Report 22/26
Operational Review Committee

Report of: Head of Nature Recovery

Subject: Well-being Objective Deep Dive / Self-Assessment: Conservation – To deliver nature recovery and connectivity at scale, so nature is flourishing in the Park, contributing to the protection of 30% of our land and seas for nature by 2030.

Management Team Leads: Head of Nature Recovery. Director of Nature and Tourism. Head of Engagement and Inclusion. Strategic Policy Manager.

Outcomes for Objective:

- Promote and deliver nature recovery on land and in the marine environment supporting the protection of 30% of our land and seas for nature by 2030.
- Favourable conservation status is achieved on high nature value sites.
- Increase in land managed for nature recovery in the Park (achieved through influencing and working with others and managing our own estate.)
- Increase in ecological connectivity.
- A wide range of people are supported to participate in taking action for nature.
- The management of marine designations has improved through working with partners, nationally and locally.

Outcomes this report is focusing on:

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Note: This report forms part of the Authority's reporting for Section 6 Biodiversity duty.

1. Progress Assessment

Delivery Plan	**Activities** [The things that are being done with these resources]	**Inputs** [The resources (staff, time, money) being put into an intervention]	**Outputs** [A count of what has happened as a result of these activities]	**Outcomes** [The immediate consequences and change.]	**Impact** [The higher level and longer term results.]
Nature Recovery Delivery Plan: Nature Recovery Projects 30x30	Strategic catchment focused Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) management programme.	FTE INNS officer (National Heritage Lottery Fund Nature Network Fund (NNF) 4 project budget) PCNPA budgets Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Place (SLSP) budgets Contractors Volunteers	The 2025 season April 2025 – March 2026: 21 hectares (ha) of Himalayan balsam are recorded as in progress of control 56 ha are under monitoring and maintenance Total area actively worked on between April 2025 and March 2026: 77.6 ha Total infestation recorded across all project areas (present, in progress and monitoring):	Reduced spread of Himalayan balsam Reduced impacts of Himalayan balsam Increase in floral diversity on a site and catchment level helping pollinators Collaboration with landowners and partner organisations Opportunities for volunteering, improving social connections, enhanced skills and personal satisfaction.	Contributing to nature recovery locally improving ecological condition and biodiversity. A more resilient connected landscape.

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			83.02 ha, with 14.12 ha in the Clydach catchment remain status unknown. Over the 2025 season (April 2025–March 2026), a total of 33 volunteer work parties were held focusing on Himalayan balsam control during the growing season and vegetation cutting outside the nesting season, with four events cancelled due to poor weather. In total, 577.5 volunteer hours were contributed across these activities, with an estimated value of £11,550. A total of 55 individuals were engaged.	Supporting local business / contractors Riparian and other connected landscape features in a better ecological condition.	

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			The West Wales Rivers Trust contributed 72 hours of staff time.		
Nature Recovery Delivery Plan: Land Management Schemes – 30x30	Conserving the Park Land Management	PCNPA budgets Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places Conservation Officers NNF4	At end of 2025:26: 6,607 total area (hectares) land managed for biodiversity through conservation land management activity. This is made up of: 503 ha of land owned or leased by the Authority managed for biodiversity 4,890 ha of land managed for biodiversity in partnership with	More land managed for Nature. Landowners engaged in the scheme. Increased knowledge and awareness for land managers. Greater ecological connectivity. Monitoring regime in place, which also increases	More resilient ecosystems. Carbon sequestration. Enhanced Park profile in agricultural community.

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			private landowners. NNF4 project funding supported addition of 41.30 ha. 1,214 ha of commons land managed for biodiversity. In addition; 2,945 ha were supported through Ffermio Bro scheme projects in 2025/26.	information, data and evidence.	
Nature Recovery Delivery Plan: Land Management Schemes – 30x30	Ffermio Bro	Welsh Government funding comprising £228,206 capital and revenue funding £39,355 with 100% of the annual budget utilised. PCNPA	36 projects completed across Pembrokeshire Coast National Park during 2025–2026, delivering: • 4,120 m of hedgerow creation and restoration.	Improved habitat connectivity, protection of watercourses, enhanced woodland and hedgerow management, and improved infrastructure supporting	Contribution to biodiversity recovery, improved ecosystem resilience and enhanced landscape connectivity across Pembrokeshire

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		Authority staff resources providing farm conservation advice, project development, administration and monitoring, supported by technical expertise, farmer engagement and partnership working. 1 FTE Farm Conservation Liaison 1 FTE Ffermio Bro Officer (September – April)	• 815 m of watercourse interventions. • 27 ha of woodland interventions. • 1,193 trees planted. • 135 m of traditional stone walling. • 2.15 ha of agroforestry, hedgerows, buffer strips and species-rich field margins.	conservation grazing. Increased farmer engagement in nature recovery and collaborative land management.	Coast National Park. Carbon sequestration. Long-term protection and enhancement of the National Park's natural environment while supporting sustainable farming.
Nature Recovery Delivery Plan: Nature Recovery	NNF 3 Project	Part funded by Pathways programme for 2 years	Grazing reintroduced on 11 marsh fritillary sites once grazing infrastructure provided.	Favourable management established for marsh fritillaries, southern damselflies and harvest mice.	More resilient populations of rare species.

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Projects – 30x30 Health, Well-being and Access Delivery Plan: 5 ways to well-being and equitable access – Project funding / delivery / management Engagement, Involvement and Learning About the Park Delivery Plan: Participation and Engagement		Full costs of INNS programme across 7 catchments Funding for capital works	Southern damselfly streams restored and potential habitats created. Four greater horseshoe bat hibernation sites protected by physical barriers and remedial works. Lichens protected from shading by scrub clearance and reintroduction of grazing. Transplants of rare windblown lichens to save the species and expand its range INNS control across 7 catchments Volunteers trained and mentored in SSSI	Bat sites protected from disturbance / damage Favourable management for lichen features of SSSIs Species diversity restored to areas previously dominated by INNS More volunteers able to carry out survey and monitoring work independently. Wider age range of volunteers able to monitor species and habitats.	More connected, larger areas of habitat. Habitats in better condition, including several SSSIs Larger number and wider range of volunteers able to do skilled species and habitat surveys so they can be monitored in the long-term.

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(Volunteering element)			monitoring, dormouse surveys, harvest mouse surveys, lichen transplants, chough and bat monitoring.		
Nature Recovery Delivery Plan: Land Management Schemes – 30x30 / Strategy and Evidence – 30x30 Engagement, Involvement and Learning Deliver Plan: Learning and Skills Development – Delivery	NNF 4 Project	National Heritage Lottery Fund Nature Networks 4 funding Staff: -1 FTE Conservation Officer -0.8 FTE Conservation Officer -1 FTE INNS Officer -1 FTE Castlemartin Ranger -0.5 FTE Pathways Volunteer Coordinator -0.4 FTE Project Manager -1 FTE Assistant Conservation Officer -2 FTE Traineeships	Management and capital works agreements - three management agreements signed; two capital agreements signed. Contractor-led scrub clearance at several sites, preparatory work for fencing work. Scrub and INNS mapping carried out at multiple (4+) sites in preparation for scrub and INNS treatment.	Re-establishment of grazing to help bring sites into better ecological condition. Increased ecological connectivity (marshy grassland connectivity in north). Increased monitoring capacity (volunteer input, quantitative survey techniques).	More connected ecological network, increase resilience of populations living within them Management of habitat in a way which will support Section 7 species. Larger number and wider range of volunteers able to do skilled species and habitat surveys so they can be monitored in the long-term.

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Models for the future		-0.6 FTE Resourcing/HR Officer Volunteers	Development of Rapid Grassland Assessment (RGA) prior to trial period. “Magical Moths” project to expand moth trapping in county by lending out moth traps to landowners “Wonderful Waxcaps” project to engage volunteers in recording waxcaps, with three training workshops.	Control of INNS, increasing native diversity. 15 landowners participated in moth trapping (15 new sites for moth recording), generating 3,500+ new moth records 9 volunteers participated in workshops, conducted waxcap surveys at 9 churchyards in county, recorded 18 species.	
Nature Recovery Delivery Plan: Our Contribution	Deliver interventions on archaeology/	Volunteer Line Managers across Teams	8,975 volunteer and social action hours were contributed to nature recovery in the Park and surrounding	People supported to participate in taking action for nature. Supporting 5 Ways	Contribute to evidence base for the Park.

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(Section 6) – 30x3) Engagement, Involvement and Learning Delivery Plan: Participation and Engagement Opportunities	heritage sites that also support nature. Pathways Project Wildlife Monitoring with Volunteers. Rangers support for practical conservation volunteering sessions.	Project specific funding supporting Nature Recovery volunteering – NNF4, NNF3	area in 2025/26. This is a 15.9% decrease on the 10,662 hours in 2024/25, but a 27% increase on 2023/24. This shows that there is fluctuation across years rather than a downward trend, with still a healthy level of Nature Recovery related volunteering being facilitated by the Authority. Volunteers supported scrub clearance work on 12 scheduled monuments that help improve their condition and also benefit nature. A total of 17 session were led and delivered by the Community	to Well-being approach. Volunteers trained to enable them to carry out specialist monitoring – Dormice.	Deepening people's long term connection with nature.

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			Archaeologist (see section 2 case study).		
Nature Recovery Delivery Plan: Partnership Contribution (Marine, Foreshore and Catchment – 30 x 30)	The Authority is a member of the relevant authority group for each of Pembrokeshire marine Special Area of Conservation, Cardigan Bay Special Area of Conservation and Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries European Marine Sites. The Authority is a member of the Milford Haven Waterway Environmental Surveillance Group.	The Authority allocates £5,815 between the groups in support of the Marine Sites officers and delivery of management scheme actions for the sites, and £3,090 in support of the Milford Haven Waterway Environmental Surveillance Group.	Relevant Authority Groups each meet three or four times a year. Project officers' lever in resources from external grants to deliver a range of agreed management scheme actions (marine sites) and research tasks (waterway).	Actions make a direct contribution to safeguarding marine features of European importance around the Pembrokeshire Coast.	Actions contribute to protection / restoration of European Marine Sites and understanding of the factors affecting them. Contributions to the Relevant Authority Groups and Surveillance Group are considered to provide a very cost-effective means of enabling the Authority to fulfil its statutory responsibilities in relation to European Marine Sites.

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Nature Recovery Delivery Plan: Our Contribution (Section 6) – 30x30)	Manage the Coast Path / Inland Rights of Way in support of nature and connectivity Case Study has been included in section 2.	Forms part of the Countryside Teams cutting programme Warden Team time	232 pollinator and habitat improvement Countryside Management work programme tasks were completed in 2025/26, in support of managing the Coast Path and Inland Rights of Way Network for nature recovery. LDP annual monitoring report: 355 planning applications either included biodiversity enhancements or biodiversity enhancements were requested as a condition of permission. As of October 2023, a statement is now	Approach was developed in the West area of the Countryside Management Team, where original approach was carried out as part of pollinator project. This was then incorporated into wider countryside cutting approach across all teams. On first vegetation cut of the season, only the bottom of the path is cut (no side cutting), this allows time for flowering before the second cut comes through. On all cuts, plants in flower are strimmed around or avoided. Any anthills	Increased connectivity and biodiversity.

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			required with all new applications to describe how Green Infrastructure has been incorporated. This measure ensures that all applications include net benefit for biodiversity.	encountered are cleared around to stop vegetation encroachment. Scalloped edges to the vegetation cuts were trial and error at the beginning, some came back very quickly, but now over time it is clear which areas work and are now maintained.	

2. Case Studies

2.1 Woodland planting – follow-up maintenance with volunteers (Winter 2025/26)

A Greener Camping Site near Llanteg undertook a major woodland planting scheme across four fields approximately seven years ago. Funded by Welsh Government, the project aimed to strengthen landscape-scale connectivity by linking Colby Woodlands with other areas of local woodland.

Following advice from PCNPA Conservation Officers, support was needed to help the young trees establish and thrive by removing their protective tree guards.

Led by the South Area Ranger, four volunteer work parties were organised during the winter of 2025/26, successfully removing all the tree guards across the site. Around 30 individual volunteers took part, representing the National Park Voluntary Wardens, Pembrokeshire Duke of Edinburgh's Award Conservation Group and Pembrokeshire College Skills in Employment Group.

As well as delivering practical conservation work, each session provided an opportunity to share knowledge and develop participants' understanding of:

- The importance of landscape-scale conservation and woodland connectivity.
- How to plan and deliver a successful woodland planting scheme.
- Woodland tree and plant species identification.
- The importance of long-term maintenance in ensuring the success of woodland creation and natural regeneration projects.

The project demonstrated the value of partnership working and volunteer involvement in delivering long-term conservation outcomes, helping to ensure that previous investment in woodland creation continues to deliver benefits for nature and the wider landscape.



Photograph 1: National Park Volunteer Wardens helping to remove tree guards. 13 builders' bags of plastic tubes were sent off for recycling.



Photograph 2: Volunteers removing tree guards from a Welsh Government woodland planting scheme – previously an intensively managed grassland.

2.2 Scrub Management – benefits for biodiversity and archaeology

During 2025-26 the Community Archaeologist led and delivered 17 scrub clearance sessions at 12 scheduled monuments to help improve the condition of these sites. This work directly benefits the Authority's nature conservation work as well. Over the financial year, the equivalent of 112 volunteers participated putting in 464 volunteer hours. Participating groups included Pembrokeshire College students, Friends of the Pembrokeshire Coast, National Park Authority volunteers, and National Trust volunteers. Targeted scheduled monuments included several promontory forts, bronze age barrows, medieval ruins, a limekiln, and a deserted farmstead.

Sites were largely selected based on the vegetation issues identified by heritage volunteers monitoring scheduled monuments. One was included as a result of the landowner approaching the Authority for support. Species problematic to monuments included bracken, gorse, blackthorn, brambles, ivy, and saplings. Their roots tend to cause problems for monuments as they displace, and damage remains. Unchecked, this scrub will become denser and worsen the condition of monuments further. Eventually, the issue becomes unmanageable and requires intervention that is more complex and costly.

Scrub clearance that benefits scheduled monuments in the National Park has taken place for many years. Those that have been targeted on an annual basis have shown that this issue eventually becomes manageable and places monuments in a stable or improved condition. Work on these sites indicate that this effort leads to sites that are in an improved condition for nature also. While the vegetation targeted for clearance have their benefit from a nature conservation perspective, in high density they can undermine the health of an ecosystem. A site covered by one or a limited number of dominant species results in a monoculture. This monoculture reduces floral diversity, which potentially limit the wildlife that choose to utilise the site. By undertaking scrub clearance, species becomes less dominant, in turn this can lead to an increase in plant species diversity and the wildlife utilising the site.



Photograph 3: Drone photograph of Tower Point Rath. Scrub clearance has taken place on the monument's earthworks. Following the clearance, plant species not previously observed at the site have emerged, including foxgloves.

2.3 Biodiversity and the Coast Path

The Pembrokeshire Coast Path is an important wildlife corridor, crossing coastal grassland, scrub, heath and maritime habitats throughout its length. The Countryside Warden Team integrated an annually recurring pollinator programme into routine path maintenance across the route. Rather than simply cutting vegetation back, the team created better habitat structure while maintaining safe public access. Work took place during both cutting rounds between June and September.

Bracken is natural in coastal landscapes, but extensive blocks can suppress smaller flowering plants that provide nectar and pollen.

Wardens cut irregular "wavy" edges into bracken stands at suitable locations along the Coast Path, including path margins, coastal edges and bracken corridors. Where conditions allowed, wider cuts increased structural variation. These edges increase transitions between vegetation types, creating varied light, shelter and growing conditions. Over several seasons, this should help smaller plants establish, increase diversity and provide richer nectar and pollen sources.

The team also created scalloped openings in gorse and bracken at suitable locations, using natural low points between bushes. This breaks up uniform vegetation, reduced the "wind tunnel" effect on exposed coastal sections and created varied microhabitats for insects and other invertebrates.



Photograph 4: Left: Wavy-cut bracken management along the Coast Path near Fishguard.
Right: Scallop cut gorse management near Newport, creating structural diversity and habitat edge features.

Several tasks protected existing features with significant ecological value. Vegetation was repeatedly cleared around individual ant hills and clusters, with follow-up cutting later in the season. Ant hills are important in species-rich grasslands and support many invertebrates. Keeping them open and exposed to sunlight helps colonies remain active and protects habitat that routine maintenance can easily overlook.

Vegetation was also cleared around a bridge and nearby watercourse during both cutting rounds, maintaining access to water for insects throughout the season.



Photograph 5: Left: Vegetation cleared around the watercourse to improve access for invertebrates and enhance habitat connectivity. Right: Ant hills identified and carefully avoided during vegetation management works to protect established invertebrate populations.

The Countryside Team's programme shows how biodiversity enhancement can be integrated into everyday operations without major capital works. Ecological thinking was built directly into and embedded in routine path maintenance. By changing how vegetation was cut, the team turned access management into practical nature recovery. This approach can deliver biodiversity gains across extensive sections of coast path at relatively low cost while meeting public-access responsibilities.

Benefits will become clearer over time because ecological responses often lag behind intervention. The annual programme recognises that sustained management is needed to influence vegetation development, increase habitat diversity and improve conditions for wildlife in this wildlife-rich corridor.

2.4 Coastal corridor enhancements

A good relationship with a coastal farmer near Angle is leading to positive improvements along the southern coast of this peninsula - for wildlife, the landscape and access.

The land is not intensively managed but had not been in an agri-environment scheme for some time, until Connecting the Coast three years ago. The fields are extensively managed by cattle, horses and sheep year-round, providing excellent feeding conditions for chough, for which this stretch of coast is a stronghold. A summer break from grazing was agreed for some of the cliff edge fields which now allows them to flower over the summer months, as well as removing animals from

the coast path at its busiest time. Last summer, extensive swathes of colourful flower-filled meadows bordered the cliff land.

The farmer was keen to do more with us. This summer, the next section of coast was targeted under a further round of SLSP funding. Again, a summer grazing break has been implemented, to bring colour and life back to this stretch. In addition, the derelict coastal fence will be removed, widening the coastal belt and removing pinch-points, which will enhance the visitor experience of the coast path here. A new fence has been installed further inland to control grazing times.

In total, almost 25 hectares/60 acres of coastal belt has come under agreement with us, benefitting a host of species, hopefully including the very rare shrill carder bee which is known to occur nearby, but nowhere else in Pembrokeshire.

The farmer is keen to do more with us. This extensive coastal land-holding offers lots of further opportunities to enhance both wildlife and access in the future.



Photograph 6: Coastal grassland in full flower during summer grazing break



Photograph 7: Coastal grassland under agreement and managed for maximum floral diversity

3. Challenges and Opportunities

The Authority continues to provide opportunities to increase the scale and impact of nature recovery across the National Park. Building on established relationships with farmers, landowners, conservation organisations and communities, there is potential to extend habitat restoration, improve ecological connectivity and secure longer-term management of important sites.

Developing nature-positive farming and land management: Ffermio Bro, Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places and the Authority's wider land management work provide a strong foundation for increasing the area of land managed for nature. There is further potential to support farmers and landowners to adopt nature-friendly practices, improve habitat condition and strengthen connections between existing wildlife sites. Maintaining and deepening these relationships, providing ongoing advice and support, together with required resources, including safeguarded sustainable longer-term funding will be important to securing lasting improvements and supporting delivery of 30x30.

Landscape-scale collaboration: The Authority is working with the National Trust on a Landscape Connections project bid. This provides an opportunity to develop a more coordinated approach to habitat connectivity, working across land ownership boundaries and identifying opportunities to strengthen ecological networks. The success of this approach will depend on securing funding and maintaining the commitment of partners and landowners.

Nature-based water quality improvements: The Strategic Nature-Based Water Quality Improvement Assessment for the Lower Western Cleddau, funded by Estée Lauder Companies UK & Ireland through the UK National Parks Foundation, will identify and prioritise nature-based intervention opportunities that could contribute to improving water quality in the lower Western Cleddau. A transparent, weighted multi-criteria approach will assess water quality benefit, source / pathway / receptor linkages, hydrological connectivity, intervention potential and implementation feasibility. GIS analysis will identify and map pollution sources, pathways, receptors and priority reaches using available datasets. Stakeholder and landowner engagement will support fieldwork access, inform feasibility and foster future implementation support. Targeted walkovers will ground-truth and refine the assessment, identifying opportunities and constraints not evident from desk-based information.

Outputs will include an updateable GIS opportunity and prioritisation database, mapbook, narrative report and selected case studies / scenarios. The assessment should distinguish between strategic priorities and actionable opportunities and briefly consider future nutrient mitigation / credit potential of interventions (and how this might influence take-up). The West Wales Rivers Trust has been selected via competitive tender to undertake the work. Further opportunities are being explored for funding via the National Parks Partnership.

Technology, monitoring and evidence: Investment in drone technology, including lidar, thermal and photogrammetry capabilities, provides opportunities to improve

habitat mapping, species monitoring and the assessment of environmental change. Developing these capabilities alongside established volunteer monitoring and ecological survey programmes will help strengthen the evidence base and inform more targeted management. **Drones** provide an opportunity for nature; Welsh Government funding enabled the Authority to purchase lidar, photogrammetry and thermal drones, complementing its existing fleet, including a multispectral drone. Funding also supported RPC-L1 training for three officers to fly in the specific category, providing greater operational flexibility, alongside training in processing and using lidar data.

Since 2020, in-house drone surveys have delivered significant savings while supporting archaeology, nature conservation, access and engagement. Uses include monitoring scheduled monuments and wildlife, recording coastline collapse and mapping wildfire extent. Drone use is subject to extensive pre-flight checks, which includes screening to ensure there are no impacts on wildlife. Enhanced equipment and data-processing skills offer further opportunities to expand drone use across conservation, archaeology and other work.



Photograph 8: A National Park Authority officer undertaking a drone survey to capture the condition of a deserted farmstead on the Castlemartin Range.

Challenges around accurate **data and evidence** available to inform the Authority's Nature Recovery activity still exist, including up to date condition assessments of protected sites. This does affect the measurement of the impact of the Authority's work towards wider Nature Recovery goals.

Developing the wider nature recovery partnership: The Authority will continue to develop its work with the Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership and other partnerships, strengthening coordination, shared priorities and opportunities to deliver nature recovery at a wider landscape scale. Progress in developing this area will be reported in future updates.

Climate change impacts: The Countryside Team is facing increasing operational pressures from climate change, changing visitor demands and workforce succession challenges. More frequent and severe storms are increasing reactive work, including coast path failures, erosion, fallen trees and infrastructure damage, diverting resources from planned maintenance and conservation activities. Changing seasonal patterns affect work programmes, with the extended growing season delaying winter maintenance and reducing the available time for essential works as well as habitat management works.

Alongside these pressures, workforce changes present risks to retaining the considerable local knowledge and practical expertise held by experienced Wardens. Effective succession planning and knowledge transfer will be essential to maintaining service continuity. These challenges highlight the need for a resilient and adaptable service that can respond to increasingly unpredictable conditions while continuing to deliver high-quality access, maintenance and conservation outcomes.

In summary, these opportunities provide a basis for building on current achievements. However, delivery will continue to be influenced by the availability of external funding, staff capacity, landowner participation, competing land management priorities and the time required for ecological improvements to become established.

Overall, the key challenge is securing the resources, capacity and evidence needed to translate substantial conservation activity into lasting ecological improvements. The greatest opportunity is to build on established partnerships and landowner relationships to deliver more coordinated, landscape-scale nature recovery.

4. Financial and Resource Considerations

Delivery during 2025/26 has been supported through a combination of Authority budgets, Welsh Government funding, National Heritage Lottery Fund Nature Networks funding, Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places funding and other external contributions. This blended approach has enabled the Authority to extend its conservation work beyond its own estate, support landowners and farmers, employ specialist staff and deliver practical habitat management and restoration.

Ffermio Bro utilised 100% of its annual Welsh Government allocation, comprising £228,206 capital and £39,355 revenue funding. National Heritage Lottery Fund NNF3 and NNF4 funding has also provided significant capacity for conservation projects, specialist staff, traineeships, volunteer coordination and capital works. Partnership contributions, contractor support and volunteering further increase the

resources available, with 8,975 volunteer and social action hours recorded for nature recovery during the year.

The Authority's work demonstrates the value of securing external investment to deliver wider environmental and community benefits. However, reliance on time-limited project funding presents a risk to continuity, particularly in relation to specialist staffing, land management agreements, monitoring and the maintenance of habitats created or restored through funded projects.

Looking ahead, maintaining sufficient staff capacity and securing longer-term funding will be important to sustaining existing improvements, developing new landscape-scale projects and demonstrating measurable progress towards the Authority's 30x30 ambition. The Authority will also need to ensure that future investment balances new project delivery with ongoing management, monitoring and maintenance of existing conservation commitments.

5. Contribution to Cross Cutting Outcomes:

Cross Cutting Outcome	Contribution – Activities and Impact
Sustainable Development Principles – 5 ways of working	**Long term –** outcomes delivered combine practical conservation today with investment in the ecological resilience of the National Park for future generations. The report records 6,607 hectares managed for biodiversity, alongside woodland creation and restoration, hedgerow planting and meadow creation. These activities support the Authority's 2030 nature recovery ambition by strengthening habitat connectivity and providing capacity for future carbon sequestration. Follow-up maintenance of woodland planted approximately seven years earlier demonstrates a commitment to protecting previous investment rather than focusing solely on new planting. Recurring habitat management and training volunteers in specialist monitoring also establish the capacity needed to sustain improvements and inform future decisions. **Prevention –** activities undertaken address the causes of environmental deterioration before problems become more severe or costly to resolve. Himalayan balsam control and maintenance covered a reported 77.6 hectares during 2025/26, helping reduce its spread and pressure on native vegetation. Reintroducing grazing on 11 marsh fritillary sites and

	protecting four greater horseshoe bat hibernation sites address habitat decline and disturbance. Scrub clearance at 12 scheduled monuments helps prevent damage to archaeological remains while creating opportunities for greater plant diversity. Watercourse interventions and protection, as well as biodiversity requirements within planning applications further embed preventative action. Together, these interventions help safeguard natural and cultural assets and reduce the need for more extensive remedial work. **Integration / Collaboration –** The report demonstrates how nature recovery can deliver benefits across environmental, social, economic and cultural well-being. Over 230 pollinator and habitat improvement tasks integrate biodiversity into routine access management, while archaeological conservation combines heritage protection with habitat improvement. Ffermio Bro projects connect sustainable farming with hedgerow and woodland management, watercourse protection and conservation grazing. Collaboration extends delivery beyond the Authority's own estate, with 4,890 hectares managed for biodiversity in partnership with private landowners. Joint working with volunteers, contractors, the West Wales Rivers Trust and European marine sites management partnerships, and other partnerships (e.g. Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership, Natural Resources Wales, National Trust) bring together expertise and resources to address landscape - and catchment-scale issues. This approach supports more coordinated delivery, alongside opportunities for learning, social connection and local business involvement. **Involvement –** The wide range of projects and activities enables people to contribute directly to nature recovery through practical conservation, citizen science and monitoring. The report records 8,975 volunteer and social action hours in 2025/26, with opportunities involving supported volunteering participants, schools, college groups, community organisations and landowners. Landowners

	enabled access to 15 new sites for moth recording, generating over 3,500 new moth records, while nine volunteers surveyed nine churchyards and recorded 18 waxcap species, strengthening the evidence available for conservation management. Heritage volunteers' observations and a landowner's request also helped identify sites requiring intervention, showing how local knowledge can influence priorities. Training and mentoring activities delivered as part of the work develop participants' skills and capacity for independent monitoring. These activities demonstrate meaningful participation.
Public Sector Equality Duty/ Socio Economic Duty / Reducing Child Poverty	**Public Sector Equality Duty –** activities provide opportunities for people from a range of backgrounds and abilities to participate in nature recovery. Supported volunteering, e.g. through Pathways, outdoor learning with schools, college groups and community organisations, supported practical conservation, training and community activities help promote equality of opportunity, inclusion and positive relationships connecting conservation with learning and participation. **Socio-economic Duty –** activities contribute to the socio-economic duty by providing opportunities for skills development, training, volunteering and engagement with the natural environment. Pathways, traineeships, college partnerships and farmer engagement can support confidence, practical experience and potential routes into employment, while helping connect communities with opportunities that might otherwise be inaccessible. The various projects support farming activity and opportunities for contractors. **Reducing Child Poverty –** the activities make an indirect contribution to mitigating the effects of child poverty, particularly through opportunities for outdoor learning, school engagement, youth ranger activities, participation and skills development (1st 1000 Days, Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools, Duke of Edinburgh's Award Conservation Group). These activities provide opportunities for shared experiences, environmental learning, to

	develop skills, improve well-being and access nature.
Promoting Welsh Language	The Authority's Farming Conservation Liaison Officer and Ffermio Bro Advisors speak Welsh, and the North Conservation Officer has learnt Welsh to A level and beyond. Ffermio Bro publications, press releases and social media are bilingual. Dormouse survey sessions have been delivered in Welsh. The Community Archaeologist is a Welsh speaker. Furthermore, several of the Nature Recovery team are Welsh learners, and staff have also engaged in Welsh Language awareness sessions.
Section 6 Biodiversity Duty / Sustainable Management of Natural Resources	The activities delivered during 2025/26 make a significant contribution to the Authority's Section 6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 through the conservation, restoration and enhancement of habitats, protection of priority species, control of invasive non-native species and improved ecological connectivity. The programme also supports the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources through long-term, preventative and evidence-led conservation, partnership working and community involvement. Activities such as woodland creation, hedgerow planting, catchment management and species monitoring contribute to ecosystem resilience, climate action and wider environmental benefits. Collectively, this work demonstrates an integrated approach to managing the National Park's natural resources, recognising the connections between biodiversity, climate resilience, water quality, sustainable farming, cultural heritage and well-being.
Engagement with Communities and Stakeholders	The activities and outcomes demonstrate strong engagement with communities and stakeholders through collaborative working with landowners, farmers, conservation organisations, schools, colleges and volunteers. Nearly 9,000 volunteer and social action hours were contributed during 2025/26, providing opportunities for practical

	conservation, skills development, training and citizen science. Partnership projects, farmer engagement and community-led monitoring help build local knowledge, strengthen relationships and encourage wider participation and shared responsibility for nature recovery across the National Park.
Staff Development / Volunteering Opportunities	Significant opportunities have been enabled for staff development and volunteering through practical conservation projects, specialist training, mentoring and skills development. NNF3 and NNF4 funding supports dedicated staff resources, traineeships and volunteer coordination, while activities such as species monitoring, habitat management and citizen science enable volunteers to develop specialist knowledge and practical experience and demonstrate the Authority's commitment to building skills, confidence and long-term capacity for nature recovery.

6. Overall Assessment and Next Steps

The Authority has made good progress in delivering its Conservation Well-being Objective during 2025/26, with significant activity across habitat management, restoration, species conservation, landowner engagement and community participation. A major strength is **partnership working** the Authority's ability to work collaboratively with farmers, private landowners, conservation organisations and volunteers, extending the reach and impact of nature recovery beyond its own estate.

The reported 6,607 hectares of land managed for biodiversity, alongside the additional 2,945 hectares supported through Ffermio Bro projects, demonstrates the scale of engagement in conservation land management. Practical interventions, including woodland creation and restoration, hedgerow planting, meadow creation, watercourse improvements and INNS control, are helping to improve habitat condition and strengthen ecological connectivity. Targeted projects supporting marsh fritillaries, southern damselflies, greater horseshoe bats and other priority species also demonstrate the contribution being made to improving the management of high nature value sites.

The programme is making an important contribution to the Authority's 30x30 ambition and its Section 6 Biodiversity Duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. In particular, the approach increasingly recognises the importance of landscape-scale delivery, working across ownership boundaries and integrating nature recovery into

wider activities such as sustainable farming, access management and heritage conservation.

Partnership working and community involvement remain particular strengths. The 8,975 volunteer and social action hours recorded during 2025/26, together with farmer engagement, citizen science and specialist monitoring opportunities, demonstrate a strong commitment to involving people in nature recovery and building longer-term capacity.

However, while the scale of activity and outputs is encouraging, there is a need to continue strengthening the evidence of ecological outcomes and longer-term impact. Hectares managed, trees planted and volunteer hours provide important measures of delivery, but do not in themselves demonstrate improvements in habitat condition, species populations or ecological connectivity. Continued monitoring will be essential to establish whether interventions are resulting in sustained biodiversity gains and favourable conservation management of priority sites.

There are also ongoing challenges in securing sufficient long-term funding and staff capacity to maintain existing projects, support landowners and ensure that habitat improvements are sustained beyond individual funding periods. The scale of the nature recovery challenge, particularly in relation to the 30x30 ambition, will require continued partnership working, investment and prioritisation.

Next steps and priorities for 2026/2027 and beyond – This self-assessment is based on key outcomes within the 2025/2026 reporting period, **partnership working is a major strength,** the Authority is increasingly influencing and supporting nature recovery beyond its own estate, particularly through relationships. **Delivery is becoming more strategic and landscape-scale**, demonstrating a move towards addressing nature recovery at a wider ecological scale. The next challenge is **demonstrating ecological impact.** The Authority has substantial evidence of activity and investment. The next stage is to demonstrate that this is translating into measurable improvements in habitat condition, species recovery, ecosystem resilience and effective management of land and marine environments.

There is a need to acknowledge that there is still a gap between the scale of activity and evidence of ecological recovery. The emerging 30x30 assessment can identify gaps, priorities and opportunities, to inform this approach, and will shape the Authority's Nature Recovery strategy.

The key message is that the Authority has a strong foundation of partnership working, land management and practical conservation, but must now focus on securing, measuring and demonstrating lasting nature recovery to achieve its 30x30 ambition into the future.