

## 5. Elan Links Project Overview

### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter details the development of the overarching vision for the Elan Links: People, Nature & Water Landscape Partnership and its implementation through a framework of strategic aims and objectives. These aims and objectives have been developed to address the clearly identified threats and opportunities in the previous chapter.

Alongside each objective and subsequent project(s) the primary outputs have been included, these again demonstrate how we are attempting to mitigate our identified threats and maximise on the opportunities available to us.

### 5.2. Elan Links: People, Nature & Water Vision

The vision of the partnership for the Elan Links programme is “to safeguard the unique and varied heritage of Elan while significantly enhancing outcomes for people and communities for the long term”.

This vision, which was developed ahead of the first phase submission to HLF, has remained the same during the development of the second phase and has become the guiding principle for the Landscape Conservation Action Plan.

### 5.3. Elan Links: People, Nature & Water Strategic Aims

In order to achieve the Elan Links vision, two overarching and strategic aims have been developed. These are:

**Aim 1. To secure and safeguard Elan’s heritage.** This aim is to tackle the threats and challenges to Elan’s heritage; natural, built and ancient, and cultural, through maintenance and restoration of heritage sites, management of important habitats, species, landscapes and sites, and through the recording and archiving of peoples history and stories with Elan. Aim 1 will be delivered through Objectives 1- 6 detailed below.

**Aim 2. To increase benefits for people from Elan.** This aim is all about developing a better and more beneficial experience for the people who visit and live in Elan. Our approach is two-fold: firstly, to make the most of our fantastic heritage through improved engagement, interpretation, narration, learning facilities and opportunities for new and existing audiences; and secondly, to promote better health and wellbeing through improved access and recreation facilities. Achieving the Aim will mean significantly better social outcomes through an innovative programme of training, skills and confidence-building in the natural environment and will mean issues associated with sustainable lifestyles using Elan as a model are more widely explored. An important outcome from the Aim will be to deliver sustained protection for this unique and valuable landscape by ensuring people continue to love, value and care for it over the long term. Aim 2 will be delivered by Objectives 7- 11 detailed below.

## Elan Links Project Overview

### 5.4. Elan Links Objectives

The following twelve objectives have been identified to prioritise actions required in order to achieve our aims and vision. The following objectives also begin to highlight the outcome aims for each of the objectives, but for in-depth project discussion please refer to the project plans.

Across all the objectives (and projects) there is an integrated approach to ensure outcomes for heritage, people and the landscape are achieved. This is particularly the case with Objectives 1, 2 and 3 which relate to the natural habitats and heritage at a landscape scale.

#### 5.4.1. Objective 1: Restore and enhance important habitats.

Objective 1 is the first objective focusing upon safeguarding Elan's natural heritage and addressing threats to Elan's distinct habitats outlined in Section 4.2.1. Three projects will be delivered under this objective:

- 1a – Healthy Bogs;
- 1b – Better Dry Heath; and
- 1c – Improving Elan's woodlands.

#### 5.4.2. Objective 2: Conserve key species as identified by the landscape character action.

Alongside Objective 1, Objective 2 focuses on landscape and monitoring works to benefit key species in Elan. There are two projects that will deliver this objective:

- 2a - Rare Birds of Elan, and
- 2b - Rare Species.

Between these two projects works will be undertaken to conserve Elan's rare upland breeding bird assemblage and focus given to identifying and monitoring all of Elan's rare species, including birds, to measure the results of our natural habitat actions and inform further works required and species requiring assistance.

Outcomes for these projects under Objectives 1 and 2 include:

-  18,000 plus hectares semi-natural habitat more resilient.

#### 5.4.3. Objective 3: Improve the sustainability of Elan's traditional high nature value farming.

Objective 3 focuses on the landscape at farm level, promoting Elan's traditional high nature value farming systems, which are responsible for maintaining much of the fantastic nature to be found at Elan. The five projects under Objective 3 are therefore designed to help secure the future of these farming systems and the benefits they provide for nature as well as Elan's cultural heritage.

The projects are:

- 3a - Elan Hay Meadows;
- 3b - Elan Rhos Hay;
- 3c - Elan Rams;
- 3d - Elan Cattle Grazing; and
- 3e - Elan Wethers.

## Elan Links Project Overview

Headline outputs for these projects include:

- 🌿 32 hectares of habitat managed more favourably;
- 🌿 45 cows secured to graze targeted areas;
- 🌿 Cooperative ram scheme set up;
- 🌿 40 land managers learning from the above activity.

### 5.4.4. Objective 4: Ensure that key built and ancient heritage sites on Elan are protected to safeguard and maintain their condition into the future.

Objectives 4 and 5 move on to consider Elan's built and ancient heritage. Objective 4 focuses on heritage which has been identified as 'at risk'. This at risk heritage will be secured by developing project activities that prevent further deterioration of these sites and/or recording information held at these sites. The project that will deliver this objective is:

#### 4a - Safeguarding Elan's Built & Ancient Heritage.

Headline outputs include:

- 🌿 resurvey of an area found to be lacking in information;
- 🌿 actions taken to safeguard at least 12 sites, identified most at-risk built;
- 🌿 management database of all the built and ancient heritage sites at Elan.

### 5.4.5. Objective 5: Access and sustainable use for Elan's built heritage.

This objective will improve access and interpretation to ensure sites are understood and cared for into the future, and to create new uses for sites where this can be done in a sympathetic manner that will both secure the future of the site and provide additional benefits for people.

Projects that will deliver this objective are:

- 5a - Increasing Access to Elan's Built Heritage;
- 5b - The Engineers House; and
- 5c - Cwm Clyd Farmstead.

Headline outputs for these projects include:

- 🌿 Improved access and interpretation for seven new sites at Elan; and
- 🌿 Renovation and new uses for two at risk historic buildings.

### 5.4.6. Objective 6: Record Elan's diverse cultural heritage ensuring accessibility and benefit into the future.

Objective 6 focuses on securing the cultural heritage of Elan. We will do this by increasing our archive collection of information regarding our heritage so that it is better identified, recorded and accessible.

The project that will deliver Objective 6 is:

- 6 - Elan Links People to Collections.

## Elan Links Project Overview

The headline outputs from this project are:

- 📌 An archiving policy strategy and adhered to by all Elan Links partners;
- 📌 New heritage collected and safeguarded;
- 📌 An easily accessible online archive and an enhanced collection of materials and oral histories.

### 5.4.7. Objective 7: Develop engaging and innovative ways of narrating Elan's heritage to a wider audience, to increase the impact of Elan's heritage.

Objective 7 moves on to our second aim of increasing people benefits from Elan. Under this objective this is achieved through projects:

- 7a - Interpreting Elan;
- 7b - Elan Interactive;
- 7c - Artists Residencies; and
- 7d - Activities & Events.

These projects will integrate across the board to ensure a simple and consistent message is available to visitors including an appreciation of the works being completed across the landscape and an understanding of the heritage they can see in front of them. Headline outputs will include:

- 📌 New audiences and wider range of people engaged
- 📌 Innovative and engaging interpretation facilities
- 📌 A multi-functioning app
- 📌 A programme of artists residencies
- 📌 An integrated programme of events & activities

In order to understand Elan's audiences better, a full Audience Development Plan has been developed. This has been complemented by an Interpretation Strategy to help guide the interpretation elements of Objective 7 and other objectives. These documents can be found in appendix LCAP3 and appendix LCAP4 but their strategic outlines and how they support meeting Objective 7 are summarised here.

#### 5.4.7.1. Elan Link's audience development work

Elan Link's audience development plan has two over-arching aims:

**Firstly, to promote Elan as a destination for enjoyment, recreation and appreciation, by as wide a range of audiences as possible, whilst ensuring minimal impact to its unique natural, built & ancient heritage and cultural heritage.**

This will be achieved by:

- 📌 Providing inclusive access to Elan and the individual components of natural heritage, built heritage & ancient heritage and sites where access to cultural heritage can be provided.
- 📌 Ensuring access to facilities and services are appropriate.
- 📌 Providing awareness raising events, effective interpretation, educational activities and volunteering and outreach programmes, together with profile-raising via press and social media.

## Elan Links Project Overview

**Secondly, to involve as wide a range of audiences as possible in engaging with, managing and celebrating the unique natural, built & ancient heritage and cultural heritage of Elan.**

This will be achieved by:

- ❶ Providing a wide range of engagement opportunities through interpretation, physical access to the built and natural heritage, education packs and activities;
- ❷ Establishing a good working relationship with landowners, tenants & commoners to encourage a better understanding of the need to change practices or enhance what they practice;
- ❸ Establishing opportunities whereby the unique natural and cultural heritage of Elan can be celebrated through food and other products;
- ❹ Developing volunteering and training opportunities that encourage local people to share and record their own stories to celebrate the areas cultural heritage;
- ❺ Raising awareness of the unique natural landscape that exists in Elan and relationship it has with water and the history of Birmingham.

The above aims will be achieved by nine identified audience development objectives and associated action points details of which can be found in the appended audience development plan.

### 5.4.7.2. Elan Links Interpretation Plan

As well as the audience development plan an independent interpretation plan was commissioned during the development phase. To meet the overall Elan Links project aims, the following aims for interpretation have been identified:

- ❶ Develop a scheme of best practice and creative interpretation tools that present the Elan Links Project key messages to Elan's public and target audiences;
- ❷ Create a programme of stimulating and educational activities that actively engage audiences in Elan's rich heritage and biodiversity;
- ❸ Provide opportunities for the public to engage in debate and discussion around Elan, its heritage and its future;
- ❹ Create interpretation that is sensitive to Elan's landscape and provide guidance of how visitors can do this too;
- ❺ Use creative interpretation to remove access barriers, and welcome people from all backgrounds;
- ❻ Use digital interpretation to connect with a local, national and international audience.

### 5.4.8. Objective 8: Increase the range and number of people experiencing Elan as visitors, volunteers and learners.

This objective will be met through projects:

8a - Friends of Elan.

Friends of Elan is the implementation of a volunteering strategy ensuring accessible and diverse volunteering opportunities.

- ❶ Friends of Elan volunteers supported to undertake valuable volunteering activity.

## Elan Links Project Overview

### 5.4.9. Objective 9: Improve the range of recreational opportunities and ways to enjoy Elan.

Objective 9 is our principle action area for access and recreation, although elements appear in other objectives (and projects), such as under Objectives 5, 7 and 10.

#### 5.4.9.1. Elan Valley Access and Recreation Plan

In order to address threats and opportunities relating to Elan, its surrounds and the Elan Links partnership, in terms of access and recreational use, during the development phase an Elan Valley Access Plan has been produced. This Plan has evaluated the current routes and literature, consulted users and developed a suite of proposals for the Elan Links programme and beyond. For the full Access and Recreation Plan please see appendix LCAP2 but a brief summary including the eight principles is provided below:

-  **Principle 1.** The Elan Links landscape has been influenced by centuries of management activity by humans and this activity still benefits the landscape and the natural life of the area. Activities associated with the water extraction industry, and the practices of farming and forestry, nature and landscape conservation therefore need to be accommodated and respected in any development or plan, as do the needs of people who live in the area.
-  **Principle 2.** People's health and wellbeing is improved by time spent at Elan and by exercising and undertaking physical activity in its exceptional natural environment. These benefits would be reduced if Elan's natural and other qualities were diminished. Access and recreation provisions should therefore recognise the need to conserve the unique natural heritage and landscape of Elan.
-  **Principle 3.** Elan has an important place in the history of access provision to the UK countryside - offering the public statutory entitlement to 'air, access and recreation' for well over 100 years. Future provision of access and recreation should value this heritage and be available to all.
-  **Principle 4.** Everybody has different interests and abilities and people should be enabled to access Elan in ways that suit them while protecting Elan's unique qualities.
-  **Principle 5.** Elan has much to offer, therefore ways for people to progress to different or more challenging activities should be simple to identify so as to help people access these opportunities.
-  **Principle 6.** Elan is rich in heritage, much of which is under-utilised and accessed currently. Therefore, ways for people to visit and engage with Elan's diverse strands of heritage should be promoted.
-  **Principle 7.** The remote upland landscape of Elan carries a variety of risks. People should be supported to make sensible choices about their own and others safety in this environment, recognising that people have different skill levels and abilities.
-  **Principle 8.** Elan has a 'two language' heritage. Access and recreation information and interpretation should reflect this utilising both Welsh and English.

This plan identifies recommendations and actions which will be completed under Objective 9, headline outputs for which include:

-  A network of new and improved routes for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and orienteers;

## Elan Links Project Overview

-  A new purpose built woodland cycle route;
-  Links with gateway communities through improved signposting of link rights of way;
-  A suite of routes suitable for families.

### 5.4.10. Objective 10: Engage with more difficult to reach individuals and provide training skills and opportunities that will build confidence, a sense of achievement and a sense of the natural environment.

This objective is all about generating a step-change increase in beneficial social outcomes from Elan. This will be done by engaging with disadvantaged and difficult to reach individuals through provision of training, skills development and other opportunities that will build confidence, a sense of achievement and a sense of the natural environment. Component projects for this objective are:

- 10a - Investing in Elan;
- 10b - Elan Empowers; and
- 10c - Experience Elan.

Headline outputs include:

-  1,500 people from disadvantaged and hard to reach groups within our local communities will have enjoyed and benefited from a special activity day in our natural environment;
-  160 young educationally disadvantaged people, NEETS, young offenders, the unemployed and those receiving ESA will have received training in the natural environment;
-  1,000 people from harder to reach groups in the Birmingham / The Midlands area will have enjoyed and benefited from a weekend retreat.

### 5.4.11. Objective 11: Increase the understanding of the importance of sustainable lifestyles for nature and society.

Elan is widely recognised as a fantastic model of sustainable resource use with people and nature benefitting from the well-managed natural environment and the innovative design of the reservoir scheme and energy-efficient water transport system. In this objective, we will learn lessons from the Elan Valley by exploring with people the importance of sustainable lifestyles to all our futures.

Sustainability will be built into all we do and hence is a component of all our projects. However, Project 11: Tap into it, will specifically focus on delivering this objective. Headline outputs include:

-  1 Cloud to Tap festival in Year 5;
-  8 outreach community projects/ events in the Birmingham area;
-  10,000 people from the communities of Birmingham and the Midlands are more aware of where their water comes from through a campaign to raise awareness about water quality, sustainability and sensible use of a precious resource;
-  Of these people, 2500 visit Elan for the first time.

## Elan Links Project Overview

### 5.4.12. Objective 12: Enshrining Legacy at Every Turn.

In addition to the above, there is a commitment that opportunities to sustain the work of the project beyond the five-year delivery phase are developed and embedded so that there is a real legacy created. To promote this outcome, we have developed a final stand-alone objective that we have called 'Enshrining Elan legacy at every turn'. This is covered in more detail in Chapter 8, the sustainability and legacy chapter.

### Elan Links Project Overview

5.5. Table to show how the Elan Links Scheme's Aims and Objectives mitigate against the current threats to Elan's heritage and or make the most of the opportunities

Aim	Objective	Project	Threats mitigated against	Opportunities addressed
<p>1: To secure and safeguard Elan's heritage. This aim is to tackle the threats and challenges to Elan's heritage through maintenance and restoration of heritage sites, management of important habitats, species and landscapes, and through securing our cultural heritage including our traditional farming systems</p>	<p>1: Restore and enhance important habitats as identified by the landscape character action plan</p>	<p>1a Healthy Bogs</p>	<p>4.2.1 Damage to Elan's distinct habitats</p> <p>4.2.6 External impacts and the threat to Elan's heritage</p>	
		<p>1b Better Dry heath</p>	<p>4.2.1 Damage to Elan's distinct habitats</p> <p>4.2.2 Changing land management practices</p> <p>4.2.6 External impacts and the threat to Elan's heritage</p>	
		<p>1c Improving Elan's woodlands</p>	<p>4.2.1 Damage to Elan's distinct habitats</p> <p>4.2.6 External impacts and the threat to Elan's heritage</p>	
	<p>2: Conserve key species as identified by the landscape character action.</p>	<p>2a Elan's Rare Birds</p>	<p>4.2.1 Damage to Elan's distinct habitats</p> <p>4.2.2 Changing land management practices</p> <p>4.2.6 External impacts and the threat to Elan's heritage</p>	
		<p>2b Elan's Rare Species</p>	<p>4.2.2 Changing land management practices</p> <p>4.2.6 External impacts and the threat to Elan's heritage</p>	<p>4.3.1.4 Development of a strategic approach to evidence gathering, monitoring and archiving</p>

### Elan Links Project Overview

Aim	Objective	Project	Threats mitigated against	Opportunities addressed
	3: Improve the sustainability of Elan's traditional high nature value farming.	3a Elan Hay Meadows	4.2.2 Changing land management practices	4.3.1.1 Reinvigorating farming practices
		3b Elan Rhos Hay	4.2.2 Changing land management practices	4.3.1.1 Reinvigorating farming practices
		3c Elan Rams	4.2.2 Changing land management practices	4.3.1.1 Reinvigorating farming practices
		3d Elan Cattle Grazing	4.2.1 Damage to Elan's distinct habitat	4.3.1.1 Reinvigorating farming practices
			4.2.2 Changing land management practices	
		3e Elan Wethers	4.2.6 External impacts and the threat to Elan's heritage	4.3.1.1 Reinvigorating farming practices
	4: Ensure that key built and ancient heritage sites on the Estate are protected to safeguard and maintain their condition into the future.	4a Safeguarding Elan's Built & Ancient Heritage	4.2.2 Changing land management practices	4.3.1.3 Sustainable usage 4.3.1.4 Development of a strategic approach to evidence gathering, monitoring and archiving
			4.2.3 Threats from neglect, abandonment and overuse	
			4.2.5 Threats resulting from inadequate evidence gathering, recording and understanding	
			4.2.6 External impacts and the threat to Elan's heritage	

## Elan Links Project Overview

Aim	Objective	Project	Threats mitigated against	Opportunities addressed
	5: Access and sustainable use for Elan's built heritage	5a Increasing Access to Elan's Built Heritage	4.2.5 Threats resulting from inadequate evidence gathering, recording and understanding	4.3.1.2 Develop new uses 4.3.1.3 Sustainable usage
		5b The Engineers House	4.2.3 Threats from neglect, abandonment and overuse	4.3.1.2 Develop new uses
		5c Cwm Clyd Farmstead	4.2.3 Threats from neglect, abandonment and overuse	4.3.1.2 Develop new uses
	6: Record Elan's diverse cultural heritage ensuring accessibility and benefit into the future	6: Elan Links People to Collections	4.2.5 Threats resulting from inadequate evidence gathering, recording and understanding	4.3.1.4 Development of a strategic approach to evidence gathering, monitoring and archiving
<p><b>Aim 2:</b> To increase benefits for people from Elan. This aim is all about developing a better and more beneficial experience for the people who visit and live in Elan. Our approach is two-fold: firstly, to make the most of our fantastic heritage through improved engagement, interpretation, narration, learning facilities and opportunities for new and existing audiences; and secondly, to promote better health and wellbeing through improved access and recreation facilities. The Aim will deliver significantly better social outcomes through an innovative programme of training, skills and confidence-building in the natural environment and will explore issues associated with sustainable lifestyles</p>	7: Develop engaging and innovative ways of narrating Elan's heritage to a wide audience to increase the impact of Elan's heritage.	7a Interpreting Elan	4.2.7 A challenging economic and policy environment for Elan and the surrounding area	4.3.2.3 Opportunity to become an exemplar for public access, recreation and enjoyment
		7b Elan Interactive	4.2.7 A challenging economic and policy environment for Elan and the surrounding area	4.3.2.3 Opportunity to become an exemplar for public access, recreation and enjoyment 4.3.1.6 Mitigating and adapting to a challenging economic and policy environment
		7c Artists Residencies	4.2.7 A challenging economic and policy environment for Elan and the surrounding area	4.3.2.3 Opportunity to become an exemplar for public access, recreation and enjoyment 4.3.3.1 Elan as a centre for creativity

### Elan Links Project Overview

Aim	Objective	Project	Threats mitigated against	Opportunities addressed
<p>using Elan as a model. An important outcome from the Aim will be to deliver sustained protection for this unique and valuable landscape by ensuring people continue to love, value and care for it over the long term.</p>		7d Activities & Events	4.2.7 A challenging economic and policy environment for Elan and the surrounding area	<p>4.3.2.3 Opportunity to become an exemplar for public access, recreation and enjoyment</p> <p>4.3.3.1 Elan as a centre for creativity</p>
	<p>8: Increase the range and number of people experiencing Elan as visitors, volunteers and learners.</p>	8a Promoting Elan	4.2.7 A challenging economic and policy environment for Elan and the surrounding area	<p>4.3.1.6 Mitigating and adapting to a challenging economic and policy environment</p> <p>4.3.2.2 To engage with Birmingham and the gateway communities</p>
		8b Friends of Elan		4.3.3.3 Opportunities to develop diverse volunteering opportunities across all strands of Elan's heritage
<p>9: Improve the range of recreational opportunities and ways to enjoy Elan.</p>			<p>4.2.4 Problems associated with overuse and inappropriate use</p> <p>4.2.7 A challenging economic and policy environment for Elan and the surrounding area</p>	<p>4.3.1.3 Sustainable usage</p> <p>4.3.2.3 Opportunity to become an exemplar for public access, recreation and enjoyment</p>

## Elan Links Project Overview

Aim	Objective	Project	Threats mitigated against	Opportunities addressed
	10: Engage with more difficult to reach individuals and provide training skills and opportunities that will build confidence, a sense of achievement and a sense of the natural environment.		4.2.7 A challenging economic and policy environment for Elan and the surrounding area	4.3.2.2 To engage with Birmingham and the gateway communities 4.3.3.2 The opportunity to develop Elan as a resource for training and education
	11: Increase the understanding of the importance of sustainable lifestyles for nature and society.		4.2.6 External impacts and the threat to Elan's heritage 4.2.7 A challenging economic and policy environment for Elan and the surrounding area	4.3.1.5 Promoting sustainable living and reducing external impacts 4.3.2.2 To engage with Birmingham and the gateway communities
	12: Enshrining Legacy at Every Turn		4.2.7 A challenging economic and policy environment for Elan and the surrounding area	4.3.1.6 Mitigating and adapting to a challenging economic and policy environment 4.3.2.1 To work in partnership for mutual benefit