

Summary of Participation in Stakeholder Engagement Process

Online Survey

An online survey was sent out on the 20 October 2021 to a wide range of over 150 consultees. This included:

- Statutory/technical stakeholders.
- Elected Members and town councillors.
- Community groups with an interest/stake in GBI

Consultees were asked for:

- Their views on the draft GBI Vision for Carmarthenshire (taken from the existing Green Infrastructure Assessment).
- Their views on how the GBI network in each town performs on the themes of People, Nature and Place, along with reasons for these ratings.
- Any opportunities or ongoing projects in each these towns.

In total, 50 responses were received to the online survey.

Interactive map

The link to the interactive map was sent out along with the survey, on same date and to the same stakeholders. The map allowed stakeholders to leave points on the map across any of the 8 towns, identifying either:

- Strengths
- Room for improvement, or
- Opportunities

In total, 149 comments were left on the interactive map. The number of comments covering each area were as follows:

- Carmarthen: 33
- Llanelli: 50
- Ammanford/ Cross Hands: 29
- Kidwelly: 17
- St Clears: 7
- Llandovery: 9
- Newcastle Emlyn: 4
- Cwmaman: 0

Virtual workshops

Three virtual workshops were held, which included a presentation from LUC and a CCC elected member, followed by a discussion of over-arching key challenges and opportunities using a MIRO 'virtual whiteboard'. Each workshop was targeted at a different category of stakeholder.

In total, 48 people participated in the virtual workshops. This included:

- 21 technical stakeholders at Workshop 1.
- 21 elected Members at Workshop 2.
- Six community group representatives at Workshop 3.

Summary of key points raised via Consultation Hub

Comments on Draft Vision

Consultees were asked to comment on a proposed draft vision for GBI in Carmarthenshire. This vision stated:

“That Carmarthenshire is a green and healthy place to live, with an increasingly coherent and resilient green infrastructure, which delivers both ecological and wellbeing benefits. The integrity and connectivity of our green infrastructure is maintained, protected and enhanced in a planned and managed way, recognising the interdependency of landscape, heritage, public access and biodiversity”

The consultees responses were as follows:

- Concerns over top-down management of nature.
- Needs more emphasis on placemaking and blue infrastructure.
- Concerns over IT access (process of consultation)
- Need for long-term commitment and community as a partner.
- Need to both preserve and grow green spaces/forest areas.
- Too wordy – needs plain English and clarity over what ‘green’ means. Too many buzz words/corporate language and is too long. If more accessible, it will be a more shared vision.
- More emphasis needed on managing biodiversity.
- Need for more cohesion among fragmented assets.
- Need to revisit building proposals and see if they conform to the Vision.
- Vision should reference Climate Change and working toward a carbon-neutral Council.
- Need to recognize the need to recovery from damage by human activity.
- Need to include working with the environment.

Comments on each of the focus towns

Carmarthen: People

- Need for coordination and investment in green spaces.
- Lack of green spaces and poor maintenance.
- Invasive species in river
- Few cycle lanes.
- Beautiful landscape but not accessible for all generations.
- Too much hard infrastructure in the centre/poor public realm, and planting regimes/landscaping do not provide ecosystem services.
- More play facilities needed in town centre.
- Car-dominated centre.
- More urban greening needed in town centres.
- Need to engage community on what projects taken forward.
- Big opportunity for e-bike infrastructure.
- Outside scope – public transport.

Carmarthen: Nature

- Concerns over coping with rising water levels – bit opportunity for SuDS.
- River habitats threatened by development and in poor condition.
- Very little nature within the town, no wild areas and few mature trees.
- Allotments and wetlands need preserving.

Carmarthen: Place

- Sense of identity and history well promoted.
- Town has a lot of potential to attract people, but general appearance of the town/lack of maintenance affects tourism sector – town looks tired/littered.
- Need to make more of the riverside.
- Needs more outdoor seating and outdoor life (music/performance).
- Needs space to contemplate.
- SuDS and green walls would contribute to place as well as ecosystem services.

- Too much hard surface and car dominance.

Carmarthen: Ongoing projects

- Civic Society managing flowerbeds.
- Town Council Historic Walks scheme
- Carmarthen Riverside Association.
- Ongoing work to enhance wetland area.

Llanelli: People

- Focus on those who are missing out on GBI.
- Green spaces being lost to development.
- Lack of investment and need to “sell” the town better.
- Northeast side of town is underdeveloped e.g., paths up to Swiss Valley and Pen y Fan Quarry.
- Coastal walking/cycle path is successful and important.
- Concerns over abuse/anti-social behaviour in green spaces.
- Poor air quality along A484.
- More seating needed on paths and in parks for older people.

Llanelli: Nature

- High reliance on grant funding/lack of revenues.
- Climate change is low priority in planning system.
- Some mowing regimes changed – but questions over how effective?
- More needed for pollinators e.g., bee boxes.
- Room for more trees planted in Pen y Fan and Sandy Park.
- Lots of green around the town.
- More street trees needed.
- Poor biodiversity and management of nature.

Llanelli: Place

- Town centre and peri-urban areas need investment.
- Town does not draw people in, and shops moved out to Parc Trostre. Looks drab and tired.
- Anti-social behaviour in certain places/around seating.
- Could make more of tourism potential using GI – street trees, planters, landscaping, verges, more connections.
- More focus needed on walking routes between station and town centre, as well as historic walking routes.

Llanelli: Ongoing projects

- Tyshia Redevelopment.
- Peltra redevelopment of Penyfan park
- Cruyff Foundation
- Wellbeing centre redevelopment of Delta lake area.
- Incredible Edibles projects.
- Town Council-run forums in Burry Port.
- Wild corner of Pwll Park developed for wildflowers/pollinators (Llanelli Naturalists/Pwll Residents Association/LRC).
- WI movement trying to adopt areas for wildlife.
- Rotary Club hoping to promote environmental schemes in Llanelli.

Ammanford/Cross Hands: People

- Needs imagination/a lot more that can be done.

Ammanford/Cross Hands: Ongoing projects

- Park re-generation (Betws)

Kidwelly: People

- Calls for protection of Glan yr Afon Nature Reserve.
- Great natural resources as on estuary – but undervalued and loss of habitat. Need enhancements.
- Insensitive management of features e.g. leaving some areas wild.
- Popular green spaces at the Quay and surrounding areas.

- Cycle route between Kidwelly and Pembrey could be improved further.
- Footpaths being eroded by motorized vehicles.
- Poor maintenance of footpaths at the Quay and Glan Yr Afon.
- Flood risk – needs more space to absorb floodwater within the flood zone.
- Roads not safe for cycling – including Sustrans Route 4.

Kidwelly: Nature

- Castle is a draw for tourism, but natural aspects of town undervalued and threatened by development.
- Council only just stopped using pesticides/herbicides, but residents don't like 'messy' areas. Needs re-education.
- Trees need to be maintained and cared for – but costs money.
- Abundance of wildlife in the Quay and Glan Yr Afon.
- Strong community of volunteers looking after green spaces.
- Land by old canal is good for nature and old landfill site + other nice pockets.

Kidwelly: Place

- Town looks shabby and poorly maintained. Needs better backdrop for castle attraction. Town been allowed to decline, which is offputting for visitors.
- Need integrated approach to tourism and GBI – as an estuary town.
- Castle and surrounding areas well looked after, but rest of town not.
- Small paved area by church used for small markets – need more spaces like this.

Kidwelly: Opportunities

- planting of trees at Glan yr Afon and the Quay and maintaining the habitats, walkways and signage.
- Canalside areas (Kymer Canal) – e.g. more wildflower areas, shelters, picnic tables, hides.
- Increasing interest in wildlife here using information panels and links with schools etc. to encourage love for natural world.
- Lots of open space could be improved for nature.
- History Shed Experience.
- Town Square redevelopment.

Kidwelly: Ongoing projects

- wildlife projects and volunteer work at Glan yr Afon.
- Cydweli Common Ground/Tir Cyffredin Cydweli is a serious, constituted, conservation group.
- Black Cat Strategy is trying to encourage tourism but needs to be fully aware about Environmental issues.
- History Shed Experience – but divergent opinions

St Clears

- No comments received via survey.

Llandovery

- No comments received via survey.

Newcastle Emlyn: People

- Some good walking routes, but room for more.
- Existing green areas poorly maintained.

Newcastle Emlyn: Place

- Some businesses have closed when banks closed – tourists may pass by the town. Town attractions are poorly publicized.

Cwmamman: People

- Good (and good work over recent years) but scope for improvement
- Excellent riverside walk.

Cwmamman: Nature

- Wildflower planting needed

Cwmamman: Place

- Ways to improve sense of place e.g at key locations – establish an identity around rich cultural heritage.
- Very little tourism and very little to do.

Cwmamman: Opportunities

- Via Community Development Officer. Lots of ongoing projects.

Summary of Key Points Raised within the virtual workshops

Summary of discussion

Three virtual workshops were held, which included a presentation from LUC and a CCC elected member, followed by a discussion of over-arching key challenges and opportunities using a MIRO 'virtual whiteboard'. All comments raised in the discussion are included in 'snapshots' of the virtual whiteboard in Appendix A.

The discussion started with an introduction to three core themes the GBI strategy will focus on: people, nature and place. Then consultees were prompted to discuss the following questions with a focus on the core themes:

- What are the key issues and opportunities facing green and blue infrastructure in Carmarthenshire?
- What are the major delivery challenges?

The key issues raised by consultees in discussion were as follows:

What are the key issues and opportunities facing green and blue infrastructure in Carmarthenshire?

People

- Carmarthenshire towns benefit from parks and green spaces but play provision, sport and recreational use of the spaces needs to be improved
- Carmarthenshire benefits from a network of rivers but recreational use and leisure activities could be introduced to wider their use, it is understood this has been successful in other counties.
- The provision of green space is generally good but safe pedestrian access to these spaces can be poor.
- Rural residents have poor active travel or public transport options to access parks, castles, lakes etc.
- Towns where arranged leisure activities were available were more successful in bringing people together to use green spaces. This was reported to support mental health and wellbeing.
- There is a desire and need for more community growing space.
- Projects in schools should be encouraged e.g. SuDs and growing projects.
- More information could be provided on local green and blue spaces to encourage their use.
- Mental and physical health is considered a priority for green and blue spaces.
- Need more safe and joined up pedestrian and cycling routes to schools and around towns.

Nature

- In rural environments more needs to be done to educate people so that they can learn more about their surroundings. These could include information boards, apps or arranged sessions.
- Communication and education about projects for nature is key to the success of projects.
- Declining biodiversity in Carmarthenshire.
- Water quality and phosphate issues.
- Flooding – tidal and river.
- Sustainable drainage and rainwater control.
- Better tree maintenance.
- Agricultural issues and pollution.
- Educating a sense of pride in nature for the next generation.
- Stewardship of natural assets.
- Create outdoor classrooms.

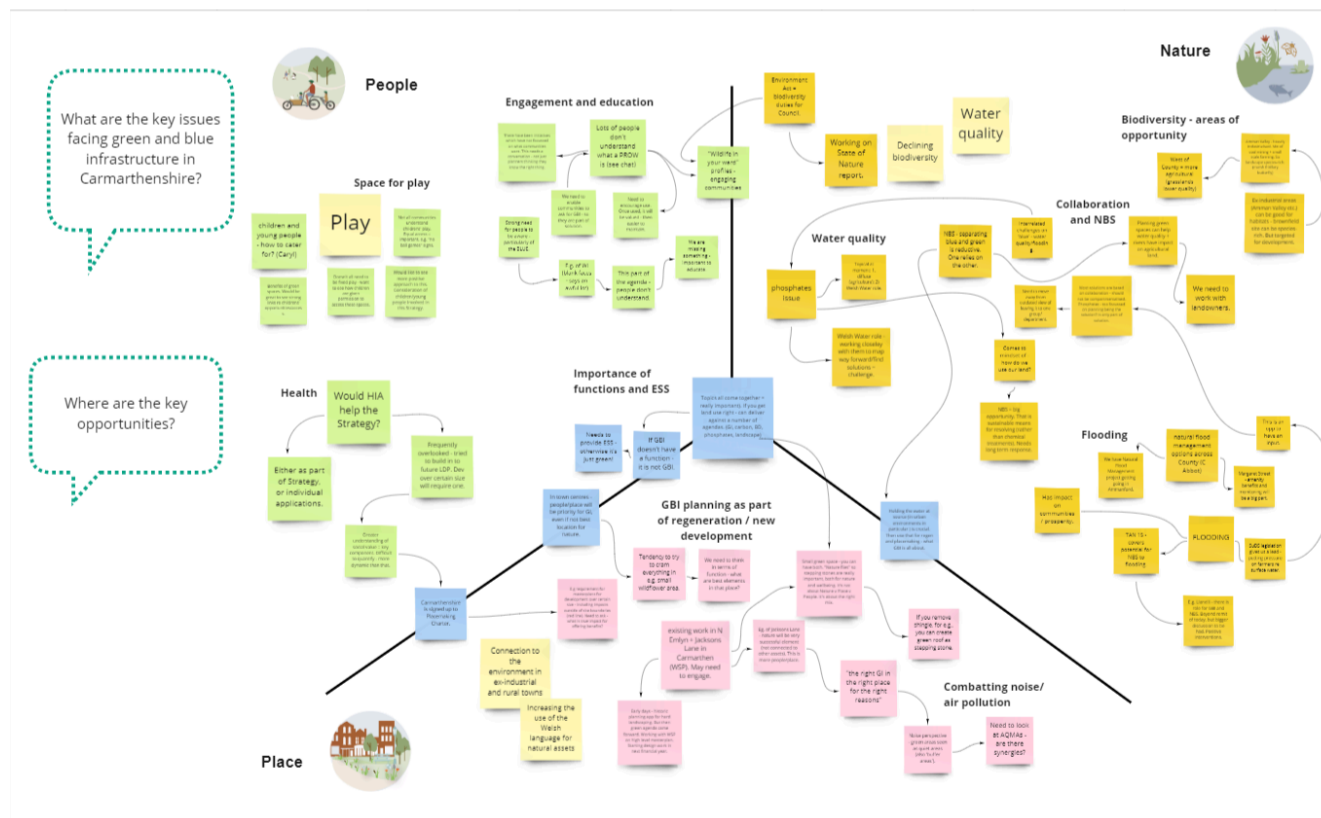
Place

- In many parks, anti-social behaviour including drug abuse is a concern. Llanelli was named as somewhere where parents are afraid to take their children to green spaces in town as there is often broken glass and needles left on the ground.
- Developing railway paths into footpaths was considered the best option for providing new routes into the countryside.
- Opportunity for energy production within coastal areas.
- Combatting noise and air pollution.
- GBI-led regeneration and new development.
- Increase the use of Welsh language for natural assets.
- Connection to the environment in ex-industrial and rural towns.
- Improve and make the most of existing green assets, heritage assets and landmarks.
- Introduce living walls.
- Rewilding underused areas.

What are the major delivery challenges?

- Challenge of maintenance and management. Concern about management of new parks/green leisure spaces given a reported lack of staff and volunteers to manage the existing spaces.
- Joined up approach e.g. ten towns initiative – need to work with this as there is an important link between many of the initiatives.
- Leadership and upskilling of planners.
- Concern regarding funding mechanisms for future developments.
- Distinction between private and public spaces.
- Delivering of GBI through the planning system and new development.
- Private or unknown ownership of land and rivers.
- Need for good communication, education and engagement.
- Drawing on community resources / energy.
- Function of spaces.

Snapshot from Virtual Whiteboard used during Workshops



Report Produced by LUC

