

Dyffryn Tywi, Hanes Tirwedd Ein Bro

Strategic Interpretation Report

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**Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar
gyfer Datblygu Gwledig:**
Ewrop yn Buddsoddi mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig
**European Agricultural Fund for
Rural Development:**
Europe Investing in Rural Areas



**Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government**

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Aims and Methodology

The aim of this study is to deliver a theme for a strategic interpretation plan, that has common agreement from key existing Dyffryn Tywi, Hanes Tirwedd Ein Bro project stakeholders, and other relevant, but yet to be involved, organisations.

Strategic interpretation themes tend to be used as basis from which to enhance the experience of visitors to a region. Therefore, feedback from both tourism bodies and tourists is important.

From this perspective, it is also important to engage with local businesses who both market to and benefit from visitors. Whilst also including the farming community, whose lives are so intrinsic to the origins of the Dyffryn Tywi, Hanes Tirwedd Ein Bro project.

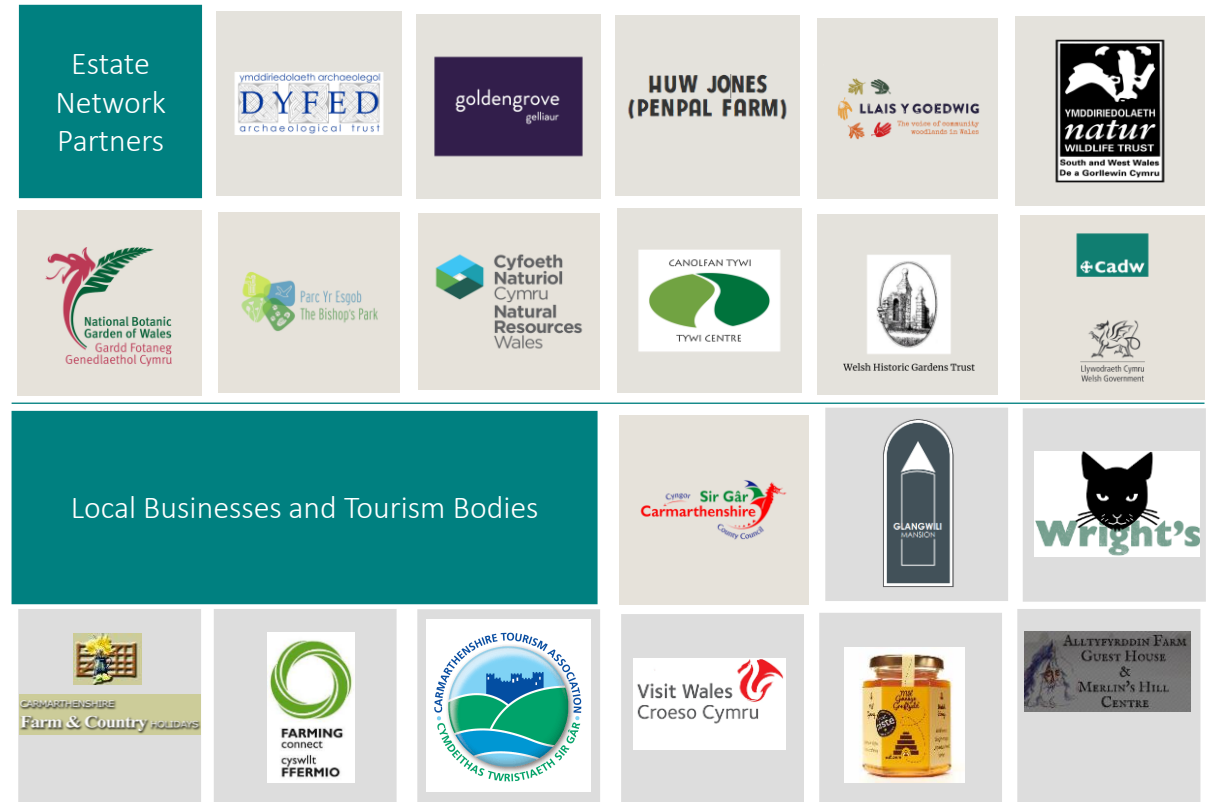
Finally, it is key that any strategic interpretation theme has obvious roots from the existing project that can clearly be identified.

“Strategic Interpretation is purposeful communication with an intended outcome”

Sam Ham - Interpretation: Making a Difference on Purpose



As such, Landsker conducted 21 guided qualitative interviews with representatives from the following organisations:



And following this, conducted 97 interviews with local residents and tourists within the Tywi Valley



Qualitative Findings: Aligning with existing projects and tourism themes



Aligning with the Dyffryn Tywi, Hanes Tirwedd Ein Bro project's key aims



All respondents, be they Network Partners, Estate Managers, local businesses owners or tourist organisations, understood both the value of the Dyffryn Tywi Project (Part 1), and going forwards, the value of creating a strategic interpretation plan for the Tywi Valley area.

To build on the work already completed, to guarantee this work's legacy and to maintain group engagement, it is considered essential, by both the project team and the network partners, to ensure that any theme has strong links to the original project.

Therefore, the aims of the Dyffryn Tywi, Hanes Tirwedd Ein Bro project, must be considered within any future theme.

To Discover

To recall and re-discover local connections with, and understandings of this landscape that are being lost.

- ✓ By working with communities in the Tywi Valley to collect and record local knowledge, memories and stories associated with the area and its farming past.

To Understand:

To better understand past local relationships with nature.

- ✓ By recording the ways that communities in this area lived with and cared for the land and highlighting the influence of traditional land management on the development of the landscape that we see today.
- ✓ By showing how past practices can help inform the way we look after the land now.

To Revive:

To help revive specific traditional skills used in the valley until recent times

- ✓ By providing practical hands-on training in land management skills, beginning with hedge-laying and meadow management.
- ✓ By showing how these traditional skills are still relevant now and how their wider use can benefit the environment – supporting our local ecology and our unique landscape.

Not reinventing the wheel. Learning from relevant existing and previous projects



Throughout the course of the interviews, it was recognised by many that other projects with similar themes to Dyffryn Tywi, Hanes Tirwedd Ein Bro (Part 1) have been completed before.

Respondents felt that as this project progresses beyond a theme, the information gathered previously should be used to inform a strategic interpretation plan, before it moves forward.

Furthermore, many respondents were aware of how previous, similar projects have often become static once they end.

Therefore many were excited by incorporating or aligning these existing projects, within a new project. Thus bringing new life to previous projects, and helping to short cut a new Dyffryn Tywi, Hanes Tirwedd Ein Bro project (part 2) to success.

The Tywi - Afon yr Oesoedd (TAYO)/Tywi - A River Through Time project ([here](#)) ran from 2008-2011. The project focused on the Tywi Valley's landscape (between Llangadog and Dryslwyn) and aimed to celebrate and conserve the valley through developing improved understanding of the landscape, strengthening links between the community and the landscape and developing skills. There are significant similarities with the Dyffryn Tywi, Hanes Tirwedd Ein Bro project. The TAYO project was based on 4 central themes: Landscape and Biodiversity (hedgerows, ponds, trees, training), Discover the Tywi (strategic interpretation), Exploration Tywi! (an investigation by the community into the origins and history of the valley ([here](#))), and The Traditional Sustainable Building Centre.

Taclo'r Tywi (Tackling the Tywi) ([here](#)) is a live project led by National Resources Wales, which seeks to make real improvements to the river's water quality and biodiversity. By managing all aspects of the Tywi environment in a more sustainable way, so the river can continue to support agriculture, forestry, biodiversity, tourism and recreation now and in the future.

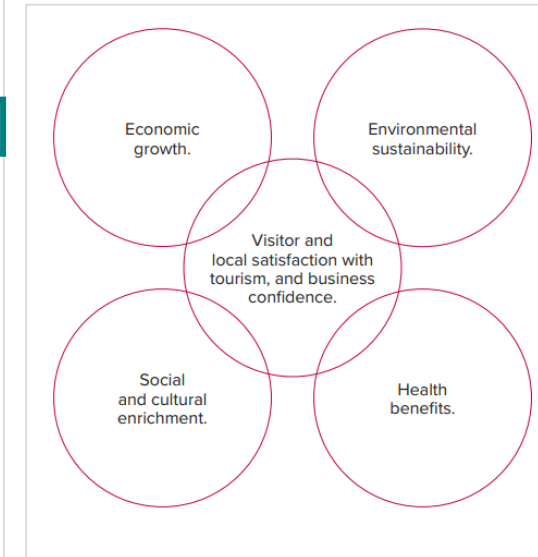
It is essential to align with the relevant tourism goals for Wales



It was identified by many (especially those working in tourism organisations or tourist facing businesses) that any theme must also align with and not compete, contradict or detract from the tourism themes already being promoted by Visit Wales and Carmarthenshire County Council. Aligning with their objectives, will enable both organisations to support the promotion of a strategic interpretation plan going forwards,. As such, it is important that the theme offered improves the quality of the visitor experience but that it also benefits the local people both economically and socially. It is also fundamental that it drives sustainability and provides health benefits.

Furthermore, driving a clear sense of place, and celebrating the Welsh languages will be very important to the theme

Ambition			
To grow tourism for the good of Wales			
Goals			
Economic growth that delivers benefits to people and places	Environmental sustainability	Social and cultural enrichment	Health benefits
Listen to residents, visitors and businesses			
Approach			
High-quality, year-round experiences that are good for visitors and host communities			
Inherently Welsh – with a global outlook			
Bro – Welsh and local		Byd – international	
Wales' core offer			
Outstanding natural landscapes	Creative culture	Epic adventure	
Croeso: a warm welcome, unique accommodation and local food and drink			
The Wales Way			
Brand objectives			
Elevate our status	Surprise and inspire	Change perceptions	Do good things Be unmistakably Wales
Our visitors			
Seasonality	Spend	Spread	
New staycation markets in the UK	International visitors – new to Wales	The people of Wales	
Types of visitor			
General visitors	Business travellers	Special interest visitors	
Trade and operators			
Key priorities for Visit Wales			
Great products and places Visit Wales-led projects Industry-led capital investment Integrated place-making International and home-grown events, including business events	Quality visitor experiences Brilliant basics Great hospitality through grading Food tourism Skilled people Product-led teams	An innovative Cymru Wales brand A stronger nation brand Adaptive marketing with an off-peak focus One campaign, two themed years Digital-first industry Visit Wales 'Centre of Excellence'	An engaged and vibrant sector Effective industry engagement through a collective industry voice Improved data and insights based on industry need Stronger strategy and policy function An agile and responsive Visit Wales
Commercial priorities			
Improved routes to market	A focus on special interest products	Commercial partnerships	
Implementation			
Restructured internal team	Refreshed governance structures	Streamlined business support	
Review of delivery at local level	New approach to partnership delivery		



Source: Visit Wales

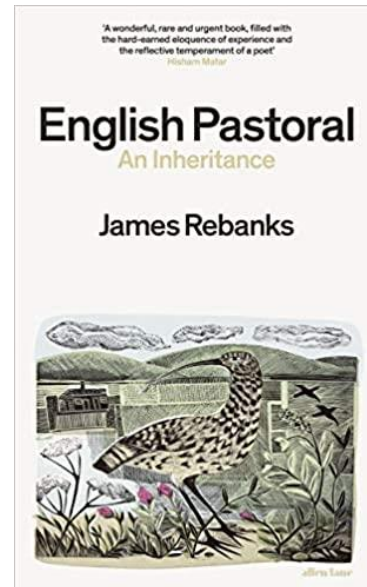
Further recommended information sources



Additionally, literature was spontaneously recommended by respondents, to help inform a future strategic interpretation plan

English Pastoral: An Inheritance by James Rebanks

English Pastoral tells of how rural landscapes have been brought to near collapse, and how the lessons of the past (work seasonality, weather, community and flora/fauna) are close to being lost. The book tells a hopeful story of how, guided by the past, one farmer does his best to restore the life that had vanished, to his land, vowing to leave a legacy for the future ([here](#))



Carwyn Graves – Welsh Food Stories

<https://carwyngraves.com/>

Carwyn Graves is an author, public speaker and gardener from Wales. Author of the bestselling Apples of Wales (2018) and Welsh Food Stories (about to be published)



Brynmor Lewis Davies - Changes in the Land Utilisation in the Towy Valley, Carmarthenshire Since the End of the 18th Century Available to rent [here](#)



Qualitative Findings: Changes to the existing project framework



Dyffryn Tywi, Hanes Tirwedd Ein Bro has been a success, frustratingly held back in length and breadth by Covid-19



- All Network Partners described the slow start to the Dyffryn Tywi (part 1) project.
- However, it is felt unanimously that the project was resurrected by Helen and Kellie with little time left and that as a result, and given the Covid-19 pressures, they have done a great job.
- The funding element of the project received mixed reviews. The funding that was made available was received positively, as it enabled biodiversity projects be completed that could not otherwise have been completed
- However, a lack of funding opportunities to engage a broader range of relevant parties, has clouded judgement of the project success for some. It was suggested that funding was made available only for very specific types of farm/estate, and as a result, other very relevant biodiversity projects could not proceed. In future, with the benefit of more time. wider consultation would prevent this from happening.
- Similarly, the training provided was considered excellent. However, the training was very relevant to some types of landowners, with others feeling that a wider range of training may have been offered – or that the training could have been offered to a wider group.

The project started without momentum, as it was initiated only to obtain match funding for the Regency Project. The project was not as sharp and as focused as it could have been had it existed automatically.

The project would have benefitted significantly from being clearer in its aims from the start.

The training given was excellent, especially that provided by Natural Resources Wales

Helen and Kellie have done an outstanding job, given the external pressures they had to work with

Funding was limited to specific types of projects, meaning that other valuable projects could not receive financial help

More should have been done to better engage the farming community. Then the funding opportunities would have been broader.

Dyffryn Tywi, Hanes Tirwedd Ein Bro Project Legacy: Network Group



- Concern was raised about project legacy – and the website alone not being enough (see slide 36). Hence, a strategic interpretation plan (or ‘Part 2 of the Dyffryn Tywi, Hanes Tirwedd Ein Bro Project’), was received well by all. Not only for a way of building legacy and taking the previous work forwards, but also as an initiative in its own right.
- The majority of network partners feel that the most positive outcome of the project so far has been meeting and networking with the other partners. This has delivered tremendous, unexpected value and is considered a significant benefit of the project. Some partners stated that previously there existed a feeling that that they were in competition with one another. Hence, before this project, the network partners had not previously gathered.
- Following on from this, many partners stated that the project has facilitated shared learning, shared knowledge and shared experience for mutual benefit. Thus, providing a new invaluable resource, that they have not had the benefit of before.
- Described as ‘the beginning of something important’, this network group is felt to be something that would be detrimental to lose and therefore, should be maintained.

So often these projects are just left, sitting on a shelf

It seems daft that these projects can't be part of something that lives and breathes organically on their own in the future

The fact that we got together, and found such benefit in it, feels like the beginning of something important that could make a huge difference. It would be an awful shame if our networking groups were lost

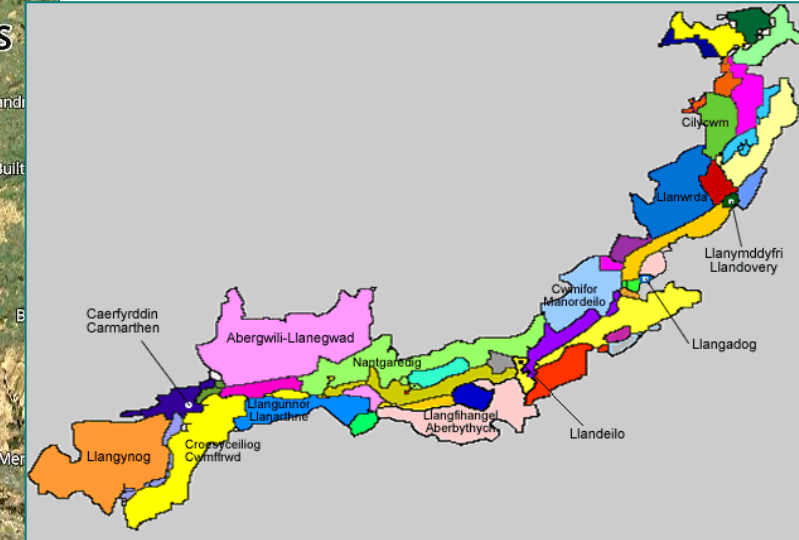
A new strategic interpretation theme must be relevant to the full valley



- Immediate unease was communicated regarding whether the previous geographical boundaries of the area included in the project, would be transferred to an interpretation plan.
- It is felt important that an interpretation theme (and its following plan) must be viable for, and be extended to include, the whole valley. Inclusivity was felt to be important both for community, and to maximise the marketing potential of the area.
- It was also suggested that definitive boundaries would be necessary to stop the project diluting to other areas, so a clear understanding of which areas will be within scope, and which are not, is important



The Course of the River Tywi



Tywi Valley

The Valley has never been promoted as a region; it doesn't even have signposts!

So much more can be achieved working together than working on an individual basis

Joint marketing is needed and necessary

Never before have we (Network Partners) had the momentum to come together

It is important to engage a wider group of stakeholders:



- It is felt by the network partners, and also identified by the Dyffryn Tywi, Hanes Tirwedd Ein Bro Project team, that a strategic interpretation plan must be developed by a larger group of partners. The plan would exist for the Valley and its communities, and hence a better representation of the Valley's relevant communities is required.
- Those identified as needing to be invited to engage were:
 1. Network Partners' marketing teams – to help drive the project forwards within each network partner organisation
 2. Tourism Bodies – to help promote the project, and ensure that it meets their objectives
 3. Local Businesses – to bring their commercial experience, to help develop the theme, and for their support
 4. Community Leaders – to help drive/promote community engagement
 5. Archaeological Trusts – to provide a greater degree of historical information and to potentially help with grant funding/project management
 6. Farming Community (Farmers, Farmers Unions and YFC) and – for their knowledge and experience of the agricultural practices within the valley

It is important to remember that the landscape connects beyond the network partners

Any plan needs to deliver a sense of place. This gives opportunity for more organisations and businesses to benefit from and engage with it, if they sit outside of the current project area (Llandeilo to Carmarthen), but within the Tywi Valley area. It also gives the plan space so that in time, it can continue to organically grow, as everyone starts to celebrate it.

The need to engage a wider group of stakeholders: Local Businesses



- The importance of engaging a wider network of local businesses with the strategic interpretation plan was spontaneously mentioned by many network partners. Indeed, the (non-network partner) businesses that took part in this preliminary study, were very interested in helping move the project forward. They feel passionately about the area and are acutely aware of today's environmental concerns and of the need for sustainability.
- Many of the local businesses are also important tourist destinations or sell popular local produce and as such, have strong potential to become useful brand ambassadors through their ability to raise profile;
 - ✓ Through word of mouth,
 - ✓ As they talk to their customers,
 - ✓ Through engagement with their local supply chain
 - ✓ By adding the plan to their marketing

Wright's Emporium



Glangwili Mansion



The need to engage a wider group of stakeholders: The Farming Community



- It was felt that due to the time limitations of the Dyffryn Tywi, Hanes Tirwedd Ein Bro project (and through no fault of the project team), full engagement of the farming community was not accomplished.
- As such, it is considered essential that they are significantly more involved in the project going forwards. The farming community is considered fundamental to the Tywi Valley landscape and how it has evolved over time. Indeed, it is considered fundamental to any future success of any project that has roots in the agricultural landscape of the valley.
- With this wider farming community in mind, it is felt important that the core subjects of meadows, hedgerows and parkland be widened to agricultural practices that all farms can engage with. (It was indicated that meadows and hedgerows are considered relevant only to medium sized farms).
- Hence, additional attention also needs to be given to ensure that the project covers broader subjects that larger and smaller farms can also buy into. To achieve this, the agricultural community needs to be invited to play a larger part in any future project. Indeed, with so many successful farmers in the area, if the local area's biodiversity is to be protected, whilst also enabling it to thrive, their help and engagement is needed.



Farmers need the story to be framed properly. Need to understand the farmers position clearly, and where they have come from; the fact that it has been government policy that has led us to where we are now. If we are to truly find our way back to sustainable agricultural practices, then that must include a more stable position for farmers, and a vision for what farming should look like.

The need to engage a wider group of stakeholders: The Farming Community



- With changes to farming practices (and farming subsidies) inevitable, any future project, should also be appealing to the farming community as their practices will need to change to become more sustainable.
- Farmers are passionate about their land, its history and its relationship with their families, who it has supported for years. There are families of farmers in the Tywi Valley who have farmed the land for generations. There are some whose family members can remember and explain decades of changes to the landscape and alongside this, the changes to both agricultural practices, and local architecture.
- It must not be forgotten that in 2021, agricultural technologies exist that are useful, and will help protect biodiversity. It is a merging of the best of the new, and the old, that will provide the best solution for future biodiversity and sustainability.
- Furthermore, many farmers have diversified and now also sell directly to their consumer. Part of the story, this also brings in new sustainability factors such as food provenance



Farming Connect have offered to engage local farmers on behalf of/or supporting the Dyffryn Tywi project (part 2) at an appropriate time.



Unanimous concerns about the future project management



- All network partners expressed the same concern that, with the funding for the Dyffryn Tywi, Hanes Tirwedd Ein Bro Project ending in January 2022, the project will lose its management team and hence its momentum.
- It is felt almost unanimously that without the project team of Helen and Kellie, it is almost certain that any future project or strategic interpretation plan will fail.
- This does not identify a lack of interest, but more a considered understanding of what the strategic interpretation plan project will require, and their lack of available time and resource to be able to help.
- It was also felt that any plan cannot be developed without the new wider group having time to consider how they might individually, and as one, promote with a theme.

Understanding how we can each interact with a plan, and link together will take months.

Unfortunately, we all have day jobs and as much as this is interesting and useful, it falls outside of our day-to-day remit

Everyone has a lack of resource

This will take a lot of development work. We can commit to attending meetings, and strategy development but we cannot commit to leading or driving this forwards

This strategy needs at minimum, careful planning and development between all the network partners. How can this happen by January 2022?

How will this be conducted – or even funded? The funding comes to an end in two months!

To succeed this needs grant funding, which I don't think has been applied for yet? Helen and Kellie will have other jobs in 2022.



Qualitative Findings: Constructing the Theme



Strategic Interpretation Themes



For a strategic interpretation theme to succeed, it is felt that it must be inspirational and engaging to three broad target groups:

- 1) Those that live in the area and wish to celebrate it
- 2) Those that work or run businesses in the area, and wish to help promote it
- 3) Those that are looking for a destination to visit, and wish to be inspired by it

Thus by:

- ✓ Enhancing the experiences of people to drive better connections with the Tywi Valley
- ✓ Encouraging positivity about the Valley by facilitating an emotional or affecting response
- ✓ Influencing behaviour by promoting preferred behaviors

A strategic interpretation plan should deliver*

- 1) Powerful promotion of the area as a destination. Creating a clear and unique sense of place.
- 2) Protection of the area's biodiversity,
- 3) Enhanced visitor experiences
- 4) Promotion of responsible access to the landscape
- 5) Increased public support



Careful consideration must be given to clashing but important theme features



The Importance of Relevancy

With any interpretation, the theme must be relevant to those who are expected to engage with it. This means that it must be meaningful, and to a degree must drive emotion through identifying personal, relevant connections with its audience. To be meaningful, simply means using subjects that people care about.

Relevancy can be facilitated by making it easy for those who engage with the theme to make easy comparisons with their own lives and experiences. This can be achieved by making contrasts, analogies, comparisons and using examples.

Relevancy is most easily achieved by delivering information through the lens of people and how they felt or made decisions at the time.

VS

The Importance of being Unique

The theme must drive a 'sense of place' to create emotional connections specifically with the Valley.

Hence, the theme itself must be unique, or it must be showcased (marketed or explained) in way that explains how it uniquely and authentically describes the Valley.

The Importance of Enjoyment

The theme must drive intrigue, inspiration and a wish to engage further. It must be easy to understand, accessible (not too academic), easy to organise marketing efforts around, easy to participate in and easy to humanise.

VS

The Importance of Fact Based Learning

The theme must allow for the delivery of educational information. It should both inform and inspire. It should enable the provision of facts in an easy-to-understand way, that are memorable and that can be easily retold. The information provided should be authentic, honest and tell the true details, good and bad, to inform a clear, nonbiased and accurate picture of any subject discussed.

Respondents offered themes that fell into two broad, and overlapping areas



1. Themes detailing the geology and/or meteorology of the landscape

- Using the river as a physical, locational and dynamic thread (and including the tributaries)
- Using the valley as a physical, locational and dynamic thread
- Using the cycle path as a physical and locational thread
- Use the railway line as physical and locational
- Stories of how the network partners' land connects/links
- Physical development of the land over time
- The geological processes that have created the valley
- Changes to the landscape as a result of climate change
- The lush environment that is created by the rain in Wales
- Explaining biodiversity through stories of Hedgerows, Meadows and Parklands.
- Explaining biodiversity and the need to protect through the beauty of the landscape



We mustn't lose touch with the physical development of the landscape and the dynamic nature of the river and the valley.

Currently landscape management is not presented in a way that will bring visitors to the area. How can this be done?

Any plan needs to deliver a sense of place, and key to the valley, is the valley and its river

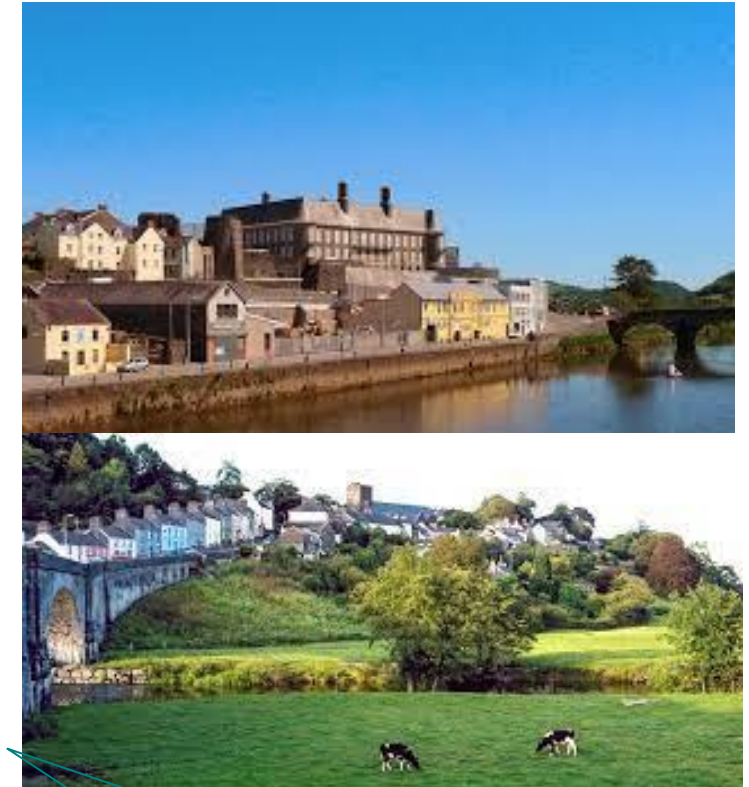
A potential issue of basing the theme on the geological landscape is that it will only excite those specifically interested in geology. The theme needs to be broad enough to engage a wide spectrum of people... and to enable broad interpretation of it

Respondents offered themes that fell into two broad, and overlapping areas



2. Themes that link human activity to the Valley's landscape

- Linking the Valley's estates and land through stories of myths and legends: Merlin, The Legend of the Oak, Tylwyth Teg, Lady of the Lake, The Physicians of Myddfai (Farmers and other locals grew up on these myths and they are situated on the land)
- Voices of the Valley. Telling the stories of those who live, and have lived in the Valley, and how they have been affected by the Valley. Therefore, explaining what needs to be done in future to protect the valley.
- Explaining how people have shaped the land (including its architecture) but also explaining how the land has and always will, shape the lives of the people
- Connections of the land explained by the lives and interconnections of historic families of the area e.g. Vaughns, Mansells, Lewes etc.
- Historical and current relationships between the valley, its people and its buildings that have determined the landscape. Describing how the agricultural jobs that the valley has required have determined the buildings that exist/ed- including the homes therefore, needed for both kings and king makers
- Leading with the history of the Valley's agricultural practices that facilitate food provenance and enable quality local produce
- Lead with how the normal people lived. This helps explain the landscape, why decisions were made and is more relatable than Lords and Ladies.
- The importance of learning from the Valley's past for a better, more sustainable future



It's the people's stories that link with the biodiversity and the land, that will draw people

Themes that link human activity to the Valley's landscape



It's the people's stories that link with the biodiversity that will draw people in

The history & stories of the people who have managed and lived on the land is an important aspect

There are great connections/links that exist between the partners' lands/peoples and the stories that they are already telling. These can be told.

Bring in the architectural stories too – what old buildings used to be, why are they there, where did people used to live – and explain through stories etc

We need more detailed stories of people's lives to engage people within our landscape

Integration of people and the landscape provides stories ... Running through this is the river and how people are influenced by it, and how the land is influenced by it (type of agriculture), and how the architecture is influenced by it (buildings required), and how status and influence and power are born from this

The Strategic Destination Plan Theme



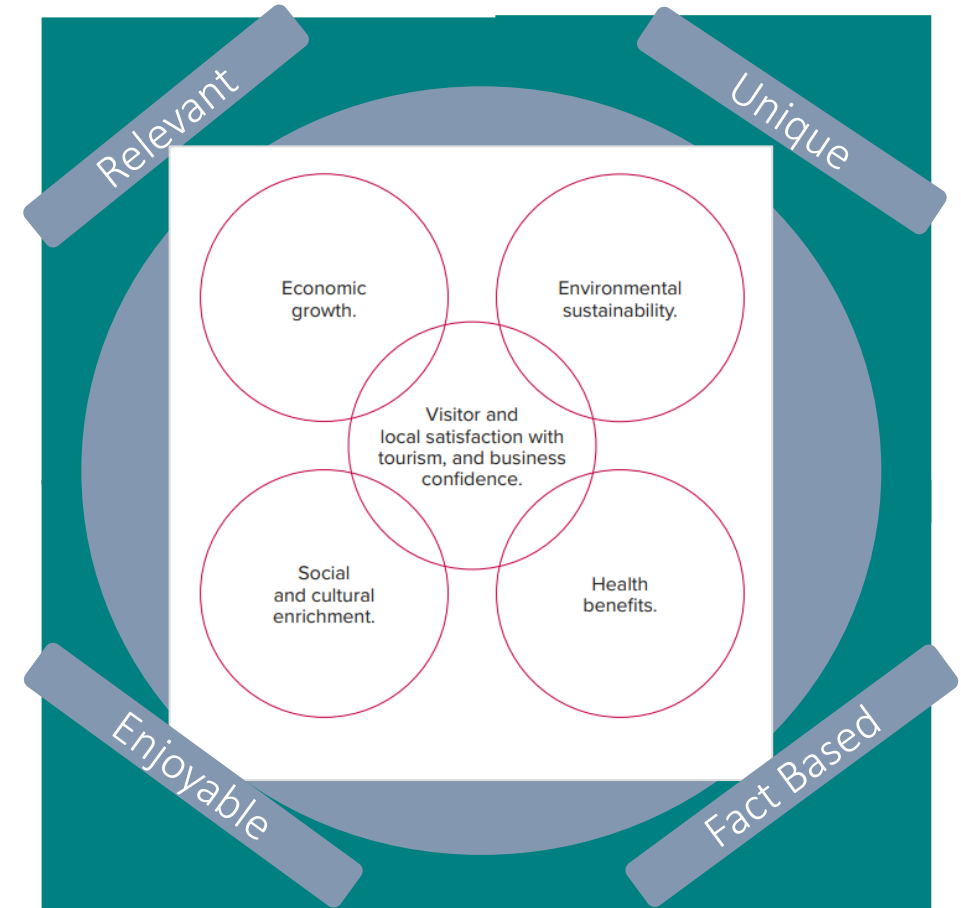
Many of these themes, are interrelated and can form sub themes of the main theme. However, with the key objective to ensure strong roots with the original project ‘Learning from the land’ perhaps summarises these themes most consistently.

Theme: **Learning from the land..**

Detail: **Learning from the past for a better, more sustainable future for the Tywi Valley**

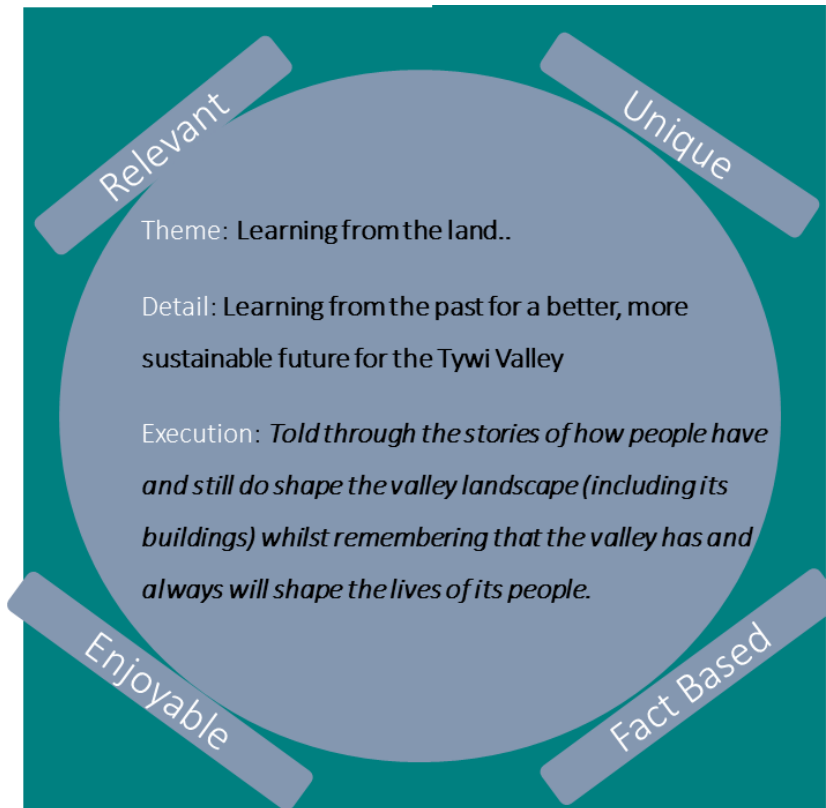
Execution: *Told through the stories of how people have and still do shape the valley landscape (including its buildings) whilst remembering that the valley has and always will shape the lives of its people.*

Relevancy is delivered via people’s stories, the current environmental crisis and the need for more sustainable practices. **Uniqueness** (and a sense of place) is delivered via the distinctiveness of the river, the valley and the geology, but also the connections of people, and families. A sense of **enjoyment** is delivered via understanding the lives, and stories of individual characters, **facts** are delivered via reasons for of the changing landscape and its biodiversity.



Tourism Objectives & Strategic Theme Objectives

The theme aligns with the original Dyffryn Tywi, Hanes Tirwedd Ein Bro (part 1) aims



To Discover

To recall and re-discover local connections with, and understandings of this landscape that are being lost.

- ✓ By working with communities in the Tywi Valley to collect and record local knowledge, memories and stories associated with the area and its farming past.

To Understand:

To better understand past local relationships with nature.

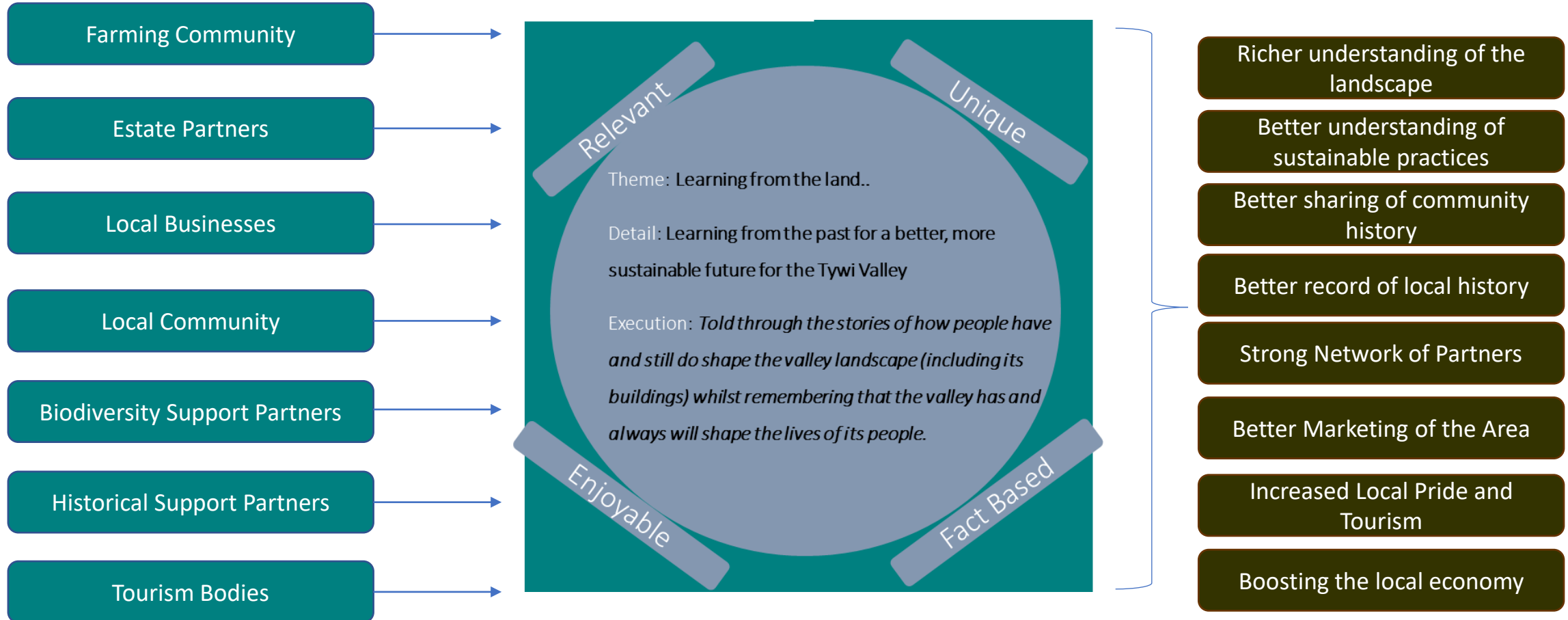
- ✓ By recording the ways that communities in this area lived with and cared for the land and highlighting the influence of traditional land management on the development of the landscape that we see today.
- ✓ By showing how past practices can help inform the way we look after the land now.

To Revive:

To help revive traditional skills used in the valley until recent times

- ✓ By identifying how traditional skills are still relevant now and how their wider use can benefit the environment – supporting our local ecology and our unique landscape.

Respondents expected that the theme and the resulting plan would provide many benefits



It naturally promotes the Welsh Language



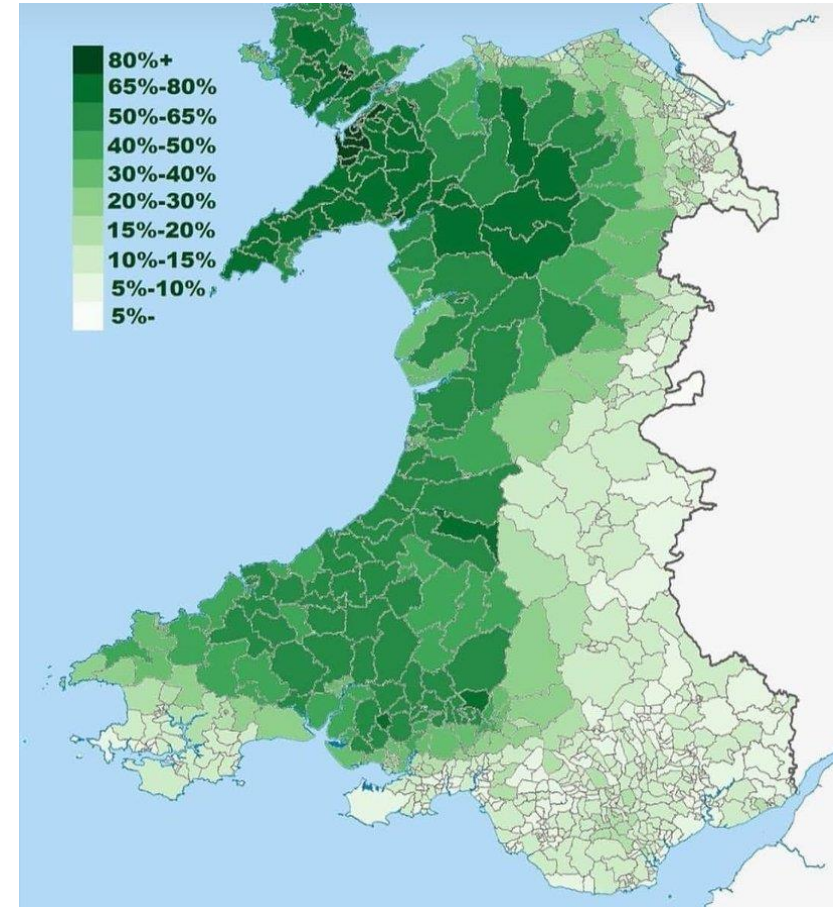
A key benefit of explaining the theme via people’s stories is that many will be told in Welsh.

It is essential that Welsh Language runs through the project, and in this case, it should do so naturally.

Furthermore, the Welsh language, alongside the rich farming and estate histories, will help explain many of the place names, field names, and property names within the Tywi Valley. All interconnected when learning from the land

Stories can be told in first language, Welsh or English

The Welsh language is key to the area and needs to be part of the project



Welsh Speakers By Ward (2020*)

The theme aligns with the relevant Government policy and tourism goals for Wales



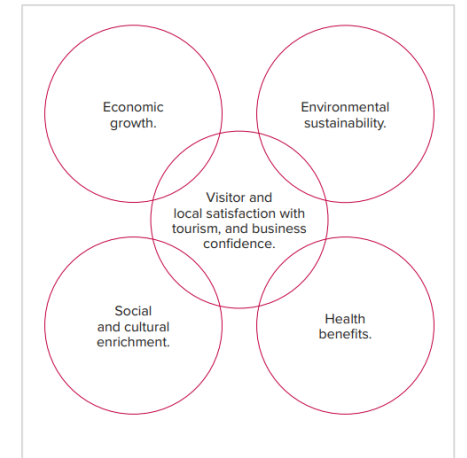
In meeting Visit Wales' objectives, the theme will “**Elevate Wales' Status**”, by offering a chance for people to better engage with one of Wales's most undisturbed beautiful and iconic landscapes. With a goal of ensuring the public extend their time spent in the area, the theme will help to elevate Wales's status not only as a place of natural beauty but as a place of activity, and rich history whilst working for sustainability.

The theme will seek to "**Surprise and Inspire**", by highlighting what the area has to offer, including quality venues, local business, and more.

The theme will aim to "**Change Perceptions**" by providing an engaging way to learn about the natural beauty of the valley in a modern, “consumer anticipated” way. It will also seek to explain that we can and should learn from the past.

The theme will be "**Unmistakably Welsh**", ensuring that via sense of place, language, landscape and environment, it will showcase the best of what is Wales.

Finally, the theme will naturally support many of the seven well-being goals that form the basis of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act , including supporting **A Prosperous Wales, A Resilient Wales, A Wales of Cohesive Communities, A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language and A Globally Responsible Wales.**



The theme must be contextualised



It was identified by many that there is a need to really understand where we are now with regards land sustainability, and what the various land holders are doing now (good and bad practice), as this forms the basis of the theme, and the future plan.

Equally, the true context for why these practices are operating (Government policy etc.,) needs to be identified and explained or contextual boundaries set.

There are also positives of today (new farming technologies, new networks, new partnerships, new realisation) that it was suggested should be celebrated and not be forgotten.

Furthermore, the project should take account of, or at least acknowledge future issues, e.g., who owns the land? In other areas of Wales, large companies are buying up land (for forestry) to help with their carbon offsetting. Should this be permitted?

If framed under the 'why' and not the 'what', farmers will engage and bring generations of information

Are we happy to tell the story of disaster for the past 50 years? This is perhaps the only authentic way of framing a strategic interpretation theme. Many people seek to forget or ignore the past.

There are positives to today. These must not be forgotten. Look forward with this and the past in mind



And a course of action needs to be developed when project management funding is available



- All respondents recognised that developing the details of the plan will take time.
- All wished to agree the boundaries and context to the theme, so the breadth and depth of it could be fully understood and communicated to additional relevant parties
- Those in large organisations explained that they would need to discuss the plan internally with their own businesses to drive support and to determine an agreed level of engagement.
- All identified that the best time to move forwards would be when potential funding for the management of the project was in place, or soon to be in place.



Including a clear plan activation strategy



Respondents had many initial yet relevant suggestions of how a plan might be implemented, which identifies their enthusiasm to move forward with the theme. Many respondents began to tell stories, about their property, business, organisation or land that linked to the theme. Others had more tactical questions about joint marketing.

If stories that are relevant to the partners and the other landowners, can be found, that that is brilliant. Perhaps businesses have stories that connect with landowners too?

We need a way for people in the valley to share their stories, but its need to be kept simple

Could volunteers go round and record the stories from the residents?

Its important to return to how the normal people lived. This helps explain the landscape, why decisions were made and is more relatable.

Could the website be used to collate user generated content?

It'd be great to engage with the people who have recently mover here too. To give them greater knowledge, and community, and to add their (reason for moving here) stories to the project

Need to remember that we shouldn't only be backward looking but also look to the future

We should think about week visitor passes and discounts for the Valley's attractions/businesses

Podcasts, guided walks and signage to allow people to explore would be fantastic

Perhaps Augmented reality, see the buildings and landscape as it was

Partners need to identify key stories, drawing on and developing stories already being told Then we should find a way of linking these stories together, and then physically signpost where to go to find more about these stories within the other network partners

What about shuttle buses?

The area needs signage!



Dyffryn Tywi Strategic Interpretation Plan – Future Stakeholder Engagement



Dyffryn Tywi Project Strategic Interpretation Plan – Future Engagement



- All stakeholder respondents were very happy to be kept up to date with the future of the project, with majority stating that they would be actively involved.
- Those that were less likely to be actively involved couldn't immediately understand how they could bring value to a strategic interpretation plan
- All respondents were very clear that they cannot replace Helen and Kellie as group leaders/project managers moving forwards, due to the work commitment this involves. Unfortunately, this project falls outside of their day to day remit, and as such, no one can afford to offer the significant amount of time required.
- Thus future funding, and project existence beyond 2022, is a universal concern.

- However, all wished to continue the Dyffryn Tywi Project momentum, and could see benefit in a Strategic Interpretation Plan for marketing purposes.
- All respondents identified that to progress, this project would require the network partners (new and old) to meet and discuss how they might move the plan forwards.
- The Strategic Interpretation theme, though purposely broad, must be set within boundaries. What is in and out of scope?
- Many noted that marketing colleagues may wish to join, so they may have a greater understanding and provide valuable input

This project needs to continue but it needs drive and resources to do this





Dyffryn Tywi, Hanes Tirwedd Ein Bro - Views on the existing website



Opinions on the website, depend on what it is believed to be for



- Few had spent significant time on the website.
- Of those that had visited the website, feelings towards it were mixed based on each respondent's belief on why the website exists.
- Those who described the site as a digital record of a project that is shortly to end, felt that the website completed this task well, stating that the project was well documented by the site.
- However, others were frustrated by this being the only reason for the website and struggled to identify the site's future benefit. Mirroring previous thoughts of projects 'left on shelves'.
- Some suggested that the website lacks a conclusion or a 'so what?' which, when delving deeper perhaps identifies a feeling that the project should have legacy, and that the website could be a great place to host this.
- Many were concerned as to how this website would be used or discovered in future, as many of the elements that drive Search Engine Optimisation will end, when the project ends i.e. dwell time on pages, amount and regularity of new content being uploaded. Many mentioned the need for back links to drive traffic from other sites to the site.
- Many also suggested that given more time, the website needed to provide better information regarding the links to other useful resources.
- It was also felt that ideally there should be space and method for the site to be updated regularly to encourage people to visit regularly e.g. space for UGC or local pictures/stories to be posted as they were received, updated with seasonal information supplied by network partners, seasonal photography.
- Lastly, concern was raised that due to the lack of input from farmers, some of the information may not be accurate (e.g. blanket forestry)

I really like the website. It looks good, is functional and is easy to read.

Not sure how or why people will discover the website, or how people recognise what it's for or what they need to take from it

Website needs to allow you to delve deeper into subjects, alongside the links, so users can learn more about the subject than the project

In many areas, the website lacks a 'so what'

At minimum pages need to stand alone and be searchable to aid longevity



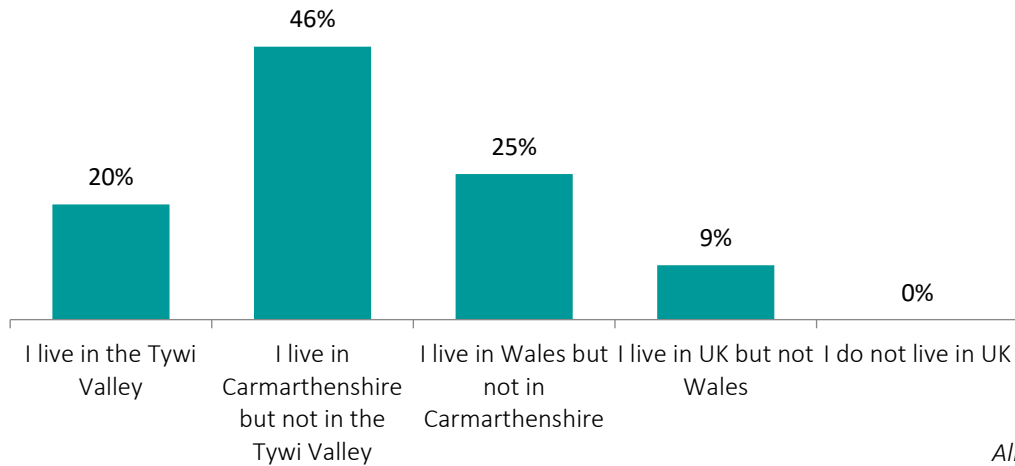
Quantitative Findings: Consumer response to the proposed theme



Respondents were most likely to live in Carmarthenshire

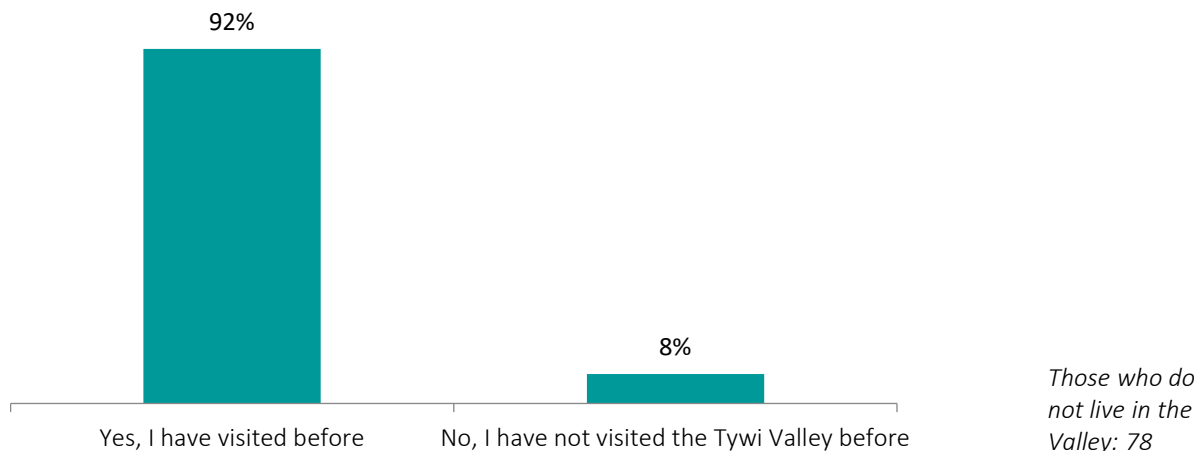


Where do you live?



- The majority of respondents (2/3) stated that they live either in Carmarthenshire or in the Tywi Valley.
- Notably many local respondents requested information as to where the Tywi Valley is. Suggesting that the Valley's identity is not clear to even those who live locally.
- No respondents live outside the UK.
- The vast majority of those who do not live in Tywi Valley have visited the area before

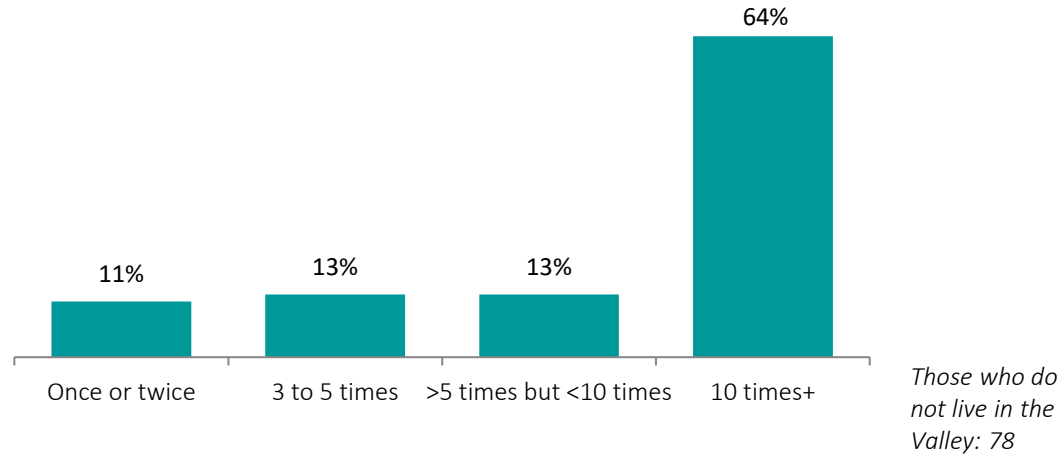
Have you visited the Tywi Valley before?



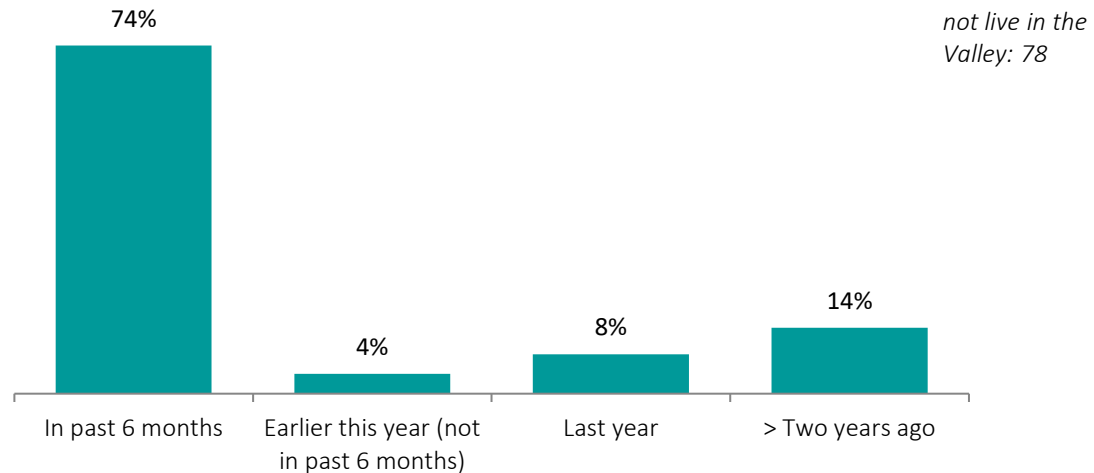
Those that live locally visit frequently and have visited recently



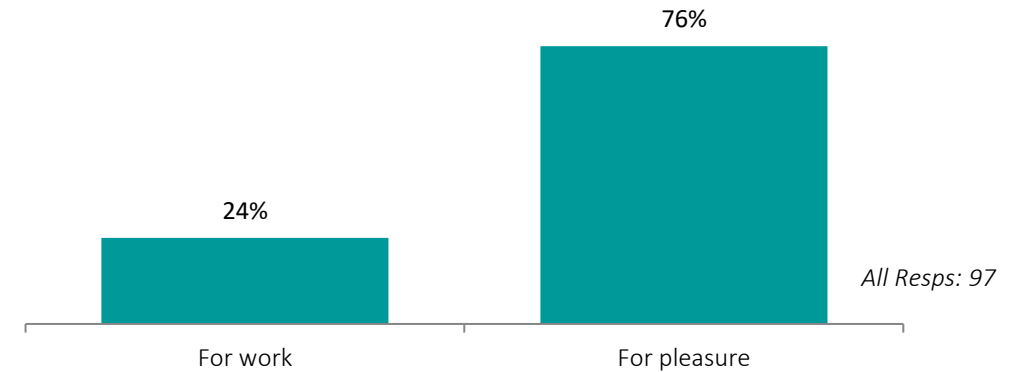
How many times have you visited the Tywi Valley?



When did you last visit the Tywi Valley?



Are you visiting today for work or pleasure?



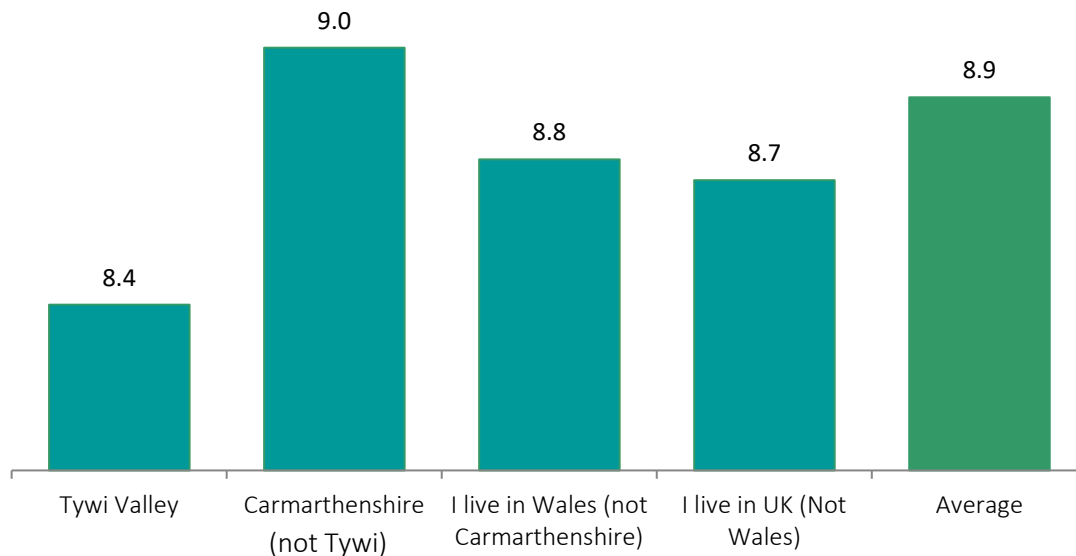
- Almost 2/3 have visited the area 10+ times before, and this is driven predominantly by those who live in Carmarthenshire, or adjoining counties
- And as they live reasonably locally, the majority of respondents have visited recently.
- Those that live further afield were less likely to have visited in the last 2 years, which is perhaps an effect of Covid-19, but also implies that it is important that the Valley is promoted widely across UK to drive more frequent visits
- ¾ were visiting the Valley for pleasure – this was expected as the survey was conducted at the weekend

The vast majority of respondents feel that it would be very beneficial to promote the Valley



The Tywi Valley is considering a marketing strategy to promote the landscape, its attractions and local businesses. The theme will allow all local businesses to promote the area in a similar way.

On a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very beneficial, how beneficial do you think it would be to promote the Tywi Valley?



All Resps: 97
By area of residency



- The majority of respondents feel that it would be very beneficial to promote the Valley
- Reasons offered for the scores, were to let people know of the valley’s beauty, to bring more visitors and thus to help the local economy and local business
- A few local respondents were concerned about what might happen should more tourists come, and the need for infrastructure. Traffic and pollution measures were cited with some comparing what might happen to the recent events in Scotland, where areas of outstanding beauty were overwhelmed by tourism volumes.

The vast majority of respondents feel that it would be very beneficial to promote the Valley



It's beautiful and should be promoted as it would help local businesses

Careful balance needed between promotion and infrastructure

I live in Pembrokeshire and I know very little about the Valley

It's not well known

Needs to be promoted more broadly. Don't promote Wales enough.

There will be too much traffic

Anything that helps the economy and brings work

The area lacks identity – (needs) something that people can understand

The area needs more visitors

Where exactly is the Tywi valley? It needs promoting

I often visit attractions in the area but many people I know have never been to them

I think the area is great for visitors as long as the increase is supported by infrastructure

Would like people to know about the area as it is lovely

Any promotion for the area is good

I'm still finding things out about the valley, there is so much to promote.

So many local businesses that could use promotion at the moment

Not well known and has a lot to offer

People don't know about or appreciate what they have on their doorsteps

Feedback was equally positive to the proposed theme

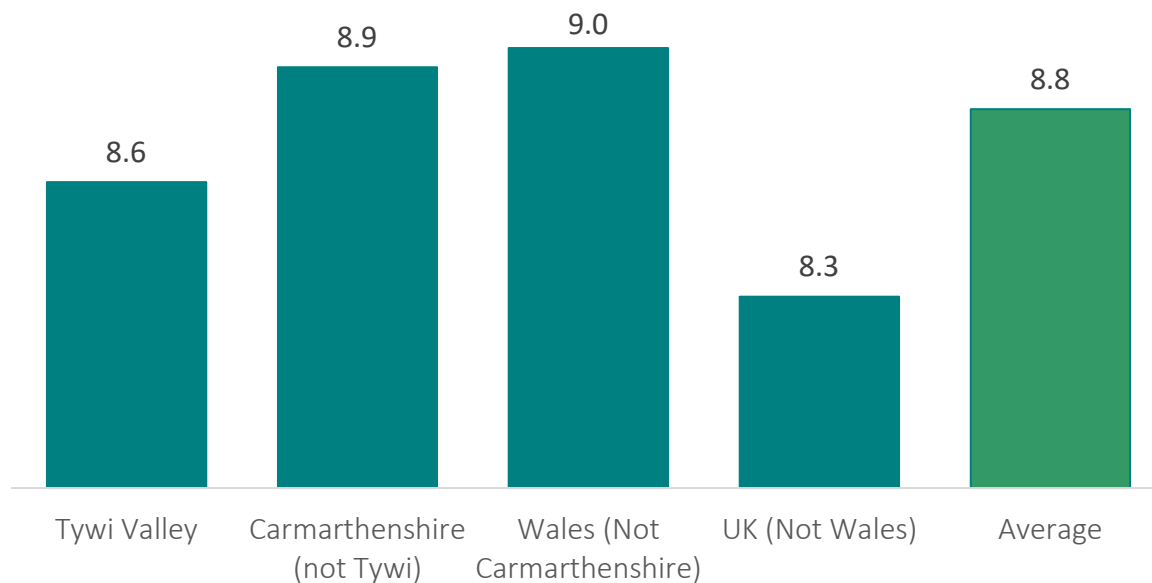


The proposed theme of this strategy is 'Learning from the Land'.

The idea being that it is possible to learn from the past to create a more sustainable future for the Tywi Valley.

The theme will be told through stories of how local people have and still do shape the valley landscape (including its buildings) whilst remembering that the valley has and always will shape the lives of its people.

On a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very interesting, how interesting do you find this theme?



All Resps: 97
By area of residency



- Most respondents feel that the theme is very interesting.
- Reasons offered for high scores, were the importance of learning from/preserving the past, a love of local history and the need to protect both the landscape and the culture
- A small number of respondents voiced concerns about the theme being too academic to be interesting or seeming extracurricular.
- Others mentioned that the theme needs to be delivered inspirationally and creatively to ensure its success, and to drive interest

Feedback was on average, very positive towards the proposed theme



Great for tourists and for locals too. Protects the culture that is in danger everywhere

Feels extra curriculum. Learning doesn't encourage tourism

Born and bred in the Valley and don't want to lose the heritage

Interested in local heritage and culture

I love history and am always interested to find out how local people used to live

It is the landscape that shapes people

Need to find the balance between technology and learning from the land

All local businesses, farmers and producers need all the extra help they can get

Good for the rural economy

Sustainability is important for the area.

Important to preserve the history that is not taught in schools

Living landscape shaped by people past/present is great but needs to be creative and inspiring too

History and personal stories are always interesting

There is a lot to learn from the past

It's important to promote and sustain the land so you don't lose it

It would give more people reasons to visit

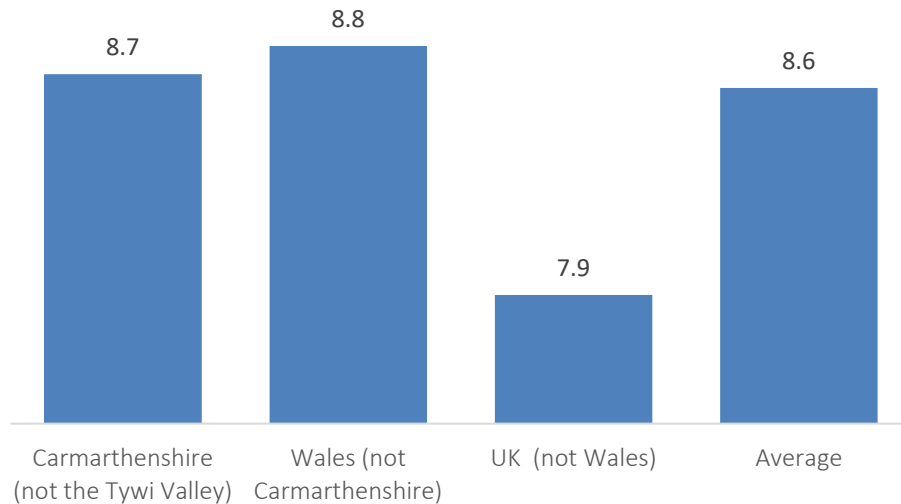
The theme seems to be relevant to current public needs (sustainability), the local area (the land) and its people - as long as it is made interesting/relevant and isn't too academic or alienating (for tourists or local businesses) it may work. The key is remembering it must excite and inspire a broad group of people

It is important to learn about the area

Respondents stated that they would be encouraged by the theme, to visit again



On a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very encouraging, to what extent would this theme encourage you to stay longer in the valley or visit again?



Resps by area of residency excluding Tywi Valley (78)



- The majority stated that the theme would encourage them to visit more or again.
- A small number stated that they would visit anyway, irrelevant of a new campaign. Some because they have family here and others because they visit regularly anyway.
- And a small number from outside of Wales stated that it depended on the theme’s execution – again speaking once more about the need to inspire, and be interesting to a broad number of people, without being too academic
- Near locals stated that if they could learn something new from it, they would revisit but it depends upon this

Respondents stated that they would be encouraged by the theme, to visit again



If you could learn more about the local area, it would encourage you to revisit more often - as you'd know more and appreciate what else is here

We visit regularly to see family anyway

If all local businesses come together, we will have a better understanding of what is available to see / do in the valley

I know very little about the valley

If it celebrates the valley, we'll know and understand more about it, and will want to come again even more. So much of it is hidden

I would like to know more about the area and what is happening

To promote the area, encourage tourists to visit, bring in jobs and money, whilst maintain the environment for our future

You can learn more about a place, the beauty of a place - and get an understanding of where else to visit

Depends on whether I can take learn from it.

The more you learn, the closer you feel to an area

Need to learn all the time for a better, more sustainable future.

I don't need to be encouraged as I like the area

It is very local to us, We need to explore more

The more knowledge you have, the more you want to visit

It is a beautiful area and encouraging visitors will benefit the community

Needs to be translated into something fun - passion/adventure/positivity. Also need to get the basics right before you delight people. Need to endear the area to the region, by aligning with Visit Wales, and using Media, Social Media through stories of the landscape and the people who frame and shape it

I am interested in history and how we can look after it through restoration and conservation. Need to move forwards whilst making it interesting for a younger generation, to save it for the future



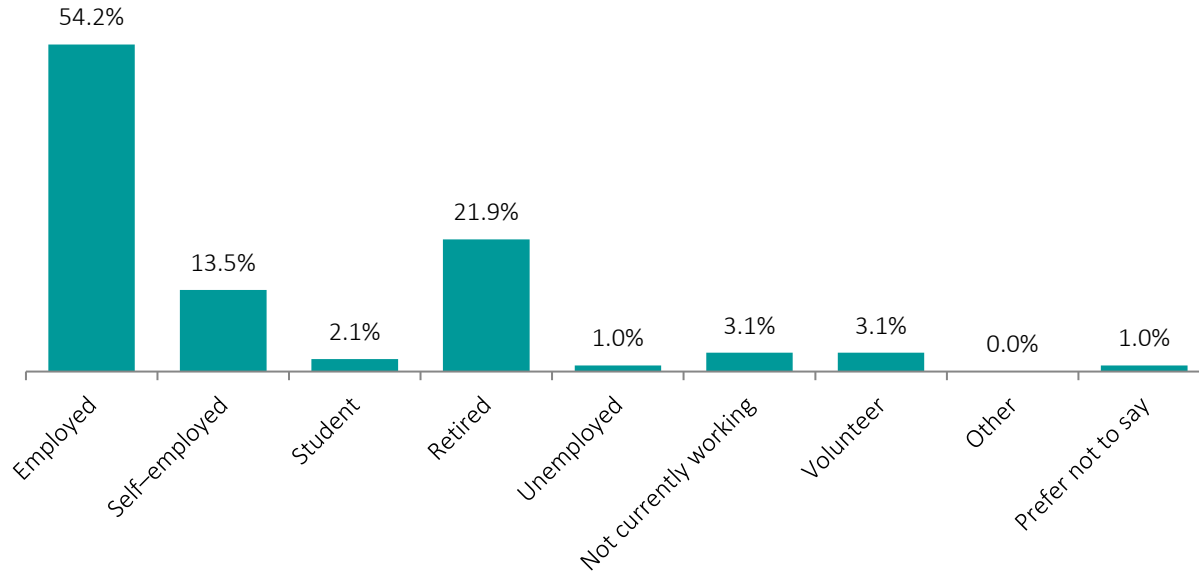
Appendix



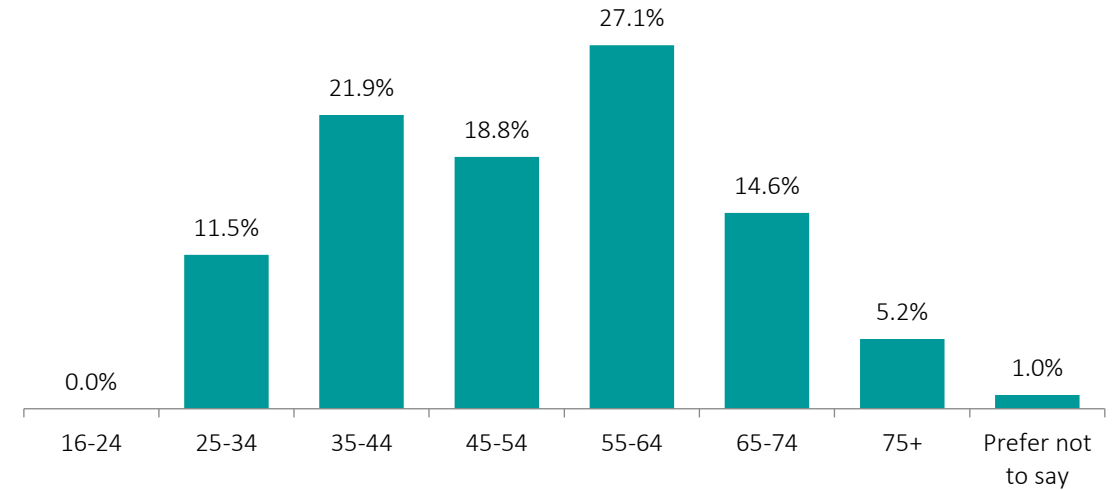
Quantitative Study Method and Demographics



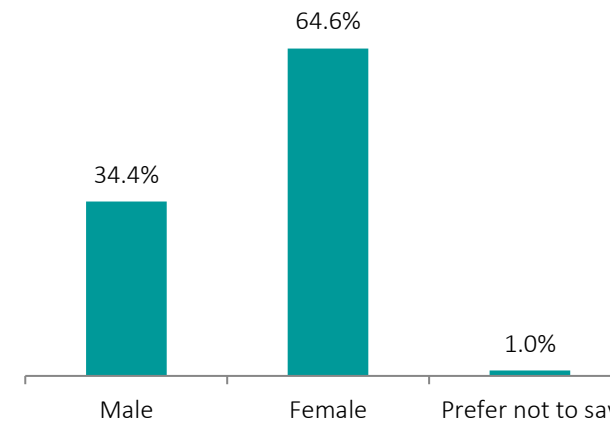
Employment



Age



Gender



- Almost 70% of respondents were employed or self employed.
- A further 22% were retired
- Almost 2/3 were female
- 52% were 54yrs or younger, and 47% were 55yrs or older