



Delivery of Woodlands for Wales social objectives through Glastir Woodlands

This document is a submission to the Glastir Programme Board to complement the paper **Glastir delivering Woodlands for Wales – The Gaps** prepared by ConFor, WFBP, CLA and the Management Planner Forum. This document undertakes a similar gap analysis for the social agenda expressed in the ‘Woodlands for People’ theme of the WfW strategy

Overview

Elements and strands in the Woodlands for Wales (WfW) strategy do not seem to be continued from BWW into Glastir Woodlands. Glastir Woodlands could be made more robust and effective by explicitly including elements of the social objectives of the WfW and UKWAS standards many of which were designed into BWW. Llais y Goedwig (LlyG) is concerned that the delivery of the WfW and many other WAG policies (communities, sustainability, natural environment framework etc.) will be compromised if due consideration is not paid to financial and advisory support for public and stakeholder engagement in woodland management. This needs to be at intermediate landscape scales (watershed) most appropriate to the delivery of ecosystem services and within which communities operate.

The main points raised by the LlyG gap analysis are:

- Safe and extensive public access to woodlands must be supported financially by Glastir Woodlands.
- Woodlands must continue to provide local employment and volunteering opportunities. Could Glastir Woodlands be used to support local economic development especially in ways that generate local markets in support of transition to a low-carbon and sustainable future?
- Local consultation must be a prerequisite for any woodland management plan. Support for public and community consultation must be available in Glastir Woodlands.
- We need more community woodland groups. Building relationships with owners and within nascent groups around a management plan is a proven development pathway for new community woodlands. Could Glastir Woodlands support and fund the development of these relationships?
- Glastir Woodlands should be able to cater for the diverse values that different groups place on their local/national woodlands and support innovation as well as traditional practices.

Setting the agenda

Whatever plans we set in place for the woodlands and forests of Wales, they will have an impact on local communities as much as agriculture and the timber industries. Therefore every woodland related strand within Glastir counts as part of a social agenda. However, this does not mean that everything contributes to community development or is a public benefit but we should ensure that Glastir seeks to maximise on such opportunities and is supportive of WfW and other Assembly community development strategies.

The first two sentences of the introduction of the WfW strategy places the social agenda in forestry right at the fore of what Welsh forestry is about. To quote it says 'The first Woodlands for Wales... has had a significant influence on the direction of Welsh forestry... it established the role that woodlands and trees can play in improving the lives of everyone in Wales, sustaining the wider environment and in providing opportunities for people and communities'. This is a very wide remit and it is helpful to resolve issues around themes to make them easier to address. Examination of the WfW Outcomes and the Action plan suggests four interactions between people and woodlands which are of concern to the forest manager. These are the provision of:

- public benefits (access, recreation, education, health and amenity);
- economic development (especially rural and local employment);
- civil society right to consultation on woodland management (specifically felling) and
- opportunities for community engagement in woodland management.

These are provided for in various ways in the WfW strategy, reinforced in the associated Action plan, enshrined in the UKWAS standard and formerly supported through the BWW grant scheme.

We take it as axiomatic that WAG wishes to develop and maintain high standards of woodland management. At the present time this is taken as the ability to meet UKWAS standards and that Glastir is intended to deliver non-market ecosystem services as part of the Living Wales ecosystem framework. The BWW scheme was designed to cover many of the basic elements e.g. management plan, provision for public access etc. so entering BWW would facilitate entry into UKWAS certification. This suggests that UKWAS can also provide a benchmark for a gap analysis of proposals for Glastir Woodlands.

Recommendation

Llais y Goedwig suggests a gap analysis is needed is to check whether the social agenda embodied in WfW, UKWAS and WAG social development policy has been carried through into proposals for Glastir Woodlands. If Glastir Woodlands is not the correct vehicle for incentives for delivery of social objectives then we further recommend that consideration is given to alternative support to these outcomes.

Question

- *Is Glastir Woodlands intended to facilitate UKWAS certification (i.e. continuing this strand of BWW)?*

WfW Outcomes

1. More woodlands and trees are managed sustainably
 - b) Promote the benefits of certification against UKWAS to woodland owners and managers in Wales.
3. Woodlands are better adapted to deliver a full range of benefits
 - c) During the development of ... Glastir, consider the non-market ecosystem services provided by woodlands and trees.

Providing public benefits from woodlands

In the light of the development of a Natural Environment Framework in the form of 'A Living Wales' it should not be necessary to itemise the public benefits which flow from woodlands. The WfW 'Woodlands and people' theme contains four Outcomes, two of which refer to public benefits in the form of education and recreation (leading to improved health). While UKWAS standard 7.2 goes further and also requires maintenance of 'traditional and permissive use rights'. The presumption in BWW was that access was to be encouraged in woodlands which were grant supported.

Public benefits are classically open access and subject to market failure. But such delivery of these benefits incurs costs to the landowner and as a principle these can be compensated through subsidy – or encouraged through an incentive or indeed purchased as a ecosystem service. It matters little how payments for delivery of public goods are construed, we have inherited a system where financial support for public access is a norm. The additional payments for footpaths etc provided under BWW was an important incentive for private landowners especially those such as community-owned woodlands which have limited capital to invest in infrastructure.

Proposals for Glastir are that it will not include provision for 'prescriptions' related to access let alone a higher rate for provision of public access. It has been observed that footpath creation does not necessarily lead to greater use and hence delivery of public benefits. Indeed this will be the case where footpaths lead no where or where few people know of them. We contend that there is a case for continued public support to compensate for market failure for public access where it can be shown by the applicant to be relevant to a target population and makes sense in relation to surrounding access networks.

Question

- *Will there be continued financial support to meet the costs of providing infrastructure for public access in woodlands?*

WfW Outcomes

9. More people enjoy the life-long learning benefits of woodlands and their products
10. More people live healthier lives as a result of their use and enjoyment of woodlands

UKWAS standard

7.2 Woodland access and recreation including traditional and permissive use rights

BWW

Higher intervention rate for footpaths, signage etc for public access.

Local economic development

This is something which is often interpreted as referring to what was formerly referred to as 'rural development forestry'. With globalisation, local can now mean Wales-scale in relation to Europe. LlyG interprets local as meaning nearby i.e. within, say, 30 km and to include all landscapes where trees can contribute to the economy which embraces urban, peri-urban and rural areas and from semi-natural woodland to urban parks. Our experience suggests that peri-urban and urban woodlands provide opportunities for employment and volunteering for nearby communities. Increasingly these activities are not just traditional forestry skills but include provision of opportunities related to public benefits e.g. mental health practitioners using the woodland environment therapeutically or as a source of craft products. Woodlands can also provide a source of local energy which could be critical in the transition to low-carbon futures for communities at a range of scales. This in turn could stimulate the development of new economies based on local markets for energy and hence carbon. These aspirations are reflected (albeit imperfectly) in WfW and UKWAS. Nevertheless BWW did not contain any provisions for local employment and most of support to employment was (and continues to be) delivered through programmes funded via Axis 1, 3 and 4.

Questions

- *Are existing arrangements within Glastir adequate for the stimulation of new economies?*
- *Are there reasons to consider targeting Glastir Woodlands to achieve local employment opportunities?*

There are two reasons for suggesting that the answer to these questions is 'yes'.

Firstly, volunteering opportunities should be considered as a public benefit (significant well-being benefits accrue to the volunteer) and may therefore warrant support from Glastir. This could come in the form of appropriate intervention rates for tasks which will be done by volunteers. This is needed despite the fact that the volunteer gives their time free of charge because the infrastructure to support volunteers is far from free – transport, insurance, supervision, safety equipment and training are often required.

Secondly, the establishment of local markets for fuelwood and other less often marketed goods could perhaps be encouraged through support to local marketing and sales. Agreed this could also be done by other means but Glastir could perhaps help with supporting infrastructure. Goods which are inaccessible cannot reach a market and cannot be sold unless they are offered for sale.

WfW Outcomes

7. Welsh woodlands contribute to reducing the carbon footprint of Wales
11. More people benefit from woodland-related enterprises
12. More Welsh-grown timber is used in Wales
13. The forest sector is better integrated and more competitive, supporting the Welsh economy
14. Increased use of timber as a key renewable resource
15. A thriving, skilled workforce in the forestry sector

UKWAS standard

7.3 Rural economy

- a) Owners/managers shall promote the integration of woodlands into the local economy

Civil society right to consultation

There is a requirement for applications for felling licenses to go onto the public register for 30 days during such time anyone can submit an objection to the proposals. At present without prior knowledge of an application this is tokenism. The 2001 Woodlands for Wales strategy included a provision for public consultation which was subsumed (and arguably diluted) in the 2009 WfW under 'more communities benefit from woodlands'. Nevertheless, local consultation is a feature of UKWAS which requires that interest groups are made aware of what is happening and respond to requests for ongoing dialogue and engagement. BWW contained provisions to facilitate public consultation on development of a management plan.

We do not have access to statistics on the uptake of this opportunity but we expect it was low as by the end of the scheme there were only a handful of Community Specialist assessors on the BWW lists. If true, this is disappointing, but should not be interpreted as meaning such provision is not needed. Llais y Goedwig experience is that community woodland groups do undertake extensive consultation and develop their management plans using techniques familiar from participatory forest management. Some of this was supported by BWW but not all, not because it was not appreciated but perhaps because the BWW team did not fully appreciate what was required. BWW was in the process of developing a deeper understanding of public consultation when it was withdrawn. Communities working together for local economic and environmental goals is an aspiration of many WAG policies – woodlands can provide a catalyst for such action and this could be promoted through judicious support to community consultation.

Wales is a bilingual country and translation is required for public consultation – LlyG member experience suggests that the cost of translation to support public consultation can be considerable and can be a barrier to public engagement. It was possible to access translation services under BWW and this needs to be continued and enhanced under Glastir.

Question

- *Is there any intention of providing advice and support on public/community consultation on forest management which will impact on local people's lives through Glastir?*

WfW Outcomes

8. More communities benefit from woodlands and trees

UKWAS standard

7.1 Consultation

a) Local people and relevant organisations and interest groups shall be made aware that:

- New or revised management planning documentation is being produced
- A new or revised FC (read WAG) scheme application and associated documents are available for inspection
- High impact operations are planned
- The woodland is being evaluated for certification.

b) The owner/manager shall ensure that there is full co-operation with FC consultation processes. The owner/manager shall consult adequately with local people and relevant organisations and make a reasonable response to issues raised or requests for ongoing dialogue and engagement.

BWW

Provision (payment provided for) a Community Specialist who 'Organizes and co-ordinates dialogue between communities or interest groups whose involvement is an appropriate part of woodland management'

Opportunities for community engagement in woodland management

Community woodlands are used by people, they can be small or large, in rural or urban settings, privately or publicly owned, but most importantly they matter to local people and are a key feature of the local landscape. Some are spaces of enjoyment, amenity and leisure, others are more focused on economic development and enterprise or the arts and creative expression. Many diverse objectives are achieved through community woodlands from rural development to social inclusion. However, developing a new community woodland group is a significant undertaking and is usually wholly voluntary.

An evaluation of the level of consultation required to support community group management planning was commissioned as a Pathfinder under BWW. This has yet to report but early findings are that consultation needs are different at management plan initiation

and revision stages and may be considerably less for revision if adequate investment has been made at initiation.

BWW made at least some provision for investment in consultation expenses for groups regardless of size. As WfW Outcome 1e) suggests accessing grant aid by owners of small woodlands should be simple while as shown above the requirements for consultation to create the additional benefits is high. So what is required is a simple-to-access grant, a large proportion of which, can be used to support consultation and participatory processes. In addition this needs to be accessible in urban as well as rural areas.

Question

- *Will Glastir Woodlands be able to provide support for consultation and participatory processes for small woodlands under community management?*

We need more community woodlands... we therefore need to be able to encourage owners to consider working with their local communities. This could be supported through provision of advice along the lines envisaged for BWW but also through access to legal advice on development of community use agreements.

Question

- *Will Glastir be able to provide support or indeed incentives for private woodland owners to provide opportunities for community group involvement or use of their woodland?*

Trees are an integral part of the landscape and being long-lived retain the imprint of previous generations of people and their relationships to woodlands. We are right to cherish and value heritage and sites of cultural importance but we also need to provide opportunities for the creation of new culturally significant sites. This may mean permitting innovative use of woodlands, things which may seem strange and embracing socially excluded groups and providing them a place to express themselves. What might this mean for woodland management – should we support it through Glastir or its ilk?

Questions

- *Is there any scope for encouraging woodland owners to work with their local communities to be provided through Glastir?*
- *Would it be possible to have an ‘innovation’ strand to the Glastir grant scheme?*
- *Is there any support within Glastir for people to live and work in the woods?*

WfW Outcomes

1. More woodlands and trees are managed sustainably
 - e) Make the process of obtaining grant aid simpler for the owners and managers of small woodlands.
6. Urban woodlands and trees deliver a full range of benefits
8. More communities benefit from woodlands and trees

19. Woodlands and trees make a positive contribution to the special landscape character of Wales and to sites of heritage and cultural importance

On behalf of Llais y Goedwig

Jenny Wong

Secretary
Llais y Goedwig

25 January 2011

Unit 6, Dyfi Eco Park
Machynlleth
Powys
SY20 8AX
Tel: 0845 456 0342
Email: info@llaisygoedwig.org.uk
Web: <http://www.llaisygoedwig.org.uk>



Response to CCW paper for the Glastir Higher Level Scheme on Permissive Access – Targeting of Provision dated 4 March 2011

Glastir Targeted Element – OBJECTIVES & PRINCIPLES FOR PRIORITISING/TARGETING OF PERMISSIVE ACCESS PROVISION

This paper was forwarded to Llais y Goedwig as a preliminary to woodland provision under BWW being presented to the Local Area Fora for consideration under Glastir. As a preliminary to further discussion on the inclusion of access to woodland the paper has been considered by the Llais y Goedwig Board and we welcome the opportunity to discuss access provisions. However, as a preliminary to the discussions the Board have raised the following points for consideration.

The paper as it stands is apparently focussed on

- (1) permissive access in service of tourism as it seeks to link ‘local services’ to ‘specified strategic routes’ and within 2 km of the new coastal path and
- (2) provision of access to deprived communities with a presumption that they are located in urban Communities First and Single Regeneration areas.

Although both these aims are laudable from the perspective of Llais y Goedwig they need to be augmented to

- a) recognise that 20% of deprived communities are in rural areas,
- b) serve the needs of local people and
- c) recognise that woodlands are destinations in their own right.

Most community woodlands contain permissive paths which serve the needs of local communities whether they are rural or urban for access to natural areas from which they derive a wide range of personal benefits (physical and mental well-being, education, theatre, bike riding etc). These permissive paths only rarely link with long-distance strategic routes and many are in rural areas. Just because a community is surrounded by countryside does not mean that it necessarily has easy access to public spaces for recreation – there are few parks in the country and farmer’s fields are not public spaces. Local woodland and the provision of footpaths to and within them are often important local amenities. Deprivation in rural areas is compounded by isolation with the withdrawal of public transport resulting in the increasing inaccessibility of amenities. Provision of access to local woodlands can at least provide locally accessible recreation opportunities. Furthermore carefully planned permissive routes can be used to link communities and make walking or cycling more attractive when single track roads are dangerous.

The Board understands that Glastir Woodland Management is to be targeted using maps and that these are to be prepared by Local Access Forums. Our concern is that woodland owners whether they be community woodland groups or private may not have ready access to their LAF to propose a route through or to their woodland so they may not be able to access Glastir funding. There needs to be some means for woodlands to obtain Glastir funding for permissive access. Might it be possible for all woodlands selected for Glastir under any criteria to be eligible for permissive access at the discretion of the owner? Presuming, of course that the woodland would qualify anyway.

It is also worth considering that footpath creation and maintenance can be the single biggest expense in the development of a community woodland. The BWW rates for permissive access hardly covered the cost of constructing footpaths suitable for the high rates of wear which are often seen in successful community woodlands.

Notes from meeting with Llais y Goedwig and Woodland Trust.

21 October 2011

Present:

Jenny Wong – Llais y Goedwig
Jerry Langford – Woodland Trust
Ros Owen – Forestry Commission Wales
Ann Humble – Glastir – WG
Oliver Massey – Glastir – WG

Overview:

Level 1 – target maps

The meeting mainly covered the 2 routes open to bodies interested in creating access in woodlands to influence the Glastir scheme.

The first area discussed at length were the target maps used for both TE and Glastir woodland Management (GWM) schemes. We discussed how these maps were developed with the Glastir Access working group and that they reflect Welsh Government Policy. It is accepted that had the remit of the group expressly included woodlands at the time, Llais y Goedwig and Woodland Trust would have been invited to join. They will be invited when the group reconvenes in the future.

In the target areas Contract Managers and Woodland officers will be pro-actively seeking access opportunities. Outside of these areas access options will not be available, unless they are supported at level 2.

Level 2 – aspirational maps

The role of the LAF groups were discussed at length. For Glastir purposes these groups are taking on the role of access users at a local level. The groups have a 2 fold role:

- 1) To assess and support existing permissive access created by old WG schemes, namely Tir Gofal and Better woodlands for Wales. Where the user group (LAF) supports an existing route, the farm or woodland owner gets additional points on their TE/woodland selection score.
- 2) To draft maps of where users would like to see permissive access created. These are often referred to as ‘aspirational’ maps. These tie in with the ROWIP process that many of the LAF’s have already undertaken. Progress in this area has been variable, very much depending on the activity of the individual groups. However, these maps are living documents and can be updated continually. The data is not used on the score process, but where LAF’s would be keen to see access, Contract Managers will have the authority to seek to include an access route in the contact.

The main issue for the 2 bodies is that their representatives are volunteers and they do not have the resources and time to attend LAF’s to put their case for inclusion in the ‘aspirational maps’.

JW sought that all woodland by default should have access available on them. The WG can not accept this approach, given the targeting approach for the scheme and past criticisms of permissive access created in Tir Gofal.

Different options for submitting data to LAF's without woodland groups attending them was discussed. It was agreed that the 'Woods for People' data held by the Woodland Trust offers an opportunity of woodland data where owners are happy for public to access the woods. At the present time very few Many community woodlands i.e. Llais y Goedwig members are ~~already~~ on this dataset.

Glastir funding is also only available for activities taking place within the contract area. The example of additional information boards and signage off site was given, boards in this scenario would not be eligible for Glastir funding, where work within the site would be, including information boards, leaflets and possibly website promotion of the access route.

Action points:

AH

Look into whether Axis 2 will fund website input.

Review funding options for managing heavily used and damaged routes.

Contact Catrin Dellar WG access policy group to make her aware of these discussion.

OM/RO

Arrange for a copy of the Woods for People data set to send to WG for them to include in the maps going to LAF's in the next 2 months for their consideration for inclusion in the supported maps.

JW

To encourage the groups she represents to register their woods on the visit woods website.

To encourage members of her groups to go along to their LAF if they can. Particularly important for groups outside of the target areas.

JL/JW

Consider lobbying routes for influencing the access target maps.

Consider asking for a meeting with Catrin Dellar.

JL/JW/RO

Draft a briefing document for Contract Managers when attending LAF meetings on woodland access and the Woods for People dataset.

RO

Meet with Catrin Dellar.



Jenny Wong
[jenny.wong@wildresources
.co.uk]

Dyddiad / Date: 27 September 2011

Dear Jenny,

Thank you for taking the time to consider and respond to the Glastir Targeted Element access policy document of 4 March 2011.

I note your comment that the national target maps are focusing on

- (1) permissive access in service of tourism as it seeks to link 'local services' to 'specified strategic routes' and within 2 km of the new coastal path and
- (2) provision of access to deprived communities with a presumption that they are located in urban Communities First and Single Regeneration areas. '

I note your group felt these broad targets should be further refined. The three points you put forward are all very relevant but it is not possible to reflect these points at a national level. The national target maps indicate potential areas for enhancing access in line with Welsh Government policies and desired strategic enhancements put forward by the access users represented on the Glastir access working group, which I accept did not include Llais y Goedwig or the Woodland Trust at the time.

The three points you raise will be addressed but at a local level. Firstly, the target maps will alert Contract managers working in the relevant areas that they should be seeking permissive access opportunities and including considering the needs of the local people.

Secondly, you raise the points that 20% of deprived communities are in rural areas and that woodlands are a destination in their own right, these points also can only realistically be addressed at a local level and the Local Access forum (LAF) network seems to be an ideal arena for these issues to be considered.



LAF's by definition consider all access issues in their local area, including opening of the existing network, enhancements to the existing network through permissive access and linking in with community projects and putting together the local ROWIP (Rights of Way improvement plan). I also know that as part of their plans, LAF's that have deprived areas within their area do consider all access opportunities around these communities.

In all of these areas the inclusion of a woodland element would only enhance the work of both your community groups to aid them to get linked in with wider projects, and the work of the LAF by raising the value and importance of woodlands as a destination.

I note your comments about all woodlands being open to access, subject to the owner's discretion. In the past Tir Gofal has been severely criticised for creating permissive access that users just don't want to use, either due to lack of linkage with existing network, or lack of people in the vicinity to use it. Due to this background, I can not agree to permissive access across the board. We are proposing to offer quite substantial funds for permissive access with access furniture, signage and associated publicising of the routes. Such investment can only be applied to routes that are demanded or desired by the user groups as representatives of the taxpayer. Therefore, WG will only seek permissive access at a local level where the LAF group have put forward a route or area, at present, these proposals are generally drawn from the ROWIP.


On this note, I hope you find the Glastir payment rates more favourable than those offered under BWW.

You raise the point that local community groups and community woodlands do not have access to their Local Access Forum. The LAF's are all locally based and I see the issue as one of linking these two groups together. I know your groups would be very welcome to join the LAF's, however, if they could not commit to joining the LAF, I am sure making a representation at a LAF meeting would start the debate and get the LAF to consider woodlands in their ROWIP plans.

I am more than happy to do all I can to promote Llais y Goedwig and encouraging LAF's to engage with community woodlands, to help for these two groups to link up as they have common goals.

Yours sincerely

Ann Humble
Head of Tir Gofal and Glastir Targeted Element

<p>Glastir Higher Level Scheme</p> <p>Permissive Access – Targeting of Provision</p> <p>Paper: (version 5) 4 march 2011</p>		 <p>Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru Countryside Council for Wales</p>
---	--	--

TITLE: Glastir Targeted Element – OBJECTIVES & PRINCIPLES FOR PRIORITISING/TARGETING OF PERMISSIVE ACCESS PROVISION

Distribution: WAG GT Access Working Group: Jont Bulbeck (CCW, Access Section) Ann Humble, Kevin Austin, Oliver Massey, Catrin Dellar (all WAG) plus CCW staff within: Environment Policy, Terrestrial Science and Access and Recreation.

Prepared by: Jont Bulbeck, CCW Access Section Head, with input from Ann Humble.

Purpose of the revised paper: to outline, for wider stakeholder consideration, the objectives and principles for the targeting of permissive access provision with the higher level Glastir agri-environment scheme.

The higher level, Targeted Element (TE) of the proposed Glastir agri-environment scheme is seeking to provide specified goods for the benefit of the public. These include the provision of permissive access. WAG is seeking to target those benefits where the need is greatest.

It is important to recognise that the access provisions within the TE scheme will be built on existing public access (such as public rights of way and open access, and including Forestry Commission land). To maximise those benefits it will therefore be important that the measures within the entry level (All Wales Element (AWE)) Glastir scheme that relate to public access rights are operating effectively.

The WAG working group on ‘public access within Glastir’ suggested that access priorities within the scheme could be targeted in 2 main ways:

- ❖ Benefits from new permissive access that would apply to any part of Wales. These would be applied to every farm invited to enter the higher level scheme. Access opportunities that arise are very site specific and can not be assessed at a regional level.
- ❖ Prioritising permissive access that relates to specified types of permissive access (e.g. horse riding) and/or for specified areas in Wales (e.g. areas designated as Community First or Single Regeneration (SRA) areas)

To guide decisions as to what the detailed criteria and prescriptions for the access elements within the scheme should be, the paper proposes the high level benefits that should be sought, together with the expected outputs.

Benefits

The high level benefits sought from Glastir permissive access are:

- ❖ Improved health and well-being from people being more active as a result of recreational access and associated information that better meets their needs and by overcoming limitations to existing provision. Specifically:

- Increased economic benefits from existing strategic access routes through enhancing the attraction of those routes and providing better links to local services
- Improved networks of recreational routes and associated access provision in an area that increase or improve people's use and enjoyment of the local area.
- For people and areas within Wales identified as having the greatest need

Priority Results

The priorities include:

- ❖ Multiple user routes
- ❖ Routes for use close to where people live, particularly deprived communities such as those within SRA or Communities First areas
- ❖ Facilities for the increased use of permissive or existing public access, such as parking to allow access to existing networks.
- ❖ Provision for use by disabled people
- ❖ Provision for users of specified strategic routes to gain access to services within the local area or that provide them with associated loops and link routes from the strategic route
- ❖ Information to enable people to use the permissive access provided as well as use of associated public access where it is linked to new permissive access.
- ❖ Routes within 2km of the proposed coast path.
- ❖ Provision of new permanent rights of way.
- ❖ Provision of circular routes in catchments

Proposed routes or facilities should lead to improved and increased use of the countryside or local green space for local people and visitors through the addition to and/or enhancement of existing public access.

The need for the route should be based on public needs. Such strategic or local needs for access improvements in an area should have been identified within WAG's Walking and Cycling Action Plan, the relevant ROWIP or other similarly relevant plan or assessment.

It is proposed that Local Access Forums (LAF's) will propose desirable routes and approve suggestions from interested parties (members of the public, farmers, National Parks etc) for any proposed permissive access opportunities in their area. The LAF's will be approached annually to review and amend their proposals if they so wish.

In addition, LAF's will be asked to assess existing permissive access currently provided by Tir Gofal. They will be asked to support those that provide added value to access in their area. Those supported TG permissive routes will be used to enhance the score of those farms offering this facility.

Proposed routes that are also linked to habitat and species improvements within Glastir will be particularly welcomed as will routes that improve interpretation and understanding of historic features and cultural landscapes.

Targets for access will therefore include:

Strategic routes: National Trails, the Wales Coast Path, and national bridle routes, existing successful permissive routes.

Priority areas: starting or finishing within Community First areas and within 2km of the coast.

To note there is some debate over the future of the Community First designation. In line with Assembly policy it is proposed to use a layer derived by combining the Communities first defined areas with target regeneration areas as suggested by the Forestry Commission in February 2011.

Result measures

Kilometre lengths of permissive routes/permanent rights of way that:

- ❖ increase and improve provision for horse riders and cyclists
- ❖ increase and improve provision for recreational users on foot
- ❖ increase and improve access provision close to where people live, particularly close to deprived communities
- ❖ increase and improve provision for disabled people
- ❖ links to and from strategic routes and local services
- ❖ form loop routes using existing strategic routes
- ❖ improve access within community first areas
- ❖ improve access within 2km of the coast
- ❖ promote the use of the routes within different media.

Indicators for use of access and benefits derived

- ❖ Numbers of people using permissive access (by route type and user type)
- ❖ Characteristics of people using the permissive access (demographics)
- ❖ Numbers of people that know about specific permissive access routes

Other Issues

The achievement of habitat improvements to enhance the experience of users of existing public access [notably strategic routes] as well as permissive access within the scheme was noted as desirable and will also be explored with nature conservation colleagues. Project officer training will also seek to make the links between access and habitat creation along the route.

Least Restrictive Access (LRA) principles are to be applied in the provision of all access and access information within the scheme. Guidance on LRA is to be by reference to 'By All Reasonable Means' (CCW) and the BT 'Countryside For All Standards and Guidance'.

Lessons learned from previous projects involved in permissive access is that the information about new routes should be readily available to the public, to ensure awareness and use.

Mapping Requirements

In the scheme submission, maps of the target areas will be required to contribute to prioritising Targeted Element applications. These are proposed by the group as:

1. Maps of specified strategic routes, including:
 - a. the [proposed] Wales Coast Path;
 - b. the 3 National Trails in Wales;
 - c. linking the major mountain biking trail centres
 - d. the 2 proposed cross-Wales bridle routes
2. Maps of target areas for permissive access provision, including:
 - a. Combined communities first and regeneration Areas,
 - b. 2km Wales Coast Zone

Timetable

The working group set out an approximate timetable for the main stages in the process:

Activity:	Date
Draft objectives for targeting of permissive access (JB)	October 2009
Draft Objectives agreed (All)	Early November 2009
Objectives confirmed by WAG	Mid/end Nov 2009
Draft Maps of strategic priorities for access provision	End Nov 2009
Draft prescriptions (including capital works and area prescriptions)	End Nov 2009
Confirmed Maps of strategic access priorities (e.g. National Trails)	January 2010

Jont Bulbeck, Recreation & Access Section Head

Original Draft: 9 October 2009

Revision 1: 4th November [taking account of comments from Oliver Massey, Catrin Dellar, Richard Morgan, (all WAG) and Brian Pawson, Sarah Hetherington, John Watkins (all CCW)]

Updated 4 March 2011 by Ann Humble