

WALES LEADING A BLUE RECOVERY PROJECT

Year 1 Report – October 2021 - September 2022

Introduction

Following the worst of the Covid pandemic, marine and fisheries stakeholders who formed the Wales Marine Action and Advisory Group (WMAAG) came together as a renewed Blue Recovery Partnership to consider how best to support sustainable development actions to both help coastal communities to recover, and to achieve our vision of Welsh seas that are clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse.

In September last year at the Wales Marine Action and Advisory Group (WMAAG) meeting, The Minister for Climate Change, Julie James, welcomed the WMAAG proposal '[Leading a Blue Recovery](#)' and asked members to develop a Blue Recovery Implementation Plan for delivery this Senedd term. Members were asked to work with policy officials to identify specific actions, focus on delivery, and articulate what will be done differently in practice.

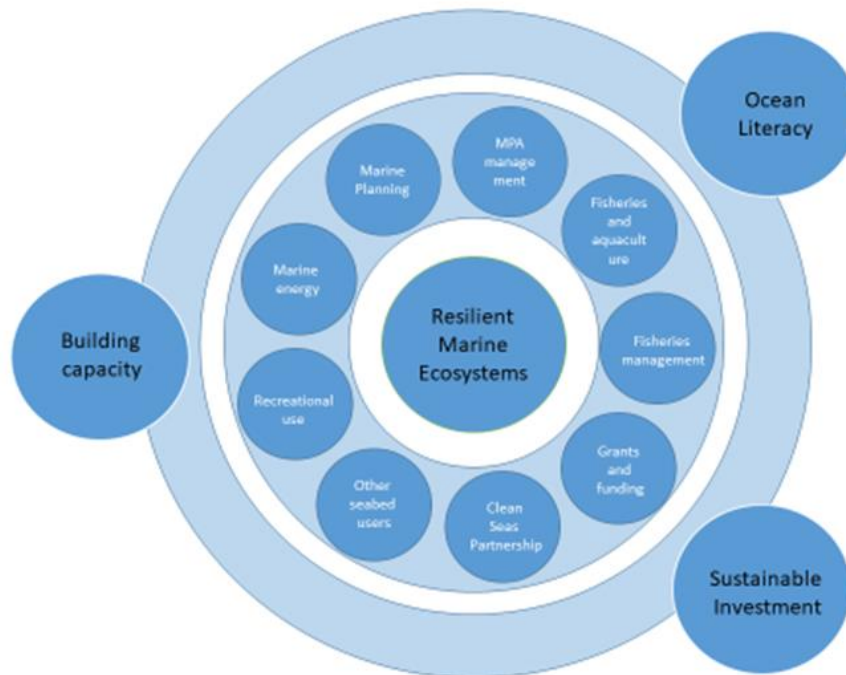
Resilient marine ecosystems and the growth they could deliver through nature recovery and community-based capacity building will deliver the Programme for Government ambitions for building a stronger, greener economy and embedding our response to the climate and nature emergencies in everything we do.

In Wales, we have many existing approaches, people and projects seeking to support marine ecosystems and the benefits we receive from them. However, we need to do more, and we need to do it faster, using our resources effectively.

WMAAG identified three areas of work to accelerate and enable action for our environment, economy, social and cultural well-being, without which, delivery is hindered by a lack of buy-in, long term funding and capacity and capability:

- **Ocean Literacy** – *to build understanding of how people, communities and business across Wales connect with Welsh coasts and seas, the impact of our collective and individual actions on the oceans' health and how the oceans' health impacts our everyday lives - leading to improvements in how we manage and use our coasts and seas;*
- **Sustainable Investment** – *securing innovative and longer-term forms of public, private and blended finance - to deliver key objectives, restoring Marine Protected Areas and transforming socio-economic systems;*
- **Building capacity** – *enabling collaboration and co-production to encourage co-ordinated action, both locally with our communities, nationally and cross border, to respond to changing needs and opportunities, as the pressures on our coasts and seas increase and conditions change.*

Figure 1 below summarises this approach.



This first project highlight report provides an update on progress since September 2021. The full group met virtually 5 times, for a total of 9 hours, over the course of the year, see **Annex 1** for the meeting schedule.

In summary, the group have:

- Identified and mapped a suite of actions to deliver actions under each of the Blue Recovery themes, and a shared narrative
- Carried out initial reviews to establish a starting point for each of the three themes
- Initiated and held stakeholder workshops to gauge current practice and actions needed for two of the themes
- Advised on development of the Wales Marine and Fisheries Scheme (EMFF Successor Scheme) to include Blue Recovery objectives.

Establishing and taking forward actions to deliver the Blue Recovery themes

An initial workshop was held in December 2021 to identify and prioritise a suite of actions to deliver against the key enablers, see **Annex 2**.

Actions were identified to:

- Focus on improving efficiency and reach of existing mechanisms - for example, engaging our respective audiences and connecting with coastal communities including through Public Service Boards.
- Build on the significant programmes of work that are already in place but need to be up-scaled/ better resourced to enable faster delivery.

- Learn from the examples of projects/ current work and best practice that could inform a wider programme of delivery across Wales.
- Use existing working groups that could deliver the required partnership working, making sure they are better connected and any gaps identified
- Be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable {by the Partnership}, Relevant and Time bound)

Subsequent meetings discussed and explored the starting point for each theme and identified a member of the group to take the actions forward. Annex 2 also includes a summary of progress against these actions to date.

Ocean Literacy

The outcome sought under this theme is that improved understanding and awareness leads to:

- Marine and coastal issues being better addressed across all relevant policy areas
- Behaviour change and increased engagement of local communities to address marine and coastal issues and challenges
- Increased resources being made available to address marine and coastal issues

Members representing Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Kirsty Lindenbaum and Kath Hughes, and Cardiff University, Emma McKinley, were already contributing to a UK survey of Ocean Literacy. This was run in 2020 and 2021 and provides some key information to establish key areas for exploration and action in Wales. NRW agreed to lead and coordinate work on this theme, particularly since it supports a key priority within the Marine Area Statement 'reconnecting people with our seas'.

In June, NRW hosted two online workshops to develop a vision for an 'ocean literate' Wales and create a priority action list. The workshops received fantastic support, attended by 78 delegates from 56 organisations across Wales.

Some key reflections from the workshop were:

There is a need for a clear vision and strategy for Ocean Literacy in Wales. However, delegates emphasised that development of a strategy shouldn't be at the expense of delivering of actions in the short-term.

There is already a significant amount of work going on across Wales to raise awareness of the marine and coastal environment and connect people with these environments. Approximately 80 individual projects including local, regional and national projects were identified. However, the national ocean literacy survey highlights that people do not recognise their impact on the health of the seas around Wales.

The top priority is to connect and co-ordinate partners working in this field so that collectively the work can have more impact and focus – a vision and strategy can support this objective. The workshop identified other key priorities that need to be

addressed including developing sustainable funding to support ocean literacy outcomes and making the most of opportunities in the new Curriculum for Wales.

An Ocean Literacy Task and Finish group drawn from participants in the workshops will meet for the first time on 27 October to begin to take forward practical actions as already identified.

Highlights from the full summary report of the workshop are attached at **Annex 3**.

Sustainable Investment

The aim of this theme is to secure innovative and long-term funding to deliver resilient marine ecosystems.

Gareth Cunningham, Marine Conservation Society presented a paper to kickstart discussion of options for the Sustainable Investment theme, and the group heard a presentation from Marine Scotland on the Scottish Marine Ecosystem Enhancement Fund.

A T&F group will meet on 19 October to decide actions to

- 1) Support the Sustainable Delivery model for nature's recovery, a contract let to Finance Earth, Eunomia and RSPB to provide advice on ecosystem service markets, innovative financing mechanisms, and relevant business models across Wales. These will be considered for the marine environment, potentially identifying pilot areas/methods to test, for example to restore areas of seagrass and saltmarsh.
- 2) Take forward relevant recommendations from the Biodiversity Deep Dive for the marine environment.
- 3) Explore how best to align with other funding streams and share information.

Building Capacity

The greater engagement and ownership of coastal communities/regions in planning and managing the marine & coastal areas is an essential element of a Blue Recovery. The aim of this theme is to enable and increase meaningful community engagement to identify local opportunities and challenges, increasing investment readiness.

Peter Davies, Chair of WMAAG is leading on this area of work which is progressing in the following areas:

- 1) Working with the Funding Policy Advisory Group (see below) to determine how investment through the Wales Marine and Fisheries Scheme can be used to support and build capacity, specifically in coastal communities.
- 2) Drawing learning from other models and initiatives, such as England's Championing Coastal Coordination (3Cs) initiative, Plymouth Marine Park, and understanding lessons from previous initiatives such as the Fisheries Liaison Action Groups (FLAGs).

- 3) Exploring best way to connect with Local Authorities, academia, the sector and coastal forums and the Well-being of Future Generations Commissioner.
- 4) Mapping local networks to build on what is working

A key action for the meeting on 6 October will be to identify the next priority actions for this theme and how to take that forward, and at the next meeting output from the WMFS stakeholder workshops will be available to review.

Wales Marine and Fisheries Scheme

The Wales Marine and Fisheries Scheme (EMFF Successor scheme) is a key driver in delivering funding support to the industry. Supporting the development of this scheme has been a key workstream over the course of this year, contributing to both the Sustainable Investment and the Build Capacity themes.

In particular, Peter Davies and the dedicated Funding Policy Advisory Group, consisting of WMAAG members, have worked with the WG Marine and Fisheries Funding Policy team to both advise on funding windows, and on the capacity building element.

Workshops to inform plans for future coastal community capacity building were led by WG's Strategic Evidence team on 15th and 22nd September.

Governance

The group felt a re-branding would reflect the renewed focus and the partnership approach now being taken. A revised Terms of Reference has been agreed for what will now be the Wales Coast and Seas Partnership (Wales CaSP) going forward. The group also reviewed options to appoint a new Chair, with the preference for a Ministerial public appointment to lead the group next year. The Minister for Climate Change has now approved this process, which will make a contribution to the Ocean Literacy theme in particular, making a clear statement about the importance of the marine environment and how we value it in Wales.

Shared Narrative

A key priority was for the group to develop a strategic, focussed and engaging 'Shared Narrative', see **Annex 4** to ensure shared purpose and consistent messaging. This has been co-developed and agreed by partners and will form the backdrop for all Blue Recovery communications and actions. It will be published on the WG website to be accompanied by partners' logos.

Next Steps

A Blue Recovery Implementation Plan is in draft, setting out Outcomes, work areas and actions, which the Task and Finish groups will continue to work towards. The role of the full group will be to monitor and review progress of these actions, evaluating success and identifying additional actions to meet the outcomes. It may be beneficial to reduce the number of full partnership meetings to 3 per year to enable further work in the T and F groups.

Meeting Schedule 22 – 23

Full Partnership Meetings

- 6th October 2022, all day blended meeting, Cathays Park, Julie James MS, Minister for Climate Change attending.

21 – 22 Review and forward planning.

Focus on Building Capacity theme.

- February 23

Focus on Ocean Literacy.

Report back from Strategic Evidence review of place- based approaches to capacity building

- June 23

Focus on Sustainable Investment.

- October 23, all day face to face meeting

22 – 23 review and forward planning

Task and Finish Group scheduled next meetings

- Sustainable Investment, 19 October
- Ocean Literacy, 27 October

Annex 1 – Year 1 meeting schedule

December 21 – Actions Workshop – half day

February 22 – confirmation of actions, prioritising, and agreeing next steps

March 22 – focus on Ocean Literacy – review of UK and Wales Ocean Literacy survey results, agreement of NRW/Cardiff Uni to take work forward. Sustainable Investment options paper.

June 22 – focus on Sustainable Investment – presentation from Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund, agreement of MCS to take work forward through T and F group.

July 22 – short governance meeting to discuss future Chair appointment, name of the group and ways of working

Annex 2 – Suite of Actions, identified at December 21 workshop, with progress to date

<p><u>Overarching Actions</u></p>		
A.	<p>Looking at the outcomes identified for the blue recovery plan, learn lessons and evaluate previous actions to identify why they have not already been achieved. Ensure building on previous successes and not starting from scratch.</p>	<p>Ongoing through all themes – specifically stakeholder workshops on Ocean Literacy and WMFS Capacity Building</p>
B.	<p>Co-develop/agree a strategic, focussed and engaging narrative to ensure consistent messaging across the WMAAG partnership.</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p><u>Ocean Literacy –</u></p> <p>Outcome: Developing ocean literacy across all parts of society and raising awareness of the significance of our coasts and seas will encourage further action across policy areas. Governance, and getting information into the Climate Change agenda across Government is very important. This also links to capacity building where local and community engagement through groups such as coastal forums can collectively have a louder voice.</p>		
1.	<p>Conduct a thorough review of the vehicles and mechanisms we currently have and how they are used to raise the profile of the marine and coastal environment, at both local and national levels. Include research into how climate change and marine environment engagement and learning is currently being delivered – eg through eco schools etc.</p> <p>Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put a research project out to tender - Stakeholders assisting with drafting project outline. - Link with NRW area statement delivery - Severn Estuary Partnership/PCF to refresh Coastal Directory as first step. 	<p>Agreed to take work forward linked to NRW area statement work</p> <p>Stakeholder workshops in June – collated 80 projects</p> <p>Will now take forward actions to co-ordinate and amplify through T and F group.</p>
2.	<p>Communicate and share the work of this group and other partners to a wider audience and making it more accessible.</p> <p>Options/Tasks:</p>	<p>Narrative complete</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reliant upon developing a strategic and focussed narrative - Use existing Marine Wales (Business Wales) website – this page is currently where the Clean Seas Partnership pages sit, but may not be the most effective vehicle? - Develop a new platform eg similar to the Wales Biodiversity Partnership platform - Determine what we need to have to have a stand-alone platform for Blue Recovery. - Stakeholders to help with providing content. - Should link to evidence sources but could also help with interpretation/analysis - Stakeholders promoting work of this group through their own networks - Social media campaigns – stakeholders and WG using their existing channels to promote the Blue Recovery messaging. 	<p>These and other identified actions to be progressed through OL T&F group</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Governance and re-branding of WMAAG group to better reflect current focus on Blue Recovery, communicating and sharing of information</p> <p>Options/Tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members to consider revised governance eg: Minister appointed Chair, Deputy Director Chair, Independent Chair, Future Generations Commissioner. - Members to consider new name for WMAAG eg: Wales Resilient Seas Partnership, Marine Resilience Wales, Blue Economy Wales, Wales Sustainable Seas, Wales Marine Partnership etc. - Re-draft the Terms of Reference. 	<p>Complete</p> <p>Wales Coasts and Seas Partnership to be initiated on 6 October</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Engage with local communities, particularly through getting attention of Local Authorities and Public Service Boards.</p> <p>Options/Tasks:</p>	<p>Currently being taken forward through Building capacity theme but to be reviewed by OL T and F group</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a model for local engagement providing community focus (link to 10 below). - Build on progress stakeholders are making with PSBs 	
5.	<p>Incorporate Climate Change and the marine environment into the national curriculum to harness the power of young people and ensure behaviour change from an early age.</p> <p>Options/Tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build on areas of learning and experience to develop resource packs - Develop Welsh Baccalaureate Global Citizenship Challenges 	Action to be taken by OL T and F group
6.	<p>Work with tourism investment to build the marine experience as key element of tourism economy – eg Visit Wales/EU funded Marine Centre of Excellence in Saundersfoot</p>	Action to be reviewed by OL T and F group. Linked to capacity building theme

Sustainable Investment

Outcome: Sustainable long term investment and developing longer term sources of public and private finance is crucial to support delivery of key objectives

1.	<p>Ensure the EMFF Successor Scheme delivers the blue recovery themes</p> <p>Options/Tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members to contribute to scheme development stakeholder sessions - Blue Recovery enablers form part of the funding criteria. - Funding of specific Blue Recovery projects - Support the development of a LEADER / FLAG funding mechanism in line with building capacity below. 	<p>WMAAG members formed the Sustainable Funding Advisory Group. Informed development for future funding windows and for development of the community led action aspect – a key deliverable for the Building Capacity theme</p>
2.	<p>Development of a sustainable investment model</p> <p>Options/Tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Standard setting for carbon e.g. blue carbon codes etc. - Use of taxes, levies and different financial products. - Make sure new funding programmes are less complex and more accessible, 	<p>Paper on options produced by MCS Scottish Marine Ecosystems Enhancement Fund reviewed.</p> <p>SI T&F group to take forward these actions, particularly delivering the marine element for the Sustainable delivery model for nature's recovery</p>

	<p>drawing lessons from EMFF and FLAG experiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learn from experience of other organisations in relation to their funding mechanisms. Eg: Defra Marine pioneers, Environment Agency's Championing Coastal Coordination scheme, Palladium and National Parks, Marine Natural Capital Assessment (possibly by JNCC). <p>NB – a project on 'Financing Nature's Recovery' is being taken forward by Welsh Government. This action could be delivered through making close links with that project, and assessing any additional marine input that may be needed.</p>	<p>and recommendations coming out of the 30x30 Deep Dive</p>
3.	<p>Creation of a one-stop shop to provide information / access to different funding streams. NB – link to Ocean Literacy above</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commission a report to gather information - Investigate if anyone is already doing this. - Present in one area eg on Marine Wales (Business Wales) website, or other platform 	<p>Action to be taken forward through main Partnership meeting, 6 Oct</p>
<p><u>Building Capacity</u></p> <p>Outcome: Building capacity, particularly at the local level, will enable meaningful community engagement to identify local opportunities and challenges and deliver action.</p>		
1.	<p>Identify a flexible model for local engagement around marine and coastal issues, providing community focus to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify impacts on communities • identify bottom-up solutions and opportunities • include local projects and evidence needs, in order to prepare the ground for increasing capacity • use and direct funds to facilitate sustainable development and marine resilience. • Re-engage with inshore fisheries <p>Options/tasks</p>	<p>Is being progressed through the development of the WMFS with input and advice from WMAAG members.</p> <p>e.g.WMFS stakeholder workshops identified local and national/capacity groups</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying current local and national groups – linked to action 1 above (Ocean Literacy) (such as through coastal partnerships and embedding marine and coastal considerations more strongly within PSB delivery) - Have a strategic conversation with Welsh Local Government Association; linked to their chairing of Wales Coastal Forum - Target key influencers - e.g. FGC – to ensure marine is built into delivery of the WFG Act. Senedd Committee also needs to be engaged - Use introduction of National Nature Service and build in a coastal marine focus to build capacity 	<p>Chair of the group has engaged and ensures link with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WLGA - Future Generations Commissioner - Marine Parks - Development of the National Nature Service - Championing Coastal Co-ordination
2.	Establish Internal WG cross government engagement Board to include tourism, water quality, coastal erosion and flooding	Other actions to be reviewed and updated/taken forward by future T and F group
3.	Offer virtual training sessions to all LAs on the marine plan and how it should be applied.	
4.	Build capacity and capability through placements (within Welsh Government and other organisations), involvement in research (eg fishing industry) and through partnerships with Universities in building the evidence platform.	
5.	Validation of our fisheries as sustainable, and build community supported aquaculture.	

Annex 3

Ocean Literacy Workshop Summary Report



Ocean literacy
workshop report June

Annex 4

Shared Narrative



Blue Recovery -
Shared Narrative FIN/