



**Cyfoeth
Naturiol
Cymru**
**Natural
Resources
Wales**

Creating an Effective Outdoor Sector Network

Wales Adventure Tourism Organisation
The Outdoor Partnership



Crynodeb Gweithredol

Mae arlwy gweithgareddau awyr agored Cymru gyda'r gorau yn y byd ac mae'n cyfrannu'n sylweddol at dwristiaeth a'r economi yng Nghymru. Mae'r sector awyr agored yn cynnwys sefydliadau sy'n cyflwyno gweithgareddau gweithredol, cymhwysol a/neu fentrus yn yr awyr agored. Yn gyffredinol, gellir rhannu'r sector yn ôl 'polisi' a 'gweithgarwch'. Mae polisi yn cynnwys asiantaethau llywodraethol ac anlywodraethol sy'n rheoli'r isadeiledd, y gwaith hyrwyddo neu hyfforddiant. Mae gweithgarwch yn cynnwys busnesau sy'n darparu atyniadau, cyfranogwyr achlysurol a chwaraeon ffurfiol. Bu datblygiadau sylweddol yn y sector yn ystod y ddwy flynedd ddiwethaf ac mae'r adroddiad hwn yn eu defnyddio i gyflwyno argymhellion ynghylch cyfeiriad y sector yn y dyfodol.

Methodoleg

Sefydlwyd Grŵp Llywio a oedd yn cynnwys cynrychiolaeth o Gymdeithas Twristiaeth Gweithgareddau Cymru, y Bartneriaeth Awyr Agored, Eryri Egniol, Fforwm Arfordir Penfro, a Grŵp Darparu Gweithgareddau Awyr Agored De Cymru, er mwyn casglu ac adrodd safbwyntiau'r rheiny sy'n cynrychioli'r sector awyr agored. Cynhaliwyd tri digwyddiad ymgysylltu rhanbarthol ac un digwyddiad cenedlaethol i randdeiliaid allweddol i gasglu safbwyntiau ledled y sector. Gofynnwyd i'r mynychwyr ystyried natur y sector awyr agored a ffurf a swyddogaeth rhwydwaith arfaethedig i'w wasanaethu.

Digwyddiadau i Randdeiliaid

Daeth mwy na 90 o bobl i'r digwyddiadau rhanbarthol. Bu i'r digwyddiadau hyn nodi natur amrywiol y busnesau a'r sefydliadau y gellid eu cynnwys fel rhan o'r sector awyr agored. Ystyriwyd swyddogaeth rhwydwaith posibl a'r heriau y byddai'n eu hwynebu. Y prif bryderon oedd:

- Rhanddeiliaid bychan/microfentrau yw mwyafrif y sector, heb gysylltiad rhwng y rheiny sy'n llunio polisi a'r rheiny sy'n cyflwyno'r gweithgareddau.
- Diffyg 'un llais' yn siarad ar ran y sector cyfan.
- Diffyg neges gyffredin yn arwain at broffil is i'r sector nag y mae'n ei haeddu.
- Diffyg 'siop un stop' y gall asiantaethau allanol ymwneud â hi.

Ar y cyfan, cytunwyd y gallai'r rhwydwaith arfaethedig fod o gymorth yn hyn o beth, ond bod gofyn i unrhyw ddatblygiad ystyried y rhwydweithiau presennol, gan osgoi creu strwythur fyddai'n gofyn am ormod o adnoddau i allu gweithredu'n gynaliadwy.

Roedd 26 o gynrychiolwyr eraill yn y digwyddiad i randdeiliaid allweddol. Gwnaethant hefyd ystyried yr heriau sy'n gysylltiedig â sefydlu rhwydwaith, gan wneud awgrymiadau ynghylch y broses y gellid ei dilyn i'w datrys. Gwnaethant nodi cost, swyddogaeth y rhwydwaith, cyd-destun o ran fforymau eraill, y llwybr sy'n arwain at greu ymddiriedaeth, a swyddogaeth polisi'r rhwydwaith fel y prif heriau. Nodwyd ffactorau ar gyfer llwyddiant hefyd o ran strwythur, uchelgais, ennyn diddordeb a pherchnogaeth, a'r cyngor oedd y dylid ehangu ar y ddogfen '6 Egwyddor Allweddol' yn y lle cyntaf i gynnwys argymhellion y gynhadledd Ysbrydoli trwy Antur.

Sefydlu Rhwydwaith

Gwnaeth y Grŵp Llywio roi sylw i adborth y sesiynau ymgysylltu er mwyn awgrymu datblygiad a fyddai'n cynnwys Cynghrair a Phorth. Bwriedir i'r Gynghrair fod yn gwmni cyfyngedig a fyddai'n cydlynu prosiectau ac yn helpu pobl a sefydliadau i ddod ynghyd i geisio am gyllid. Gallai unrhyw berson yn y sector ymaelodi wrth gytuno i'r '6 egwyddor allweddol' a byddai'r berthynas yn cael ei rheoli ar sail rithiol, drwy'r Porth a thrwy Femoranda Cyd-ddealltwriaeth.

Adnodd ar-lein fyddai'r Porth gyda'r nod o hwyluso trafodaeth rhwng carfannau polisi a gweithgarwch y sector. Byddai holl fusnes y Gynghrair yn cael ei gynnal drwy'r Porth (gan gynnwys pleidleisio a Chyfarfodydd Cyffredinol Blyneddol). Hwn hefyd fyddai'r prif gyfrwng ar gyfer awgrymu syniadau am brosiectau a datblygu partneriaethau, gan hwyluso'r canlynol:

- Lledaenu a chofnodi gwybodaeth ac arfer gorau
- Gwneud pawb â buddiant yn rhan o'r sgwrs
- Cynyddu tryloywder oddi fewn ac oddi allan i'r sector
- Osgoi dyblygu prosiectau neu eu datblygu mewn modd ynysig

Yr enw ar y ddau endid hyn ar y cyd fyddai: **Cynghrair Awyr Agored**

Cynhaliwyd dadansoddiad o'r bwch sy'n bodoli gyda'r rhwydweithiau presennol hefyd i sefydlu sut y byddai Cynghrair Awyr Agored Cymru yn ategu at y gweithgarwch presennol yn hytrach nag amharu arno. Teimlwyd mai prif rinweddau Cynghrair a Phorth, o'u cymharu â rhwydweithiau, oedd y byddent yn:

- Cynrychioli holl sefydliadau a busnesau'r sector awyr agored yn ddiwahân, waeth beth fo'u maint a'u gweithgarwch
- Datblygu prosiectau traws sector i gyflawni amcanion cyffredin a bod â'r gallu i gael mynediad at gyllid i'w cyflawni
- Cyfathrebu â darparwyr gweithgarwch awyr agored o bob math
- Cynnig ffordd o negodi ac uno 'llais' y sector a'i fynegi'n effeithiol wrth y llywodraeth

I gloi, amlinellwyd rhai o amcanion Cynghrair Awyr Agored Cymru gan ragweld hyd a lled llwyddiant.

Argymhellion

Mae'r adroddiad yn argymhell fod y sector awyr agored yn cymeradwyo 'Cynghrair Awyr Agored Cymru' fel enw ar y 'rhwydwaith'; yn cymeradwyo strwythur sy'n adlewyrchu safbwyntiau'r rheiny a ymgynghorwyd â nhw yn ystod y broses hon; ac yn ystyried fframwaith cyfreithiol y Gynghrair i'r dyfodol yn ystod y tymor canol a'r tymor hir. Law yn llaw â hynny, argymhellir bod y sector hefyd yn cymeradwyo cynllun busnes Cynghrair Awyr Agored Cymru, sy'n amlinellu'r cynllun busnes ar gyfer Cynghrair o'r fath yn glir ac yn cyfuno Chwe Egwyddor Allweddol y Sector Awyr Agored, argymhellion yr Adroddiad Iechyd a Mentergarwch Naturiol, y gynhadledd Ysbrydoli trwy Antur, a sylwadau'r rheiny a ymgynghorwyd â nhw drwy gydol yr ymgynghoriad hwn.

Executive Summary

Wales has a world class offer for outdoor activities that contributes significantly to tourism in Wales and the economy. The Outdoor Sector consist of the organisations that service active, applicative and/or adventurous activities in the outdoor. Generally the sector can be divided into 'policy' and 'activity'. Policy comprises of government and non-government organisations that manage infrastructure, promotion or training. Activity comprises of businesses that including activity provides, attractions, casual participants and formal sports. The past two years have seen some major developments in the sector and this report uses these to make recommendations for the future direction of the sector.

Methodology

A Steering Group comprising of representation from the Wales Adventure Tourism Organisations, The Outdoor Partnership, Snowdonia Active, Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum and the South Wales Outdoor Activity Provider Group was established to capture and report the views of those who represent the outdoor sector. Three regional engagement events and one national key stakeholder event was held to gather views from across the sector. Participants were asked to consider the nature of the outdoor sector and the form and function of a possible network to serve it.

Stakeholder Events

There were over 90 attendees to the regional events. The events identified the diverse nature of businesses and organisations that could be included as part of the outdoor sector. It looked at the role of a possible network and the challenges it would face. The main concerns were that there is:

- A sector comprising a majority of small stakeholders/micro enterprises with no link between those producing policy and those delivering activity.
- The absence of a 'single voice' speaking on behalf of the sector.
- A lack of a uniform message giving rise to a lower profile than the sector deserves.
- Lack of a 'one stop shop' to which external agencies can engage.

It was generally agreed that the proposed network could help with this but that any development needed to be mindful of existing forums and not create a structure that would be too resource heavy to be able to operate sustainably.

There were a further 26 representatives at the key stockholder event. They also looked at the challenges associated with setting up a network and made suggestions about the process that could be taken to resolve these. They identified cost, role of the network, context to other forums, route to trust and networks policy role as the key challenges. They also identified success factors in terms of structure, ambition, sign up and ownership and advised that one of the first goals should be to expands the '6 Key Principals' document to include the recommendations of the Inspiring Through Adventure Conference.

Establishing a Network

The Steering Group drew from the feedback from the engagement sessions to suggest a development that would include an Alliance and a Portal. The Alliance would be a limited company that would act as coordinator for projects and help people and organizations group together and apply for funding. Membership would be open to any person in the sector that signed up to the '6 key principals' and relationships would be managed virtually, though the Portal, and through MoUs.

The Portal would be an online tool that would help facilitate discussion between the policy and activity sides of the sector. All the Alliance business would be carried out through the Portal (including voting and AGMs). It would also be the main interface through which project ideas would be raised and partnerships developed, helping:

- Disseminate and archive knowledge and best practice
- Bring all interested stakeholders into the conversation
- Increase transparency within and outside the sector
- Avoid projects being duplicated or developed in silos

The combination of these two entities would be called the: **Outdoor Alliance**

A gap analysis was also carried out with existing networks to see how the Wales Outdoor Alliance would complement and not supplant existing activity. The main points that it was felt that the Alliance and Portal offer that networks do not is that it would:

- Represent all outdoor sector organisations and businesses, irrespective of size or activity
- Develop cross sector projects to deliver against common goals, and be able to access funds to deliver them
- Communicate with outdoor activity providers across all activities and disciplines
- Provide a method of negotiating and unifying the sectors 'voice' and delivering it effectively to government

It concluded by outlining some of the goals of the Wales Outdoor Alliance and what success would look like.

Recommendations

The report recommends that the Outdoor Sector endorses the name of 'the network' as 'OUTDOOR ALLIANCE' (OA), endorses a structure that reflects the views of those consulted during this process, give consideration to the future legal framework for the Alliance in the medium to long term. In doing this the sector also endorses the Wales Outdoor Alliance Business Plan which clearly lays out the Business Model for such an Alliance & aligns The Outdoor Sector's Six Key Principles, its Natural Health & Enterprise Report Recommendations, the Inspiring Through Adventure Conference and the views of those consulted throughout this consultation.

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Introduction

Wales is unique. In a relatively small geographical area Wales provides a world class environment suitable for a wide range of outdoor & adventurous activities based upon its mountains, coast, rivers, forests, moorland, heritage and culture. Activity tourism in Wales is worth at least £481m to the Welsh Economy with a further £304m added value supporting over 8000 FTE jobs (Millar 2014). This takes no account of the education, recreation and health sector in Wales. This contribution comprises 12% of the Welsh tourism economy.

In recent years the sector that has grown around these outdoor activities has expanded significantly over the traditional perception of “outdoor activities” and “outdoor tourism attractions”. The Outdoor Sector mainly comprises a multitude of micro businesses and organisations that support **Active** (*activities that include physical and/or mental challenge*), **Appreciative** (*where appreciation of nature is central to the activity*) and/or **Adventurous** (*where the activity involves an unexpected outcome*) activities in the outdoors. These include:

- Activity and education providers
- Outdoor activity clubs and volunteer groups
- Equipment manufacturing & retail
- National governing bodies of sport and recreation
- Business and tourism associations
- Training and qualifications organisations
- Safety management organisations
- Landowner / land management organisations
- Local & national government agencies

The sector perceives itself comprising several distinct sections i.e. providers, casual/informal users, sport & recreation, heritage, attractions, existing agencies, governments etc. These sections work in one, more or many areas and are fluid in nature. The fluidity of the outdoor sector makes it difficult to compose a definitive descriptor especially in the context of who is ‘in’ and who is ‘out’. Generally the sector can be divided into ‘**policy**’ and ‘**activity**’.

- **Policy:** comprises of government and non-government organisations that manage infrastructure, promotion or training
- **Activity:** comprises of a range of organisations and businesses that including activity provides, attractions, casual participants and formal sports

Please see the report by Sport England for further analysis of the scope and definition of the Outdoor Sector: <https://www.sportengland.org/media/3275/outdoors-participation-report-v2-lr-spreads.pdf>

Over the past two years, key individuals and organisations have come together to consider the scope of the outdoor sector and how it can better promote its values, benefits and principles. Below is a summary of the most relevant events in the outdoor sector over that period:

- **November 2014:** NRW commissioned Snowdonia-Active (S-A) to carry out a scoping study to look at how to move 'Towards an all-Wales approach to interpreting natural, historic and cultural heritage through outdoor activity'.
- **October 2015:** WATO and TOP, together with key individuals establish six key principles that focus on the outdoors and provide a foundation for future policy, aligned to the seven goals of the Well-being for Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- **February 2016:** NRW, Sport Wales and Visit Wales hosted the 'Inspiring Through Adventure Conference' (ITAC) at Plas Menai. Part of the Year of Adventure (YoA). This conference celebrated the contribution that adventure has made to Wales and asked delegates to suggest how this contribution could be improved in the future.
- **March 2016:** 50+ key stakeholders & partners attended a Senedd reception to officially launch the Six Key Principles and the Natural Health & Enterprise Report.
- **July 2016:** NRW contracted WATO and TOP to look in to the potential for 'Creating an effective outdoor sector network in Wales'.

Out of these events has come a view that this 'Outdoor Sector' has struggled to keep up with the national framework in which it operates and that whilst its contribution is fully appreciated, it could better promote its values, benefits and principles. The aim of this research is to explore how this could be achieved.

Methodology

The methodology has to a large extent been guided by the project specifications (Appendix 1). A Steering Group comprising of representation from the Wales Adventure Tourism Organisations, The Outdoor Partnership, Snowdonia Active, Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum and the South Wales Outdoor Activity Provider Group was established to deliver this project.

The priority of the Steering Group was to capture and report the views of those who represent the outdoor sector. This was achieved through:

1. Three regional engagement consultations where all in attendance had the opportunity to contribute through workgroups, as well as submit individual written views. Each workgroup were asked the following key questions:
 - A. How would you best define 'outdoor sector'? In doing so, consider what you believe falls within the sector and what sits outside the sector.
 - B. If a Welsh outdoor sector network were to be established, what would you want from it? In considering this, identify the pros & cons of such a network.
 - C. How would you see the structure of such a network for Wales? What would it look like?
2. A national key stakeholder engagement meeting in Newport, where attendees were again asked to contribute through workgroups. Each workgroup were asked the following questions:
 - A. Identify the challenges of a network; suggest building blocks to establish a network; and identify success factors for the network
 - B. Identify the initial goals for the network; how the goals could be accomplished; and who should be involved in delivering the goals.

The workgroups considered several options for the structure of the network. The views captured in both the regional and national key stakeholder engagement meetings have been compiled within this document.

Stakeholder Feedback

The following section summarises the results of 3 regional stakeholders' events and one national key stakeholder events, held in the latter part of 2016.

Regional Stakeholder Events

Over 90 people in total, from a wide range of organisations (large, SME's & micro businesses) attended the regional meetings and generated robust discussion. It was evident from the workgroups that the major attraction of the outdoors was its adventurous nature largely unregulated within certain criteria. Thus providing a sense of being able to go outdoors anywhere, at any time often to an entirely new area and attain a sense of achievement upon which future experience could be built. Such scope was frequently attracting new ideas/ activities resulting in a rapidly expanding sector, beyond the traditional image of outdoor activities.

Main points raised about the role of a network

Discussion identified the disparate and rapidly changing nature of the outdoor sector giving rise to:

- A sector comprising a majority of small stakeholders/micro enterprises.
- The absence of a 'single voice' speaking on behalf of the sector.
- A lack of a uniform message giving rise to a lower profile than the sector deserves.
- Lack of a 'one stop shop' to which external agencies can engage.

The sector perceives itself comprising several distinct sections i.e. providers, casual/informal users, sport & recreation, heritage, attractions, existing agencies, governments etc. These sections work in one, more or many areas e.g. education, health, environment, tourism etc., and are fluid in nature i.e. moving in and out of areas. The fluidity of the outdoor sector makes it difficult to compose a definitive descriptor especially in the context of who is 'in' and who is 'out'. Generally the sector can be divided into '**policy**' and '**activity**'. Policy comprises government (national and local); landowners and agencies i.e. National Access Forum/ Institute of Outdoor Learning etc. Activity would comprise a range of morphing sectors including led activities, attractions, casual participants and formal sports – each of which are capable of being sub-divided. Policy and activity are interlinked in a matrix with each wanting and able to influence the other.

The area that generated the greatest amount of discussion was the formation of a 'definition' and consequently what was 'in' the sector and what was 'out'. There were many hard and fast views on what would be 'in' the sector i.e. traditional activities including rock climbing, canoeing, county walking, coastering, sailing etc., and strong views about what would be 'outside' the sector i.e. car rallying, off-roading etc. Much of the discussion was around activities that fell in the middle ground i.e. trail bike riding involved physical activity & a high level of skill but was vehicle based with

little restriction and horse carriage driving, which involved traditional vehicles but is subject to access limitations.

There is a strong feeling that any network should be a collective but not restrained, thus enabling a response to an ever changing market. It should be formalised (recognised) but sufficiently informal to be pro- active. There was a strong desire to avoid duplication or a structure that might:

- Require substantial funding, especially if it required another financial subscription, &
- Seek to compete with existing specialist networks/forums.

Points raised about the challenges a network would face

Landowners control access to all outdoor sites except where public rights of way existed but subject to specific restrictions. Landowners effectively 'license' use of their land for specific use (not necessarily specific users). 'Unlicensed' activities had the potential to disrupt and put at risk these agreements. In many situations an activity could be 'licensed' or tolerated in one situation and area but not another. Therefore some activities could give rise to adverse attitudes where landowners would want to influence participation, to create more responsibility toward the environment and, to some extent, regulate.

It was suggested that a definition was not appropriate but rather establish a 'brand' embracing core principles (i.e. do no damage to the environment) to which participants could sign up. Hence the network should act both as a portal between policy and activity, and as a conduit for communication within the activity areas in order that they could 'speak with one voice' A network should increase representation of the outdoors at a policy level through better advocacy; better communication; engaging all activity sectors; and seek to create a legacy for future generations.

On several occasions the issue was raised as to how existing networks (i.e. National Access Forum) fitted into any potential developing outdoor network. Arguably an outdoor network already exists through specific and overlapping agencies with a large area of users subscribing to one or more of the existing agencies but not feeling that they have a significantly consistent voice in any. Any attempt to map the existing agencies and interests has proved to be confusing, unreliable and infinitely variable.

There were also views on setting standards; establishing core values; creating an evidence base; and effectively combining resources (i.e. CPD, standards). However, there are many examples of good practice and in certain areas some organisations are better positioned than others. Hence a network should seek to share good practice in the first instance by asking - what already exists - who does it best - what is not being done – and, on a priority basis, who could do it?

Ultimately, it was considered difficult for the outdoor sector to agree and convey a common message, due to the diversity of the activity it represented. This was considered to be a major obstacle to attracting new responsible participation and it was a common view that identity is an essential issue to be tackled by any future network.

National Key Stakeholder Event

The national event in Newport was attended by 26 Key Stakeholders who were asked to identify the main challenges a future network would have to address, the building blocks required and associated success factors.

Points raised by the national stakeholders about the challenges a network would face

- **Cost:** Due to the fragmentation of the network, stakeholders already contributed to various organisations/ accreditations. They were reluctant to subscribe to a new, untested network although a contribution from the sector was not unreasonable to expect. The structure of the network would directly influence the cost of operation.
- **Role of the Network:** There had been several discussions in past years about forming a more cohesive sector. There was a general feeling the time was right to try and bring this to reality. The Six Key Principles document was considered a sound starting point but the actual role of the network needed more work on the 'common vision' and 'collective voice'.
- **Context to other forums:** There are several existing forums working with an interest in the sector. They have an established role so such and outdoor network would need to avoid duplication. An outdoor network would need to define its relationship with these forums including the National Access Forum; Outdoor Recreation Network; Wales Environmental Link; Physical Activity Wales Network etc.
- **'Route of trust':** The strength of a network would be in the support it attracted. 35 organisations are currently signed up to the Six Key Principles but this should be extended and subscribers would want to know the avenues for communication.
- **Networks Policy Role:** Significant progress would be achieved if the network were actively involved in both policy development and the ability for advocacy on behalf of the sector. There were concerns that some public funded organisations would not be able to act in these capacities requiring the membership of the network to be rationalised

The building block that the key stakeholders think are needed to establish a network

These are the main points that were raised in the discussion about the 'building blocks' needed to create a viable outdoor sector network.

Topic	Work Area	Success factors (many are inter-related)
Structure	<p>Clearly define the structure to 'manage the message' recognising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area, regional and national representation; • Links with other related networks and forums; • Links with government/ policy; • Operational channels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A visual structure with Terms of Reference • Defined local to national channels of communication • Defined cooperative links with existing forums
Ambition	<p>The advice was not to be too ambitious initially. Best keep ambitions simple to pilot approaches and partnerships as a basis upon which to build.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A completed audit of the sector (including organisations; role; evidence/data held) • Identify several manageable projects representing the sector to demonstrate the sectors ambition and ability to work cooperatively. Suggestions included establishing baseline data to establish evidence about the economic, environmental; social (activity, health, education) contribution of the sector; projects combined with other forums.
Sign-up	<p>Build and rationalise the number of organisations able to sign-up to the Six Key Principles as a demonstration of support for the network. Identify what roles key organisations could play.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the number of organisations signed up from 35 (currently) to 50. Membership would need to be rationalised to reflect organisation's ability to respond to the ambitions of the sector. • Introduce a tiered "sign-up" to reflect peripheral interests.
Ownership	<p>Establish political champions for the network. There may have to be several representing major political policy arenas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifiable champions for the outdoor sector. • Defined links and direct lines of communication with government departments.

The next steps suggested by the key stakeholders

The key stakeholders advised the next step should be to develop the network's coordination and structure. The network co-ordinator should act as a 'critical friend':

- To Government - to ensure a coherent approach.
- Within the sector - to produce confidence in what it can deliver.
- Across policy and operational platforms - reflecting the diverse nature of the sector (e.g. environment; economic & social).
- To organisations and interests outside the sector including the public.
- The co-ordinator should be able to identify relevant consultations and calls for evidence and help the sector to respond to them.

The key stakeholders also advised on what the initial goals of a network should be, how the goals might be accomplished and who should be involved in achieving the goals.

Initial goals of the network suggested by the key stakeholders

The first goal for the network would be to align the Six Key Principles with the recommendations of the ITAC report. The network should keep the principles under review in the context of any changes in the political and social change of the environment along with the development of the sector.

Once the key areas of work are established, an evidence baseline should be identified in each area. Both quantitative and qualitative evidence (including best practice) should be used in order to bring to life the contribution that the sector makes. This data should be made widely available to the sector in support of pursuing government goals across several policy platforms.

Using this evidence, the sector should demonstrate a return on investment for each of the key areas of work if limited sources of funding are to be used to best benefit. There is also a need to explain the consequences / lost opportunities / impact if status quo were to remain. Such an approach would also help identify any gaps in evidence and provision, which would then:

- Be the focus of future research
- Identify the actions (i.e. training needs) required to deliver the ITAC recommendations

Other key goals the network should aim to deliver include:

- Identify effective "decision makers" in the various policy platforms to channel the evidence to best effect.
- Develop a sector wide training programme that would ensure better delivery of health outcomes. This would provide assurances to outside organisations when referring.
- Assemble a database of funding opportunities to fund the delivery of the sector initial goals.

How the key stakeholder think the goals might be accomplished

At the national event, the key stakeholders proposed the following actions to help accomplish the goals that they suggested:

- Creation of a broad evidence based document that shows what the outdoors 'can do' in relation to health, environment, education and how they work in synergy;
- A base line of what is currently provided and what could be provided;
- An audit of what is going on, where, and by whom - this audit could be broken down by the six key principles to show the structure of the outdoor sector.
- Creation of a visualisation of what the 'outdoor sector' is and who is involved currently or has the opportunity to deliver in the outdoors. This would be to help the outdoor sector and other sectors understand and embrace what the outdoors can achieve.
- Continuous dissemination perhaps via a briefing paper (3 – 4 times /yr) to both policy and the sector. Such dissemination should report on work in progress; CPD; training; good practice; policy, environmental and community issues; research; evidence etc.

Who the key stakeholders think needs to be involved in delivering the initial goals?

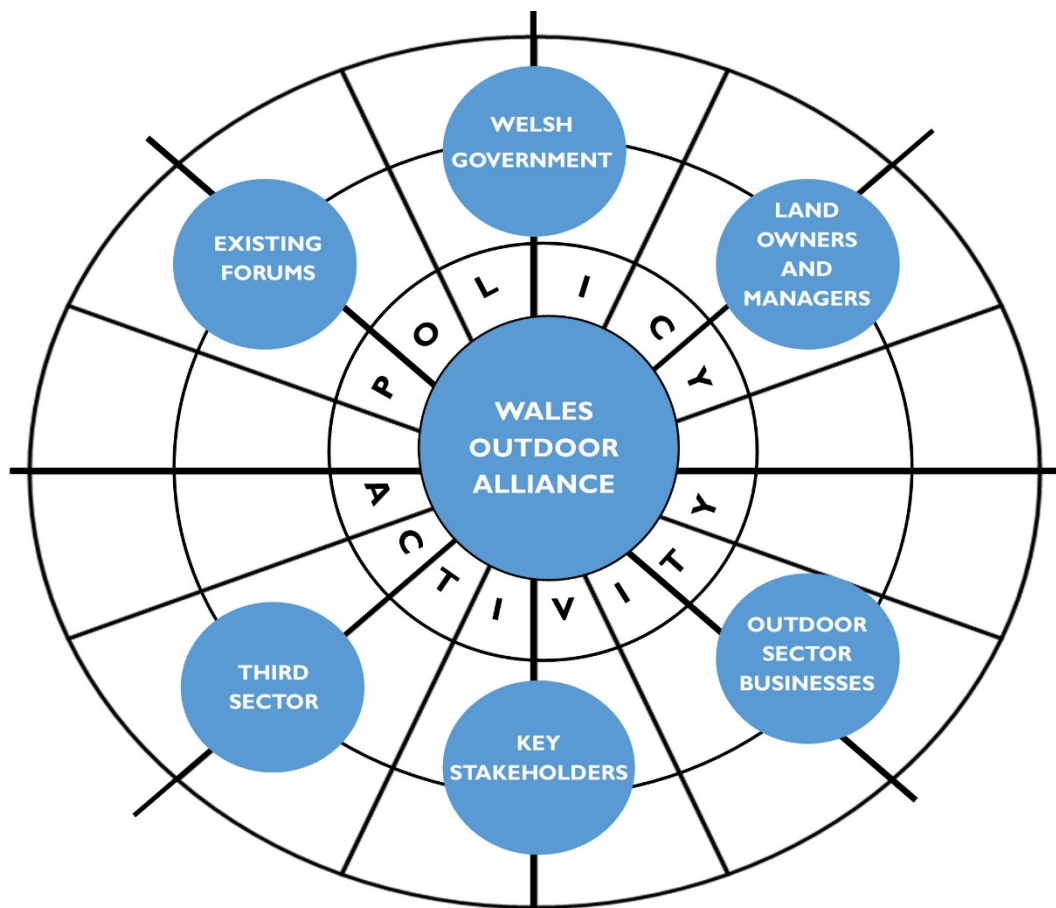
A co-ordinating and facilitating function will need to be developed to focus on exploiting existing structures for evidence and support. In the longer term the co-ordinating and facilitating may become more permanent but initially the focus should be on not being too ambitious and using the combined resources that already exist. With this in mind, initial roles could be carried out by:

- **Network Co-ordination:** WATO/TOP (administration, providing the activity source material and forming links with government)
- **Organising the evidence base:** Universities and academia
- **Providing a steer on activity:** Other related forums/ networks/ organisations and businesses (this would include the visualisation work, accreditation, training and pooling existing evidence (e.g. Public Health Wales, Natural Resources Wales).

Establishing a Network

Drawing from the conclusions arising from the engagement meetings, the Steering Group evaluated options for delivering a viable network. They considered a need for a structure that would allow organisations to work together and access funding as well and a means by which better communication could be promoted across the sector. The structure that was envisaged was a combination of a 'network' and a 'portal'.

A graphic representation of this structure is outlined below. This represents an interrelated 'network', which allows the sector to communicate internally, as well as providing a 'portal' through which two-way communication can operate with organisations and forums already working with the sector. This structure would also help negotiate and represent a "single voice" to government. A name for the structure would be '**Outdoor Alliance**'



What would be the role and governance of the Alliance?

Structurally, it is envisaged that the Alliance would comprise of a Not for Profit Limited Company registered with Companies House. It would have 7 directors, including a Chair, made up of representatives from across the sector with role specific responsibilities (e.g. Governance, Health, Education, Economy/ Business, Skills, Participation. Finance). This would allow for the application of funding, demonstrating professionalism and commitment.

The Alliance would help member organisations from across the sector to work together on projects that deliver against the core aims of the Alliance. The Alliance could act as a coordinator for these projects and submit funding applications.

Any funding accessed by the Alliance would carry a management charge that would contribute to the salary of a coordinator post, employed directly by the company. Any business or organisation in the outdoor sector, no matter how big or small, will be able to join. Initial membership will be based on signing up to the '6 Key Principals'.

If a member business or organisation would like to initiate, or participate in, a project run through the Alliance, the relationship would be managed through individually agreed MOUs setting out the expectations of the company, the contribution of the member and relationship that exists between the member and the company.

There would be no regular face to face meetings associated with the company, all communication would be carried out online. The directors would meet virtually to discuss business matters and support the co-ordinator. AGMs and voting would also be carried out online.

What would the Portal look like?

In order to increase communication efficiency across a geographically wide and diverse sector, there is a need to find a user friendly solution to simplify sharing information and initiate discussion on relevant topics quickly. This could be achieved through a central online Portal where everybody in the Alliance can access all the relevant information, communications and documents in one place. This central Portal would be an easy way to stay up to date and reference with relevant news, increase communication between stakeholders, and ensure easy access to key documents and reports.

Within the Portal an online discussion forum could bring together everybody who has joined the Alliance (government, practitioners, authorities, and conservationists) and allow for an open discussion on any topic which would be beneficial. This would include a space where participants can ask questions, discuss projects, issues, and opportunities which will help bond everybody within the Alliance. Such a space will help:

- Disseminate and archive knowledge and best practice
- Bring all interested stakeholders into the conversation
- Increase transparency within and outside the sector
- Avoid projects being duplicated or developed in silos

The Portal could also be supported by traditional communication plans and face to face networking opportunities such as the quarterly email update or an annual conference.

How would the Alliance and the Portal relate to other existing networks?

During the consultation process, a number of existing organisations and networks have been identified that must be paid heed of. They are as follows:

- **National Access Forum Wales** – This is a professional forum hosted by NRW that considers developments in access and provides guidance to Welsh Government and other public agencies.
- **Outdoor Recreation Network** – A UK wide membership organisation that coordinates and collates research in outdoor recreation
- **Sport and Recreation Alliance** – A UK national umbrella body for the national governing bodies of sport and recreation
- **Welsh Sports Association** – A Wales umbrella body for the national governing bodies of sport and recreation
- **Outdoor Industries Association** – International advocacy and research body for the outdoor industries (private sector producers of outdoor equipment)
- **English Outdoors Council** – English umbrella body for organisations that work with or deliver outdoor education

The main gap in these current structures are that none of the existing networks:

- Represent all outdoor sector organisations and businesses, irrespective of size or activity
- Develop cross sector projects to deliver against common goals, and be able to access funds to deliver them
- Communicate with outdoor activity providers across all activities and disciplines
- Provide a method of negotiating and unifying the sectors 'voice' and delivering it effectively to government

What would be the long term objectives of the Outdoor Alliance?

The **long term** aim of the Alliance is to raise the level of collaborative and innovative working between outdoor sector organisations to deliver against its '6 key Principals'. They are as follows:

- **Partnership:** We seek to capitalise on the contribution made by the outdoor sector to the economy, health and environment in Wales - working across the sector, with Welsh Government and other organisations
- **Economy:** We aim to ensure that the outdoor sector is present in long term strategies contributing to a thriving rural economy in Wales
- **Natural Resilience:** We aim to increase understanding and care of nature to build ecological resilience
- **Health and Wellbeing:** We aim to inspire a generational change towards more active, healthy living
- **Education:** We seek to harness the skills learned through outdoor experiences to create benefits to Welsh communities, education and businesses
- **Sustainability:** We seek opportunities that prove that transformative, sector-scale change to sustainable working is possible.

What would success look like for setting up the Outdoor Alliance?

The principle of establishing a more cohesive approach within the outdoor sector has been raised in the past. As outlined in this report, the opportunity to address this desire is closer than ever and the sector has now contributed to a vision of what would be wanted from a sector wide Alliance. For this to be achieved, there are a set of short term goals that will need to be addresses. Within the first 2 years of operation these are the key successes needed:

- A group of 'Trustees' who will help establish the Alliance as an independent entity over an agreed period of time.
- An agreed structure of the alliance that allows it to apply for project funding for agreed initiatives.
- A 'Membership' structure and 'membership' sign-up.
- A financially viable Alliance as a result of its ability to deliver its role efficiently and effectively across Wales
- Defined local / national communication channels including maintaining cooperative links with existing forums.
- Defined links and lines of communication with government departments/agencies and major landowners.
- Surprise collaborations amongst organisations that contribute to shaping future agendas
- Identifiable advocacy champions that ensure the Alliance is consulted by Welsh Government on policies and legislation

Recommendations

The Outdoor Sector should:

1. Endorse the name of 'the network' as '**OUTDOOR ALLIANCE**' (OA).
2. Endorse a structure that reflects the views of those consulted during this process.
3. Give consideration to the future legal framework for the Alliance in the medium to long term.
4. Endorse the Wales Outdoor Alliance Business Plan which clearly lays out the Business Model for such an Alliance & aligns The Outdoor Sectors Six Key Principles, its Natural Health & Enterprise Report Recommendations, the Inspiring Through Adventure Conference and the views of those consulted throughout this consultation.

Appendix 1: 'Creating an effective outdoor sector network in Wales' Specification

Aim:

To enable the outdoor sector to address some of the key recommendations of the Inspiring Through Adventure Conference (2016)

Introduction:

In February 2016, Natural Resources Wales, Sports Wales and Visit Wales organised a 2-day conference called "Inspiring Through Adventure" as part of the Year of Adventure 2016 initiative. The conference was attended by 90 representatives from across the outdoor sector (and other sectors), including activists, service providers, government officers and governing bodies. The four key themes that ran through the event were how to inspire:

- lifelong participation in sport and physical outdoor activities to reap the health and well-being benefits such activities generate for both individuals and society as a whole;
- an environmentally sustainable outdoor sector with the capacity to sustain higher numbers of visitors;
- the holistic training and development of volunteers, leaders, instructors and coaches.
- a cross-sector approach to partnership working.

The recommendations that came out of the workshops were split into two sections; suggestions for actions that can be carried out in the next 12 months and those that could be worked towards in future. They have been summarised below:

In the next 12 months

- Improving partnership working and cross sector communication
- Strengthen the working relationship with the health sector
- Review the evidence that is currently available on the benefits, to people and place, of adventure activities
- Explore ways that the sector can: develop new environmental standards, improve collaboration on training and CPD, create standard pathways of engagement and progression and build on the success of the Year of Adventure.

To be developed beyond the Year of Adventure

- Use the improved cross-sector partnership to develop projects that will benefit the health and well-being of the nation.
- Carry out further research and evaluation to assess the case for more engagement in outdoor activities.
- Focus on improving participation in outdoor activities amongst young people
- Look at ways to reduce the environmental footprint of the sector and protect sensitive landscapes
- Improve the skill development and qualification framework to provide more incentives for people to look for work in the sector and offer a broader learning platform.

Project activity:

The contractor will undertake the following Tasks:

1. With the recommendations of the ITAC in mind, review and clarify the current definition of the 'outdoor sector' – clearly identify what the outdoor sector is and is not and make recommendations on how this brand can be developed.
2. Undertake a minimum of three stakeholder consultation events (a minimum of one in each of the areas covered by the North Wales Environmental Outdoor Charter Group, the South Wales Outdoor Activity Provider Group and the Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum) in order to consolidate and gain buy in to the output of Task 1, above, and to provide further clarity on the direction of travel, bearing in mind the recommendations of ITAC.
3. Provide a business model for an effective outdoor sector network for Wales that allows for both high level strategic development and regional/local delivery. Identify and recommend realistic funding models and sources that could support and make sustainable this network.
4. Use the outputs of ITAC and the stakeholder events to recommend a two year program of work for the above network that will enable the outdoor sector, as defined by Task 1, to maximise its ability to deliver the recommendations of ITAC sustainably and coherently.

Milestones and deliverables

1. **July 2016:** Project initiation meeting – agree with NRW the approach and outputs for project, identify stakeholders, agree roles.
2. **September 2016:** Update meeting with NRW
3. **December 2016:** Draft report to NRW for
4. **February 2017:** Final report to NRW

The full report will be provided in MSWord electronic format to NRW. The final report will be provided in English, with a bilingual (Welsh/English) executive summary.

This report is commissioned by NRW on behalf of the outdoor sector.