nutrient inputs by a minimum of 50% by 2030<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> The Agricultural Land Classification system classifies land into five grades, with Grade 3 subdivided into Subgrades 3a and 3b. The best and most versatile land is defined as Grades 1, 2 and 3a.

<sup>36</sup> Target 7 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework focuses on reducing excess nutrients and the impact of nutrient pollution on ecosystems.



5. We will work collaboratively to reduce negative impacts of nutrient pollution on the quality and use of inland or coastal waters.
6. We will reduce ammonia emissions from the agricultural sector.

## 5.5 Climate and Natural Resources: policies and measures

Policy	Results	Monitoring
N1: Contribute to a carbon-neutral Wales	1	<p>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carbon footprint data and projections</li> <li>Performance against <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policy 33 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy</li> <li>Welsh Government Net Zero Reporting</li> <li>Project data and Climate Well-being Objective indicators, Operational Review reports and case impact studies</li> </ul> <p>Pembrokeshire County Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welsh Government Net Zero Reporting</li> </ul> <p>Pembrokeshire Public Services Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring of Decarbonisation and Net Zero project plan</li> </ul>
N2: Adapt to climate change	2	<p>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance against <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policy 34 Flooding and Coastal Inundation</li> <li>Performance against <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policy 35 Development in the Coastal Change Management Area</li> <li>Performance against <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policy 36 Relocation of Existing Permanent Dwellings affected by Coastal Change</li> <li>Performance against <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policy 37 Relocation and replacement of development (other than residential) affected by coastal change</li> <li>Project data and Climate Well-being Objective indicators, Operational Review reports and case impact studies</li> </ul> <p>Pembrokeshire Public Services Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring of Climate Adaptation project</li> </ul>

Policy	Results	Monitoring
N3: Conserve and enhance soils and natural carbon storage	3	<p>Natural Resources Wales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State of Natural Resources Reporting</li> </ul> <p>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance against <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policy 8 Special Qualities</li> </ul>
N4: Conserve and enhance water quality and restore natural watercourses	4	<p>Natural Resources Wales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water quality and resource monitoring data</li> </ul> <p>Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Storm overflow spill data</li> </ul> <p>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance against <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policy 8 Special Qualities</li> </ul>
N5: Protect air quality	5, 6	<p>Natural Resources Wales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Air quality monitoring, modelling and assessment; pollutant-sensitive species monitoring</li> </ul> <p>Pembrokeshire County Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Air Quality Updating and Screening Assessments</li> </ul> <p>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance against <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policy 8 Special Qualities</li> </ul>



## 5.6 Climate and Natural Resources: action 2025-2029

See also workstreams under Conservation.

### Workstream: Net Zero

Ref	Partner action	Lead	Key delivery partners
N1/A	Deliver <i>Net Zero Wales</i> : targets include a carbon-neutral public sector by 2030 and a carbon-neutral National Park by 2048 (the <i>Race to Zero</i> ) - requiring continued collaboration with partners to deliver carbon-neutral or low carbon options for energy, development, travel, food, to achieve a just transition to net zero and a circular economy.	Pembrokeshire Public Services Board	Local Area Energy Plan partners  Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum
N1/B	Deliver Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policies and guidance, in accordance with the energy hierarchy, sustainable design, drainage and waste.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	
N1/C	Support farm businesses to reduce carbon through offsetting and reduction measures.	Farming Connect  Natural Resources Wales	Pembrokeshire Sustainable Agriculture Network
N1/D	Continue to use the Sustainable Development Fund to support community low carbon projects.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Community groups
N1/E (see also SE1/J)	Deliver accessible and affordable public transport, active travel and low-carbon vehicle initiatives.	Pembrokeshire County Council	Greenways Partnership

### Workstream: Adapting to climate change

Ref	Partner action	Lead	Key delivery partners
N2/A	Deliver Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policies and guidance, including flooding and coastal inundation, development in coastal change management areas, relocation of development affected by coastal change.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Utility companies

N2/B	Manage coastal adaptation within the context of the two Shoreline Management Plans and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> ; collaborate on adaptation projects.	Pembrokeshire County Council  Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum
N2/C	Work collaboratively to implement the Pembrokeshire Climate Adaptation Strategy 2022.	Pembrokeshire County Council	Public Service Board partners

### Workstream: Soils and carbon storage

Ref	Partner action	Lead	Key delivery partners
N3/A	Conserve and enhance soils (supporting the National Peatland Action Programme), protect wetlands, semi-natural habitats and woodland and trees in the landscape.	Natural Resources Wales	Land managers
N3/B	Implement Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policies and guidance in relation to soil, water, air and earth heritage.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	
N3/C (see also E2/D)	Restore seagrass and saltmarsh habitats.	European Marine Sites Relevant Authority Groups	Sky Ocean Rescue  World Wide Fund for Nature

### Workstream: Water resources and quality

Ref	Partner action	Lead	Key delivery partners
N4/A	Implement Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policies and guidance including the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Systems.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	
N4/B	Significantly improve the quality of water bodies in the National Park classed as poor or moderate, within the context of the <i>Western Wales River Basin Management Plan 2021 – 2027</i>	Natural Resources Wales	Farmers' Union of Wales  National Farmers' Union Cymru

			Nutrient Management Boards
N4/C	Significantly reduce environmental harm from storm overflow sewage discharges, including working within the framework of the <i>Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan for Cleddau and Pembrokeshire Rivers</i> .	Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water	Nutrient Management Boards
N4/D	Manage flood risk, within the context of the <i>Flood Risk Management Plan (South West Wales) 2023-2029</i> .	Natural Resources Wales	Pembrokeshire County Council
N4/E (see also E2/I)	Reduce plastics and microplastics in the environment and at source.	Welsh Government	Keep Wales Tidy  Local authorities, and industry stakeholders  Natural Resources Wales  Waste and Resources Action Programme

#### Workstream: Air quality

Ref	Partner action	Lead	Key delivery partners
N5/A	Work with farmers to reduce ammonia losses to the environment from livestock management.	Farming Connect  Natural Resources Wales	Pembrokeshire Sustainable Agriculture Network
N5/B	Achieve Welsh national air quality targets proposed in The Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill.	Pembrokeshire County Council	Greenways Partnership

## 6 Communities

### 6.1 Background

**National Park purposes - conserving landscape, wildlife and heritage, and promoting public enjoyment and understanding of them - directly and indirectly result in a wide range of social and economic benefits.**

For example, the landscape can contribute to renewable electricity and heat production, while healthy soils enable farmers and communities to grow crops and raise livestock.

**The National Park Authority has a duty to support the social and economic well-being of Park communities in its pursuit of National Park purposes.**

**All the themes in this Plan therefore contribute to socio-economic well-being.**

Development planning policy and guidance help shape development in the National Park. Current planning policy for the National Park area is set out in the *Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan 2 (to 2031)* for the National Park, prepared by the National Park Authority.

Pembrokeshire County Council provides many services for communities across Pembrokeshire, including the National Park, from highway maintenance to waste disposal.

Public bodies in Wales must have regard to the socio-economic duty under the Equality Act 2010. This requires public bodies to consider how their strategic decisions can improve equality of outcome for people who suffer socio-economic disadvantage. The socio-economic well-being of communities in the National Park is affected by challenges relating to coastal and rural poverty, affordable housing, cost of living, seasonality of jobs and in-work poverty. Partners are involved in engaging young people in new employment opportunities linked to the green jobs transition and marine energy.

Through taking a socially-responsible approach to procurement, public bodies operating in the National Park and surrounding area can have a positive impact on local businesses and economic well-being of the Park.

The Destination Management Plan for Pembrokeshire has the ambition to “Grow tourism for the good of Pembrokeshire” and is guided by the following principles for the visitor economy:

- benefit local communities generating sustainable livelihoods and income opportunities
- help protect and celebrate unique cultural identities and traditions
- support the circular economy in Pembrokeshire helping businesses to develop and thrive
- conserve and respect the environment and help to restore ecosystems and natural resource
- be welcome and inclusive to all

**Local and regional strategic partnerships such as the Pembrokeshire Public Services Board and Corporate Joint Committee for South-West Wales provide an important opportunity for public bodies to work with one another to address complex challenges facing communities.**

**Local communities, land managers, businesses and developers are key partners in helping public and charitable bodies maintain the National Park's special qualities, ensuring that its landscapes continue to offer both economic and cultural value for future generations.**

## 6.2 The State of the Park: Communities

### 6.2.1 Population

- The resident population of the National Park at the 2021 census was 20,933, a population decline of 7.6% on the 2011 Census (22,644) and the largest population decline of all the National Parks in England and Wales between the two censuses.
- The 2021 Census indicates that 33.2% of usual residents are 65 and over.

### 6.2.2 Economy

- Gross Domestic Product for Pembrokeshire was £3.6 billion for 2021.
- The top two ranked employment classes in the National Park for people in work aged 16-74 are: human health and social work activities (13.8%); accommodation and food service activities (13.2%)
- The tourism economy is a critical economic driver for Pembrokeshire and the beauty of the National Park is a key reason for many to visit the area.
- Jobs are often low paid (over 25% of full-time workers earned less than £18,000 per year in 2017) and seasonal (winter benefit claimant rates are almost double those for summer).
- New sectors are developing in Pembrokeshire in particular marine energy.

### 6.2.3 Poverty

- The economy, equality and poverty are inextricably linked. There are also strong links between poverty and poorer health and well-being outcomes which if not addressed, can exacerbate existing inequalities.
- In-work poverty is an increasing problem, exacerbated by the cost of living. Rural poverty is often less visible than urban poverty.
- The End Child Poverty Coalition analysis of 2021/22 data showed Pembrokeshire as the county with the fifth highest percentage of children living in poverty in Wales after housing costs are considered at 29.0%. Child poverty is on course to increase in most of the UK.
- Housing costs are playing a role in child poverty rates in Pembrokeshire. The provision of affordable housing particularly for young people and families continues to be an issue identified at a national and local level.

### 6.2.4 Housing

- House prices and rents in the National Park are significantly higher than the rest of Pembrokeshire; the median sale price for houses in the National Park in 2023 was 9.67 times the median wage<sup>37</sup>.
- Most county council wards in the National Park are classified amongst the 10% most deprived in Wales in the 'access to services' domain of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019.
- At the 2011 Census the National Park had one of the highest rates of second / holiday home use of its general housing stock in England and Wales, at 26.7%.
- There is a high level of need for affordable housing with 4,515 people on the ChoiceHomes@ Pembrokeshire housing waiting list in October 2024. Of these, the majority were waiting for a 1 bed (2,743) or 2 bed (1,064) property.

The challenges facing local communities in terms of housing are very clear and the National Park Authority has acknowledged the key importance of delivering affordable housing within *Local Development Plan 2* and of ensuring jobs and homes for local communities, within the wider context of landscape protection.

Partners such as Registered Social Landlords and building companies are essential to deliver high quality development within this sensitive environment, and to ensure that local jobs and housing are available can support the retention of Welsh speakers within language-sensitive communities.

### 6.2.5 Transport and Access to facilities

The National Park is well-populated but the population is dispersed, which adds to the challenges of access to services and travel-based carbon reductions.

Closure of local services and the distance of travel to some services mean that access to essential services can be difficult in some parts of the National Park. This is aggravated by the relatively high number of households (13.7% at the 2021 Census) that do not own a car.

There are limited public transport options for residents and visitors. Mainline train services serve Pembrokeshire through three rail lines to Fishguard, Milford Haven and Pembroke Dock. Services are infrequent and slow and there are limited plans to enhance this provision. Bus services in Pembrokeshire are reliant on public subsidy which is under significant pressure. These present barriers to access and participation for users reliant on these services.

Active Travel Network Maps for Pembrokeshire show existing and planned walking and cycling routes. These are concentrated around designated settlements; there is further need to develop more active travel opportunity within towns and villages. Pembrokeshire's network of cycle routes is mainly on the road (due to the historical nature of the highway network). In rural areas where distances are typically greater, there is scope for safe use of electric bikes to play a greater part in active travel choices.

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<sup>37</sup> Based on postcodes that have at least a third of their area within the National Park.

Challenges for transport include the need for action nationally, regionally and locally to:

- Deliver more frequent, faster, more dependable mainline train services to Pembrokeshire. Integration between public transport modes is required to make public transport an attractive choice and provision needs to be made for visitors who wish to visit Pembrokeshire car-free.
- Support public transport services more broadly to enable a shift away from reliance on the private car and make public transport a viable and attractive option for residents and visitors. Public transport options need to be affordable and accessible to all, including older and disabled people. Bus infrastructure needs improvement: better quality waiting areas and shelters, information provision and real-time information displays, information on bus fares and improve integration between services.
- Improve demand-responsive transport services in and community transport options to assist with accessibility issues.
- Support and develop active travel options throughout towns and villages, including better provision of cycle parking within towns and villages and at primary visitor destinations.

### 6.3 Communities: mission

**Foster the socio-economic well-being of National Park communities in the pursuit of National Park purposes**

### 6.4 Communities: results

1. We will meet all Local Development Plan targets, e.g. 60 new homes per annum, of which 23 are affordable.
2. We will reduce the significant waiting list for affordable housing in Pembrokeshire (over 4,500 in 2024).
3. We will contribute to delivery of *Tackling Poverty: Our Strategy to 2023*.
4. We will develop and deliver projects and schemes that benefit those facing inequalities and deprivation, in particular children and young families from deprived areas.
5. We will address the issue of high numbers of poorly paid seasonal jobs and limited employment opportunities.
6. We will implement procurement strategies that have positive impact on local businesses, contributing to delivery of the socially-responsible procurement duty.
7. We will deliver the *Pembrokeshire Destination Management Plan 2024-2028*.
8. We will maintain and extend sustainable transport and active travel options to achieve the target of 45% of journeys being undertaken by sustainable modes by 2040.

## 6.5 Communities: policy and measures

Policy	Results	Monitoring
SE1: Foster socio-economic well-being of National Park communities (in pursuit of National Park purposes).	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	<p>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project data and Communities Well-being Objective indicators, Operational Review reports and case impact studies</li> <li>• Local Development Plan 2 annual monitoring reports</li> </ul> <p>Pembrokeshire Public Services Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing Poverty and Inequalities project monitoring</li> <li>• Strengthening Communities project monitoring</li> </ul>
<i>Please also see all other policies and monitoring in this Plan.</i>		



## 6.6 Communities: action 2025-2029

### Workstream: Socio-economic well-being

Ref	Partner action	Lead	Key delivery partners
SE1/A	Apply Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's <i>Local Development Plan 2</i> policy when determining planning applications; policy covers for example major development, defence sites, lighting, amenity, employment (fair work), housing.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority  Pembrokeshire County Council	Developers  Planning and Environment Decisions Wales
SE1/B	Deliver appropriate homes, including affordable housing, for local communities through the planning system and joint working. Apply local lettings policies applied on rural exceptions sites where appropriate and where evidence demonstrates they support delivery against desired outcomes.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority  Pembrokeshire County Council	Home-builders  Registered Social Landlords
SE1/C	Develop an evidence base on types and needs of homes (e.g. relationship with Welsh language, sharing data on second / holiday homes, considering options regarding local shared ownership).	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority  Pembrokeshire County Council	
SE1/D	Deliver <i>Tackling Poverty: Our Strategy</i> (developed as part of the Well-being plan for Pembrokeshire Reducing Poverty and Inequalities project).	Pembrokeshire Public Services Board	
SE1/E	Deliver the <i>Strengthening Communities</i> project under the Pembrokeshire Well-being Plan.	Pembrokeshire Public Services Board	
SE1/F	Promote skills development and pathways to employment and fair work opportunities within existing and developing industries in the National Park (including the marine energy sector).	Pembrokeshire College  Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority  Pembrokeshire County Council
SE1/G	Implement procurement strategies in support of the socially-responsible procurement duty.	Pembrokeshire County Council  Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	

SE1/H	Deliver the <i>Pembrokeshire Destination Management Plan 2024-28</i> in support of regenerative tourism and a visitor economy that benefits local communities, generating sustainable livelihoods and income opportunities.	Visit Pembrokeshire	
SE1/I	Support the delivery and monitoring of the <i>South-West Wales Regional Transport Plan</i> through the Corporate Joint Committee for South-West Wales.	Corporate Joint Committee for South-West Wales	
SE1/J (see also N1/E)	Support the delivery of accessible and affordable public transport, active travel and low-carbon vehicle initiatives.	Pembrokeshire County Council  Transport for Wales	Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations

## 7 Next steps

**The National Park Authority is committed to working through a Partnership Plan group and with other organisations and communities to deliver collaborative action and to monitor the outcomes of the Partnership Plan<sup>38</sup>.**

The National Park Authority will:

- work with key partners to maintain or initiate action in the various workstreams relevant to the missions
- publish regular reports on the impacts of policy and action to celebrate success and share learning
- work with partners to implement recommendations of the impact assessments, for example in relation to promotion of the Welsh language and equalities

Partners will be encouraged to use the Partnership Plan to inform their own strategies and plans, and to share and celebrate those contributions.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of the Partnership Plan please contact:

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<sup>38</sup> See also section 1.12 “Delivery of the Plan in partnership” in this Plan.

# Annex 1 - Examples of relevant legislation, policy and guidance

These examples are intended to be broadly representative of the plans, policies and programmes listed in Sustainability Appraisal Appendix A (reviewed January 2025).

## Legislation

- Active Travel (Wales) Act 2014
- Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016 including the principles of sustainable management of natural resources<sup>39</sup>
- Environment Act 1995
- Equality Act 2010
- Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023
- National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949
- Planning (Wales) Act 2015
- Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023
- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (including the five ways of working principles<sup>40</sup>)
- Welsh Language Act 1993 / Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

## Policy and proposals

- Biodiversity Deep Dive 2022 (including the 30x30 target)
- Curriculum for Wales
- Cymraeg 2050

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<sup>39</sup> Principles for the sustainable management of natural resources are set out in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and are: manage adaptively; consider the appropriate spatial scale for action; promote and engage in collaboration and co-operation; arrange for public participation in decision-making; take account of relevant evidence and gather evidence in respect of uncertainties; recognise the benefits and intrinsic value of natural resources and ecosystems; take account of the short, medium and long term consequences of actions; prevent significant damage to ecosystems; take account of the resilience of ecosystems, in particular the diversity, connectivity, scale, condition (including structure and functioning) and adaptability of ecosystems.

<sup>40</sup> Five ways of working are set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The intention is that the Partnership Plan (a plan which gives rise to projects) will fulfil (and continuously improve on) the five ways of working as follows. Long term: The Plan adopts the principles of sustainable natural resource management. Prevention: The Plan proposes ways to avoid and design out issues as well as ways of addressing them. Integration: The Plan aligns with local and national well-being objectives and goals, with Natural Resources Policy priorities and with relevant Area Statements. Collaboration and Involvement: If the Partnership Plan process is to add value it should help collaboration between partners and involve a representative cross-section of society. Plan review and implementation provides a continuous opportunity to start new conversations and forge and maintain new relationships. The Equality Impact Assessment of the Partnership Plan has identified further potential for collaboration.

- Environmental principles, governance and biodiversity targets: White Paper 2024, which includes proposals for a statutory target framework for biodiversity in Wales, delivered locally through the Local Nature Recovery Action Plan, geared to improvement in the status of species and ecosystems by 2030 and their clear recovery by 2050
- Equality plans and objectives - Welsh Government (and other associated plans e.g. Anti-racist Wales Action Plan), Pembrokeshire National Park Authority, Pembrokeshire County Council and other public bodies
- European Landscape Convention
- Future Wales National Plan 2040
- Just Transition Framework for net zero
- Llwybr Newydd: The Wales Transport Strategy 2021
- Local Development Plan 2 Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (to 2031)
- Marine Area Statement
- National Framework for Social Prescribing
- National Indicators and Milestones for Wales
- National Parks UK Climate Emergency Response Statement
- Natural Resources Policy 2017<sup>41</sup>
- Nature Recovery Action Plan for Pembrokeshire
- Net Zero Strategic Plan 2022
- Noise and Soundscape Plan for Wales 2023-2028
- Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's Well-being Objectives
- Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Next Generation Youth Manifesto
- Pembrokeshire Destination Management Plan 2024-28
- Pembrokeshire Local Flood Risk Strategy
- Pembrokeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Planning Policy Wales Edition 12, February 2024
- South-West Area Statement
- South-West Wales Flood Risk Management Plan 2023-2029
- South-West Wales Regional Transport Plan (2025-2030)
- Welcome to Wales: Priorities for the Visitor Economy 2020-2025
- Well-being Plan for Pembrokeshire 2023-2028
- Welsh Language Community Housing Plan
- Welsh Language Promotion Strategies (Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, Pembrokeshire County Council)
- Welsh National Marine Plan 2019

## Guidance and resources

- Designated Landscape Management Plan Guidance (Natural Resources Wales)
- Future Trends Report (2021)
- LANDMAP – the Welsh landscape baseline
- State of Natural Resources Report for Wales 2020 / Bridges to the Future
- State of the UK Climate Report 2023
- The National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales

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<sup>41</sup> This identifies three national priorities: delivering nature-based solutions; increasing renewable energy and resource efficiency; taking a place-based approach.

- The Nature and Us / Natur a Ni vision (2023) for a 2050 where society and nature thrive together, and where people are more involved in decisions that impact on nature.
- The State of Nature 2023
- Third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment: Summary for Wales

In future, the Partnership Plan must also have regard to the sustainable land management report published under section 6 of the Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023. The first of these is due in December 2026, so will fall within the lifetime of this Plan.

## Annex 2 – Impact Assessments

This Partnership Plan is accompanied by a set of individual statutory impact assessments.

### Equality Impact Assessment

The Equality Impact Assessment is required by the Equality Act 2010. The Authority is required (in the formative stages of policies, procedure, practice or guidelines) to consider the impact of proposals on people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010; that is, people who share a protected characteristic of age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, and religion or belief.

The public equality duty requires the National Park Authority to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different communities.

Socio-economic duty impacts have been considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment. This includes aspects of intersectionality (that is, the ways in which multiple aspects and systems of inequality interact with one another and create distinct experiences and outcomes), and socio-economic disadvantage.

Health impacts have also been considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment.

### Habitats Regulations Assessment

The National Park Authority is a competent authority under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017<sup>42</sup> (“the Habitats Regulations”). In accordance with Regulation 63, the Partnership Plan must be assessed for likely significant effects on the UK National Site Network (Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas), and Ramsar sites. Such an assessment is referred to as a Habitats Regulations Assessment.

### Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

Sustainability Appraisal assesses the environmental, social and economic implications of the Partnership Plan’s strategies and policies. Strategic Environmental Assessment requires the formal assessment of certain plans and programmes that are likely to have significant effects on the environment<sup>43</sup>. The requirements of both can be met in a single appraisal.

### Well-being of Future Generations Assessment

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015) defines sustainable development as the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals. The Partnership

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<sup>42</sup> The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

<sup>43</sup> EU Directive 2001/42/EC (“the SEA Directive”) as transposed into Welsh law through The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004.

Plan will be assessed against the seven well-being goals for Wales and five ways of working under the Act.

### Welsh Language Assessment

Review of the Partnership Plan must be carried out in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards Regulations (No.1) 2015. The Authority must conscientiously consider<sup>44</sup> specific possible impacts of policy on the Welsh language, via a Welsh Language Assessment.

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<sup>44</sup> Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council vs. Welsh Language Commissioner. The Tribunal's decision highlighted two important elements: (1) Organisations must include sufficient information in consultation documents about the possible effects of their proposals on the Welsh language, so that the public can consider them and respond intelligently to them. That means that it is necessary to do more than just state that consideration has been given to the effects. A conscientious effort must be made to identify the relevant factors and their impact on the Welsh language. (2) Direct and indirect effects must be considered.