

WALES COASTS AND SEAS PARTNERSHIP
(Leading a Blue Recovery)
Annual Highlight Report

Year 2: October 2022 – September 2023

Summary

Three areas of work were identified to accelerate and enable action for our marine environment, economy, social and cultural well-being, without which delivery is hindered by a lack of buy-in, long term funding, 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.*

This project highlight report provides an update on progress between September 2022 and October 2023.

The group has had three full Partnership meetings, with further meetings of the working groups taking place throughout the year.

In summary, the group has:

- Relunched as the Wales Coasts and Seas Partnership (CaSP Cymru) by the Minister for Climate Change
- Published the Shared Narrative and revised Terms of Reference on Gov.Wales [Wales Coasts and Seas Partnership \(CaSP Cymru\) | GOV.WALES](#)
- Established an Ocean Literacy working group, which has created a network of champions that now meets regularly and shares learning and best practice across Wales and beyond.
- The working group has developed a vision and draft strategy for Ocean Literacy in Wales, and is now seeking funding to widen engagement to refine and deliver an action plan with the aim of building ocean literacy across all parts of society.
- Established a Blue Investment working group, and agreed four key actions – identifying sustainable sources of funding; establishing a database of funding

for marine projects; directing this funding towards agreed priority projects and contributing to setting standards for blended investment in Wales.

- The Blue Investment working group has developed a proposal for a developer fund, working title of the Wales Resilient Ecosystems and Enhancement Fund (WREEF).
- Contributed significantly to the development of the Wales Marine and Fisheries Scheme, and initiated and steered the Coastal Capacity Building Challenge Fund, and the subsequent Coastal Capacity Building Fund.
- Begun work to explore establishing CaSP as the national framework for coastal co-ordination.
- Reviewed the Biodiversity 30x30 recommendations, taking ownership of marine recommendations, and identifying further links with the work of CaSP Cymru.
- Supported and facilitated the Ministerial appointment of a new Chair to act as a champion for the Partnership and the work it continues to deliver.
- Improved information sharing across the marine sector through a regular newsletter.

Introduction

Following the worst of the Covid pandemic marine and fisheries stakeholders, who were the Wales Marine Action and Advisory Group, came together 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.

As a group they identified the need for a package of enabling actions in order to ramp up and deliver existing projects, plans and actions, as well as define new ones to deliver resilient marine ecosystems through nature-based solutions and socio-economic opportunities.

These enabling actions fall into three themes:

- ***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.*

Following a commission by the Minister for Climate Change, Julie James, in response to the [Blue Recovery report](#), an initial workshop was held in December 2021 to identify and prioritise a suite of actions to deliver against the key enablers.

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. Figure 1 below summarises this approach.
- 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)

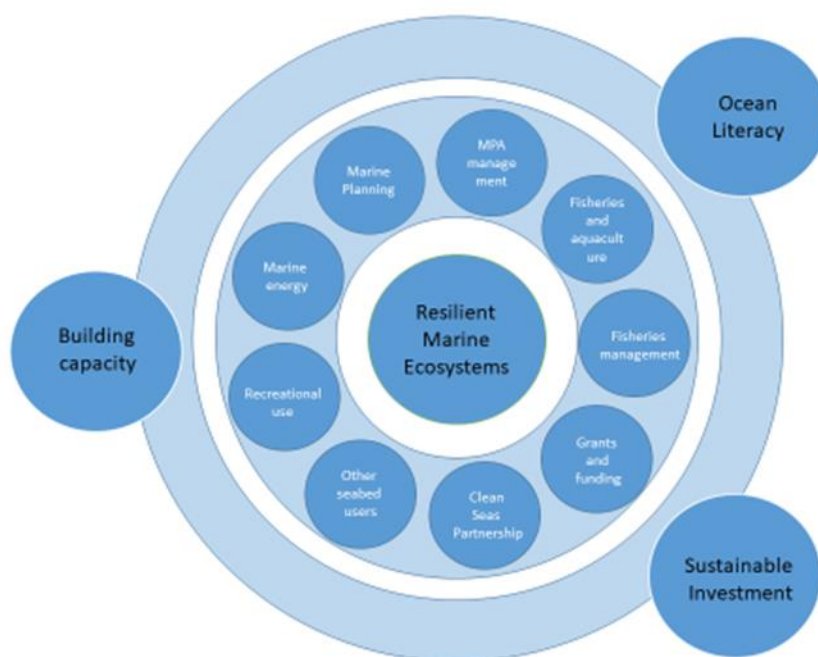


Figure 1: Representing how the three themes support delivery of programmes, projects and uses of the seas, while ensuring we maintain and enhance resilient marine ecosystems.

The [2021 – 2022 Highlight Report](#) provides an overview of activity in Year 1 of delivery of the Leading a Blue Recovery work, now rebranded as Wales Coasts and Seas Partnership (CaSP Cymru) – Towards Marine Resilience.

In this second year the Partnership has built on the actions identified in the first year.

Ocean Literacy

The outcomes / success measures for this theme are that:

- Ocean literacy is developed across all parts of society so that understanding of the significance and importance of our coasts and seas will encourage further action across society and policy areas.
- Ocean Literacy strategy identifies and delivers on a set of outcomes and sub outcomes to achieve the above.

A working group has been established and is co-ordinated by Kirsty Lindenbaum and Kath Hughes at NRW. The group now totals 24 members, who represent 13 different organisations between them. This represents a new network in Wales and individual members are already highlighting the benefits from the shared learning and expertise of this wider group.

The group has had regular online and face to face meetings to draw up a draft Ocean Literacy Strategy and action plan, as well as using meetings to invite speakers to share their work on Ocean Literacy action in Wales, UK and Internationally.

The draft Strategy document is ready to be shared with the wider CaSP group for further discussion, refinement, and wider engagement around actions that we can take together.

The draft Vision and Objectives are:

Vision: The people of Wales are connected to, understand and value our coasts and seas, making informed decisions every day, that support a safe and sustainable relationship with nature.

Objectives

- Ocean **connection**: Physical and emotional. Accessing and experiencing marine and coastal spaces in different ways, being in nature and feeling comfortable in them is one of the first steps into developing a strong connection.
- Ocean **understanding**: Knowledge, awareness and impact. Making informed decisions is critical to positive behaviour change, this includes understanding your own and others impacts, and the need for sustainable management
- Ocean **values**: Beliefs and principles. Taking a personal position on managing our natural resources now and in the future
- Ocean **influence**: An active, responsible, and ethical “ocean citizen”. Influencing society as part of a resilient and prosperous community

The group now wishes to engage more widely around the draft strategy to refine this and bring in wider partners to input and support delivery. We have also been exploring funding opportunities to draw down resource to deliver effective engagement, and to put in place a ‘Festival of the Sea’ series of events to celebrate the seas and their multiple uses in events across Wales during 2025.

Blue Investment¹

The aim of this theme is to secure innovative and long-term funding to deliver resilient marine ecosystems. The outcomes / success measures sought under this theme are to:

- Identify sources of funding, existing and new to enable blue recovery.
- Provide clarity and tangible fundable projects that demonstrate/achieve blue recovery to potential funders/funding streams.

Gareth Cunningham, Marine Conservation Society is leading the Blue Investment working group, which now meets every month.

The group are focussing on:

- 1) Mapping out what funding is available to avoid any duplication of existing funds. Initial changes have been made to the Funding Wales platform hosted by WCVA to identify all funding relevant to the marine environment. Once complete, analysis will be done to help inform and address barriers to accessing funding.

¹ Renamed from Sustainable Investment to differentiate from other Welsh Government groups

- 2) Identifying a clear picture of what we want to fund to ensure money invested delivers benefits within Wales. This has begun by linking with work carried out by NRW to map Nature networks and future opportunities for enhancement and restoration.
- 3) Developing a long term, voluntary funding framework which will complement Government funding. A smaller task and finish group has been collaborating with the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) to develop a funding framework with a working title of Wales Resilient Ecosystems and Enhancement Fund (WREEF). The next step for this work will be to approach potential investors to gauge interest and develop the model further.
- 4) This will also align with the delivery of the Biodiversity Deep Dive recommendations, see below, including developing Principles for Responsible Investment relevant to the marine environment.

Building Capacity

The aim of this theme is to enable and increase meaningful community engagement to identify local opportunities and challenges and increase investment readiness.

A set of outcomes for this theme has been developed:

- A broad network of marine and fisheries stakeholders who act as a forum for gathering and sharing information at a local, operational level.
- Improved co-management of the marine ecosystem leading to improvements on a range of locally identified marine ecosystem indicators.
- More informed and collaborative process for consenting of marine developments leading to efficient, timely implementation.
- Improved profitability through strengthening local supply chains.
- Enhanced tourism offers related to the environment.
- Better public understanding of marine issues (ocean literacy) and consequently higher levels of public engagement/activity in local coastal communities.
- Successful funding bids to financial assistance schemes.

Building Capacity crosses over into both Ocean Literacy and Blue Investment, and work to meet this theme is progressing through those respective working groups.

However, the main focus this year has been supporting the development of the Wales Marine and Fisheries Scheme, a key funding mechanism for the marine and fisheries sectors, and in particular the [Coastal Capacity Building Fund](#), through Welsh Government's Funding Policy Advisory Group.

Following analysis of the [Evidence Review and Stakeholder workshops](#) a Coastal Capacity Building Challenge Fund was opened to see what sort of activities investment in this area would support. A total of 14 projects were funded with a wide range of outputs.

Further to this the Coastal Capacity Building Fund is now being delivered via Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) through the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA). The first application window opened in August and closed at the end of September. The fund has a budget of £1M available across two years, at £500k per year.

Peter Davies, outgoing Chair of CaSP, led on further actions in this area of work including exploring the potential for marine national parks in Wales, and making links with the Future Generations Commission.

At the June meeting a proposal was put forward that CaSP is essentially the national framework leadership group as proposed for England by the Coastal Partnerships Network (CPN). It was agreed that if CaSP were to effectively be the National body for Wales several actions would be needed:

- to be better connected to the CPN and agree a main point of contact.
- Map existing networks and governance structures, possibly through an iteration of the Coastal Directory
- Bring the wider network of partnerships together in Wales, linking to the marine planning sector governance, and Coastal Forums
- Establish a Governance group to manage administrative operations.
- Have a legislative framework underpinning the National body.

The incoming Chair will now lead on this area of work.

Biodiversity Deep Dive Recommendations

The February CaSP meeting included a workshop to consider where the Partnership would take ownership of recommendations and/or actions arising from the Minister for Climate Change's [Biodiversity Deep Dive](#). The Partnership reviewed the 'success measures' to capture action CaSP Cymru is delivering towards these, as well as identifying further areas the Partnership can contribute a marine dimension to. The key messages for each of CaSP's themes are summarised below:

Building Capacity: The CaSP actions align well with recommendation 5, particularly expanding and enhancing capacity and capability building schemes to support the public, third and private sectors to accelerate delivery for nature recovery. CaSP has highlighted the need for identifying funding requirements and enhancing understanding of capacity in Wales. To support nature recovery in the marine environment, a comprehensive approach involving social sciences and reskilling was emphasised.

Ocean Literacy: Addressing the nature and climate emergency demands greater education and awareness, which directly links with Ocean Literacy. Bridging diverse sectors, such as tourism and recreation, and integrating with existing efforts were seen as essential for a cohesive approach, including ensuring the Sustainable Farming Scheme delivers for marine and coasts, and linking into the wider landscape. Also aligning with recommendation 5, the Ocean Literacy strategy will deliver the longer term action to improve education and awareness of the nature and climate emergency and actions individuals and organisations can take.

Blue Investment: A very clear link between these CaSP actions and recommendation 6 regarding public and private finance. Creating resilient marine ecosystems was underscored through mapping restoration and fostering connections between land and sea. Effective communication strategies were recommended, focussing on benefits and accessibility, while addressing funding

barriers and monitoring challenges to develop dynamic funding options, adopting an approach similar to the Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund in Wales.

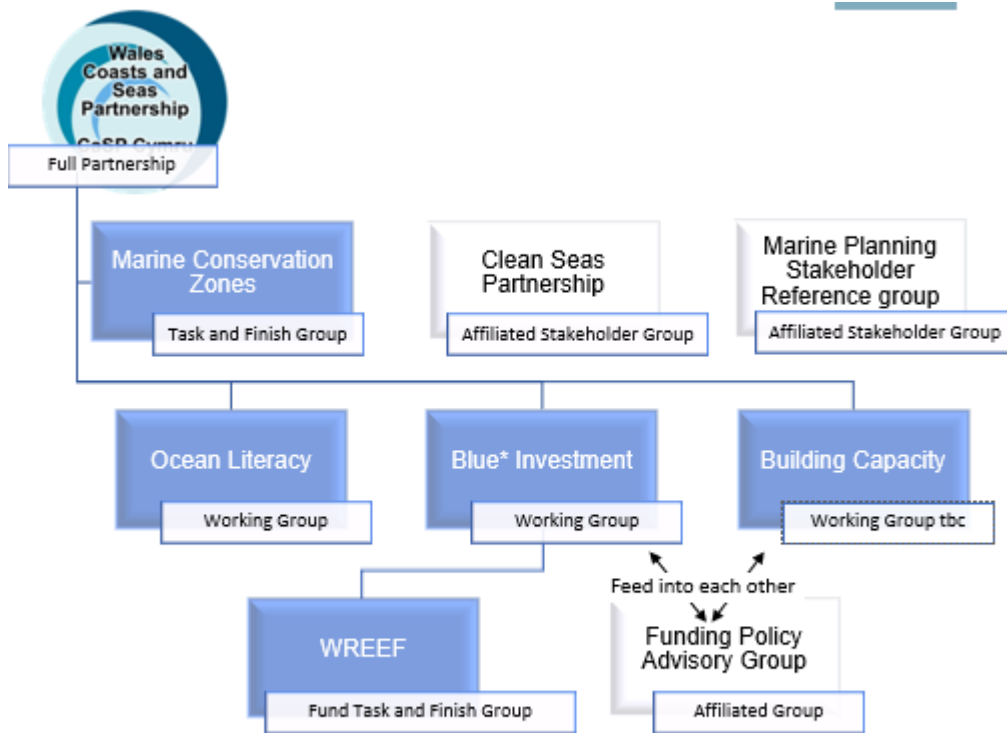
Governance

The re-branded Wales Coast and Seas Partnership (CaSP Cymru) was launched by the Minister for Climate Change in October 2022 with revised [Terms of Reference](#) published in January 2023. After a Public Appointments recruitment process the Minister appointed Dr David Tudor as the incoming Chair, following the retirement of Peter Davies from the role he had held in various guises for 10 years. Peter's invaluable work to foster collaboration, build strong relationships and advocate for sustainable management in the marine environment was recognised in a letter of thanks from the Minister, and by the send-off he was given by colleagues and partners at his last meeting. His leadership, vision and commitment will be missed, but we look forward to the Partnership's continued growth and success under new leadership.

As well as leading the Partnership, the new Chair has a clear remit to provide an outward facing ambassador, to be an active advocate for our coasts and seas on behalf of the Minister for Climate Change, and to widen the reach and diversity of the Partnership.

Three full Partnership meetings have been held over the course of the year as well as Working Group and Task and Finish group meetings, shown in **Annex 1**. Condensed minutes of full Partnership meetings are published on the WG web pages. The Secretariat is provided by Welsh Government's Marine and Biodiversity Division.

The Governance structure of the Coasts and Seas Partnership, and associated groups, is shown in Figure 2 below. A draft Delivery Plan is included at Annex 2, but this will be improved and refined by a management group, consisting of the Chair, theme leads and secretariat over the next 6 months.



*Formally Sustainable Investment and can appear so in documents prior to 2023.

Figure 2: Current Governance Structure of CaSP Cymru

Communications

A key priority for the group was to develop a strategic, focussed and engaging '[Shared Narrative](#)' to ensure members of the Partnership are working towards a shared purpose and outcomes, and provide consistent messaging. This was published in December 2022 and forms the backdrop for all CaSP Cymru communications and actions.

A newsletter is now circulated to partners on a regular basis, sharing news, publications and consultations. Partners are encouraged both to share information for the newsletter via the Secretariat, and to disseminate the newsletter or its contents through their own networks and partners.

In 2022/23 the Chair and the Secretariat spoke at several events to raise awareness of the Partnership and its work. It is hoped to extend this outreach over the next year through Wales Climate Week, and the national Coastal Futures conference. Work has begun for the Ocean Literacy Strategy to become a recognised activity of the UN Decade for Ocean Science.

Next Steps

The Delivery 'Plan on a Page' sets out the outcomes, work areas and actions which the working groups will continue to work towards (See **Annex 2**). The Partnership will monitor and review progress of these actions, evaluating success and identifying

additional actions to meet the outcomes. The Delivery Plan will remain iterative and will evolve year on year. However, a key action for next year will be to put in place a more robust baseline against which to monitor and assess progress and successful outcomes.

Delivery of Biodiversity Deep Dive recommendations will also be reported through six monthly Progress Updates.

Meeting Schedule 2023

Full Partnership Meetings

- 5th October 2023, all day meeting to take place in Cardiff. MCC to welcome Dr David Tudor as the newly appointed Chair.
- Provisional dates for 2024:
 - Thursday 22nd February
 - Thursday 13th June

Working groups and Task and Finish groups scheduled meetings:

- Blue Investment Working Group – Monthly on 2nd Thursday of the month
- Next WREEF Task and Finish Group – 11th October
- Ocean Literacy Working Group – tbc
- Funding Policy Advisory Group - tbc

See **Annex 1** below for Year Two full meeting schedule.

Annex 1 – Year 2 meeting schedule

CaSP Full Partnership meeting	Ocean Literacy	Blue Investment	Building Capacity
6/10/22 - Cardiff			
		19/10/22 Working group	
	27/10/22 Working group		16/11/22
		01/12/22 Working group	
	14/12/22 Working group		
		01/02/23 WREEF Task and Finish Group (TFG)	
15/02/23 – Online			
	06/03/23 Working group		
		31/03/23 WREEF TFG	
	03/05/23 Working group	04/05/23 Working group	
		09/06/23 WREEF TFG	
	20/06/23 Working group		
21/06/23 – Saundersfoot			
	5 & 6/07/23 Strategy devt.		
	17/07/23 Strategy devt.		
	19/07/23 Working group		
		10/08/23 Working group	
	11/09/23 Working group	11/09/23 WREEF TFG	
		14/09/23 Working group	

