

What has the Heritage Lottery Fund done for nature?

Research report undertaken
for HLF December 2017





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**Research Report undertaken by Hummingbird and OHES on behalf of the
Heritage Lottery Fund**

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Front cover image: Volunteers cutting reed at the Woodberry Wetlands © Pennie Dixie/LWT

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1. SUMMARY

The **aim of this research** is to explore the impact that HLF investment has had since its inception in 1994 on landscapes, nature and the organisations that champion nature.

In July 2017, following a tender process, HLF commissioned ecological consultants Hummingbird and OHES to undertake this research. The views expressed are those of the consultants and all the stakeholders interviewed so are not necessarily the views of HLF.

1.1. What the Nature Organisations Tells Us

We asked 20 key figures in nature conservation to **explore the impact HLF investment has had on nature and nature conservation in the UK**. They identified the following:

- Leading and funding **partnership working** for nature across all actors, from statutory agencies to not-for-profit organisations.
- **Developing and growing organisations** and, over time, the whole nature conservation sector.
- **Transforming skills, project planning and management capacity** through doing projects and promoting good practise.
- Driving up standards by bringing **rigour and challenge** to project assessment, development and delivery.
- Ensuring that **reconnecting people with nature, putting people at the heart of the projects** they fund has become core practise for nature organisations.
- **Extending the range of volunteering, training and employment opportunities** to conserve and promote nature.
- Enhancing the **aspirations and vision of the sector**, leading to more ambitious projects delivering more outcomes for people and nature.
- Encouraging the nature organisations to **innovate and take risks**, leading to more creative, high-quality projects.
- Providing a **gold standard** for nature projects, which attracts publicity, increases participation, levers funding and enhances prestige for nature.
- Promoting the **evaluation of nature projects**, fostering dissemination and learning about good practise.
- HLF funding **transforms entire landscapes for nature**. HLF landscape-scale initiatives were ahead of the nature organisations and have been **major contributors to the Lawton principle of “bigger, better and more joined up”**.
- HLF has **influenced policy through the projects it funds**. Delivery of visionary and innovative strategies have become mainstreamed through HLF projects.

The interviewees identified a range of challenges for nature over the coming years:

- **Shrinking funding** combined with **increasing competition** for available funds.

- **Brexit**, which will require a wholesale rethink of nature conservation and worsen funding.
- Brexit will **impact nature harder** than any other heritage sector.
- Working for **nature in rural areas**, is more difficult and more expensive, and more urgent because of the wildlife resource they support.
- A **developing political vacuum** in terms of nature conservation at national and local Government levels, and in the main Agencies which have been significantly weakened.
- **Improving the social diversity** of the sector to better reflect society.

Respondents see a **significant role for HLF in addressing all these challenges**, and that **this role will strengthen in the future**.

The UK remains one of the “...most nature depleted countries in the world” (Hayhow et al 2016). It is clear that without HLF, the situation would be worse. “**HLF have become a critical part of the nature conservation effort – they are the finger in the dyke...**” (Doug Hulyer).

Stakeholders also want HLF to consider **climate change; tailored approaches for the four Nations**; making HLF **more flexible and simpler** to deal with; **streamlining land acquisition**; and **HLF taking more of a leadership role** in the sector.

1.2. What the Data Tells Us

Since 1994, HLF has spent **£548 million on biodiversity** projects and **£227 million on Landscape Partnerships**. Spend averaged **10% of HLF total grants**, rising to 13% since 2013.

The **withdrawal of traditional funding streams** means organisations **will increasingly look to HLF to fund nature**. Capacity of nature organisations to submit applications and deliver projects may limit HLF investment.

Spend on nature across the four Nations is uneven: England 76%, Scotland 15%, Wales 5% and Northern Ireland 4%.

HLF has been a **major investor in land acquisition**. There were 460 acquisitions 1994-2017, securing nature on 79,297ha at a cost of £149.3 million.

Funding from HLF has made a major contribution towards delivering the **UK’s Biodiversity Action Plan**:

“...HLF is arguably the most significant non-governmental funding source for biodiversity conservation in the UK.” Bailey and Thompson (2007)

Data and case studies show that large investment programmes are particularly effective at delivering results for nature, such as the Tomorrow’s Heathland Heritage initiative.

HLF has funded a **wide array of activities**, including engaging audiences, training, learning about nature, citizen science, volunteering and other participatory activities. Activity projects are more numerous than direct conservation action.

Many nature projects supported by HLF are within **areas of high population density**. By funding projects near to where people live, HLF enables people to directly engage with natural heritage. HLF nature projects spent **at least £88 million in deprived areas**, but this is still less than 12% of spend on nature.

1.3. What the Projects Tell Us

Eight case studies of HLF funded nature projects or programmes were compiled. They demonstrate the range of work undertaken and high levels of impact for nature organisations, wildlife, landscape and engagement with audiences.

1.4. Conclusions

The **report concludes** that when asking “What has HLF done for Nature?”, the evidence supports two clear outcomes:

A series of habitats, species and landscapes which are more resilient and in better condition. HLF has been fundamental in arresting widespread decline of nature in the UK. Our nature is more accessible to people, who are more engaged with its conservation.

A group of organisations which are stronger, fitter and more able to conserve nature, and more adept at working together to extend their impact.

In recognising these outcomes, the collective voice of the nature organisations suggests the following role for HLF in the near future:

Keep going, don't change too much, keep all of the benefits of process and rigour and methods described above, the sector just needs more HLF, now more than ever.

2. AIMS AND METHODS

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) was set up in 1994 under the National Lottery Act to support projects involving the national, regional and local heritage of the United Kingdom. HLF operates under the auspices of the National Heritage Memorial Fund. Figure 1 shows the distribution of all nature projects from 1994 to July 2017 funded by HLF.

Figure 1: HLF Nature Projects. The map includes Landscape Partnerships but not parks and other designed landscapes. The size of dot is proportional to the size of grant.



HLF have funded nature and landscape projects across all parts of the UK, from urban areas through to remote wilderness environments.

The scope of the Heritage Lottery Fund was widened under the Heritage Act 1997 to include work on private land and to allow activities-only projects to be included.

The purpose of the Report is summarised in the brief from HLF:

“The aim of this research is to explore the strategic impact that HLF investment has had on landscapes, nature and the organisations that champion nature over the past twenty years..... The research will test our hypothesis that National Lottery funding from HLF has played a critical role in the past and will continue to be vital in future. Lastly, the research will consider what role HLF could play in future in supporting landscape and nature on the UK mainland.”

We describe the methods we have used in the research, and the three main sources of data and information we have utilised, in Appendix 1.

Twenty interviews with key stakeholders (described in Section 3.1) summarises the benefits HLF funding has brought to nature and the conservation organisations.

We then provide the results of our analyses of data spreadsheets and other past work undertaken for HLF. This provides data on HLF spend on nature plus additional facts on how HLF has helped conserve nature.

We have compiled eight case studies from programmes and projects which exemplify the impact HLF funding can have on nature and on the organisations who champion nature.

Lastly, we draw some conclusions from this body of research.

3. THE EXPERIENCE OF STAKEHOLDERS

3.1. The Community of Stakeholders

The stakeholders interviewed for this project are a valuable repository of experience and insight into the impact HLF has had on nature and the conservation organisations. They include the heads of many nature organisations, those who have delivered a wide range of HLF funded projects, strategists, conservation planners, scientists, Government advisors and managers of nature and landscapes in National Parks, AONBs and the nations nature reserves. We also received a response from *Rethink Nature*, a grouping of the CEOs of the principle species-based NGOs. The respondents, their role and their experience of HLF and nature projects is summarised in Appendix 1. The full response of *Rethink Nature* is also included in this Appendix.

Engaging people with Nature is an important strand of HLF funded work for the nature organisations. Scenes from the Summer Festival, Up on the Downs LP, Kent.



3.2. Positive Participation Not Conflict: HLF Fostering Partnership

3.2.1. Partnership as a Core Value

Stakeholders believe working in partnership is central to conserving nature.

“...partnerships are consortia of the willing. This is important because landowners and other organisations are participating positively rather than being in conflict with nature, as so often in the past – partnership has flipped this often difficult relationship around....HLF has been fundamental in this shift. [It is]...one of the unsung outcomes of HLF work”.

Sir John Lawton, Ecologist and Government Advisor

As an example, Simon Pepper (former HLF Scotland Committee and SNH Board member) cited the Eagles of South Scotland project, a collaboration between Buccleuch Estates, Scottish Land and Estates, RSPB Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission Scotland and the Langholm Initiative, who were formerly at loggerheads but who came together for an eagle reintroduction and conservation project:

“[Led by RSPB]... it was a big bridge builder which brought many shared benefits...” to the Partners. Simon Pepper

“[Partnerships] are an important mechanism in bringing clusters of organisations together.” Jonny Hughes CEO Scottish Wildlife Trust

Mike Clarke (CEO RSPB) summarised the other main reason for partnership working:

“The job is just too big for us to do on our own. We need to build partnership.”

Below: A Reach of the River Wandle, SE London, Restored as part of the Living Wandle Landscape Partnership. © HLF



3.2.2. How HLF Fosters Partnership

All consultees felt that HLF had a significant role in promoting partnership working

“HLF has been transformative in getting people to think more widely about contributing to a wider vision, rather than ploughing their own furrow”

Simon Pepper

“...HLF has been a catalyst for partnerships, insisting they are in place for any major scheme”

Richard Leafe.

“[HLF has }...helped to drive consensus thinking and planning. Through the HLF process, organisations are required to put aside their different organisational strategies and agree a shared agenda.” Simon Pryor, NT Director of the Natural Environment.

“The HLF has been a universal binding force.”

Howard Davies

HLF has successfully fostered partnerships in two ways

1. *By providing the resources which allowed partnerships to take place.*

“Funding oils the wheels of partnerships. Putting resources into partnerships to make things happen is critical”

Nick Johannsen, Director Kent AONB

Partnership requires a lot of staff time – attending steering groups, developing joint projects, regular liaison at officer and senior level, integrating financial and reporting methods and ensuring common approaches to communications and public engagement. The bigger and more complex the partnership, the higher the costs.

This is a heavy burden on partners, which has been eased by HLF accepting Full Cost Recovery (FCR) in recent years. Even so, smaller organisations with fewer staff find servicing partnerships a challenge.

2. *Actively promoting partnership as a working method.*

HLF guidance and HLF officers (especially the Development Teams) encourage organisations to work with others as projects of all types evolve. Cross-sectoral working – with health or arts organisations for instance – is strongly encouraged. Collaboration is intrinsic to the Landscape Partnership programme, so anyone wishing to access the substantial funds in LPs must work in partnership. Some partnerships have had a long legacy, such as the HLF Fix the Fells scheme in the Lake District:

“[Ongoing partnership]...is now the main mechanism for maintaining upland footpaths”

Richard Leafe.

Some felt HLF could do more to promote partnerships through bringing people together (web forums were not thought to be useful), including fostering cross-sector working:

“HLF could do more to link nature organisations with those outside the sector, such as health, or other parts of the heritage sector, such as museums”

Marian Spain, CEO Plantlife

The promotion of partnership at the higher levels are the priority, as smaller and more local partnerships come more easily. Doug Hulyer (former HLF Trustee, SW Committee, NE Board) summarises:

“Local partnerships are well done and are very popular, but partnerships at the national level are more difficult because as one approaches the organisational national offices, they become more competitive and less oriented to partnerships.”

Working with other sectors such as the arts has been fruitful for projects trying to engage with new audiences. The Charivari street festival, Up on the Downs Landscape Partnership, Kent. © Richard Haynes



The barriers caused by inter-organisational competition were noted by many commentators, often the heads of organisations.

“Cultural maturity within the sector is not great....[many]....haven’t yet developed models of collaborative governance.”
Howard Davies

3.3. Specific Benefits of Partnership Working Supported by HLF

Stakeholders saw the following advantages of collaborative working.

3.3.1. Enriching skills

Respondents felt their organisations had been enriched by sharing skills and new perspectives with other partners. This enrichment is greatest when organisations are dissimilar; hence cross-sectoral partnerships can be especially beneficial.

3.3.2. Levering funding

Partnership working gives access to funding that would otherwise be unavailable to an individual organisation. Large scale projects, that one organisation alone could not deliver, become possible. This is critical in addressing the scale of nature’s decline.

3.3.3. Playing on a bigger stage

A partnership offers the opportunity to be part of something bigger, or broader, than the individual partner. Smaller organisations are given a leg up, and can be part of a bigger stage.

3.3.4. Working with landscapes

The complex natural and cultural history of landscapes requires conservation projects to integrate wildlife, farming, archaeological, historical and cultural skill sets. This inevitably

means a partnership. In addition, working on the scale of whole landscapes needs partnership because of the level of resources involved and the number and diversity of landowners.

“Partnerships have been especially important in pushing forward the landscape scale agenda.”
Mike Clark.

This also applies to projects which conserve species across a wide geographic range.

“[There has been a]... **growing scientific awareness of the landscape approach and HLF have cemented that and embedded it in ways of working. [HLF have]...strongly connected people and local communities into a project – making it an equal rather than an additional element..[of a project].**”

Simon Pryor, NT Director of Natural Environment

3.3.5. Working with broader audiences

Delivering high quality audience engagement is probably the area which has benefited most. Historically, the sector lacked depth of expertise in this specialist field. Collaborating with arts, youth, health and wellbeing, and community specialists have all enabled nature organisations to reach further and deeper into their audiences, new and old.

“Partnership has helped make nature conservation accessible to a wider range of people and audiences”
Anne McCall, Director RSPB Scotland.

Finding common ground with the Ghurkha community near Dover, Up on the on the Downs LPS. © Richard Haynes



Many emphasised the value of cross-sectoral partnerships:

“Partnerships within the sector do not always provide great benefits, as they may not add additional skill sets.”
Stephanie Hilborne (CEO Wildlife Trusts nationally)

“...this is where HLF could help more.....promoting cross-sectoral working.” Mike Clarke

Cross-sectoral partnerships with health and wellbeing may become increasingly important. In Wales, the Government has directly linked wellbeing to nature. The guiding legislation for Natural Resources Wales is the Wellbeing for Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Wellbeing Act has linked the environment to child poverty –

“.....poverty of opportunity is a main strand of the legislation, with opportunity to access nature a part of wellbeing” Madeleine Havard, Board NRW, HLF Wales Committee

Welsh Landscape Partnerships such as Heather and Hillforts and the Llyn Peninsular have particularly strong wellbeing components.

Memorial service for the fallen Spitfire pilot, Harold Penketh, Great Fen. Raising the Spitfire meant the Cambridge Wildlife Trust worked with whole audiences new to them.



3.3.6. Building a Coherent Sector

Partnership working builds bridges. Organisations increasingly understand they have more to gain by collaboration than by isolated working, and that they can work in partnership without losing profile. Many respondents felt that the sector has become less competitive through closer collaboration.

“The market doesn’t see competition in the nature sector, so why should we?”

Mike Clarke

“[A good partnership]...brings ideas and energy. It gets a lot of people around the table to solve problems”

Anne McCall

“Partnership fosters the desire to look at higher levels of strategy together”.

Marian Spain

3.3.7. Costs and Benefits

HLF has enabled the nature organisations to accrue all these benefits, equipping them to better conserve nature. Although it appears expensive methodology, many respondents feel it is good value:

“In funding core partnership costs, HLF is paying for the intangible benefits of partnership”

Marian Spain

“...its the added value [of partnership] which justifies the extra cost and complexity”

Kim Gutteridge, RSPB Fundraising Manager

3.3.8. Being Realistic about Partnerships

More than 15 years’ experience has identified some limits to partnership working. Many felt the resources required to run a partnership were still a barrier, even with Full Cost Recovery. Many pointed to the compromise inherent in working in partnership, the inevitable dilution of an individual organisations vision. Managing liability, with clear lines of responsibility and clear protocols for managing risk were cited by Mike Clarke as problematic. There can be clashes of culture and the need for considerable diplomacy “Sometimes it can just be tedious” (unattributed).

Many stakeholders felt that partnership was not the answer in every circumstance, and that sometimes it was more sensible for individual organisations to get on with a straightforward project alone.

“It is important to consider what added value a partnership brings....”

Stephanie Hilborne

Where it is appropriate, the form of the partnership and its method of working need careful consideration to ensure it is effective and provides additionality. Some felt Partnership has been **limited in its effectiveness**:

“[Partnerships] ...are all too often delivering the easier issues, such as access training and education, **picking the low hanging fruit**. [He asks] **...what are the real biological outcomes?**”

Bob Brown Ulster Wildlife Trust, former HLF NI Committee.

3.4. The Impact of Significant Funding from HLF

The volume of funding, the consequent expansion of the nature organisations and the amount of work this has enabled is quantified in Section 4. The overall outcome of HLF funding has been to escalate the ability of the sector to conserve nature.

“HLF has been a beacon. It has allowed [nature organisations] to do more, and to do it better.”

Madeleine Havard

“RSPB’s mission is to make a difference for nature and HLF means we can make a bigger difference. HLF magnifies the impact of RSPB.....The landscape would not be as it is today if it weren’t for HLF.”

Mike Clarke

He points out that there have been three big, consistent funders for RSPB in recent years – HLF, Landfill Tax and the European Union. Consistency of HLF funding has been key:

“This funding has been especially important as it is counter-cyclical, constant even during economic down turns.”

Mike Clarke

Aside from the injection of funding HLF has provided, stakeholders described how HLF has transformed nature organisations and nature in the UK. The following summarises their comments.

3.5. How HLF Has Transformed Nature Organisations

Stakeholders identified the following mechanisms that have transformed first individual organisations then the whole sector through HLF funding.

3.5.1. Direct transformation of an organisations

Smaller organisations with few staff could be directly transformed by even modest support.

“[The Chilterns AONB]...staff has grown from 9 to 14 just from HLF development funding.”

Sue Holden CEO Chilterns AONB

A substantial grant can build an organisation, while the volume of grants over a protracted period has helped to build the NGO sector. HLF funding has been hugely beneficial for the Wildlife Trusts:

“[The]....reserves capital bids in the 1990’s providing millions for upgrading nature reserves. It was transformational for the movement.....and was the main driver for professionalisation of the organisation, dragging the nature reserves into a publicly accessible condition. Without it, we wouldn’t look like we do now” Stephanie Hilborne

“...it altered the Trust movement forever.”

Madeleine Havard

Although some organisations like the National Trust are very well established, significant HLF funding has **changed their view of nature**. Hence Simon Pryor suggests that:

“[HLF Funding]....has shown what can be done for natural heritage. [which has raised the question within organisations of]...why don’t we do this more widely? As a result, natural heritage is now one of the National Trust’s top three priorities.”

For AONBs and National Parks as a whole, the message is clear:

“If it weren’t for HLF, AONBs wouldn’t have delivered much. Most of the restoration of landscapes and engaging nature with the public undertaken by AONBs is funded by HLF”

Sue Holden

The North Pennines AONB has benefitted from many HLF grants. © HLF



“We [AONBs] would have been dead in the water a long time ago without HLF.”

Howard Davies

“[HLF]....makes things happen that otherwise we simply would not do...[because] ... the National Park’s discretionary budget is not sufficient to deliver projects on any significant scale”

Richard Leafe

Plantlife summarised what was a widely held view among emerging NGOs:

“HLF funding has fundamentally underpinned our charitable objectives” Marian Spain

3.5.2. Project planning, management and professionalism

HLF funding has greatly enhanced the capacity to plan and develop projects of all sizes. Transformations were especially marked in smaller or locally-based organisations who received significant HLF grants.

“...where delivery was more challenging and required a greater step-up in capacity “

Doug Hulyer

The County Wildlife Trust movement again cited the reserve enhancement programme in the 1990s in ramping up their project planning and management capacity.

Even large national organisations saw HLF funding as a major driver of improved competence and professionalism.

“[This has had]....a cumulative effect which is much greater than the individual projects. Projects produce high levels of expertise and energy, which diffuse outwards across the sector as staff move to new organisations.”

Sue Holden

The Wandle Trust, SE London, now manages specialised teams of volunteers who plan and deliver urban river restoration projects. © HLF



3.5.3. Rigour and challenge

The discipline and rigour of the HLF process were cited as important in driving up standards in the among nature organisations. Many recognise the long-term benefit of being challenged by HLF, and of the competitive nature of the process, in improving standards. HLF’s promotion of best practise, supplemented by clear and useful guidance, together with mentoring where needed, all contribute to an organisation stepping-up its performance.

“The rigour that HLF brings is welcome ...it encourages us to be systematic....HLF are very good at....pushing projects to go the extra mile.” Anne McCall

“[The grants officers]...are great at asking the right questions and providing a different perspective...[and that the development period helps to]...create a more rounded project.” Heather MacLachan (head NT in Northern Ireland, formerly CEO UWT)

“[The challenge offered by HLF]...makes organisations raise their game” Doug Hulyer,

Although he recognises that for small organisations the process may be “...too much and too onerous...”, a commonly held view.

3.5.4. Development of audience engagement

The following encapsulates a view universally held by the stakeholders.

“Across the board, the major transformation for organisations has been the shift of focus from entirely nature to including people and engagement” Doug Hulyer

Leo Kokoszko (left) enthusing about seabirds with a young visitor, RSPB Bempton Cliffs. Leo who has autism has gained confidence to the point where he now mentors other volunteers.



While nature organisations always had some element of working with people in their remits, the sheer scale, volume and professionalism of HLF funded public engagement has embedded the practise in their DNA.

“HLF has forced us to look beyond our core supporters. [Audience engagement]...is now the third pillar of Plantlife’s strategy along with Conservation and Partnership Working”
Marian Spain

Better engagement is now seen as a core part of the long-term sustainability of nature conservation.

“[Audience engagement] has helped RSPB find ways to change the mind set of visitors.”
Mike Clarke

Mike Clarke cites the *Discover Nature* project at Minsmere as ground breaking for RSPB. Learning from that project has diffused throughout the organisation. **“RSPB has started the process of thinking about people first.”**

He observes an increasing trend for people to experience nature at first hand. Visitors to RSPB reserves have trebled in recent years, while at the same time membership has increased by only 25%. The desire for an experience with nature is responsible.

“[HLF projects have made nature organisations]...think how they are perceived and received by the local community” Heather MacLachan.

“I should think more than a million people have been brought in {to nature} by “happenings” in their local community” Alison Millward

Tree planting at Great North Wood, London. © London Wildlife Trust



The status of audience engagement staff has been greatly enhanced within nature organisations. This has led directly to “...the broadening of the base of partnerships [for nature]” Richard Leafe.

Perhaps surprisingly considering the number built and run with HLF support, very few mentioned visitor centres. Heather MacLachan is a supporter, describing them as “...a **portal to nature and biodiversity**”. She was also one of the few who remarked on the importance of interpretation “...as a **means to develop people’s understanding of landscape.**”

HLF projects can greatly affect individuals. For example:

“[The *Discovering Nature* programme at RSPB Minsmere] ...has been transformative for me personally, helping me to deal with my illness, and helped develop a more direct relationship with nature.” Lizzie Guntrip, who has debilitating ME

With Lottery funding, RSPB installed access infrastructure that facilitated those with low mobility – such as ME sufferers - to experience the wildlife spectacle of the reserve. Lizzie’s re-invigorated engagement with nature lead her to become a Heritage Ambassador under the DustKickers programme.

“[HLF have been]....leading the way in **inclusive access for nature.**” Lizzie Guntrip

The Development phase is an especially important part of audience engagement.

“[It has].....enabled us to undertake detailed and extensive consultation with local stakeholders. It is expensive and time-consuming work, which is otherwise very difficult for charities to undertake. This is especially important in Scotland because so much nature is in very rural, very sparse communities which are difficult to reach.”

Anne McCall

HLF continues to fill a gap in driving forward audience engagement. Natural England in particular has suffered a regression in their audience work.

“NE had made major steps in 2006/7 to drive the people and nature agenda, but this changed in 2010 when Defra required NE to concentrate on core statutory duties – which people engagement was not. Since then there has been no leadership for the people agenda, other than that provided by HLF through funding activity-led projects.”

Doug Hulyer

Large partnership projects funded by HLF such as Back from the Brink and the Great Fen have given NE the chance to recover their audience focussed activity.

Lest we celebrate too early, Mike Clarke comments “The sector has learned a lot. But there is still a long way to go.”

3.5.5. Volunteering, training and employment

An undervalued aspect of audience engagement has been the lift to volunteering provided by HLF funding.

Volunteers building a bird hide at Great Fen. © Cambridge Wildlife Trust



“The promotion of volunteering has been really important, especially bringing new volunteers into the sector. This has been a big legacy”

Marian Spain

Training, **especially at the entry level, has broadened the intake**

“...and made the sector much more accessible for young people. It is bringing new people with new ideas into the sector.”

Anne McCall.

“Entry level trainees have broadened their experience and acquired key skills such as leading and managing volunteers. This will have an impact as the trainees develop and feed into managerial posts.”

Alison Millward ex-HLF Expert Panel, Advisor

HLF projects have set many individuals onto a career path in nature. Since working at Minsmere and becoming an HLF Heritage Ambassador, Lizzie Guntrip has developed wide ranging networks, and broadened her experience including journalisms, making short films and social media. It has helped her develop her career aspirations.

“[It has]...opened up new avenues. There has been no other way to obtain this kind of experience.”

Lizzie Guntrip

3.5.6. Raising aspiration

Many respondents reflected on the way HLF has raised aspirations and widened the vision of nature organisations.

“HLF Funding has lifted the ambition of [our] organisation”

Nick Johannsen

Only HLF can fund large landscape-scale or cross-sectoral projects. This has transformed the perception of what can be done. Even on a smaller scale, organisations know that if they have a workable idea well presented, it could be funded. Imaginings could become reality, and this has allowed organisations to raise their eyes to the horizon.

HLF funding has allowed visionary projects such as Woodberry Wetlands to happen. © LWT



3.5.7. HLF as the gold standard

The quality of planning and delivery, the size and reach of HLF projects and their overall impact has given a sizeable lift to nature projects.

“HLF has become the gold standing in funding – it encourages other organisations to want to fund a project. It also amounts to an endorsement...” Doug Hulyer

Anne McCall agrees, seeing it as especially important in Scotland:

“HLF is a huge endorsement of the value of the RSPB’s projects, especially with local communities.”

Stephanie Hilborne also notes the endorsement HLF brings at the community level:

“...HLF funding has given value to local action, changing perceptions about what was valuable. No-one else was valuing this in the same way.”

Lizzie Guntrip agreed, citing urban conservation as an example that few other funders value or will support. She also felt HLF funding provided important endorsement for unsung and otherwise obscure types of heritage:

“HLF funds on the basis of heritage need, not just high-profile nature...”

for instance, funding conservation of the freshwater pearl mussel or the Cornish path moss.

The Pennine Moors which hosted the ground-breaking Moors for the Future Landscape Partnership. © HLF



3.5.8. Innovation and taking risk

The size of grants, the scope and ambition of the conservation work, recruiting staff to novel areas of activity, and working with cross-sectoral partners have all brought innovation to nature organisations. Large-scale restoration and re-creation has generated new techniques

and developed best practise, for instance in grassland (e.g. Plantlife's *Magnificent Meadows*) and peatlands (*Moors for the Future* and *Flows to the Future*). Innovation by its nature is high-risk, but the sector has grown in confidence to take on, and overcome, risk. As a consequence, innovative techniques become tested, adopted and mainstreamed.

3.5.9. Evaluation

HLF has promoted evaluation of projects and helped the sector to learn from their experience. The benefit to the sector of good evaluation is being increasingly appreciated.

"[The evaluation process]...forces partners to reflect on their achievements and then to look at the legacy of their schemes. Evaluation helps to identifywhat should go forward into the future, enriched with new ideas." Alison Millward

Many respondents commented that more could be done to share the lessons and good practise emerging from evaluations. Some also felt that nature was not being properly evaluated. Alison Millward called for "...more longitudinal research..." to evaluation wildlife projects.

Bob Brown suggests:

"....real nature outcomes such as birds, insects and plants are very difficult to measure.there is not the level of detail in outcomes applied to nature as there have been for buildings."

Hence evaluation is not sufficiently precise and does not yield penetrating insights for nature projects.

3.5.10. An updraft of organisational development

Many of these factors act positively upon each other so that an organisation becomes caught in an updraft of development.

More projects are undertaken, experience increases and the ability to develop and deliver schemes to best practise standards increases. This expands organisational vision and aspiration, leading to more broadly based and ambitious initiatives which have greater impact and greater resonance with audiences. They are increasingly seen as champions for nature and draw individuals and stakeholders towards them. Increased professionalism and project management capacity draws other partners to collaborate. As they grow and develop they become more resilient, and better able to develop in the future.

Planting Bluebells. The diversity of activities deployed to engage people with nature has widened enormously in the last 10 years.



While this positive feedback loop of development has been sustained for the last 20 years, it is dependent on continuing momentum – and continuing funding.

3.5.11. Sectoral transformation

When enough organisations have been caught in the updraft, so the sector as a whole becomes transformed.

Consultation with nature organisations, and other evidence in this report, indicates this point of transformation has been reached. While there are many other factors involved in this transformation, few consultees seemed to doubt that the funding and the processes HLF has brought to the sector has been instrumental.

“Charities are increasingly delivering for nature as part of the wider “civil society” effort. HLF has been a pillar in enabling this to happen.” Mike Clarke

3.6. How HLF Has Transformed Nature

All consultees agree that entire sites or landscapes can be transformed by HLF projects.

“No-one gets landscape scale working like HLF does.” Sue Holden

“...the potential scale of investment can change whole landscapes, as in *Flows for the Future*, where the scale of tree removal and peatland restoration has been immense,

the delivery of climate change targets made possible.....it's a real game changer"

Anne McCall.

"[HLF investment can]..turn around the fortunes of a whole landscape.."

Alison Millward

HLF investment can also transform a national habitat resource. Through the *Tomorrow's Heathland Heritage* programme, 80% of the BAP target for heathland restoration was achieved, a major contribution to nature's condition and resilience.

Heathland being restored by the Sheffield Wildlife Trust through the HLF funded *Wild Sheffield* project © Mike Harding



Despite HLF's demonstrable successes for nature, respondents emphasised that more needs to be done. At a national scale, it is the firm view of Anne McCall that the UK has no hope of reaching the Government target of stemming biodiversity losses by 2020 (a deadline revised from the original target of 2010). The condition of nature in the UK continues to be parlous:

"The loss of nature in the UK continues. An [index] that assesses how intact a country's biodiversity is, suggests that the UK has lost significantly more nature over the long term than the global average. The index suggests that we are among the most nature-depleted countries in the world." The State of Nature Report (Hayhow et al 2016)

The size of the requirement is too large for a single funding body. It is unrealistic to expect HLF funding to be transformative for the whole of nature. At current levels of expenditure, it can only be complementary to other forms of funding. For instance:

"[In the Lake District].....most of the heavy lifting in terms of funding for nature has been done by agri-environment." Richard Leafe

Even so, the nature organisations make very clear that without HLF, nature would be in much worse condition.

“HLF has become a critical part of the nature conservation effort – they are the finger in the dyke....”

Doug Hulyer

“...how much more a decline would there have been if it weren’t for HLF. Together ...[HLF and the nature organisations]....have stemmed the flow and prevented the worst case from happening.”

Jonny Hughes

Coed Felinrhyd, Wales, restored by the Woodland Trust with funds from HLF.



This is especially so for land acquisition:

“[HLF is]....one of the few funders for land acquisition and has been the only consistent funder of major acquisition.”

Doug Hulyer

The importance of HLF is likely to increase over time as other funding streams shrink. The role of HLF has evolved from its original purpose of providing added value work and enhancement, to being a cornerstone for the sector, holding the line for nature.

3.7. The Wider Strategic Impact of HLF

Stakeholders recognise that HLF is a grant distributor. It does not have a formal role in lobbying for nature, or providing input to the development of policy.

However, most thought HLF had an indirect strategic impact. Some see a much stronger role for HLF in helping the sector develop policy.

“HLF have influenced policy, [but]...not as much as I would like to see. There is a role for HLF in what feels like something of a vacuum at the moment.” Mike Clarke

Through the transformational change in the sector already described, and through the large portfolio of projects which demonstrate what can be done, policy can shift to include strategies which were previously largely conceptual, such as landscape-scale conservation. The constellation of possibilities that have now become reality has allowed the sector to widen the scope of policy.

“...by enabling implementation, by being a mechanism...encourages policy makers to include ideas that would otherwise be unworkable. It has allowed [these] policies to become mainstreamed.”
Doug Hulyer

HLF has promoted the adoption of the core strategy of *bigger, better and more joined up* (Lawton 2010).

“This [HLF’s influence on policy] is particularly so for landscape-scale work – delivering on and supporting Lawton Review-based policy.”
Mike Clarke

“HLF has been one of the key players in making space for nature, by putting things back.”
Sir John Lawton

HLF-fostered policy evolution has fed through to changing perceptions in Government, Scotland being a prime example.

“Because of the increasing profile of nature – as a consequence of big projects and extensive public engagement – the Scottish Government now sees nature as an important component of Scotland Plc, an essential part of Scottish identity.”
Anne McCall

“Increasingly, nature is considered as a fundamental part of a healthy society and economy. **HLF has helped with this thinking.**”
Jonny Hughes

The Scottish Government is well aware of the work of HLF, with the language changing markedly in the last 5-10 years.

“[As]...landscape scale conservation is talked about more easily...[as a result of programmes such as Landscape Partnerships],...HLF are providing the mechanisms to deliver policy, and that is making more policy options possible.” Anne McCall.

There is work still to do. Anne McCall notes that getting the Scottish Government to agree that nature is heritage, and include it in their evolving Heritage Strategy, is proving difficult.

There is a parallel process evolving in Northern Ireland

“...with the devolved Government developing a better understanding of landscape-scale working and also marine conservation policy, both largely through HLF funded initiatives.”
Heather MacLachan

HLF was ahead of the curve in terms of landscape-scale working, partnership working and audience engagement with nature. They were HLF requirements for nature conservation,

years before they became formal policies in the sector or in Government. Stakeholder consultation for this report indicates adoption of these strategies is now well advanced, making a significant long-term contribution to sustainability of nature conservation.

The wetland landscape around Framlingham Castle was restored by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust with HLF funds. © Mike Harding



HLF has promoted nature in other sectors of heritage. Just as nature projects had to take account of historic and built heritage, so projects whose primary focus may be other heritage types have had to include work that enhances nature. This trend is increasing.

“...HLF has broken down the boundaries between heritage sectors” Madeleine Havard.

A small minority were more cautious about HLFs role in policy development:

“...HLF shouldn’t be influencing policy too much and should remain separate from Government.” Matt Shardlow

3.8. Strategic Challenges for Nature Over the Next Five Years

Almost universally, the two challenges first mentioned by stakeholders for conservation organisations were shrinking funding streams and Brexit.

3.8.1. Shrinking funding

Since the introduction of austerity, the sector has seen:

- Core Government funding for nature fall sharply.
- Greater dependence on Trusts, Landfill Tax and other income streams.
- Greater dependence on HLF.

- More heritage players managing assets e.g. English Heritage, and bidding for available funding.
- An increasing tendency for Government Agencies to apply to HLF e.g. Natural England, Forestry Commission and Environment Agency, for work they would have funded themselves in the past but is now considered beyond their statutory obligations.

The result is that competition is increasing, while funding streams are reducing.

3.8.2. Withdrawal from the EU

Brexit has created uncertainty for the whole sector. A wide variety of wildlife protection law, environmental sustainability policy, regulation and enforcement originated from Europe. Farm and rural economic policy will need to be reformulated.

“We could see the whole structure of nature conservation change, but its very uncertain as to how”.
Doug Hulyer

In Northern Ireland, the reintroduction of a hard border will impede conservation efforts and is a concern for nature planners:

“..nature knows no such boundaries”
Heather MacLachan

3.8.3. Brexit will worsen funding to nature

There is a direct link between Brexit and reduced funding. It is not just nature reserves whose financial viability is underpinned by EU agri-environment schemes.

“Most land with nature interest issustained by agriculture, much of it marginal land. How will the sector sustain this when agricultural support changes? ...the emphasis needs to change from subsidy for land to payments for services to society.”
Sir John Lawton

“[Some regions such as the Lake District]are particularly dependent on agri-environment and face an especially uncertain future.”
Richard Leafe

European grants such as Life and Leader still fund many large nature projects.

“Two out of three of our LPs were matched funded by Europe. I don’t know what we will do for future schemes”.
Nick Johannsen

“[In terms of funding]there is a perfect storm coming”.
Mike Clarke

3.8.4. Impact of Brexit is strongest on Natural Heritage

Because the conservation of nature is so bound up with European policy and funding, the impact of Brexit will be more strongly felt on nature than on any other sector of the heritage. This is strongly reflected in point 6 of the submission by *Rethink Nature* given in Appendix 1.

3.8.5. Working for nature in rural areas

There are issues for deeply rural areas with particularly rich nature resources. These apply particularly to the uplands and to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland:

“A challenge for Scotland is that it has a huge wildlife resource but less people and funding. It can therefore be difficult for HLF to give Scotland funding proportional to the wildlife resource and the need”
Anne McCall

Remote rural areas are difficult working environments for nature conservation. © HLF



3.8.6. A political vacuum

Many disparaged the current lack of political leadership regarding nature.

The sector needs to push ***national Governments*** to be more ambitious. Mike Clarke saw “raising the level of global ambition” as a key challenge for the sector. Nature is internationally interconnected, both habitats and species. Climate change is perhaps the biggest challenge of all. The UK could be a leader in this respect, to be a role model, but work is required to convince the Government of this.

Howard Davies saw an opportunity to ***reconsider nature’s place within a free market system*** whose valuation models do not adequately accommodate intangibles such as nature. The established economic model needs to be challenged so that nature is not “...shoehorned...” in.

There is concern about ***local government*** as well as national:

“[I am worried about]...the diminishing capacity in local authorities to manage and protect nature through the planning system and throughout their work. This impacts on the sector which has to pick up the dropped batten.”
Stephanie Hilborne

Also weakened are ***Individual Agencies***. Since the cuts, Natural England has been much reduced, losing any function – such as public engagement - which is not core to the management of statutory duties. A common feeling emerging from this research was that the voice for nature inside Government has been largely lost, and that currently the political focus is on the economy and Brexit.

The Channel Tunnel Railhead at Folkestone Downs, Kent Downs AONB. © Mike Harding



A few were concerned that the political vacuum may *allow a new land-grab*.

“There is likely to be an attack on land in the future as the green belt, AONBs, National Parks, designated sites and local wildlife areas are dismantled in the absence of political leadership and under pressure for alternative land uses”. Doug Hulyer

Others were even more alarmed:

“Land acquisition is now the only certainty...” Stephanie Hilborne

3.8.7. Improving diversity within nature organisations

Some saw a strong link between effective audience engagement and modernising the diversity of the people who deliver conservation.

“[Nature conservation]...needs to diversify the staff and trustees of its organisations to more closely reflect society and to widen their reach. Staff and Trustees need to catch up with the diversity of volunteers which already has a better match”
Stephanie Hilborne

“[Nature conservation]..... is perceived as a white, middle class, able-bodied, older-male industry...it needs to increase employment opportunities for women”. Lizzie Guntrip

She also saw lack of engagement with young people a particular challenge.

“The sector as a whole needs to make nature relevant to [young people]. This is difficult as nature is generally not “cool” for teenagers. It has an image problem – it is seen as an old man’s hobby”.
Lizzie Guntrip

Young volunteers helping restore chalk tunnels in the White Cliffs Landscape Partnership, Kent. © Richard Haynes



3.9. Resilience and the Need for HLF to Maintain Long-Term Support

Some stakeholders warned that the positive changes wrought by HLF funding could also be a risk to resilience. As a result of HLF investment, organisations have increased their liabilities – land, buildings, operations – creating a much bigger machine needing to be fed with ever greater levels of resources.

Some of these liabilities could not be divested easily were the operating environment to deteriorate sharply, leaving organisations vulnerable and at risk. Whether the transformations described above create resilience or vulnerability is yet to be tested.

HLF should consider how it will support the nature organisations sustain the investment they have together made.

3.10. HLF's Role in the Next Five Years

Most stakeholders' comments can be summarised as:

“Keep going, don't change too much, keep all of the benefits of process and rigour and methods described above, the sector just needs more HLF, now more than ever.”

Within this general call for support, there were some strong pointers to the future.

3.10.1. Funding

HLF is a key part of the solution to the funding issue. A higher level of funding for nature was called for.

“HLF is now the main source of funding to save nature. If HLF doesn't fund nature, no one else will.”

Marian Spain

“[We would like to see HLF].... develop strategic funding programmes that address the scale, timescale and pan-UK nature of the challenges facing biodiversity” *Rethink Nature*

Some felt the need for matched funding should be softened:

“Finding funding to match HLF is very challenging.” Richard Leafe

“The continuing decline in public sector funding is problem. HLF could respond by reducing the match funding requirement”. Nick Johannsen

Note however that if this were done, fewer projects could be funded and there would be fewer beneficiaries.

In making funding decisions, many commentators felt that HLF staff and Trustees needed a deeper understanding of issues facing nature and the work required for its conservation. The need for better skills in nature was also highlighted in the recent Tailored Review of HLF (DCMS 2017). Stakeholders would also like to see parity in funding with other areas of HLF spend:

“Natural heritage conservation has a number of distinctive features including greater complexity, interdependency and long-term planning and action horizons.

We would like to see HLF build its capacity to understand and share the challenges facing biodiversity, and to put this on a more equal footing with cultural heritage.”

Rethink Nature

The *Rethink Nature* group recognise that the nature organisations need to step up if HLF were to increase available funding. They see a role for HLF in assisting organisations make more and better funding applications:

“[The]..low...proportion of HLF funds spent on nature is partly due to the lack of “good applications” coming through, but...also related to the allocation priorities set by HLF. More work is needed to agree what “good” means.....driven primarily by the case for support.

HLF and NGOs need to tackle inhibitors, including.....sunk costs and hidden costs....Uncertainties over long-term funding....Tactical aversion to large scale thinking...”

Rethink Nature

Commentators felt HLF needs to streamline acquisition. Vendors are not always willing to wait for the HLF application and decision-making process. Even the fast track process requires activity plans and project planning documentation, which is not possible in rapid response acquisition.

HLF has generally not funded projects aimed at developing broad strategy, campaigning or advocacy but some see this area of activity is key in addressing many of the future challenges.

“Scottish Wildlife Trust have a big battle ahead in providing capacity for campaigning and advocacy, and HLF could help with this...”
Jonny Hughes

3.10.2. Climate Change

HLF need to engage meaningfully with climate change.

“Practically everything we do [in the National Park] is climate related. HLF need to respond to the threat posed to nature by climate change”
Richard Leafe

“[The nature sector is]...too wedded to designated sites and high-profile species, and needs to take a wider view...this could be through Ecosystem Services¹ which HLF is increasingly interested in...[as a]....necessary framework for conservation of nature.”
Simon Pepper

Simon cited *Flows to the Future* as a project based on practical implementation of both climate change and ecosystem services approaches.

The Flow Country, NE Scotland, an enormous peatland store of carbon. © Neil Cowie



¹ Ecosystem Services are the range of services provided to society by land and nature – flood management, climate change mitigation and carbon storage, biodiversity conservation, recreation, wellbeing and so on. HLF’s interest in ecosystem services has resulted in the production of an explanatory briefing note to inform policy (Dickie and Ozdemiroglu 2013).

3.10.3. Working with the Nations

According to Madeleine Havard,

“...there is a difficulty in the devolved nations, who have some autonomy but where HLF remains tied to London”.

Consequently, synchronising policy, and fine tuning the processes and HLF outcomes to the individual needs of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, remains a challenge.

3.10.4. Making HLF flexible and simpler to deal with

Increasing flexibility shown by HLF over successive strategic plan periods should be continued, including what can be funded, and who.

“...[HLF]has become simpler to deal with, more straightforward, more fleet of foot.

[Widening from traditional designated heritage].. has been welcome, even to allowing applicants to tell HLF what the heritage is. This has allowed [nature] organisations to work on ...connectivity projects, and have a much wider vision”. Madeleine Havard

Some felt HLF could go further:

“[HLF]...still takes a narrow view of heritage. It is largely place-based and asset-based. This is a pale reflection of what is meant by the nation’s heritage.” HLF should [reflect the criteria and objectives of the World Heritage Convention 2005] “..which has **a more progressive view of heritage, including a broader consideration of cultural heritage.....**It adds a *values* dimension. [This would]...see **a closer unity between heritage and culture.”** Mike Clarke and Kim Gutteridge

HLF needs to consider nature in different ways to other aspects of heritage. [Restoration of buildings] ...is inherently passive, as it is by people for people and without people [it] will rot. **Biodiversity is....sentient, and responds in an active way....[Consequently]HLF have to think about how to process biodiversity and make decisions about how to support nature”** Bob Brown

3.10.5. HLF leadership

Many saw a strong leadership role for HLF in the sector:

“HLF is a powerful voice and can shape what people think. It is widely respected as a funding authority – rigorous and objective..... This leadership role means it can be one of the most powerful advocates of nature.” Anne McCall

“[We would like to see]...HLF actively championing nature and making the case for funding.” *Rethink Nature*

“[HLF should be using]the convening power of funders, as with the Heritage Exchange meeting... [Such meetings would]...create the space in which HLF could develop its own policies.” Mike Clarke

3.10.6. HLF replacing Government funding

Many respondents worried that HLF will be drawn into funding what was formerly core Government spending

“.....which lets the Government off the hook.”

However, it is not clear how HLF can address the impending funding crisis without backfilling at least some past Government funding. Targeting of HLFs funds will become more critical in the next five years.

3.10.7. Dependency on HLF

Some expressed caution about building up a dependency on HLF, a process which has partially begun for small organisations which use project funding for core costs and staff. Any dependency on a single funder undermines long term resilience.

4. ANALYSIS OF CORE DATA

Analysis of HLF spreadsheets and past reports provides the following data and key conclusions. Further details, diagrams and data tables are contained in Appendix 2.

4.1. Headline Spending Figures

Between 1994 to March 2017, HLF spent £775 million on nature projects (Table 1 Appendix 2).

HLF data shows this funded 3605 projects, including 125 Landscape Partnerships.

HLF's spend on nature rose from around 10% of its total budget from 1994-2013, to around 13% thereafter.

£548 million (71%) was spent on biodiversity or geodiversity projects.

£227 million (29%) on the Landscape Partnership programme.

If spend on parks and designed landscapes were added, HLF data suggest the share of total spend was around 23% in 2015/16 (Figure 17, Appendix 2). However, the amount of the parks programme budget benefitting nature is small and uncertain (see Appendix 2 Section 11).

4.2. Spending on Nature Per Programme

Most of the spend on nature goes through two main programmes. Heritage Grants and Landscape Partnership programmes take 60% and 30% of HLF spend on nature respectively (Figure 1, Appendix 2).

Our/Your Heritage takes 5%, and Skills for the Future 2%. The remaining is spent through a wide range of the other smaller HLF grant programmes.

When numbers of projects are considered (Figure 2 and Table 2, Appendix 2), the smaller projects typical of other programmes such as Awards for All, Our/Your Heritage and a variety of other small programmes, are much more numerous.

See Appendix 2, Section 1 for further details.

4.3. Spend According to Size of Grant

The data show an overall pattern of very many small projects with low combined spend, with a small number of schemes over £100,000 spending most of the grant.

Data from HLF spreadsheets shows that small grants of less than £100,000 are **much more numerous** (2795 projects), accounting for 77.5% of nature projects (Figure 3 Appendix 2).

Only 20.7% of schemes (812 in total) had grants of £100,000 to £2 million.

There have only been 64 grants more than £2 million (1.8% of all nature projects), half of them Landscape Partnerships.

However, data also shows that large grants above £100,000 account for the vast majority of **spend in cash terms** (Figure 4, Appendix 2). Grants between £100K and £2 million take 59.3% of HLF spend on nature, grants more than £2 million a further 31.1%. All grants below £100,000 account for only 9.6% of spend on nature.

See Section 2, Appendix 2 for further details.

4.4. Spend in Relation to Need

HLF spending on nature still falls well short of the need. The withdrawal of traditional funding streams means nature organisations will increasingly look to HLF to fund nature.

In 2006, HLF (2006) estimated that the shortfall in Government funding to deliver the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) was £418million, between 2006-20.

This requirement is nearly all for direct conservation work on habitats and species. HLF's total biodiversity spend 1994-2017 of £500 million will include a wide range of activities which do not directly support the UKBAP.

There is increasingly intense competition for HLF funds, and a reduction in available funding for nature from other sources, especially from Government, the Agencies and Local Authorities. This is likely to worsen with Brexit. The stakeholders discussed in detail the deteriorating funding climate. HLF cannot meet all of this shortfall, and will therefore need to consider how best to focus funding in areas of most impact.

4.5. Response of the Nature Organisations to Available HLF Funding

HLF research has established that up to 2014, the capacity of the nature organisations was limiting the number and size of nature projects.

In 2014 (just prior to SF4) HLF analysed the feedback from 47 organisations and key individuals in natural heritage conservation to identify why more and larger nature projects were not forthcoming at that time (HLF 2014). Three main reasons emerged²:

1. The limited size and resources of many natural heritage organisations meant the organisations were not able to prepare or run larger projects requiring grants of more than £1million. This explains why projects at Board level (grants of £2million or more) were relatively rare, and why there hadn't been any Major Batch nature projects "...for years".
2. It was perceived by organisations that there was very stiff competition for large grants.

² A fourth reason, an inability for host organisations to recover the full costs of running projects, was dealt with in the process of SF4 and should no longer be a barrier.

3. There was great uncertainty securing the matched funding needed for a large HLF grant.

The three reasons, especially acting together, explain why more than three quarters of submitted projects fall in the £10K-£100K grant area, and less than 2% above £2 million. The consultation suggested a highly constrained, financially conservative and risk-averse sector. This may be partly due to the financial crisis, which started in 2007/8, and affected the whole SP3 period.

4.6. The Distribution of Funding for Nature

4.6.1. Distribution by Nation and Region

Organisations in England have utilised 76% of HLF's spend on nature, Scotland 15%, Wales 5% and Northern Ireland only 4% (Figure 5 Appendix 2).

Spend by HLF region (Figure 6) is much more equal, varying around 10% each. London, the North-West, North-East and Yorkshire and Humberside are below average at 7-8%. Wales and Northern Ireland are still lowest.

Spend on nature per capita (Figure 7 Appendix 2) is much more balanced across the regions, although Scotland still has the largest share.

See Section 3 in Appendix 2 for further details.

4.6.2. Distribution across protected sites

The data was not sufficiently detailed to allow a correlation between projects and protected sites for biodiversity projects (Figure 8 Appendix 2).

Locations of Landscape Partnerships showed a correlation with protected landscapes (Figure 9, Appendix 2), even though around 1/3 were in non-designated landscapes.

The Landscape Partnership scheme aims to deliver the aspirations of the European Landscape Convention in which all landscapes matter. Working outside of the primary designated landscapes is crucial in helping everyone to access nature, and to conserve landscapes with less statutory protection.

4.7. Buying Land for Nature

Compilation of data in past reports shows that HLF have made an enormous contribution to securing nature through supporting the nature organisations land acquisitions.

There were 460 acquisitions 1994-2017, purchasing 79,297ha at a cost of £149.3 million.

It is clearly a substantial contribution to conserving natural heritage. By 2003, 95% had been bought, with only 5% in the 14 years following. This suggests a significant slow-down in land purchase, but note that a single acquisition, Mar Lodge in 1995, accounted for 31,000ha and £10.3 million of grant.

More detailed data is presented in Section 5 of Appendix 2.

4.8. Conservation of Habitats and Species

Funding from HLF has made a major contribution towards delivering the UKs Biodiversity Action Plan.

“...HLF is arguably the most significant non-governmental funding source for biodiversity conservation in the UK.” Bailey and Thompson (2007)

By 2006, HLF funding enabled the following (Bailey and Thompson (2007), Table 3, Appendix 2):

- 80% of the BAP target for heath restoration.
- 66% of the BAP target for fen restoration.
- One third or more of the BAP re-creation target for chalk downland, hay meadow, wood pasture, fen, grazing marsh and heath

Large programmes are particularly effective at delivering outcomes for nature. For example, Tomorrow’s Heathland Heritage (THH, started in 1997) accounted for 91% of all heathland restoration funded by HLF, and 94% of re-creation, in less than 12 years. See the case study of THH in Section 5.

By 2017, acquisition and other biodiversity projects had addressed conservation on 142,274 ha of land.

Data on the habitats benefitting from HLF funding are given in Section 6, Appendix 2.

4.9. Activities That Benefit Nature

HLF has funded a wide array of activities in addition to direct conservation work, including engaging audiences, training, learning about nature, citizen science, volunteering and other participatory activities.

Compiling previous data reports (see Section 7 Appendix 2) the activities funded by HLF, and the trends, can be summarised as:

- Biodiversity Action Plan – 10% of projects, increasing, especially species projects.
- Access – 22% of projects, decreasing.
- Learning, volunteering and audience development – 38% of projects, variable trend.
- New build including visitor centres – 4% of projects, stable.
- General Conservation – 10% of projects, variable trend.
- Recording biodiversity – 15% of projects, increasing.

See Table 4, Appendix 2 for more detail. The figures relate to numbers of projects. When cash spend is considered, recent data (2014-17) suggests BAP work takes 40% of the budget, as projects are fewer but cost more (Bailey 2017).

4.10. Ensuring Support for Conservation: Winning Hearts and Minds.

The data (Table 4 Appendix 2) suggests that the great majority of projects are related to engaging people with nature, throughout the 23 years the Fund has operated.

This is of critical importance to conserving natural heritage, as reflected by the stakeholders in Section 3 above.

Long-term conservation of nature is a philosophical, political and social practise. Without the motivation to conserve nature, without the support of decision makers and local communities, and without a shared understanding of the need to conserve nature and the work that is required, conservation of nature on a meaningful scale is not possible.

The sector must convince society that healthy nature is in everyone's interest, that all will experience enough benefit to make compromising other society objectives worthwhile. Effecting this cultural change is not achieved by managing habitats, but by engaging with audiences, fostering understanding of nature and its benefits, and involving people in looking after nature. It drives conservation action and is the foundation of sustainability.

HLF have not just been funders, but leaders in this area. Activities which engage audiences with natural heritage have been funded since 1994. Providing access was a requirement from the start, but the 1997 Heritage Act expanded the possibilities for activities.

HLF supported this work with:

- professional mentoring,
- guidance documents,
- web communities and
- funding specialists to help develop and deliver engagement work

all helping to build the sector's capacity.

The sector has now adopted audience engagement methods into its *modus operandi* and this is clearly articulated in the stakeholder interviews (Section 3).

It is an example of significant cultural change in the sector, induced by HLF's leadership. Arguably, it has been the biggest single step along the road of winning hearts and minds for the conservation of natural heritage.

4.11. HLF Projects and Population Density

Many projects supported by HLF are within areas of high population density (Figure 10, Appendix 2). By funding so many nature projects near to where people live, HLF is enabling people to directly engage with natural heritage.

Funding projects in populated areas is an important strategy in ensuring support for conservation. Further data and maps are presented in Section 7 of Appendix 2.

4.12. HLF Funding and Deprivation

HLF grants have channelled at least £88 million into deprived areas³. Those with most barriers and fewest opportunities are thereby brought closer to nature.

Note however that this is still only 12% of HLF's total spend on nature. It could be argued that the main beneficiaries of wildlife and landscape conservation are the better off.

Many of the communities most in need of contact with nature, many of whom cannot travel easily to find nature and have many other barriers, are not being served adequately by HLF funded projects.

Figures 11-15, Appendix 2 show the distribution of nature projects in deprived areas in different areas of the UK, including London. Section 9 of Appendix 2 provides a further breakdown of data.

Projects in deprived areas are very varied, but the vast majority are activity based (Figure 16, Appendix 2), engaging audiences with nature.

4.13. Landscape Partnerships

LPs have been transformative – for the land and communities that host the scheme, and for the way that the sector delivers landscape conservation. It was a programme ahead of its time. Around a third of HLF's nature funding goes through LPs.

Landscape Partnerships have made substantial contributions to BAP habitat targets, especially heathland, in addition to the other habitats listed in Table 3, Appendix 2. Physical works have had an enduring impact, improving the fabric of landscapes across the UK. They have also delivered a wide range of outputs in the engagement of communities and people. Impacts on communities are more difficult to assess, but were described as **“pervasive and long term”** (Clarke et al 2001) and that such outcomes **“...often eclipse hard outputs in terms of breadth and legacy” and have “...led to fundamental improvements in how local people experience and value their landscape.”** Parker et al (2016).

LPs have been described as **an “intelligent response” to UK landscapes** (Parker et al 2016) which have a long and varied history offering multiple services and functions to diverse communities and stakeholders. Historically, they have been evaluated separately by HLF (Clarke et al 2006, Parker et al 2016).

More detail on LPs are included in Section 10, Appendix 2.

³ There is some ambiguity in the spreadsheets as some spend under deprived areas may also be under targeted areas for SP1-4. Hence this is likely to be a minimum figure.

4.14. Designed Landscapes: The Parks for People Programme

The data included in this report do not include spend on Parks for People. In the past, the Parks programme has not provided strong benefits for nature, but this is changing. Changes to the programme guidance in 2013 have strongly encouraged all Parks for People projects to consider existing habitats and species, and to look for opportunities to enhance nature and to help urban populations engage with nature. Parks projects increase links between deprived communities and nature.

Further information is provided in Section 11, Appendix 2.

5. CASE STUDIES

5.1. Overview

HLF schemes have the power to transform nature and people’s lives. Eight examples were examined to illustrate aspects of the transformation wrought through good projects. They are:

Scheme	Key Features
The Great Fen , Cambridgeshire	The transformation of nature in a degraded landscape by a partnership with a bold vision. A prime example of “bigger, better and more joined up”.
The London Wetlands	Transforming urban spaces by bringing back nature; reconnecting people with nature.
Tomorrow’s Heathland Heritage , across the UK	Making a significant impact on the UK resource of a priority habitat through a single, transformational programme of action.
Ospreys of Dyfi , Mid-Wales	Engaging people with nature by using iconic species and well planned and managed visitor infrastructure.
Flows to the Future , Caithness	Restoring the internationally important peatlands of Caithness Flow Country. It combines habitat restoration work with reconnecting people with peatlands and their role in combating climate change.
Skomer Island , Wales	Experiencing and valuing nature in places of exceptional and potentially fragile wildlife importance.
Moors for the Future , Peak District	Innovation, vision and ambition results in a game-changing restoration scheme operating at a landscape scale. It has engaged people at every level of implementation.
Belfast Hills , Northern Ireland	Reconnecting urban and rural environments to provide more accessible landscapes in better condition.

5.2. The Great Fen, Cambridgeshire

5.2.1. Summary

The Great Fen demonstrates the transformation of nature in a degraded landscape by a partnership with a bold vision. It is a prime example of “bigger, better and more joined up”. It also shows how detached local communities can be re-engaged with nature.

Great Fen Location



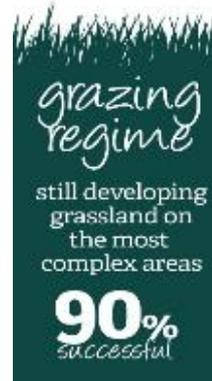
5.2.2. Key Achievements

The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire (The Wildlife Trust) bought 929 ha of arable land to restore back to nature.

The work involved significant capital works, together with access improvements and nature related activities. It lasted from 2008 to 2017, costing nearly £17 million.

The scheme linked two isolated National Nature Reserves, hugely expanded the area of wetland and restored a wide range of fen habitats and species. Work included:





The project required a landscape-scale approach which could only be achieved with a broad partnership of local stakeholders. It was achieved by two tranches of HLF funding, the first in 2007, a second in 2013 when more land became available

5.2.3. Transformational Change for Nature

In less than 10 years, the partnership has transformed a degraded, flat and dry arable plain of carrot and onion fields to a wild again wetland, rich in species and visual interest.

The water tables are recovering and wetland habitats are re-assembling. Key wildlife indicator species such as water voles are recolonising or expanding their range.

This has been transformation at a landscape scale. Few projects better exemplify the call for "bigger, better and more joined up"⁴.

Google Earth aerial image of part of Kester's Docking. A composite image of the same area of land from two time periods; the lower segment pre-restoration, the upper segment after wetland restoration. Courtesy CWT.



⁴ Lawton (2010)

5.2.4. Reconnecting People with Nature

A critical change for local nature is the support that has been developed for conservation in Fenland, the Trust bringing local people together with their local landscape.

“...we have....reconnected people with the landscape and history of the fens, ... built wider audiences and reached isolated older people, young people, and people with sensory impairments. We have....given huge enjoyment, fostered local pride and changed attitudes. We have empowered local people to take action.... We have learned that difficult and challenging audiences can be connected tothe stories hidden in the landscape.”
Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust Evaluation Report

Volunteering has been an especially important way for people to connect and contribute. Many of the volunteers are local.



5.2.5. Seven Enduring Legacies

1. Substantial land acquisition and its re-wilding from arable to wetland.
2. Reconnection and increased resilience of two National Nature Reserves.
3. Improved access to a large swathe of previously closed land, near to large urban centres.
4. Local communities reconnected with nature.
5. A body of new volunteers passionate about Great Fen and engaged with its conservation
6. A step change in the capacity of the Trust to undertake large and complex projects.
7. A partnership that is enthusiastic to progress further conservation and audience work in the area. The Great Fen is the first stage in re-wilding 3,700ha of land.

5.2.6. Five Key Messages for HLF

1. Large investments produce truly transformational projects.
2. Landscape-scale transformations are possible even in degraded farmland environments.
3. High quality, deep penetration audience engagement is possible with habitats and species which are not spectacular, and without big infrastructure such as visitor centres.
4. The key requirement for success is the quality of the project staff.

5. Follow-on funding can be very cost effective for HLF.

5.3. The London Wetlands

5.3.1. Summary

The London wetlands demonstrate how spectacular nature can return to urban post-industrial landscapes and how large audiences can be reconnected to nature.

Five schemes are summarised at the end of this case study. Before the HLF projects, four of the sites, all in the heart of London, were closed to people and all five were largely empty of wildlife.

5.3.2. Key Achievements

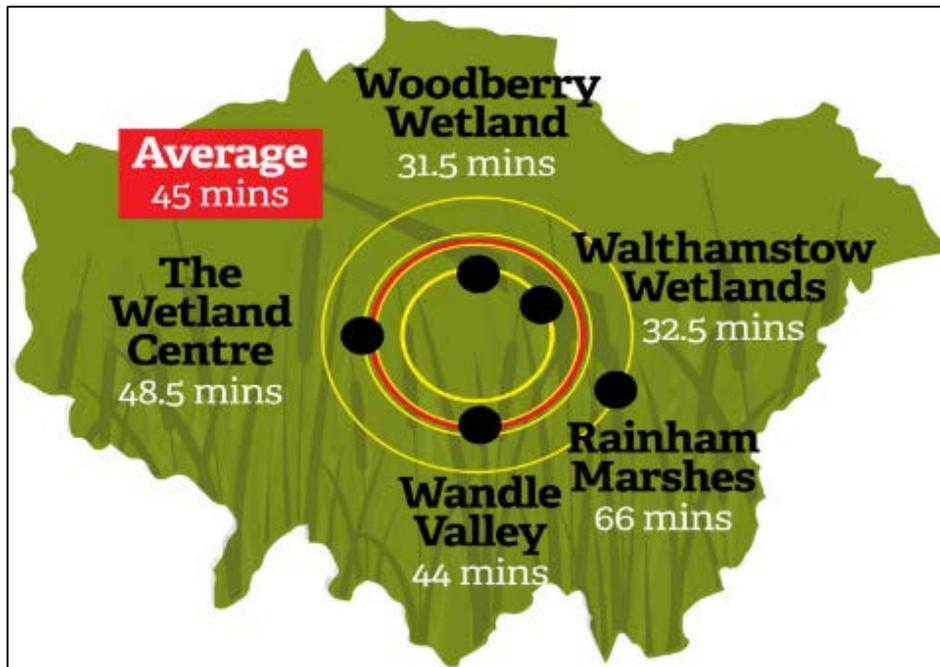
- **Restoring 588ha of wetland** from derelict MoD land, water industry sites and degraded urban landscapes. In the Wandle valley, six lengths of chalk stream have been restored from urban channels.
- **Bringing people and nature together** through four new or upgraded visitor centres; providing access and interpretation at all sites; and supporting a diverse range of activities.

5.3.3. Reconnecting Communities with Nature

The wetlands are **easily accessible** by public transport (see image). The average travel time from central London to the five sites is **45 minutes**⁵, Woodberry and Walthamstow both around 30 minutes. This is accessible nature for the 9 million people who live in London.

Average travel time from central London to the five wetlands,

⁵ Using the TfL website, travel time (including walking) to each of the five from Paddington, Liverpool Street, Victoria and Kings Cross was calculated. The mean of the 20 journeys is 45 minutes.



The projects have re-connected urban communities with nature by **creating inspiring wild spaces with spectacular wildlife**. Audience engagement has been **inclusive and imaginative**.

The projects collectively are a major contribution to **winning hearts and minds in the capital**.

Responses to 'How does nature in the city make you feel?' Woodberry Wetlands.



5.3.4. People Looking After Nature

Volunteering for nature in their local patch has been inspiring for local communities.

“Volunteering here is so rewarding - a beautiful spot, fascinating nature, interesting work, exercise outdoors and fantastic people. It's hard to beat!” “It's very special seeing how much the site means to the local community, and helping them to appreciate nature more.” Roger Hadwen and Charlie Phillips, volunteers at Woodberry Wetlands.

Volunteers Managing the Reedbeds, Woodberry. © Penny Dixie/LWT



5.3.5. Learning About Nature

The opportunity for London based schools and communities to include visits to nature has been invaluable:

“We really enjoyed investigating in the pond and the wood because the children had the opportunity to ... experience finding animals themselves” Orchard Primary School, Year 1

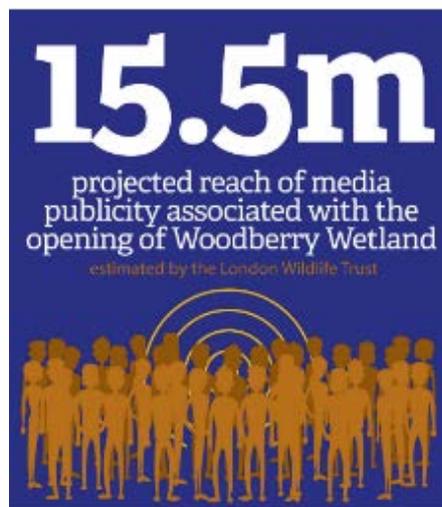
“Having everything hands-on allowed children to discover for themselves” Jubilee Primary School Year 4

Kids enjoying exploring Woodberry Wetlands during half term holidays. © LWT



5.3.6. Nine Lessons from Five Wetlands

1. Urban nature conservation can be undertaken at a large scale with real habitat and species benefits. The results can be as spectacular as any rural nature reserve.
2. Urban areas provide the best opportunities to bring people together with nature. They can engage more easily with difficult to reach and new audiences.
3. Nature projects are a magnet for the media. The opening of Woodberry hosted by David Attenborough reached a huge audience, with *BBC Breakfast* presenting the weather forecast from the wetland.



4. Because of the density of the nearby populations, large investments in visitor infrastructure provide high value for money.
5. The low level of spend on nature in deprived areas could most easily be addressed through urban nature projects.

6. Accessibility by public transport and re-use of old buildings makes for high sustainability.
7. Urban contexts provide diverse and unexpected partnerships. The urbanscape is rich with imagination and possibilities.
8. It is possible to undertake landscape scale working and improve habitat connectivity in urban contexts. Work can even be undertaken on whole river catchments.
9. Landscape Partnerships work well in urban areas, but imagination is needed to integrate the urban fabric in the work of the scheme.

5.3.7. The Five Projects

The five projects were achieved with around £7 million of HLF funds, leveraging around £8 million more in partnership funding.

Site	Size	Lead Partner	Details
The London Wetland Centre	51ha	Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust	Four disused reservoirs remodelled to wetland. Partners included Thames Water and Berkeley Homes.
Rainham Marshes	376 ha	RSPB	Former MoD training rangeland, transformed to wet grassland, pools, reedbed and fen.
Woodberry Wetland	12 ha	London Wildlife Trust	Post-industrial reservoirs and treatment works transformed to wetland and visitor centre, with Thames Water.
Walthamstow Wetlands	200 ha	London Wildlife Trust, Thames Water, LB Waltham Forest	Active water industry site with former water works. Wetland with designated sites and restored listed buildings for visitor centre.
The Living Wandle		Landscape Partnership scheme	Very diverse range of nature projects and engagement activities in the River Wandle valley.



5.4. Tomorrow's Heathland Heritage

5.4.1. Summary

The Tomorrow's Heathland Heritage (THH) initiative made a significant impact on the UK resource of lowland heathland through a single, transformational programme of action.

It was one of the first HLF programmes solely directed at nature. It ran from 1997 to 2009, comprising 28 separate projects.

Location of THH Projects⁶



There were lead organisations of every type from local authorities through to RSPB and the Wildlife Trusts. Sometimes pre-existing partnerships managed components, others were delivered by new partnerships.

HLF contributed c. £14 million or 54% to the scheme, a highly cost-effective investment.

A programme office based at English Nature coordinated the effort, ensuring consistency and compliance across the programme. It also reported on progress to HLF. The core unit was seen as critical to scheme success.

5.4.2. Key Achievements

The programme achieved an enormous amount for heathland conservation in only 12 years:

⁶ Two development projects are not mapped.



Projects also improved public access (often on land that had been private), installed new interpretation, undertook learning activities, events and community engagement.

Even so, a key learning point was the need to undertake much more community engagement work to support the sometimes controversial management work.

The Flying Flock, Norfolk Wildlife Trust's peripatetic sheep grazing operation © HLF



5.4.3. Transformational Change for Nature

In little more than a decade, THH transformed the health of the nation's lowland heath and set it on a path of sustainable long-term management.

THH blazed a trail for comprehensive habitat programmes. The model could be applied to a range of other UK habitats and or species.

5.4.4. Six Scheme Legacies

1. Establishing a body of good practise which continues to inform conservation of heathland such as:
 - Innovative heathland management techniques, in particular, habitat re-creation, use of large machinery, heath grazing, implementing cattle grids, and working on commons.

- Establishing partnerships for habitat restoration including private landowners. Many of the partnerships continue today.
 - Restoring heaths in or near to urban areas.
2. Good practise was widely disseminated among land and nature organisations through a range of exchanges, meetings and conferences, and by articles in industry publications.
 3. 44,533 ha of heath restored or re-created, and in sustainable management.
 4. Development of protocols for funding work on private land, state aid compliance, post project sustainability and landowner agreements.
 5. A successful management model for habitat programmes and large partnerships.
 6. An improved understanding of the role of audience engagement in supporting conservation initiatives, particularly where controversial works such as tree felling, fencing common land or impacting recreation are concerned.

THH projects included a diversity of partners – including the MoD in Breckland. © M. Harding



5.4.5. Five Key Messages for HLF

1. Large, well-managed and well targeted programmes can have significant impact on entire habitats.
2. Such programmes can be very cost effective for HLF.
3. Key to success is a strong and well-informed project management team backed up and coordinated by a Programme Management Team.
4. Innovation, taking well controlled risk and having an ambitious vision for a scheme all yield high impact and high-quality results.
5. Audience engagement is a key element in building support for the conservation effort as well as an outcome in its own right. It requires resourcing with sufficient staff with the right skill sets.

5.5. Ospreys of Dyfi, Montgomeryshire

5.5.1. Summary

The Ospreys of Dyfi shows how local communities and visitors can be reconnected with nature through using spectacular species, together with well-planned visitor infrastructure and a series of imaginative and well targeted activities.

Location of Cors Dyfi



There were two HLF projects at Cors Dyfi, the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust's (MWT) wetland nature reserve, an activities programme from 2009-2012 and then the main capital and activities project from 2012 to 2016. The strong legacy means many aspects continue today.

At the heart of the project are accessible nesting Ospreys within a large wetland nature reserve.

5.5.2. Key Achievements

- Construction of a 600m boardwalk, water hide and 360° observation Tower on peat bog and swamp. The Tower includes visitor and learning spaces.
- A broad programme of learning and participation focused on ospreys, other key species and on peatlands.
- A high level of participation in conservation through a variety of volunteering roles.
- An enduring public profile which is maintained via web sites⁷, social media and related audience engagement activities.

“Before the involvement of HLF, Cors Dyfi had a baseline visitor number of 2,000 – 3,000 people a year. During the first full year of being open, we saw the annual visitor numbers increase to a new baseline of almost 40,000.” 2017 Evaluation Report.

⁷ See <http://www.dyfiospreyproject.com/live-streaming> and <http://www.montwt.co.uk/reserves/cors-dyfi>

- Over the full period of HLF funding, the site has been visited by 275,000 people.

Recognising these achievements, the project won the Environment category of the National Lottery Awards in 2016.

Osprey chick at the nest, Cors Dyfi. © MWT/HLF



5.5.3. Connecting People With Nature

Much of the work of the project was achieved by volunteers who came from as far away as Sussex and Hampshire. Nearly 40,000 hours was registered in 2012-2016.

Volunteers undertook wildlife monitoring including ospreys, otters, rare plants, dormice, moths, bats and invertebrates. They also monitored hydrology and helped manage the herd of water buffalo.

Habitat management provided another volunteering role in the scheme, offering more traditional tasks. The boardwalk was built by volunteers, mostly by hand.

Using only muscle power, over 30 tonnes of materials were carried 600m to the site of the observation Tower. A system of winches, ropes and pulleys were used to raise the Glulam beam structure. All to minimise impact of machinery on the bog.

The project was inclusive. The bottom floor of the tower observatory was 2m above ground level, requiring a 50m low-gradient ramp, and all of the interpretation was duplicated on the ground floor. A disabled lift was added. The boardwalk was wide enough to accommodate two wheelchairs passing. Variable coloured materials were used to help visually impaired people navigate the buildings.

The Tower Observation Hide. © MWT



The Trust used 357 events to reconnect more than 6,700 people with nature. This included music events and visits by BBC *Countryfile* and *Springwatch*. The new facilities were used by a wide range of audiences in the learning programme.

The Learning Programme at Cors Dyfi. © MWT



Digital media was a key interface. As well as the web site with live streaming and Live Chat, the Trust were active on YouTube, Flickr, Facebook and Twitter.

The life-changing power of nature is exemplified by Tracey Norris who moved to Dyfi from Hampshire to be near to the reserve. A GP, she now works part time, volunteering on the

reserve for the rest of the week. Her story was featured on the HLF website on 08/02/2016. Tracey said:

“We are like a family.....I feel like I have come home”.

5.5.4. Five Legacies

1. A spectacular group of visitor facilities close to nesting Ospreys and within a peatland wilderness.
2. High visitor numbers who can connect to spectacular and rare wildlife.
3. An innovative programme of learning and volunteering which continues today.
4. A well-documented example of good practise in audience engagement and sustainable development for nature.
5. An exemplar of how contact with nature can make positive changes to people’s lives.

5.5.5. Three Messages for HLF

1. Spectacular wildlife can be a powerful tool for engaging audiences in the conservation of nature.
2. Development of visitor infrastructure can be undertaken with minimal environmental impact and for modest cost if it is planned with care.
3. Digital and social media if used well are critical for engaging audiences with nature.

5.6. Flows to the Future

5.6.1. Summary

This ambitious project focuses on restoring the internationally important peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland, known as the Flow Country. It combines critical habitat restoration work with activities to engage audiences with the importance of peatlands and their role in combating climate change.

Location of Flows to the Future Location



5.6.2. Key Achievements

This ongoing project, which started in 2014, is being delivered through the Peatland Partnership (with RSPB Scotland as the lead partner) and will receive a total grant of £4.6 million.

At this mid-point, it is working towards its target of restoring 15km² of blanket bog, through a combination of tree removal, tree mulching and drain blocking. The project will undo some of the damage caused by forestry planting over the last 40 years. Income from timber sales will partially fund the project.

Tree removal on the Flows (© Paul Turner, RSPB).



The project has already provided an imaginative new lookout tower and boardwalk at Forsinard, and recruited a team of dedicated staff to deliver a range of educational and recreational activities based around peatlands and climate change.

The Flows Lookout Tower, Forsinard (© Kevin Arrowsmith)



5.6.3. Transformational change for nature

The Flows to the Future project tackles environmental issues at two scales:

- **The landscape scale** – by restoring a diverse and threatened habitat, supporting a wide range of animals, insects and plants. The Flows includes blanket bog as well as associated habitats such as heath, lochs and pools.
- **The global scale** – by reversing loss of carbon from drying peat, to carbon storage in healthy, restored wetland. It is estimated that over 400 million tonnes of carbon are stored in the Flow Country peats, which is more than double the amount of carbon in all of the UK's forests.

5.6.4. Reconnecting people with nature

A significant part of the project involves providing improved access, interpretation and learning opportunities for people, both within the Flow Country and beyond. A field centre is being provided which will offer facilities for studying the wetland as well as accommodation for volunteers. All activities are aimed at inspiring visitors to take an active interest in helping to protect the peatlands.

Interpretation facilities provided at Forsinard (© HLF)



5.6.5. Five project legacies

1. Gathering good practise for restoration and management of peatlands and its key species.
2. Assembling a body of volunteers who are passionate about protecting this rare habitat.
3. Raising the profile of the role that carbon storage has to play in climate change.
4. Building new relationships with universities, local communities, landowners and recreational organisations.
5. Restoring the landscape from dark, uniform plantations back to open, natural wilderness.

5.6.6. Key messages for HLF

1. Projects which address global issues at a local scale provide audiences with the means to make a positive difference to their environment.
2. Funding projects in remote areas can often be more expensive, but can bring people closer to some of our most inspiring landscapes, even if they are unable to visit themselves.
3. Giving applicants access to lessons learnt from other projects (through their evaluations) is important in order to hone techniques, speed up the restoration process and save money.
4. Projects which protect habitats at a landscape scale not only provide huge benefits to many different kinds of wildlife, but also ensure that the wildlife exists as viable and sustainable populations.

5.7. Skomer Island, Wales

5.7.1. Summary

The Skomer Island project demonstrates how unique opportunities can be provided for people to experience and value nature, even in places of exceptional wildlife importance.

In 2004, the Heritage Lottery Fund approved a grant of £1,675,000 to enhance the quality of the Skomer Island visitor experience. The project, which was a joint bid between the South and West Wales Wildlife Trust and the Countryside Council for Wales, ran for 5 years and was completed in 2009.

5.7.2. Key Achievements

Capital works were undertaken to the buildings and infrastructure of the island, including the renovation of the farm buildings to provide attractive accommodation for volunteers and visitors, a workshop and library.

The renovations were sensitively managed to preserve the built heritage of the island, utilising traditional materials and enhancing the 'sense of place' that belongs to the island.

Skomer is one of only a few places in the UK where members of the public have easy access to major seabird colonies during the breeding season. Skomer now offers better provision for day trippers and is showing record numbers of visitors. Wildlife watchers are carefully controlled in order to protect the wildlife resource.

The project offers awe-inspiring overnight stays, based on the islands natural resources. For instance, visitors can experience dark skies unblemished by light pollution, or witness the night-time return of thousands of Manx Shearwaters to their burrows.

The overnight experience at Skomer Islands newly renovated buildings.



Connection between the mainland and the island is maintained through a range of digital media, providing interpretation and information for those who cannot come to the islands. The remote island also now contributes to the sustainable development of the local tourism economy and supporting rural regeneration in west Wales.

5.7.3. Engaging People with Nature in a Sensitive Location

Skomer Island Heritage Experience demonstrates how making visitors at the centre of site management can raise public awareness and also help sustain the ecological value of a place.

Through improving the visitor experience, there are many indirect benefits to wildlife, including:

- **Increased financial support.** For instance, in 2015, record breaking numbers of new Wildlife Trust memberships were recruited on the island.
- **Greater volunteer participation** supporting the Island's maintenance and providing wildlife monitoring data. In 2015, Skomer welcomed 145 weekly volunteers.
- **Improved visitor management** which minimises the impact of visitors on the internationally important wildlife interest.

The project has delivered a 'flagship' development which as Chris Delaney (former member of the Committee for Wales) states "is crucial to audience development. It is the hub of the island."

5.7.4. Four Project Legacies

1. An expanding core of people who value and enjoy the island's wildlife through offering experiences which capture the imagination.
2. Establishing strong partnerships between land owners and managers, with a shared purpose of protecting the Island's wildlife.
3. Conserving the landscape value of Skomer by sensitive building design and renovation.
4. Providing facilities and staff which create a centre around which new projects can develop and important research can be undertaken.

Volunteers setting up solar panels during the renovation of neighbouring Skokholm Island in 2011. (<http://www.friendsofskokholmandskomer.org/>)



5.7.5. Four Key Messages for HLF

1. HLF has an important role to play in bringing together key organisations. These partnerships project a very positive message to members of the public. They also allow development of well-integrated plans for managing visitors.
2. Engaging with a more diverse and larger audience, and developing original and exciting ways to inspire people, can generate huge support for a site.
3. Not all sites will be able to accommodate people in ways which are not detrimental to their wildlife resource. However, Skomer is a model which should be shared across the sector so that other sites may benefit from this approach.
4. Dedicated and skilled staff are essential in securing a successful project. It requires the right people in the right roles.

5.8. Moors for the Future

5.8.1. Summary

This scheme shows how innovation, vision and ambition can result in a game-changing restoration scheme operating at a landscape scale, and which has engaged people at every level of implementation.

Moors for the Future project within the Peak District National Park



The partnership focused on restoring and conserving some of the most damaged moorland sites within the Peak District Natural Park and was the start of one of the biggest upland restoration projects found in the UK.

This scheme started with the formation of the Moors for the Future Partnership in 2003 with a £3.1million grant from HLF.

The partnership is also outstanding for its success in building a legacy of related projects by securing more than £30million from a range of organisations.

One of these related projects is an HLF funded community science project called 'MoorCitizens', which encourages people to get involved in caring for their local moors and help shape responses to climate change.

5.8.2. Key Achievements

The partnership continues to build upon a wide range of outcomes for both nature and people.

Direct benefits, such as the revegetating of 4 km² of bare and eroding peatland, has in turn led to the development of new propagation techniques for moorland flora.

The scheme employed over 30 people in peatland project activities

The scheme has also brought together 20 partners to implement 50 projects which reconnect people with nature. These range from a 3-year 'Moor Care' initiative (an access and interpretation project focused on social media), access improvements (through the creation or improvement of 18 km of upland paths) and refurbishment of The Edale Moorland Centre (costing £1.2million).

5.8.3. Landscape Scale Change

The scheme has been transformative at the landscape scale.

- Experience gained through the original scheme has already enabled the Moors for the Future Partnership to restore 32 km² of blanket bog.



- A body of best practise in moorland restoration has been developed, potentially benefitting all of the upland peatlands.
- The partnership has implemented sustainable techniques for restoring peatland hydrology, such as the use of gully blocking to dam eroding channels, raising the water table and recapturing sediment transported after heavy rain.

Stone dams on Kinder Scout shortly after construction in 2013



- It has stimulated research into the role of peatland in delivering ecosystem services (such as the provision of clean drinking water) and is developing essential datasets on the moorland environment and species through volunteer participation.

A group of volunteers taking part in a bumblebee survey



5.8.4. Six Scheme Legacies

1. Improved educational facilities which reconnect visitors and local communities with the moorland environment.
2. A body of good practise in restoration and audience engagement with upland peatlands.
3. Large areas of restored moorland, with increased diversity of species.
4. An expanding resource of volunteers

5. Important baseline data on the condition of the moorland and its species.
6. Secured funding to continue the achievements of the partnership up to 2021.

5.8.5. Four Key Messages for HLF

1. Landscape partnerships are an excellent means of kick-starting multiple projects and new funding opportunities.
2. This was a very cost-effective project. Cost savings can be made when working at a large scale.
3. Establishing a strong management infrastructure, particularly where numerous projects are involved, will ensure better project delivery and method statements.
4. Transformation at a landscape scale is possible if the vision is ambitious and the partnership determined.

5.9. Belfast Hills Landscape Partnership

5.9.1. Summary

The Belfast Hills Landscape Partnership Project provides an excellent example of how urban and rural environments can be re-connected to provide a more accessible landscape in better condition. It also demonstrates how a wide range of approaches can be used to maximise the impact and legacy of landscape partnership schemes.

In 2012, the Belfast Hills Partnership was awarded a grant of £1,157,700 from the HLF to “restore, both physically and in the minds of our people, the Belfast Hills as a vital living asset for Belfast and beyond”. The project built on four previous HLF investments in individual sites within the area, but under this scheme, a long-term Vision for the management of the Belfast Hills as a whole was delivered.

The Belfast Hills Landscape Partnership Scheme Location



5.9.2. Key Achievements

The project area is a challenging one. It includes 5,250ha of high value upland habitat, fringed by some of the most socially deprived wards in Northern Ireland. To cover the wide variety of needs for the area, 29 projects were delivered providing substantial benefits in four main areas:

- ***Conservation of built and natural features*** including projects working on invasive species control, wildfire mapping and grassland habitat enhancement.
- ***Increasing community participation*** by creating opportunities for people to get involved and learn about the Belfast Hills, through heritage books, school activities and information panels.
- ***Improving access and learning*** by installing new access routes and providing virtual tours on a newly created website.
- ***Developing Training and Skills*** to care for the landscape, such as biological surveying, practical conservation and mapping skills.

Improving access across the Belfast Hills. © HLF



As a direct result of these projects, many more people are using the Hills and thousands of members of the local community have engaged with the scheme.

5.9.3. Transformational Change for Nature

In the first two years⁸ of the scheme, staff and volunteers have delivered remarkable benefits to the natural heritage of the area. These include:

- planting over 10km² of wildflowers,
- planting more than 1300 trees and
- decreasing the extent of invasive species by more than 60%.

However, long-term benefits have also included increasing the skill set and support of volunteers and encouraging a sense of ownership and participation within the community. The latter has been achieved for example by setting up a Planning Issues Network to establish links between community groups and planning bodies.

⁸ Data on the project is currently only available from the interim evaluation report.

Volunteers working to improve the Belfast Hills



5.9.4. Five Scheme Legacies

1. Community training will ensure people have the right skills and knowledge to protect and manage their local landscape.
2. Local communities, many in deprived areas, have been reconnected with their local landscape.
3. Closer working between community groups and planning bodies ensures communities can better influence the future of their landscape.
4. An expanded path network gives new access to the Hills for a much wider range of audiences.
5. A strong partnership board and commitment to the scheme, which will ensure action for the hills will continue into the future.

The view from the Hills into Belfast.



5.9.5. Five Key Messages for HLF

1. It is possible to overcome the disconnection felt by urban communities to local landscapes through a strong partnership vision and a community-led approach.
2. Integrated landscape schemes such as LPs provide considerable added value to site based work through connecting capital work to access, learning and community engagement projects.
3. Working with land owners over the long term – including developing binding post-scheme landowner agreements – builds great resilience into landscape schemes. They pave the way for further working through future landscape initiatives.
4. Regular review of project partner roles and responsibilities ensures continuing commitment and engagement, keeping the partnership fresh and dynamic.
5. Allowing schemes to re-invest savings and underspend into new opportunities can enhance programme delivery and allow value to be added to components. Outcomes can be greatly enhanced.

Re-Connecting the Hills with the City



6. CONCLUSIONS

This report answers the question: *What Has HLF Done For Nature?*

The research clearly demonstrates that HLF has had a substantial impact on nature since its inception in 1994.

It has **used direct funding** to benefit nature in the following ways:

- Provided £548 million for biodiversity projects and £227 million for landscapes.
- Funded the acquisition of 79,297ha of land for nature conservation, in 460 acquisitions.
- In total 142,274 ha of land has benefitted from HLF funding.
- HLF funding has been a significant factor in delivery of the UKs Biodiversity Action Plan targets, for instance funding 80% of the target for heathland restoration. HLF has been key in conserving habitats and a wide range of species.
- It has helped deliver core nature strategies such as the Lawton Principle of “*bigger, better and more joined up*” through landscape-scale working.
- It has invested heavily in projects which engage people with nature, including nearly £90 million in deprived areas. These activity projects have been crucial in building support for conservation of nature. Activity projects have also involved people in nature and its care, and have raised understanding of natural heritage for a wide range of audiences.

The outcome is a series of habitats, species and landscapes which are more resilient and in better condition. HLF has been fundamental in arresting widespread decline of nature in the UK. Our nature is more accessible to people, who are more engaged with its conservation.

HLF has **built the capacity of nature organisations** and **driven adoption of good practise** in the following ways:

- It has embedded partnership as a core working method to achieve conservation of nature.
- The capacity of organisations to conceive, develop and deliver projects has grown enormously, through (1) enhanced funding and sustained project delivery, (2) the rigour and challenge of the HLF process, (3) improvements in project management, (4) mentoring and support, (5) dissemination of best practise, (6) improved evaluation and learning, (7) training across the organisations, (8) a more ambitious vision, and (9) a greater willingness to take risk and achieve good outcomes.
- HLF has driven adoption of audience engagement, so that it is a core working practise for nature organisations.

The outcome is a group of organisations which are stronger, fitter and more able to conserve nature, and more adept at working together to extend their impact.

The nature conservation organisations provided much of the evidence in this report, describing in detail what HLF has done for nature. They conclude:

“HLF has been one of the key players in making space for nature....” Sir John Lawton.

“The landscape would not be as it is today if it were not for HLF.” Mike Clarke

“HLF has become a critical part of the nature conservation effort – they are the finger in the dyke.” Doug Hulyer

The future is challenging for nature, with (1) reduced funding (2) Brexit, and (3) a developing political vacuum for nature being the key concerns of the nature organisations.

The organisations see **a strong and increasing role for HLF** to address these issues, making a range of suggestions for future directions. These can be summarised as:

“Keep going, don’t change too much, keep all of the benefits of process and rigour and methods described above, the sector just needs more HLF, now more than ever.”

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8. APPENDIX 1: Methodology

8.1. Scope

Two areas of HLF activity are considered in the report:

- **Biodiversity projects** – any project in any of the main programmes – Our Heritage and predecessor schemes, Young Roots, Heritage Grants and so on – that were predominantly based on biodiversity conservation. This included both capital and activity-led projects and could be of any size of grant.
- **Landscape Partnerships** (and the predecessor Area Partnership scheme) – a scheme based on natural heritage within a defined area. Such schemes always contain a mix of heritage conservation and activities including training, learning and participation. They also contain some built heritage conservation and engagement as buildings are integral to landscape character.

Spend on built heritage has not been split out of Landscape Partnerships and spend on buildings and infrastructure (such as Visitor Centres) has not been split out of biodiversity projects as they are usually essential to delivery of conservation or engagement activities.

Projects under the Parks for People programme and its predecessors are not included as the report considers natural heritage rather than designed landscapes. This could change in the future as parks projects increasing include nature.

8.2. Data Examined

We utilised three sources of information and data sets:

Stakeholder Interviews

Consultations with twenty stakeholders who had in-depth experience of the nature sector and/or of working with the Heritage Lottery Fund were undertaken. A long-list of stakeholders was developed between ourselves and HLF staff and then prioritised – the final consultees are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Stakeholders Interviewed

Name	Position now or past	Engagement with HLF
Bob Brown OBE	Member of Ulster WT Council and former member of HLF Northern Ireland Committee. Marine biologist.	Through projects with RSPB and National Trust (HGs and Landscape Partnerships, and also as HLF Committee member.
Mike Clarke & Kim Gutteridge	CEO RSPB, previously Head of Operations. RSPB Head of Fundraising	Contributed to HLF Heritage Exchange conferences in the past. Involvement in and knowledge of wide range of HLF projects and programmes.

Name	Position now or past	Engagement with HLF
Howard Davies	Director of NAAONBs and NRW Board member	A good overview from the AONBs perspective. Previously a Director for the Wildlife Trusts for Wales.
Lizzie Guntrip	Young Heritage Ambassador. Emerging journalist and media professional.	Good perspective on young people and heritage. Not developed or delivered schemes but keen using. Nature has been key to her managing ME.
Dr Madeleine Havard	Deputy Chair Natural Resources Wales and	Former HLF Wales Committee member. CEO South and West Wales Wildlife Trust. Delivered WT capital works programme. Wide overview of delivery and strategy.
Stephanie Hilborne	CEO Wildlife Trusts.	Worked developing large central bids. Also has overview on vast number of County Wildlife Trust HLF projects. Member of DCMS External Challenge Panel.
Sue Holden	Director Chilterns AONB. Formerly CEO of Woodland Trust	Has overseen a large number of schemes with WT and the AONB. Strong AONB perspective.
Jonny Hughes	Scottish Wildlife Trust CEO Global IUCN leader and initiator of World Natural Capital Forum.	Overseen and helped develop a wide range of projects including skills and training, HGs and Landscape Partnership.
Doug Hulyer	Retired from Board of NE. Advisor to Defra. Past Director of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust.	Former Trustee of HLF and on SW Committee. Educator and advocate of engaging people. Involved in development and delivery of projects with WWT
Nick Johannsen	Director Kent Downs AONB	Provides input into AONB policy. Overseen a wide range of HLF funded projects from Our Heritage to Landscape Partnerships.
Prof Sir John Lawton	RSPB Vice Chair, Patron Yorkshire and Wiltshire Wildlife Trusts. Principle author of the Lawton Report (2010), Govt advisor on ecology and conservation.	Strongly linked to national policy, input into Board decisions. Strategic input to some applications.

Name	Position now or past	Engagement with HLF
Richard Leafe	Lake District National Park CEO, previously Natural England.	Provides a National Parks perspective. Has strategic discussions with HLF at region level. Overseen delivery of array of HLF projects.
Sir John Major	Former Prime Minister.	Creator of the National Lottery and Patron of the Great Fen project. Full interview was not possible.
Anne McCall	Director RSPB Scotland	Led development of the Inner Forth LP. Overseen wide range of projects with RSPB. Strategic discussions with HLF and hosted visits with DCMS.
Heather McLachlan	Director National Trust Northern Ireland, formerly CEO of Ulster Wildlife Trust.	Undertakes strategic working with HLF across range of heritage issues in NI. Also overseen many HLF funded projects including HGs and LPS.
Alison Millward	Consultant and advisor for HLF on land and biodiversity and on activities.	Working for HLF on the ROSS register for nature projects and for activities related projects since c.2000. She was on the Historic Buildings and Land Panel for 10 years. She helped develop the LP programme.
Simon Pepper	Board of Scottish Natural Heritage, Director of WWF Scotland, Board of Forestry Commission and Deer Commission, Government advisor on Sustainable Development	HLF Scotland Committee for 6 years to 2017; overview of projects and programmes but not delivery. Strong involvement in strategy.
Simon Pryor	Director of Environment NT	NT Director of Environment, previously with Forestry Commission, with long-term knowledge of HLF.
Matt Shardlow	CEO Buglife	Broad engagement with HLF through projects and also bilateral discussions with HLF policy and operational staff.
Marian Spain	CEO Plantlife. Previously Countryside Agency working on AONBs.	Extensive experience at strategy and also delivery level, overseeing a number of HLF schemes large and small.

The stakeholders were of two groups:

- Those who had developed or implemented HLF projects or had line managed staff who had done so. The range of HLF programmes and themes engaged with by stakeholders was comprehensive, from small grants of £20k or less to large partnership projects with multi-million grants, from Young Roots and Skills for the Future through to Landscape Partnerships. Some had experience of the full breadth of this range.
- Those who had been involved in HLF at a decision making or strategic level (or both) as Trustees or on Region committees, or who led large organisations within the sector and determined strategy and direction. Typically, they had not been involved with project development or delivery, but there were exceptions. Some had moved from projects to strategy and leadership through career progression, while some heads of smaller organisation retained an overview on operations.

A special submission was made by *Rethink Nature*, a strategy grouping of CEOs from the taxa-based nature organisations: RSPB, Butterfly Conservation, Plantlife, Buglife, Butterfly Conservation, Bat Conservation Trust, the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust. This is reproduced at the end of this Appendix section, and quoted/referred to in the main text.

Care was taken to ensure a geographical spread across the four territories and the range of natural heritage interests. Accounts of each discussion are provided separately to HLF.

8.2.1. Previous Analyses and Raw Data

We reviewed past analyses, evaluations and internal HLF papers such as Board briefings. They are all included in the References. They show how grant spend and the strategy of both HLF and the sector have evolved.

We also analysed two Excel spreadsheets compiled by HLF:

- the Natural Heritage 1994-17 spreadsheet (Final September 2017 version)
- the Landscape Partnerships Data 1994-2017 spreadsheet (August 2017 version)

The spreadsheets contain a number of fields such as project costs, metrics on habitats, species and project activity, and on location, although not all fields have been filled in for every project. Postcode locations were converted to national grid reference to allow mapping. A sample were checked to ensure the entry in the spreadsheet was the project location rather than the office of the applicant. All of the financial data needed re-analysis following some editing of entries to exclude repeated projects and other anomalies. Hence the figures in this report do not always correlate with those in previous reports but are believed to be the most accurate.

8.2.2. Case Studies of HLF Funded Schemes

Eight case studies were compiled. These were of projects which showed the impact of HLF funding. Some were individual projects taking place on individual sites, others are groups of projects which exemplified a particular approach. Landscape Partnerships were included, and as far as possible the case studies were spread across the four territories.

Raw data analyses, digital outputs, PowerPoint material and summary transcripts have been supplied directly to HLF. This report includes the overview, discussion and conclusions.

8.2..1 Rethink Nature

Biodiversity funding by HLF and other lottery distributors.

1. There is a mismatch between what lottery players and the public want to see funded and how the funds are allocated. Surveys rank natural heritage among the most popular projects funded by the lottery, while nature projects make a huge contribution to the highest-ranked social objectives such as tackling loneliness
2. We would like to see HLF build its capacity to understand and share the challenges facing biodiversity, and to put this on a more equal footing with cultural heritage. Natural heritage conservation has a number of distinctive features including greater complexity, interdependency and long-term planning and action horizons. We would welcome:
 - a. In-house staff, Committee and Trustee expertise/experience/interest matching the scale of the need and the level of public support for biodiversity
 - b. HLF actively championing biodiversity and making the case for funding it. The urgency of stemming biodiversity loss can be difficult to convey or understand, as it usually takes place over years or decades.
 - c. Working with NGOs and statutory agencies to develop strategic funding programmes that address the scale, timescale and pan-UK nature of the challenges facing biodiversity and people's connection to it. Similar to the Parks for People programme and sitting alongside Landscape Partnerships, this would enable HLF officers and governors to streamline processes and applicant support, focus on added value and need, and actively champion the value of and case for biodiversity.
3. As part of its research programme, we encourage HLF to adopt the State of Nature Report and its four UK country versions as its primary information source as to the current state of and trends in the natural heritage "asset base", and therefore the scale of need. The State of Nature is a periodic review based on robust data and would underpin strategic investment programmes in future.
4. The relatively low (<10%) proportion of HLF funds spent on nature is partly due to the lack of "good applications" coming through, but apparently also related to the allocation priorities set by HLF. More work is needed to agree what "good" means, and for this to be primarily driven by the case for support. NGOs and HLF need to recognise and tackle inhibitors including:
 - a. Reality of sunk costs and hidden costs during pre-development, development and operational phases; e.g. taking these into account Back from the Brink will prove considerably more expensive than even its promoters are able to measure, and certainly more expensive than the programme accounts will show, notwithstanding FCR.
 - b. Uncertainties over long-term funding for work which is rarely "one-off" in reality.
 - c. Tactical aversion to large-scale thinking (ambition limited by funding thresholds, and specifically lack of confidence/encouragement in taking biodiversity proposals to UK panel)

5. Back from the Brink is emerging as a potential model for future working on focussed biodiversity outcomes, including in-depth community engagement and reconnection. Its current scope is limited to England, and to a subset of priority species, but the aim is to develop a model for significantly greater investment in the nation's biodiversity assets and appropriate extension into the rest of the UK. HLF's role in setting this in train will prove decisive; extending and maintaining momentum can be the basis for a long-term strategic programme.
6. Brexit is expected to impact the natural environment funding landscape more, and more directly, than other areas of heritage, due to the direct link between funding and EU policies and programmes.
 - a. The NGO sector, along with the public sector, has benefited considerably from targeted funds such as LIFE+ as well as more broadly-based funds of which biodiversity is an eligible purpose, such as Interreg.
 - b. NGOs that have eligible farming-based operations benefit from agri-environment revenue funding. For many Lottery-funded projects it is a major source of post-project revenue and a (relative) guarantee of sustainability. At least it is an important medium-term revenue source allowing for long-term adaptation of revenue streams.
 - c. Loss of agri-environment or equivalent revenue would impact on NGOs' ability to deploy their own and externally-sourced capital, including Lottery funding for capital works.
 - d. The loss of agri-environment funding paid to private operators (farmers) would be a blow to private biodiversity-friendly initiatives; this would arise because of an absolute reduction in post-Brexit public sector subsidies, and/or because of any diminution of allocation or specificity for biodiversity. The less this kind of work is carried out within farming operations, the greater the overall task for NGOs and statutory agencies to make good the loss.
7. Innovative funding – HLF could work alongside NGOs and other funders to explore what is possible, including repayable funding, bonds etc. especially if former EU sources are repatriated.

9. APPENDIX 2 : Key Data

9.1. Overview of Spend

9.1.1. Gross Figures

Table 1 summarises HLF funding since November 1994. Because of the problems with analysis in past reports and some errors in the main spreadsheets, these data were obtained from a fresh analysis of all projects, after some “cleaning” of the data in conjunction with HLF. Hence the figures may not tally with past calculations, but are believed now to be the most accurate.

Table 1: HLF Spend on Landscape Partnerships and Biodiversity-based Nature Projects⁹.

Strategic Plan	Dates (FY)	Spend on LPs (£million)	Spend on Biodiversity (£million)	Total (£million)	Share of total HLF Spend
SP1	Nov 1994- March 2003	22.35	189.71	212.06	8%
SP2	April 2003- March 2008	37.43	110.82	148.25	9.4%
SP3	April 2008- March 2013	71.27	102.04	173.32	10.8%
SF4 (4 years data)	April 2013- March 2018	96.29	145.33	241.62	13.15%
TOTAL	Nov 1994- March 2017	227.35	547.9	775.26	10.16%

Some of the spend in LPs is not directly attributable to nature as the programme includes built, social and historic heritage and its associated activities. Conversely, the figures do not include spend on nature included in “Community Projects”, a new HLF spend category calculated since 2011 and accounting for around £74 million.

The share of spending on nature increased by a third in the latest Strategic Framework. The increase reflects substantial promotion of HLF programmes within the sector and changes to

⁹ Note: Financial years are calculated based on the Initial decision date for each project. Spend on LP projects is based on ‘Grant Awarded’ for completed projects, ‘Stage 1 award’ combined with any ‘development grants’ for pre-April 2010 projects, and ‘Stage 1 award’ only for post April 2010 projects (which had Development grants included within the Stage 1 sum).

the programmes and structuring of grants during SF4. Even so, 13% remains a relatively small share.

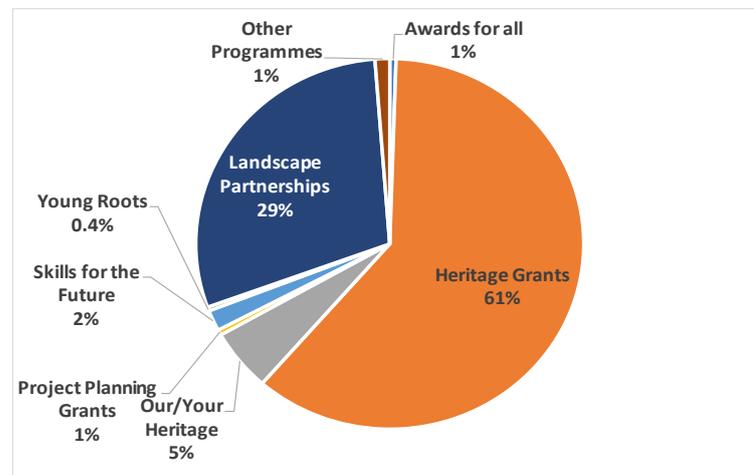
HLF data shows this funded 3607 projects, including 125 Landscape Partnerships (including the predecessor Area Partnerships).

9.2. Spend Per Programme

Figure 1 shows proportion of **spend according to grant programme**, with data derived from HLF's data spreadsheets.

Project Planning Grants is a closed programme which allowed applicants to prepare detailed proposals. It was replaced by the development year of the two-stage application process.

Figure 1 : Share of Grant Spent on Nature According to Programme

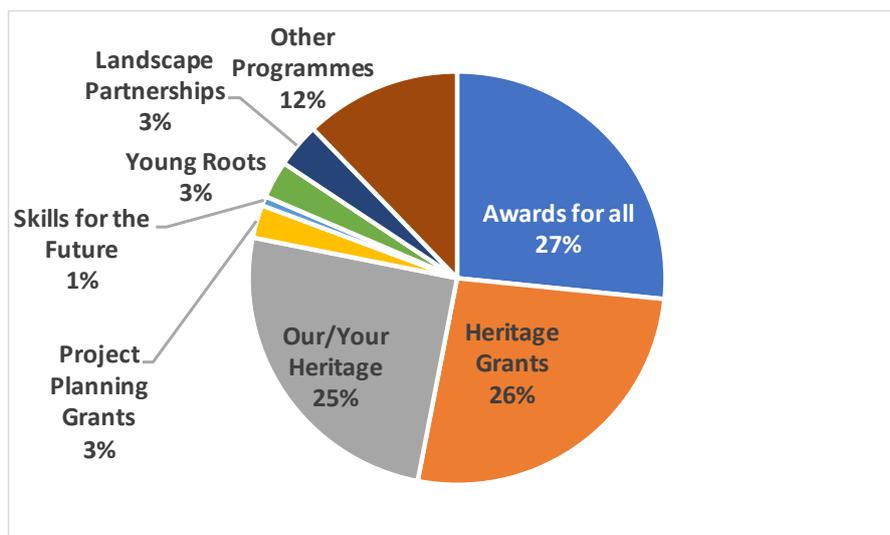


“Other”, accounting for around 1% of grant spend, includes: Catalyst; Local Heritage Initiative; Millennium Festivities Fund; Sharing Heritage; Transition Funding; and Townscapes Heritage. The contribution of some of these programmes to nature is uncertain.

The Tomorrow’s Heathland Heritage initiative is included in Heritage Grants. Alone, it would account for 1.8% of HLF spend on nature.

If the **number of projects in each programme** is compared, the big spending programmes do not dominate (Figure 2 and Table 2).

Figure 2 : Number of Projects per Programme.



Clearly, LPs and Heritage Grants host many fewer but more substantial projects. Programmes such as Awards For All, Your/Our Heritage and Other Programmes all have a much higher proportion of project numbers. These programmes support small, usually activity-based projects, whereas LPs and HGs are more capital intensive and higher cost. This is reflected in mean cost of project in each programme (Table 2). Perhaps surprisingly, nature projects in the Skills for the Future programme are on average a little more expensive than Heritage Grants.

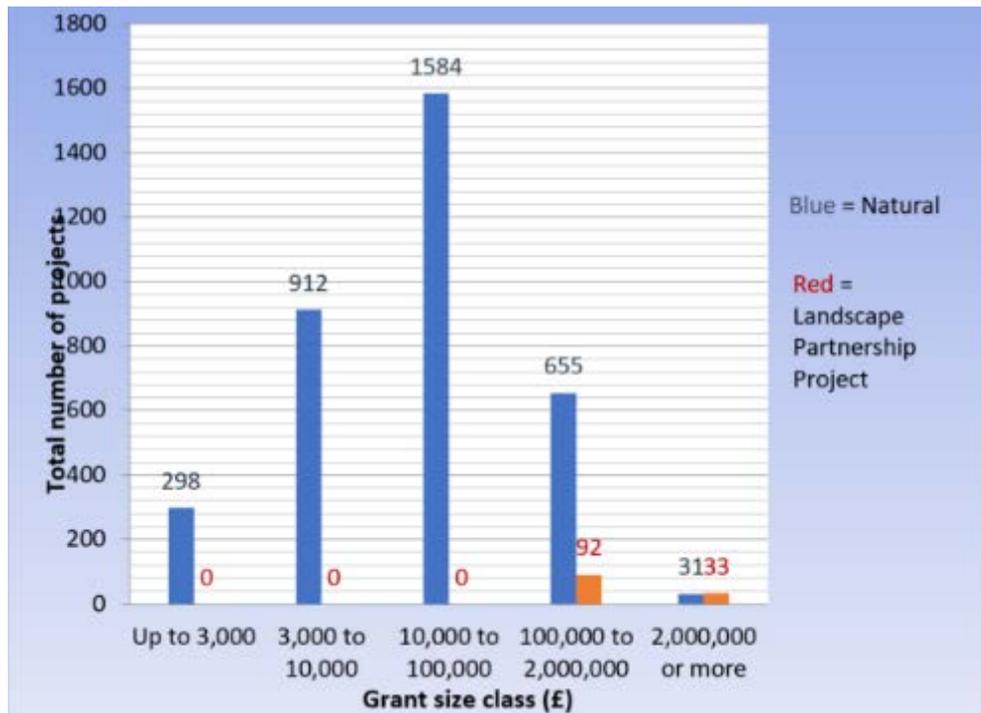
Table 2 : Mean Cost of Nature Projects in Each Programme

Programme	Number	%	Average (£)
Awards for all	960	27%	4,191
Heritage Grants	951	26%	496,550
Our/Your Heritage	906	25%	46,189
Project Planning Grants	93	3%	39,118
Skills for the Future	27	1%	520,133
Young Roots	105	3%	25,391
Landscape Partnerships	125	3%	1,818,827
Other Programmes	438	12%	21,622
Total	3605	100%	215,052

9.3. The Size of Grants for Nature

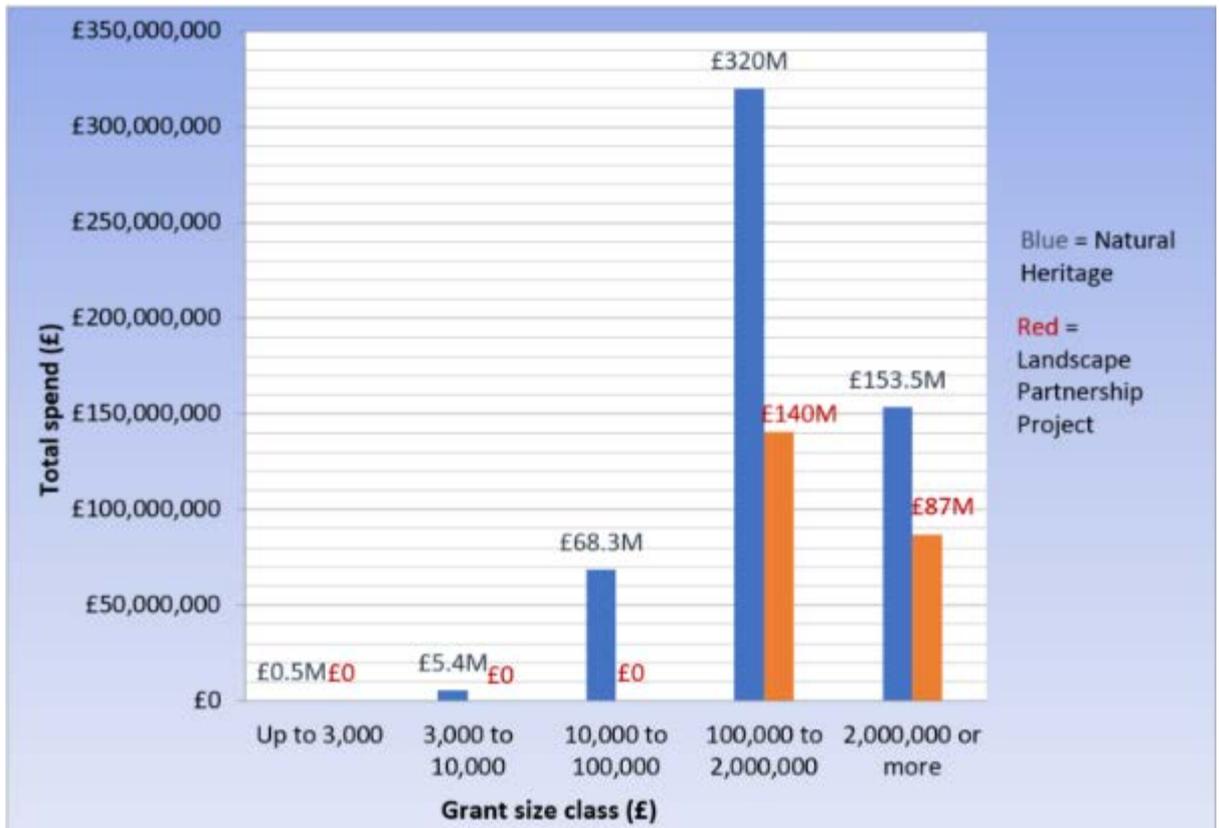
Figure 3 shows that most grants are small, less than £100,000. Very large grants for nature are rare; there have only been 31 Heritage Grants of more than £2 million since HLF began, plus a further 33 LPs.

Figure 3 : Number of Nature Projects in Different Grant Categories



However, when the spend per grant size is analysed (Figure 4) a very different pattern emerges. Grants between £100,000 and £2 million take 59.3% of HLF spend on nature, grants more than £2 million a further 31.1%. All grants below £100,000 account for only 9.6% of spend on nature.

Figure 4 : Total Grant Spend According to Grant Size



Whether outcomes for nature are maximised by many small projects, or fewer larger projects, cannot be ascertained from available data but would be worthy of assessment.

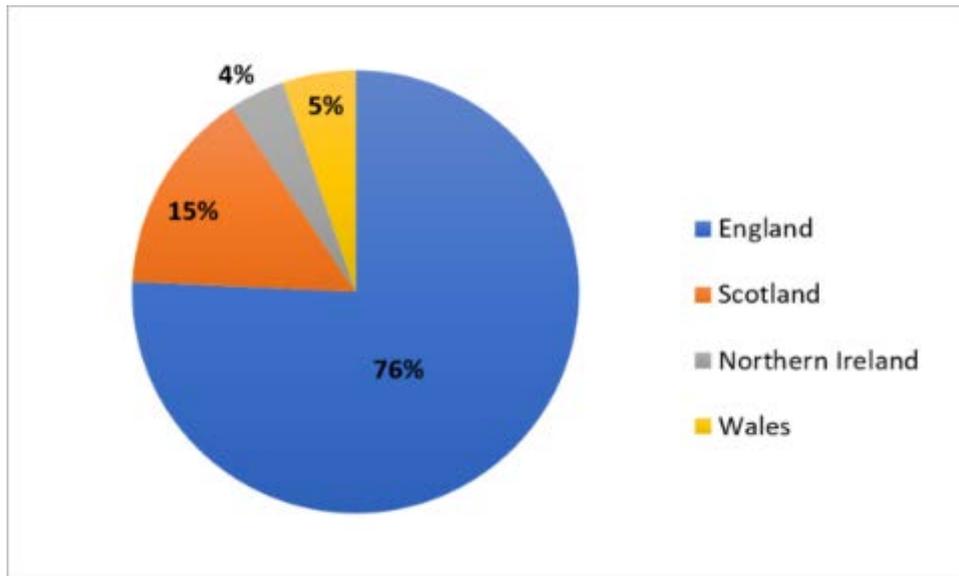
9.4. Distribution by Nation and Region

9.4.1. Gross Spend Per Area

Figure 5 summarises the proportion of total spend on nature among the four nations of the UK. Approximately three quarters of the total spend on natural heritage and LP projects since 1994 has been in England, partly reflecting total size and therefore need and demand.

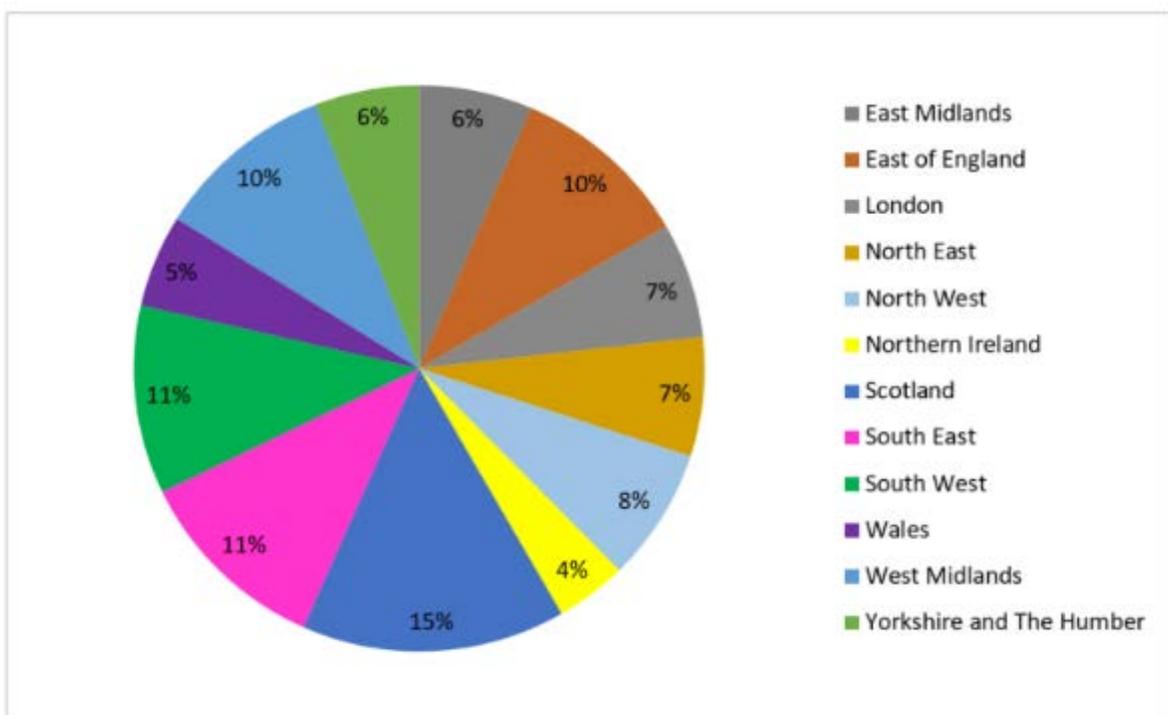
Landscape Partnership projects are much more prominent in Northern Ireland, with 43% of all HLF nature grants there being directed into LPs. In England, Scotland and Wales, the proportion of nature spend for LPs ranges between 20 to 28% for each country.

Figure 5: Proportion of total spend by HLF in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (1994-2017).



When considered at a regional level, the spread of funding is more evenly distributed (Figure 6), but still illustrates uptake of funding in Northern Ireland and Wales is currently behind other regions of equal size.

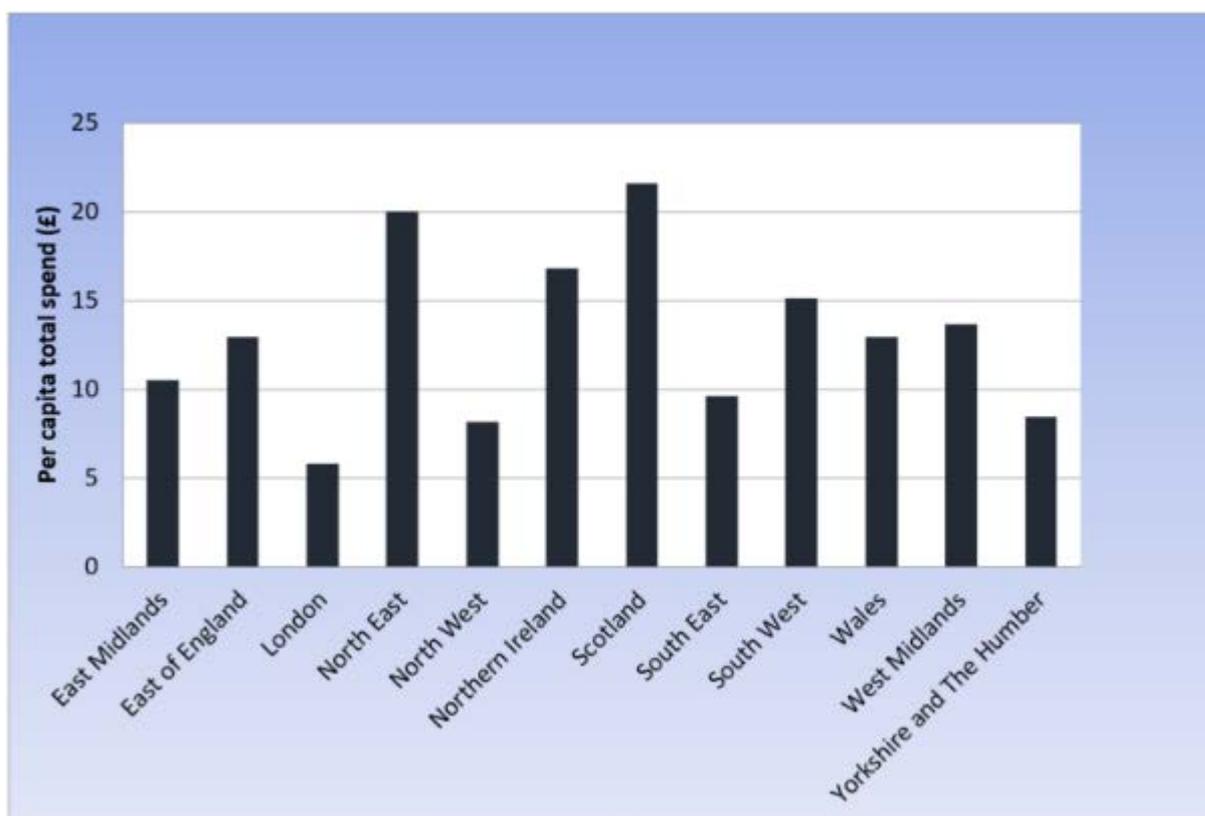
Figure 6: Regional proportion of total spend by HLF on Natural Heritage and Landscape Partnership projects from 1994 to 2017.



9.4.2. Spend per Region Per Capita

Regions which Figure 6 suggests receive low spend are generally low in population. If the figures for per capita spend are analysed, spend across regions is more balanced (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Spend on Nature Per Region, Per Capita



Scotland is still significantly better funded, but the share among other regions is more equal. Regions with large conurbations and less nature – London and the North-West in particular – fare less well.

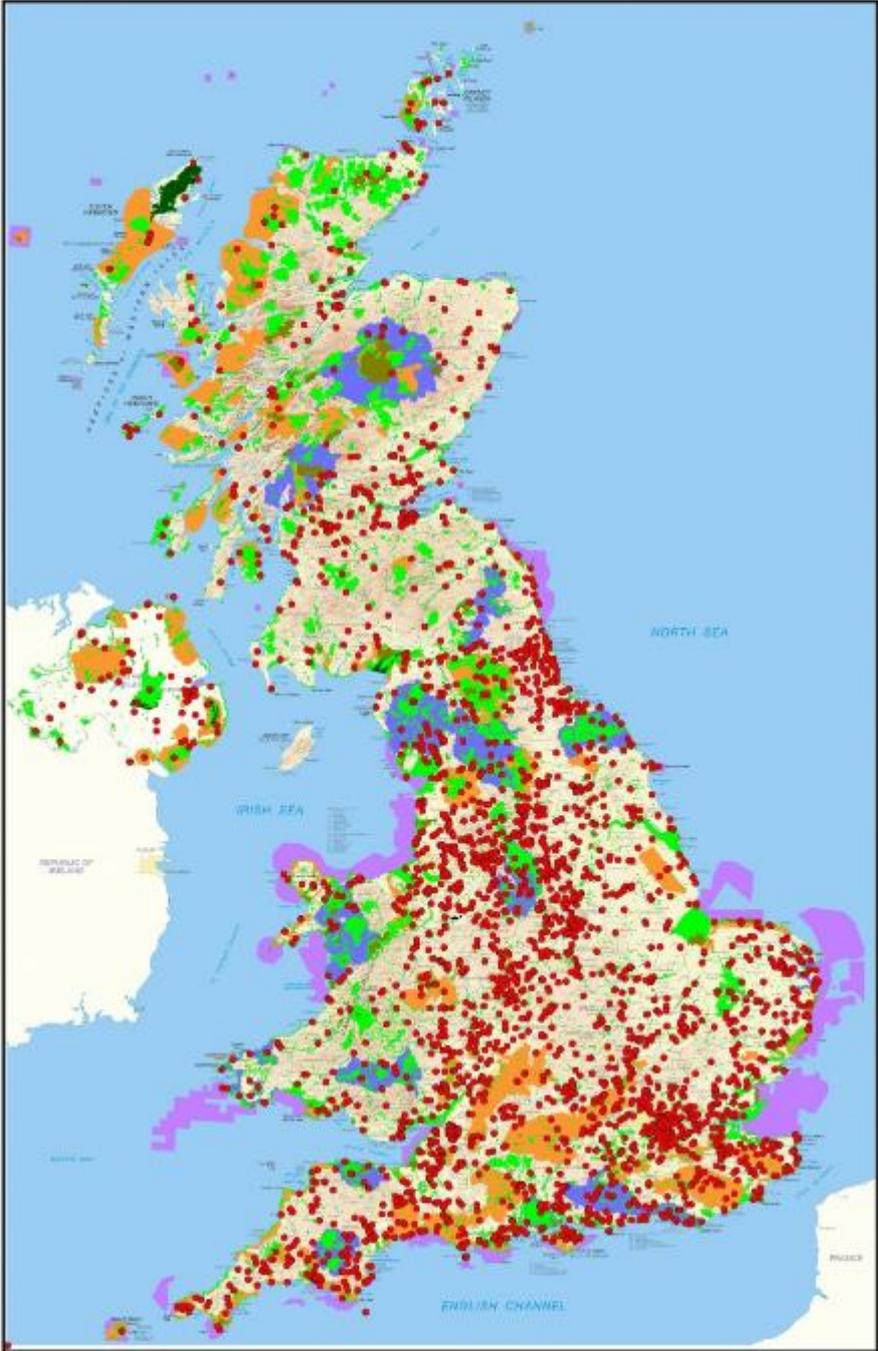
9.5. Mapping Funding with Protected Sites

Answering the question “Does HLF funding reflect the distribution of nature around the UK” would be helpful in this research.

Figure 8 shows the distribution of HLF funded projects across the UK in relation to designated sites of ecological and landscape importance. However, the scale of the map (and the scale of available mapping of ecological sites) makes visual correlation difficult. So many protected sites are very small and cannot be represented on a UK wide map.

The spreadsheet of HLF projects indicates that 16% of natural heritage projects were within designated sites, but this is probably a dubious metric as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI’s) are not included within the spreadsheet as “designated sites”. Without better (more comprehensive and more precise) data on projects HLF has funded, answering this key question adequately is not possible.

Figure 8: Distribution of HLF funded projects across the UK in relation to designated sites of ecological and landscape importance.



Key:

- = National Parks
- = Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs and ASSIs)
- = Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)
- = Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) & Special Protection Areas (SPAs)
- = Wetland site designated of international importance (RAMSAR)
- = National Nature Reserves (NNRs)
- = Project supported by HLF

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Landscape Partnership projects (Figure 9) are better correlated with protected sites, with 45% of all LP projects occurring within AONBs, National Parks or World Heritage Sites and a further 23% within SAC's, SPA,s, NNRs, or RAMSAR's.

Figure 9: Distribution of Landscape Partnerships in relation to landscape designations.



Key:

- = National Parks
- = Landscape Partnership Project supported by HLF
- = Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)

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9.6. Spend on Land Acquisition

Land purchase has been a key area of spend. In 1994-9¹⁰, 51,512 ha were purchased with £38.2 million of HLF funding. A large portion of this was the Mar Lodge Estate in March 1995 (31,174 ha at £10.3 million). Other than Mar Lodge (National Trust for Scotland), most purchase was undertaken by the Wildlife Trusts.

By 2004, after ten years of the Fund, there had been 365 acquisitions, amounting to 66,137ha, quoted as 1.75 times the area of the Isle of Wight¹¹. Acquisitions accounted for 35% of the HLF spend on nature. Acquisition continued at the same rate and in the same pattern to the end of 2006¹² when £77.6 million had been spent by HLF contributing to 67,377ha purchased. In terms of habitats acquired, upland/moorland habitats accounted for 53%, woodland 11%, heathland and peatland 9% each, and agricultural land 6%.

During SP3 (2008-13¹³), there were 31 land acquisitions totalling 1,885ha for £10.39million¹⁴, a significant decrease. The overall pattern stayed the same – the Wildlife Trust were the main beneficiary, with heath/moorland being the main habitat acquired.

During 2014-17 (SF4) 21 acquisitions were made totalling 1,003ha and £15.37million¹⁵, an upturn on SP3.

Because of some gaps in the data, HLFs core data spreadsheets were re-analysed for the current report. They showed a grand total of 460 acquisitions for 1994 to 2017, purchasing 79,297ha at a cost of £149.3 million. 71% was purchased during SP1, and by 2003, 95% had been bought, with only 5% in the 14 years following. It is clearly a substantial contribution to securing natural heritage. HLF are likely to have spent more on acquiring land for nature than any other single organisation in Britain.

9.7. Spend on Biodiversity Conservation

The UK's **Biodiversity Action Plan** (BAP) was for many years the overarching national strategy for the conservation of nature. Progress in conservation was measured against targets for Habitats (HAP) and Species (SAP). Table 3 summarises the contribution made to BAP targets by HLF funded projects from 1994-2006.

Clearly, HLF funding made a major contribution to the core work of the conservation sector, even in this short time.

¹⁰ Norton (1999)

¹¹ Bailey et al (2004)

¹² Bailey and Thompson (2007)

¹³ There is a gap in analysis between 2006-8

¹⁴ Bailey (2013)

¹⁵ Bailey (2014, 2015, 2017)

Table 3: HLF’s principle contributions to achieving Biodiversity Action Plan Targets 1994-2006. The full inventory for all habitats is given in Bailey and Thompson (2007)

Habitat	Restoration Area in ha (% of BAP target achieved)	Creation Area in ha (% of BAP target achieved)
Downland	1,096 (3%)	643 (64%)
Hay Meadow	979 (6%)	192 (34%)
Wood-pasture and parkland	583 (3%)	414 (83%)
Fen	795 (66%)	334 (no target)
Reedbed	158 (3%)	324 (27%)
Lowland grazing marsh	2,742 (0.9%)	1,323 (53%)
Lowland Heath	46,429 (80%)	2,477 (41%)

Large programmes are particularly effective at delivering results for nature. For example, Tomorrow’s Heathland Heritage (THH, started in 1997) accounted for 91% of heathland restoration funded by HLF, and 94% of re-creation in less than 12 years.¹⁶ A second large programme was the Wildlife Trusts’ reserves enhancement capital programme, started in 1996 with *Wild Places of Shropshire*. By 2001, this programme had addressed 38,592ha of habitat on 1056 nature reserves across the UK.

Understanding the value of such programmes, HLF Trustees stated their ambition in 1997 to “...support at least one strategic partner programme with a national impact every year or biennially”¹⁷. This did not happen again, however, until 2016 when the Back from the Brink project led by Natural England was offered £4.75 million for species conservation work across England.

When biodiversity projects were added to acquisitions, a total of 117,180ha of land had benefitted from HLF funding by 2006. Analysis of HLF’s internal data spreadsheet shows the area of land within biodiversity projects had reached 62,977ha by 2017. With acquisitions, a grand total of 142,274ha had been addressed. High Level Stewardship, the agri-environment instrument for land of high environmental value, had addressed only 65,000ha.

9.8. Activities That Benefit Nature

Table 4 analyses the range of all activities included in HLF projects for three time periods since 1994.

¹⁶ Bailey and Thompson 2007.

¹⁷ HLF (1997)

Table 4 : Primary Activities Undertaken Through Biodiversity Projects Funded by HLF.

n=number of projects funded that year with the given activity as its primary focus. Using data combined from Bailey (2013, 2014, 2015, 2017). Some Activities had data for only some time periods and have been omitted as incomparable. They are: Landscape Partnerships; Management Plans; Archaeology; Business and Strategy; Fundraising Capacity; Other Capital Works.

Activity	n (%) 1994-07	n (%) 2008-13	n (%) 2014-17
HAP	67 (5%)	22 (5%)	31 (7%)
SAP	11 (1%)	14 (3%)	27 (6%)
Physical Access	119 (8%)	15 (4%)	16 (3%)
Sensory Access	15 (1%)	1 (0%)	1 (0%)
Intellectual Access	218 (15%)	63 (15%)	64 (13%)
Cultural Access	7 (0%)	0	2 (0%)
Audience Development	227 (16%)	68 (16%)	48 (10%)
Volunteering	30 (2%)	40 (10%)	20 (4%)
Education	176 (12%)	39 (9%)	18 (4%)
Training	68 (5%)	34(8%)	40 (8%)
Community cohesion	21 (1%)	4 (1%)	7 (1%)
Social inclusion	12 (1%)	9 (2%)	18 (4%)
New build	41 (3%)	15 (4%)	19 (4%)
General conservation	190 (13%)	31 (8%)	23 (5%)
Recording	147 (10%)	50 (12%)	74 (16%)

Note that HLF's requirement for projects to be balanced across a range of outcomes means that all projects could contain some or all of heritage conservation, learning or participation. In addition, the data in Table 4 do not reflect project spend – one Young Roots project has equal weighting with a multi-million pound habitat conservation project. As budget is more closely related to volume of work done, an analysis by spend would be instructive (this has only been done for 4 years of SF4). Hence only broad conclusions can be drawn from Table 4:

- Consistently across the period, the most frequent kind of projects are learning projects, and then access projects. The former has been volatile, while the latter declined during SF4. Within learning, audience development and pure education projects have declined in number while social inclusion has increased.
- Direct Biodiversity Action Plan work has progressively increased, markedly so during SF4 and especially for species projects.
- General conservation projects have declined in frequency.
- Recording projects have increased significantly especially during SF4.
- Otherwise, the overall pattern of frequency of project type has not changed greatly. Although HLF have put increasing emphasis on learning and participation through successive strategic periods, it appears that this has not had a marked effect on the number of nature projects.

Bailey (2015, 2017) has compiled budget data for 4 years of SF4. It shows a skewed spend toward BAP work (40%). Extraordinarily, £28.4 million was awarded to species work in 2015-17. Inspection of SF4 data suggest activity projects are numerous, but relatively inexpensive, while direct conservation projects are less frequent but of high value.

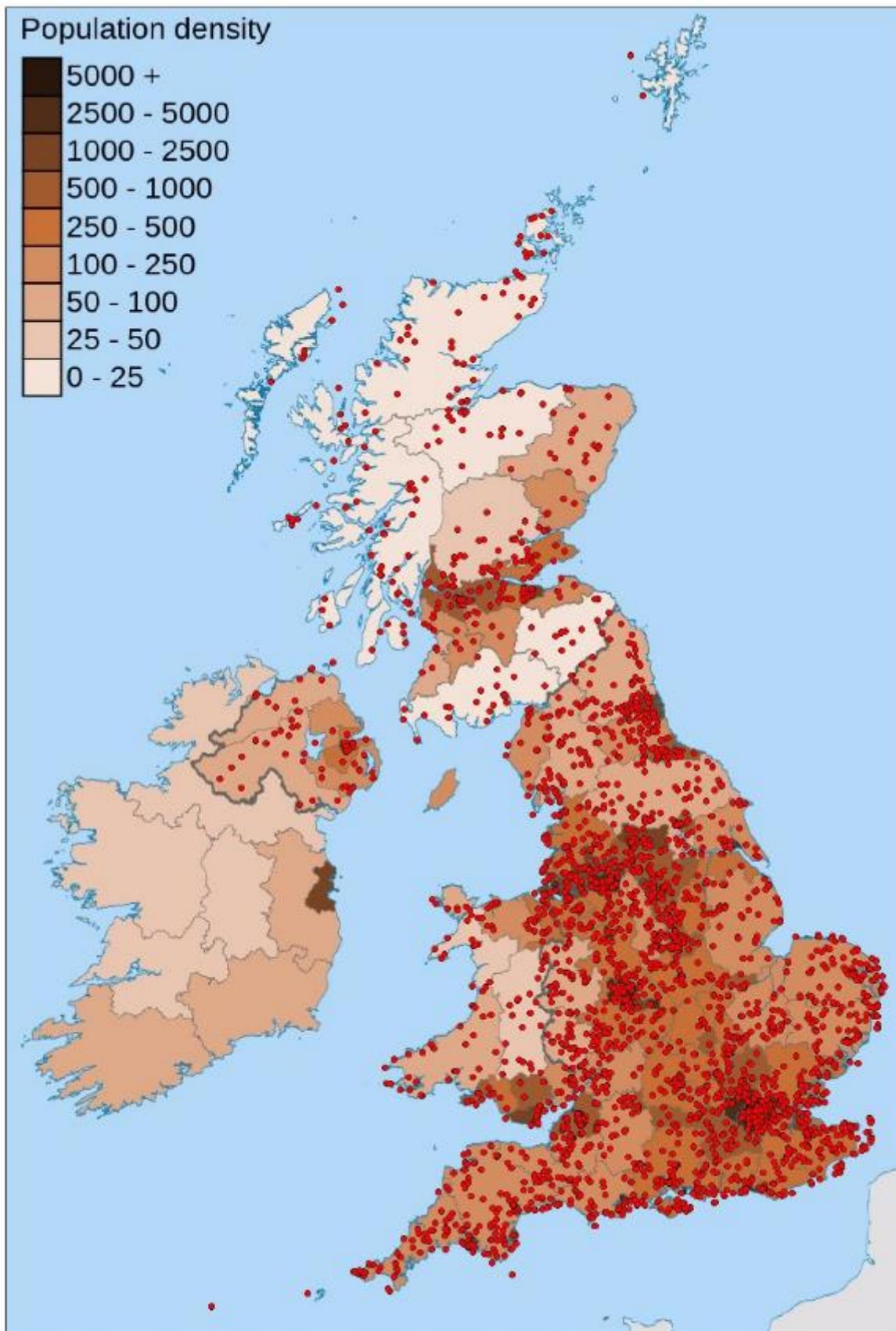
The finding of Bailey (2015, 2017) clearly chimes with the findings in Sections 1 and 2 above, where activity based projects were small and numerous whereas high value capital based-projects (which deliver most BAP conservation work) are fewer and high value.

9.9. HLF Projects and Population Density

Figure 10 shows the distribution of HLF funded projects over a map of population density.

Population density will be correlated with the means to develop and deliver projects, so perhaps this pattern is to be expected. Comparing Figure 10 with Figures 8 and 9, there is a stronger link between projects and population density than with need or the distribution of nature.

Figure 10: Distribution of HLF funded Landscape Partnership and Natural Heritage projects across the UK in relation to population density.



9.10. HLF Funding in Deprived Areas

HLF aim to support projects in deprived areas. Using government data¹⁸ available from 2015, Figures 11 to 15 show the distribution of nature projects across the UK in relation to the most deprived areas. At around £88 million, the overall spend in these areas remains low.

Northern Ireland (Figure 11) has the highest proportion of projects funded in deprived areas (35%), with such projects representing 39% or £5.7 million of the Northern Ireland total spend on nature.

England also demonstrates a significant proportion of funded projects (22%) were located in deprived areas (Figure 12), representing 16% or £74.9 million of the total spend in England.

Wales showed the lowest proportion of projects in deprived areas (only 5%, Figure 13), representing 4% or £966,800 total spend for Wales.

In Scotland (Figure 14), despite some very deprived areas, only 12% of HLF projects occurred within these areas, representing 8% or £6.2 million of the total spend in Scotland.

Examination of urban areas (for example London, Figure 15) suggests closer proximity of nature projects with deprived communities. Short distances and ease of low cost public transport makes projects more readily accessible. Clearly, if HLF aspires to bring nature to audiences in deprived communities, urban areas are a good place to start. The case study on London Wetlands shows what good value urban projects can be, and the wide range of high quality audience engagement that can be undertaken.

Projects in deprived areas can be very varied (Figure 16). Around 57% of all projects in deprived areas had the primary purpose of audience development, education, intellectual access or recording. Projects with the primary purpose of general nature conservation, Habitat Action Plans and Species Action Plans only represent 14% of the total number of projects funded in deprived areas, reflecting the small size and capital works requirements of wildlife sites in these built-up areas.

¹⁸ The Government has undertaken a qualitative study of deprivation, covering areas such as income, employment, health deprivation and disability, education skill and training, barriers to housing and services, crime and the living environment.

Figure 11: Distribution of HLF funded Landscape Partnership and Natural Heritage projects across Northern Ireland in relation to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (Deprivation map sourced from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 2010)

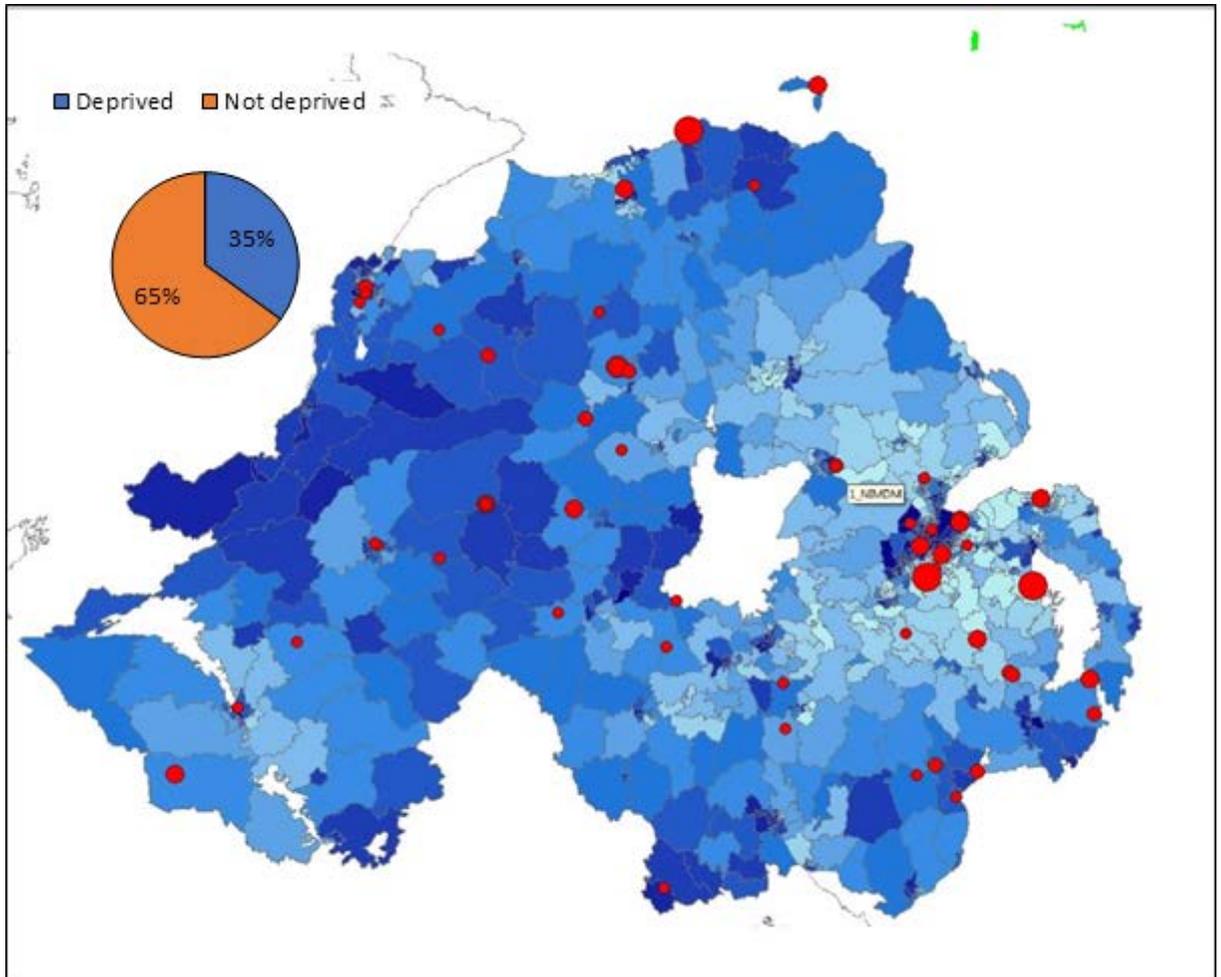


Figure 12: Distribution of HLF funded Landscape Partnership and Natural Heritage projects across England in relation to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (Deprivation map sourced from <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>)

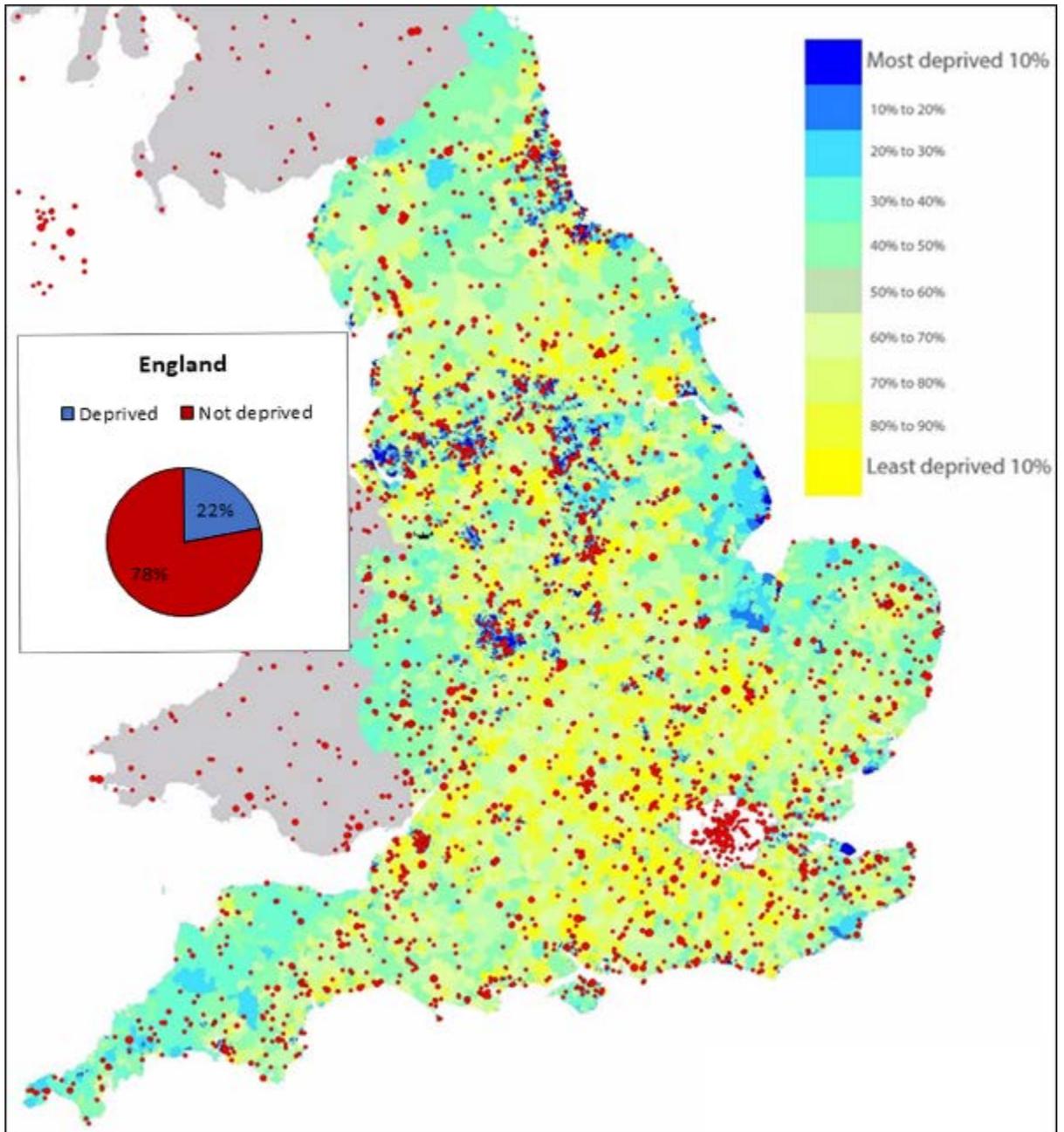


Figure 13: Distribution of HLF funded Landscape Partnership and Natural Heritage projects across Wales in relation to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (Deprivation map sourced from Statistics for Wales, 2014)

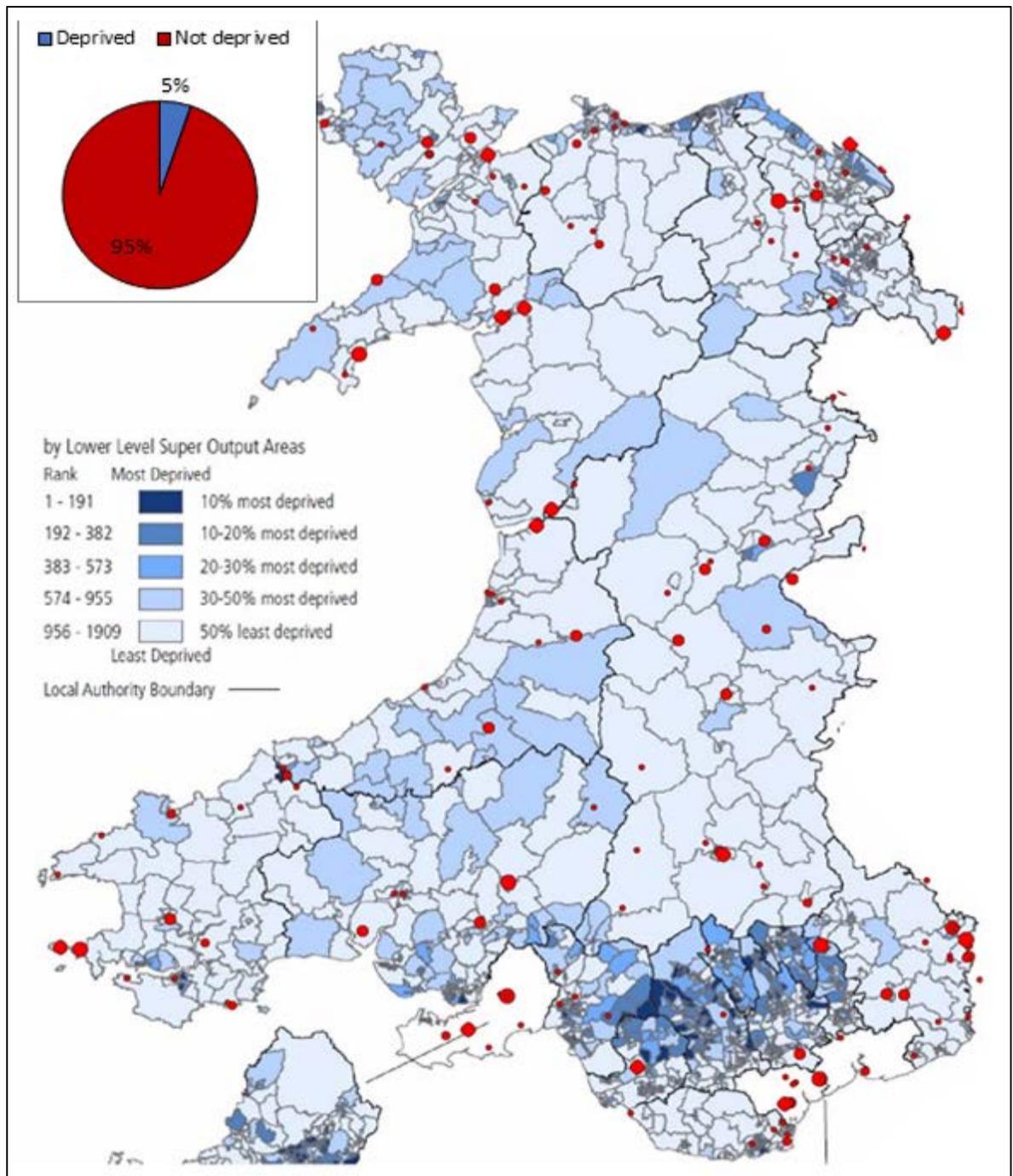


Figure 14: Distribution of HLF funded Landscape Partnership and Natural Heritage projects across Scotland in relation to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (Deprivation map sourced from <https://jamestrimble.github.io/imdmaps/simd2016>)

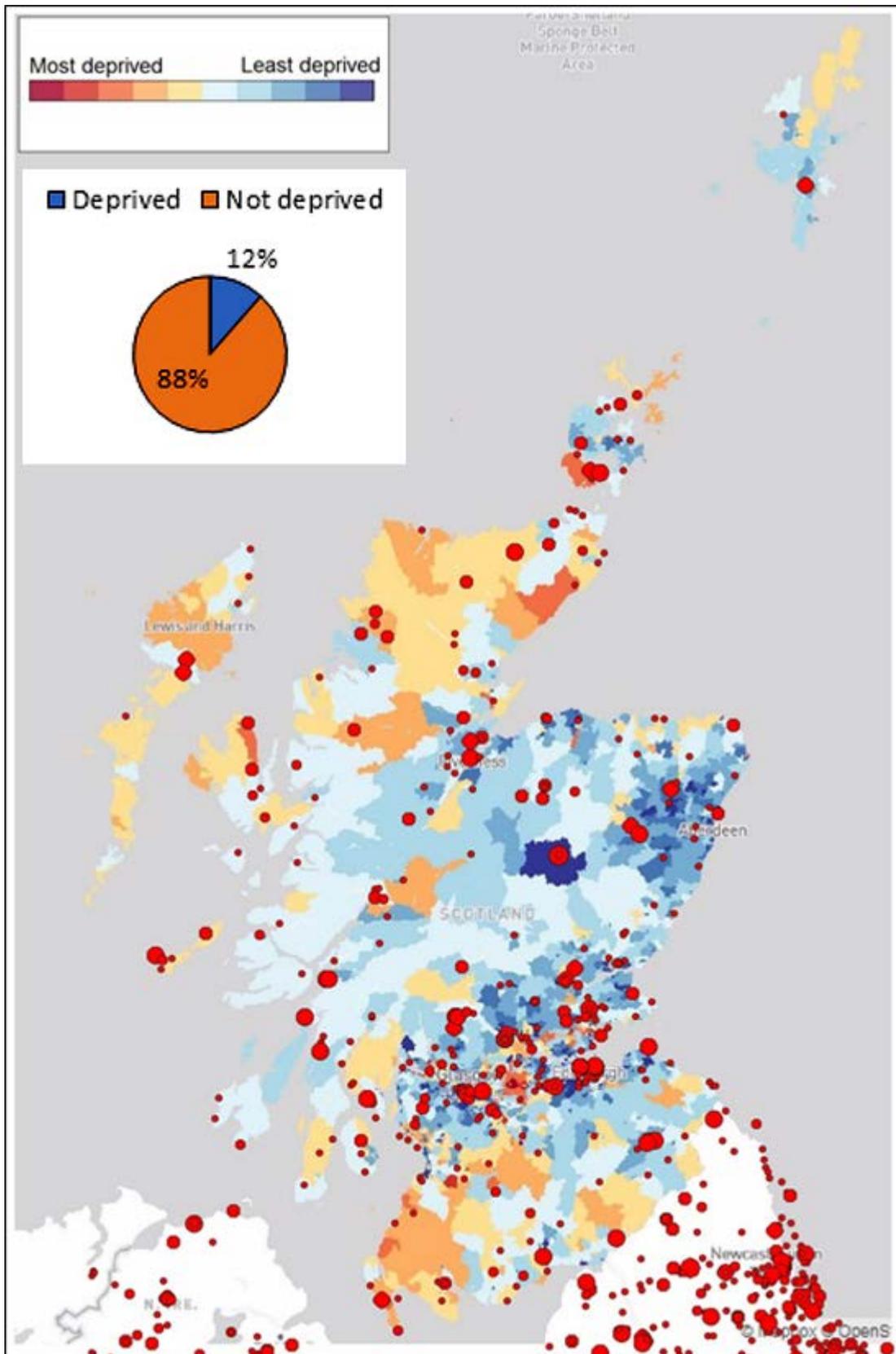


Figure 15: Proximity of HLF funded nature projects to deprived areas. See Figure 12 for the key.

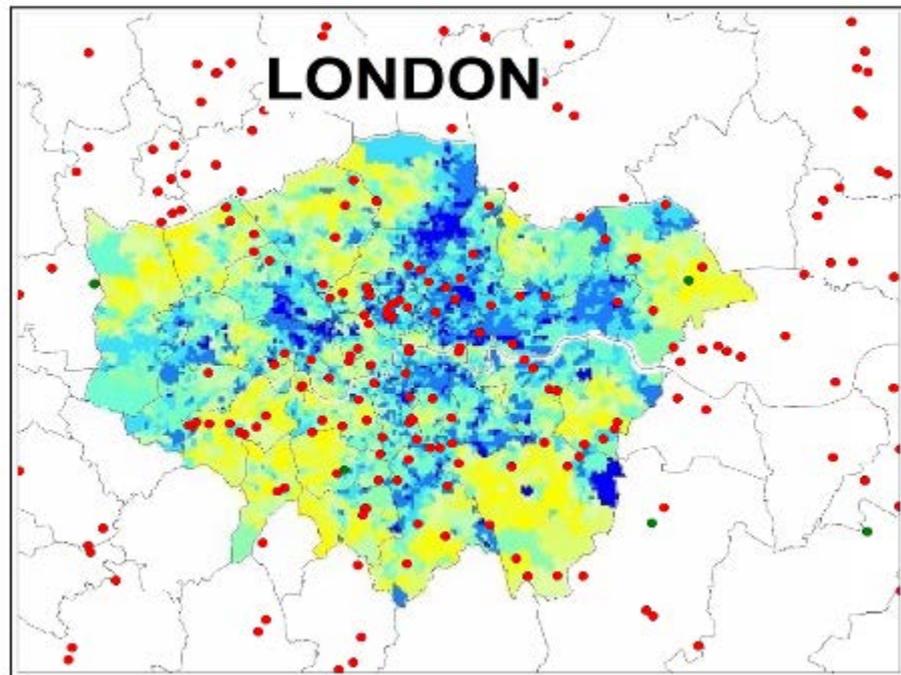
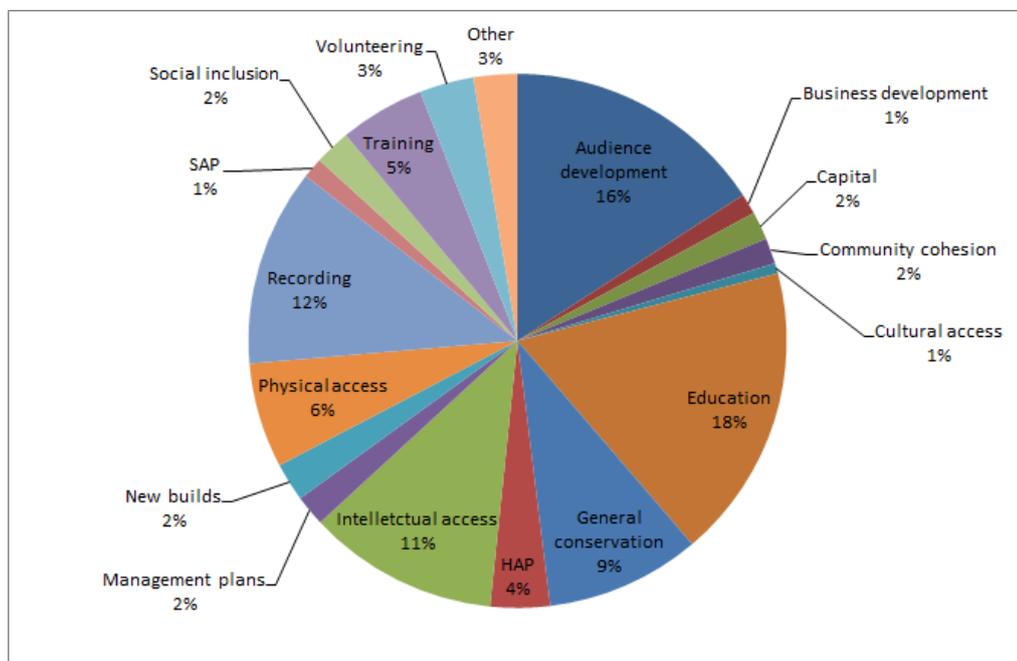


Figure 16: Types of primary purpose listed for HLF funded biodiversity projects in deprived areas.



9.11. The Landscape Partnership Scheme

The Landscape Partnership Scheme is an important programme for nature. Table 1 above shows that around a third of HLFs nature funding goes through LPs, with spend accelerating through the four strategic plans.

9.11.1. Origins and evolution

The LP programme started in 2004 with SP2, and was a development of Area Partnerships launched during SP1. They have made a “significant contribution”¹¹ to UK implementation of the European Landscape Convention, presenting a package of conservation measures together with learning and engagement all focused on a specific and distinctive areas.

9.11.2. Scope

An LP can incorporate all the subject areas listed in Table 4, plus occasionally land acquisition. Hence, LPs have been described as an “intelligent response”²¹ to UK landscapes which have a long and varied history, offering multiple services and functions to diverse communities and stakeholders. Projects which conserve landscapes need to embrace all relevant themes and activities if they are to be effective. Initially focussed on protected landscapes of generally higher quality, they now encompass a wide range of undesigned and urban landscapes (Figure 9).

LPs have delivered significantly for nature. They have made substantial contributions to BAP habitat targets, especially heathland, in addition to those listed in Table 3. Physical works have had an enduring impact, improving the fabric of landscapes across the UK. They have also delivered a wide range of outputs in the engagement of communities and people. Impacts on communities are more difficult to assess, but were described as “pervasive and long term”¹⁹ and that such outcomes “...often eclipse hard outputs in terms of breadth and legacy” and have “...led to fundamental improvements in how local people experience and value their landscape.”²⁰

LPs greatly strengthen joined-up action across sectors, empowering citizens and civil society. They enable local action – all key elements of Defra’s 2011 Natural Environment White Paper, which the LP scheme had largely anticipated.

9.11.3. Partnership at the core

One of the key benefits is “...bringing partners together...around a shared vision of landscape.”²²

The ability of such partnerships to involve so many community groups of every possible size and complexion, often with core purposes very different to landscape conservation, is an important attribute. The links made between groups during LPs usually endure beyond the scheme. Involving groups across the spectrum of ages in the work of an LP is another important strategy. The more generations that are involved, the more lasting the legacy will

¹⁹ Clarke et al (2001)

²⁰ Parker et al (2016)

be²². Involving a diversity of community groups and across the age spectrum ensures that LPs foster “...greater community cohesion.”²¹

9.11.4. Relationship to policy

With their focus on landscape-scale conservation, connectivity and holistic landscape management, LPs have anticipated and contribute to a wide range of national policy initiatives. LPs preceded nature sector initiatives such as Living Landscapes (Wildlife Trusts) and FutureScapes (RSPB). LPs contribute towards the aims of Defra’s Lawton Report²² with its clarion call for “bigger, better and more joined up”. Defra subsequently published a White Paper – *The Natural Choice – securing the value of nature*²³ which sets out broader environmental policies. It established Nature Improvement Areas, which aimed to enhance biodiversity within specific areas or landscapes. Not all NIAs obtained Defra funding; many unsuccessful schemes evolved into thriving LPs. Defra also published *Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services*²⁴ in 2011. LPs significantly contribute to this strategy with its aim to “...halt overall loss of biodiversity, support healthy, well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people.”¹⁴.

Clearly, 2010-11 was a period of intense policy activity which chimed closely with the aims and work of the LP scheme. It is perhaps no surprise that this period coincides with a significant increase in spend on LPs by HLF (Table 1).

This review, and the views of stakeholders summarised in Section 3 of the main report, makes clear that LPs have been transformative – for the land and communities that host the scheme, and for the way that the sector delivers landscape conservation. It was a programme ahead of its time.

9.12. The Parks for People Programme

Parks for People (PfP), a programme jointly funded by Big and HLF Lottery distributors, funds restoration work and associated activities in designed landscapes – parks, cemeteries and formal open spaces. Table 1 above does not include spend on PfP, as Parks were considered historically to have a minor nature component.

However, designed landscapes often support significant species and habitats, especially when considered in an urban context. In recent years, the nature element in Parks has been elevated and there are some impressive examples of wildlife and habitat conservation in PfP. In metropolitan areas, they may increasingly become a significant vehicle for conservation of nature, and for engaging audiences with wildlife.

HLF data show that that if Parks spending were added to LP and biodiversity spend, the proportion of HLF budget spent (for the FY 2015/16) was c.23%, and comparable to major

²¹ Clarke et al (2001)

²² Lawton, J (2010)

²³ HMG (2011a)

²⁴ HMG (2011b)

sectors of HLF funding (Figure 17). The annual spend is erratic but varies around 20%. Clearly, were the nature element of PfP enhanced, there could be much stronger outcomes for nature.

Figure 17: Share of HLF Funding Between Main Heritage Area. Unpublished data courtesy of HLF. Land and Biodiversity includes spend on the Parks for People programme.

