



COFNOD O BENDERFYNIAD WEDI'I DDIRPRWYO GAN SWYDDOG
RECORD OF DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION

Penderfyniad Allweddol | Key Decision ✓

Mae'r Penderfyniad Wedi'i Ddirprwyo hwn wedi'i bennu yn 'Benderfyniad Allweddol' gan ei fod yn debygol o:

This Delegated Decision has been established as a 'Key Decision' as it is likely:

a) arwain at y Cyngor yn ysgwyddo gwariant sylweddol neu wneud arbedion sylweddol;
to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant;

*

neu / or:

b) fod yn arwyddocaol o ran sut mae'n effeithio ar gymunedau sy'n byw neu'n gweithio mewn ardal sy'n cynnwys dwy etholaeth neu adran etholiadol neu ragor.
to be significant in terms of its effects on Communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral wards.

*

c) Eraill / Other:

PWNC | SUBJECT:

Lost Peatlands - Landscape Connections Project Partnership

DIBEN YR ADRODDIAD | PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:

This report has been prepared to accompany the intended officer decision of the Director, Prospects and Development as described below.

The purpose of the report is to:-

- Seek approval for Rhondda Cynon Taf Council to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with a group of cross-sector organisations and contribute £10k of match-funding during the development phase (2025/2026 – Year 1) of the project with a further contribution of £2k during the delivery phase (Year 2 – Year 5).
- Provide details on the Project Partnership and its proposed purpose.

PENDERFYNIAD WEDI'I DDIRPRWYO | DELEGATED DECISION:

It is AGREED that:

- The Council will enter into the Memorandum of Understanding and contribute £10k of match-funding to the development phase of the project (2025/2026 - Year 1) with a further contribution of £2k during the delivery phase (Year 2 - Year 5).



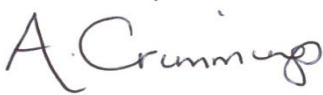


Llofnod y Prif Swyddog
Chief Officer Signature

Simon Gale	Director, Prosperity and Development	11 June 2025
Enw (priflythrennau) Name (Print Name)	Swydd Designation	Dyddiad Date

Mae'r penderfyniad yn cael ei wneud yn unol ag Adran 15 o Ddeddf Llywodraeth Leol 2000 (Swyddogaethau'r Corff Gweithredol) ac yn y cylch gorchwyl sy wedi'i nodi yn Adran 5 o Ran 3 o Gyfansoddiad y Cyngor.

The decision is taken in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act, 2000 (Executive Functions) and in the terms set out in Section 5 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

YMGYNGHORI | CONSULTATION

	Cllr A. Crimmings, Cabinet Member for Environment & Leisure	4 June 2025
	Cllr C. Leyshon, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Youth Participation and Climate Change	4 June 2025
	Cllr M. Norris, Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development	4 June 2025
LLOFNOD YR AELOD YMGYNGHOR O'R CABINET CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE	ENW A SWYDD NAME AND DESIGNATION	DYDDIAD DATE

LLOFNODSWYDDOG YMGYNGHOROL CONSULTEE OFFICER SIGNATURE	ENW A SWYDD NAME AND DESIGNATION	DYDDIAD DATE

A FYDD Y PENDERFYNIAD YMA'N CAEL EFFAITH AR Y WARD?

WILL THIS DECISION HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE WARD?

BYDD | YES ✓

NA FYDD | NO

Unrhyw sylwadau pellach/Oes angen rhoi gwybod i'r Aelod Lleol: ✓

Any further comments/Need for Local Member to be informed:

RHEOLAU'R WEITHDREFN GALW-I-MEWN | CALL IN PROCEDURE RULES.

A YW'R PENDERFYNIAD YN UN BRYN A HEB FOD YN DESTUN PROSES GALW-I-MEWN GAN Y PWYLLGOR TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU?:

IS THE DECISION DEEMED URGENT AND NOT SUBJECT TO CALL-IN BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

YDY | YES x

NAC YDY | NO ✓

Rheswm dros fod yn fater brys | Reason for Urgency:

Os yw'n cael ei ystyried yn fater brys - llofnod y Llywydd, y Dirprwy Lywydd neu Bennaeth y Gwasanaeth Cyflogedig yn cadarnhau cytundeb fod y penderfyniad arfaethedig yn rhesymol yn yr holl amgylchiadau iddo gael ei drin fel mater brys, yn unol â rheol gweithdrefn trosolwg a chraffu 17.2:

If deemed urgent - signature of Presiding Member or Deputy Presiding Member or Head of Paid Service confirming agreement that the proposed decision is reasonable in all the circumstances for it being treated as a matter of urgency, in accordance with the overview and scrutiny procedure rule 17.2:

.....
(Llywydd | Presiding Member)

.....
(Dyddiad | Date)

DS - Os yw hwn yn benderfyniad sy'n cael ei ail-ystyried yna does dim modd galw'r penderfyniad i mewn a bydd y penderfyniad yn dod i rym o'r dyddiad mae'r penderfyniad wedi'i lofnodi.

NB - If this is a reconsidered decision then the decision Cannot be Called In and the decision will take effect from the date the decision is signed.

AT DDEFNYDD Y SWYDDFA YN UNIG | FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

DYDDIADAU CYHOEDDI A GWEITHREDU | PUBLICATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATES

CYHOEDDI | PUBLICATION

Cyhoeddi ar Wefan y Cyngor | Publication on the Council's Website:- _____ 11.06.25 _____

DYDDIAD | DATE

GWEITHREDU'R PENDERFYNIAD | IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

Nodwch: Fydd y penderfyniad hwn ddim yn dod i rym nac yn cael ei weithredu'n llawn nes cyn pen 3 diwrnod gwaith ar ôl ei gyhoeddi. Nod hyn yw ei alluogi i gael ei "Alw i Mewn" yn unol â Rheol 17.1, Rheolau Gweithdrefn Trosolwg a Chraffu.

Note: This decision will not come into force and may not be implemented until the expiry of 3 clear working days after its publication to enable it to be the subject to the Call-In Procedure in Rule 17.1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

Yn amodol ar y drefn "Galw i Mewn", caiff y penderfyniad ei roi ar waith ar:

Subject to Call In the implementation date will be:

_____ 17.06.25 _____
DYDDIAD / DATE

WEDI'I GYMERADWYO I'W GYHOEDDI: ✓ | APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION :✓

Rhagor o wybodaeth | Further Information:

Cyfadrn Directorate:	Prosperity and Development
Enw'r Person Cyswllt Contact Name:	Jim Bailey
Swydd Designation:	Head of Planning
Rhif Ffôn Telephone Number:	01443 281114

DELEGATED DECISION

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO ACCOMPANY A DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT

June 2025

LOST PEATLANDS - LANDSCAPE CONNECTIONS PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

AUTHOR(s): Jim Bailey, Head of Planning

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for Rhondda Cynon Taf Council to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with a group of cross-sector organisations and contribute £10k of match-funding to the development phase (Year 1) of the Lost Peatlands – Landscape Connections Project with a further contribution of £2k during the delivery phase (Year 2-Year 5).
- 1.2 Provide details on the Project Partnership and its proposed purpose.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 The Council enters into the Memorandum of Understanding and;
- 2.2 Contributes £10k of match-funding during the development phase of the project (2025/2026 – Year 1) with a further contribution of £2k during the delivery phase (Year 2-Year 5).

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 An Expression of Interest was submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), led by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council in April 2024 outlining proposals to build upon the successes and lessons learnt from the successful NLHF funded Lost Peatlands Project Round 1 to expand and continue that work through a successor project.
- 3.2 Subsequently Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council was invited to submit a full application in August 2024 providing further information about the partnership project.
- 3.3 The project was approved by the NLHF in December 2024 .

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The purpose of Lost Peatlands - Landscape Connections Project Partnership is to reverse the decline of the South Wales Valleys' natural and cultural heritage, restore peat as a natural carbon sink, reconnect Valley's communities with their local biodiversity, landscapes and histories, and foster greater awareness of specific environmental issues and Solutions of the Valley's.
- 4.2 The total grant awarded for the development phase (2025-2026 - Year 1) was £201,967 with the intention to accumulate £40,500 (£25,500 cash and £15,000 non-cash).
- 4.3 The total grant awarded for the delivery phase (2026-2030 - Years 2 to 5) is £2,205,743 (cash) with the intention to accumulate £582,000 of match funding (£472,000 cash and £110,000 non-cash). Full spend must be defrayed by 31 March 2030 and it is the intention to start this phase in March 2026.

5.0 DETAILS OF THE LOST PEATLANDS - LANDSCAPE CONNECTIONS PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

- 5.1 The NLHF landscape-scale partnership project aims to restore areas within upland landscape of the Upper Avon and Neath Valleys in Neath Port Talbot and the Upper Rhondda Fawr and Cynon Valleys in Rhondda Cynon Taf, whilst helping local communities explore and enjoy the landscape on their doorstep and immerse themselves in the fascinating history and heritage of the area.
- 5.2 Following the NLHF funded Lost Peatlands Project Round 1, a full application was submitted for Lost Peatlands Project Round 2. The partnership, comprising of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Woodland Trust (Coed Cadw), Pen Y Cymoedd Wind Farm Limited, Small Woods/Coed Lleol and Natural Resources Wales will deliver the following outcomes:
 - Double the project area to re-connect the people of four Valleys (Avon; Neath; Rhondda and Cynon) with their landscape and its heritage whilst doubling the community reach.
 - Restore, enhance and protect nature at multiple sites, particularly upland habitats (peatlands) containing significant carbon stores to support nature recovery; address the climate/nature emergencies; and develop restoration best practice. This includes peatbogs owned by RCT Council at Cwmparc.
 - Deliver activities, resources, training and volunteering opportunities to change perceptions and engender better understanding and awareness of environmental issues whilst encouraging pride in local heritage. The projects identifies Dare Valley and Clydach Vale Country Parks as key RCT project hubs.

- Support communities to improve their health, wellbeing, education and heritage skills through community outreach and place making. The partnership will work with local health boards, schools, third sector organisations and volunteer groups to reach multigenerational and diverse populations of people.
- Work with history and nature groups/organisations to identify, document and revitalise the story of these Valleys through interactive outputs such as digital resources (Mobile App & Website Maps) and community art schemes.

6.0 BENEFITS AND IMPACT

- 6.1 The monitoring to date proves that expanding peatland restoration within the area - one of the largest areas of connected peat in Wales - will reduce carbon emissions, develop best practice examples of how to reduce wildfire risk, and review how positive land management interventions can benefit natural flood management and water quality. Without intervention the peatlands of the area will continue to degrade and release carbon.
- 6.2 Land-use change has resulted in nature becoming fragmented. Poor management, neglect, wildfire and lack of awareness means sites are in poor condition and at risk of loss. Welsh Government, State of Nature Reports have highlighted the low resilience of Welsh habitats/species to environmental change, and recommends that action is needed to promote recovery - especially through restoration/management to create a network of good quality habitats. Awareness raising and education will encourage people to better understand and value their local nature.
- 6.3 The impacts of Covid-19 and the recent cost-of-living crisis has increased the importance of promoting green space access for wellbeing, health and education opportunities - particularly in deprived communities. The Lost Peatlands 1 project was very successful in promoting community engagement with the 'outdoors', and the Lost Peatlands – Landscape Connections project has been specifically designed to build on and extend that program of works.
- 6.4 The Valleys' rich industrial heritage and story is at risk of being lost due to declining populations of first-hand witnesses, whilst ancient history is only starting to be unearthed. Through use of digital technologies, recording and interpretation, the project will collect local information and present a landscapes' story that is accessible to future generations.
- 6.5 The inclusion of Dare Valley Country Park and Clydach Vale Country Park will also expand the reach of community engagement activity.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 7.1 There is no requirement for an Equality Impact Assessment or Socio-Economic Analysis for the purposes of this report, but on a project basis the requirements for assessments will be met at the appropriate stages of project development.

8.0 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 A Welsh Language impact assessment has not been undertaken as part of this project proposal however all signage and publicity will be bilingual, meeting all relevant standards.

9.0 CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 9.1 Relevant service areas within the Council have been consulted, including Finance.

10.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 10.1 A match funding amount of £10k has been secured through the Council's Carbon Reduction budget.
- 10.2 The £2k will be funded by the Council's revenue budget during the delivery phase (Years 2-5).

11.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 11.1 Legal colleagues were consulted as part of the construction of the Memorandum of Understanding and their recommendations were implemented.

12.1 LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

- 12.1 The successful delivery of the project will contribute to two of the Well-being objectives "Nature and Environment" and "Culture, Heritage and Welsh Language" within the 2024-2030 Corporate Plan; by providing a green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT's environment and nature and recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future. This project will help to reduce carbon emissions and increase carbon capture and nature by rewetting and restoring our peat bogs.
- 12.2 The project will make a positive impact on the Welsh Government's Well-being of Future Generations Act by contributing to improving the economic, social, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of Wales and the National Well-being Indicators Framework.

13.0 STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

13.1 The proposal is considered strategic to the whole of the borough.

14.0 CONCLUSION

14.1 The Lost Peatlands 1 project, which finished in March 2025 delivered important environmental and community benefits for an area of Rhondda Cynon Taf closest to the Pen Y Cymoedd Windfarm scheme. Such was the success of Lost Peatlands 1, that the National Heritage Lottery Fund has approved the continuation and expansion of this program of works for a further 5 years through the new Lost Peatlands – Landscape Connection project. This will benefit more of our environment and more of our communities. The Memorandum of Understanding between Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, and Neath Port Talbot Council, and other project partners, provides the basis of the funding and staff commitment from Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council to support and deliver its contribution to the project. This Report is seeking permission for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council to sign that Memorandum of Understanding.

Other Information: -

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee