



Report of the Gower AONB Officer

Gower National Landscape Advisory Group – 24 June 2024

Advisory Group – Future Priorities and Funding

Introduction

The Gower AONB Management Plan 2017 sets out a 20-year vision for Gower, supported by 12 themes and 39 objectives. This management plan relates to all those involved in Gower and is not purely a Council document. Of these objectives, 13 are addressed by work carried out by the Gower Natural Landscapes Team, although there is some overlap with other objectives.

The management plan is adopted by Swansea Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), ensuring that it can be referred to in the planning process, particularly the Local Development Plan.

The plan is a statutory document and is to be reviewed every five years – the next review is due to start this year. This will be the first review since the declaration of the Climate and Nature Emergencies by Welsh Government and Swansea Council and this will require the plan to address these issues as a priority.

Vision

The Gower Management Plan 2006 included a 20-year vision for Gower, which has been retained in subsequent management plans.

Gower is recognised by residents and visitors as a protected landscape of international importance where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and cultural value, and with high biological diversity. Its natural beauty will be sustained by the conservation and enhancement of its natural special qualities, whilst at the same time supporting a sustainable local economy and maintaining culturally rich communities and is reflected in the quality and scale of the built environment.

Priorities

The Gower AONB Management Plan 2017 set out 12 themes as priorities:

- Awareness raising and understanding.
- Biodiversity.
- Geology.
- Landscape and seascape.
- Cultural heritage.

- Natural resources.
- Tranquillity.
- Recreational resources.
- Primary industries.
- Tourism.
- Transport.
- Utilities and communications.

Following the declaration of the Climate and Nature Emergencies, by both Welsh Government and Welsh Government, it is expected that addressing these two issues will be a priority for future management plans. This is reflected in the priorities of the main grant funders and is expected to become the main funding priority in future.

Funding

Funding for the Gower National Landscape team comes from three main sources, each with their own priorities and themes.

Funder	Current Annual Funding	Priorities and Themes
Swansea Council	£88,600	Core funding for staff and match funding
Natural Resources Wales	£75,000	75% grant funding for projects addressing NRW Priority Areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity enhancement and ecosystem resilience, including land, water, and woodland / forest management, including developing sustainable agricultural practice. • Climate change adaptation, mitigation, and carbon management, including coastal and marine issues. • Access, recreation and sustainable tourism for health and well-being. • Supporting Welsh language, culture, and the historic environment.
Welsh Government – project funding	£200,000	100% project funding addressing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature Recovery • Decarbonisation • Supporting Communities • Sustainable Tourism
Welsh Government – staff funding	£50,000	100% revenue funding (staff costs) addressing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity (including local Nature Recovery Action Plans) • Decarbonisation • Sustainable Tourism
Welsh Government – SDF grant scheme funding	£100,000	Sustainable Development Fund grant scheme, based on Future Generations priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a prosperous Wales, • a resilient Wales, • a healthier Wales, • a more equal Wales, • a Wales of cohesive communities, • a Wales of vibrant culture, • a globally responsible Wales

The current grant offers all end in March 2025, and discussions with the funders are taking place over the summer and autumn, to explore how future funding can best be put in place. It is likely that the current priorities will continue – providing a focus on responding to climate and nature emergencies. While this will inevitably shape the work that the Gower National Landscape team do, there will remain significant flexibility in the detail of the projects.

Future Direction and Priorities

Ahead of the discussions with NRW and Welsh Government, and to help shape the forthcoming management plan review, it would be helpful to have your comments on our future priorities.

In particular:

- Should the 20-year Vision be reviewed?
- Have we missed any issues which should be a priority?
- Are any of the priorities no longer priorities, or do they need rewording?
- The objectives will need to be reviewed – do you have comments on this?
- We would welcome comments on how we can include the activity of partner organisations in achieving the priorities in the management plan.

Mike Scott
17 June 2024