



**Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar
gyfer Datblygu Gwledig:**
Ewrop yn Buddsoddi mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig
**European Agricultural Fund for
Rural Development:**
Europe Investing in Rural Areas



**Llywodraeth Cymru
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**Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme
2014–2020**

Sustainable Management Scheme – Expression of Interest – Criteria and Application Form

EOI Window 3rd October – 30th November 2016

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1 INTRODUCTION

These Guidance Notes explain how the Expression of Interest (EOI) process for the **Sustainable Management Scheme (SMS)** will be operated.

Please read these notes carefully. You will also need to refer to

- The Welsh Government Rural Communities - Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 Expression of Interest Guidance Notes.
- The Guidance Notes for the Sustainable Management Scheme. These can be found at the web address below;

<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/cap/ruraldevelopment/wales-rural-development-programme-2014-2020/?lang=en>

2 TIMESCALES

The window for expressions of interest (EOI) is expected to be open for two calendar months. Dates will be published on the Welsh Government (WG) website (see link above) and are subject to review. This will enable applicants to forward plan their application to meet their business needs in terms of timescales, project seasonality and the phasing of activities.

As detailed by section 43 of the key requirements of the *Measure 16.5 Sustainable Management Scheme Guidance Notes* all projects have a maximum duration of 3 years and funding is agreed in principle for successful full applications undertaking activities over this timescale.

Any change to this position will be formally notified on the Welsh Government website at:

<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/cap/ruraldevelopment/wales-rural-development-programme-2014-2020/sustainable-management-scheme/?lang=en>

3 FUNDS AVAILABLE

The indicative funding available for each window will be published in advance on the WG website. For this window the Welsh Government would expect the maximum requested funding within a submitted EOI **not to exceed GBP 700,000**. This is an upper limit and not intended as a guide. Submissions for collaborative landscape scale projects will be considered provided they are complete and meet the published criteria.

4 HOW TO APPLY

For full details of how to apply please refer to the Sustainable Management Scheme Guidance Notes.

EOIs must be completed on the form at the end of this document.

Applicants should complete the EOI form electronically. Sections can be expanded as required. Please note that all the information must be provided within the EOI form. Additional documents or supporting information will not be accepted at EOI stage.

Completed EOI Forms should be submitted via email to:

sustainablemanagementscheme@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

No EOI will be accepted after the closing date.

5 EOI SELECTION CRITERIA

The purpose of the Sustainable Management Scheme is to support collaborative landscape scale projects taking action to improve the resilience of our natural resources and ecosystems in a way that also delivers benefits to farm businesses and rural communities. It will also support the reduction of greenhouse gases from the sector and the vital action needed to help farm businesses and rural communities adapt to the impacts of climate change.

There is often a time commitment needed to develop fully functioning collaborations and to undertake the planning required for some land management activities linked to seasonality. In recognition of this, the SMS will also support proposals seeking to facilitate, develop or establish new collaborations and activities; to facilitate agreements of local priorities and to help potential new collaborations develop project proposals. Projects of this type will need to provide clear evidence that this activity will include or is likely to result in the delivery of tangible action on the ground with environmental, social or economic benefits.

The selection criteria are informed directly from the Sustainable Management Scheme guidance and are essential to help achieve the purpose of the scheme as set out above. There is no restriction on the scope of the intended collaborative activities funded by the scheme; however a non exhaustive list of the type of activities that will qualify for support is included at ANNEX A of the Sustainable Management Scheme Guidance Notes.

An EOI proposal will be scored where a score of 4 is the highest and a score of 0 is the lowest with three increments in between.

For each criterion the assessment will be made on the basis of the information and explanations given. Higher scores will be achieved by providing clear

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explanations supported by examples of proposed activities and details of how those activities will be taken forward and managed.

The adoption of the principles of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) is key to achieving the aim of the SMS therefore this has been given the highest weighting of the five criteria. Projects that provide clear evidence of how they have considered and applied the nine principles of sustainable management of natural resources, to the approach they are proposing in their EOI, will score more highly.

In addition to the principles, when taking forward projects under this scheme it is important for the applicant to ensure that they have addressed one or more of the national emerging priorities, as set out in the Welsh Government's Natural Resources Policy Statement 2015¹ and summarised in ANNEX B of the SMS Guidance Notes.

As well as these emerging national priorities, applicants must also demonstrate that the project addresses the local challenges and opportunities presented within the landscapes and communities of the proposed project focus area. The equal high weighting reflects the importance of an EOI being inclusive of both national and local priorities.

The final two selection criteria are an opportunity for applicants to show they are planning a well thought out and structured project with clearly defined outcomes and deliverables. Working in collaboration can present a number of challenges and so clarity and good project management will be essential to success. Equal importance is given to the early consideration of the appropriate level of requirements for monitoring and evaluating the proposed project as it progresses against its aims, this is reflected in the weighting given to these criteria.

	Selection Criteria	Score	Weighting	Total
1	Action to tackle one or more of the emerging national priorities from the Natural Resources Policy Statement 2015	0-4	x 3	
2	Application of the principles of sustainable management of natural resources	0-4	x 4	
3	Action to tackle Local area challenges and take forward opportunities	0-4	x 3	
4	Ensuring good governance, project management & clearly identified outcomes	0-4	x 2	

¹ <http://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/150914-natural-resources-policy-statement-en.pdf>

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5	Clear and appropriate monitoring and evaluation plans.	0-4	x 2	
	Final Score			

An explanation of what is required for each criterion is given in the next section.

1. Addressing emerging national priorities

The aim of SMNR resources is to maintain and enhance the resilience of ecosystems and the benefits they provide and, in so doing, meet the needs of present generations of people without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

The Welsh Government's Natural Resources Policy Statement illustrates some of the emerging priorities and opportunities for the SMNR at a national level.

Emerging Priorities of the Natural Resources Policy Statement

- Better lowland soil, water, planting and habitat measures
- More good quality, urban green infrastructure and sustainable urban drainage
- Better coastal habitat flood management
- Improved diversity and extent of outdoor recreation facilities
- Better management and use of designated sites
- Better located woodlands and trees
- More upland peat management

Please refer to ANNEX A of the SMS Guidance Notes for examples of activities that can help to deliver to these priorities.

Projects that can demonstrate how they will address one or more of these priorities will score higher.

Score 4 The applicant has provided a comprehensive explanation of how the proposed project will directly address more than one of the emerging priorities. Innovative approaches are proposed and offer real potential for delivery within the project and with the potential to be used elsewhere. The applicant has set out a clear rationale for the proposed interventions. The applicant has provided extensive evidence of the need for the proposed activities and assurances that the activities proposed do not duplicate activities already underway or previously undertaken through other funding mechanisms within the project focus area.

Score 3 The applicant has provided a full explanation of how the proposed project will directly address more than one of the emerging priorities.

Where innovative approaches are proposed, the applicant has set out a clear rationale for the proposed interventions. The applicant has provided good evidence of the need for the proposed activities and assurances that the activities proposed do not duplicate activities already underway or previously undertaken through other funding mechanisms within the project focus area.

- Score 2 The applicant has provided a satisfactory explanation of how their proposed project will address one or more of the emerging priorities. The applicant has provided some explanation of how each of the elements of the project will address the emerging priorities. Where innovative activities are proposed the applicant has given some explanation for including these activities. The applicant has provided evidence of the need for the proposed activities and some (but limited) assurances that the activities proposed, do not duplicate activities already underway or previously undertaken, through other funding mechanisms within the project focus areas.
- Score 1 The applicant has provided very little or an unrealistic explanation of how their proposed project will address the emerging priorities. The applicant has provided little or no explanation of how each of the elements of the project will address the emerging priorities. Where innovative activities are proposed the applicant has given little or no explanation for including these activities. The applicant has provided little or no evidence of the need for the proposed activities and there is possible duplication with activities already underway or previously undertaken through other funding mechanisms, within the project focus area.
- Score 0 No evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the project will address any of the emerging priorities

2. Application of the principles of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources

Principles of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources:

- a) **Manage adaptively** by planning monitoring, reviewing and where appropriate, changing action
- b) Consider the appropriate **spatial scale** for action
- c) Promote and engage in **collaboration and cooperation**
- d) Make appropriate arrangements for **public participation** in decision-making
- e) Take account of all relevant **evidence**, and gather evidence in respect of **uncertainties**
- f) Take account of the **benefits** and intrinsic value of natural resources and ecosystems
- g) Take action to **prevent** serious or irreversible damage to ecosystems
- h) Take account of the **short, medium and long term consequences** of actions
- i) Take account of the **resilience of ecosystems**, in particular:
 - Diversity within and between ecosystems
 - The connections between and within ecosystems
 - The scale of ecosystems
 - The condition of ecosystems
 - The adaptability of ecosystems

Applicants should be able to demonstrate how they have considered each of the principles of SMNR in relation to their project and how they are applying the principles both in the planning and delivery of their proposed activities.

Score 4 The project has been clearly designed utilising all the principles and provides a robust and clear description and evidence where appropriate. There is a comprehensive explanation of how each of the principles have or will be applied across the whole project and associated activities. The applicant has made an extensive investigation of the social, economic and environmental benefits that the proposed project will deliver. The applicants has provided a clear, well researched and achievable description or expectation of these social, economic and environmental benefits in the EOI.

Score 3 The applicant has provided a robust and clear description and evidence where appropriate, illustrating how each of the principles have or will be applied across the whole project and associated activities. The applicant has considered the social, economic and environmental benefits that the proposed project will deliver and has provided a clear

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description or expectation of these social, economic and environmental benefits in the EOI.

- Score 2 The applicant has provided a satisfactory description and some evidence where appropriate illustrating how each of the principles have or will be applied across the whole project and associated activities. The applicant has briefly considered the social, economic and environmental benefits the proposed project will deliver and has provided a satisfactory description of these expected benefits.
- Score 1 The applicant has provided an incomplete or insufficient description of how each of the principles have or will be applied across the whole project and associated activities. The applicant may have provided some description but has misapplied or misunderstood the principles. The applicant has shown little consideration of the expected social, economic and environmental benefits the proposed project will deliver and provided a limited description.
- Score 0 The applicant has provided an incomplete or insufficient response, failing to demonstrate both an awareness of the principles of SMNR and to utilise these principles in the design or implementation of the project.

3. Action on local area challenges and opportunities

In keeping with the principles of SMNR it is important for projects supported by the SMS to have also been developed in response to local area sector or community priorities and opportunities. Projects need to take account of the environmental, social and economic opportunities and challenges specific to the area, which may include but not be restricted to new business and market opportunities, soil erosion and flood management, protected areas and biodiversity, social and economic deprivation and social exclusion; local resilience to climate change or health and education issues.

Score 4 The applicant has provided a comprehensive explanation of how the proposed project, will directly address more than one identified local challenge or opportunity within the project focus area. The explanation includes clear extensive rationale and evidence, including stakeholder engagement or collaborative activities where appropriate to justify the intervention. The applicant has provided a clear description of how the proposed project activities, will contribute significantly and demonstrably towards these local challenges or opportunities. The applicant has clearly identified and set out the main beneficiaries of the proposed project outputs and where appropriate engaging them more collaboratively as partners. The applicant has given consideration to, and provides assurances that, the proposed activities do not duplicate activities already underway or previously undertaken with other funding mechanisms within the project's focus area.

Score 3 The applicant has provided a good explanation of how the proposed project, will directly address more than one identified local challenge or opportunity within the project focus area. The explanation includes clear rationale and evidence, including stakeholder engagement where appropriate to justify the intervention. The applicant has provided a clear description of how the proposed project activities, will contribute towards these local challenges or opportunities. The applicant has clearly identified and set out the main beneficiaries of the proposed project outputs. The applicant has given consideration to, and provides assurances that, the proposed activities do not duplicate activities already underway or previously undertaken with other funding mechanisms within the project's focus area.

Score 2 The applicant has provided a satisfactory explanation of how the proposed project, will directly address one or more of the identified local challenges or opportunities in the focus area. The explanation includes some evidence, including limited stakeholder engagement where appropriate to justify the intervention. The applicant has provided a basic description of how the proposed project activities, will contribute towards these local challenges or opportunities. The applicant has attempted to identify the main beneficiaries of the proposed project outputs. The

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applicant has given some consideration and assurances that, the proposed activities do not duplicate activities already underway or previously undertaken with other funding mechanisms within the project's focus area.

- Score 1 The applicant has provided very little or incomplete explanation of how the proposed project, will address local challenges or opportunities in the focus area. The applicant has not considered the main beneficiaries of the proposed project outputs. The proposed activities appear to potentially duplicate activities already underway or previously undertaken, with other funding mechanisms within the project's focus area.
- Score 0 No evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the project will address any local challenges or opportunities

4. Governance, Project Management and Outcomes

In this section applicants should explain how the project's activities will be managed over initiation, development and delivery phases, and explain how key decisions will be made. This section should include the governance and structure of the proposed collaboration and details of the programme or project management to deliver the proposed activities on a day to day basis. This should also include details of key project roles and who will undertake these roles if known at this time. Information on the approach to risk and issue management should also be included. Where a new collaboration is proposed and doesn't currently exist, the applicant should include good evidence that there is the potential for the new collaboration to be developed successfully in the full application stage, to a level where the proposed project can be effectively governed, managed and delivered.

The proposal should clearly identify and explain the expected project outputs and outcomes, and when these will be realised and reported. Good proposals should also explain how the outputs and outcomes will help tackle the emerging priorities of the national policy statement, and the opportunities and challenges of the local area.

[Note - the outputs might be in the form of a new collaborative structure and defined project proposals for activities to be supported under future EOI's and other parts of the Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme or supported by other funding sources. The outputs might also be in the form of study reports or information dissemination sessions so that lessons learned can be shared more widely. These types of outputs can still be put in the context of the benefits they could deliver, and how they contribute towards the emerging national priorities and local level challenges and opportunities]

Score 4 The applicant has provided a clear, comprehensive description outlining the lead organisation, the proposed collaboration, and where possible an organisational plan on how the project will be governed, delivered, financially managed and supported (Information on the proposed organisational and governance structure to be given where the collaboration is yet to be established). Proposals looking to set up a new collaboration have already engaged with potential collaborators and are able to provide strong evidence that there is the potential for the new collaboration to be developed successfully in the full application stage, to a level where the proposed project can be effectively governed, managed and delivered. The applicant has provided a clear comprehensive description of the proposed outputs and outcomes the project is expected to deliver including timescales. There should be evidence provided through reference to research, studies or previous work to provide assurance of the stated deliverables, outputs and outcomes. There is a comprehensive description of how these outcomes will provide social, environmental and economic benefits that relate to the priorities of the national policy statement and the opportunities and challenges of the local area.

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- Score 3 The applicant has provided a clear and robust description outlining the lead organisation, the proposed collaboration, and where possible an organisational plan on how the project will be governed, delivered, financially managed and supported (Information on the proposed organisational and governance structure to be given where the collaboration is yet to be established). Proposals looking to set up a new collaboration have provided good evidence that there is the potential for the new collaboration to be developed successfully in the full application stage, to a level where the proposed project can be effectively governed, managed and delivered. The applicant has provided a clear description of the proposed outputs and outcomes the project is expected to deliver including timescales. This should include a description of how these provide benefits that relate to the priorities of the national policy statement and the opportunities and challenges of the local area.
- Score 2 The applicant has provided a satisfactory description outlining the lead organisation, the proposed collaboration, and where possible a basic organisational plan on how the project will be governed, delivered, financially managed and supported (Information on the proposed organisational and governance structure to be given where the collaboration is yet to be established). Proposals looking to set up a new collaboration have provided sufficient evidence that there is the potential for the new collaboration to be developed successfully in the full application stage, to a level where the proposed project can be effectively governed, managed and delivered. The applicant has provided a satisfactory description of most of the proposed outputs and outcomes the project is expected to deliver, including an indication of timescales and how these relate to the priorities of the national policy statement and the opportunities and challenges of the local area.
- Score 1 The applicant has provided an incomplete or insufficient description outlining the lead organisation, the proposed collaboration, and where possible a basic organisational plan on how the project will be governed, delivered, financially managed and supported (Information on the proposed organisational and governance structure to be given where the collaboration is yet to be established). Proposals looking to set up a new collaboration haven't provided sufficient evidence that there is the potential for the new collaboration to be developed successfully in the full application stage to a level where the proposed project can be effectively governed, managed and delivered. The applicant provided a limited or insufficient description of the proposed outputs and outcomes the project is expected to deliver with little or no indication of timescales, and how these relate to the priorities of the national policy statement and the opportunities and challenges of the local area.
- Score 0 The applicant has provided an incomplete or insufficient response. There is no evidence of the organisations' capability to deliver the proposed project scope. There is no real consideration on how any

proposed activities can deliver outputs or outcomes that will result in a range of benefits.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

A critical aspect to the successful delivery and subsequent reporting of the benefits of a project is a clear understanding of the monitoring and evaluation requirements. The consideration of these requirements when beginning the development of a project is key to ensuring relevant data collection, monitoring arrangements and early evaluative activities are suitable for the type of project. It is important to also consider the cost and procurement of any of these independent services during the development of a project.

In this section the applicant should explain what the monitoring and evaluation arrangements will be. The applicant should explain how monitoring will be undertaken, including an explanation of how the immediate and wider stakeholders will be consulted, and how the evaluation will be organised and managed. Applicants should outline the range of methods to be employed to monitor and evaluate the activities delivered throughout the project including the rationale for the utilisation of any innovative methodologies, modelling or equipment. It is important to include processes to monitor and evaluate both the quantitative and qualitative social, environmental and economic benefits to the area and associated community.

Applicants should plan to collaborate with those with appropriate specialisms, or obtain an external independent assessment on any beneficiary site to ensure that there is no overall negative benefit to local biodiversity, other natural resources or the local community. Applicants should plan to put in place monitoring, to ensure the clear collection of data and associated evidence for the outputs and outcomes of the project. This will include an effective evaluation of the tangible and intangible benefits and how they relate to the national emerging priorities, local opportunities and challenges.

Score 4 The applicant has provided a comprehensive, robust proposal describing clearly the monitoring and evaluation methodology to be utilised. The applicant demonstrates outstanding knowledge and / or experience of the collaborating organisations in monitoring and evaluating projects effectively. The applicant has provided a full, clear description on how the monitoring activities proposed, intend to collect all the relevant information for each element to be able to effectively report and evaluate the successful delivery of the project. This will include a full description on how each of the outcomes will be monitored and evaluated. There is detailed consideration of both the tangible and intangible benefits that may result from these outcomes with a focus on contributing to the well-being goals in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Where innovative methodologies are proposed, the applicant has provided a clear rationale for using the approach. The applicant has also evidenced the mechanisms for reviewing project issues, to provide lessons learned and to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the project and any cost associated with this acceptably budgeted for.

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- Score 3 The applicant has provided a detailed proposal describing the monitoring and evaluation methodology to be utilised. The applicant demonstrates a high level of knowledge and / or experience of the collaborating organisations in monitoring and evaluating projects effectively. The applicant has provided a clear description on how the monitoring activities proposed, intend to collect all the relevant information for each element to be able to effectively report and evaluate the successful delivery of the project. Where innovative methodologies are proposed, the applicant has provided a clear rationale for using the approach. The applicant has also evidenced the mechanisms for reviewing project issues, to provide lessons learned and to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the project.
- Score 2 The applicant has provided a satisfactory outline describing the monitoring and evaluation methodology to be utilised. The applicant demonstrates some knowledge and / or experience of the collaborating organisations in monitoring and evaluating projects effectively. The applicant has provided an outline on how the monitoring activities proposed, intend to collect all the relevant information for each element to be able to effectively report and evaluate the successful delivery of the project. Where innovative methodologies are proposed the applicant has provided some rationale for using the approach. The applicant has also provided an outline of the mechanisms for reviewing project issues, and to provide lessons learned and to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the project.
- Score 1 The applicant has provided an incomplete or insufficient outline or description of a monitoring and evaluation methodology. The response demonstrates little knowledge and or experience of the collaborating organisations in monitoring and evaluating projects. The response may give some information regarding monitoring and / or evaluation, but fails to provide sufficient evidence regarding the methodology or how it will be adopted or report on the project benefits.
- Score 0 The applicant has provided an incomplete or insufficient response. There is no evidence of a plan to monitor or evaluate the proposed project.

Sustainable Management Scheme EXPRESSION OF INTEREST APPLICATION FORM

Project Overview

1. Project Name and Description (A short working project title maximum 50 characters)

Project Name:

Halkyn Mountain Living Landscape Project

Project Description (**Maximum 250 words**)

Please ensure this briefly but clearly identifies what the project is about, what investments are proposed to be made and very briefly why these are needed.

Halkyn Mountain is a unique 2000 acre common, designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), for its wide range of habitats. It has been grazed for centuries and has been heavily mined for lead, leaving fascinating industrial remains strewn across the open landscape.

The mountain common is divided between five communities. It is used for recreation, with many local people and visitors coming to experience its unique landscape and wildlife and the stunning views across North-Wales and the Dee Estuary.

Management of the mountain is challenging, with issues such as an ageing farming population with few graziers actively implementing their grazing rights. This results in fewer sheep grazing the common and significant scrub encroachment. Recreational pressure, dogs and traffic have contributed to the decline in the number of animals put out to graze.

This collaborative project seeks to address the decline in grazing through appropriate vegetation management on the landscape scale, the installation of cattle grids and management of recreational pressure.

A project officer will work with stakeholders to deliver key projects. To ensure long term sustainability they will engage with the graziers and endeavour to steer the common into Glastir or a Management Agreement and halt the declining economic value of the common and invigorate farm businesses.

The project officer will also provide opportunities for people from different backgrounds to make a positive difference to wildlife and help community groups to engage in outdoor exercise, improve their mental wellbeing and develop skills to help enrich their lives, leading to more resilient and healthier communities.

2. Project Location

ADDRESS:
Halkyn Mountain
Flintshire
SJ 1955 7188

POST CODE:
CH8

3. Other details

Proposed Start Date : 1st September 2017
Likely End Date : 31st March 2021
Total Project Cost: £400,000
Total Grant Amount: £285,000
Proposed additional funding source(s) and amount(s):

BREAKDOWN OF THE PROJECT COSTS

Please give a breakdown (where known) of the estimated project costs under the project's key activity headings.

Costs:

Project Officer -	£100,000
Cattle Grids -	£200,000
Vegetation Management -	£60,000
Independent Evaluation -	£10,000
Promotion and Awareness Raising -	£15,000
Project Management, Finance/Admin -	£15,000
Total	£400,000

Match funding to be provided by:

Grosvenor Estate (landowner)	£50,000
Flintshire County Council	£15,000
Natural Resources Wales	£30,000
Cemex Quarry	£5,000
Brynford Community Council	£5,000
Chester Zoo	£5,000
Pet Cemetery	£5,000
Total	£115,000

Applicant Details and Background

4. Applicant Name and full Postal Address

Applicant / Company Name: Flintshire County Council

Address: Countryside Service
Wepre Park Visitor Centre
Wepre Park
Connah's Quay
Flintshire

Post Code: CH5 4HL

Contact name: Tom Woodall Position: Access & Natural Environment Manager

e-mail: tom.woodall@flintshire.gov.uk

Telephone No: 01352 703902
(incl. STD code)

5. Applicant's business status

Please tick appropriate box:

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • Sole Trader | <input type="checkbox"/> | • Charity | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Partnership | <input type="checkbox"/> | • Not for profit Company | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Private Limited Company | <input type="checkbox"/> | • Public Sector Body | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| • Public Limited Company | <input type="checkbox"/> | • Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Community Group | <input type="checkbox"/> | • Social Enterprise | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Cooperative | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

If other, please specify

Company Number and / or Charity Number (if appropriate):

Customer Reference Number CRN (if known):
(CRN is the Welsh Government grant payment reference number)

6. Company Structure

Is the applicant company a member of a group of companies?

Yes No

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If **yes**, please give the name of the immediate, and if different, the ultimate Parent company and the country in which they are registered:

Is the applicant business a micro-enterprise, SME or intermediate enterprise:

Micro-enterprise Yes No

SME Yes No

Intermediate Enterprise Yes No

Large Enterprise Yes No

Please give details:

No of Employees (Full Time equivalents based on 30 hours per week)	
Annual gross turnover (for last Financial Year)	
Annual gross profit (for last Financial Year)	

7. Will your organisation be the lead organisation in delivering the programme of activities detailed in the EOI?

Yes No

If **no** please give details (as referenced in 1-3 above)

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8. Collaborative group details

If the activities detailed in this EOI are to be delivered wholly or partly by an existing collaborative group (e.g. Partnership, Forum, Working Group, Strategic Board) please give details.

The Halkyn Mountain Joint Consultative Board (HMJCB) will provide the strategic direction and the project will report progress and findings to the HMJCB. The Halkyn Commoners' & Graziers Association are a key partner in this project guiding the project officer and driving the delivery and facilitating grazier involvement.

In addition there will be a number of partner organisations that will be responsible for implementing the schemes and activities or will be providing guidance and support to the project. These include:

Flintshire County Council – Countryside Service, Streetscene Service, Enterprise & Regeneration Service, Leisure Service, Finance

Grosvenor Estate (Landowner)

Natural Resources Wales

Flintshire Local Access Forum (LAF)

PONT, Pori, Natur a Threftadaeth

Cemex Quarry

North Wales Wildlife Trust

Chester Zoo

ARC, Amphibian Reptile Conservation

Troedio Clwyd

North Wales Fire and Rescue and Police

A project operation group comprising of the key stakeholders and deliverers will manage the day-to-day operations of the project.

Will the collaborative group be set up as an entity able to undertake legal and fiscal transactions as a single party?

Yes No

If **No**, one of the organisations in the partnership will be required to provide this function **on behalf of the group** should the EOI be successful and the project is invited to full application.

9. Details of engagement with Natural Resources Wales

Please give details of your current engagement with Natural Resources Wales including the name of any case officer or official the project team is currently or previously been engaged with in developing this project. Please indicate no engagement by stating *NONE* in box below.

Version
Issue
Issue

Nick Thomas, Regional Manager of NRW has been actively involved in the design and development of this project.
Ceirios Davies, Conservation Officer has been providing advice on habitat management and liaising with the Graziers

Project Details

Please explain how your proposed project will deliver against the Sustainable Management Scheme EOI priority criteria

1. Action against Natural Resource Policy Priorities

This project will deliver against two of the emerging priorities of the Natural Resources Policy Statement:

- **Improved diversity and extent of outdoor recreation facilities**
- **Better management and use of designated sites**

In 2008 an Integrated Strategy and Action Plan for Halkyn Mountain Common was devised to establish a strategic and integrated approach to managing its unique landscape. A comprehensive participatory exercise was undertaken to secure the views and comments of all individuals and parties with an interest and stake in the future of the common. The resulting vision of this work was:

“To manage Halkyn Mountain in an active partnership between all stakeholders so that the whole of the common is effectively grazed to fulfil its ecological potential, the outstanding cultural heritage is conserved and celebrated, the common is enjoyed for informal countryside by local people and visitors, the individual communities are sustainable with an excellent range of services and the common becomes a special and safe place in which to live, work and visit.”

To achieve this vision a number of objectives were agreed. Those that are pertinent to this project and meet the above Natural Resource Policy Priorities are:

- To manage key habitats and species to be in favourable condition.
- To support sustainable grazing practices of the commoners.
- To increase the biodiversity of the mountain with the return of species that used to be here.
- To ensure that local people appreciate the unique and dynamic character of the common, and what it is, and to understand that management is required to keep the common open and ecologically rich.
- To raise awareness and understanding as to what makes commons special thereby influencing the attitudes and behaviour of local people and visitors and reducing litter, dumping, illegal off road vehicle use, poorly controlled dogs and erosion.
- To promote Halkyn Mountain for low volume high value sustainable tourism based around walking, cycling and riding and providing interpretation using new media so that it is not intrusive in the landscape.
- To manage the area, with its great ecological, geological and historic interest, in a way that provides enjoyment for local residents and visitors.
- To involve local people in recording and monitoring the natural and cultural heritage of the common.

Since the production of this strategy and action plan, the HMJCB and organisations such as Flintshire County Council (FCC) and Natural Resource Wales (NRW) have been striving to make this vision a reality. The Sustainable Management Scheme provides an opportunity to deliver a cohesive package of meaningful activities within a framework designed to be collaborative and inclusive.

The actions that the stakeholders have identified as priorities for this project are:

Appointment of a Project Officer

Whilst there are several stakeholder organisations that have a mutual interest in the longevity of the common, the majority of them do not have the resources to commit to funding a dedicated project officer. Whilst the organisations endeavour to protect and safeguard the mountain's future, other priorities and commitments mean that the mountain is not necessarily afforded the focused attention that is required. Building on good practice where a project officer has been in post, such as the Halkyn Mountain Cultural and Heritage Ranger, it is the intention to appoint a project officer for the duration of the project to effectively deliver this project.

Vegetation Management

Halkyn Mountain SAC is designated for the following features:

Feature 1: Calaminarian grassland

Feature 2: European dry heath

Feature 3: Semi – natural dry grassland and scrubland

Feature 4: Molinia meadows on calcareous peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils

Feature 5: Great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*

This project seeks to provide a holistic approach to vegetation management across the common, tackling the overgrown areas to improve diversity and resilience of habitat.

All four feature habitats above are found to be in unfavourable and declining condition with a dominance of western gorse and bracken.

This project aims to improve this position by delivering specific management activities in line with the conservation objectives, in particular tree, scrub and bracken management which have a very low bio-diversity value. Scrub removal and flailing will increase the extent of all grassland and heathland types. Scrub management will also target uncommon vascular plants and control invasive species. Bracken crushing will primarily increase the extent of calcareous grassland and heathland. The aim is to create areas of heathland that are a mosaic of different age classes across the whole common.

The implications if the vegetation management programme is not undertaken is that this unique common's ecosystem will be disrupted and become dominated by impenetrable gorse and bracken. This will result in low value habitats and limited bio-diversity. It will reduce the area available for grazing and recreation uses, thus placing more stress and pressure on those areas that are currently accessible.

The vegetation management will be carried out under the supervision of the project officer, in collaboration with the graziers, NRW, PONT, Chester Zoo, North Wales Wildlife Trust and Grosvenor Estate. Local contractors with a specialism and experience of working in environmentally sensitive sites will be invited to tender for the work.

This activity will complement and add value to the work that has been undertaken by Chester Zoo in partnership with the Graziers. A programme of cutting gorse and heather has opened up further areas of the common for grazing and increased access for recreation. The benefits of this work have been evident this year with the emergence of rarer wildflowers and plants returning to the area. It is the intention that this work could be replicated through this project on a much larger scale across the whole common.

The vegetation management will contribute to the Natural Resources Policy priority of 'better management and use of designated sites' by maximising the bio-diversity opportunities for the various species and enabling unique common land ecosystems to thrive. The scrub management will also address the priority 'improved diversity and extent of outdoor recreation facilities' by improving access across the common for walking in areas that were previously inaccessible due to heavy gorse and thick bracken growth. Routes across the common will link the five communities and larger urban area of Holywell improving social cohesion. There will also be opportunity to develop compost product from the arising's to improve the economic viability of the common to local farm businesses.

Grazing Management and Enhancement

The proposed grazing improvement scheme will help address the 'better management and use of designated sites' priority. The act of grazing is so crucial to maintaining the ecological importance of the mountain landscape. However the economics of upland sheep farming coupled with an aging commoner population is putting this at risk in the medium to longer term. The decline in grazing has led to some areas becoming overgrown and inaccessible which then places a focus on 'easier' areas which then become overgrazed. A CCW study in 1996 identified the stocking levels as the main factor in effective management of the common. A sympathetic grazing regime and the vegetation management programme outlined above will enhance both the quality and accessibility of grazing land. It is hoped that these improvements will also encourage a younger generation to engage in the grazing tradition and boost the economic viability of farm businesses on the common. Welsh Government produced an overgrazing report in 2000 which also referenced areas which were under grazed. A stocking rate of 1650 sheep is suggested but currently levels are around 1000, there is a recognition that grazing is not carried out in a holistic manner.

This positive action will run alongside the installation of five cattle grids which will enable new graziers to come forward to provide sustainable and appropriate management of the common. The cattle grids will encourage the sheep to remain within their own area of the common thus reducing the likelihood of sheep drifting into the villages and the tendency for some areas to be grazed more heavily than others.

Three cattle grids have been installed previously through Aggregate Levy funding and the Graziers Association have reported an improving quality of available grazing and an increase in stock number around these grids.

Leisure, Recreation, Health and Wellbeing

The project officer will explore how the mountain can be utilised to address the health and wellbeing of local residents and subsequently deliver actions that will result in 'improved diversity and extent of outdoor recreation facilities'.

Working in partnership with Flintshire Local Access Forum (LAF), FCC Leisure Service and local GP practices, innovative and engaging exercise and recreational programmes capitalising on the common's unique physical assets will be developed. The Flintshire LAF have explored ways to work better with the health sector and are supportive of this project. Troedio Clwyd, a walking for health initiative, is also keen to develop routes on the mountain for their members. The Flintshire Leisure Tour route directs visitors onto the common. Working with the Flintshire Tourism Association the project officer will explore ideas designed to encourage visitors to get out of their cars and explore the common by foot. Thus increasing the profile of the area, whilst offering opportunities to benefit from some outdoor exercise.

Community Awareness and Participation

The project officer, as well as overseeing the management works, will encourage and enable appropriate visitor and community usage of the landscape. This will be achieved through the delivery of events, awareness raising and volunteer action. They will also be pro-active in tackling inappropriate behaviour by users such as illegal off-roading, arson and irresponsible dog owners, through working in partnership with the appropriate bodies and user groups. This urban common has pressures from recreation, positive and negative, which also has had an impact on the ability of farm businesses to graze.

There are several organisations which all have a stake or interest in the future development and sustainability of Halkyn mountain. Several of these are represented on the HMJCB but the engagement with the wider community can be sporadic. The project officer will have a key role in establishing more effective communication channels and broadening networking opportunities. Engaging local communities through their participation in volunteering activities and providing them with an opportunity to express their views and ideas will engender a sense of ownership and pride in the area, it will look at a 'whole family approach' from creating childhood memories to enhancing family days through to active retirement activity. Halkyn lies adjacent to one of the most deprived communities in Flintshire and residents will be encouraged to 'step out' into this unique environment and in turn improve their own mental health and wellbeing.

Throughout the duration of this project, all proposed actions will be discussed and agreed with NRW to avoid any potential detrimental impacts and to ensure an effective balance of recreation development and environmental conservation is achieved. Through working in partnership this project seeks to reduce negative behaviours and celebrate positive involvement, thus providing improved social

cohesion.

This project will build on a previous successful model which raised awareness and appreciation of the significant heritage sites across the mountain. The employment of a project officer was successful in safeguarding prominent features such as the lime kilns and educating the public on the mining and industrial activity that has had such an impact on shaping the landscape and communities on the common. The appointment of a project officer will be replicated through this project, however the emphasis will now be on improving the bio-diversity, increasing grazing opportunities, community participation and exploring the potential to utilise the common for recreation, health and wellbeing benefit.

2. Adoption of the Principles for the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources

This project will address the principles of sustainable management of natural resources in the following ways:

Manage adaptively by planning, monitoring, reviewing and where appropriate, changing action

The project management methodology will comprise of four distinctive phases: the initiation, the development, the implementation and the completion of the project. The principles of PRINCE2 project management will be utilised to ensure an effective project management process is achieved. The project officer, in conjunction with the project operation group will plan the anticipated delivery mechanism and monitoring process. In addition they will delegate, monitor and control the various elements of the project to ensure that the project's aims and objectives are fulfilled whilst meeting anticipated expenditure, performance indicators, timescales and key milestones. All risks and issues will be assessed and remedial actions explored with delivery partners, stakeholders and the Welsh Government.

The implementation of issue and change control procedures will ensure that any changes that may affect the project's agreed baselines are identified, assessed and proposed solutions are agreed beforehand to achieve an effective implementation. Issue and change control will be a continual process which will be performed throughout the life of the project.

Grazing can be an adaptive approach to a sensitive landscape, the habitat will be monitored and the evidence obtained will be instrumental in directing the grazing activity to the most appropriate location at the correct time to meet certain stock levels. The overall project management will be adaptive, responding to the needs of the local community, farm businesses and recreation pressures whilst protecting a sensitive environment and eco-system.

Consider the appropriate spatial scale for action

Halkyn Mountain is an area of just under 800 hectares of open access common land. It is firmly embedded in County Council, regional, national and even international policies and strategies. Much of Halkyn Mountain is of national importance as evidenced by designation of 699 hectares as a Site of Special Scientific Interest

(SSSI) and of European importance through designation of 610 hectares Special Area Conservation (SAC). It is a living landscape including five communities and smaller isolated settlements, active 'rights of common', a couple of operational quarries and open access and leisure amenities. The whole of the mountain area is considered to be an appropriate scale and size to achieve the project's objectives. The vegetation management will be undertaken on a scale that will ensure an appropriate approach to grazing in order to achieve a more balanced distribution of grazing activity.

Promote and engage in collaboration and cooperation

NRW Regional Manager, Nick Thomas, has been involved in the design and development of the project and will be an active representative on the project operation group. A range of organisations (as identified in Section 4) will be involved in the design and subsequent operation delivery or strategic direction of the project. Their involvement and participation will ensure local buy-in to the project and provide those with an interest on the mountain an opportunity to influence the project. Groups such as the Grazing Association and the Local Access Forum have key roles to play in driving delivery on this project and are essential in its ongoing sustainability.

Make appropriate arrangements for public participation in decision making

Public participation will be a key measure of the project's success. The project officer will enthuse and encourage a wider involvement and interest in the common by facilitating volunteering opportunities, action days, events and awareness raising activities. Feedback and comments will be obtained and recorded which will be reported back to the project operation group for them to consider and amend the project accordingly. Articles in the 'Halkyn Mountain News' and reports to the town and community councils will provide the means for communicating progress and success to the wider community. Involvement from GPs and leisure activity providers will determine the most appropriate exercise and recreational regimes.

Take account of all relevant evidence and gather evidence in respect of uncertainties

The preparation of an evaluation brief and the appointment of an independent evaluation organisation during the initiation of the project will inform the action planning and monitoring during the subsequent phases of the project. The regular review of progress and evidence by the project operation group will allow the project to adapt in response to any changes or uncertainties that may arise during the lifetime of the project. All social, economic and environmental evidence will be collected on a regular basis and assessed against the project's target indicators and overall aims and objectives. Each partner will also evaluate the success of the project for example NRW's SAC monitoring team could provide a rapid assessment method to inform the project of changes to the habitat to enable an adaptive response to be put in place.

Take account of the benefits and intrinsic value of natural resources and ecosystems

The positive vegetation management programme will reduce the decline in the ecosystem resilience, whilst the long term uplift in grazing will reduce serious damage to the mountain's landscape and habitat. The project officer will have a significant role in raising awareness of the common's special qualities and its intrinsic natural value. The consequences of non-action would be the reduction in grazing, an increase in scrub, and eventually woodland, a loss of biodiversity and a decline in the

special features that are significant to Halkyn Mountain.

Take action to prevent serious or irreversible damage to ecosystems

All of the required biodiversity/ecological habitat assessments will be included within the monitoring and evaluation process. This evidence will be continuously reviewed and if necessary, alternative approaches will be adopted in order to prevent significant damage to ecosystems occurring both during, and after, the project. Throughout the duration of this project, proposed actions will be discussed and agreed with NRW to prevent any potential detrimental impacts on the fragile environment and ecosystems. Fire, antisocial behaviour and in inappropriate management are all factors which can damage this sensitive ecosystem and will be tackled as part of this project.

Take account of the short, medium and long term consequences of actions

The regular project review regime implemented by this project will make it easier to identify the short, medium and long term consequences. The frequency of the reviews by the project operation group will enable the project to act swiftly in response to any consequential actions that are deemed inappropriate.

Take account of the resilience of ecosystems, in particular:

- Diversity within and between ecosystems
- The connections between and within ecosystems
- The scale of ecosystems
- The condition of ecosystems
- The adaptability of ecosystems

The natural, diverse and well-managed ecosystems that could be achieved through this project will be more resilient to long term influences such as climate change. If carefully managed the ecosystems will become more adaptable and resilient to other threats such as recreation pressures, grass/heath fires and over grazing.

The 4 features (calaminarian grassland, European dry heath, semi-natural grassland and scrubland and molinia meadows) identified in the SAC Management Plan will be retained and appropriately managed to encourage their growth and increase biodiversity. These habitats will then support the existence of other species and wildlife, which are critical to the ecosystems of Halkyn mountain.

3. Meeting local opportunities and challenges of targeted area(s)

Halkyn mountain common is a remarkable area which continues to be influenced by a range of often conflicting factors. It is defined as an urban common, although sits in a particularly rural setting with some communities suffering from social and economic deprivation and isolation. The land is almost entirely in the ownership of the Grosvenor Estate.

The HMJCB is a local strategic group representing the wider community and users of the common. Its members have recognised that for many years the common has suffered from a multitude of conflicting users. The general consensus of the HMJCB is that more effective coordinated management of activities on the common will improve the possibility of it realising its full potential. It recognises that the Sustainable

Management Scheme presents an opportunity to resolve a number of these problems through sustained partnership working between all stakeholders working to an agreed vision and end goal. However it acknowledges that a number of challenges and pressures will need to be addressed to reap the rewards of this commitment. The specific issues facing this project are:

Challenges and Pressures:

- Spreading bracken and gorse has the effect of reducing the area available for grazing and for recreation and amenity.
- The dominance of bracken and gorse also diminishes the value of the species-rich grassland and results in a low value ecosystem.
- The common is very exposed and requires effective barriers to protect the landscape from livestock and walkers.
- There are many footpaths and several bridle paths across the common and if not carefully controlled, there is the potential for people to wander over grazing land and sensitive sites.
- Anti-social behaviour such as fly tipping, fires and unauthorised vehicles becomes a cumulative problem if appropriate measures are not put in place.
- An ageing grazing population demographic and declining interest due to poor quality grazing, the economics of upland sheep farming and a feeling that there is no mechanism in place to assist the graziers.
- A lack of understanding by residents and visitors as to what common land is and the implications this imposes on behaviour.
- The lack of public awareness and understanding of the SSSI and SAC designations and their meaning.
- Perception that Halkyn Mountain is an unattractive, sparse environment preventing people from enjoying the unique qualities of the area.

Through the continued involvement of the HMJCB, Graziers and with wider community engagement and participation, it is envisaged that this project will realise and achieve the following:

Opportunities and Solutions

- Gorse and bracken clearance schemes have the advantage of releasing further grazing and therefore preventing problems of overgrazing in other areas of the common.
- Self-seeded indigenous trees are given a better opportunity to establish and flourish.
- Controlled access to environmentally sensitive areas is easier to manage and maintain.
- The appearance of the landscape is vastly improved and the bio-diversity of the common will be enhanced with the presence of high-value and varied wildlife habitats.
- The introduction of cattle grids will prevent livestock from roaming onto certain areas of the common, thus reducing overgrazing and providing areas previously subject to intensive grazing the opportunity to recover and rejuvenate. These grids assist the graziers with the management and

movement of their livestock.

- There is potential to develop a marketable product in the form of Halkyn lamb with local food suppliers, learning good practice from existing schemes, such as the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB grazed lamb or Halkyn compost from the vegetation management, to supply the local communities and reduce the need for peat base composts and improving the economic viability of the common.
- Improved interpretation and awareness raising activities will enable walkers and riders to follow less sensitive routes. This will reduce potential disturbance to grazing stock and provide an opportunity to tackle recreational pressures.
- The common is a popular local amenity site frequently used for traditional recreational activities such as walking, cycling and horse riding. The varied and, in some locations, challenging landscape lends itself to the more contemporary forms of exercise, for example green gyms and outdoor boot camps.
- Embracing visitors and sympathetic high value, low impact tourism development based on a quality product can bring economic benefit to local communities and safeguard and sustain local services.
- The landscape shaped by many years of mining, quarrying and other industrial activity has a certain charm and features which could be promoted as positive qualities.
- The project officer by engaging effectively with a wide cross-section of the community can communicate and educate on the significance of the activities being undertaken and the relevance to the common.
- The project officer, in collaboration with North Wales Police and North Wales Fire Service, could implement a range of measures to tackle the problems of misuse on the common.

The beneficiaries of the project include:

- Local communities and residents
- Local businesses, quarries
- Visitors and tourists
- Graziers
- Land owner

Local people and organisation have strong opinions about the future of 'their' common, which are sometimes divergent. This project provides the opportunity to bring together these differing views to find a common ground. What is clear, is that there a strong sense of loyalty and affection for the common and a desire to safeguard it for the benefit of future generations. This commitment is evidenced not only through active participation in groups such as the HMJCB, but also through the financial contributions made by a number stakeholders towards this project.

4. Governance, Project Management and Outcomes

Governance

The overarching steering group for the project will be the HMJCB. It will provide

strategic direction, determine priorities and advise on where resources should be targeted. The group was established in 1990 with the primary objectives to:

- Promote liaison between the different bodies and organisations.
- Identify areas that would benefit from joint initiative and the promotion of necessary action to achieve results.
- Act as the forum for the exchange of views and ideas.
- Assist with the resolution of potential conflicts of interest.
- Preserve Halkyn Mountain Common's conservation value.

It comprises membership of a wide range of organisations that represent varied interests on the common. Organisations that sit on the HMJCB include:

- Flintshire County Council
- Natural Resources Wales
- Grosvenor Estates
- Halkyn Mountain Graziers
- Town and Community Councils
- Fire and Rescue, North Wales Police
- Local Access Forum
- Quarries

The HMJCB has historically worked closely with a number of delivery organisations, such as FCC and NRW, and have been able to support various conservation and countryside schemes undertaken on the common.

A project operation group has already been established and has been instrumental in the design and development of the proposed project. This group initially comprises representatives from FCC, NRW, Graziers and North Wales Wildlife Trust, with the potential to encompass the involvement of other organisations that will play a key role in project delivery. This will operate as a working group, assessing progress and performance, identifying problems, assessing risk and recommending solutions and remedial actions. This group will report on a quarterly basis to the HMJCB.

The project will be managed on a day-to-day basis by FCC's Countryside Service. The project officer will be employed by North Wales Wildlife Trust but will be line managed by FCC's Access and Natural Environment Manager. A Service Level Agreement will be in place between the two organisations, setting out the roles and responsibilities and lines of accountability for the project.

In addition to the supervision of the project officer, FCC will have responsibility for a number of duties associated with running a project of this nature:

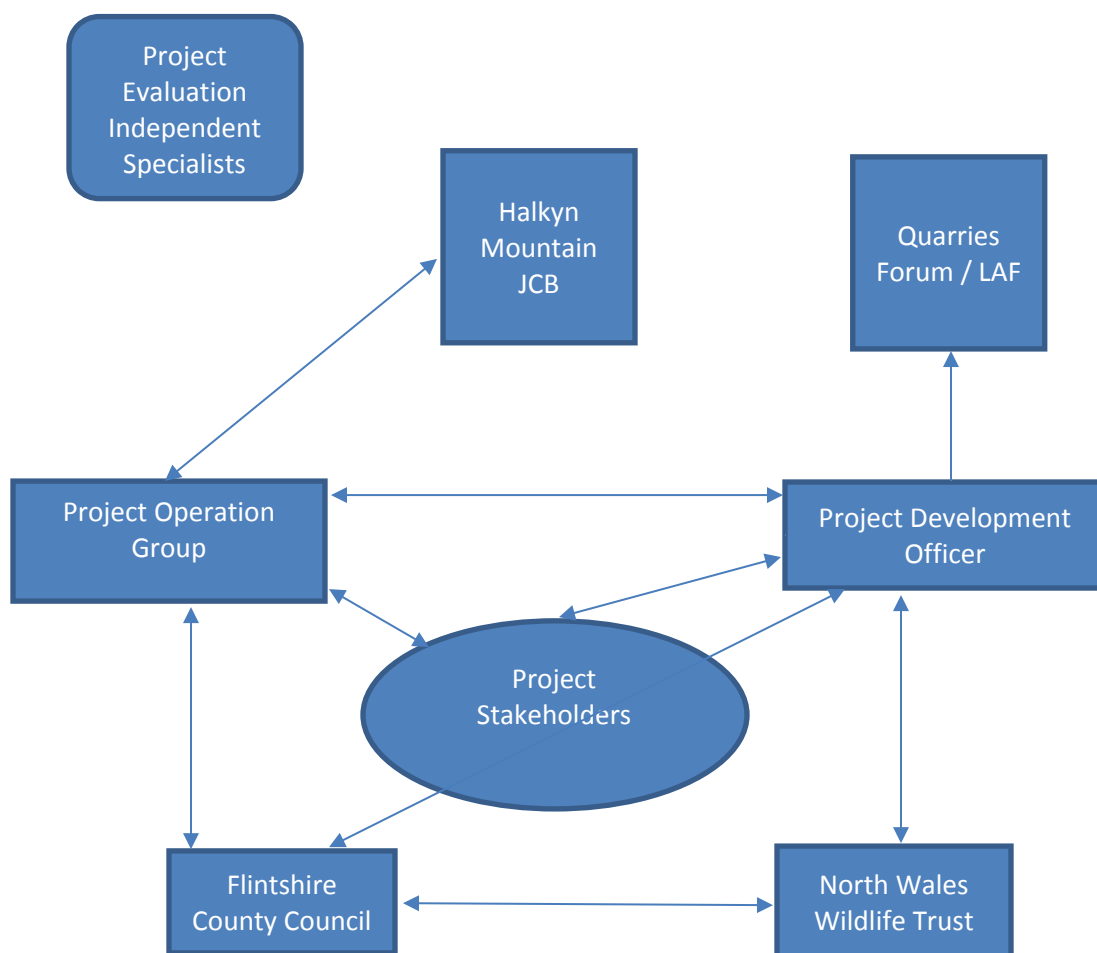
- Countryside Services – overall accountability of the project, line management of project officer, monitoring and evaluation, performance management, procurement, contract management, promotion and publicity, regular dialogue with Welsh Government.
- Enterprise and Regeneration Service – assist with establishing the required programme management systems and procedures, ensure working practices and governance arrangements comply with European programme regulations.

- Finance – compilation and submission of financial claims, provision of accounting information.
- Streetscene Service – procurement and contract management of the installation of the cattle grids.

In addition to the above, independent specialists will be commissioned to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the project.

The project officer will also attend the Quarries Forum (which comprise membership of Cemex, Tarmac) and Local Access Forum to inform of progress and identify potential collaborative actions.

The governance structure, reporting and communication channels are illustrated in the diagram below.



Project Management

Day-to-day project management responsibility would sit with FCC with support and advice provided by the project operation group. If in the event that the proposal was

successful in its application for funding, the following methodology would be adopted:

Initiation of Project

- Advertise, recruit and appoint the project officer.
- Prepare project evaluation brief, invite organisations with the relevant experience and specialist skills to tender and appoint successful company.
- Prepare designs and specification for the cattle grids.
- Remind and inform key stakeholders, beneficiaries and partners of the objectives of the project and identify measures to secure their effective participation.
- Devise an appropriate communication strategy.
- Devise a project exit strategy with successor activities and recommendations for sustainable actions.
- Establish project management procedures that comply with EU funded programme regulations.

Development of Project

- Identify priority locations where vegetation management is critical.
- Design a programme of activity for community engagement.
- Project officer to forge effective working relationships, particularly with the HMJCB and the project operation group representatives.
- Identify appropriate, complementary health and recreation activities.
- Promote the project to the public and wider community.
- Undertake baseline monitoring and evaluation.
- Procure a specialist company to install the cattle grids.

Implementation of Project

- Monitor bracken and gorse clearance activities to ensure that they are sympathetic to the sensitive environment and will maximise grazing opportunities.
- Promote the benefits of grazing and encourage graziers to consider the benefits of a land management scheme such as Glastir.
- Monitor the project's impact on the mountain's ecosystem and wildlife habitats.
- Implement a range of community actions, including volunteering opportunities, events and awareness raising activities.
- Implement an exercise and recreation programme designed to improve the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of the local communities.
- Ensure the cattle grids have been installed in line with the design specification.
- Monitor the project's performance regarding timescales, budget, milestones and performance indicators.
- Undertake regular liaison and reporting with all partners, stakeholders and the Welsh Government.

Completion of Project

- Ensure that all activities are completed to schedule, budget and in accordance with the project brief and overall aims and objectives.

- Complete project evaluation and disseminate findings with all interest parties.
- Obtain feedback from partners, stakeholders and the local community.
- Promote the success of the project, its benefits and impacts.
- Implement the actions identified in the exit strategy designed to ensure sustainable results.
- Submit final claim and all performance measurement evidence to Welsh Government.

Outputs

The specific outputs that the project will achieve are as follows:

- Delivery of 2 cattle grids in year 1
- Development of 3 grids in year 2
- Delivery of 3 grids in year 3
- Project officer employed for the duration of the project
- 8Ha gorse cut per annum
- 2Ha scrub cut per annum
- 8Ha bracken crushed per annum
- Invasive species controlled, e.g. Cotoneaster, Crassula
- 10 grazing rights activated with an increase in 300 stock on the mountain
- 30 Ha increase in grazing pasture
- 15 events and education activities held per annum
- 15 recreation and exercise activities held per annum
- 6 community action days per annum (including volunteering activity, litter picks, environmental enhancement schemes).
- 2 articles in the Halkyn Mountain News per annum
- 2 Police coordination exercises per annum
- 1 fire control exercise per annum

Outcomes

It is anticipated that the outcomes and achievements of this project will address 'improved diversity and extent of outdoor recreation facilities' and 'better management and use of designated sites' through the following:

- Vegetation management and clearance schemes will release further land for grazing, thus minimizing pressure on areas that are currently being overgrazed. This will result in a more balanced approach of land uses on a delicate environment.
- Indigenous plants and species will be given the opportunity to flourish resulting in a more resilient and diverse ecosystem.
- Livestock movement will be controlled, assisting graziers and safeguarding sensitive habitats and landscapes.
- Additional graziers, particularly the younger generation, will exercise their rights to graze.
- The appearance of the landscape will be enhanced and be more aesthetically appealing.

- Controlled access and management of leisure and recreation activities will reduce disturbance to livestock and wildlife whilst conserving and protecting sensitive sites.
- The negative image attached to the mountain has the potential to be reversed with the sparse landscape portrayed as an unusual feature capable of hosting or attracting innovative activities.
- Through the implementation of a range of exercises and recreational activities, significant health conditions such as obesity, diabetes and mental health conditions could be alleviated.
- A more cohesive approach to the management and long term sustainability of the common will be adopted, with local buy-in and ownership from key stakeholders and the mountain's communities.
- Economic activity in farm businesses is improved

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation will play an essential part of the process in assessing the effectiveness of the project and its results. It will help inform whether the project's aims and objectives are being met and will reveal areas where activity has been successful or areas where revisions are required and where improvements need to be made.

The project officer will be required to submit project updates detailing information such as: vegetation management results, grazier engagement and levels of grazing activity, engagement with communities, stakeholders and partner organisations, development of leisure, recreation, health and wellbeing activities and promotion and awareness raising campaigns.

The data and information to be collected and reviewed will be obtained from a range of sources. NRW will provide baseline habitat quality data and maps to establish a starting position for the project which will be reviewed annually. Fixed point photography over the duration of the project will evidence the landscape changes. The graziers will report on the increase in sheep grazing as a result of the improved vegetation and the installation of cattle grids. Local GP practices and the health board will provide statistics and feedback on the numbers participating in the health and recreation initiatives and their impact on addressing debilitating illnesses. Visitor counters and feedback forms will capture the numbers of people participating in the volunteering activities, community awareness days and promotion events.

The various FCC officers participating in the project will be involved in collecting and collating all information and evidence that will be used to steer the project, evaluate its impact and provide the necessary detail to compile reports and financial claims to Welsh Government. Individual project files will be set up and the information will be kept in a clear and transparent manner for project management and audit purposes.

This information and the progress of the project will be reviewed on a monthly basis by the project operation group. The purpose of these reviews will be to measure the

progress of the project against the anticipated outputs and indicators, identify whether the project is in line with the expected expenditure profile and check that milestones and timescales are met. These reviews will also provide the opportunity to take the necessary measures at an operational level to address any problems that are arising.

Quarterly reporting will be then conducted with the HMJCB. This will measure the impact of the project on a more strategic level and determine whether it is achieving its overall aim and objectives. The various partners will have the opportunity to recommend remedial courses of action and for alternative approaches to be considered if the project is failing to make the anticipated impact.

Welsh Government will be notified of any fundamental changes to the project, at an operational or strategic level, and where required project amendment documentation will be submitted.

Evaluation from the onset of the project will be required to ensure that the approach adopted is still relevant to the situation and circumstances. Targets and performance measures will enable the assessment of specific tasks to determine whether they are having any impact.

Independent evaluation of the project will be undertaken by a third party organisation. Project partners with particular areas of expertise and specialisms will also have the opportunity to participate in the evaluation process. The appointment of the evaluation organisation will be carried out in the initiation phase of the project. This will engender a better understanding of the project's aims and objectives, allow an input into the design and delivery of the project and develop an effective working relationship with the various delivery partners and stakeholders.

An agreed baseline will be established representing the starting or current position against which the project can be measured and the evaluators will then adopt various evaluation techniques to measure performance and the project's effectiveness. The process will involve:

- Identifying the objectives to be measured.
- Selecting the most appropriate techniques or tools.
- Applying the techniques and obtaining the results.
- Analysing the results.
- Evaluating what this means and adapting the project accordingly to ensure improvement.

Examples of evaluation techniques that could be utilised for this project include:

- Ecological monitoring
- Vegetation surveys
- Recording grazing numbers
- Focus groups
- Household surveys
- Business surveys
- Website blogs providing feedback and suggestions

- Participation forms
- Attendance at stakeholder meetings to gauge opinions
- Visitor counters
- Analysis of health statistics

Through regular review meetings with the project operation group and the HMJCB, steps will be put in place to devise an exit strategy for the project. The overall intention of this project is to raise the quality and diversity of the common's landscape and wildlife habitats and sympathetically develop its grazing, leisure and recreation potential. Thus the legacy of this project is that through the investments made and the support provided the quality, the viability and sustainability of Halkyn Mountain common will be enhanced and continue beyond the life of the project.

Declaration by Applicant

- I declare that the information contained in this application is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.
- I confirm that I have read and understood the Scheme and EOI Guidance Notes and any other technical guidance that has been issued and that I am authorised to sign / submit this application.
- I undertake to notify the Welsh Government of any other application for grant aid for this project.
- I confirm that no work on this project has started.
- I acknowledge that neither the Welsh Government nor any adviser appointed by the Welsh Government shall be responsible for any advice given, including without limit any advice given in relation to this application and business plan, and that I am solely responsible for all business decisions undertaken.

ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE: By emailing this form to the Welsh Government's Sustainable Management Scheme email address you are making the declaration above.

Date: 25th November 2016
Name: Tom Woodall
Company / Organisation: Flintshire County Council
Position: Access & Natural Environment Manager