



Cynllun Gweithredu Thematig Natura 2000 Rheoli Pori a Da Byw

Natura 2000 Thematic Action Plan Grazing and Livestock Management

Rhaglen Natura 2000 LIFE yng Nghymru
LIFE Natura 2000 Programme for Wales



LIFE N2K Wales: LIFE NAT11/UK/385
Supported by LIFE, a financial instrument of the European Community

Published by:
Natural Resources Wales
Cambria House
29 Newport Road
Cardiff
CF24 0TP

0300 065 3000 (Mon-Fri, 8am - 6pm)

enquiries@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk
www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

© Natural Resources Wales

All rights reserved. This document may be reproduced with prior permission of
Natural Resources Wales

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
1. Cyflwyniad	4
2. Introduction	6
3. Background.....	8
4. Issues and risks	9
5. Policy and legislative context	11
6. Current mechanisms and planned actions on sites to 2020.....	12
7. Rationale for strategic actions.....	14
8. Development of strategic actions	15
9. Strategic Actions for Natura 2000 in Wales: Grazing and Livestock Management	16
Appendix A:	18
Appendix B:	21

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to everyone within Natural Resources Wales and externally who contributed to the development of strategic actions for this Thematic Action Plan during the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme workshops or subsequent engagement period.

In particular thanks go to the following specialists who reviewed and refined the strategic actions: Alun Davies, Gwion Aeron.

October 2015

1. Cyflwyniad

Rhaglen Natura 2000 LIFE yng Nghymru

Mae 92 Ardal Cadwraeth Arbennig (ACA) ac 20 Ardal Gwarchodaeth Arbennig (AGA) Cymru'n cynnwys 123 o nodweddion cynefinoedd a rhywogaethau dynodedig. Gyda'i gilydd, y rhain yw rhwydwaith Natura 2000.

Mae Rhaglen Natura 2000 LIFE yng Nghymru wedi datblygu blaen-gynllyn strategol i reoli ac adfer Natura 2000 yng Nghymru. Drwy weithio â rhanddeiliaid mae wedi pennu'r prif heriau sy'n wynebu'r safleoedd, y rhywogaethau a'r cynefinoedd hyn a warchodir gan Ewrop, a nodi'r camau gweithredu sydd eu hangen, y blaenoriaethau, y costau a'r cyfleoedd cyllido i fynd i'r afael â nhw. Cafodd y rhaglen ei chynnal gan Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru a'i hariannu gan gynllun LIFE+ Nature yr Undeb Ewropeaidd.

Y pwrpas yw galluogi Cymru i wneud cynnydd sylweddol tuag at sicrhau bod rhywogaethau a chynefinoedd Natura 2000 mewn cyflwr ffafriol a helpu i gyflawni ei hymrwymiaidau o dan Gyfarwydeb Cynefinoedd ac Adar yr Undeb Ewropeaidd. Mae'r Rhaglen yn ceisio darparu llwyfan hefyd i sicrhau rhagor o gyllid ar gyfer prosiectau sy'n gysylltiedig â Natura 2000 o bob ffynhonnell bosibl, ac i integreiddio cyllid Natura 2000 mewn offerynnau ariannol a meysydd polisi eraill.

Mae manylion llawn Rhaglen Natura 2000 LIFE a rhwydwaith Natura 2000 yng Nghymru yn Ffeithiau a Ffigurau, Rhaglen Natura 2000 LIFE yng Nghymru: Adroddiad 1.

Cynlluniau Gweithredu Thematig

Mae Rhaglen Natura 2000 LIFE wedi creu 11 Cynllun Gweithredu Thematig, pob un yn ymdrin â chamau gweithredu strategol blaenoriaeth i fynd i'r afael â'r prif broblemau a'r risgiau¹ a nodwyd fel y rhai sy'n cael effaith andwyol ar nodweddion Natura 2000 ledled y rhwydwaith.

Y Cynlluniau Gweithredu Thematig yw:

- Mynediad a hamdden
- Llygredd aer: Gwaddodi nitrogen
- Newid yn yr hinsawdd a chwalu cynefinoedd
- Llygredd dŵr gwasgaredig
- Rheoli perygl llifogydd ac erydu arfordirol
- Rheoli pori a da byw
- Rhywogaethau a phathogenau estron goresgynnol
- Newidiadau gan ddyn i amodau hydrolog
- Sbwriel y môr
- Pysgodfeydd morol
- Rheoli coetiroedd

¹ Problemau (neu bwysau) yw adweithiau andwyol i nodweddion Natura 2000 sy'n digwydd ar hyn o bryd ar neu yng nghyffiniau ACA neu AGA sy'n rhwystro'r rhywogaeth neu'r cynefin dynodedig rhag cyrraedd cyflwr ffafriol.

Risgiau (neu fygythiadau) i nodweddion Natura 2000 sy'n debygol o ddigwydd erbyn 2020.

Y brif gynulleidfa ar gyfer y Cynlluniau Gweithredu yw rheolwr, pobl sy'n gwneud penderfyniadau a chyllidwyr yn Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru, Llywodraeth Cymru a sefydliadau partner allweddol.

Mae'r camau gweithredu i'w gweld yn y tabl yn Adran 9. Camau yw'r rhain y gellir eu cyflawni ar lefel genedlaethol neu ranbarthol, i ategu camau gweithredu ar safleoedd o fewn Cynlluniau Gwella â Blaenoriaeth. Maent yn ceisio mynd i'r afael â rhwystrau sylfaenol, a'u hachosion lle bo'n bosibl, a datblygu fframwaith strwythurol sy'n cefnogi ac yn hyrwyddo trefniadau rheoli priodol yn lleol. Mae'r camau gweithredu'n cynnwys y rhai sydd eu hangen i fynd i'r afael â bylchau mewn tystiolaeth sy'n atal dealltwriaeth lawn o anghenion rheoli.

Gall rhai camau gweithredu strategol gynnig ffrydiau gwaith newydd a mentrau mawr; mae eraill yn cyd-fynd i raddau helaeth â pholisïau, strategaethau a rhaglenni gwaith sy'n bodoli eisoes neu sydd wrthi'n cael eu datblygu.

Cafodd y camau gweithredu strategol eu nodi yn ystod gweithdai a gynhaliwyd gyda gweithwyr proffesiynol arbenigol yn y maes, o Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru a sefydliadau eraill. Roeddynt yn seiliedig hefyd ar grynodedbau o gamau gweithredu ar safleoedd a oedd yn deillio o'r Cynlluniau Gwella â Blaenoriaeth a'r Gronfa Ddata Camau Gweithredu (gweler isod). Cafodd y rhain eu hadolygu a'u dilysu gan weithgor bychan a buont yn destun proses ymgysylltu a thrafod gyda rhanddeiliaid hefyd. Gweler Adran 8 am ragor o fanylion.

Y camau gweithredu strategol yw'r rhai a nodwyd sydd eu hangen i gael y nodweddion i gyflwr ffatriol. Maent yn amodol ar y graddau y mae adnoddau ar gael ac ar gytundeb rhanddeiliaid. Nid ydynt yn cynrychioli cynllun gweithredol sydd wedi'i ariannu'n llawn nac wedi ymrwymo'n llawn iddo. Fodd bynnag, y bwriad yw defnyddio'r camau gweithredu i lywio amrywiaeth o gynlluniau gweithredol a rhaglenni gwaith yn y dyfodol.

Er bod y camau gweithredu strategol yn canolbwyntio ar gyfres Natura 2000, gellir defnyddio llawer ohonynt yn eang a gallent fod o fudd i Safleoedd o Ddiddordeb Gwyddonol Arbennig a helpu i warchod bioamrywiaeth a chryfhau'r ecosystem yn yr amgylchedd ehangach.

Cynlluniau Gwella â Blaenoriaeth a Chronfa Ddata Camau Gweithredu

Mae Rhaglen Natura 2000 LIFE wedi cynhyrchu Cynlluniau Gwella â Blaenoriaeth ar gyfer pob safle Natura 2000 yng Nghymru. Mae'r cynlluniau hyn yn nodi'r prif broblemau a risgiau sy'n effeithio ar nodweddion Natura 2000 ac yn disgrifio'r camau gweithredu â blaenoriaeth, wedi'u costio, sydd eu hangen i gael a chynnal nodweddion y safle mewn cyflwr ffatriol. Mae'r cynlluniau'n defnyddio gwybodaeth o Gronfa Ddata Camau Gweithredu Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru sy'n cynnwys yr holl gamau gweithredu (blaenoriaeth uchel, canolig, isel) ar gyfer safleoedd Natura 2000. Datblygwyd y camau gweithredu gan Swyddogion Cadwraeth Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru ar y cyd â rhanddeiliaid a phartneriaid. Cafodd cynnwys y Gronfa Ddata ei ymestyn a'i ddiweddarau'n llawn yn ystod 2014/5.

2. Introduction

LIFE Natura 2000 Programme for Wales

There are 123 designated habitat and species features on the 92 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and 20 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in Wales. Together these comprise the Natura 2000 network.

The LIFE Natura 2000 Programme for Wales has developed a strategic forward plan to manage and restore Natura 2000 in Wales. Working with stakeholders it has determined the key challenges facing these European protected sites, species and habitats and identified the actions required, priorities, costs and funding opportunities to address them. The Programme was run by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and funded by the European Union scheme LIFE+ Nature.

The purpose is to enable Wales to make significant progress towards bringing Natura 2000 species and habitats into favourable condition and help meet its commitments under the European Habitats and Birds Directives. The Programme also aims to provide a platform to seek further funding for Natura 2000 related projects from all potential sources, and to integrate Natura 2000 funding into other financial instruments and policy areas.

Full details about the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme and the Natura 2000 network in Wales can be found in the *LIFE Natura 2000 Programme for Wales: Fact and Figures Report 1*.

Thematic Action Plans

The LIFE Natura 2000 Programme has created 11 Thematic Action Plans, each of which detail priority strategic actions to address major issues and risks² which have been identified as having an adverse impact on Natura 2000 features across the network.

The Thematic Action Plans are as follows:

- Access and recreation
- Air pollution: Nitrogen deposition
- Climate change and habitat fragmentation
- Diffuse water pollution
- Flood and coastal erosion risk management
- Grazing and livestock management
- Non-native invasive species and pathogens
- Man-made changes to hydraulic conditions
- Marine litter
- Marine fisheries
- Woodland management

² Issues (or pressures) are adverse impacts to Natura 2000 features which are currently taking place on or around SACs or SPAs which act as barriers to the designated habitat or species features reaching favourable condition.

Risks (or threats) are impacts to Natura 2000 features which are likely to occur by 2020.

The primary audience for the Actions Plans are managers, decision makers and fund holders within Natural Resources Wales, Welsh Government and key partner organisations.

The strategic actions are set out in the table in Section 9. These are actions which may be delivered at national or regional level, to complement the site-level actions within Prioritised Improvement Plans (PIPs). They seek to address fundamental barriers and where possible their root causes, and to develop a structural framework which supports and promotes appropriate management at a local level. Actions include those needed to address evidence gaps which are hindering full understanding of management needs. Some strategic actions may propose new work streams and larger-scale initiatives; others align closely to existing or developing policies, strategies and work programmes.

The strategic actions were identified during workshops held with professionals with expertise in the field, from Natural Resources Wales and other organisations. These were also informed by summaries of site level actions derived from the PIPs and Actions Database (see below). These were reviewed and validated by a small working group and also subject to a process of engagement and discussion with stakeholders. See Section 8 for more details.

The strategic actions are those which have been identified as being required to bring features into favourable condition. They are subject to resource availability and stakeholder agreement. They do not represent a fully funded or committed operational plan. However, the intention is that the actions will be used to inform a range of operational plans and work programmes in the future.

While the strategic actions are focused on the Natura 2000 series, many have a broad applicability and may also be of benefit to Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other biodiversity conservation and ecosystem resilience work in the wider environment.

Prioritised Improvement Plans and Actions Database

The LIFE Natura 2000 Programme has produced Prioritised Improvement Plans (PIPs) for all Natura 2000 sites in Wales. The PIPs identify the main issues and risks affecting the Natura 2000 features on the site and describe costed, prioritised actions required to achieve and maintain the site features in favourable condition.

The PIPs draw information from the Natural Resources Wales Actions Database which hold all actions (high, medium, low priority) for Natura 2000 sites. Actions were developed by Natural Resources Wales Conservation Officers in association with stakeholders and partners. The content of the Database was fully extended and updated during 2014/5.

3. Background

Work carried out by the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme for Wales in 2014/15 has identified grazing and livestock management as a priority issue/risk affecting Natura 2000 features in Wales. It was the most commonly cited issue/risk in the PIPs and Actions Database.³ This is consistent with the most recent round of UK level Natura 2000 reporting; the 10th UK 'Article 12 report'⁴ and the 3rd 'Article 17 report'⁵ show that inappropriate grazing is having or has the potential to have adverse impacts on the condition of a variety of SAC and SPA features throughout the UK.

A grazing is an essential part the conservation management of many Natura 2000 habitats such as Dry heath or Purple moor-grass meadows. It prevents sub-climax communities from becoming overgrown by scrub and rank vegetation and maintaining species diversity. However, excessive or inappropriate grazing and intensive livestock systems can be detrimental to the condition of the feature. Instances of insufficient grazing, overgrazing, or inappropriate type or timing of livestock grazing are common on Natura 2000 sites.

It can be difficult to achieve the appropriate level of grazing on Natura 2000 sites because they may have several habitat and species features which have different and complex grazing requirements. In some instances, mowing may also be required, to facilitate aftermath grazing, to control rank vegetation or to allow the re-introduction of grazing in an abandoned plot.

A successful grazing regime for Natura 2000 relies on a low-input, low-intensity system and, often relies on the use of the traditional breeds and/or heavy stock (i.e. ponies or cattle). Lack of infrastructure such as fencing or stock handling facilities can be an issue. Appropriate grazing of the uplands may rely on traditional practices such as hefting of flocks or shepherding. The decline in such practices can be a cause localised under- or over-grazing problems.

The factors which govern grazing and livestock management on Natura 2000 sites, is rarely restricted to the sites themselves – the viable management of farm holdings which extend beyond the site boundary, viable low-intensity regional farming economies, availability of appropriate stock, market prices, European and national farming policy and subsidies, including agri-environment incentives all play a part.

Other issues may combine with the impacts of inappropriate grazing management to exacerbate problems on Natura 2000 sites. In particular, nutrient-loading from atmospheric pollution exacerbates vegetation rankness and problems caused by under-grazing, especially on *Molinia* vegetation on mires, upland sheepwalks and marshy grassland communities. The *Air pollution: Nitrogen deposition Thematic Action Plan* outlines actions which are recommended to address this key issue, however, on any given site, solutions need to be holistic, addressing the issues together, rather than isolation.

³ Natural Resources Wales, 2015. *LIFE Natura 2000 Programme for Wales Summary Report*.

⁴ Joint Nature Conservation Committee, 2013. *10th Report by the United Kingdom under Article 12 on the implementation of the Directive on the conservation of wild birds (2009/147/EC) from January 2008 to December 2012*. JNCC, Peterborough.

⁵ Joint Nature Conservation Committee, 2013. *Summary of conclusions & qualifiers – 3rd UK Habitats Directive Reporting*.

4. Issues and risks

The LIFE Natura 2000 Programme data shows that inappropriate grazing and livestock management is an issue or risk on 78 out of 112 Natura 2000 sites across Wales (70%) (See Appendix A for more details). These issues and risks relate mainly to the quantity, the type and the timing of livestock grazing on the site but also include the loss of such traditional livestock management practices such as shepherding.

1,121 grazing and livestock management issues and risks were recorded across the Natura 2000 series (on individual units or on whole sites), out of a total of 3,090 records (for all types of issue and risk).

79 out of 123 (64%) Natura 2000 habitats or species are affected. The most frequently affected features are shown in Table 1 below. Inappropriate grazing and livestock management has impacts across a wide range of ecosystems and taxon groups including heaths, bogs, mires and fens, woodlands, coastal sand dunes, birds, amphibians and mammals. A full list of the features affected is shown in Appendix B.

Table 1. Natura 2000 features most frequently adversely affected by inappropriate grazing and livestock management

Natura 2000 feature (common name)	Number of instances feature affected
Dry heaths	354
Blanket bog	188
Purple moor-grass meadows	169
Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath	163
Calcium-rich springwater-fed fens	145
Marsh fritillary butterfly	136
Western acidic oak woodland	110
Calcium-rich fen dominated by great fen sedge (saw sedge)	101
Very wet mires often identified by an unstable 'quaking' surface	59
Dry grasslands and scrublands or chalk or limestone	52

The 'number of instances' indicates the number of times grazing and livestock management is logged as an issue or risk for the feature at either a detailed management unit level or whole site level, on SACs and SPAs in Wales. This includes high, medium and low priority issues/risks.

Management units are sub-divisions of Natura 2000 sites based on landownership or ecological differences. Issues and risks are recorded as either at a 'site level' (if the affects occur across the site) or 'unit level' (if the impacts are localised).

The information is derived from the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme data held in the NRW Actions Database. Sourced September 2015.

The broad issue/risk of grazing and livestock management can be described in more detail as shown below:-

Inappropriate grazing type: On wetland sites such as Corsydd Mon SAC and Corsydd Llyn SAC, it is desirable to have heavy stock such as ponies or cattle due to their tolerance for the wet condition and the selective way that they graze which creates beneficial niches and helps maintain open areas of alkaline fen. The introduction of cattle can also be of benefit for upland sites such as Cadair Idris SAC.

Inappropriate timing of grazing: On some sites the period of grazing may not be the most beneficial for habitats such as dry heath.

Under/over-grazing: Undergrazing and abandonment of grazing is a particular issue for lowland grassland and wetland sites. Abandonment of grazing is common and over time this leads to loss of fencing and stock handling infrastructure, which requires replacement before grazing can be reinstated.

Where once overgrazing was seen as the main issue for upland Natura 2000 sites in Wales, we now also see insufficient grazing becoming problematic. Cwm Doethie-Mynydd Mallaen SAC, and Migneint-Arenig-Dduallt SAC, for example, have instances of both overgrazing and insufficient grazing on different parts of the site.

Inadequate shepherding/hefting: Sites such as Eryri SAC, Berwyn a Mynyddoedd De Clwyd SAC and Great Orme's Head SAC have experienced the loss of traditional hefts (often because grazing has ceased for a period) which means that only parts of the site or management units are grazed. Shepherding can ensure that livestock move around to desired parts of the site, however, this is often prohibitively costly.

5. Policy and legislative context

There is a broad framework of policy and legislation at the international, UK and Welsh level which drives and supports the management of Natura 2000. The primary European legislation is the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive which promote the conservation and management of natural habitats and wild species. Key UK legislation includes the Habitats Regulations, Wildlife and Countryside Act, and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. Wales is developing a new approach to integrated and sustainable natural resource management, through for example, the Environment (Wales) Bill and the Nature Recovery Plan. Further information is provided in the *LIFE Natura 2000 Programme Facts and Figures Report 1*.

Policy and legislation which specifically impacts upon the issue of grazing and livestock management are as follows:-

Countryside Act 1968 (as amended) and more recently **Article 9 of the Natural Resources Body for Wales (Establishment) order 2012** enables NRW to enter into contractual management agreements with landowners or occupiers on Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The majority of these are Section 15 agreements, whereby the owner/occupier agrees to manage the land according to management prescriptions in return for payment.

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) implements a system of subsidies and enables the funding of activities to encourage the sustainable management of agriculture and the environment.

Article 28 (1) of EC Regulation 1305/2013 on rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) enables the Welsh Government to establish an agri-environment scheme to provide payment for the delivery of specific environmental goods and services. The Welsh Glastir scheme is aimed at combating climate change; improving water management; and maintaining and enhancing biodiversity.

Cross Compliance is a regulatory requirement setting out standards that farmers must meet in order to receive agricultural support payments. Farmers must meet a set of Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) and keeping land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAECs). The SMRs relate to the areas of public, animal and plant health, environment and animal welfare, including livestock identification and tracing. GAECs are standards that relate to the issues of soil conservation, ensuring a minimum level of maintenance, avoiding the deterioration of habitats whilst protecting and managing water and landscape features. The GAECs standards that relate specifically to limiting grazing damage to semi-natural vegetation from overgrazing and under grazing/under management are GAEC: B and GAEC: C. Failure to meet any of the Cross Compliance standards could result in a financial penalty being imposed.

The Commons Act 2006 provides powers to stop unauthorised agricultural activity on registered common land where these activities are detrimental to either the commoners, land owners or the public interest. It also enables the establishment of Commons Councils who could manage agricultural activities of the common.

6. Current mechanisms and planned actions on sites to 2020

The LIFE Natura 2000 Programme identified and costed actions to address issues relating to grazing and livestock management on Natura 2000 sites during 2014/15 for the period to 2020. These actions are held in full in the NRW Actions Database and summarised in Prioritised Improvement Plans.

Actions expressed in terms of the delivery mechanism are shown below in Table 2. It shows the number of times mechanisms are identified against an action on a Natura 2000 site or management unit within a site and also specifies estimated costs and staff time. This includes high, medium and low priority actions.

Table 2. Key mechanisms identified in the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme data to address issues and risks associated with woodland management on SACs and SPAs in Wales.

Mechanism	Total number of instances of mechanism	Total cost*	Total NRW staff days*
NRW management agreement	351	£6,723,926	2800
Investigation	342	£86,300	1203
Direct management	312	£3,507,249	2518
Agri-environment management agreement (Glastir)	195	£12,998,678	1413
Facilitate establishment of Commons Council	20	£0	55
Risk surveillance	15	£0	451
Compulsory withdraw/modify notice/consent	11	£0	85
Tenancy negotiation or buy out	11	£5,201	15
Issue notice/consent	7	£0	9
Grazing licence	5	£0	21
Changes to policy and/or legislation	5	£0	170
Targeted education, awareness raising and liaison	4	£470,000	55

**The costs are broad estimated costs to deliver the action(s), rounded to the nearest thousand. In most cases the costs are calculated to 2020 except where longer term funding would be needed. The number of NRW staff days is the number of annual staff days x 5 (for number of years until 2020) which would be needed, plus the number of one-off staff days until 2020. Note that there are a number of uncosted actions, due to the difficulty of estimating costs where more in depth action specific information is required.*

The primary mechanisms used to deliver appropriate grazing management on Natura 2000 sites are described in more detail below.

- **NRW Management Agreements** provide payment for specific conservation management on protected sites, based on detailed prescriptions. Management Agreements of this type have been relied upon heavily in the past as a primary mechanism to produce changes to grazing regimes on private land. They are

flexible and can be designed to meet the specific requirements of the site, however, limited budgets restrict their scope.

- **Glastir agri-environment scheme** is a Welsh Government sustainable environmental land management scheme available to farmers and landowners. Glastir is an alternative to NRW Management Agreements however, as a whole-farm, national scheme with multiple objectives it is less flexible and less focused on specific Natura 2000 needs. Both Glastir and NRW Management Agreements depend upon voluntary uptake.
- **Investigations** are required if there is insufficient evidence to identify an appropriate action in a particular case. There is a lack of information about the management requirements on some management units, so there is a significant need for further investigation. The nature of the investigation can vary and often involves a visit to the land and discussions with the occupier as to the existing management, but can also mean a more detailed survey or further research is required.
- **Direct management** generally refers to practical activities to implement agreed work programmes on land owned or managed by voluntary bodies, local authorities or NRW. Direct management can be used to install grazing infrastructure such as fences and stock handling facilities, or to carry out activities such as mowing.
- **Facilitate establishment of a Commons Council.** A Common Council is a democratic structure through which commoners, land owners and others with an interest in a common can work together to manage agricultural activities. A number of Commons Councils have been established in recent years which have greatly assisted in facilitating the grazing management of large areas of Natura 2000 particularly in the uplands.
- **Risk surveillance** involves monitoring for signs of a potential risk so that action can be taken before it becomes an issue.
- **Compulsory withdrawal or modification of a notice/consent.** This mechanism is used where existing notices/consents cannot be removed by voluntary means or through a management agreement.

7. Rationale for strategic actions

The Natura 2000 actions identified in the Prioritised Improvement Plans and the Actions Database are predominantly site-based. These can produce good results at a local level, and have practical advantages, for example, conservation offices or site managers often have detailed knowledge about the requirements of the site or the local availability of livestock. However, localised actions have little ability to tackle broader factors and root causes of grazing and livestock management issues related to national or international agricultural policy, farming economics, the nature of agri-environment schemes or training of farmers. Nor are they able to consider novel or innovative approaches.

Furthermore although there is a reasonably comprehensive framework of strategic plans and policies in place which relate to grazing and livestock management these are not necessarily focused on Natura 2000 sites or features.

Therefore, a set of strategic actions have been laid out in Section 9 of this plan. The strategic actions seek to provide improvements to the strategic framework and improve integration of Natura 2000 needs, as well as considering activities around training, awareness raising and alternative funding sources. The actions aim to build on existing programmes as well as developing new initiatives.

Delivery of the strategic actions will require collaborative working between Natural Resources Wales, the Welsh Government, farming unions, landowners and occupiers, grazing projects such as PONT, public and third sector organisations and the National Parks. It is anticipated that the strategic actions will be used to guide future work programmes.

8. Development of strategic actions

The strategic actions shown in Section 9 were developed through a process of engagement in combination with analysis of the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme data. Summary outputs of the data from Natura 2000 sites was used to provide contextual background for a grazing and livestock management workshops held in Shrewsbury on 11 June 2015. Attendees were specialists from Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Government with an expertise in grazing and agricultural policy and management practice.

Participants were asked to consider existing management methods for issues arising from grazing and livestock management and to identify new strategic actions which could address impacts regionally or at a Welsh or UK level. These contributions were then reviewed by a small working group.

The draft strategic actions were made available for comment to a wider audience through a series of three workshops during the summer of 2015. The first workshop was open to sector leads from Welsh Government, while the second and third workshops (held on the 19 and 25 August 2015, in Garwnant and Bangor respectively) were attended by representatives of interested organisations in Wales, from, for example, the third sector, local authorities, farming unions and other user groups. There was a total of 84 attendees. The consultation drafts were also available to others unable to attend these events on request. Feedback on the strategic actions was used by the working group to finalise the proposed strategic actions.

The strategic actions are intended to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Assignable, Realistic and Time-related) and therefore information has been provided on costs and time-scales where possible. A proposed lead delivery organisation is listed against each action. The intention is that this organisation will drive the action forward, collaborating with other partners and stakeholders as necessary.

9. Strategic Actions for Natura 2000 in Wales: Grazing and Livestock Management

The following represents a list of proposed actions which are needed to make progress towards favourable condition of Natura 2000 features. They do not represent a fully funded or committed operational plan.

	Action	Detail	Priority	Link to existing work programmes	Proposed lead organisation	Potential partner organisation(s)	Estimated cost (£)	Proposed timetable
1	Continue with development of Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes/ systems incorporating N2K needs. Investigate further ecosystem services provided by N2K sites and features.		High	PES practitioners group PES strategic action group NRM Programme	Welsh Government Natural Resources Wales	Third sector Commercial sector Utilities	Staff time Baseline monitoring	Ongoing
2	Review impact of Welsh Government Woodland Estate funded targeted grazing projects on N2K sites. Roll out more widely, if appropriate.		High	NRW Upland framework PONT (Pori Natur a Threftadaeth)	Natural Resources Wales	PONT Land managers National Parks	Staff time Project cost	TBC
3	Review opportunities to encourage large livestock and traditional breeds to graze N2K sites.		High	PONT National Trust Cooperation CMI	Natural Resources Wales Welsh Government	Third sector PONT	Staff time project cost	Ongoing
4	Maintain and support existing local grazing schemes and encourage the development of new local and regional grazing projects /schemes covering groups of N2K sites.	Develop a network of grazing projects/schemes such as Anglesey Grazing Animal Project or Pembrokeshire Grazing Network throughout Wales which could include machinery rings, the use of mobile herds.	High	PONT AGAP (Anglesey Grazing Animals Project) Glastir Commons	Natural Resources Wales Welsh Government	Land managers Third sector PONT Farming Unions National Parks	Staff time Project costs	Ongoing
5	Develop an environmental education initiative using an 'educate the educators' approach. To focus on traditional and wildlife-friendly grazing techniques, appropriate breeds, financial benefits/support, marketing of produce etc.	Build on the initiative already underway by NRW to provide environmental education in agricultural colleges. Also develop within: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farming Advice Services Continued professional development of lectures Catering colleges Young Farmers Clubs 	High	NRW Education Strategy	Natural Resources Wales	Welsh Government Colleges Agricultural colleges	Staff time Project costs	Ongoing
6	Develop a training and educational resource(s) to improve conservation grazing management knowledge and skills of landowners. Target landowners to improve engagement and willingness to undertake appropriate management on N2K sites.		High	Knowledge transfer Rural Development Plan	Welsh Government Natural Resources Wales	Third sector National Parks PONT	Staff time Project costs	Ongoing

	Action	Detail	Priority	Link to existing work programmes	Proposed lead organisation	Potential partner organisation(s)	Estimated cost (£)	Proposed timetable
7	Ensure Prioritised Improvement Plans are accessible for all to inform appropriate management of N2K sites.	NRW and WG Glastir to use PIPs to inform and guide priorities.	High	Glastir Advance NRW Management Agreements (S.15)	Natural Resources Wales Welsh Government	Third sector National Parks	Staff time	Ongoing
8	Undertake site specific feasibility study to explore non-fencing solutions for controlling livestock on N2K sites.	Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close shepherding possibilities • High frequency and other technologies, • Traditional 'raking' systems to allow better management of large open areas.	Medium	PONT projects National Trust projects	Natural Resources Wales	PONT National Trust Upland Ecosystem Group National Parks	Staff time Project costs	Immediate short-medium
9	Develop N2K Management Officers to facilitate management of large N2K sites or groups of sites.	Use the 'Glastir Commons Officer' model as a guide.	Medium		Welsh Government Natural Resources Wales National Parks	Land managers Third sector PONT	Staff time Project costs	Short term
10	Review existing/recent initiatives and pilot studies relating to the production and marketing of high value wildlife-friendly produce from N2K sites and develop recommendations. Carry out further feasibility study(ies) if required.	To include consideration of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking producers to markets/customers • Niche markets • Promotion of the ecological value of grazing animals 	Medium	Towards Sustainable Growth: An Action Plan for the Food and Drink Industry 2014-2020 Cambrian Mountain Initiative (CMI)	Welsh Government Natural Resources Wales	Third sector Land managers Cooperation groups (e.g. CMI) Cywain National Parks	Staff time Project costs	Ongoing

Appendix A: Natura 2000 sites recorded as having grazing and livestock management as an issue or risk adversely affecting (or having the potential to adversely affect) features of that site

Data was derived from the NRW Actions Database following work by the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme. High, medium and low priority current issues and potential future risks are included. The issue/risk may be recorded for the whole site or at a more detailed 'management unit' (sub-site) level. The issue or risk is recorded by 'sub-category' e.g. over-grazing, under-grazing, inappropriate type and timing – hence why the issue/risk may appear more than once at a site level.

Data from September 2015.

Site Name	SAC/ SPA	Number of times the issue/risk was identified on the site		
		Unit level	Site level	Total
Berwyn a Mynyddoedd De Clwyd / Berwyn and South Clwyd Mountains	SAC	135	-	135
Corsydd Mon / Anglesey Fens	SAC	99	1	100
Eryri / Snowdonia	SAC	92	2	94
Migneint-Arenig-Dduallt	SAC	49	2	51
Corsydd Llyn / Llyn Fens	SAC	47	-	47
Coedydd Derw a Safleoedd Ystlumod Meirion / Meirionnydd Oakwoods and Bat	SAC	37	-	37
Cadair Idris	SAC	31	1	32
Deeside & Buckley Newt Sites	SAC	31	-	31
Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem and Cadney Mosses	SAC	27	-	27
Gower Commons / Tiroedd Comin Gwyr	SAC	23	3	26
Clogwyni Pen Llyn / Seacliffs of Llyn	SAC	22	3	25
Corsydd Eifionydd	SAC	19	3	22
Great Ormes Head / Pen Y Gogarth	SAC	20	2	22
Elenydd-Mallaen	SPA	18	3	21
River Dee and Bala Lake / Afon Dyfrydwy a Llyn Tegid	SAC	18	1	19
Crymlyn Bog / Cors Crymlyn	SAC	18	-	18
Mwyngloddiau Fforest Gwydir / Gwydir Forest Mines	SAC	17	1	18
Rhinog	SAC	18	-	18
Severn Estuary / Mor Hafren	SAC	18	-	18
Blaen Cynon	SAC	17	-	17
Caeau Mynydd Mawr	SAC	16	1	17
Coedydd Aber	SAC	14	3	17
Cwm Doethie - Mynydd Mallaen	SAC	14	2	16
Glannau Ynys Gybi / Holy Island Coast	SPA	16	-	16
Halkyn Mountain / Mynydd Helygain	SAC	13	3	16
Morfa Harlech a Morfa Dyffryn	SAC	13	2	15
Kenfig / Cynffig	SAC	14	-	14
Carmarthen Bay Dunes / Twyni Bay Caerfyrddin	SAC	13	-	13

Cors Fochno	SAC	13	-	13
Johnstown Newt Sites	SAC	13	-	13
River Wye / Afon Gwy	SAC	12	1	13
Cernydd Carmel	SAC	11	-	11
Coedydd Llawr-y-glyn	SAC	11	-	11
Gweunydd Blaencleddau	SAC	11	-	11
Preseli	SAC	9	2	11
Rhos Llawr-cwrt	SAC	9	2	11
Glannau Ynys Gybi / Holy Island Coast	SAC	10	-	10
Glaswelltiroedd Cefn Cribwr / Cefn Cribwr Grasslands	SAC	10	-	10
North Pembrokeshire Woodlands / Coedydd Gogledd Sir Benfro	SAC	10	-	10
St David's / Ty Ddewi	SAC	9	1	10
Coetiroedd Cwm Elan / Elan Valley Woodlands	SAC	9	-	9
Cors Caron	SAC	9	-	9
Cwm Cadlan	SAC	9	-	9
North West Pembrokeshire Commons / Comins Gogledd Orllewin Sir Benfro	SAC	9	-	9
Ramsey and St David's Peninsula Coast	SPA	8	1	9
Alyn Valley Woods / Coedwigoedd Dyffryn Alun	SAC	8	-	8
Berwyn	SPA	8	-	8
Coedwigoedd Penrhyn Creuddyn / Creuddyn Peninsula Woods	SAC	8	-	8
Mynydd Cilan, Trwyn y Wylfa ac Ynysoedd Sant Tudwal	SPA	6	2	8
Rhos Talglas	SAC	7	-	7
Aberbargoed Grasslands	SAC	5	-	5
Afon Eden-Cors Goch Trawsfynydd	SAC	3	2	5
Afon Teifi / River Teifi	SAC	4	1	5
Pen Llyn ar Sarnau / Llyn Peninsula and the Sarnau	SAC	4	1	5
Afon Tywi / River Tywi	SAC	4	-	4
Brecon Beacons / Bannau Brycheiniog	SAC	4	-	4
Elenydd	SAC	2	2	4
Glannau Aberdaron ac Ynys Enlli / Aberdaron Coast and Bardsey Island	SPA	2	2	4
Granllyn	SAC	4	-	4
Sugar Loaf Woodlands	SAC	4	-	4
Usk Bat Sites / Safloedd Ystlumod Wysg	SAC	3	1	4
Yerbeston Tops	SAC	4	-	4
Afonydd Cleddau / Cleddau Rivers	SAC	3	-	3
Gower Ash Woods / Coedydd Ynn Gwyr	SAC	3	-	3
Y Twyni o Abermenai i Aberffraw / Abermenai to Aberffraw Dunes	SAC	3	-	3
Blackmill Woodlands	SAC	2	-	2
Castlemartin Coast	SPA	-	2	2
Coed Cwm Einion	SAC	1	1	2

Craig yr Aderyn (Bird's Rock)	SPA	1	1	2
Dee Estuary / Aber Dyfrydwy	SAC	-	2	2
Drostre Bank	SAC	2	-	2
Mynydd Epynt	SAC	1	1	2
Rhos Goch	SAC	2	-	2
Coedydd a Cheunant Rheidol / Rheidol Woods and Gorge	SAC	1	-	1
Coedydd Nedd a Mellte	SAC	1	-	1
Llangorse Lake / Llyn Syfaddan	SAC	1	-	1
The Dee Estuary	SPA	-	1	1
Ynys Seiriol / Puffin Island	SPA	1	-	1
Total		1143	59	1,121

Appendix B: Natura 2000 features identified as being adversely affected (or having the potential to be adversely affect) by grazing and livestock management on sites

Data was derived from the NRW Actions Database following work by the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme. High, medium and low priority current issues and potential future risks are included. The issue/risk may be recorded for the whole site or at a more detailed 'management unit' (sub-site) level. The issue or risk is recorded by 'sub-category' e.g. over-grazing, under-grazing, inappropriate type and timing.

Data from September 2015.

Feature (common name)	Number of instances feature affected		
	Unit level	Site level	Total
Dry heaths	336	18	354
Blanket Bog	182	6	188
Purple moor-grass meadows	162	7	169
Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath	153	10	163
Calcium-rich springwater-fed fens	141	4	145
Marsh fritillary butterfly	123	13	136
Western acidic oak woodland	105	5	110
Calcium-rich fen dominated by great fen sedge (saw sedge)	100	1	101
Very wet mires often identified by an unstable 'quaking' surface	57	2	59
Dry grasslands and scrublands or chalk or limestone	47	5	52
Great crested newt	50	-	50
Degraded raised bogs	47	1	48
Vegetated sea cliffs	38	5	43
Chough	33	8	41
Southern damselfly	32	6	38
Humid dune slacks	31	4	35
Merlin	26	5	31
Otter	27	3	30
Brook lamprey	26	3	29
Acidic scree	26	2	28
Dune grassland	25	2	27
Grasslands on soils rich in heavy metals	25	2	27
Bullhead	23	3	26
Dunes with creeping willow	23	2	25
Atlantic salt meadows	22	3	25
Atlantic salmon	20	4	24
Plants in crevices in base-rich rocks	21	2	23
River lamprey	20	3	23
Montane acid grasslands	21	1	22
Rivers with floating vegetation often dominated by water-crowfoot	19	3	22
Plants in crevices on acid rocks	18	2	20

Tall herb communities	18	2	20
Shifting dunes with marram	14	4	18
Alpine and subalpine heaths	16	1	17
Geyer`s whorl snail	16	1	17
Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes	14	2	16
Petalwort	16	-	16
Depressions on peat substrates	12	3	15
Sea lamprey	12	3	15
Clear-water lakes or lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels	14	-	14
Active raised bogs	12	2	14
Wet woodland	10	3	13
Slender green feather-moss	11	-	11
Hen Harrier	8	2	10
Fen Orchid	8	-	8
Base-rich scree	7	-	7
Red Kite	5	1	6
Estuaries	4	2	6
Peregrine	4	1	5
Twaite shad	4	1	5
Allis shad	3	1	4
Species-rich grassland with mat-grass in upland areas	3	1	4
Hard-water springs depositing lime	1	1	2
Floating water-plantain	2	-	2
Shifting dunes	-	2	2
Barbastelle bat	1	-	1
Calcium-rich nutrient-poor lakes, lochs and pools	1	-	1
Cormorant	1	-	1
Desmoulin`s whorl snail	1	-	1
Naturally nutrient-rich lakes or lochs which are often dominated by pondweed	1	-	1
Shore dock	1	-	1
Alpine and subalpine calcareous grasslands	-	1	1
High-altitude plant communities associated with areas of water seepage	-	1	1
Pintail	-	1	1
Teal	-	1	1
White-clawed -or Atlantic stream- crayfish	-	1	1
Dunlin	-	1	1
Knot	-	1	1
Oystercatcher	-	1	1
Black-tailed Godwit	-	1	1
Freshwater pearl mussel	-	1	1
Intertidal mudflats and sandflats	-	1	1
Curlew	-	1	1

Grey plover	-	1	1
Lesser horseshoe bat	-	1	1
Glasswort and other annuals colonising mud and sand	-	1	1
Shelduck	-	1	1
Redshank	-	1	1