

Living Levels Landscape Partnership Landscape Conservation Action Plan August 2017

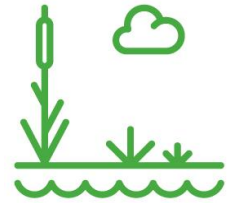
APPENDIX 3 Living Levels Visitor Experience Destination Management Plan

Living Levels Landscape Partnership

Destination Management Plan

Final Report

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Prepared by:

Cole & Shaw cyf with

Letha Consultancy, Wye Knot Tourism, Gareth Kiddie

Associates, Lucy von Weber Ltd, Can Do Team

supported by

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SECTION 1

Introduction

We are pleased to present the Visitor Experience Destination Management Project Plan for the Living Levels, a key output of the development phase of a successful major project supported by Heritage Lottery Fund under its Landscape Partnership Scheme for the area of the Severn Estuary coast of Wales known colloquially as the ‘Gwent Levels’, lying between Cardiff and Chepstow and either side of the River Usk.

International scientific recognition, and a prestigious stakeholder partnership, represent a great start, but we have fully understood the need to transmute the intrinsic ‘landscape value’ of the Living Levels into wider social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being and sustainability. Reclaimed from the turbid and unpredictable waters of the Severn Estuary over millennia by the ingenuity of successive generations of engineers and farmers, the area is now under significant pressure from development and climate change while its subtle attributes and benefits are often overlooked, misunderstood and even unloved by many who now live, work or travel in the area. On the whole, Wales doesn’t do ‘flat’ which makes the ‘big skies’ of the Living Levels a unique but challenging offer.



Yet even a superficial sweep of the area’s natural and cultural heritage throws up a succession of fascinating vignettes - the impacts of a major flooding recorded in a medieval church (left), Brunel’s Great Western Railway and Severn tunnel, prehistoric footprints and trackways snaking towards Somerset, the bones of a long-extinct Aurochs, the estate wealth of the Morgans of Tredegar, Roman drainage channels, medieval ports, a unique watery lexicon, the imposing silhouette of the Transporter Bridge, spectacular murmurations of starlings....

The spotlight turned on the area by the Wales Coast Path and National Cycle Network routes, along with an increasing number of leisure-hungry neighbours in Cardiff, Newport and Monmouthshire means that we can no longer afford to neglect the Living Levels which need to be actively managed for the generations to come. Already major conservation ‘brands’ such as National Trust and RSPB have committed to the Living Levels and are successfully telling parts of their story to new and engaged visitors.

Other pieces of the jigsaw are also in place with communities investing in their own interpretation and local authorities upgrading access routes. The Living Levels project however gives an opportunity and impetus to consolidate and enhance the investments to date and show how the rich local detail fits into the ‘big picture’.



With the City region approach and the funding mechanism of the City Deal agreed, the Living Levels area is located on a transport and development corridor seen as vital to Wales’ growth aspirations. The project is therefore timely and crucial in proving the greater added value of the area for the visitor economy, bio-diversity, leisure and well-being¹.

It is a truism that the Levels represent a ‘Living’ Landscape, shaped by human activity, with a resident population and the attendant pressures of two expanding cities. There is a wide range of political and personal opinions to be embraced and finding a consensus between vested interests has been a key outcome of this work.

¹ Not least as defined by the Welsh Government’s Wellbeing of Future Generations Act

What we were asked to do

The Living Levels Partnership is adopting an integrated approach to ensure that interpretation, marketing, physical and intellectual access and the experience on the ground all project the same agreed ‘story’ and its sub-themes - an integrated ‘destination approach’. This work is vital as it will unlock the major funding which will allow the overall Living Levels project to proceed as planned.

In summary this is what we have sought to do:

- Discover and agree the vision or shared ‘story’ of the Living Levels through research and wide-ranging stakeholder consultation and a process that raises levels of awareness and engagement
- Identify, collate and list sources for a range of images, content and other resources to support the story and its sub-themes
- Develop a credible approach to brand and ‘sense of place’
- Develop a comprehensive and practical Interpretation Plan, future-proofed in terms of sustainability and techniques recommended
- Develop a practical Access and Signage Plan which will encourage and allow sustainable enjoyment of the Levels by **all** visitors
- Create an Integrated Marketing Plan which identifies, engages and attracts the widest range of audiences in line with the project partners’ social, cultural, environmental and economic aspirations
- Recommend future governance and organisational arrangements to ensure sustainability of the destination plan
- In each plan detail, locate and cost the interventions required so that they can be easily taken forward in the implementation stage of the project.

In simple terms the purpose of the overall Destination Plan is to:

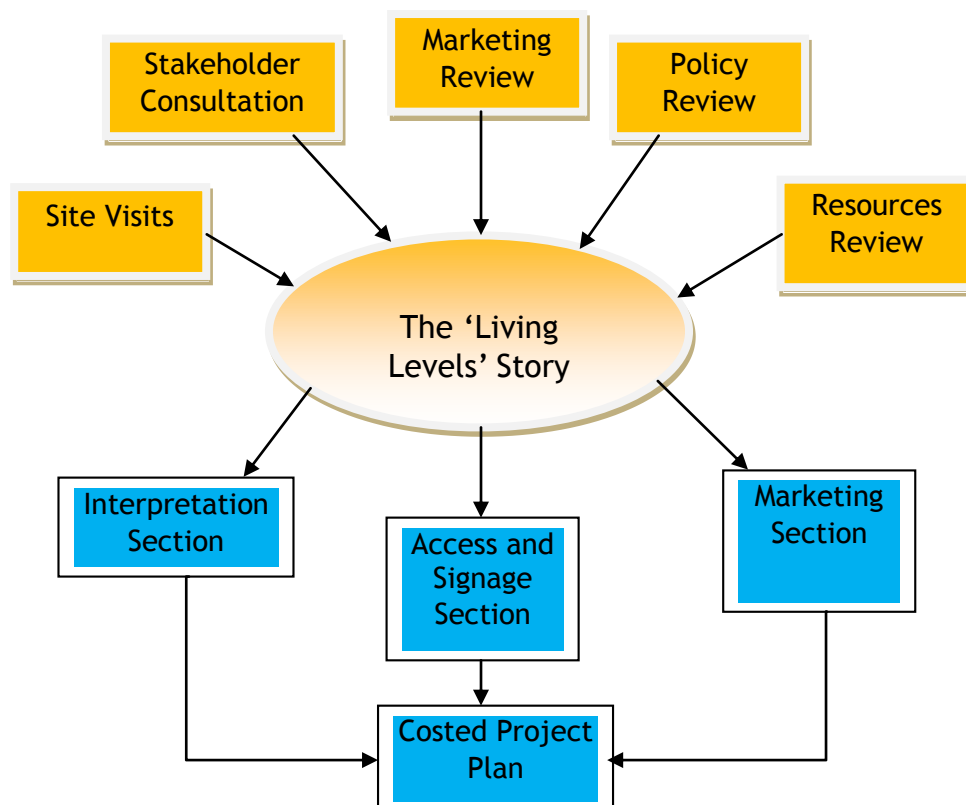
Increase footfall, economic value and visitor understanding and enjoyment by improving access to, awareness of, and the visitor experience in, the Living Levels

While this Plan is regarded as a key step in unlocking support for the full implementation of the Living Levels Landscape Partnership Scheme, it should also help inform further complementary funding opportunities eg Coastal Communities Fund, Rural Communities Development Fund, Regional Tourism Engagement Fund, Tourism Investment Support Scheme etc.

How we did it

The work has naturally fallen into a number of tasks some of which ran concurrently while others were sequenced.

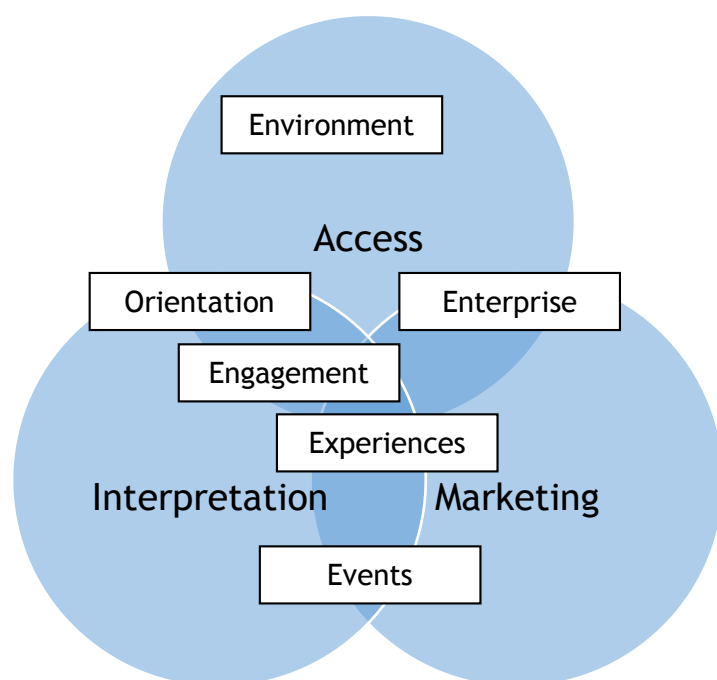
We start by showing a schematic overview of the project which identifies the main processes leading to the development of the Living Levels Story, from which the detailed topic chapters are derived. They in turn are summarised in a costed action plan. We have also identified an approach to governance, implementation and an evaluation framework with a minimum number of key performance indicators mindful that there will, of necessity, be a larger range of indicators developed for the project overall and the component partner projects within it.



The Living Levels Story is the foundation statement which informs the recommendations of each of the topic sections. These are designed to stand alone or be combined as required for ease of implementation and dissemination but are heavily interdependent. Of necessity therefore there is repetition between the content of topic sections.

Project Dimensions

The following figure identifies the scope of this plan and the relationships between its component dimensions:



Project Principles

Initial research, site visits and consultations have helped us establish a number of key principles to underpin the development of the visitor experience and against

which proposed physical, interpretive and marketing interventions have been tested:

- ✓ **Quality of experience:** To provide all visitors with a fulfilling, enjoyable and high quality experience of the Levels and its component parts
- ✓ **Promoting understanding:** To increase appreciation and understanding of the special landscape, biodiversity, management regime and heritage of the Levels for both local people and visitors
- ✓ **Strengthening communities:** To increase local awareness, understanding, care and enjoyment of the Levels and instill a 'sense of place' and ownership
- ✓ **Sustainable growth:** To prevent negative impacts of visitor activity through balancing the potential growth of tourism with needs of residents and the environment
- ✓ **Spreading benefits:** To share the economic and social benefits of tourism and distribute visitor flows throughout the Levels by encouraging exploration and understanding of lesser known areas
- ✓ **Visitor spend:** To increase the value of visitor spend to levels that contribute to the economic prosperity of local communities
- ✓ **Living Levels for all:** To ensure an inclusive experience where all visitors are able to enjoy a visit irrespective of their personal circumstances, encouraged by accessible and appropriate facilities, experiences, information and promotion
- ✓ **Collaboration:** ensure all partners are 'singing from the same hymn sheet' in terms of the way the Levels are portrayed, talked about and promoted
- ✓ **Adding Value:** optimising the local return on investment from pre-existing infrastructure eg Wales Coast Path, National Cycle Network
- ✓ **Authenticity:** To encourage an experience which is rooted in, and unique to, the locality and provides a genuine 'sense of place' shared by those who live in, work in and visit the levels

Parallel workstreams and wider cooperation

From the beginning of our work we were careful to dovetail and coordinate our activities with Chris Blandford Associates (CBA), the consultants carrying out the parallel studies into Landscape Character Assessment and Green Infrastructure. This cooperation included holding 2 joint stakeholder workshops in October 2016. We believe our findings, recommendations and action plan are entirely compatible with and complementary to CBA's work - both taking advantage of key exemplar locations for access, interpretation and enjoyment while avoiding more fragile, sensitive, low-capacity and less accessible sites.

Our plan, especially in respect of access, interpretation and signage, necessarily includes recommendations for physical interventions which may lie outside the strict boundaries of the study area as determined by the client, but will add significant value in terms of encouraging visits, increasing understanding and creating a clear 'sense of place'. Indeed where major residential, commercial and retail development has encroached on the northern parts of the Levels is an obvious opportunity for starting to tell their story.

In addition we have been active participants in the brand development process, contracted to Elfen, for the project and partnership, recognizing the likely 'spillover' into customer-facing applications.

Where appropriate, we have also supported the Project team's community engagement activities with a team member presence and/or input to the consultation structure rather than undertake parallel community consultations.

We have contributed to early discussions with the client's chosen contractor for Monitoring and Evaluation, Resources for Change.

Finally we have reviewed the individual partner project proposals within the overall programme for impacts on our plan (and vice versa). We are confident that there is full synergy and indeed as they come on stream, the partner projects will



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offer both additional opportunities to reinforce brand and marketing communications as well as providing additional content and experiences for visitors in some cases.

Outline Plan of Study Area



A more interactive form of mapping identifying the location of proposed interventions has been submitted separately to the client. Subject to budget, we understand the client intends to commission a standard mapping tool for the whole Living Levels area to aid the implementation phase, which we would endorse.

Research

Our initial research was based on many site visits, in-depth resources review, workshops, group and one-to-one consultations with a wide range of project partners and stakeholders. The client had already embarked on a comprehensive 6 month programme of community engagement events and we were able to successfully ‘piggy-back’ on these through attendance and/or adding in specific questions or areas for discussion. This has allowed us to concentrate on specific groups relevant to Destination Development issues eg visitor economy.

We identified an extensive list of Opportunities and Challenges which formed the basis of an interim issues report to the client.

Key learnings from the Research Phase overall can be summarised as follows:

- Partly due to recent development pressure, as well as the number of heritage and scientific designations, there is no shortage of technical and academic studies into the Levels area from an archeological, conservation and historic landscape perspective - the evidence and resource base, including physical finds, is therefore comparatively rich and authoritative, providing both a sound rationale and high quality content to support our recommendations.
- Similarly there are plenty of well-intentioned individual initiatives and projects in the pipeline to improve access and interpretation but they lacked a coherent strategic framework before this project. The task has therefore been one of prioritisation and creative delivery.
- As the study area crosses the boundaries of 3 local authorities, relevant policies and priorities, and levels of maintenance, provision of existing waymarking, visitor facilities, interpretation standards and delivery technologies are not necessarily equivalent. Linked with other land use and management issues this means that some parts of the Levels are more immediately attractive to visits.
- Importantly, as we have learned from our consultations and the project team's own extensive public engagement activities, there remains a generation of interested and engaged local residents, landowners and workers who have a deep understanding of the unique way in which the Levels have been formed and maintained over centuries. With new settlement patterns and other social change however this reservoir of knowledge and enthusiasm is not guaranteed a long term future. The project



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is therefore timely as an opportunity to pass on the knowledge and develop a new generation of Living Levels champions.

- Community engagement, and a workshop held with tourism operators, also revealed, however, that wider local awareness of the Living Levels area and its special qualities (other than individual well marketed sites) is low from a business and resident perspective. Although there is little specific resistance to visiting *per se*, potential visitors need to be given compelling reasons to choose the Levels as a destination, backed up by messaging, information and signage which inspires and gives reassurances about routes, points of interest and visitor services.
- An essentially flat landscape offers significant advantages for encouraging improved levels of ‘easy’ physical activity and well-being ‘on the doorstep’ for large local resident populations, including those who do not typically participate. However the extent, connectivity and condition of the current route network does not necessarily always support that aim

As an ‘added value’ output from the research phase we have provided the client group with a comprehensive schedule of the relevant information sources for future use and reference by the partnership.



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What's the Living Levels Story?

The wider consultation process has given the project a lot more than just an understanding of the 'story' and its themes. The process has helped build awareness, pride and capacity and identify key thought- and action- leaders among the stakeholders.

The Story

In terms of the 'Story' the clear major thread is the interaction and tension between **Water** and **People**. This can be explored dynamically to point up jeopardy and risk eg:

- Salt v Fresh
- Tidal v drained
- Human Management v Natural Forces
- Clean v polluted
- 'Welsh' levels v 'English' levels
- Inside and outside the 'wall'
- Hidden v visible

There are some clear and strong sub-themes to the 'Story':

- **Timeline** - prehistoric exploration/exploitation of the levels through to today (and tomorrow)
- **'Everybody plays their part'** - centuries of levels creation, families and communities, governance and cooperation
- **'Levels Lingo'** - a distinctive language for a special place
- **'An accidental oasis'** - a home for today's (and tomorrow's) bio-diversity and enjoyment - **'Un-natural Nature'**
- **'A vital corridor'** - contribution to Wales' economy and development over centuries (prehistoric tracks, roman roads, Brunel's railway, power, motorways, industry, housing)

The Living Levels as a Destination ‘Brand’

This may be a plan for developing and presenting a destination **area** but we do not believe the Living Levels currently represents a viable destination **brand**; nor are there the resources or assets to successfully create one in the short term. Rather, the area provides a rich mix of unique visitor experiences which add significant value to the existing destination and corporate brands already established in the area (Newport, Cardiff, Monmouthshire, National Trust, RSPB etc). It is important however that, whenever the Levels area is talked about, the messages are consistent. We are advocating use of a ‘Sense of Place’ Toolkit to support communities, organisations and businesses as they develop Living Levels Product and Experiences. Our detailed proposals on this approach to branding can be found in the Marketing Section of the report but in short...

We do recommend maintaining the title ‘**Living Levels**’ for the area, which has already gained significant traction through the community engagement process, qualified in local markets by destination signifiers where necessary eg ‘**Living Levels Cardiff**’, ‘**Living Levels Monmouthshire**’, ‘**Living Levels Newport**’ and for markets across the border ‘**Living Levels Wales**’ (alongside of course Welsh Language equivalents eg **Lefalau Byw Cymru**)

The Client has commissioned a project and partnership brand, including a visual identity, from Elfen. There was no requirement that this should become a consumer facing destination brand, especially as each part of the Levels is already a component of another destination, but it may prove to be a valued endorsement mechanism for Levels experiences and it is important that the brand components for internal and external use are consistent and mutually reinforcing. Thus we have sought to provide significant expertise and input to the development of the partnership brand.



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SECTION 2

Interpretation Plan

Introduction

In this section we look at how the Levels 'Story' leads to Interpretative aims, objectives, themes and storylines and a comprehensive Interpretation Plan.

1. Background

The Living Levels is a complex landscape. Stolen from the sea, its reliance on and relationship with people is precarious, intricate and yet enduring.

Nature, for its part, has exploited the opportunity and created a unique ecosystem - an 'accidental' oasis supported by the special way the Levels has been created and managed.

We fully appreciate that the story of this place is much more, and much older, than walling off the sea. It is a story of constant change - even today's 'permanent' sea wall is one of a succession of such structures over time. The Goldcliff footprints, laid down between 6000BC and 4700 BC were made on freshwater mud, not salt water - five thousand years ago you could walk to Lundy and the seashore was 100 miles away. The estuary, in a very different form, provided for people and animals in prehistoric times, and we are fortunate that now it continues to offer up so much rich archaeological evidence and finds that allow us to connect very directly with the land before the Levels². We are also fortunate that the natural change in the prehistoric landscape has been recorded

² Mesolithic remains have been discovered at Goldcliff, stratified in an estuarine clay underlying a sequence of peat deposits. Additionally, late Mesolithic human footprints, impressed into the lower Wentlooge Formation have been found at Uskmouth. Again they were preserved in estuarine clay beneath a deposit of clay. http://www.ggat.org.uk/cadw/historic_landscape/Gwent%20Levels/English/GL_Main.htm

in a paleo-geographic model.³ Climate change is not new - but those natural processes underway since the last ice age are now accelerating through human action.

But what makes this landscape unique? What makes it what it is today - the Levels - as opposed to just another piece of Welsh coastline? What is the heart of the story that will appeal to those who currently have no knowledge of, or interest in the Levels? We believe it is the intentional intervention by people to take and keep this land from the water.

“Man’s greatest impact on the wetland landscape has been his determination and success in reclaiming the levels, which has been ongoing at least since the Roman period⁴”.

It is this deliberate action, more than any other factor, which created the environment we see today. We do, however, recognise that, within this man-made landscape (a phrase used frequently in the Landscape Character Assessment Study), the environment has continued to evolve.

Since the Romans first decided to hold back the tide and steal the land for agriculture, the extent of that ‘land’ has been redefined and reinforced. What we now understand as the Levels owes much to the development of the sea wall since the medieval period.

To build a barrier against the sea on a sufficient scale across a great raft of coastline is impressive enough. But equally impressive is the series of grips, drains, pills, ditches, reens and gouts that were formed to keep the land drained, irrigated and salt free and yet allow, purely through gravity, excess water to find its way out into the estuary - a stretch of coast with the second highest tidal range

³ Rick Tuner has noted that the changes to sea level in prehistoric times, and the development of the Severn Estuary have been the subject of a paleo-geographic model which may be useful in interpreting the prehistoric landscape.

⁴ http://www.ggat.org.uk/cadw/historic_landscape/Gwent%20Levels/English/GL_Main.htm

in the world. The legal framework that grew to ensure the maintenance of this network is of itself a quirky and fascinating part of the Levels' story; as is the distinctive and unique 'Levels lingo' that it spawned.

We believe that the element of tension and jeopardy that exists between the land and sea (as demonstrated by the catastrophic 17th century flood and many subsequent floods, the quasi-judicial proceedings of the Commissioner of Sewers and the imperative for the Drainage Board's work) is an appealing narrative for many uninitiated audiences, given more urgent emphasis by current and wider concerns about climate change and rising sea levels.

We also acknowledge that the history of the Levels reflects the history of Wales - Early occupation; Roman invasion; the growth of the Christian faith; Medieval Anglo-Norman lords v Welsh kingdoms; the great flood of 1607; traditional rural and village life (and its decline); the industrialisation of Wales and the opening up of transport links. It also strongly reflects traditional industries such as farming, fishing, shipbuilding and cider making.

It is also worth noting that up to the early 20th century this area looked first to the sea - across to Bristol and the ports of the Severn Estuary, rather than inland to Wales. This maritime influence has been largely forgotten.

This, then, is a rich and fertile landscape both culturally and physically.

The role of the interpretation will be to engage the many and varied users and to show them why the Levels are special, and how their actions have an impact upon its survival (both economically and physically).

2. Interpretative Aims - why do we want to tell the story of the Living Levels?



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As shown above, the Levels is important historically and ecologically, which is recognised by a small group of local people who understand this landscape and want to 'champion' it. However, engagement activities with residents and wider audience research through our marketing development work, confirms that understanding, appreciation and awareness of the Levels is low. Very few people shopping at Newport Retail Park, or new home owners at Llanwern, have any knowledge or understanding that they are 'on the Levels'. As a 'new' destination there is no qualitative or quantitative 'baseline' analysis of usage, although later in the report we have set one through the STEAM mechanism. Understandably current visitor information is concentrated on specific sites - Tredegar House, RSPB Wetlands, Caldicot Castle, for example. We do know from people counter data that the stretch of the Wales Coast Path through the Levels area has relatively low usage compared with those further west and north.

Despite some good studies for specific areas, we feel that currently there is no real on-the-ground attempt to tell the stories of the Levels to either existing users (who are as varied as shoppers in the retail park, to walkers on the Wales Coast Path, to birdwatchers at the Wetlands centre) or potential users.

If people don't understand why the Levels area is 'special' then we can't expect them to appreciate it. This deficit needs to be addressed, so that users are more understanding of the precious character of the Levels and their own role in its sustainability.

We also believe there is a need to bring these stories alive in ways that:

- Are creative/imaginative/inspiring and yet robust and practical
- Are inclusive and relevant to the many audiences
- Are bilingual Welsh and English
- Are firmly grounded in fact - celebrate the historic and 'natural' environment
- Complement other access and interpretation projects locally, regionally and nationally
- Increase local pride and support for the Levels



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- Help create a positive and dynamic image of the Levels (as one person put it - 'create an idea of 'place' that people can fix in their minds' - think Lake District - that automatically conjours up a vision in the mind's eye - we need the Levels to have the same effect)
- Has a positive economic impact and inspires entrepreneurialism

3. What are our interpretive objectives?

We want certain things to happen as a result of visiting the Living Levels and experiencing the interpretation. These aspirations are set out below as learning, behavioural and emotional objectives.

Learning Objectives:

We want

- Most users to know that the Levels are an important landscape historically and environmentally ie
 - Heritage:
 - o most school age/adult visitors to understand that the Levels were created by people stealing land from the sea and that this is a precarious relationship which has on-going relevance today in relation to climate change and rising sea levels.
 - o Most school age/adult visitors to be able to recognise the Level's historical and landscape features
 - Environment:
 - o Most school age/adult visitors to understand that the site is environmentally sensitive and needs to be continually managed to maintain its special qualities

Emotional Objectives:

We want users to...

- Be impressed by the efforts of people in making and retaining this landscape



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- Be awestruck at the contrast it provides to the urban environments on its doorstep, both in terms of topography, industry, and beauty /tranquility.
- Be inspired by the life stories of some of the characters of the Levels (human or otherwise).
- Enjoy exploring it sensitively

Behavioural Objectives:

We want users to...

- Respect the Levels because of its historical and environmental importance.
- Encourage others to understand and enjoy the area sensitively
- Ensure that where necessary, existing users change how they use the Levels in order to help preserve/conservate it - look after it or lose it!

4. Interpretive themes

“Effective interpretation is based on themes. A theme is a central or key idea that a visitor should be able to remember and summarise if asked. The development of a theme therefore provides organisational structure and clarification of understanding”⁵

Theme development:

Having set out the key elements of the story, we are now in a position to develop an effective theme for the site. To aid this process we shall be adopting Prof. Sam Ham’s 3 step theme generator⁶:

- **Step 1...** Generally the Levels is relevant because it is an environment shaped by human interventions that hold back the tide; at high tides, under natural circumstances it should be under the water of the estuary.

⁵ Cadw 2007, Commissioned Report by Atkins pg. 21

⁶ ENVIRONMENTAL INTERPRETATION A Practical Guide for People with Big Ideas and Small Budgets Sam H. Ham Professor Department of Resource Recreation and Tourism College of Forestry, Wildlife, and Range Sciences University of Idaho Moscow, Idaho; 1992, pg. 42

- **Step 2...** Specifically we want to tell people about the Levels' many fascinating and often unique facets - from its sea wall and its built heritage to its ecology; its inhabitants - people (past and present), plants and animals; and how it is being conserved and preserved for the future.
- **Step 3...** After visiting the Levels we think it is important that visitors remember that this is no ordinary landscape, and that despite its laid-back rural feel, there is a constant tension between the sea and the people who live and work on the Levels.

This has resulted in the following theme:

The Living Levels: dramatically stolen from the sea long ago, this is a fragile, fertile, man-made landscape teeming with history and ecology, whose tranquility belies the constant tension between the human struggle to maintain it and the water's desire to reclaim it

To complement the theme, we have begun to dissect the story of the Levels in to bite-sized interpretative messages (storylines) as shown below:

1. The unique history of the Levels

- Land before the Levels - climate change after the last ice age transformed this landscape from a river valley - home to humans and animals - into a estuary with the second highest tidal range in the world.
- The history of the Levels is shaped by how the natural and man-made landscape has been used throughout history, and in particular by how the Levels area was created and how it has been maintained.

2. Living on the Levels/ the people of the Levels

- The challenges and opportunities provided by the Levels have led to distinct, industrious communities and strong characters.



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3. Care, conservation and preservation

- The Levels is a landscape that cannot be left ‘untouched’; it requires constant care and conservation to support the rich diversity of wildlife and plantlife which make the area so special

4. The Challenge: managing water on the Levels

- The Levels is a landscape in constant tension and now, as in the past, requires specialist and cooperative management, particularly in the light of accelerating climate change and rising sea levels.

Narrative for Interpretation Plan

We have used previously commissioned reports and surveys, to inform the development of the Interpretation Plan for the Living Levels (Wales Coast Path Monmouthshire Interpretation Plan, Interpreting the Newport Transporter Bridge 2014, Wales Coast Path Newport Interpretation Plan, Caldicot Castle Interpretation Plan).

We have also incorporated creative ideas from the Living Levels Partners, ensuring the spread of proposed interpretive interventions stretches across the project area (RSPB model, Rick Turner tide markers, Caldicot Castle re-interpretation, Tredegar House re-interpretation of Home Farm and cycling link to Wetlands coast/subway interpretation, GWT development at Magor Marsh, Tunnel Exhibition at Sudbrook, Churches on the Levels etc.).

Here we provide a narrative to support the interpretive actions identified in the table which follows.

NB costs are based on similar projects we have been involved with elsewhere and/or costs sought from suppliers specific to this plan. As such these costs provide a useful working budget but will be subject to change over time due to inflation, and will need to be tested through procurement as the implementation phase progresses.



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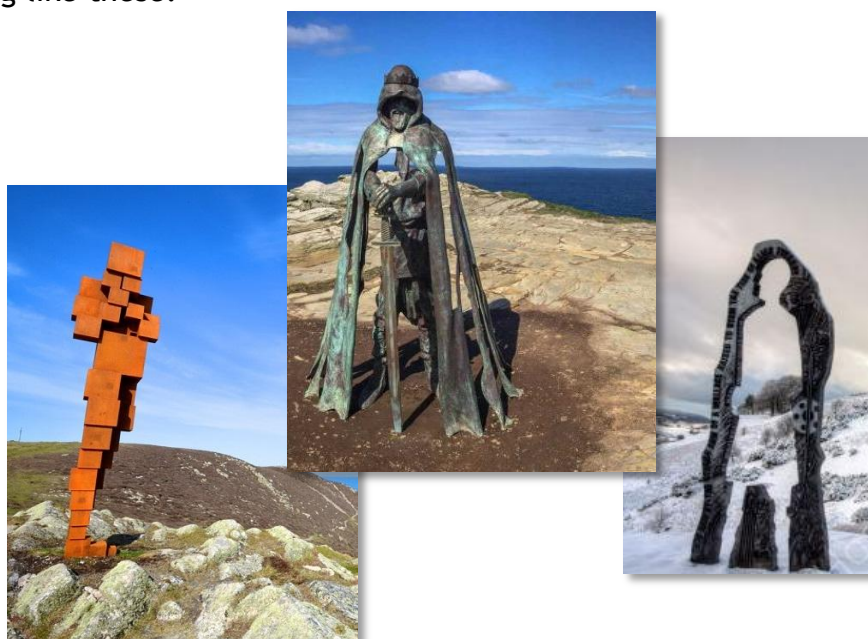


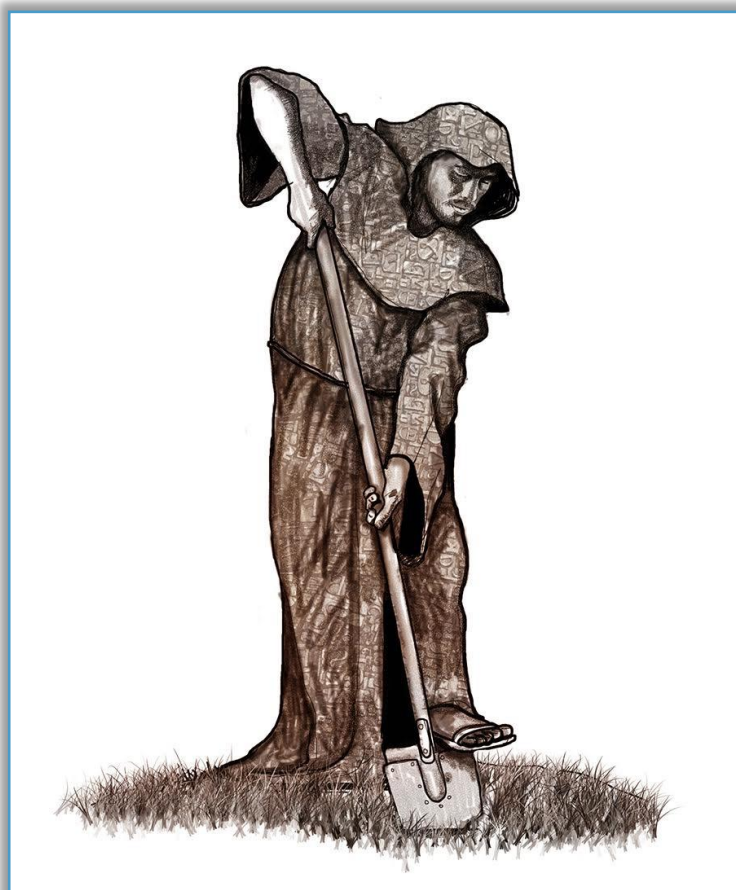
People of the Levels - Figures in the Landscape

A key aim of the Living Levels project is to reconnect people to the landscape of the Levels. One way of doing this is by placing sculptural artwork figures in the landscape at places with historical or environmental significance. These figures will bring to life the heritage of the Levels and the stories of the people who have lived, worked, worshipped and played here. They can also draw attention to the natural heritage of area and act as visual signposts and markers.

An artist or sculptor would be employed to deliver the project, who we envisage working closely with the Community Officer in recruiting and engaging local participation. We envisage using community workshops to help choose who the figures are and where they would be placed, complemented by historical research to ensure the stories are grounded in fact. Ideally each community will 'adopt' their figure, so this involvement in delivery is crucial. As part of the proposed Levels Festival (detailed below) the figures could be the centre piece of events, from illumination to themed guided walks.

We include some examples of figures used in the landscape elsewhere in the UK, to illustrate what could be done, although the Levels' figures may not look anything like these.





We have asked an interpretive artist (Rubin Eynon) to sketch an initial concept of 'The Monk' for the Levels (left) by way of additional inspiration

Related to the figures is the proposal to place a replica Roman marker stone to the west of Goldcliff, close to where it was found (on the 'wrong' side of the sea wall). This will be in partnership with the National Roman Legionary Museum at Caerleon, who plan to put the

original stone on display in a new exhibition about the Living Levels area and its importance in supporting the Legionary Fortress.

Our approach to these interpretive interventions is pragmatic, targeted and joined up. All the figures and proposed locations are placed on the Wales Coast Path (WCP) or circular routes to or from it, or located at attractions along these routes where there is a target audience. The exception is the proposal to place a sculpture at the Retail Park in Newport, which has been built on the Levels. We feel a sculpture in this location would raise awareness for an audience that is mostly blissfully unaware that they are on the Levels when they are doing their shopping. This is part of a large latent audience already over the threshold.

We believe there are opportunities for further artistic interventions - perhaps a Mesolithic Aurochs hunt as graffiti on a factory or warehouse wall.... We are also aware that previous projects have delivered other relevant sculptures in the study

area eg King Tewdric at Mathern and the boatman in Chepstow which could be ‘picked up’ in interpretive materials.

We also believe there is significant merit in creating a larger scale figure close to the Wales/ England border and main transport corridor as a visual signifier and ‘attention grabber’ for the overall project.

Ideas and locations for figures in the landscape

<u>Suggested Locations</u>	<u>Figure</u>
Severn Tunnel Junction (visible from train and cars)	Larger scale teaser figure (Reen Vaulters?)
Black Rock	Lave net fishermen or ferryman
Sudbrook boat yard	Ship builder
Sudbrook Tunnel Exhibition	Tunnel engineer
Sudbrook Chapel	Ship's captain
Sudbrook fort	Iron Age inhabitant
On footbridge over reen	Reen vaulter
Caldicot Castle	Bronze Age sailor/ sewn boat
Caldicot Pill (inland path to Castle)	Fisherman or Boatbuilder
Magor Procurator's House	Procurator
Magor Marsh	Brinker
Magor Pill (lost port of Abergwaetha)	Sailor / boat sculpture
Redwick village	Cider maker
Goldcliff /Sea Wall WCP detour	Monk with putcher
Goldcliff - wrong side of sea wall	Footprints in the mud figure(s)
West of Goldcliff on seawall	Roman legionary / replica stone
East Usk Lighthouse	Thomas Williams lighthouse builder
Wetlands Centre	Stoker or figure from Wharf pub with contraband
Transporter Bridge	Orb workers on bicycles

Pillgwenlly	Dockworker unloading ship
Tredegar House Home Farm	Farm Worker
Lighthouse pub	Lighthouse keeper
St Brides / Peterstone	Legionary building sea wall
Newport Retail Park	Levels farm worker

Tidemarkers

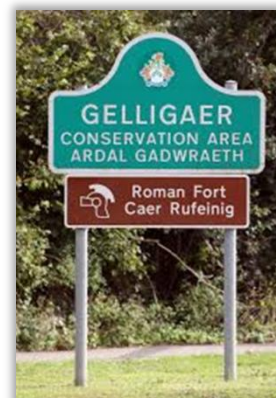
As previously proposed by Rick Turner, we recommend that tide markers could be rolled out to various sites across the Levels. The markers could be wall mounted at places like Gwent Wildlife Trust's Centre at Magor Marsh, or attached/ incorporated into interpretation at other sites. They would contain information about height above sea level at key cycles in the tide, as well as showing the water level at that site during the Great Flood of 1607. We would love people to be able to gauge whether their heads would be above or below sea level if the sea wall was not in place. It would be a very simple but effective mechanism for explaining the difference in ground levels within the Levels (eg why Magor Marsh is lower-lying than the land closer to the sea wall). It also brings home that sense of jeopardy created by the tensions between the sea and the land.

Tides are measured against chart data so site surveys will be required to establish the correct heights/Ordnance Data on the tide markers at each of the proposed locations. This would make an interesting volunteer project with relevant technical support.

We also believe community involvement would be critical to what could otherwise be seen as controversial by some residents and businesses

Living Levels Community place name signs

Placed below village arrival signs these will include the wording 'A Living Levels Community' and include the height above (or below) sea level, to reinforce the low-lying nature of these settlements and create a more coherent sense of place on the Levels. The conservation area example (right) from Gelligaer provides an idea of how this would work/look



Circular walking routes

Victorian and Edwardian clergy, walking their parishes on the Levels, were the first people to record the interesting plant species and communities. This rare natural heritage is the reason why the Levels have been designated as SSSI and one of the best ways to appreciate it is by following in the footsteps of those earlier naturalists, and to walk on the Levels. We propose using existing circular walks to link the Levels churches with the sea wall, WCP and attraction and facilities inland. Interpretation (and access interventions) will be targeted at these routes and areas to achieve the greatest impact. Further evidence for each of the recommended routes can be found at Appendix 9

The priority circular routes start from:

1. **Wetlands Centre** (short and long) to include Nash and Great Treaston, Saltmarsh, Goldcliff, WCP
2. **Goldcliff/ Redwick** (start point to join circular route above or to link to circular route below)
3. **BlackRock/Sudbrook** inc Portskewett and Caldicot Castle

Due to budget limitations we feel the following are desirable routes in the medium term, as they are linked to hubs, but sit outside the scope of this project as they require considerable work to bring them up to a suitable standard to make them visitor-friendly.

4. **Magor** Creating a walking route from Procurator's House and Church in Magor, via Magor Marsh to the Wales Coast Path is a priority to open up access for local

residents and bring WCP walkers into the town to use the facilities there. However, although it would be possible to create a dog free route through Magor Marsh Reserve and onto Blackwall track (which would be the dog route) too much of the southern route remains road-based, and is unlikely to be resolved within the timescale of the project.

5. Lighthouse Inn A short walk inland from the WCP at Lighthouse Inn to St Brides church could be developed, but this needs environmental actions to make it more walker/ visitor friendly. The route involves walking through an industrial premise with large vehicles operating, the church is not actually open for visitors and there are no facilities for visitors in the village. There is also a section which is on the road and not ideal for walkers. There are persistent issues with dumping and fly-tipping which does not present a positive experience for the visitor.

Because of the overlap of routes we suggest standalone route and interpretive leaflets for walks from Black Rock, Wetlands and Redwick/ Goldcliff. These will be interpretive leaflets including a route map.

Linear routes from:

- 1. Lighthouse Inn to West Usk Lighthouse and Peterstone Gout**
- 2. Black Rock to Sudbrook**
- 3. Wetlands along WCP towards Goldcliff**
- 4. Percoed Reen/ Marshfield linked to a Duffryn Community Interpretation Project**

Exemplar Approach: Duffryn to Marshfield

The newly surfaced Percoed Reen cycle/walking path between Duffryn and Hawse Lane offers potential to provide interpretation specifically targeted at a local community audience.

This would include an interpretation panel at the start of the new track, 1 or 2 Figures in the Landscape placed alongside the path and 2 or 3 small panels on

fencing and bridges interpreting how the water system works. There could be a leaflet which is distributed locally in Newport to encourage use of this new resource. Where the off-road path ends there is potential to continue along the road and then follow a footpath across the fields to Marshfield Church to make a loop (please see Appendix 9). Marshfield churchyard is immaculately maintained and, although the church is not open, there are interesting graves. However there is industrial scale rubble tipping in the field adjacent to the church, through which the footpath passes, which would require community engagement. A community project to help plan interpretation and interventions here and change behaviours, perhaps including a Scrapheap Sculpture challenge in local schools, is vital, if this proposal is to succeed.

This pilot project could test a model for wider engagement techniques to be applied in other Living Levels communities

These linear routes may not need separate print to promote - just a call to action on the info/ interpretation at each site with walking distance on signposting.

For each route there will be a mix of interpretive interventions including:

- Interpretive walk leaflet
- Interpretation panels/hub information
- Figures in the landscape
- Tide markers
- Interpretation at churches, hides, attractions
- Interpretation on footbridges/water features along the route

How walks fit into interpretive plan

We feel the development of the walking opportunities in the Levels will make an excellent project for Volunteers:

- History Detectives and Ground Truthing. Volunteers can research historical interest and people on the routes to assist interpretation development and give real stories to the figures in the landscape found along the routes.



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- Piloting and testing routes once developed.
- Testing routes for different users re accessibility.
- Using routes as Guided Walk Events and theming them for the Levels Festival.

Environmental Quality and impact on visitor experience

As we have identified above, there are issues with dumping, poor way marking and routes going through industrial areas, which other strands of the project need to address. We do not feel it is appropriate to spend money on other routes in the Western Levels area at present, due to the poor environmental quality of these routes (and physical barriers due to railway engineering). Phasing of work is therefore a priority in terms of the delivery of the fly-tipping and community engagement elements of the overall Levels project.

Levels Events

The Living Levels area has a number of naturally occurring seasonal spectacles - starling murmurations, apple blossom and apple harvest, hay harvest, spring tides etc. It also has its fair share of existing events - Caldicot's Cider and Perry Festival, the Newport Family Cycling Festival, GWT's Open Days, Open Doors events at local churches etc. all of which could be rebadged 'Living Levels Festival of...'

There is a proposal from the local Churches to produce a 'Maritime' Levels exhibition for 2018 as part of Visit Wales' Year of the Sea (building on the success of their Flood 400 exhibition commemorating the Great Flood of 1607). Churches could also be involved in a 'Levels from above' festival (see below).

There may also be potential to develop a reputation for 'alternative events', e.g. the alternative Christmas Lights, where the lights from the PowerStation and other industrial sites are packaged with temporary lighting installations at key buildings and community art installations for a series of days each winter. There are already



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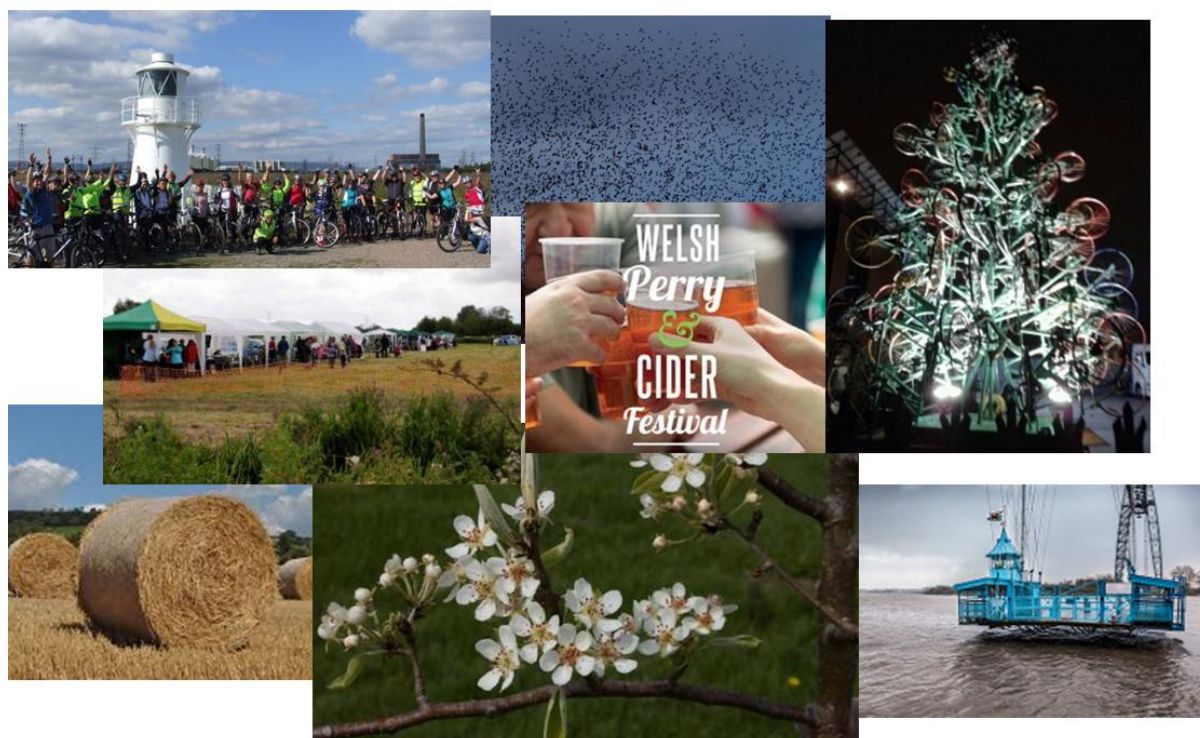
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instances of creative Christmas lighting in the Living Levels, such as the tree made of recycled bikes displayed at a local haulier's yard (image below). It could possibly include a water-based fire display using the reens. An event like this would need to be sensitively managed in terms of undue light pollution or disturbance to wildlife, but choosing the right location a high profile and engaging event could be devised. (The Wye Valley River Festival has championed pyrotechnics on, above and next to water in a highly creative and entertaining way.)

A series of guided interpretive walks (based on the circular walking routes) would support other Events activities, starting from key sites like Wetlands, Transporter Bridge, Tunnel Exhibition, Redwick, Black Rock and local churches.

All in all we believe there is plenty here to sustain a year round programme of Living Levels community and larger scale events based on the seasons, given significant impetus by Wales' Year of the Sea in 2018.



Community Art Project

The Levels project has the community at its heart, and a community art project would be an excellent way to engage with local people, communities, colleges and schools, whilst at the same time, creating works that will be of interest to visitors. The art project should be focused on telling the stories of the Levels identified in this plan, but from the perspective of individual communities, thus reflecting the many facets of the Levels. The Living levels Project Officer has already been in contact with the artist who developed the Somerset Levels community art project to see what lessons can be learnt and shared. There the project culminated in a spectacular celebratory event and we would recommend a similar approach to link in to the Levels Seasons events approach. Ideally the legacy of such a project would be enrichment of the interpretation and access offer of the Living Levels.

Churches on the Levels

The medieval churches on the Levels are focal points in the landscape, not least because their spires and towers provide welcome vertical markers above the low-lying fields. They have been focal points for the communities around them, witnessing, and bearing the scars of life and death on the Levels - such as the catastrophic flood of 1607. The influence of the Church, and especially the monastic grange at Goldcliff, on the development of the Levels landscape is an important part of the story.

The interpretive proposal focuses on ensuring the Levels story is told at key churches and that they are linked to the Wales Coast Path and other visitor attractions via circular walks. These footpaths exist because historically they linked local communities with their nearest church and pub. The churches listed below, primarily in the Magor Benefice, have been identified to us by the church authorities themselves, as they are open to the public and able to offer shelter and refreshments.



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- Levels Church Trail linking 3 main sites up on a Visitor Trail: the Grade 1 Listed churches at Redwick, Nash and Magor.
- Interpretation AND orientation at individual churches taking the form of:
 - o Exterior Orientation/ Interpretation panel close to main entrance to churchyard. Map of Levels saying 'You are Here', other churches, footpaths, attractions are. Headline story of churches on the Levels
 - o Church porch intro panel (imp for when churches not open)
 - o Inside church site specific interpretation where appropriate
 - o Digital provision of interpretation eg access to parish records and other local history resources).
 - o Assist churches in establishing their sites as self-service coffee/ toilet stops with interpretation just off the Wales Coast Path
- Bishton Church has a well-developed plan for an interpretation project which could be implemented in Year 1 of the project

Nash Church is a particular priority as it is so close to the Wetlands Centre and on the WCP. The focus is on making church more accessible and reorganising the interior/tower to make space for interpretive displays. Walking routes led here from the local monastery creating a strong linking subject for the circular walks.

Levels from above

Getting a physical view over the Levels is not always easy. Without that view many people struggle to understand its unique landscape character. The 'Levels from above' project seeks to give people the landscape overview via a few relatively straightforward means:

Physical access:

- Make more of available viewpoints e.g. Magor Railway Bridge, the Transporter Bridge;



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- Work with churches, pubs and lighthouses etc. with good vantage points to open their towers/views for special events or by appointment.

Virtual Access:

- Create a series of time-lapse films reflecting significant cycles in the tide/ drainage. These films could be housed on monitors at key sites (Wetlands/Transporter Bridge/Tredegar House etc.) as well as on project and partner web sites.

Site/ Partner- specific Interpretation

Interpretive Artwork Maesglas Underpass

The underpass is a significant structure on the cycle route between Tredegar House, the heavily urbanised Duffryn Estate, and the Wetlands Centre. It has the potential to become a canvas for helping to tell the story of the Levels to local people and visitors. It



would be particularly effective if it introduced walkers/cyclists to the bird and animal life they could encounter as they approach the Wetlands. Indeed, it is a great opportunity to bridge the gap between the residential hinterland and the environmental oasis of the Wetlands. This mural example is from Waddon underpass, London Borough of Croydon, but the site might also lend itself well to sound-based artwork.

Waterplay/ Levels Model

We endorse the proposal for the development of an interactive model to help visitors



understand the quotidian processes which maintain the unique Levels system of drainage. We believe that this would best be achieved through a waterplay feature similar to that shown here (Victoria Park, London) appealing to a family market. The favoured site and partner for this attraction would be the RSPB Wetlands Centre. However, on investigation, accommodating this kind of installation may prove too environmentally challenging at the site. We recommend investigation of other sites as a matter of priority. (One very relevant option would be the redeveloped Lamby Way/ Parc Tredellerch site where the proposal is for interpretation of sustainable energy but this may not come onstream during the HLF project funding period).

There would still be an opportunity to install a smaller cast relief model together with a timeline at the Wetlands Centre to provide the important overall context for visitors.

Living Levels Map

There is no single user-friendly map of the Levels which shows the routes and facilities in this unique area. A good quality map could be applied to everything from 'Welcome' (you are here) type boards at attractions, orientation graphics, leaflets, web sites, and simple posters for use at B&B's etc. The map underpins the visitor experience.



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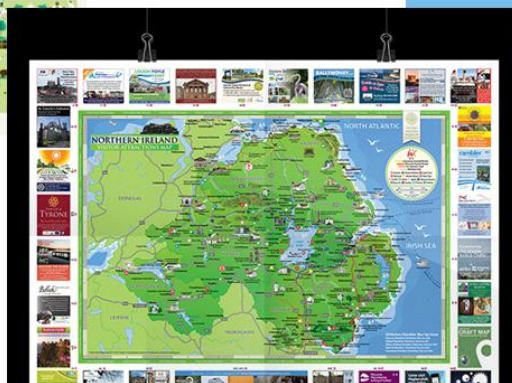
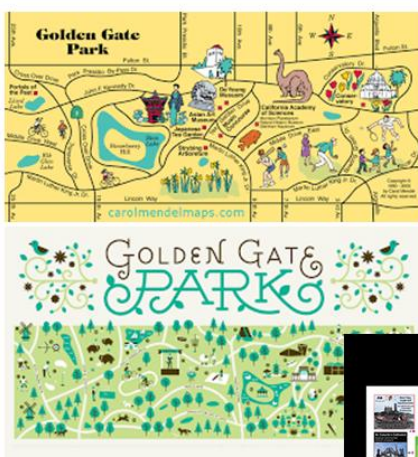
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Living Levels Poster

The poster utilizes the map (above) and becomes a simple tool for use by businesses across the area, so that they can easily help visitors to identify where they are in the locality, what their potential opportunities are, and how to get to the facilities of their choice. These would be freely available to B&B's, cafes, attractions, hotels etc. for display and potentially for use in bedroom browsers. The leaflet (below) would contain a 'takeaway' version of the map.

Living Levels Leaflet

Introductory and interpretive leaflet about the Levels providing general information on attractions, walking routes, facilities etc. Below this will sit a suite of walking and cycling leaflets, interpretive in focus and including map and route information.

Photography, Imagery and Licencing Fees

New photography will need to be commissioned for use on interpretive materials with the copyright retained by the project.

Historical and archive images will also be needed for interpretation panels, leaflets, the website etc. Costs for reproduction and licensing fees can be substantial where content is not free from copyright.

This resource will be available for marketing and promotional activity on- and off-line.

National Roman Legionary Museum Caerleon - Levels exhibition

The Romans, from their base at Caerleon, were the first to try to ‘tame’ the Levels. With a large number of horses needing grazing land, the Severn’s saltmarshes each side of the river Usk access to the Legionary Fort was right on the doorstep. A Roman marker stone, found on the ‘wrong’ side of the present sea wall to the west of Goldcliff, and now in the collections of the National Roman Legionary Museum, would be put on display at the Caerleon museum as the centre-piece of a new exhibition about the Roman influence on the Levels. A replica would be placed near where the original was discovered. The NRLM are enthusiastic and keen to be involved in delivering a key piece of the interpretive jigsaw at this ‘forgotten’ levels’ territory. We have included a budget sum of £10,000 to provide new interpretation here, aligning museum displays and artefacts to tell site specific and relevant strands of the Levels’ story. This would be for a fairly passive experience and not include any high-tech interpretative techniques.

Newport Museum

There is a rich and varied resource of artefacts and archives relating to the Gwent Levels in Newport Museum, although the public displays themselves are now 30 years old. Collections range from Palaeolithic handaxes, Mesolithic footprints, Bronze Age boats, Iron Age trackways, Roman boats, Medieval fish traps to twentieth century salmon putchers. Many items are not on display and, as academics agree that the collection is more comprehensive than those of Bristol Museum and the National Museum of Wales, there is the opportunity to create something of national significance and appeal here. Add in the Newport Ship and the story of trade along the Severn and something very special could be created. A full redisplay will probably require funding beyond the scope of this project, but a



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budget allowance has been made for aligning the museum displays to enhance Living Levels coverage and access at Newport Museum of £35,000. This is a fairly conservative estimate of costs and would concentrate on redisplay and interpretation rather than highly interactive elements. In addition we recommend creating a complementary ‘pop-up’ display at the **Newport Ship**’s current location (firmly on the Levels) at a cost of £5,000.

Other Museums

We would encourage other sites of the National Museum (Cathays and St Fagans) to introduce the Levels story in respect of geology, agriculture, industry and transport. The Cardiff Story is a partner to the project and is well placed to communicate the social history of Levels communities and remind visitors that the capital’s docks area itself is built on similarly reclaimed and drained land. In terms of Monmouthshire’s Museum Service, as well as the identified proposals for Caldicot Castle there are opportunities to enhance current displays and interpretation at Chepstow Museum, especially in respect of fishing practices.

Other ideas

In addition to the above interventions, we also think it would be worth the client looking at opportunities such as:

- Ambassadors - running a one-off course for existing Tourism Ambassadors in the area specifically about the Levels
- Factory fence panels - encouraging local businesses to add life to their sites using panels attached to their fence lines that depict workers, processes and products.
- Guidebook - explore commercial opportunities to develop a Living Levels guide - a high quality, informative and image-raising guide book.

However, we understand that these are not currently priorities.



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Interpretation Action Plan⁷

LL Overarching Interpretation Projects - HIGH Priorities						
Overarching Interpretation PROJECTS	Project location	Interpretation Details	Links to the Interpretive sub-themes	Cost	Dependencies and Timings	Considerations
People in the landscape sculpture trail Phase 1	Preferred Locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severn Tunnel Junction - Larger Scale Figure • Black Rock Lave net fisherman • Sudbrook Fort Iron Age man or ship's captain • Caldicot Castle Sewn boat sailor • Magor Marsh Brinker • Redwick Cider maker • Seawall/ 	A sculpture trail based on putting 'people' in the landscape. Made of steel, these are life-size characters. From a distance they look like real people/silhouettes, but as you get closer, you see they are representing characters from the history of the Levels. They also have interpretation 'built in' - etched or cast messages on their clothes/equipment.	The unique history of the Levels Living on the Levels/ People of the Levels Care, conservation and preservation Challenge managing water on the Levels	£14k - £15k per figure £100,000 Proposed spend (The trail could be added to as other funding/ sponsorship comes on line.)	Year 1: Volunteer historical research/ community workshops Oral histories Design devt Site surveys Planning permissions Year 2 & 3	We have identified 20 possible 'people' figures and have prioritised 10 preferred locations (based on geographic spread, story and historical period) However, a £100,000 budget will buy only 6 or 7. The figures are all on either WCP or on Circular Walks

⁷ Please note all costs quoted here and throughout the report are net of VAT



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<p>Phase 2</p>	<p>Goldcliff WCP-monk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetlands Soker • Transporter bridge Orb worker • Percoed Reen Farmer • Lighthouse Inn Roman seawall builder • Newport Retail Park attention grabber for Levels story • Tredegar House Farmer -gateway to cycle links to Wetlands/ Percoed Rn • Magor Procurator s/posting way to WCP/ M Marsh • Lighthouse (keeper) • WCP Putter fisherman • Cardiff Bay attention grabber alongside LL info 	<p>These tell the story and can also act as signposts along WCP to routes inland to attractions and facilities.</p>			<p>Manufacture and install</p>	<p>from WCP to inland attractions - apart from Percoed Reen (which is on cycle route 88).</p> <p>There could be a discrete project along Percoed Reen with a series of figures and interpretation geared to a local/ family audience.</p>
<p>Replica Roman Marker Stone</p>	<p>Goldcliff</p>	<p>Original found on the 'wrong' side of the current sea wall in</p>	<p>History/ Managing water</p>	<p>£1500 + in kind from NMW</p>	<p>Year 1 3D scanning by Museum, Design, site survey, p p.</p>	<p>National Roman Legion Museum keen partner</p>



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		Caerleon Museum		Caerleon	Launch 2018 Maritime Year	PR / launch opp Maritime Year
Tide markers at key sites	<p>To include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetlands • Magor • Magor Marsh • Seawall • Retail park • Caldicot Castle • Caldicot Moor • Goldcliff • Redwick • Lighthouse • Percoed Reen • Tredegar House 	<p>Measurement Markers which show the height of the highest tides where you are standing, if there was no seawall to protect the Levels.</p> <p>These can be standalone and fixed to walls in suitable locations including churches(4). Where no suitable walls we propose they are integrated into the Orientation and Interpretation Panels at Hubs (8).</p>	<p>Challenge of managing water on the Levels/ Unique history of the Levels</p>	<p>£2000 R & D plus £850 per unit for wall mounted tide markers, based on 3mm x 2130mm laser cut full colour print n-viro (10 years UV Guarantee)</p> <p>12 markers: £12,200.00</p>	<p>Year 1 R&D £2000</p> <p>Launch during 2018 Maritime Year</p>	<p>R & D site surveys against Ordnance Data at each Tide marker location. (Tides are measured against chart data. Need correct heights at individual locations)</p> <p>PR / launch opp Maritime Year</p>

<p>‘A Living Levels Community’ place name signs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Mellons • Marshfield • Peterstone • Castleton • St Brides • Duffryn • Nash • Goldcliff • Redwick • Whitson • Bishton • Magor • Undy • Rogiet • Llanfihangel-Rogiet • Caldicot • Portskewett • Sudbrook • Mathern 	<p>Signs placed underneath village welcome signs which include the height above sea level and ‘A Living Levels Community’.</p>	<p>Living on the Levels. People of the Levels. Managing water on the Levels.</p>	<p>Budget for 20 £10,000</p>	<p>Year 1 Easy win</p>	<p>Subject to discussions with Highways and Community Councils</p>
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Orientation/ interpretation panels at Primary Hubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chepstow (Start WCP) • CaldicotCas • MagorP/Hse • Magor Msh • Severn Tunnel/Rogie t C/P • Npt Retail Park • Wetlands • Transporter • Tredegar House • Lighthouse Inn • Lamby Way • Cardiff Bay • Redwick 	Orientation/ interpretation panels. Includes Living Levels map and 'You are Here' information. Tide markers to be integrated to design as appropriate.	All themes, emphasis depending on the site	<p>£2000 per unit to cover content dev, trans,design /print panel</p> <p>13 x £2000</p> <p>(Cost of Tide markers covered separately above)</p> <p>£26,000</p>	<p>These panels form part of a shared project within the Access Budget. Access Budget will pay for hardware. (Average cost per site)</p> <p>Care taken to avoid clutter and panel creep</p>
Orientation/ Interpretation at Community Hubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Rock • St Pierre • Mathern • Sudbrook • Portskewett • Seawall/G/c • Nash • Med Ship • Velodrome • R.Usk/Blaena von Wharf • St Brides • W. Usk L/H 	Orientation/ interpretation panels. Includes Living Levels map and 'You are Here' information Tide markers to be integrated to design as appropriate		<p>2000 per unit to cover content dev, trans,design /print panel Community Hubs x 13:</p> <p>Cost of Tide markers covered separately</p>	<p>These panels form part of a shared project within the Access Budget. Access Budget will pay for hardware.</p> <p>Cross reference with church panels Care taken to avoid clutter</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peterstone 			above) £26,000		
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Levels Map scale-able	Various locations/uses	Used on panels, leaflets, posters	All	£1000 map design	Year 1 £1000	Multiple uses - orientation, interpretation, marketing
Levels leaflet	All	'You are here/ what else to do on the Levels' using Levels map as intro		Dev/research/ write/trans content £1200 Design and Print leaflet Printing £15,000	Year 1 £6200 Year 2 Reprint £5000 Year 3 Reprint £5000	Ties in with brochure racks and hub distribution
Posters	All	Prints of poster map for use in tourist sites/accom		£1000		Sites reproduce foc to use on their own signage/web sites/leaflets etc, but pay their own production costs.
Photography & Imagery	All eg: Events Specialist plant and wildlife images, landscapes and unique Levels activities (pollarding etc)	Interpretive content will need high quality photography and licensing of some historic images. I Image library available to local businesses and organisations to use as a legacy resource.		Photography £4000 Image licences £2000		Use in leaflets, panels and website. Use for marketing Use for legacy/ HLF recording of activities Opportunity to work with Coleg Gwent

						Partners could also contribute from own archives
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Events	Various	<p>Repackage existing events and natural occurrences into an annual Living Levels festival programme over 3 years e.g:</p> <p>Apple blossom time Spring high tides Lave net fishing days 'Sea Sunday' Church Service Guided Walks Heritage and Traditional Skills days Magor Marsh Open Days Harvest on the Levels Autumn apple days Murmurations 'Alternative' Christmas lights.</p>	All, depending on the location/ event	£40,000 over 3 years for events repackaging/ promotion	<p>Year 1: £10,000 Package Levels Festival and brand as Maritime Wales</p> <p>Year 2: £10,000</p> <p>Year 3: £20,000</p>	<p>LL Project Team to take the lead. Marketing support through Digital Community Manager</p> <p>Cider and Perry Festival, family Cycling Festival, City to Coast walk, Magor Marsh Open days</p> <p>Dovetail with Wye Valley River Fest</p> <p>Tie in launch of LL projects with events Tie in with existing events: 2018 Maritime Wales year</p>
Churches & the Sea Exhibition for Maritime Wales 2018		Churches have strong links to the Severn/ sea. They will develop a 'maritime themed' exhibition for 2018 Maritime Wales, which will tour Levels churches and community venues and have a legacy after 2018.		£5000 Exhibition dev, trans, design and manufacture	Yr 1: 2018	
Community Art Project In		Community art project (on scale of Somerset Levels Crane project)		£50,000 for community art		Project Team to lead - subject to



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		<p>Fire display on reens and water?</p> <p>Dark Skies events</p> <p>Challenge competition using 'found' items from reen clearance and seashore. Sculptural 'makes' on display at Wetlands etc as part of Arts Festival</p>		project.		<p>tender to qualified consultancy</p> <p>Link to community environment project (subject to H&S issues)</p>
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<p>Churches on the Levels</p> <p>Interpretation/ orientation</p>	<p>St Brides Marshfield Goldcliff, Nash, Redwick, Magor,</p>	<p>Exterior orientation/ interpretation panels at main entrance to 7 churchyards. (Map of Levels saying 'You are Here', and where other churches are showing footpaths links and nearby attractions. Headline story of churches on the Levels.)</p> <p>Interior site specific interpretation panels x 4 (not St Brides and Marshfield as not open daily)</p> <p>Digital provision inside churches for accessing parish records etc</p>	<p>Unique history of the Levels/ Living on the Levels/ People of the Levels/ Challenge managing water on the Levels</p>	<p>£2500 X 6 churches</p> <p>Content dev, design, trans manufacture £5000</p> <p>£5000</p>	<p>Yr 1. Volunteer historical research</p> <p>Oral histories</p> <p>Volunteer pilot walks</p>	<p>Crossover with Community hub provision. Will be some sharing of costs with Access budget</p> <p>Maritime Wales link (covered in Events above)</p> <p>Partner Gwent Archives/ Peoples Collection to pilot digital project</p>
<p>Churches on the Levels Trail</p>	<p>Churches at Nash, Redwick and Magor</p>	<p>Trail linking Grade 1 Churches at Nash, Redwick and Magor</p> <p>(Victorian and Edwardian clergy were the first to recognize and record the special plant and wildlife species on the Levels as they walked across their parishes.)</p>		<p>Content dev, design, trans, print £3000</p> <p>(Churches Total: £28,000)</p>		

Bishton Church interpretation St Cadwaladr and the Early Church and its influence on the Levels	Bishton Church	Permanent panel exhibits. St Cadwaladr + the Early Church and its influence on the Levels, history in relatively modern times eg from the former School records and myriad family photos and records. Victorian map flooring. Automatic locking door to allow daytime access. Exterior panel at entrance to churchyard.	Unique history of the Levels/ Living on the Levels/ People of the Levels/ Challenge of managing water on the Levels	5 wall panels £4000 Freestanding display £1500 Content dev inc translation £1600 Floor map £550 External panel £2100 Door Lock £800 Improvement to disabled access £1400 Total: £12,000	Match funding from Church
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Levels from above	Hardware at 3 sites (Wetlands, Caldicot & Lighthouse or transporter bridge??)	Films on-line/in visitor centres of exciting happenings (like high tides or murmurations) and have them as time lapse; then pick this concept up through events - Open Doors for Church Towers etc. Also state/refer people to good regular look out points - railway bridge at Magor and Transporter Bridge being two possibilities.	Care, conservation and preservation/ Challenge managing water on the Levels/The future of the Levels	Filming and production Hardware x 3 sites £15,000	Years 1-3	Plan so footage can be used on www and social media platforms Further opportunity to work with FE/ HE locally
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Circular Walk 1:	Black Rock to Sudbrook, Caldicot Castle and Portskewett	<p>Interpretive Interventions to include:</p> <p>Lave Net Fisher Figure</p> <p>Lave Panel Fishing Shed</p> <p>Sudbrook Figure</p> <p>Sudbrook Fort Inter Panel</p> <p>Caldicot Castle Figure</p> <p>Caldicot Castle Tidemark</p>		<p>£15,000*</p> <p>£2000</p> <p>£15,000*</p> <p>£3000</p> <p>£15,000*</p> <p>£850**</p>		<p>Joint project with Access Budget funding signage etc</p> <p>*Already budgeted for above</p>
Circular Walk 2:	Goldcliff/Redwick	<p>Redwick Figure</p> <p>Redwick Tidemark</p> <p>Redwick Footbridge interpretation x 2</p>		<p>£15,000*</p> <p>£850**</p> <p>£1000</p>		<p>*Already budgeted for above</p> <p>**Tidemarkers already budgeted for above Shared with Access budget</p>

Percoed Reen / Duffryn Community Project / linear walk	Interpretation incl figures, for local family audience	Orientation/ interpretation board at start of new cycle track, 2 or 3 figures and 2 or 3 small panels on fencing and bridges for family audience.		£30,000	Car parking issue for non residents. Involve community project/ arts festival re recycling 'found' stuff in reens to make sculptural artworks, possibly displayed along route or at Wetlands Centre	Links to Access improvements and new signposting of route.
Total				£405,500		
LL Other Specific Interpretation Projects - Priorities						



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Museums Redisplay	Caerleon Roman Legionary Museum Newport Museum and Art Gallery Newport Ship	Redisplay and interpretation of Levels related objects and narrative	Unique history of the Levels/ Living on the Levels/ people of the Levels/ Challenge managing water on the Levels	£50,000	Year 1 Design and Planning (£5,000) Year 2 Implementation (£45,000)	Connects key heritage organizations into Living Levels story
Underpass	On cycle route between Tredegar House and Wetlands	Interpretative artwork depicting history (one side) and wildlife (other side) of the Levels	The unique history of the levels/ Care,Conserv ation & Preservation	£10,000 Based on budget for similar project in Croydon		



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Levels Model + Timeline	RSPB Wetlands	Sculpted (bronze) relief model of Levels area and historical timeline (from ice age)	The unique history of the levels/ Care, conservation and preservation/ Challenge managing water on the Levels/The future of the Levels	£25,000	Replacement proposal for working model	Wetlands is the key site for telling the overall story of the Levels Separate Budget in overall project
Working play model of the water system in the Levels	tbc	Interpretative 'play model that demonstrates how drainage/water movement works on the Levels	Challenge - managing water on the Levels	£60,000	Originally proposed for Wetlands Centre but not viable	Separate budget in overall project. New site required for Waterplay feature



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Summary of budget from above:

Item	£k
People in the landscape	100
Roman wall marker	1.5
Tide markers	12.2
Community/sea level signs	10
Primary hub panels	24
Community hub panels	26
Map	1
Levels leaflet	16.2
Poster	1
Photography and Imagery	6
Events	40
Community arts	50
Churches	33
Bishton	12



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Levels from above	15
Lighthouse project	5
Percoed Reen	30
Circular walks interpretation	20
Underpass Mural	10
Museums Redisplay	50
Total (Interpretation)	462.9
Total (Model + Timeline)	85



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SECTION 3

Access and Signage Plan

Introduction

In this section we look at barriers and solutions to improving access, physical and intellectual, to the Living Levels area and the stories and routes within it identified through the Interpretation Planning process.

As with interpretation we found no shortage of previously commissioned reports and surveys. We have collated and reviewed these to inform the development of Access and Signage proposals for the Living Levels.

Following that review and consultation with a range of public and other organisations we assess the current situation as follows:

1. The long-distance walk routes, including Wales Coast Path together with the network of cycle routes create an alternative metro-like access structure across the majority of the area, with the main substantive gap being the Cardiff to Newport off (main) road cycle route (the continuation of Route 88 linking Cardiff to the off road path at Marshfield is shown on Sustrans website and an improved route between Cardiff and Newport if show in CCC's Strategic Cycle Network Map http://www.keepingcardiffmoving.co.uk/uploads/documents/66/original/Strategic_Cycle_Network_-_map_of_numbered_routes.pdf?1344846507) Newport have created a multiuse path as far as Marshfield). Newport have created a multiuse path as far as Marshfield).
2. The train links to the east Levels provides opportunities and there will/may be near- future rail links to the new Llanwern developments and to St Mellons as part of the Cardiff Capital region Metro proposals.

3. The bus connectivity to the east is relatively serviceable with the Newport to Chepstow route serving the majority of the towns/villages. However, to the bus connectivity to the west is restricted to the A48 (albeit with frequent services). There is a 'call in advance' service to Lighthouse Inn and other communities in the west of the project area but this is very poorly promoted and not visible when using services such as Travel Line Cymru.
4. Brown and White Highways signage is limited to the major tourism facilities such as Tredegar House, the Sports Village, Caldicot Castle and The Wetlands Centre.
5. Whilst there is a perception that there are few facilities across The Levels, there are in fact more tourism businesses and services than many perceive - see Appendix 4 for list.. However, these are not linked to the main attractions and linear/circular routes.
6. Car parking is unsigned and can be difficult to find. Public and business comment has indicated that at key times (e.g. Sunday lunchtime) some pub car parks are too busy to allow non-customer use, even with a charge.
7. Cycle rack provision could be improved in most areas, in particular to allow the cyclists to keep their bikes in sight whilst they have a refreshment break.
8. There is no information structure across the area - including no information/orientation panels at key points of arrival, and no leaflet racking (whilst there are leaflets produced re walks in the Levels, it is a challenge to pick them up in many locations across the area).
9. Finding walks information for the area requires visiting each of the local authority websites. It is not easy to access for people wanting to explore the area.
10. The access routes to the Wales Coast Path are not signed for visitors arriving by car, and where parking is remote from the path, there is no signage to take the visitor to the Wales Coast Path/Sea Wall.
11. Fly tipping is an issue especially in the west, and there are also some areas where the environment can be seen as intimidating.

12. The budget and staffing resource available to maintain footpaths, interpretation and information installations is extremely limited, and continually under pressure.

Following this research it has been agreed that the Access and Signage strand of the Living Levels Project will:

1. Adopt a way of working that will involve and harness the community in the development, implementation and ongoing maintenance (monitoring) of information, access and interpretation. The proposed approach will build upon MCC's Community Engagement Toolkit, and it will be used during the implementation phase of the Living Levels project during which it will be refined and prepared for communities to use independently post project.
2. Build on the existing infrastructure rather than build new - in particular maximising the benefit of the Wales Coast Path, for long distance walkers and for local/casual walkers who have not used the path before.
3. Link together business and community facilities with the Wales Coast Path and other promoted walk and cycle routes.
4. Focus activity on a number of Primary access hubs, which will be augmented by Community hubs.
5. Wherever possible physical, intellectual and information access for all potential visitor groups will be achieved.

The lack of signage to and from the Wales Coast Path is an issue that requires a pan Wales solution. In the appendix are the draft approaches proposed to NRW following a workshop to explore this issue. Key aims are:

- Road signage to key access points where people can park and access the WCP easily and have a “good experience”.
- Pedestrian signage to the WCP from neighbouring communities and attractions, either as linear return routes or as part of circular walk routes.



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- Signage on the WCP to indicate “how far” to points of interest - this may be integrated with interpretation structures.

Following considerable discussion, it has been agreed that distance should be the measure used on signs (rather than time). Importantly, NRW have agreed with the principles of the plans and have confirmed that they will work with the Living Levels project to refine the plans and to implement as a pilot for review and possible wider rollout across WCP. The approach would be embedded within all route development within the Living Levels Project.

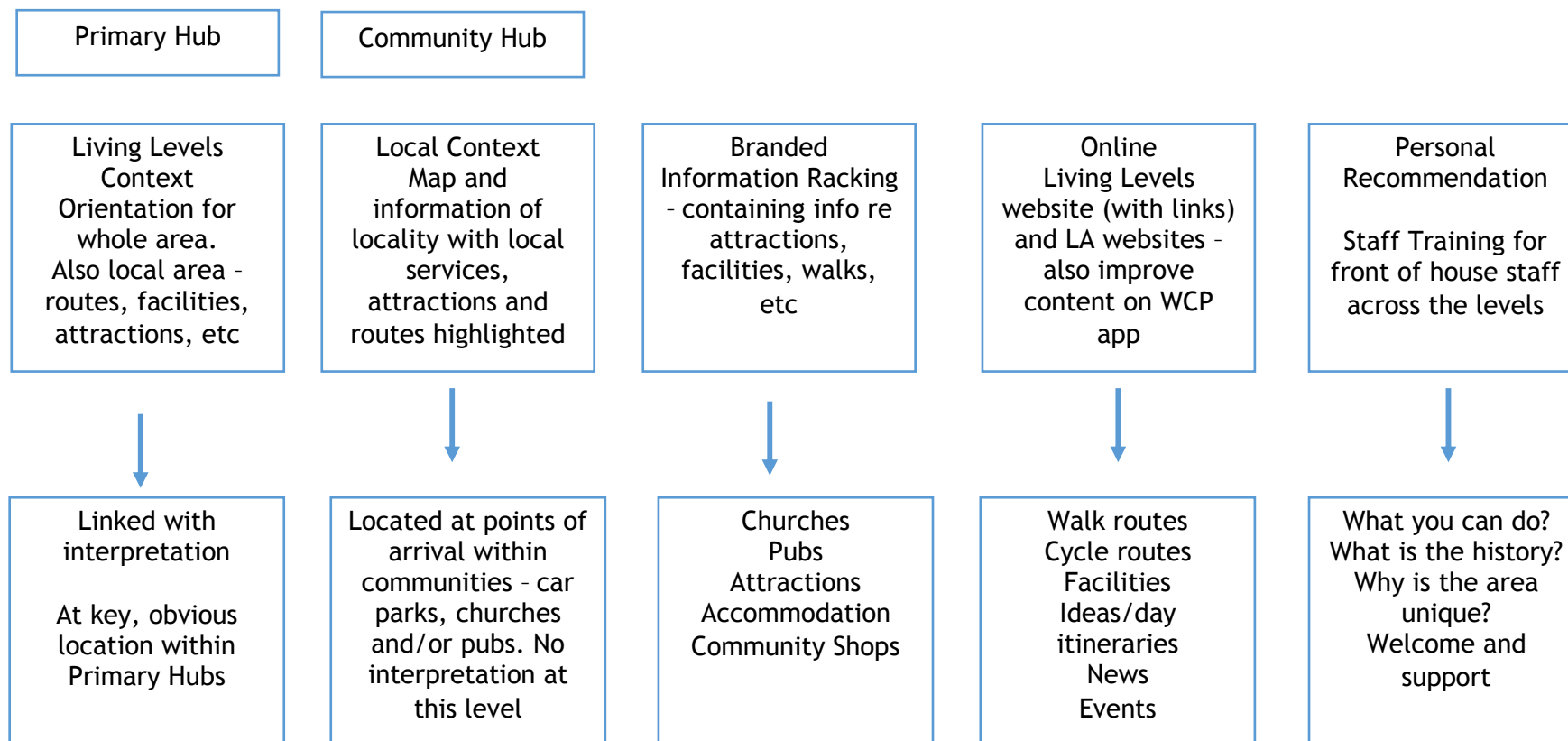
Primary Hubs and Community Hubs - how the information systems will work.

A key principle is to create layers of information (and interpretation where appropriate) to help everybody have the best possible experience, and to encourage wider exploration, recommendations and repeat visits.

The structure needs to ensure that:

- Visitors are able to find the appropriate information for their visit.
- At whatever point they interact with information, it should make sense and sit within the overall context of the Living Levels.
- Visitors should not be overwhelmed with too much irrelevant information.

Information Structure



Primary and Community Hubs, would, where appropriate also have the branded racking and have staff trained to provide information to visitors. Links to Living Levels website should be included in all relevant attractions and community websites - increasing the connection with The Living Levels.

Primary Hubs

Primary hubs (shown on the map below) are located across the Living Levels, at sites where there are ‘full-time’ facilities (parking, toilets, refreshments) for visitors, most of which are visitor attractions and heritage sites. The aim is to link these sites into the Levels to encourage exploration and recognition of what the Levels has to offer. At these sites the main actions will be:

- Interpretation - Information - Orientation.
- Improved Brown & White Signage if necessary.
- Promoted walk and cycling routes - including routes to and from WCP.
- Living levels Events Programme.
- Training for those working in and around Hub facility - re what The Living Levels has to offer - use of Ambassadors possible.

Associated Hubs

It is recognised that there are potentially sites outside the Living Levels boundary that are connected to the narrative of the area, and these will provide additional opportunities for associated activities linked to the Primary Hubs, in particular the provision of information/interpretation and the training of front of house staff to be able to talk about the opportunities for visitors across the area. Primary among these are Caerleon Legionary Museum and Newport Museum in respect of the Roman heritage but others can also contribute: Chepstow Castle for the Norman heritage, The Cardiff Story for the social history and National Museum of Wales, Cardiff/St Fagans regarding the importance of the Levels area for transport and agriculture.



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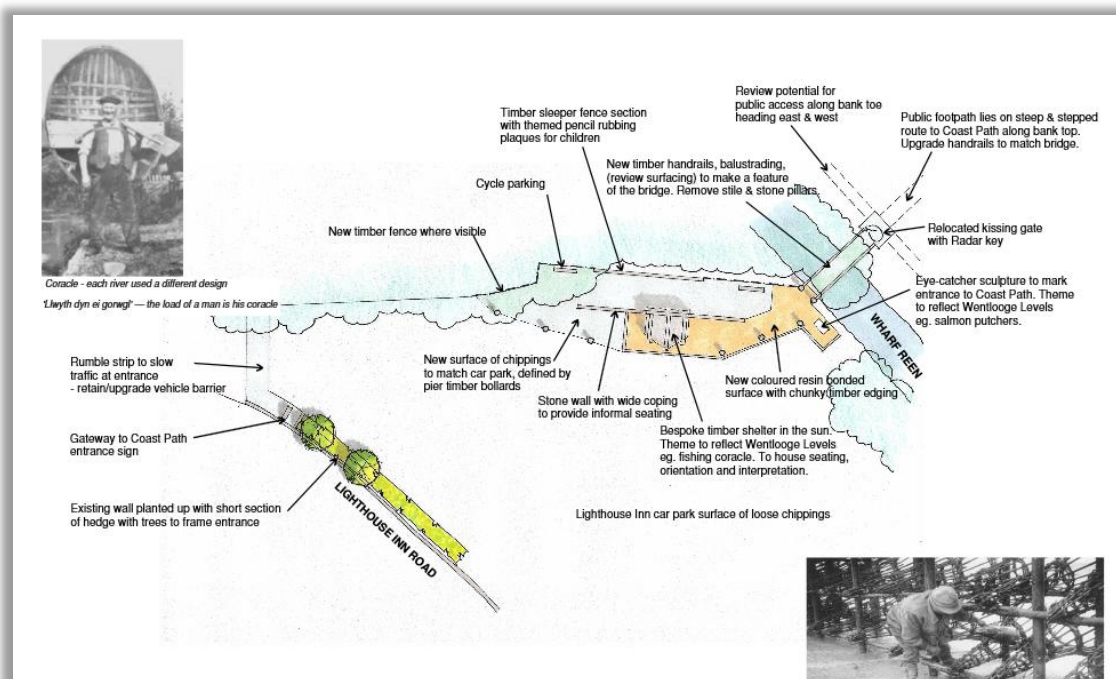
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Primary Hubs and Proposed Content/ Experience

- **Chepstow** - Start of WCP, and an intersection for a number of long distance walk routes (soon to include the link to the English Coast Path), information about the Levels, highlight alternate walk/cycling routes into Levels. (Public wifi available in some shops and establishments).
- **Caldicot Castle** - Exhibition in tower, information/orientation in park and castle, events programme, walk routes.
- **Magor & Magor Marsh (2 hubs)** - information/orientation, links to other sites re walks/cycling (circular routes).
- **Severn Tunnel Junction/Rogiet Country Park** - Information highlighting the cycling links.
- **Newport Retail Park** - Signposting to opportunities on The Levels - good starting point for those using public transport. Awareness of Levels context. (Public wifi available in some shops).
- **Wetlands Centre** - Improve cycle racking, sign links to Nash/Goldcliff walks and cycle (circular route), information hub. Wifi for using GPS routes.
- **Transporter Bridge** - Visitor Centre - information hub, train volunteers about Levels, new information/orientation/interpretation panels alongside river, viewing opportunity from top of bridge.

- **Tredegar House and Park** - information in car park and entrance (in principle agreed - details to be agreed with National Trust), signage re cycling to Wetlands/to WCP, cycle racking.
- **Lighthouse Inn** - Information hub in car park and in the pub, improved access to WCP, improved car park, signage from WCP and along WCP to Peterstone. This area will become the main west access to the Wales Coast Path, and as such, a ramped access will be introduced to allow all users to reach the top of the sea wall even if they are unable/uninterested in walking along the path. The draft design and costings were created as part of the Wales Coast Path Wentlooge Gateway Feasibility Study March 2014. In addition, budget has been allocated for the installation of a ramped access to the Coast Path at this point, improving access to the Sea Wall for all users.



- **Lamby Way/ Parc Tredellerch** - Information hub, information re local facilities, distances along WCP
- **Cardiff Bay** - Living Levels information at Cardiff Bay Visitor Centre (Millennium Centre), training, promotion of WCP and cycle routes into Levels. (Public wifi available in some shops and establishments).

Community Hubs

These hubs will be developed with the aim that the community retains an involvement in the maintenance of the infrastructure post implementation. At these sites the main actions will be:

- Car Park and public transport - project will look to add cycle racks.
- The signage of businesses, churches and community facilities within reasonable proximity to walk/cycle routes that can provide refreshments and public conveniences at weekends.
- Information and orientation giving more information about local services. There may also be opportunities to use existing local information services.
- Encouraging businesses to promote their wifi hub as a means to gather information and install information/leaflet racking in businesses/community facilities.
- Be a start for a at least one walk/cycle routes - utilising existing routes - potentially re branding/re signing.
- Community or business involvement re the maintenance of walk routes, cleanliness of signage and leaflet racking.
- Local ambassadors to welcome visitors.



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- **Black Rock** - Brown & White signage, information/orientation, signage along WCP to Sudbrook, etc - re distance to next site/point of interest.
- **St Pierre** - Access to WCP (to be negotiated), Information for visitors. Wifi available in hotel for guests.
- **Mathern** - Information hub.
- **Sudbrook** - Information hub at Severn Junction Centre, circular route linking Black Rock and Portskewett, explore options re parking for visitors.
- **Portskewett** - Circular route linking Black Rock and Portskewett.
- **Redwick** - Circular walk route to WCP. B&W signage to pub and Brick House GH.
- **Seawall/Goldcliff** - Information supporting interpretation and highlighting the conservation and heritage.
- **Nash** - Circular walk/cycle routes, work with community to identify local parking for visitors, signage to and from WCP .
- **Medieval Ship** - Information hub, training volunteers.
- **Velodrome** - Work with the management to install an information hub re cycling in Living Levels, map re routes (graded).
- **River Usk/Blaenavon Wharf** - Information panel about area.
- **St Brides** - Information hub in community facility.

- **West Usk Lighthouse** - information for guests.
- **Peterstone** (various sites) - Information (at Golf Club, Church and Pub).

Working with the Community

To optimise the community ownership of the access and interpretation elements of the Living Levels project, it is proposed that a Community Toolkit (that is developed from the Monmouthshire Community Engagement Toolkit) will be developed at the beginning of the project, and then used with the community to implement the access and interpretation work programmes, before being refined and published at the end of the Living Levels project to allow ongoing management and other communities to implement projects in line with the overarching plan. The Living Levels has a strong network of Community and Town Councils who have been actively involved in the consultation for the Living Levels Programme. It is anticipated that these organisations will be the starting point for creating community ownership of the routes and the linkages with local businesses and services. In addition Chepstow has an active 'Walkers are Welcome' Group.

Walk Routes

The aim is to encourage local people and visitors to explore the Levels, leaving their car behind. So, a selection of routes has been identified to improve access, and along which a variety of interpretation tools will be introduced to bring the landscape, history and natural heritage to life.



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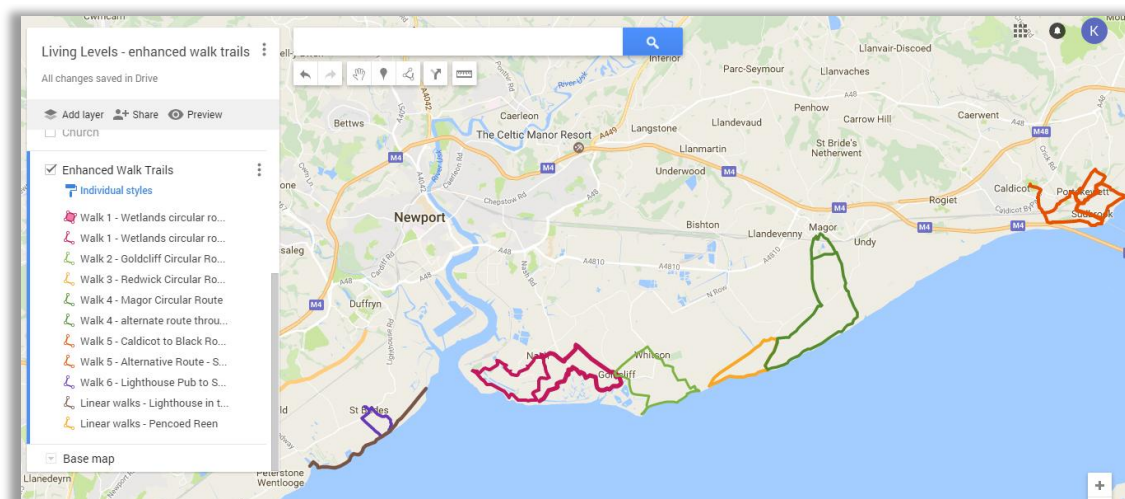
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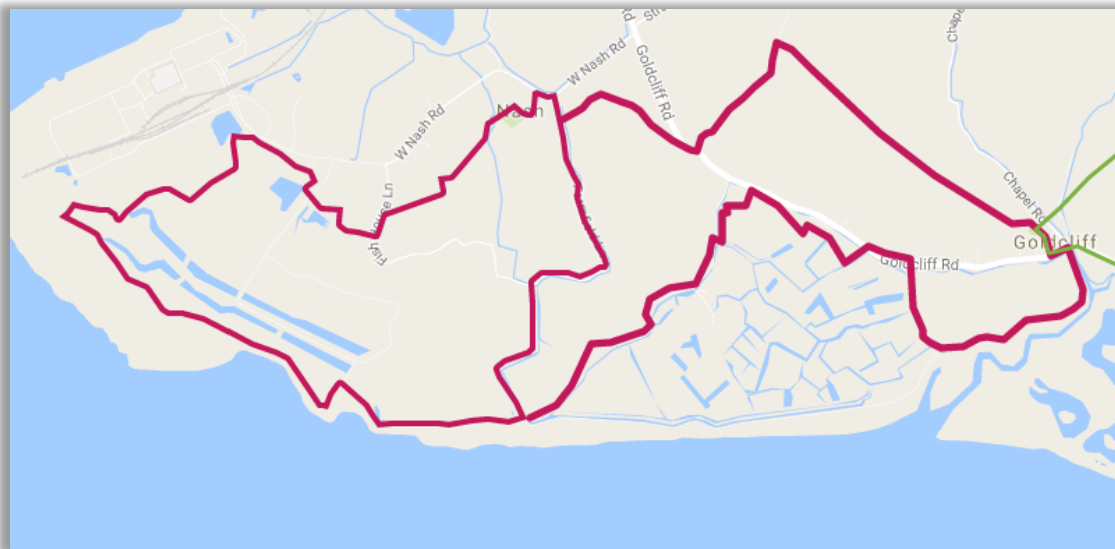
As also identified in the Interpretation section, the proposed circular routes are:

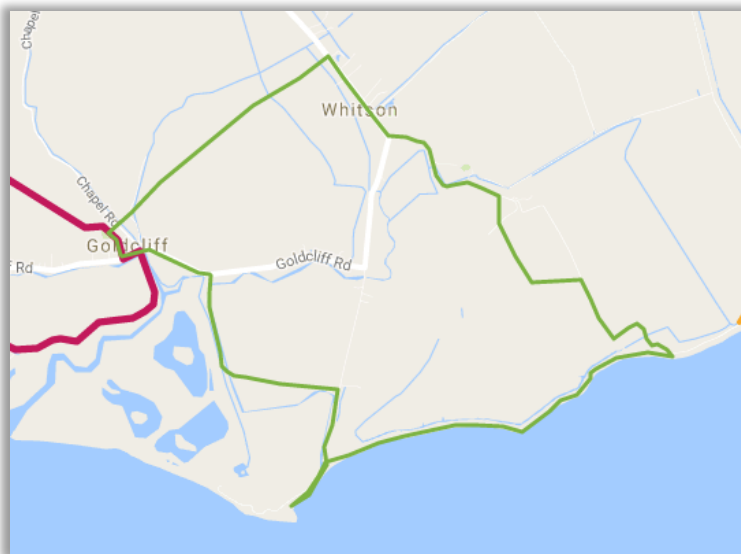
1. Wetlands (short and long) to include Nash and Great Treaston, Saltmarsh, Goldcliff and WCP.
2. Goldcliff/ Redwick (2 loops linked by short 2 way section on WCP start point to join circular route above and Magor route below)
3. Black Rock/Sudbrook inc Portskewett and Caldicot Castle.

The following represent a medium term priority once resources allow them to be re-routed in a more visitor-friendly way

4. Magor Procurator's House and Church to Magor Marsh, dog free route through Marsh and onto Blackwall track (an addition dog route is along Blackwall track will be signed).
5. Lighthouse Inn inland short route to St Brides Church.

Walk(s) 1





Walk(s) 2

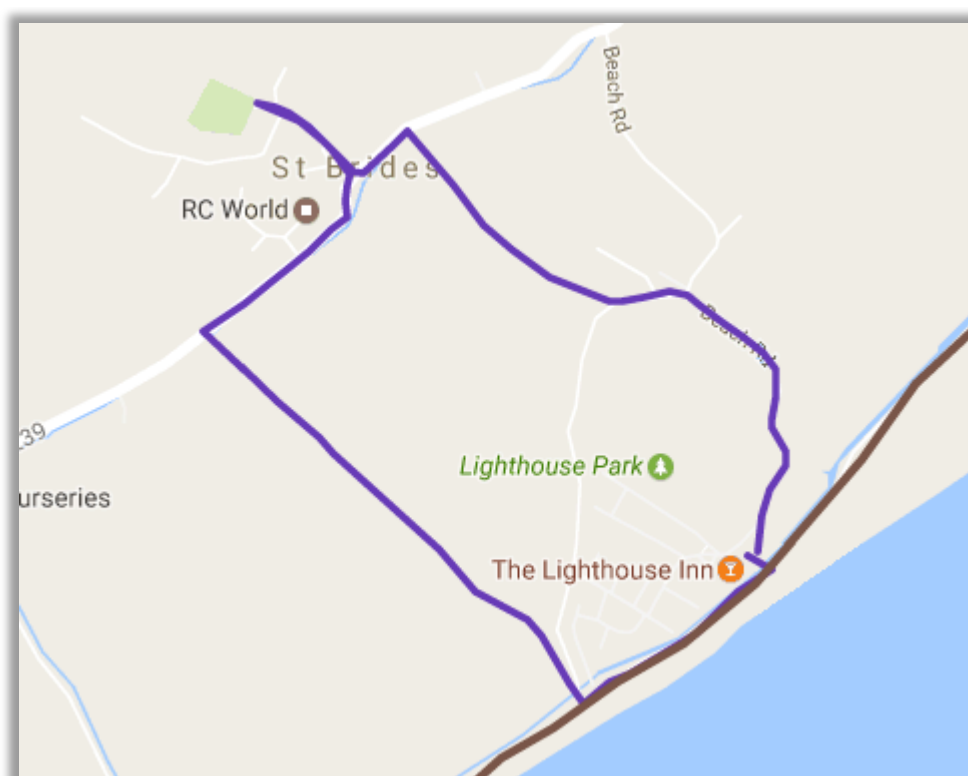


Walk(s) 3



Walk 4

Walk 5



These routes are using existing public footpaths and quiet roads so the majority of investment will be in signing these effectively - using, where appropriate the signage to the WCP protocol, in combination with themed route signage which may take its name or symbol from the location, the interpretative story or a feature that can be enjoyed along the route. Some additional routes using existing rights of way were considered but excluded because of issues that would result in a poor visitor experience e.g. significant fly tipping problems and major path condition

concerns. We do think there will be a significant opportunity for new routes in the re-development of Lamby Way landfill site (linking to Wales Coast Path, Parc Tredelerch and the Rumney Trail) but understand that this will fall outside the timetable of HLF-funded activities.

While these priority recommended routes have been walked to check condition and quality of experience, there are refinements that the project team should explore before implementation, in particular, options for diversion routes away from roads, although this would require additional budget allocation.

In addition, there will be some linear signed routes:

1. Lighthouse Inn to Peterstone Gout and West Usk Lighthouse along WCP.
2. Percoed Reen to Hawse Lane.
3. Black Rock to Sudbrook along WCP.
4. Wetlands along WCP.

Linear Walks (Walks 3 & 4 are included in circular routes_



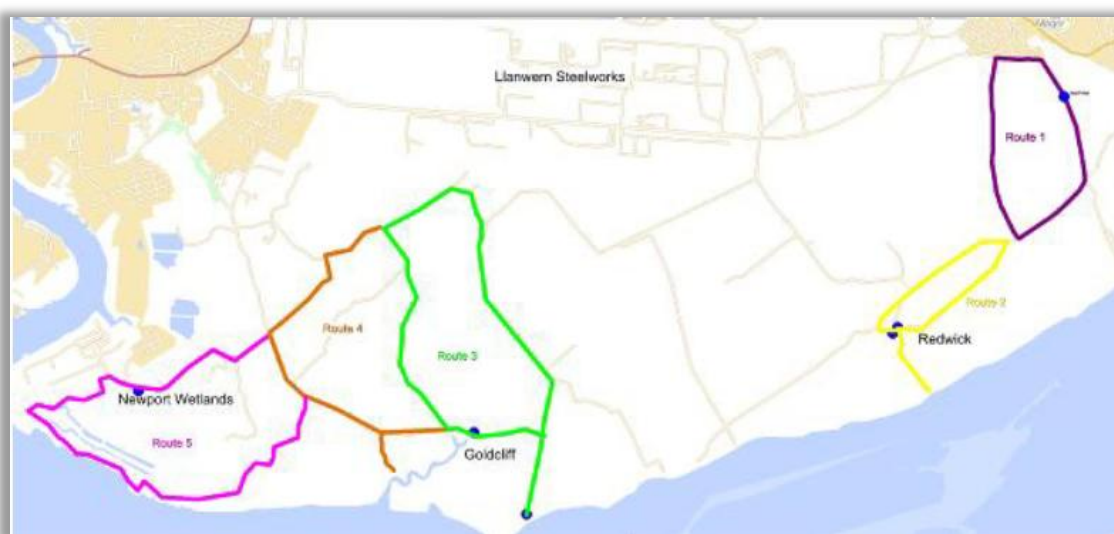
As well as signage, there will also be leaflets produced as downloads and as printed copies, as well as GPS downloadable routes for use on the Living Levels as well as partner's websites. The leaflets will contextualise the routes within The Living Levels, highlighting other aspects of the area to visit and explore - this will be achieved through the usage of the Living Levels map (see Interpretation Section).

Cycle Routes

The Levels are a great place to cycle (as they are flat). Whilst the roads to the west are busy, the roads to the east are, in general, quiet and suitable for family cycling. Sustrans produced a review of the options across the Levels in 2014.

The proposed circular routes are:

- Route 1 - Magor/Magor Marsh
- Route 2 - Redwick
- Route 3 - Sea Wall/Goldcliff
- Route 4 - Goldcliff to Nash
- Route 5 - Wetlands to Nash



The full details of the routes are found in the Newport Gwent Levels Cycle network report published March 2014 by Sustrans. In the main, these routes require signage and some repairs to the surface. At the moment, these routes are simply numbered, however there is the opportunity to name them, under the 'Living Levels' identity, in line with the interpretative stories being told in the area that they travel through. The original report had explored options to the west of the River Usk (between Newport and Cardiff). However, while there was an overall desire to create a safe, off road (or on very minor roads/lanes) commuter cycle route between the two cities, without significant infrastructure investment, the western area did not provide an enjoyable, family cycling experience at that time. Since the report was completed Newport CC has completed the route from Newport to Marshfield between the cities

http://www.keepingcardiffmoving.co.uk/uploads/documents/66/original/Strategic_Cycle_Network_-_map_of_numbered_routes.pdf?1344846507, and Cardiff is supportive of the cycling opportunities

The routes to the east of the River Usk can be linked together using National Cycle Network Route 4⁸/the Celtic Trail these routes will allow an enthusiastic cyclist to link Severn Junction and Newport Railway Stations, and also to link Severn Junction with Chepstow.

In addition to these, the route between Tredegar House and Wetlands is also being put forward for some signage improvement and it is proposed to sign the link from Tredegar House to the Percoed Reen.

Like the walk routes, leaflets will be produced as downloads and as printed copies, as well as GPS downloadable routes for use on the Living Levels as well as partner's websites. The leaflets will contextualise the routes within The Living

⁸ NCN R4 since inception has been known as the Celtic Trail. This would unfortunately preclude rebranding the length serving the Levels Area as the 'Living Levels Way' or similar.

Levels, highlighting other aspects of the area to visit and explore - this will be achieved through the usage of the pan area mapping.

Cross Area Projects

To support these targeted activities, there are a number of cross area projects:

- **Brown and White highways signposting** - increasing the accessibility of visitor facilities across the Levels, and directing visitors to the points on the Wales Coast Path where they will experience the best experience. This will be delivered as 3 sub regional schemes from key trunk roads. The detail of these schemes will be developed in conjunction with the relevant Highways Departments and will involve the engagement and agreement of attractions and tourism businesses in the scheme (as they will contribute to the overall budget, in addition to the net cost to the project as per the figures included in this plan). **It should be noted that this aspect of the overall plan is not intended to replace existing signage, but to add relevant tourism signage to support the improved facilities and the tourism businesses in areas where there is no signage scheme in place.**
- **Cycle racking** - providing appropriately positioned cycle racks at twenty four key visitor facilities across the Levels (to be identified but will include the hub locations and establishments within key communities). These will be installed in partnership with the business and will be created in a way that adds to the general sense of place, i.e. they will be designed to incorporate interpretative strands or the Living Levels logo (to be agreed). This project has the potential of being a joint project with Coleg Gwent or another art/craft based educational establishment.
- **Branded information racking** - in 30 visitor facilities, to make it easy for residents and visitors to find out what else there is to do across the levels. This will augment the established, commercial information distribution and racking systems across South Wales, and will focus on providing Levels information and ideas to people in the area during the project. The delivery



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of leaflets by the project team will facilitate communication with local businesses and general monitoring of the impact of the activities. In the longer term the aim is that businesses/churches, etc will recognise the benefits of providing information for visitors and will carry on collecting and displaying information. In some instances, the venues may be seen as outlets for the commercial operations.

- **Web information** - ensuring that all partners and Living Levels websites carry effective and up to date information to help residents and visitors to access as much of the levels as practical.
- **Ambassadors and Visitor Welcome** - there is already a band of trained visitor ambassadors in the area (previously trained for Newport, Monmouthshire or the WCP scheme) so this project will aim to harness the enthusiasm of the existing ambassadors as well as offering initial training and support for tourism businesses and facilities front of house staff, re what the levels have to offer, and how to best explore the area, together with a little customer care.
- **Pan Living Levels Map and Imagery** - this is a joint activity with the Interpretation strand, which will create common resources for use in all activities, resulting in consistent messages, values and perceptions.
- **General Signage** - this is a small budget to allow small scale improvements to adjoining routes and facilities to optimise the linkages between sites, routes and facilities.

Project Plan

This falls into a number of interrelated sections:

1. The Way of working - community toolkit
2. Pan levels projects - info racking, info print (cycling and walking) website info, ambassadors and cycle racking
3. Cycle routes
4. Highway signage



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5. Primary hubs (info and walk routes - signage)
6. Community hubs (info and walk routes - signage)



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Access and Signage Action Plan

Overarching PROJECTS	Project name/location		Costs inc VAT	Dependencies and timings	Considerations	Links with Interpretation and/or Marketing
Way of working	Adaptation of the MCC Community Engagement Toolkit - incorporating the interpretation plan, contacts, ways of working that fit with the Living Levels project approach, etc.	Living Levels Community Toolkit - Access and Interpretation This will be used throughout the project and at the end the final version will be published (online) as a tool for all communities across the Levels to continue to use. (Could include supplements re events organisation as well as interpretation and marketing - cf Marketing Section)	£5,000	Initial adaptation £3,000 Y1 Refinement and production £2,000 Y3	Initial creation, final redraft and print	Will embed Interpretation plan, ways of implementing and the Marketing approach.
Sub Total			£5,000			
Pan Levels projects						



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	Information Racking	Identify 30 sites for the installation of branded Levels racking and then the delivery of suitable information to all sites 4 times a year. Locations to include Primary and Community hubs.	Racks - at £200 each - £6,000 plus 12 deliveries £6,000 Total cost £12,000	Creation and installation £6,000 Y1 Servicing £2,000 Y1, Y2 & Y3	Op to work with businesses and community	Design should include marketing and interpretation messages
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	Information Publication - Cycling the Levels	<p>A pack of leaflets highlighting the individual overall infrastructure - one leaflet per new route published as completed, as well as the existing Redwick circular route. The overarching context will include the NCN routes and mapping of cycling facilities/info re using the Train network.</p> <p>For the eastern area, the opportunity to cycle between Severn Junction and Newport Railways stations should be highlighted.</p>	<p>Y1 create overall design approach - complete leaflet as each route is completed and finalise with overall pack. 6000 print run for each route. Total Budget £20,000*</p>	<p>£5,000 Y1 £5,000 Y2 £10,000 Y3</p>	Design should be suitable for online download as well as print	Integrate interpretation along the routes - as well as positive marketing messages.
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	Information Publication - Walking the Levels	<p>A pack of leaflets highlighting the individual overall infrastructure - one leaflet per new route published as completed, The overarching context will include the long distance walk routes and info re using the Train and bus network. They will have an interpretive role as well as orientation/info.</p> <p>Print run small. At least 10K for 1st year with opportunity to review Y2&3. (Consider pop size on doorstep).</p>	<p>Y1 create overall design approach - complete leaflet as each route is completed and finalise with overall pack. 6000 print run for each route. Total Budget £20,000*</p>	<p>£5,000 Y1 £5,000 Y2 £10,000 Y3</p>	<p>Design should be suitable for online download as well as print</p>	<p>Integrate interpretation along the routes - as well as positive marketing messages. *Potential additional £5000 from interpretation</p>
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	Web information	All promoted walk and cycling routes to have GPS routes made available via all LA sites and LL website - with option to download route and/or leaflets. Info on facilities, transport, etc to be easily available on La and LL sites.	Content creation (loading onto existing sites). £8,000	£3,000 Y1 £2,000 Y2 £3,000 Y3	Vital to work with LA and other partners to optimise availability	Using existing website(s) - promotional and interpretation messages to be delivered as integral elements
	Ambassadors/Living Levels awareness for key front of house staff	Update the already trained Newport, WCP and Monmouthshire Ambassadors - and offer training for front of house staff re what is available across The Levels. One session per year plus newsletters. Target 40 people per session.	£4,000	£1,000 Y1 £1,000 Y2 £2,000 Y3		



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	Cycle racking	<p>Design a Living Levels cycle rack. Install 8 of the racks per year at hubs and visitor facilities across Living Levels.</p> <p>Project with Coleg Gwent or similar Art/Craft educational establishment.</p>	£400 per unit & £200 installation - total cost £14,400	<p>Initial design Y1 and partner agreement Roll out £5,000 Y1 £5,000 Y2 £4,400 Y3</p>	Partnership with business - re provision of space and agreement re maintenance	Integration of LL brand and/or interpretative theme within design
	Maps and imagery	Leaflets and information panels will all require high quality imagery and maps - this will be jointly funded by the access and interpretation budgets.	£4000	High	£3,000 Y1 £1,000 Y2	Joint project with Interpretation
	General Signage	To support additional linkages from improved walk and cycle routes to the established network - this is for minor improvements across the Living Levels in addition to the defined routes.	£15,000	£4,000 Y1 £4,000 Y2 £7,000 Y3		



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Sub Total			£97,400			
Promoted Cycle Routes	Implementing the Newport Gwent Levels cycling plan as drafted by Sustrans 2014 - Information Boards to be delivered as part of Community Hubs and Cycle Racks as Cycle Racking project					
	Route 1 - Magor/Magor Marsh	Route signage, green lane surface improvements and 2 removeable access bollards	£12,000	£6,000 Y1 £6,000 Y2	Op to work with Sustrans re implementation	
	Route 2 - Redwick	Signage	£4,000	£4,000 Y2	Op to work with Sustrans re implementation	



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	Route 3 - Sea Wall /Goldcliff	Signage	£4,000	£4,000 Y2	Op to work with Sustrans re implementat ion	
	Route 4 - Goldcliff/Nash	Signage and traffic calming survey and measures	£10,000	£2,000 Y1 £8,000 Y2	Op to work with Sustrans re implementat ion	
	Route 5 - Wetlands	Signage	£4,000	£4,000 Y2	Op to work with Sustrans re implementat ion	
	Tredegar House to Wetlands	Signage from Tredegar House to NCN Route 8.	£3,000	£3,000 Y1	Op to work with Sustrans re implementat ion	Improvements to Maesglas Underpass - part of Interpretation Project



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	Links to Percoed Reen multi use path	Signage to Percoed Reen - (In due course will mean that cyclists from Cardiff are directed via TH to get to Wetlands)	£3,000	£3,000 Y3		Links with interpretation along the route
Sub Total			£40,000			
Brown and White Highways Signage						



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	West Levels	Signage scheme to around 12 tourism facilities from A48 including signage to Lighthouse Inn/WCP	£6,000 with contributions of approx £2500 for named signs from businesses	£6,000 Y1	Sign up of businesses needed before implementation. NRW agreement on WCP signage scheme needed	
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	East Levels - Newport	Enhanced scheme around Nash, Goldcliff and Seawall	£4,000 - contribution from businesses for specific business signage	£4,000 Y2	Sign up of businesses needed before implementat ion. NRW agreement on WCP signage scheme needed	
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	East Levels - Monmouthshire	Small schemes to Magor Marsh, Sudbrook, Black Rock and Portskewett - to be designed - includes parking for WCP	£5,000 - contribution from businesses for specific business signage	£5,000 Y3	Sign up of businesses needed before implementation. NRW agreement on WCP signage scheme needed	
Sub Total			£15,000			
Primary Hubs						
Chepstow - start of WCP	Information	Information on the Visit Monmouthshire kiosks and involvement in Ambassadors/Living Level strand	Zero			



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Caldicot Castle	Caldicot Castle - Levels Information and orientation	Install information re Levels, local routes and facilities - using the existing structure in car park.	£3,000*	£3,000 Y2		Info to link with interpretation. *Shared project/ budget with Interpretation
	Circular Walk Route	Signage of circular route to Black Rock, Sudbrook and Portskewett- integrating WCP signage	£4,000	£4,000 Y3		Potential interpretation on route
Magor & Magor Marsh	Magor & Magor Marsh Levels Orientation	Panels in both locations highlighting all routes (cycling and walking) as well as local facilities	£6,000	£6,000 Y2		Integrate Interpretation elements* Shared project/ budget with Interpretation



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	Circular Walk Route	Magor to Magor Marsh and then to the WCP - mostly off road. Car parking in Magor. Signage along the route integrating WCP signage. Also, need to sign dog friendly route outside of GWT	£3,000	£3,000 Y1	Partnership with GWT	Interpretation structures along the route
Severn Junction/Rogiet Country Park	Severn Junction/Rogiet Country Park orientation/information panel	Panel includes information on the WCP (and why it runs away from the coast in this area) and the cycle routes around the Levels - which can link back to Newport railway station	£3,000*	£3,000 Y2	Possible partnership with Network Rail re siting of panel	Integrate Interpretation elements. *Shared project/ budget with Interpretation
Newport Retail Park	Newport Retail Park - Levels orientation panel and/or sense of place artwork	Look for opportunities to work with businesses to implement this	Zero			



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Wetlands Centre	Information and Orientation	2 panels - 1 in car park, the other in visitor centre (or nearby) - contextualising the Centre within The Levels and highlighting the pan area and the local walk and cycling routes. Additional cycle racking near the centre would be delivered as part of the racking project.	£6,000*	£6,000 Y1		Integrate Interpretation elements. *Shared project/ budget with Interpretation
	Circular Walk	Wetlands to Nash and Goldcliff - signage	£2,000	£2,000 Y1		Integrate Interpretation elements
Transporter Bridge	Transporter Bridge Information/orientation	Panel highlighting the links that run this way - walking and cycling - and what can be explored in the levels	£3,000*	£3,000 Y2		Integrate with the Interpretation strand - especially the view from the top of the bridge. *Shared project/ budget with Interpretation



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Tredeggar House	Tredeggar House - Information/Orientation	Back to back panels showing walk and cycle routes and links to the coast as well as the place of TH within the Levels	£5,000*	£5,000 Y2		Integrate with interpretation on site. *Shared project/ budget with Interpretation
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Lighthouse Inn	Lighthouse Inn - Levels access and orientation	<p>Landscaping, improved access to WCP (new ramped access), cycle racking, shelter, information, orientation and interpretation of the Levels, and improved car park surface.</p> <p>Appendix 3 details the budget for the designed plan 2014. In addition to this £22,000 has been included for the installation of a ramped access to the Sea wall/WCP. (£103,000 for improvements to access, car park, installation of cycle racks, shelter, etc and £22,000 for ramped access to WCP - interpretation costs from Interpretation budget).</p>	£125,000	Y1 - all agreements Implement £125,000 Y2	Agreement with landowner and detailed design of ramped access to seawall required	Interpretation structures and panels - to focus on the wildlife sensitivity. Interpretation costs are included within Interpretation Plan
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	Walk route	Signage on WCP - from point of access - detailing sites along the route and distance to	£2,000	£2,000 Y2		Integrated with Interpretative structure at Wentlooge/ the Lighthouse
	Lighthouse Inn - facilities	Work with owner investment in the Inn - potential VW project	Zero	Y1 - Y3	Work with pub operator to secure external funding	
Lamby Way	Information	Panel to contextualise all the opportunities across the levels and how Cardiff is part of The Levels. Delivery to fit in with the opening of the Lamby Park and the redirection of the WCP.	£3,000*	£3,000 Y2		Integrate with Interpretation plan. *Shared project/ budget with Interpretation



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Cardiff Bay	Information	Information on the Visit Cardiff website and involvement in Ambassadors/Living Level strand	Zero			
Associated Hubs - Caerleon Legionary Museum and Newport Museum, The Cardiff Story, The National Museum of Wales, Cardiff/St Fagans		Information distribution and training.	£10,000			
Sub Total			£175,000			
Community Hubs						



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Black Rock	Information and Signage	Information panel within Car Park area. Sign to WCP to raise awareness	£3,000*	£3,000 Y1		Needs to be developed in conjunction with the interpretative plan. *Shared project/ budget with Interpretation
	Signage along WCP	Distance to Chepstow - and Distance to Sudbrook (and visa versa) - giving confidence and highlighting proximity	£1,000	£1,000 Y1		Can be integrated with interpretation structures
St Pierre	Information	Leaflet racking in hotel and panel in car park - re walks and cycling in the area	£3,000*	£3,000 Y3		Tie it in with encouraging involvement in the marketing activity. *Shared project/ budget with Interpretation



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Mathern	Information and Signage	Information panel at key point of arrival	£3,000*	£3,000 Y3		*Shared project/ budget with Interpretation
Sudbrook	Information and Signage	Information panel at key point of arrival	£3,000*	£3,000 Y1	Opportunity to work with Sudbrook Heritage Centre volunteers	Needs to be developed in conjunction with the interpretative plan. *Shared project/ budget with Interpretation
	Signage along WCP	Distance to Black Rock and to Goldcliff	£1,000	£1,000 Y1		
	Car Parking	Explore options for car parking for visitors to the Exhibition and the WCP	Zero		Development activity for future projects	



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Portskewett	Information and Signage	Information at car park - highlighting the walking and cycling routes and local facilities - needs to be on the Caldicot to Black Rock circular route	£3,000*	£3,000 Y1		*Shared project/ budget with Interpretation
Redwick	Information	Information at car park - highlighting the walking and cycling routes and local facilities	£3,000	£3,000 Y2		*Shared project/ budget with Interpretation
Seawall/Goldcliff	Information	Panel on WCP at entry point - linking to the cafe	£3,000*	£3,000 Y1		May be integrated with the Interpretation at this point. *Shared project/ budget with Interpretation
	Signage along WCP	Distance to Sudbrook and to Wetlands Centre along the official WCP	£1,000	£1,000 Y1		



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Nash	Information and Signage	Information at car park - highlighting the walking and cycling routes - need to be on the Wetlands/Nash walk/cycle route	£3,000	£3,000 Y1		
Medieval Ship	Information	Racking and Training of front of house staff - covered by other projects	Zero			
Velodrome	Information and Signage	Information panel focusing on the cycling opportunities across The Levels - together with support facilities for cyclists. Highlighting options for existing users and acting as a hub/starting point for new visitors to the area.	£3,000*	£3,000 Y2		*Shared project/ budget with Interpretation
River Usk/Blaenavon Wharf	Information	Information panel focusing on the cycling and walking opportunities across The Levels	£3,000*	£3,000 Y3		Integrate with the Interpretation plan. *Shared project/ budget with Interpretation



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St Brides	Information	Information panels and racks church - highlighting the facilities across the western levels	£3,000*	£3,000 Y3		Integrate with the Interpretation plan. *Shared project/ budget with Interpretation
West Usk Lighthouse	Information	Racking and Training of front of house staff - covered by other projects	Zero			
Peterstone	Information	Information panels and racks at key facilities such as Walnut Tree Farm, the Golf Club and the Six Bells Inn - highlighting the facilities across the western levels	£8,000*	£8,000 Y3	Work with local businesses	These need to be integrated with the historical and environmental interpretation. *Shared project/ budget with Interpretation
Sub Total			£44,000			



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Total	£376,400			
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Project costs include design, translation, planning/highways permission, installation, etc

SECTION 4

Integrated Marketing Plan

Introduction

In this section we look at the challenges of marketing the Living Levels and the actions required to build awareness, visits and loyalty based on the interpretation and access plans outlined in previous sections.

There are particular difficulties (not least in terms of planning and developing in a flood-risk area) in ensuring the expected components of the visitor experience are in place and/or easily accessible ie accommodation, food and drink, attractions, activities, events, transport in addition to interpretation, wayfinding and access. This may require innovative solutions - eg floating camping pods - which are beyond the scope of this plan.

Overview

The Living Levels offers the prospective visitor a collection of rich and varied experiences. This approach, with digital content marketing at its heart, focuses on embracing those experiences to build both community and visitor awareness and drive visits throughout the year.

Although the Living Levels is not currently a competitive “traditional” destination in terms of discrete geography, services or recognition it *can* capitalise on the growth in experiential tourism; the desire of visitors to seek out new areas and products that are underexploited and offer “authenticity” playing to the “feelings



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and sensations (they) will have on their journey, the stories they will learn and the connections they will make”⁹.

From the outset it was clear, from the point of view of the creation of an integrated marketing plan, that the toughest element to tackle within the study area would also be one of its greatest strengths; finding the best way to unify the current, disparate product as well as branding and promotion to cater for existing audiences, while at the same time accessing new visitors across different markets.

The range of strands (from geographical, geological and archaeological to cultural and social as well as economic heritage) represent challenges in terms of catering for many interests but crucially, mean that the stories to be told (and in the modern vernacular “content opportunities”) are rich; offering a huge range of possibilities for not only marketing message content but also media choice. A content marketing approach focuses on originating and sharing entertaining, interesting and useful content (e.g. videos, blog posts, images, infographics). Those who do it well concentrate on creating content that people want to share with others (peer to peer). The Living Levels has a wealth of unexploited and under promoted stories to tell that can make content delivery rich and varied.

We concentrate on two principal audiences:

1. Local residents (and Visiting Friends and Relatives), businesses and partners (i.e. stakeholders and potential ambassadors on the ground) encouraging an appreciation and use of the product “on their doorstep”.
2. Independent Explorers¹⁰ for both day and overnight stays. Specifically, the subsets of Family Explorers (FE) Active Nature Enthusiasts (ANE), Scenic Explorers (SE) and Personal Cultural Explorers (CE).

⁹ Tourism Northern Ireland (2016)

¹⁰ This is the approach to market segmentation favoured by Visit Wales

Digital Community Management - the activity detailed within this section is strongly geared towards the digital medium, built around a content marketing approach that is ideal for an experience based product offer. Almost 9 in 10 travel purchases are influenced by digital channels, (including social media and peer reviews even if the final purchase isn't made online¹¹). There is a clear recommendation relating to **resourcing of a Digital Community Manager** as it is this role that will act as the guardian for all activity, providing a channel not only for sustained, cost effective promotion but also as an anchor for all engagement, ensuring efficient, informed roll-out of content to partners as well as consumers and the wider business community. It is the Community Manager's job to find people, listen to them, learn from them, and (when appropriate) engage with them. The informed and in-touch Community Manager uses social listening and analytics tools to find the conversations happening around the product.

The Living Levels' foundation of on the ground community building is the perfect platform from which to extend work digitally, crowd sourcing content and engaging with a wider base.

It is the Living Levels Digital Community Manager that will, working with partners, put in place digital resources and activity planning based around the 5 stages of travel planning (Google¹²) equally applicable to all market segments and based around travel search patterns online. From Dreaming to Planning, Booking to Experiencing and finally Sharing.

¹¹ Deloitte (2015)

¹² Google (2012)



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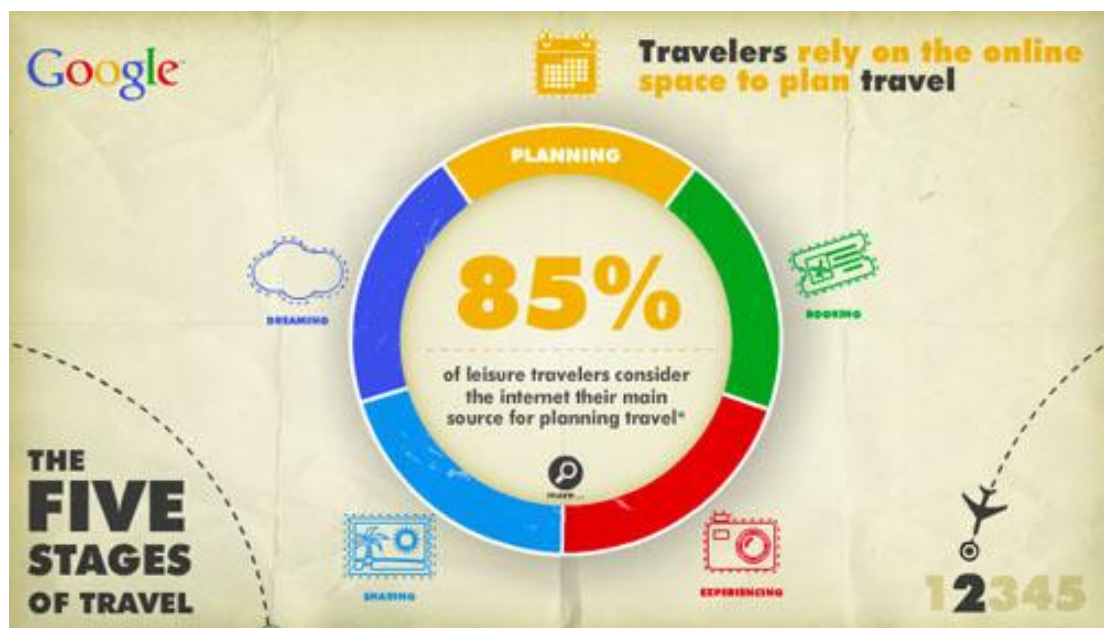
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Cardiff
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CARDIFF
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(Source: Google)

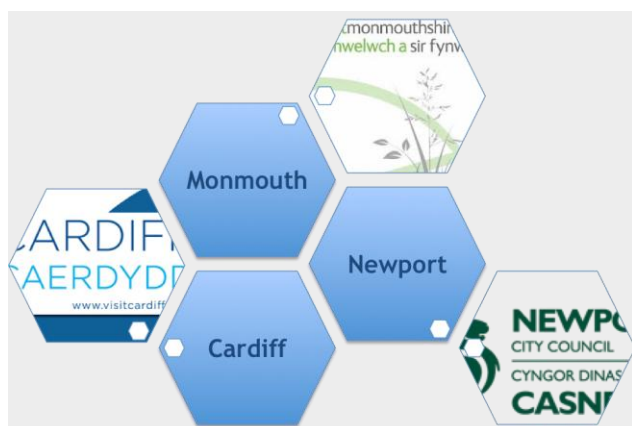
Whereas traditional marketing roles speak to an audience on behalf of a product or destination (i.e. an *audience* as a specific group of people who are targeted **recipients** of a message) Community Managers develop relationships and have conversations with the community i.e. groups of people who have developed **relationships** around a strong common interest.

The **collective promotional strength of Partners** is highlighted in this plan and one of the four strategic objectives cited within this section is “combining and building upon resources to increase the reach and impact of marketing efforts” (see 2.4). The Digital Community Manager would assist in efficient facilitation of this; providing content and guidelines to enable effective and consistent use across the many organisations involved.

The plan focuses on complementing and optimising the interpretive themes (i.e. history, heritage, ecology/nature) and maximising opportunities presented by existing channels and partner activity in an approach that embraces the philosophy “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”.

It seeks to capitalise on the current direction of travel (both figuratively and

literally) being taken by tourism destinations and, vitally, contemporary visitors.



1. The current picture

1.1. Microenvironment - an area under an umbrella of many others

The Living levels area encompasses elements of several tourism destinations (counties of Cardiff, Monmouth and Newport) and also falls under the umbrella of brands well known by the public including the RSPB, National Trust, Sustrans and the Wales Coast Path.

The study area has patchy recognition in terms of its visitor offer among the local community and though not viewed, as yet, as a destination in its own right the Levels can benefit from the profile and combined promotional power, and support, of its constituent stakeholders.



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CYNGOR DINAS
CASNEWYD



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CAERDYDD

The Levels offers many stories and experiences but these have not been organised into a coherent marketing proposition that can be used by its many partners and it would appear that even on the ground (with the exception of some of those working within the hospitality and conservation sectors) there is limited recognition by residents and communities of the area's potential appeal to visitors.

The above means that any marketing activity will need to be as closely targeted to Levels communities as it is to external visitors in order to “deliver on the promise” when a trip is made.

Although this makes for a harder initial marketing proposition, it does, on a positive note, mean that the messages, stories and imagery promoting a visit can be originated afresh, using the strongest themes and linked to interpretation, unencumbered by the need to adapt around existing “historic” marketing activity.

A brand

A brand position and identity (with website) is currently in development for the Living Levels Partnership¹³. Principally as a tool for corporate and engagement communications and as an anchor for project activity this brand, with additional development work, may also be usefully extended and adapted for consumer facing messages.

From way marking identification and use on interpretive print collateral to its application on wider media (e.g. social channels, editorial, a consumer facing micro site as and when required) the extension and adaptation route offers a cost effective and sustainable way to build on the work to date, taking cognisance of wide ranging consultation results and the initial positioning work to provide a base for visitor facing communications when the time is right.

¹³ Brand identity and positioning being undertaken by Elfen (2017)

1.2 Macro environment

Several principal factors may impact on the emergence of the Living Levels as a destination of choice for both day and staying visitors.

While there is still uncertainty around the longer term impact of **Brexit** the vote had an "immediate, positive impact"¹⁴ on tourism to the UK in the latter part of 2016 when a drop in the value of sterling saw an increase in bookings from Europe and further afield as well as from value hungry domestic tourists who chose to holiday at home.

UK holidays are also maintaining a holding pattern of sustained **growth in the short break sector**. In 2016, for the second consecutive year, the proportion of Britons taking a short-break (i.e. up to three nights) at home increased¹⁵. A clear indication that UK destinations can and should shape their communications and activities around short-breaks as a UK based holiday is, overwhelmingly, more likely to fall into the 3 nights or less category.

"Safety first" would appear to be a major consideration for many. People have chosen to holiday in more traditional destinations and also to seek out UK locations that offer a borderless, hassle free trip (e.g. there has been a decline in bookings to destinations such as Paris and New York)

Recent research shows that people want more out of their life and their time away than ever before. They look to make authentic connections on a physical, emotional, spiritual, social and intellectual level. **Experiential tourism** is able to assist with this and has grown in recent years. Those travelling have demonstrated a hunger for truly experience based breaks, something that the Levels may be well placed to offer.

¹⁴ Forward Keys Research (2016)

¹⁵ BDRC Continental Holiday Trends (2016)

Social media peer-to-peer sharing has helped to fuel the above and acted as a platform for peer recommendations. Holiday choices influenced by trusted friends and family will continue and point to the encouragement of word of mouth through positive reviews and social sharing. As recorded by Nielsen “92% of consumers trust online content from friends & family above all other forms of brand messaging”¹⁶. Perhaps even more significantly, that same research shows that online reviews play such a strong part in the decision making process that “(consumers)...trust strangers second most - far more than they trust content from brands.”

Improved connectivity and a rise in mobile phone growth and usage tipped the balance of Internet search in November 2016 with more users around the world accessing the Internet from mobile devices than from desktop computers for the first time.

Overall, when planning a break, **digital media** now plays a central role in the process. On average, Britons took around 5 1/2 hours to dream, plan and book their main holiday in 2015¹⁷ using a combination of online resources, 4 in 5 were peer-led (word of mouth, friends’ social media or review sites) or expert-led (travel agents) while search engines also played a major role.

The Levels product and presentation of the opportunities to *experience* that product must be available as widely as possible online.

In the Wales context there is an opportunity to be grasped for the area maximising opportunities created by **Visit Wales’ Year of the Sea**” in 2018. The theme based marketing and development activity that will take place offers a chance for the Living Levels to tell its story to potential visitors, capitalising on the macro trends, particularly the growth in UK short breaks and the rise of the experience based trip.

¹⁶ Nielsen (2012) Global Trust in Advertising

¹⁷ BDRC Continental Holiday Trends (2016)

1.3 Who visits and who *could* visit

With a drive time population of approximately 2 million the Levels area is close to large numbers of potential day visitors. However this latent demand has to be nurtured in order to be realised and overnight stays encouraged.

Drive Times (Minutes)	Caldicot Castle	RSPB Newport Wetlands	Tredegar House
0 to 30	87,671	239,341	539,757
0 to 60	1,673,570	1,699,093	1,962,781

NB: Within the overall 60 minute drive time contours of each nodal point (Caldicot Castle, RSPB Newport Wetlands and Tredegar House) the residential population is over 1.6 million residents and for Tredegar House this reaches to just under 2 million residents.

(Isochrones detail in Appendix)

STEAM figures can give us a picture of current tourism activity (2015)¹⁸

- **Monmouthshire** Visitors 1.2m staying and 1.7 day
- **Newport** Visitors 0.7m staying and 2m day visitors (the latter driven, in part, by business tourism)
- **Cardiff** Visitors 2m staying and 18.5m day

Living Levels STEAM Analysis¹⁹

¹⁸ Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Model (STEAM) 2015

¹⁹ This is based on ward boundaries and includes high footfall sites including Tredegar House, Caldicot Castle and the Wetlands Centre. It also includes St Mellons and St Pierre Hotels but excludes the Coldra major accommodation cluster.

A breakdown of data (disaggregated as far as possible) relating to the Living Levels area gives us an impression of current activity that, although not detailed, at least provides a baseline upon which to monitor future trends.

2015 Figures (extract from STEAM report 2015 - Appendix)

Category	Tourist Number (thousands)
Serviced Accommodation	206.3
Non-Serviced Accommodation	7.9
SFR (aka VFR) 108.2	108.2
Day Visitors 1,048.1	1,048.1
TOTAL	1,370.5

There is a **lack of primary data for visitors** to the Levels area as an “entity” - both quantitative and qualitative data is light - but we do know, from studies carried out by the organisations included as the three nodal points that individual attractions are recording healthy, consistent visitor numbers and, also, data available from the Wales Visitor Survey²⁰ for each of the individual destinations helps us consider what those visitors rate as important aspects of their decision to visit.

Monmouthshire’s appeal (evidenced in the 2016 Visitor survey) is clearly for couples and families with young children enjoying the outdoors, history, heritage and events, although these are largely seasonal; Newport and Cardiff both benefit significantly from business orientated visits, helping to iron out the peaks and troughs of seasonality and mid week occupancy levels. The latter has also seen a

²⁰ Wales Visitor Survey - South East Wales Tourism Partnership (2016) Beaufort Research

rapid growth in city leisure breaks in recent years as Cardiff's national and international profile has been boosted (and visitor interest fed by constituent accommodation promotion, infrastructure development and event programming that has put the destination at front of mind for many considering a UK short break).

The visitor economy of South East Wales is worth more than £2bn to the overall region²¹ with Cardiff generating 50% of tourism income generation - the Capital represents latent opportunities to attract visitors who may be drawn, initially, to its high profile city offer and sport and cultural events to embracing a wider suite of experiences (on offer in the Levels) that lie within easy reach.

Most recent data (2016 South East Wales Visitor Survey, Beaufort Research) gives us a general picture for the region as a whole.

Notably “ *The majority of visitors to South East Wales are from Wales (71%), which is higher than for Wales as a whole. This reflects the higher proportion of day visitors to this area than to Wales generally*”

in addition to which “ *The age profile of visitors to South East Wales also reflects the all Wales profile; younger people aged 16 - 34 years account for just under a quarter of visitors (23%), while around four in ten are aged 35-54 years and 55+ years.*”

Also of interest when considering marketing delivery planning is “*...the high prevalence of ABC1 visitors; these make up around two thirds of visitors to South East Wales (64%), while C2DE visitors account for just over a third (35%).*”

1.4 Current Marketing - Context

As highlighted, the Levels sits amidst 3 destinations under the umbrella of Wales, with each destination's target markets and marketing activity largely in line with

²¹ Cardiff Tourism Strategy and Action Plan (2015)

Visit Wales' current market segments²². Built on the continued foundation of Independent Explorers (for the 2017 Year of Legends and unlikely to change significantly for the Year of the Sea in 2018) these segments include people in Wales as well as the wider UK and also overseas (Germany and USA)

- Cultural Explorers (couples, mostly over 40)
- Scenic Explorers (couples, mostly over 40)
- Family Explorers (largely under 50 with children under 15)
- Active Explorers (households with no children largely under 35)

The attractions and brands that sit at ground level pursue their own target markets though there are obvious touch points and overlaps e.g. RSPB marketing is directed towards the ANE (Active Nature Explorers) segment.

The Levels' marketing activity and by default, the product that it promotes, needs to capitalise on others' efforts and offer content based on enhancing the wider product message each promotes.

The product within the Levels receives exposure (to greatly varying degrees) across a variety of channels and organisations. See Appendix for an overview of visitor facing online activity and coverage of the Levels area.

The accent has been on the digital coverage “above the line” that is currently afforded to the Levels as it is this medium that sits at the heart of the future marketing approach.

As an emergent product and with limited resources to impact on a wider market place under its own “banner” the success of product promotion and an increase in both awareness and visits to the area will rest on the successful presentation and mainstreaming of Levels product within partner activity.

²² Visit Wales (2016)

There are offline materials currently in circulation across the partner base and these will, by and large, exist going forward though consistency in Levels content (where relevant) should be sought.

The existing partner print will be complemented by a suite of information leaflets connected to the walking and cycling routes and enhanced by links to the interpretation themes. (Interpretation will sit alongside the routes detailed, adding value to the experience). These leaflets will live both online (e.g. as downloads for digital content promotion) as well as offline in the form of print collateral for distribution on the ground. As well as further afield, the print will be distributed across the area as after care for visitors travelling to the Living Levels and to encourage recognition and visits from the local communities.

Leaflet distribution combined with targeted social media should also be used to raise awareness at key Living Levels access points along the M4 corridor and at relevant rail and bus stations.

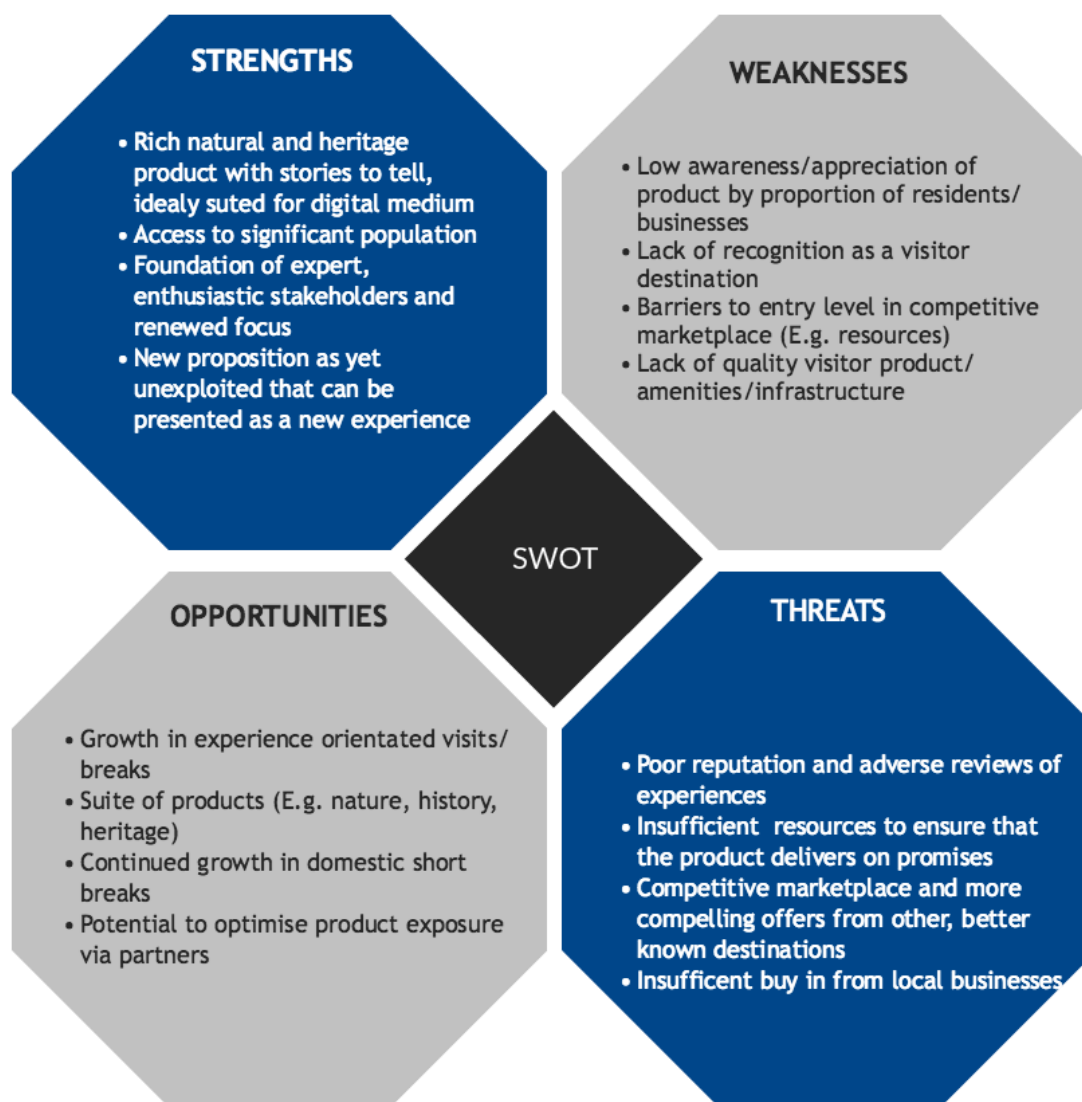


1.5 SWOT Analysis - the basics

As well as prevailing economic and behavioural trends, we need to consider visitor's needs and demands which can generally be defined in terms of the following 5 A's

- Attraction, Activities, Access, Accommodation and Amenities

Potentially strong (albeit not widely recognised) with regard to Attractions, Activities and Access, the area currently struggles in respect of its Accommodation and Amenities.



To provide further depth to the SWOT, we have expanded on what we believe to be the 5 key challenges and opportunities for marketing of the Levels.

1.5 5 Key Issues with regard to marketing planning

Issue	Challenges	Opportunities/Actions
1. Primary Data on Current Visitors	<p>There is a lack of primary data on the discrete Levels area - available material from partners e.g. visitor surveys, business monitor information from operators etc. is wider destination or specific attraction based.</p> <p>Specifically, there is a paucity of research with regard to visitor profile and motivations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collection & interpretation of visitor source data and visitor feedback will be needed for evaluation Baseline data can be put in place and new activity must build in visitor feedback channels. Research originated by partners could include core questions that would assist in determining Levels activity levels and product satisfaction.

<p>2. Primary Branding as a destination</p> <p><i>*Partnership</i></p> <p>Website is under development</p>	<p>The Levels area is not a recognised tourism destination area. Nor is it likely to gain ground in a landscape of many that do exist (both destination and organisation) in the area. Also, another (new) PRIMARY destination brand may not be recognised and used effectively by partners (quite apart from the issues regarding the levels of sustained activity and resources required to establish a primary brand in the marketplace).</p> <p>There is currently disparity and fragmentation with regard to promotion of the Levels area and its product.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rather than attempting to establish an additional <i>primary destination</i> visitor-facing brand, mainstreaming of promotion of the Levels product could provide longer-term benefit. This to be done using an extension of the internal brand related and adapted to specific themes (e.g. water, nature, people) • Consistency in referencing the Levels is needed throughout partners' promotional materials - a "toolkit" of messages and imagery could assist in this. This would help to unify and provide an umbrella for presenting the "Levels" many individual assets. • The partnership website could be used as a resource bank for toolkits. • The Partnership visual brand, planned for use on aspects such as comms and physical assets such as way markers, could be developed as a marque for use by third parties when carrying information on the Levels, tying communication together and complementing (as a "sub brand") other partner activity.
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<p>3.</p> <p>Website/ Digital Resources and Print collateral</p> <p>- How and where the Levels product is currently promoted</p>	<p>Even an “all singing and dancing” consumer facing website will struggle to gain exposure in a climate of emergent product and may wrestle with surrounding, strong destination identities. Sustainability of activity may be difficult and costly in both terms of both time and financial resources.</p> <p>Where the area’s product is referenced in existing print collateral (across partners and organisations) it lacks consistency and content depth.</p> <p>The Levels area has a great deal to offer but is not well represented in existing apps (e.g. Wales Coast Path) and on social media platforms and websites.</p> <p>NB: the emergent Partnership site is to carry all partner logos with links back to respective sites, though none of those sites currently have an appropriate landing page (to which the link should be directed) of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A microsite that is created to signpost and support constituent partners and Levels product could easily sit within the Partnership site, accessible via the main menu but, importantly, also having its own URL. • An audit of promotion/communication opportunities identifies many avenues that can be used to roll out a harmonised message regarding the area’s product. There are latent opportunities for promotion that can be harnessed. Each partner should/could establish a content page that is Levels specific. • New, consumer facing social media channels would provide a cost effective, long-term solution to building product awareness. Visual based platforms such as Instagram are needed to complement interpretation and maximise reach and exposure from elements such as figures in the landscape as well as optimising the promotional value and communication reach of aspects, particularly those around nature /ecology. Individual experience/product promotion can be achieved via a social media approach i.e. targeting interest led sub groups (from bumblebees to birds and activities to access points) • A Digital Community Manager role is integral to the above and could
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	<p>Levels product.</p>	<p>make real gains based on the depth of content and widespread potential audience groups accessible online.</p>
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<p>4.</p> <p>General Product Awareness</p>	<p>“Delivering on the promise” will be hard when, as well as a lack of external awareness there is a discernible lack of internal (e.g. local residents) awareness of what the area has to offer in terms of its appeal to visitors.</p> <p>There is huge disparity in terms of the readiness of product to receive visitors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toolkits that are specific to the internal audience will be important in order to support awareness raising and to enable the realisation of opportunities. • Upgrading of physical and virtual information will be required to support marketing. This work is, in part, has been highlighted in the Access section of the study. • The wide range of activity and story content will be strengths in terms of wider promotional opportunities but only if presented as a coherent suite of Levels product (embraced and reciprocally promoted by all partners) • Promotion must factor in the suite of wider project activity (e.g. that which seeks to address issues such as fly tipping) and coordinate message content and timing around that staged programme activity
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<p>5.</p> <p>Capitalising on rather than competing with strong destinations</p>	<p>See 2 and 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will be important to harness the wider area's visitor base and potential latent demand (including Cardiff) and ensure that the Levels is presented as an easily identifiable product/suite of products. • A resource bank of imagery and sample text should be available or partners and its use championed (in part by the Digital Community Manager). (See above)
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2. Strategic Objectives and Marketing Approach

1. The effective use of “experiences” to attract visits to the Living Levels supported by a content marketing approach
2. Raising awareness of the Living Levels product within the local visitor economy and resident communities
3. Focus on targeting best-prospect market segments and making use of product resources enhanced via interpretation activity
4. Combining and building upon resources to increase the reach and impact of marketing efforts

1.1. Experiential tourism at the heart of the approach

“At the heart of any destination is an experience that consumers will remember, that they will want to repeat and that they will want to share with their colleagues” Professor Chris Voss - London Business School

Experiential tourism marketing embraces sense of place and focuses on capturing the hearts and minds of potential visitors inspiring them to find out more about an area’s history, people, culture and ecology.

It encourages businesses and products to enhance their offer to drive visits and spend.

A marketing (and development) approach based on experiential

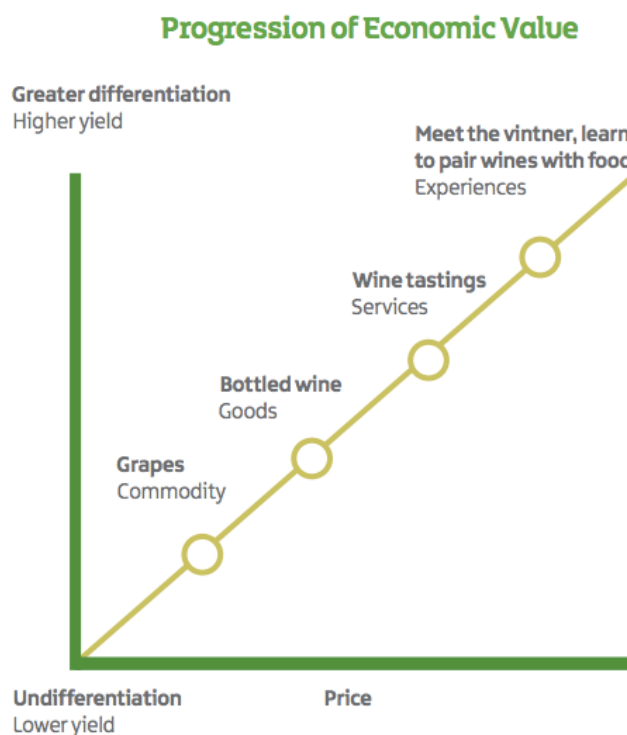


Figure 1 Source: Tourism NI

tourism (see figure 1²³) represents opportunities beyond delivering traditional tourism products (i.e. based on goods and services) and is at the core of contemporary marketing throughout destinations worldwide, from Northern Ireland to Canada. The Canadian Tourism Commission refer to a model known as “The Progression of Economic Value”²⁴ and emphasises that

“Whilst each individual level of commerce has value, as your product progresses, so too does your ability to differentiate yourself in the marketplace and ultimately charge a premium. Experiential travel represents a real opportunity to drive more profitability into businesses”

The Living Levels has a range of experiences that have been identified via the Access and Interpretation activity and structured as themes within the plan.

These themes, supported, as they will be by work that not only tells their story but guides access to physical locations, offer a framework upon which to build and promote experiences, offering potential visitors a match their interests and allowing the creation of distinct memories which, crucially, can be shared peer to peer.

2.2 Toolkit and roll out of awareness raising initiatives within the Living Levels community (business and resident)

Since the project’s inception, the Partnership project team has undertaken extensive, effective outreach work. In addition, the wide spread community consultation inherent within both the Access and Interpretation work stream and Landscape Characterisation activity has ensured clarity with regard to the current level of appreciation and understanding of the Living Levels product.

²³ Canadian Tourism Commission (2015)

²⁴ Canadian Tourism Commission (2015)

It is clear that there is unexploited potential for local businesses to gain from promotion of the Living Levels. In order for this to be achieved, a toolkit of information, imagery and other media resources could be made available online (hosted by the Partnership's emergent website) that will supplement the work being undertaken in the community by the project team, building on the foundations of work to date.

The toolkit (either in full or as sections) should become part of all community engagement. Drawing from the work on access and interpretation it should be a succinct, easy to use directory of stories and locations spanning history, heritage, nature and conservation, with guidance on how to better understand and tell the Levels story.

The toolkit will also provide the basis of a resource for encouraging and assisting potential entrepreneurs to create and expand experiences based on the Levels traditions e.g. from weaving (using reeds) to small scale, artisan cider production

This will be an essential element of product development upon which marketing activity will rely. The toolkit will also have a role to play in content selection for targeting the day visitor market (particularly VFR).

2.3 Focus on targeting best-prospect market segments

This marketing plan focuses on complementing and optimising the interpretive themes (i.e. history, heritage, ecology/nature) and maximising opportunities presented by existing channels and partner activity. It supports Visit Wales' strategic direction of "driving a product-led approach that identifies compelling reasons to visit Wales" - an approach that has experiences and sense of place at its core and a focus on the market segment "**Independent Explorers (IE)**" by definition, a group that is in search of new places and experiences

- Affluent/ slightly upmarket



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- Mainly adults, aged 30 and over
- Keen to avoid over-commercialised tourist traps
- Independent in their thinking and actions
- Looking for places that inspire and challenge them
- Interested in understanding the local culture and meeting local people wanting to return home refreshed and enriched

Independent Explorers make up over 40% of the UK population²⁵ and are a vitally important target market for the Living Levels, not least as their inclusion will facilitate better reach of product offers via national marketing as well as complementing destination work. However, they are not the only target market that the Levels, supported by improved interpretation, can pursue.

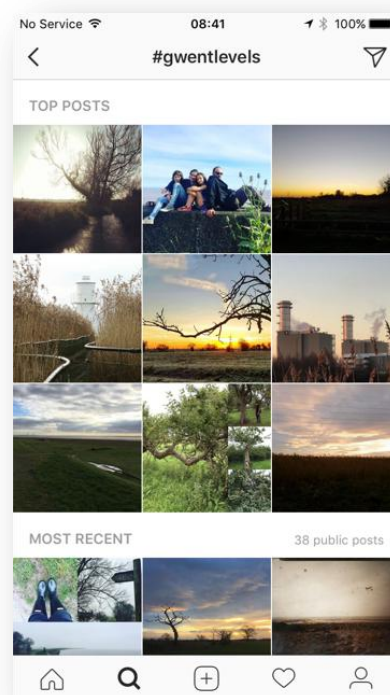
We have split our prioritised market segments into **Primary** (offering best match to opportunities) and **Secondary** (less immediate appeal but with potential to address wider aims of awareness raising and seasonal spread of visits) and within these, identified further **Niche** opportunities.

Marketing messages/themes defining and supporting audience choices (distilled from and linked to interpretative themes) History, People, Nature and Conservation, Water

NB: Visit Wales' Year of the Sea in 2018 will be an invaluable springboard for campaign launch activity, offering as it does an obvious opportunity for the Living Levels area to capitalise on its links to the sea via its history and geography. E.g. Inspiring and encouraging the area's hinterland population to visit the nearest coastline.

²⁵ Visit Wales (2013)

Social Media: The approach to all target markets will play heavily on crowd sourced content, stories, comments and particularly images. Complementing elements of the interpretation development (e.g. figures in the landscape) platforms such as Instagram can be used to encourage sharing of pictures and reposted to boost the Living Levels presence online. It will be important that, across all platforms, a consistent hashtag is promoted. The project team has built a following under #ourlivinglevels. There is also some content online relating to #gwentlevels though this is patchy with low follower numbers. (Confusingly #livinglevels deals with high rise buildings). We suggest #livinglevelswales #lefalaubywcymru to encapsulate both subject and location but the client may wish to continue with the current project hashtag.



A note on definitions

1. Market segmentation - separating a market into segments or groups of consumers who are similar, but different from consumers in other groups - this plan focuses on the market/consumer group "Independent Explorers"
2. Target marketing - segmentation divides a market up into subgroups. Target marketing involves deciding which segments are most profitable and for whom the Levels product may have appeal (see below table)
3. Positioning - involves creating a product image that appeals to a target market or several target markets.

Segment/Target Market	Overview	Motivations and points to note	Theme (main link)	Potential Positioning	Communication Channels
PRIMARY					



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Resident community (Day visits)	In line with Visiting Friends and Relatives (see below) this base is large and an easily accessible, latent market opportunity	All year round market Looking for new ideas	History People Nature Conservation Water	An unexplored product on the doorstep Walking (and some cycling including the inception of 5 new routes on the eastern Levels) as well as attractions base (RSPB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education sector (i.e. encouraging visits from wider family following educational trips) • Print distribution • Web content - partner sites • Social Media • Information Centres • Other community touch points (e.g. libraries, community groups)
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VFR (Visiting Friends and Relatives)	Large base due to easy access from high population ·	All year round market Looking for new ideas	History People Nature & Conservation Water	An unexplored product on the doorstep Walking (and some cycling including the inception of 5 new routes on the eastern Levels) as well as attractions base (RSPB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print distribution • Web content - partner sites • Social Media • Information Centres • Other community touch points (e.g. libraries, community groups)
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Day visitors using the wider area (including Cardiff) as a staying holiday base	Large base of potential latent demand	Looking for easy access to a variety of experiences/new ideas	History People Nature & Conservation Water	An unexplored product with easy access to varied product. From walking to special interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print distribution • Stakeholder (operator) online content (e.g. hotels) • Information Centres
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<p>(Overnight stays and day visits)</p> <p>Walkers</p>	<p>People who have walking as their primary purpose</p>	<p>Will look for loops and links, easy access to the path and amenities where possible (incl. refreshment and toilet stops)</p> <p>Accommodation that is walker friendly</p>	<p>Nature History</p> <p>(And the chance to use both as a backdrop to walking)</p>	<p>Part of the Wales Coast Path</p> <p>The link to the English Coast Path, the first parts of which open in 2018/19</p> <p>Flat and achievable for different levels</p> <p>“Undiscovered” in comparison to other routes, offering changing landscapes and supported by stories</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wales Coast Path content and channels • Web content - partner sites • Social Media including family orientated blogs • Partner email databases • Visit Wales product exposure (editorial content)
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<p>(Special interest break takers)</p> <p>Personal Explorers</p>	<p>Those with interests such as History and heritage, arts and culture and distinctive experiences.</p>	<p>Prepared to search and enjoy the process but strong product has to be foundation</p>	<p>History</p> <p>People</p> <p>Nature & Conservation</p> <p>Water</p>	<p>A chance to discover and explore</p> <p>Tailored to wide range of interests and including Roman heritage, history, fishing, photography, naturalists</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant blogs • Editorial in specialist publications • Web content - partner sites • Social Media • Partner email databases • Visit Wales product exposure (editorial content)
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Segment/Target Market	Overview	Motivations and points to note	Theme (main link)	Potential Positioning	Communication Channels
SECONDARY					



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<p>(Short break takers)</p> <p>Personal/Cultural Explorers</p>	<p>Older couples /empty nesters</p> <p>Mostly middle class and in the higher income bracket and Usually higher spending than families</p>	<p>Looking for a good range of historical attractions, interesting towns and cities, good quality accommodation and scenery. Interested in the local way of life and culture, and enjoy discovering new experiences and places in the UK</p>	<p>History</p> <p>People</p> <p>Water</p>	<p>A strong and relatively established market for Wales.</p> <p>Challenge is to increase market share out of season.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web content - partner sites • Editorial content in specialist press • Social Media including family orientated blogs • Partner email databases • Visit Wales product exposure (editorial content)
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Cyclists	Initial focus on local residents and cycle groups	Looking for easy access to routes of varying lengths	Nature History (And the chance to use both as a backdrop to cycling)	Easy access for Cycle groups within an hour to 1.5 hour drive time A chance to experience a different environment (with interpretation backing up routes) and a flat landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustrans • Partner websites • Social media • Cycling Clubs/groups
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Overseas Visitors	High spend though harder to reach on territory	Looking for easy access to a variety of experiences	History People Nature & Conservation Water	Complementary to target of Day Visitors using the wider area (including Cardiff) as a staying holiday base Appeal as a walking product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on Visit Wales target markets and supply of quality content for promotion • Visit Britain - as above • Wales Official Tour Guide Association
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NB: A Content/Editorial Calendar should be put in place from the outset to guide all activity. Taking cognisance of all channels and built around key dates, themes and seasons this will guide all content messages to visitors as well as being used to ensure clear communications with partners, allowing simplified curation of content and plotting seasonal spread.

2.4 Combining and building upon resources

As an emergent product and with limited resources to impact on a wider market place under its own banner the success of product promotion and an increase in both awareness and visits to the area will rest on the successful mainstreaming of Levels product within partner activity, by default playing to partner markets.

In addition to the Partners (such as Sustrans who could add the newly developed cycle routes into existing interactive mapping) this should include Improvements to the profile that the area is given through third party (non-partner) activity undertaken such as that of the Wales Coast Path (e.g. app and website profile)



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3. Marketing Action Plan and Budget

Item	Rationale and content	Indicative Cost
Business/ Community Toolkit	<p>This will include imagery covered in Access and Interpretation (A and I) budget. Design and origination costs - will be largely for use as an online resource on the Partnership website and with a limited print run.</p> <p>Format to follow existing best practice toolkits such as Monmouthshire's events edition.</p>	£5000
Partner Resources/ Toolkit	<p>A adaptation of the Business and Community toolkit, this will be a suite of resources used for roll out to all organisational partners (and those who represent potential channels for Levels product exposure e.g. Visit Wales (See Appendix for Audit)</p> <p>It will include branding, imagery covered in Access and Interpretation (A and I) budget, themes and sample content text.</p> <p>Design and origination costs - solely for use as an online resource on the Partnership website.</p>	£1500



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Brand development/ extension	Consumer facing adaptation of the Partnership brand to include a suite of treatments based on themes and suitable for different applications	£5000 year 1 Total £5000
Microsite - consumer facing	Integration of mini site into Partnership site Up to 8 pages and accessible through a direct url and/or Partnership website i.e. same Content Management System (CMS) as the Partnership site	£2000 Year 1 Total £2000
Social Media targeted Advertising	Including Retargeting activity across a wider network	£2000 year 1 £1500 year 2 £1500 year 3 Total £5000
Events, PR and tactical marketing opportunities	In addition to social media advertising budget - and to include activities such as event attendance, advertorial and hosting of visits together with adhoc opportunities where relevant (e.g. 2018 Year of the Sea events)	£2000 per year Total £6000



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Digital Community Management	Intern or contract based including establishing channels (e.g. Instagram to complement landscape figures and Pinterest to find a way of extending reach of general themes) and growing and maintaining all platforms as well as authoring blogs and seeding information online. This anchor role is vital to achieve cut through with all audiences effectively (e.g. residents/businesses and visitor).	£10000 year 1 £7000 year 2 £7000 year 2 Total £24000
	TOTAL	£48,500



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4. Monitoring and Measurement

The progress and efficacy of the marketing plan will be monitored at different levels and within activity that cuts across all work streams (e.g. the undertaking of surveys with consistent core questions, consultation with businesses) although it will also have discrete targets and methodology to assess those targets attached to specific activity.

4.1 Responsibilities and methods

Each partner will have reporting requirements but they will also need to play a reciprocal role via monitoring of their own activity where it has relevance to the Living Levels product, in order to provide a full picture (e.g. web traffic, visitor numbers and spend behaviour at attractions).

Elements such as footfall counters, together with a range of other interventions are detailed in the main monitoring section of the overall plan however; as the marketing activity has a strong focus on the digital medium there are specific monitoring requirements in addition to the above. As well as fulfilling reporting requirements these measures will be crucial to guide development of activity on a rolling basis and should be overseen, coordinated and reported on by the Digital Community Manager.

4.2 Defining Key Digital (Content) Marketing Performance Indicators (KPIs) - these should include figures and milestones relating to

- Use and downloading of online toolkit and resources
- Partner and other third party content referencing Living Levels
- Numbers relating to community growth and community engagement (i.e. including interaction, sharing, engagement and referrals and reviews)

- Sentiment analysis derived from social listening (software and also review of peer to peer conversation and third party material)
- Return on Investment (ROI) from social media marketing



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SECTION 5

Governance, Monitoring and Evaluation

Introduction

In this short final section we identify key issues and solutions around the effective implementation of this plan and how we can measure success

Governance

The Partnership has asked for a Destination Plan combining Interpretation, Access and Marketing. While the Living Levels is not a conventional tourism destination in a Wales context, the ‘best practice’ advice from Visit Wales in terms of destination management is still relevant:

Making a destination work effectively from a visitor’s perspective is essential to destination management. For a destination to work it needs buy-in from all stakeholders involved, working in partnership to make sure there are no gaps or failures in the provision.

Some of the important pieces that make up the entire destination include:

- *car parking, toilets, leisure centres, parks and visitor information provided by local authorities*
- *accommodation, activities and attractions provided by the tourism trade*
- *cultural and countryside experiences provided by organisations like National Parks, Cadw, museums and galleries*
- *interaction with the host community*

Knowing how all these fit together is key to achieving effective destination management.



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Stakeholders and the community need to commit to strategic issues in servicing visitor needs. Using a tool such as the 'tourism value chain' which is invaluable in helping both businesses and organisations to visualise the complete visitor 'journey' can help achieve an effective destination.²⁶

Destination Partnership

Best practice also demands that the Destination Plan is ideally developed, delivered and monitored through a stable and enduring Destination Partnership which embraces all the types of stakeholders identified above - public, private and third sector. In the case of the Living Levels, the area covered may be relatively small geographically but there is a high degree of organisational complexity and a large number of stakeholders with a clear interest. Happily, this is already acknowledged in the make-up and terms of reference of the Living Levels Partnership.

The partners have previously committed to collaborative working beyond the life of the HLF Landscape Partnership Scheme and sealed that commitment through the creation of a Partnership Board with an independent Chair. Our recommendation is that this Board is the *de facto* Destination Partnership although we would recommend the formal addition of visitor economy and community representatives. We suggest that the Partnership Board could in turn appoint sub-groups (with wider co-options) on a task and finish basis to oversee aspects of the Destination Plan as required.

The Destination Partnership approach will help facilitate the conversion of new assets developed through the partner projects into revised and additional visit content as well as inspiration for events and social media activity.

²⁶ <https://businesswales.gov.wales/dmwales/destination-management>



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‘Ownership’ and Implementation

The costings submitted with this plan reflect our understanding that there will be centrally-based resources within the project team to undertake/ oversee procurement and project manage implementation of the interventions identified in this report - there is no in-built allowance for additional management time or consultancy margins.

We have held ‘in principle’ discussions with planners in Newport and Monmouthshire. Given the sensitive nature of the landscape they believe the physical interventions identified will require planning permission, but their views are positive given the proposed scale and materials. We would recommend identifying as many items/ locations as possible in single applications to minimize planning fees (as these are based on the total m2 footprint they should be reasonable ie £390 for up to 75m2). We believe that any environmental concerns which would preclude any particular sites (or locations within them) should be ironed out prior to planning application stage through the goodwill of those with statutory or advisory responsibilities already sitting round the Partnership Board table including Local Authorities and Natural Resources Wales.

As this plan is implemented, new and improved assets will be created, in both physical and virtual forms. Agreements between partners, not least the protocols demanded by HLF, will establish responsibilities for implementation, updating, repair and maintenance and legal ownerships. Through the destination partnership approach however it may be possible to devolve some responsibilities further, not least in encouraging local communities to care for the assets on their ‘patch’.

Although not included in our proposals, we are recommending that within the overall Scheme, the Partnership establishes a legacy fund, either held by a nominated lead partner or by a corporate entity created from the Partnership, to support ongoing maintenance, repair and replacement, ideally beyond the minimum period set by HLF. This has proved invaluable in similar schemes eg



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‘Overlooking the Wye’. In addition a tapering human resource input is required after the project period to close it down, write up lessons learned and ensure secure handover of assets and ongoing initiatives.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Partnership has commissioned an overall Monitoring and Evaluation Framework from Resources for Change which is currently in development. To help inform that Framework the following table identifies some specific candidate metrics which will indicate progress against this plan which, in short, is seeking to

Increase footfall, economic value and visitor understanding and enjoyment by improving access to, awareness of, and the visitor experience in, the Living Levels²⁷

There are already a number of visitor- related monitoring and research activities taking place across the Living Levels, to which partners are committed, and these are highlighted. In terms of visitor surveys we recommend that a shared set of core questions is developed, in line with the All-Wales Tourism Research Group (led by Visit Wales) to allow internal and external comparability over time.

²⁷ We use the term ‘visitor’ to cover both those staying in the area and regional and local residents accessing the Living Levels area for leisure, learning and well-being purposes



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Dimension	KPI	Methodology	Baseline 2017/18 unless otherwise stated	Target 2021
Volume and Value of Visits	Number of Visits	STEAM + footpath counters	1.05m Day Visits 322k Staying Visits (2015) Route Usage tbc	+10%
	Value of Visits	STEAM (supported by VW/ LA Visitor Survey)	£99.92m	+5%



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User Understanding	Users will understand that the Levels were created by people reclaiming land from the sea and that this is a precarious relationship which has on-going relevance today in relation to climate change and rising sea levels	Survey (through key hub partners - Caldicot Castle, Tredegar House, Wetlands and online)	To be established	70%+
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	Users will be able to recognise the Level's historical and landscape features	Survey (through key hub partners - Caldicot Castle, Tredegar House, Wetlands and online)	To be established	70% +
	Users will understand that the site is environmentally sensitive and needs to be continually managed to maintain its special qualities	Survey (through key hub partners - Caldicot Castle, Tredegar House, Wetlands and online)	To be established	70% +

Visitor and Resident Awareness	Number accessing and sharing Levels information SM Followers	Analysis of SM Channels and Google Analytics	To be established	tbc
Visitor and Resident Satisfaction	Visitor rating of Levels products	Reputational analysis of SM Channels inc. Tripadvisor VW/ LA Visitor Survey	To be established	tbc
Visitor Economy Satisfaction	Industry rating of type and level of business Levels of content creation for on-line channels	Analysis of on-line channels Levels content picked up by Visit Wales campaigns	To be established	tbc



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SECTION 6

Summary Budget and Action Plan

(Please see Spreadsheet)



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APPENDICES



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Access and Signage: Appendix 1

Proposals for signage from and along The Wales Coast Footpath - The Living Levels - following workshop 11 November 2016.

Linking the products of The Living Levels together

The Wales Coast Path is a major asset to The Levels. However, currently there is no formal signage system to link users of the route to nearby facilities. Nor is there a scheme that encourages casual users of the WCP to explore further.

The signage along the path is, in the main, effective and follows a strong branding approach. (It is recognised that there are some difficulties and inconsistencies re the installation of these signs at some points).

Signage – Wooden

Carved Waymarkers

It may be a requirement to carve the logo into waymark signs. As an approximate guide, the shield logo should be around a minimum 50mm height to preserve detail, although the quality of wood, as well as machinery used, will often determine the end result.



These samples show wooden signs, with acrylic moulds sunk into the wooden sign.

For advice on fully carved wooden signs contact: enquiries@kow.gov.uk

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Signage – Street signs

These are some samples of road and street signs that show Wales Coast Path markers.

Any street signage will need approval and permissions before they are put in place from possibly both the Local Highways agency and possibly planning permission. Please contact your local county council for guidance on this.



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At the moment, even if facilities are within a few metres of the WCP, there is no formal signage to encourage usage, and to highlight the surrounding facilities.



The current WCP signage is designed for “regular walkers”, people with a map and an understanding of the geography of the area. There is nothing to help the “nervous” walker to explore, for instance, how far is it to XXX.

Proposals



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The workshop agreed that ensuring that users have a quality experience, and aren't directed to "closed" facilities was essential.

With this in mind, it was agreed that the best options for signage from the WCP were:

- Routes to **communities** with a number of facilities - including toilets and refreshments.
- Circular routes integrating sections of the WCP and community destinations.
- Highlight along routes key viewpoints and other points of interest via the installation of interpretation and/or the improvement of content online (via the WCP app, or a dedicated Living Levels approach to Cultural Beacons)

The signage (which could be integrated into artwork or interpretation) from the WCP would use symbols to highlight what is available on the route, and should "name" the circular route to give an idea what the experience will be - creating a series of unique Levels Branded walk routes. Another option re naming could be to use a symbol (the curly walk, the jagged walk, etc) and colours.

The opportunity to sign individual businesses was seen as important but very difficult to manage (e.g. Permanent signs being out of date when a pub closes). It was agreed that a scheme for using sandwich board signs on the WCP could be implemented in partnership with the Community Councils and individual businesses.

Distance or Time

There was considerable discussion about "distance" or "time". If distance is it metres or miles, if time, how do you work out the average time to walk a distance and convey this to the user?

Looking at international examples of long distance footpath signage, this is an ongoing debate.





Whilst many of the long distance European walk routes target the experienced walker, in trying to integrate the WCP into the Living Levels offer, it is more about encouraging non regular walkers to get out and explore. With this in mind, as well as the shorter distances involved, it would seem best to use Time, to encourage exploration. The average speed identified by The British Heart Foundation (<https://www.bhf.org.uk/get-involved/events/training-zone/walking-training-zone/walking-faqs>) is 3 miles per hour when walking on country or forestry paths.

Time and Distance has been discussed extensively - Distance has been preferred by those who have been in attendance at the meetings.

200 meters to

The aim of this sort of signage will be to give visitors confidence to explore. For instance, signage at Lighthouse Inn could say Peterstone 1.5 miles and Tredegar House 3 miles (as an example). This information could be embedded within interpretation artworks or panels. The distance to approach would also be used on the circular walks.

Access and Signage: Appendix 2

Proposals for signage to The Wales Coast Footpath - The Living Levels - following workshop 11 November 2016.

The use of the Coast Path roundel for directions when you are following the path are well established and detailed within the Brand Guidelines.



However, at the moment, there are no standardised signage protocols for signage TO the path - by foot or by vehicle.

The aim of the workshop on 11 November was to explore options for consideration by NRW and for inclusion in the Living Levels HLF project plan.

Proposal

Within the Brand Guidelines there are examples of how the logo elements and colourings can be used in print; there has been very little use made of some of these options.



The discussions at the meeting highlighted several key points:

- The importance of ensuring the people do not get confused as to whether or not they are “on” the path.
- Consistency of approach will make it easier for visitors.
- The need to direct visitors to the “best” overall experience of The Wales Coast Path.

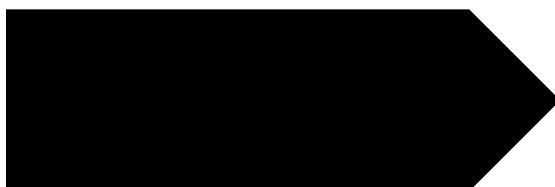
In principle, there was agreement that formalising the approach for directing visitors to The Wales Coast Path would highlight awareness of the path as well as increase the use of the path, especially in more urban areas where the resident population is often unaware of the proximity of the route.

Pedestrians signage to Wales Coast Path

Following discussions, it was agreed that the pedestrian signs to the Wales Coast Path need to include:

- The shell symbol - without the surrounding name.
- The word “To” (and Welsh equivalent) - clearly showing the difference between being on the route and approaching the route.
- The distance to the route.

A potential design approach - to be printed on metal, cut into wood, or fixed into the ground (e.g. as etchings or metal plaques).



Highway Signage to Wales Coast Path

In directing visitors in vehicles to the Wales Coast Path, it was agreed that the selection of parking sites was critical to give the best possible experience.

- The car park should be official, and safe (as much as possible), ie it should not be directing people to roadside parking. The car parking can be free or charged.
- The route from the car park to the Wales Coast Path should be effectively signed, and provide a generally accessible route.
- Ideally, signed car parks should also include some or all:
 - o Refreshments and/or toilets.
 - o Cycle racks.

- o Interpretation about the route and/or the locality depending upon the distance from the path.
- o Useful information for the unfamiliar visitor, including information to local attractions, refreshments and toilets.

As a visitor facility, the highway signage would be Brown/White and the Welsh Government would need to approve the inclusion of a symbol for The Wales Coast Path in the recognised list of symbols.

Highway signs are intended to take the visitor and their vehicle to the point where they can access the identified visitor facility; consequently, the presence of a car park is implicit in the signage. Consequently, where an overall list of visitor facilities in a town or locality is generated (a gateway sign) then the name and symbol (or in some instances only the accepted symbol) would be used. The minimal information is included to allow the car driver to take in the information. A possible approach would be (the symbol may be simply a white logo on the brown background, or it may be contained within a black box).



Wales Coast Path
Llwybr Arfordir Cymru

When approaching the individual site, the adding of the P symbol would emphasise the fact that you are being directed to where you park for access to the Wales Coast Path.



To progress the integration of a Wales Coast Path symbol within the accepted Brown and White Highways Symbols, Neil McBride and Welsh Government will need to be consulted.


Access and Signage : Appendix 3

BUDGET COSTS FOR LIGHTHOUSE INN

AREA 1 CAR PARK ENTRANCE	
Entrance sign in timber	1,500
Rumble strip 25 sqm @ £145 incl. breakout	3,600
Timber bollards - provisional 2 @ £150	300
Vehicle barrier upgrade £1,500	1,500
Hedge with trees to exg. wall 20 lin m incl. breakout, topsoil	1,000
Total	c8k

AREA 2 NEW VISITOR GATEWAY	
Remove exg fence, replace with new timber fence 30 lin m @ £80 lin m behind new gateway works 25 lin m @ £80 lin m extension to entire boundary up to Lighthouse Road	2,400 2,000
Incorporate section of timber sleepers into fence 10 lin m @ £180/m, with carved ends £500, pencil rubbing plaques £200	2,500
Stone wall with wide concrete profiled coping 17 lin m @ £250/m	4,250
Bespoke timber shelter with seating approx. 3.5 x 2.5m budget £10-20k	10,000-20,000
Eye-catcher sculpture in timber - budget £3k	3,000
Remove exg. concrete block surface £5 add new coloured tarmac surface 55sqm £55-75/sqm (resin bound)	4,125
Upgrade adjacent surface in self binding gravel eg. Coxwell 100sqm £20/sqm	2,000
Timber pier bollards 1m 6no @ £125	750
Cycle storage - grooved oak trunk 2no @ £500	1,000
Handrail to bridge 20 lin m £100/m & 1.8m timber piers 2no @ £150	2,300
New surface across bridge to kissing gate 17sqm £55/sqm	1,000
Remove stile, pillars, new kissing gate suitable for wider access (with radar key)	1,500
Interpretation panels (under Lighthouse Inn canopy) mounted onto wall, acrylic	2,000

New picket fence to car park/reen boundary 40 lin m @ £50/m	2,000
Planting of native hawthorn to fill gaps	100
Remove concrete bollards (20no)	1,500
Replace with timber bollards or timber sleeper edging @£50/m	2,000
Total	c45k-55k

AREA 3 EXISTING CAR PARK SURFACE	
<p>Total area of existing tarmac surface 2,100sqm</p> <p>Potholes are concentrated at entrance area/east end approx covering 900sqm - difficult to estimate extent of repair needed without survey. Engineering solution will be required - subject to CBR testing of ground conditions, size/weight of vehicles, and assuming not required to meet adoptable standards.</p> <p>Existing drainage system for surface water run-off is unknown - this could become (and is increasingly) an issue with Welsh Water/NRW. Although no extension to hard surface area is proposed, 'betterment' may be sought via a Sustainable Drainage solution.</p>  <p>Patch up potholes, regulate levels, new surface finish at £14-19/sqm - depends on depth and extent of potholes ie.:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fill pot holes first, then spread Tarmac Ulti-drive to 35-40mm thickness (10mm stone for car parks) tough as contains wax with bitumen or 2. Combine filler and surface by spreading Tarmac Ulti-fast pave which acts as a regulator if potholes are <75mm deep (or plane area off to one level), spread to 50-75mm thickness (14mm stone) which can be laid directly onto sub-base 	<p>Full extent 30-40,000</p> <p>East area only 15-20,000</p>

Total	Option 1 Full extent £40k Option 2 East area only £20k
--------------	---

AREA 4 COAST PATH	
Chippings surface to Coast Path 1.2m wide from steps to east ramp at 210m; to west ramp at 340m [spec and costs from NCC] £7/sqm	6,000
New hand rails up to flood bank top 22 lin m £75 lin m + text £300	1,950
Interpretation panel 1no and 2x2m hard surface surround £1k + £300	1,300
Oak seat £500, with text £300	800
Interpretation panel 1no £1k	1,000
Total	c£11k

AREA 5 ST BRIDES LINK	
Oak seat £500	500
Interpretation panel 1no £1k	1,000
Chippings surfaced link to seating 2x 15m at £15	450
Sign for circular walk £250	250
Clear bramble £200	200
Upgrade path surface from bank toe to bridge 2x30m at £20	1,200
Review steel mesh bridge to improve access allow £800	800
Total	c5k

Estimate at this stage:

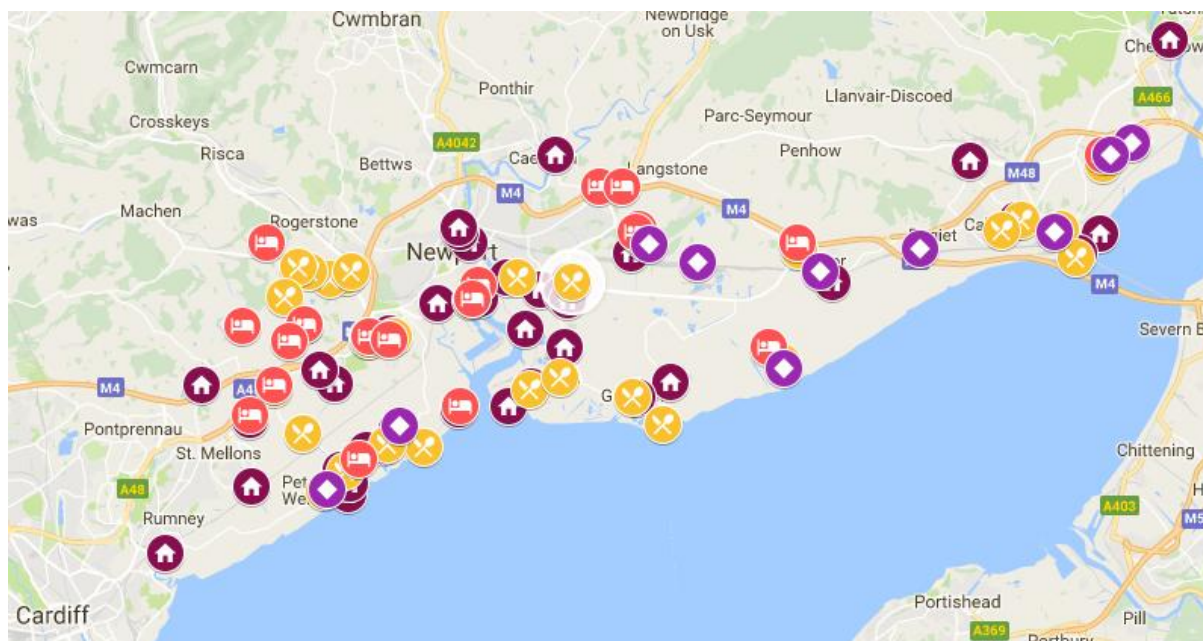
	£k budget
Area 1 car park entrance	8

Area 2 new visitor gateway	45-55
Area 3 existing car park surface	20-40
Area 4 coast path	11
Area 5 St Brides link	5
sub-total	90-120
Topographic survey	1.5
Landscape consultancy fees (assume detailed design to contract administration)	8
Engineering fee	3
CDM-C	1.5
Planning (and Advertising Regs for panels) fees	0.5
Contractors preliminaries	3
Contingency @ 5%	4
Total project cost	£110-140k

Other Costs to consider:

PRODUCTION OF INTERPRETATION/ORIENTATION INFORMATION
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research, text, editing, graphics, translation for orientation and interpretation panels 2. Support for Wi-fi at the Lighthouse Inn 3. Other media: maintain up to date 'live' website; downloads; small low-key panels; leaflets; QR codes
WIDER IMPROVEMENTS TO COAST PATH (Wentlooge section)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Link proposed Coast Path surface from St Brides link to join with surfaced path to the west - distance tbc 2. Chippings surface to kissing gates, allow for resetting gates on slopes 3. Improve access for dogs at stiles 4. Pedestrian counter

Tourism Businesses across the Living Levels - Appendix 4



The Living Levels contains a diverse range of tourism facilities, in addition to the infrastructure of walks and cycle routes. The lists below do not include the high number of facilities in Cardiff and Newport City.

Attractions	Tearooms/Restaurants/Cafes
Newport Transport Bridge	Rose Inn
Tredegar House and Park	Sea Wall Tearooms
Black Rock	Wetlands Centre
Sudbrook Heritage Centre	St Pierre Hotel
The Wetlands Centre	Caldicot Castle
Caldicot Castle and Country Park	Caldicot Town (Various)
Peterstone Lakes Golf Club	Magor Town (Various)
Walnut Tree Farm Park	Waterloo Inn
Newport Sports Village	Tredegar House

Newport Retail Park	Holiday Inn
The Parc Golf Club	The Lighthouse Inn
Whitson - “Monks Ditch”	Peterstone Lakes Golf Club
Goldcliff Sea Wall and Priory	Six Bells
East Usk Lighthouse	Portskewett Inn
Great Traston Meadows Reserve	The Farmers Arms
Peterstone Wentlooge Marshes SSSI	Sudbrook Heritage Centre (self service)
Magor Marsh SSSI	Walnut Tree Farm
Newport Docks (history)	Tredegar Arms
Newport City Bridge	The Ruperra Arms
Riverfront Theatre	The Friendly Fox
Footbridge over River Usk	Rhiwderin Inn
Steel Wave	The Farmer’s Daughter
Newport Castle	Junction 28
West Usk Lighthouse	Coach and Horses Inn
The Gout at Peterstone	Y Maerun
Cwm Hedd Fishing Lakes	The Dragonfly
Peterstone Coarse Fishing Lakes	Vanilla Pod
Treetops Sporting Grounds	Fanny’s Rest Stop Cafe
Springfield Riding Stables	Waterloo Hotel and Bistro
St Mellons Golf Club	Various Restaurant - Retail Park
Cefn Mably Farm Park and Moody Cow	Lysaght’s Institute

Farms Shop	
Tiny Rebel Brewery	Milton Hotel
Supakart	
Medieval Ship	
Llanwern Gold Glub	
St Pierre Golf Resort	
Ponderosa Equestrian Centre	
Parc Tredelerch	
Hendre Lake Parc	
Caerwent - Roman Remains	
Caerleon - Roman Remains	

Accommodation	Churches
St Pierre Resort	Church of St Thomas the Apostle
Mathern Palace	St Tewdric
Brick House Guest House	St Pierre
West Usk Lighthouse	Sudbrook
Ty Coch Camping and Caravanning Site	St Marys Church
St Mellons Hotel	St Brides Church
Premier Inn - Castleton	Magor Church

Holiday Inn Express, Coedkernew	Peterstone Church (private)
Newport - various B&B's and hotels	Llanwern Church
Celtic Manor Resort and Coldra Hotels	Saint Cadwaladr's Bishton
Premier Inn	
Hampton by Hilton	
Tredegar House Caravan Site	
Cwm Hedd Camping	
Pentre Tai B&B and camping	
Clearwell Farm Cottages	
Pen-y-Groes Caravan Site	
The Waterloo Hotel and Bistro	
Hazel Court	
Milton Hotel	

Living Levels Destination Plan - Consultees: Appendix 5

We are grateful to the following for their considered and expert individual input to the project. Many of these together with other organisational representatives were also present at workshops listed below.

Cadw

- Dave Penberthy - Head of Interpretation

Cardiff Council

- Jennifer Griffiths - Rights of Way
- Matthew Harris - LL Project Partner
- Victoria Rogers - Cardiff Story

Church in Wales (Monmouth Diocese)

- Richard Jones
- Bob Hepworth
- Rev Jeremy Harris

Creative Rural Communities

- Nicola Sumner Smith
- Natasha Davies

Gwent Wildlife Trust

- Gemma Bode - LL Project Partner
- Magor Marsh team

Heritage Lottery Fund team

Keep Wales Tidy

- Simon Preddy

Monmouthshire County Council

- Matthew Lewis - LL Project Partner
- Ruth Rourke - Countryside and Rights of Way
- Nicola Edwards - Tourism and Food
- Rachel Lewis - Planning
- Phil Thomas -Planning
- Zara Bligh - Vale of Usk Local Action Group
- Mike Powell - Vale of Usk Local Action Group

National Library of Wales

- Haxel Thomas

National Museum Wales (Caerleon) team

National Trust

- Phillip Wilson (Tredegar House)

Natural Resources Wales

- Sarah Tindall

Newport City Council

- Lynne Richards - LL Project Partner
- Carl Bustin - Countryside
- Marc Benson - Countryside and Rights of Way
- Lee Benham - Highways
- Newport Museum team

Newport Heritage Forum/ Newport Ship

- Phil Cox

Royal Commission for Historic and Ancient Monuments in Wales (RCHAMW) /Peoples Collection

- Tom Pert

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

- Mark Underhill - LL Project Director
- Alison Boyes - LL Project Manager
- Gavin Jones - LL Community Engagement Officer
- Wetlands Centre team

Sanctaidd

- John Winton

Sustrans

- Gwyn Smith

Rick Turner (heritage consultant to the overall project)

Visit Wales

- Thom Hadfield - LL Project Partner
- Gerwyn Evans - Head of Development

Sue Waters (local resident, historian and archive holder)

Wentlooge Community Council

- Brian Miles

Members of the team were also present at the following meetings and events which informed our work

- Inception Meeting with Project Steering Group
- Project Partner Introductory Workshop (led by CBA/ LL)
- Internal Drainage Board Meeting/ Workshop (joint with LL)
- Project and Community Stakeholder Workshop (Joint with CBA/ LL)
- Cardiff Council Workshop (Joint with CBA/ LL)

- Project Steering Group Update Meetings x 2
- Project Partner Options Workshop (led by C&S)
- Partner Access and Interpretation Workshop
- Visitor Economy Workshop (Led by C&S)
- Branding Workshops (led by Elfen)
- Monitoring and Evaluation Workshop (led by R4C)
- Community Engagement Events (led by LL)

We are particularly grateful to Lynne Richards and Alison Boyes for providing significant feedback and insight throughout the project on behalf of the wider partnership.

STEAM Summary for Levels Area: Appendix 6

All £'s 2015 indexed (RPI Factor 14/15 +1.0111)	GWENT LEVELS STEAM Report 2015 Numeric Executive Summary	Issued 27 October 2016
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Analysis by Sector of Expenditure (£'s millions)		2015
Accommodation		18.11
Food & Drink		17.08
Recreation		5.40
Shopping		12.45
Transport		10.91
Total Direct Revenue		63.94
Indirect Expenditure		23.19
VAT		12.79
TOTAL		99.92

Revenue by Category of Visitor (£'s millions)		2015
Serviced Accommodation		48.24
Non-Serviced Accommodation		3.96
SFR		15.04
Day Visitors		32.68
TOTAL		99.92

Tourist Days (Thousands)		2015
Serviced Accommodation		349.7
Non-Serviced Accommodation		48.1
SFR		257.5
Day Visitors		1,048.1
TOTAL		1,703.4

Tourist Numbers (Thousands)		2015
Serviced Accommodation		206.3
Non-Serviced Accommodation		7.9
SFR		108.2
Day Visitors		1,048.1
TOTAL		1,370.5

Sectors in which Employment is supported (FTE's)		2015
Direct Employment		
Accommodation		174
Food & Drink		372
Recreation		96
Shopping		192
Transport		81
Total Direct Employment		914
Indirect Employment		256
TOTAL		1,170

Living Levels Isochrone Report: Appendix 7

Demographic review

In terms of exploring the opportunities for the Living Levels Landscape it is important to understand the local and wider sub-regional demographic profile.

As part of this study we have carried out a demographic review of the residential population living within the 0 to 30, 0 to 60 minute drivetime contours. Due to the size of the study area three nodal points were selected - Caldicot Castle in the east, Tredegar House in the West and the RSPB Newport Wetland Centre. The local market, particularly within the 0 to 30 minute drivetime contour is likely to be the key driver of users along with visitors generated from the wider tourism base. The visitor flows from the tourism market are subject to seasonal variations. It is acknowledged that the further residents are located away from the Living Levels, the propensity to visit and interact with the landscape will decrease and the competitive marketplace will be extended.

Headline population

The headline residential population figures are set out in the table below. Within the immediate 30 minute drivetime contour of each site the population reached varies between just under 100,000 residents for Caldicot Castle, 240,000 for RSPB Wetlands Centre and over half a million for Tredegar House.

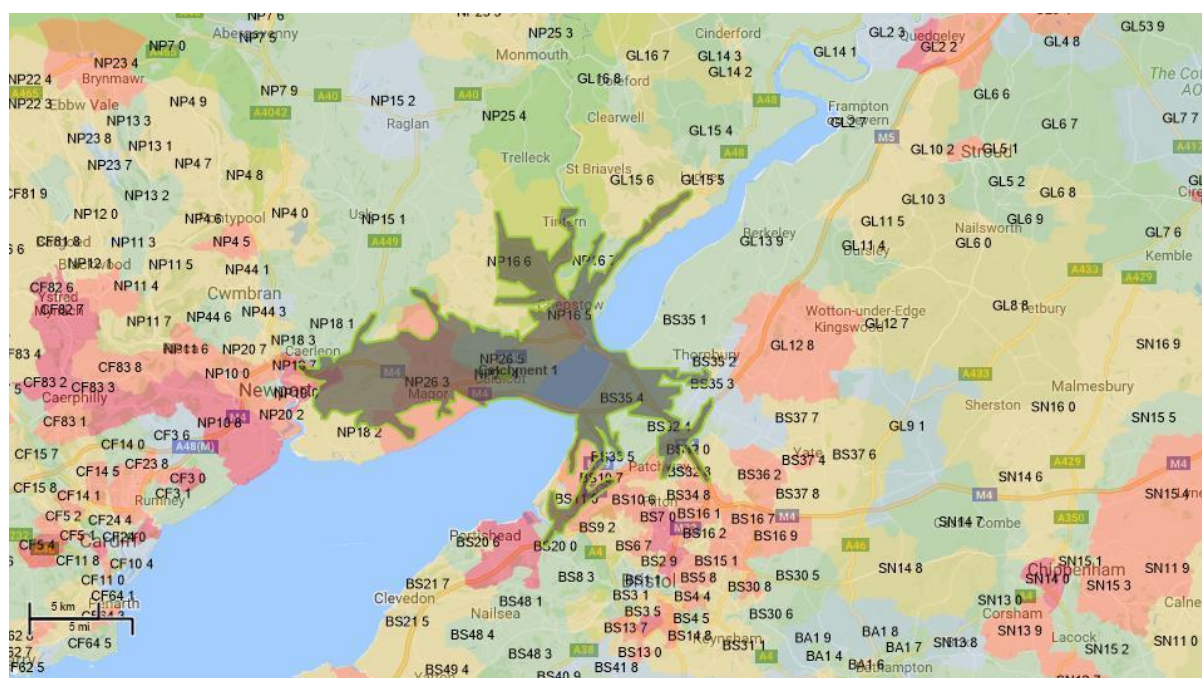
Within the overall 60 minute drivetime contours of each nodal point the residential population is over 1.6 million residents and for Tredegar this reaches to just under 2 million residents. In terms of the size of the market these are strong headline population figures across all three nodal points.

Drive Times (Minutes)	Caldicot Castle	RSPB Newport Wetlands	Tredegar House
0 to 30	87,671	239,341	539,757
0 to 60	1,673,570	1,699,093	1,962,781

Source: GeoPlan

On the following pages we set out the 30 minute drivetime maps for all three points.

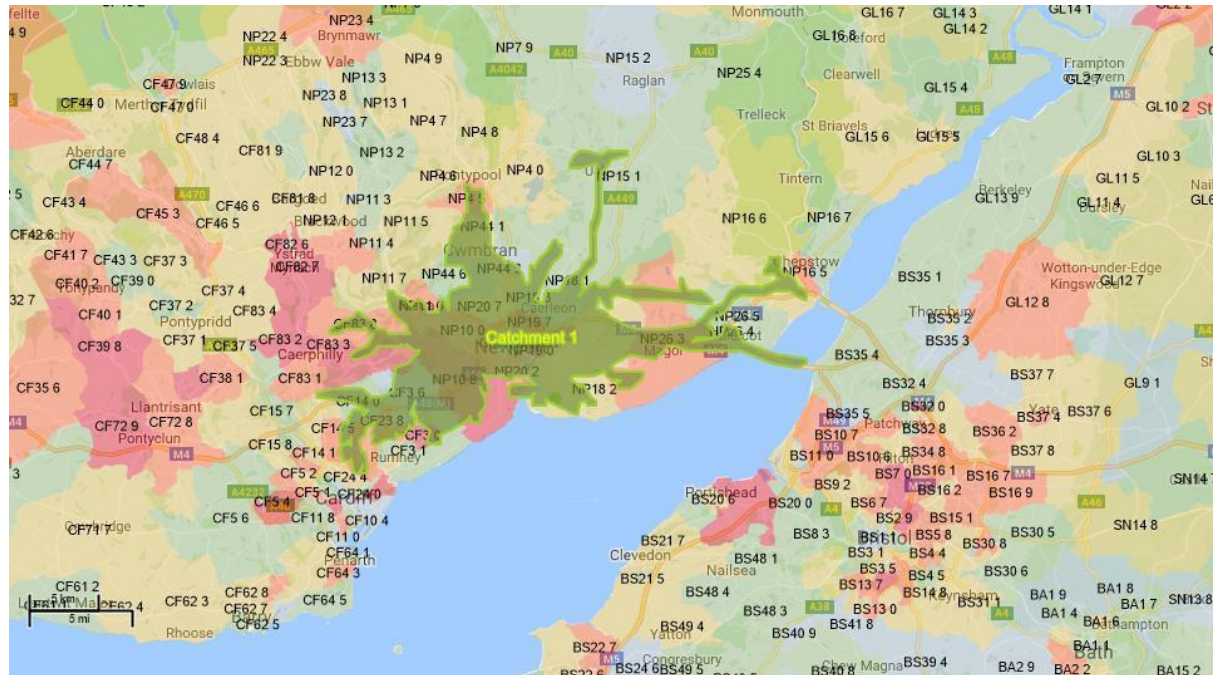
Caldicot Castle - the immediate 30 minute drive time contour to the north of Caldicot Castle reaches to Tintern and covers Chepstow to the east. In the south, it crosses both Severn Bridges and reaches past Bristol and to the west reaches the outskirts of Newport. The 'spider' effect of the drivetime map and is driven by the local/main road networks.



30 minutes - source GeoPlan

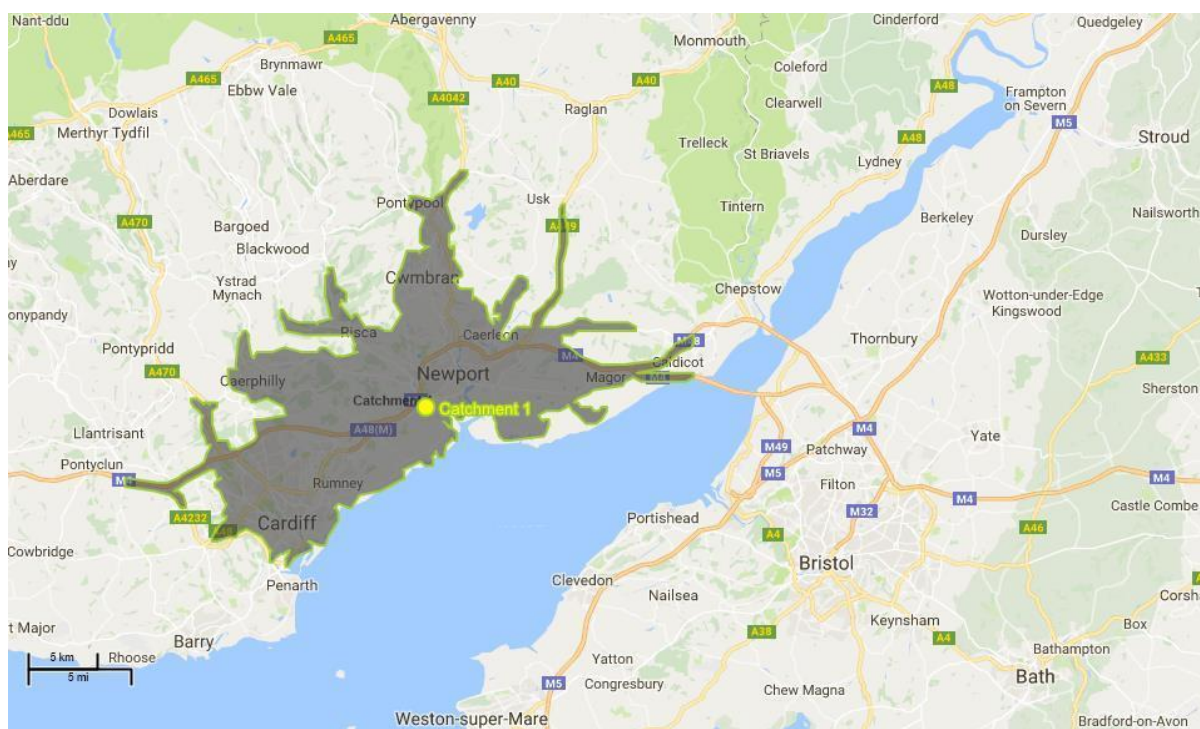
The drive time data utilises an OpenStreetMap travel time network that represents the average driving speeds by road type across the UK. From the point of where the catchment is created, it generates an approximation of how far an individual could travel in a given number of minutes using this road network. The catchment summary figures are weighted in accordance with the degree of overlap with the Postcode Sector i.e. if 50% of the Postcode Sector is covered by the catchment, the demographic figures are weighted accordingly to represent only 50% of the complete Postcode Sector value. The demographic data is based on 2011 Census and has been updated to provide projected figures.

RSPB Newport Wetlands Centre - the 30 minute catchment reaches the fringes of Chepstow to the north east and nearly touches the edge of Pontypool and past Usk to the north. The drivetime contour does not cross the River Severn and to the west the contour nearly touches the outskirts of Cardiff.



30 minutes - source GeoPlan

Tredegar House - from this nodal point the 30 minute drivetime contour reaches past Caldicot to the east, in the north reaches Usk and Pontypool and extends to a large part of Cardiff to the west.



30 minutes – source GeoPlan

Age profiles - the table below provides a breakdown of the age profiles across the wider area. For the 60 minute contours, the profiles across all three nodal points for the core family market, (residents aged between 25 and 44) are broadly in line with the national average figures or index. The most significant difference is shown within Caldicot Castle's 0 to 30 minute contour - this age bracket is some 7% below the national average.

The most significant variances are recorded for residents aged between 16 to 24. For all three drivetime contours there is an over-representation of older teenagers and young adults when compared to the national average (except the immediate 30 minute contour for Caldicot Castle and the RSPB Newport Wetlands Centre). This is most pronounced within the 0 to 30 minute and overall 0 to 60 minute drive time contours for the nodal point in the west (Tredegar House). Here the proportion of residents aged 16 to 24 are 32% and 13% above the index figure respectively.

Within the overall 60 minute drivetime contour, in respect of older adults there is a lower representation than the national average of residents aged 45 to 64 and those aged 65 and over reported for all three nodal points.²⁸

²⁸ Please note where the variance is greater than 10% than the index figures this is highlighted in all tables (+10% in green and -10% in red). Index figures are rounded.

Age	Market																	
	Caldicot Castle						RSPB Newport Wetlands						Tredegar House					
	0 - 30 minute			0 to 60 minute			0 - 30 minute			0 to 60 minute			0 - 30 minute			0 to 60 minute		
	Area total	Area %	Index	Area total	Area %	Index	Area total	Area %	Index	Area total	Area %	Index	Area total	Area %	Index	Area total	Area %	Index
Age 0 to 15	17,350	19.79	105	308,027	18.41	98	47,777	19.96	106	317,681	18.70	100	100,723	18.66	99	365,535	18.62	99
Age 16 to 24	9,972	11.38	95	230,537	13.78	116	30,122	12.59	95	231,820	13.64	114	84,764	15.70	132	264,518	13.48	113
Age 25 to 44	22,389	25.54	93	462,926	27.66	101	62,683	26.19	104	476,188	28.03	102	149,933	27.78	102	543,499	27.69	101
Age 45 to 64	23,087	26.34	103	407,374	24.34	95	60,253	25.17	101	412,745	24.29	95	125,957	23.34	91	482,985	24.61	96
Age 65 and over	14,869	16.96	103	264,667	15.81	97	38,504	16.09	102	260,632	15.34	94	78,373	14.52	89	306,257	15.60	95

Source: GeoPlan

Social grades - there is some variance across all three points (please see the table below).

For example, within the overall 60 minute drivetime contours the representation of ABs are above the index figure (apart from the 0 to 60 minute contour for Tredegar House which is directly in line with the index figure). Within the overall 60 minute contour for Caldicot Castle the figure is 10% above the index figure.

Within all three 0 to 60 minute contours there is an under representation of C2s (skilled working class). Some 7% below the index figure at Caldicot, 8% at Newport Wetlands Centre and some 5% at Tredegar House. If we look at the local market place - residents living within the immediate 30 minute drivetime contours the picture is similar apart from Calidcot Castle whereby representation of residents from the C2 social grade is slightly above the national average by 4%.

There is an over representation of residents from the D and E social grades living within the 30 minute drivetime contours of all three points when compared to the index figure. For example at Caldicot Castle the figure is 6% above the national average and for the Newport Wetlands Centre and Tredegar House the figures are 18% and 6% respectively above the national average. Then by extending the contour out to 60 minutes for both Caldicot Castle and the Newport Wetlands Centre the representation of D and E social grades is below the national average.

Social Grade	Market																	
	Caldicot Castle						RSPB Newport Wetlands						Tredegar House					
	0 - 30 minutes			0 to 60 minutes			0 - 30 minutes			0 to 60 minutes			0 - 30 minutes			0 to 60 minutes		
	Area total	Area %	Index	Area total	Area %	Index	Area total	Area %	Index	Area total	Area %	Index	Area total	Area %	Index	Area total	Area %	Index
AB Middle and upper middle class	5,772	21.9	99	129,019	24.5	110	13,842	18.9	85	126,056	23.4	106	36,915	21.6	97	136,902	22.2	100
C1 Lower middle class	7,520	28.6	93	169,839	32.2	104	22,076	30.1	97	172,598	32.1	104	56,588	33.2	107	194,115	31.4	102
C2 Skilled working class	5,738	21.8	104	102,742	19.5	93	15,008	20.4	98	103,870	19.3	92	30,069	17.6	84	122,407	19.8	95
D and E Working class / Lowest levels of subsistence	7,270	27.6	106	125,270	23.8	91	22,505	30.6	118	135,616	25.2	97	47,072	27.6	106	164,495	26.6	102

Source: GeoPlan

Economic activity - encouragingly across all drivetime contours (apart from the immediate contour for Tredegar House) there is a higher representation than the national average of economically active residents in part time employment. There is a lower than the national average representation of residents in full time employment within the immediate 0 to 30 minute drivetime contours for both the Newport Wetlands Centre and Tredegar House (1% less for the Newport Wetlands Centre and 3% less for Tredegar House).

With respect to the Caldicot Castle nodal point there is a lower than national average representation of residents who are unemployed - some 5% below for the immediate 30 minute contour and 12% below for the overall 60 minute contour. The picture is somewhat different within the 30 minute contours for both the Newport Wetlands Centre and Tredegar House whereby there is a higher percentage than the national average of residents who are unemployed - some 14% and 6% respectively.

Across all three points for the overall 60 minute contour the number of residents who are retired is below the national average - 7% for Caldicot Castle, 5% for Newport Wetland Centre and 3% for Tredegar House. Also for Tredegar House the percentage of people who are retired within the immediate 30 minute contour is 12% below the national average. Within the immediate 30 minute contours for both Caldicot Castle and Newport Wetlands Centre the number of retired residents is above the national average.

Residents who are economically inactive in terms of either being classified as on long-term sick or disabled are below the national average for both drivetime contours for Caldicot Castle. However, for the Newport Wetlands Centre and Tredegar House, across all drivetime contours there is a significantly higher proportion of residents who are classified as economically inactive due to long-term illness or from being disabled. For the 30 minute contour the figures are 29% for the Newport Wetlands Centre and 26% for Tredegar House. For the overall 60 minute contours the figures for the Newport Wetlands Centre and Tredegar House are 13% and 25% respectively above the index figure.

Economic Activity	Market Place																	
	Caldicot Castle						RSPB Newport Wetlands						Tredegar House					
	0 - 30 minutes			0 to 60 minutes			0 - 30 minutes			0 to 60 minutes			0 - 30 minutes			0 to 60 minutes		
	Area total	Area %	Index	Area total	Area %	Index	Area total	Area %	Index	Area total	Area %	Index	Area total	Area %	Index	Area total	Area %	Index
Economically Active - Employees - Part time	9,578	15.2	111	175,397	14.2	104	25,123	14.6	107	174,264	13.9	102	52,795	13.2	97	198,883	13.8	101
Economically Active - Employees - Full time	25,551	40.5	105	482,634	39.2	102	65,690	38.1	99	490,570	39.8	103	149,351	37.4	97	558,517	38.7	101
Economically Active - Self employed	4,885	7.7	82	105,004	8.5	90	11,434	6.6	70	98,707	8.0	84	26,635	6.7	70	110,184	7.6	80
Economically Active - Unemployed	2,664	4.2	95	47,894	3.9	88	8,730	5.1	114	52,498	4.3	96	18,792	4.7	106	62,917	4.4	99
Economically Active - Full time student	1,914	3.0	87	52,341	4.2	122	6,184	3.6	103	51,195	4.2	120	19,946	5.0	144	56,130	3.9	112
Economically Inactive - Retired	9,340	14.8	107	158,397	12.9	93	24,753	14.3	104	161,619	13.1	95	48,520	12.2	88	193,234	13.4	97
Economically Inactive - Students (including full-time students)	2,750	4.4	75	89,049	7.2	124	9,737	5.6	97	88,564	7.2	124	35,867	9.0	155	98,757	6.8	118
Economically Inactive - Looking after home or family	2,673	4.2	99	46,038	3.7	87	7,502	4.3	102	47,877	3.9	91	16,144	4.0	95	55,710	3.9	90
Economically Inactive - Long-term sick or disabled	2,693	4.3	98	51,258	4.2	96	9,682	5.6	129	60,638	4.9	113	21,718	5.4	126	78,084	5.4	125
Economically Inactive - Other	1,084	1.7	79	24,066	2.0	89	3,721	2.2	99	25,821	2.1	96	9,069	2.3	104	30,913	2.1	98

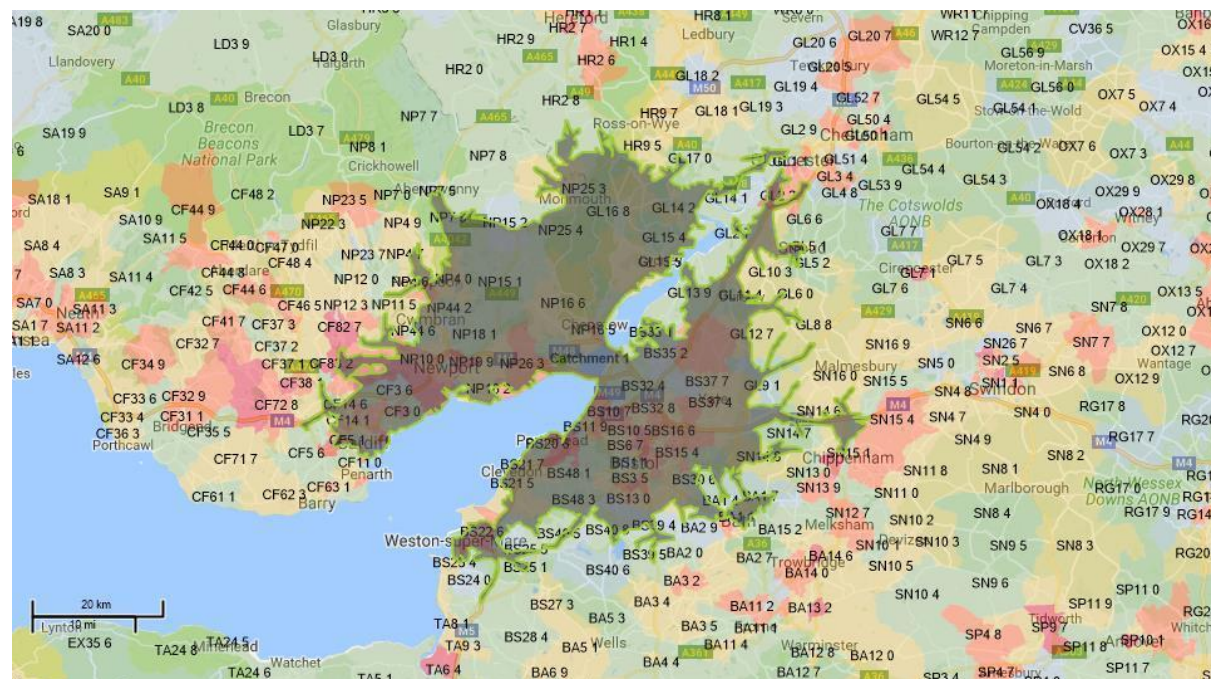
Source: GeoPlan

What are the key points for the Living Levels project?

- There are noticeable differences in terms of the size of the immediate available market catchments when taken from the individuals points within the Living Levels area
- The one hour catchment demographic is reasonably strong for the overall study area at over 1.5 million residents
- Parts of the Living Levels area are within a short drivetime of major urban conurbations - the eastern part of the Living Levels 'territory' is accessible to parts of Bristol within 30 minutes and the 30 minute drivetime catchment for the western part extends to Cardiff
- There is a variation of economic activity and employment within the different drivetime data generated across the area. This needs to be considered in terms of pricing policy for activities and events to allow access for lower income and disadvantaged groups
- There appear to be opportunities to engage with urban residents within easy reach of the Living Levels project area
- There is a higher predominance of teenagers and young adults (aged 15 to 24) within all three node points (at the 60 minute contour) this has implications in terms of using different marketing channels to engage with this age bracket. For example, the use of social media.
- It is worth noting that there are more than a quarter of a million residents aged 65 and over. This represents an important user group for nature based experiences particularly in off peak times. This has implications for the design and network of trails to ensure adequate access provision.

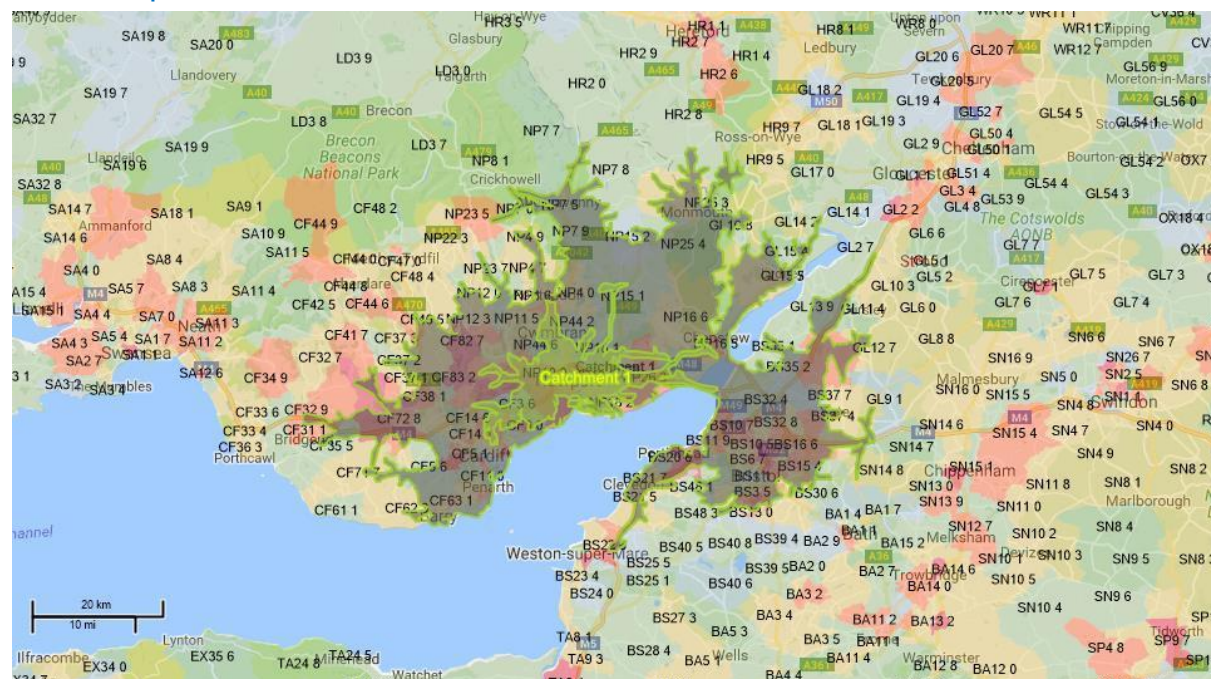
Drivetime maps (60 minutes)

Caldicot Castle



60 minutes - source GeoPlan

RSPB Newport Wetlands Centre



60 minutes - source GeoPlan

Tredegar House



60 minutes - source GeoPlan

Sources and Resources: Appendix 8

During the course of developing this plan the team referenced a substantial number of written and online resources, as well as developing a bank of reference images.

Along with working documents which illustrate the development of the team's thinking these source documents have been shared with the Living Levels Project Manager through a DropBox File.

In addition the team mapped the current tourism asset base and proposed access and interpretation interventions onto the Google Maps platform. Access and control of this resource has also been passed to the Project Manager.

Background Information for Recommended Routes: Appendix 9

Please see separate files + maps