## LLS7 BIG SKIES COMMUNITY ARTS FULL PROJECT PLAN

### 1. Aims

The ‘Big Skies’ Community Art Project is primarily a way to engage the community and schools in the creation of art works which tell the unique story of the landscape. It will focus on harder to reach audiences from more deprived areas with the least connection to the landscape at present.

The specific aims are:

- To engage with local people, communities and schools, whilst at the same time, creating events and works that will add depth to visitor experiences
- To open up this forgotten coastal landscape, rich in heritage, to newcomers and established residents alike
- To focus on telling the stories and themes of the Levels as identified in the Living Levels Destination Plan, from the perspective of different individual communities within three Levels ‘cluster’ catchments via a series of workshops, to reflect the many facets of the Levels, culminating in a galvanising celebratory ‘event’, over the three Delivery years
- To secure the maximum level of community engagement from at least three schools per cluster area and other social groups involved with young children and families. The culminating event is to be preceded by a schedule of creative workshops during school time, after school and weekend ‘open’ activities
- To enable the developed events to become key features of the Living Levels’ ‘Events Calendar’ and any resulting artworks to be on display at key locations
- To create at least one iconic structure to form a centrepiece for all the ‘cluster’ events starting with the Year One 2018 - coinciding with the ‘Year of the Sea’

### 2. Project Lead

Living Levels Community Engagement Officer and appointed Community Artist (to be appointed by public tender)

### 3. Other Organisations or groups who will be involved in delivery

Newport Live Arts Development team have expressed a desire to be involved and are especially useful for contact with hard to reach communities.

- Woodland Routes to Wellbeing Project
- National Trust Tredegar House
- RSPB Newport Wetlands
- Monmouthshire and Cardiff Arts Development teams
Schools engaged through the LLS4 Learning project

More will be added - dependant on the ‘cluster’ areas pinpointed and agreed upon and discussions with the appointed artist.

4. **Project Location:**
   a) **Place Name:**
   b) **Local Authority area:**
   c) **Grid Reference (6 or 12 figure):**

   Events will be at key cluster points across the Living Levels Landscape therefore locations will be varied (clusters described in detail below).

5. **Project Description and proposed activities**

   The Community Engagement Process has revealed that the Gwent Levels are known locally by many names such as ‘Flats’, ‘Moors’, ‘Wharf’, ‘Marl’, ‘Gwent/ Caldicot/ Monmouthshire/ Wentlooge/ Chepstow Levels’. A common unifying feature and one that is celebrated are its wide horizon and ‘Big Skies’, due to the flat landscape and expansive views over the Severn Estuary. A unique juxtaposition of industry and natural environment, this ethereal environment frames the sky as much as the landscape with artists appreciating it for its ever-changing pallet of light and colour that contrast with the hills and valleys to the north. Therefore, the proposed ‘Big Sky’ Community Arts project has the potential to provide a joyful, simple, inclusive and creative way for people to appreciate and most importantly, **reconnect with the Gwent Levels** landscape.

   The ‘Big Sky’ project will create, with the procured services of a proven Community Artist, a **creative, authentic** and contemporary **live** body of work that will develop and deliver a programme of community activity based firmly in the communities of the Gwent Levels. This aim is to inspire and create new traditions in the form of an annual series of distinctive ‘celebrations’, preceded by creative workshops exploring the landscape’s rich history in different locations across the Living Levels landscape, helping the project to explore and develop its overall interpretative theme:

   "**The Living Levels: dramatically stolen from the sea long ago, this is a fragile, fertile, man-made landscape teeming with history and ecology, whose tranquillity belies the constant tension between the human struggle to maintain it and the water’s desire to reclaim it**”

   The ‘Big Sky’ Community Arts Project will be actively working with schools and their wider communities in the project catchment area, targeting in particular the most deprived and ‘disconnected’ communities with the least understanding and appreciation of the Levels landscape and heritage.

   We envisage that this will have the potential to become a fantastic and engaging series of activities culminating in a ‘wow’ factor annual ‘Big Sky’ event. As well as being a celebration for the communities it also has the potential to attract visitors from the wider Severnside catchment, and there are a number of opportunities to link with wider celebrations (both river and maritime) along the Severn corridor and beyond.

   **The journey:**

   Our engagement has revealed that many people are not aware of the extent of the Gwent Levels at all, and many perceive it to be featureless and deserted. There is an important and urgent task to recapture local people living in the edges of this landscape to restore a sense of pride and connection to a forgotten heritage. This project will bring to life through art the Story of the Levels through time, including forgotten heritage of prehistoric man, extinct beasts, Roman engineering, Viking trade and the vital but tense relationship between the land and water.
The ‘Big Sky’ Community Arts Project will be an annual culmination of creative workshops with local school children and residents, and collaborations with other community organisations, working towards an annual celebratory ‘Big Sky’ event.

These will be concentrated in two ‘cluster’ catchments, over the two years (one per year), working with at least three schools per cluster, across the linear 30 mile stretch of the Gwent Levels. This has the added value of being accessible to the three tourist catchments around Cardiff, Newport and Chepstow. The two clusters also take in several key ‘river mouths’ such as the ‘Usk’ and ‘Wye’, reflecting the Visit Wales ‘Year of the Sea’ theme of ‘River Stories’ which will enable us to benefit from the publicity and promotional support of Visit Wales. Visit Wales have been enthusiastic about the proposals and several discussions have taken place with them in preparation of this bid.

Each cluster area will have at least three schools workshops and one ‘open’ workshop for the wider community to attract families and adults, culminating in a celebratory event in October/November, forming a new, Levels activity in the Levels Events calendar.

Some of the same schools engaged through our Living Levels Learning project will be targeted in order to increase the engagement of those children and others within the schools. This will help to deliver a strong Living Levels message and increase audience participation in the workshops and events as well as adding creative and engaging value to the exploration and discovery of the heritage of the Gwent Levels through the classroom. These workshops will be delivered by the artist along with the Living Levels Community Engagement Officer and a designated representative from the school.

Therefore, the two Levels ‘cluster’ locations are:

1. **Mid-Levels Cluster:** including the settlements of Bishton, Redwick, Goldcliff, Llanwern and Langstone. Again, this cluster catchment is reflecting the diverse communities both very old and super-new. The following schools are to be engaged through the Learning project: **Pillgwenlly Primary** (restricted area within school for outdoor learning and in an economically deprived area), **Llswerry Primary** (very close to the Levels), **St.Andrews Primary** (restricted grounds, economically deprived), **Always Primary** (Special Needs Unit, on the Levels, economically deprived), **Ringland Primary, Malpas Court** (Local to the levels), **Langstone Primary** (close to Magor Marsh).

2. **East Levels Cluster:** Including the settlements of Magor, Undy, Caldicot, Rogiet, Caerwent and Portskewett. Very much the ‘commuter belt’ and arguably more affluent communities including families, new people to the Levels and very much feeling the impact of future development so an ideal location for some positive activities and events. The following schools engaged through the Learning project serving these communities are: **Archbishop Rowan Williams** (local to Magor site), **Rogiet Primary** (on the Levels, close to Rogiet Countryside Park), **Magor Primary** (on the levels, close to Magor Marsh), **Undy Primary** (on the Levels – close to Magor Marsh), **Llanmartin Primary** (close to Magor Marsh and on the Levels), **Pembroke Primary, Caldicot Comprehensive** recommended by Janet Karn.

The Living Levels team will be going out to tender with a comprehensive but flexible brief to the local and national Arts Community in order to gather a wide range of creative ideas and visions of what they perceive to be the most creative and stimulating approach to engage people with this unique landscape. We believe the best projects arise from a reasonable degree of clarity at the outset but and a certain amount of latitude thereafter founded on trust.

We have therefore defined two themes which we will ask the artists to explore in their tender
both of which we think will inspire a deeply embedded and enduring emotional connection with place leading to positive regenerative activity. These are:

- **In year one** - A creative exploration of the tension between man and sea in managing this landscape over a long period of history. Whilst choice of subject and materials will be left to the artist, this could include looking at different treatments of LiDAR data that picks up the many levels of surface drainage in the ancient landscape to produce wonderful patterns in combination with a range of old maps and climate models which predict future tides. Using these modern digital forms will present a powerful visual way of exploring the themes of drainage, flood risk, and climate change helping to raise awareness of the beauty and fragility of the landscape.

- **In year two** - A play on the concept of ‘footprints in the landscape’ which could start by looking at the prehistoric man and animal footprints which still permeate the foreshore but also a more contemporary exploration of footprints including the ‘footprint’ of industry and development. Industrial structures are now very dominant in the flat landscape and apart from Church spires are often the only vertical structures in the landscape such as the many pylons criss-crossing the landscape. Exploring this theme through art could offer a chance to reconcile the natural and industrial influences on the landscape.

Through engagement with Newport Live!’s Arts Development Team, the leading Arts Development team for our project area, we have learnt that the local Arts Community is home to a number of local artists who are experienced on both a national and international stage and we would be keen to offer them the opportunity to bring their experience and local affinity to the process. This would have the added advantage of local knowledge and ‘tapping in’ to elements and stories unique to the Levels. Cardiff and Monmouthshire Arts teams will also be added to a steering group at the beginning of the project to ensure there is balance of engagement and outputs across the project area.

The Newport Arts Development Team have confirmed their willingness to share their comprehensive contacts and networks for not only the Arts Community but also their strong network of ‘new’ communities of asylum seekers and refugees wanting to become involved in their ‘new’ landscape of the Gwent Levels.

Artists will be required to submit a draft proposal including an outline of their vision and approach to developing the project. We would be particularly interested in hearing about the type of workshop activities that they plan to build into the programme to meet the aims and objectives of the project and how they would set up the eventual ‘Celebratory’ events at the end to bringing communities together in a final celebration. We would expect them to have extensive prior experience to date of community art projects and as part of the selection would be required to submit up to 8 images (digital) of recent work and any written supporting material.

Artists will be able to draw on the stories and themes highlighted in the Interpretation Plan and will be given access to a write-up of conversations and discussions during the schools and community workshops, including such local stories picked up during the Community Engagement process as ‘Whitson Zoo’, ‘The Tsunami’, ‘Village Greens out to Sea’ and prehistoric ‘Giant Cattle...’

Year One of this project coincides with the Visit Wales theme of ‘Year of the Sea’ 2018 and this offers the perfect opportunity to celebrate and explore ‘The Story’ of the Levels identified with its clear major thread of the interaction and tension between Water and People (Salt v Fresh/Tidal v drained//Human Management v Natural Forces/Clean v polluted/‘Welsh’ levels v ‘English’ levels/Inside and outside the ‘wall’/Hidden v visible).
Year One is especially poignant as it is the (Visit Wales) ‘Year of the Sea’ and we would emphasise through the initial Artist’s brief that we would expect the ‘Big Sky’ Community Arts Project to contribute to these additional aims and objectives:

- In line with our Destination Plan we would hope to ‘engage and attract the widest range of audiences’ by drawing positive coverage both local and nationally to this challenging landscape and increasing visitor understanding.
- To deliver the year in accordance with the core values of the Wales brand - Authentic, Creative & Alive.

The resulting ‘Big Sky’ event will be a spectacular celebratory event at a key ‘Levels’ hub venue, to be decided annually, that will enable as many people from as wide a catchment area as possible to participate.

In addition, the artist will be required to create a bespoke signature ‘piece’ to be a permanent iconic fixture of the annual events - metaphorically linking the landscape and the three clusters and their ‘Big Sky’ celebratory events. This is a method used in events such as the Wye River Festival as a symbolic constant throughout a series of activities.

Popular with many people at our engagement events and displays - from Community Councils to Radio interviews has been the discovery of the distinctive ‘Levels Lingo’ - a language evolved from the management of the land mainly in the past but still used in the present; words such as ‘Stank’, ‘Grip’ and ‘Noggle’ rub shoulders with more familiar terms such as ‘Reen’ and ‘Pill’. Pieces developed in the workshops should also celebrate the ‘here and now’ and bring this culture out – perhaps by exploring poetry and readings that can accompany visual pieces during the celebration events.

We hope that by encouraging this creative participation, it will make for a genuine empowerment with a real potential to grow a perception of connected communities in such a diverse and ‘scattered’ landscape. There is also the ability for any artwork created and installed to bind these communities together through an evolving tradition.

6. Baseline: a picture of now - why the project is needed.

As described in the LCA and Visitor Destination Management Plan, the Gwent Levels ranks alongside Snowdonia in its “landscape value” but does not have the same recognition amongst its resident, local populations or potential visitors.

Through our Community Engagement activities, it has become apparent that there are large numbers of people living on the edge of the Levels who know little or nothing about the landscape and are therefore unlikely to appreciate it. Whilst we have only been able to sample a relatively low number of people living in edge communities and Levels towns and villages, we have been able to identify distinct patterns and trends relating to people’s overall awareness and enjoyment of the Levels. There is generally higher awareness and appreciation among older residents living in market towns and villages located on the Levels and lower awareness and appreciation amongst those who are more geographically isolated from the Levels and more urban residents.

Of 248 residents surveyed by Newport Council, 19 people reported they had no idea where or what ‘The Gwent Levels’ were and 60 narrowly associated it with Newport Wetlands or the area around Goldcliff. When asked to describe its features, 51 people associated it with birds and wildlife but just 14 with other landscape features including the reen network, agricultural land or other identifiable features. At Newport Wetlands – most people surveyed ‘had no idea’ they were on reclaimed land. Current school visits focus narrowly on connections with nature and the environment – not with the wider landscape, its history or the historic environment. There are also growing commuter belts around Chepstow, the prospect of a substantial influx of
people with the scrapping of the Severn Crossing tolls, planned large-scale housing developments at Llanwern and others, plus the pressures of the two large cities of Cardiff and Newport. Therefore, there is an urgent to reconnect people to this landscape before its historical significance and meaning is confined to the County Archives.

The age-profile and demographic trends in the LLLP area suggest it is likely that many of these newcomers will be made up of families. At our various ‘Pop-Up’ activities, family groups, have revealed that ‘Activities’ came high on their priority for the LLLP, with an emphasis on the need for more family-orientated (and children) local activities. It is worth noting that both ‘Landscape/Environment’ and ‘Health and Wellbeing’ also featured as themes in the top four, which are arguably linked as increased activity would increase appreciation and exploration of the Levels Landscape and therefore contribute to the health and wellbeing benefits of this landscape.

At a recent engagement activity with members of Adult Learning Wales from Cardiff, they were asked ‘Which of the following ways of learning about the Gwent Levels heritage would you prefer?’, the theme of ‘Arts and Crafts’ middle-ranked beaten only by more traditional methods such as ‘Museums’ and ‘Trails’.

“What we have on the Levels is unique and its story(ies) needs to be spread as widely as possible. Those of us living on the Levels whose families, like my own, go back generations, learnt of its history from our parents. Incomers and visitors need to be educated in its history which many know little of...”

Anna Harris (4th generation) Goldcliff

One other ‘issue’ to bear in mind for family groups is that ‘time constraints’ came top as a perceived barrier to participating on the Levels so timings of workshops and ‘Big Sky’ celebratory events will have to be carefully scheduled.

“The (Living Levels) project has real potential to unlock what is in some ways a "sleeping giant" - the spirit of an area whose distinct physical and community characteristics are in danger of being lost in the modern world...”

Rob Hepworth (Community Councillor, Bishton)

The Living Levels team have already been in contact with the artist who developed a Somerset Levels ‘Great Crane’ community art project which focused on the reintroduced cranes. There the project culminated in a spectacular celebratory event which enabled the community to really ‘adopt’ the crane as a symbol of regeneration of the landscape. We have taken a lot of advice on board from that programme. The artist also created a signature piece which was intended to be used for future events. This is a method has been used in nearby events such as the Wye River Festival as a symbolic constant throughout a series of activities along a linear landscape - as the Living Levels is.

Other comments received:

“Forward thinking cultures create living landscapes where people can live alongside nature, working and playing where the air is fresh and the water is clear.....

... The Living Levels is an exciting concept, a new identity emerging from a special ancestry.”

Graham Horder, Chepstow, Wildlife Cameraman

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appoint ‘Creative Panel’ from partners and Arts</td>
<td>Local and sector knowledge and input secured</td>
<td>Recruitment process benefits from informed expertise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Artists brief agreed and finalised</td>
<td>1 Artist’s brief document produced</td>
<td>Creative process allowed to develop but within parameters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify priority communities within the two ‘cluster’ locations (Year One)</td>
<td>Target 3 communities within each cluster</td>
<td>Communities and new audiences from different backgrounds and demographics engaged with their heritage and the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue ‘call out’ and artists’ brief locally/nationally using Arts Networks</td>
<td>Number of Living Levels media ‘shout-outs’ 5</td>
<td>More local people (professionals) engaged about the Gwent Levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested artists submit draft proposals including outline of their vision and approach to developing the workshops and ‘Big Sky’ celebratory event.</td>
<td>Number of proposals (at least 3)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shortlisted artists invited in to present to ‘Creative Panel’: Artist appointed</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Plan programme of workshops and final event</td>
<td>Workable time scale for workshops and celebratory event</td>
<td>A considered project with the potential of sustainability through about by popularity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirm venues for workshops and locations for ‘Big Sky’ celebratory event</td>
<td></td>
<td>Successful event with a reputation to build on over three years and beyond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media shout-out etc for ‘Open Sessions’ and event through all channels</td>
<td>Living Levels media ‘shout-outs’ 5</td>
<td>People will be engaged with their landscape, biodiversity and heritage in a creative way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure community engagement via schools</td>
<td>Number of schools engaged (minimum of 6 over 2 years) target of at least 150 school children per cluster</td>
<td>People will be engaged with their landscape, biodiversity and heritage in a creative way More people informed and participating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure wider community engagement via Community Councils etc</td>
<td></td>
<td>Community Councils promote the projects locally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools workshop sessions facilitated by LLLP CEO, appointed schools rep and artist</td>
<td>Number of workshops (6 over 2 years) Target: Number of pupil participants 30 per workshop</td>
<td>The landscape and its heritage benefits from an initiative and creative promotional ‘tool’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Open workshop sessions within the clusters facilitated by LLLP team, relevant host organisation and artist.  

Number of workshop weeks (2 over 2 years)  

More people from a wider area/background appreciate their landscape

(All) Media shout-out etc for ‘Big Sky’ celebratory event  

Press release and at least 5 media outlet coverage  

Promotion

BIG SKY CELEBRATORY EVENT DETAILS TBDC  

Following format agreed with artist

8. WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE

If your project is successful, what will things be like at the mid-point of the Scheme?

At least:

- 3 Schools workshops held
- 1 Community workshop held
- 10 Groups engaged
- 100 Individuals engaged
- 1 ‘Big Sky’ celebratory event held (Year One) attracting at least 150 people

Completed 100 evaluation Visitor Profile and Workshop Attendee surveys asking ‘Have we surprised you?’ (...about the Heritage/Ecology of the Gwent Levels), ‘How did you travel here today? ‘What encourages you to visit the Gwent Levels? baseline surveys asking people what they know about the history and landscape of the levels

If your project is successful, what will things be like at the end of the Scheme?

At least:

- 6 Schools workshops held
- 2 Community workshops held
- 20 Groups engaged
- 200 Individuals engaged/volunteered
- 2 ‘Big Sky’ celebratory events held attracting at least 500 people

Completed 200 evaluation Visitor and Workshop Attendee Profile surveys asking ‘Have we surprised you?’ (...about the Heritage/Ecology of the Gwent Levels), ‘How did you travel here today? ‘What encourages you to visit the Gwent Levels? baseline surveys asking people what they know about the history and landscape of the levels

If your project is successful, what will things be like a long time into the future?

Local people – especially families with young children and those not previously engaged - start to associate the Gwent Levels with a vibrant, exciting landscape offering stimulating, accessible and inspiring activities for all ages and abilities. Most importantly, the heritage of the distinctive landscape of the Gwent Levels will be organised, managed and showcased by the very people who live and work here via a unique spectacle and the annual ‘Big Sky’ celebratory events. A useful comparator benchmark would be for these to become as well-known as other South East Wales events such as Caerphilly’s ‘Rivers of Light’ in the future.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Audience, beneficiaries and communication plan</th>
<th>Primary LLLP audiences include:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Residents of deprived communities, BAME groups, or those with physical, intellectual or social impairments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Residents located in and benefitting from the rural wards and service centres of the Vale of Usk</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Those in full-time education and lifelong learners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Working with Newport Live Arts Development we will have excellent access to hard to reach communities, including refugee and asylum seekers, their ‘City Seedlings’ groups. These groups already have an interest in ‘giving something back’ and will have stories of their own.

**Wider audience:**

- Visitors and Visiting Friends and Relatives

On a wider landscape scale, the potential is there to bring people into a safe, open and celebratory environment just minutes away from what can be oppressive urban settings but a world away in its destination offer. For example, communities in Duffryn, St. Mellons, Trowbridge, South Newport.

**Key messages:**

**A precious landscape** - the Gwent Levels exists because it has been carefully adapted and managed over a long period of time and has been a ‘Story’ of tensions and struggles between man and the elements. Our proposed workshops and ‘**Big Sky**’ celebratory annual events will bring local people out onto this forgotten landscape so that they can appreciate it for themselves, whether they are pupils taking part in the potential ‘parade’ activities or members of the public discovering new historical venues whilst taking part in the workshops.

**A unique heritage** - 30 miles, 10,000 years of history.

**A need to protect** - rare species such as the Shrill Carder Bee, Water Vole, and Common Crane may all feature as ‘creations’ or mural depictions. Through discussions and conversations with children and adults alike, we will endeavour to explain the Gwent Levels are so important to help preserve important wildlife and plant species.

Schools including teachers and pupils plus volunteers and participants in the workshops and events will all receive background information through assemblies or talks to classes about the Living Levels programme and its aims.

The artists applying for the commission will be expected to act as an ambassador for the programme especially over the three years.

Each workshop and subsequent ‘**Big Sky**’ celebratory event would be backed up with a comprehensive but succinct pop-up informative display encompassing the key themes and messages of the whole ‘Living Levels’ programme with interactive elements as piloted at a wide range of ‘Pop-Ups’ and ‘Pop-Ins’ during the Development Phase.

We acknowledge that engaging with as many local people as possible is a
continual process and a huge challenge - we cannot assume that people ‘get it’ already and there will always be a flow of new visitors and people moving to the area.

10. **HLF Outcomes and evidence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HLF outcome</th>
<th>How this outcome is met by the project.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Heritage will be better managed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Heritage will be in better condition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Heritage will be better identified / recorded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4 People will have developed skills | The project will encourage an exploration of the heritage, people and wildlife of the Gwent Levels landscape and will ultimately aim to equip our Gwent Levels communities with creative skills and the confidence required to be able to take these Art activities forward with the potential of developing over the life of the project and beyond into annual events and installations. Skills in:  
  - Artistic creation  
  - Organising/assisting at workshops  
  - Event organisation |
| 5 People will have learnt about heritage | The creative process will draw on key themes and stories from the Gwent Levels to develop the artwork.  
People will learn about the special interest in the landscape |
| 6 People will have volunteered time | There are many ways in which people can volunteer on the ‘Big Sky’ project:  
  - taking part in the celebratory events by being a participant or steward  
  - assisting with the workshops, assisting the artist and parents/guardians helping to supervise the workshops in the schools and in the community |
| 7 Environmental impacts will be reduced | |
| 8 More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage | People from a variety of backgrounds will participate including from BAME groups and deprived areas and the urban areas surrounding the Gwent Levels. Primary school and adults will participate. |
| 9 Your local | The ‘Big Sky’ events and created artworks will help cast the |
area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit

Gwent Levels landscape and its communities in a positive light and people will be more inclined to act as custodians of the landscape.

11. **Opportunities for community groups and local residents to participate in the development, delivery and maintenance of the project.**

There are many ways in which people can **volunteer** on the ‘Big Sky’ project, for example, taking part in the celebratory events by being a participant or steward, assisting with the workshops, assisting the artist and parents/guardians helping to supervise the workshops in the schools.

- **Schools** will be integral to the whole project in tandem with the **Learning** project, we have identified at least 24 schools that serve the proposed cluster areas (listed previously). Schools and **clubs** will be vital in publicising the events and even as recruitment sources for workshops both in the schools and in the communities.

- **b)** This will hopefully inspire annual **community events** for the future by increasing awareness particularly through our network of Community and Town Councils, community agencies, interest groups, individuals (all contacts built up through the Development phase). All the ‘Big Sky’ celebratory events (scheduled for **October/November on an annual basis**) and ‘open’ workshops will be open to the community.

12. **Timetable**

May 2018-October 2019. The ‘Big Sky’ celebratory events will form part of the **‘Levels Events Calendar’** programme which will start in Spring 2018. The workshops and events for the ‘Big Sky’ Community Arts project will run annually - with the celebratory events scheduled for October/November of each year.

13. **Risks and mitigation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk description</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Consequence description</th>
<th>Mitigating actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decline of Community cluster partnerships i.e. Communities First, neighbourhood partnerships.</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Networks and contacts built up during Delivery are lost</td>
<td>Maintain contacts/links with as many community partnerships and subgroups as possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist delays delivery</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Delay in delivering workshops and events</td>
<td>Regular meetings and communications with artist to ensure workshops and event planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to gain enough interest in workshops/events</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Spectacle reduces in size and impact and long-term benefits for the communities lost</td>
<td>Use the good connections and networks of Arts Development plus the LLS-4 contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less volunteer interest than anticipated</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Less people to engage with workshops and celebratory events</td>
<td>Ensure adverts are displayed widely and that current partner and LLLP volunteers are involved right from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of suitable locations for ‘Big Sky’ events</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Hard work at workshops has poor ‘pay-off’ in terms of event and achievement</td>
<td>Use strong connections with local venues built up through Community Engagement in Development Phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff changes</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Interruption or delay in delivering the project</td>
<td>Ensure information is stored and easily accessible in case there are staff changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverse weather at ‘Big Sky’ event</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Demonstrators and activities postponed</td>
<td>Contingency for activities (indoor/outdoor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injury etc. to staff, public</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Litigation</td>
<td>Inform relevant Local Authority Event Advisory Group. Robust Risk Assessments for activities, venues, participants. Confirm all insurances from venue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicity (lack of)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Attendance low. Post event denial of knowing about it</td>
<td>Good relations with media outlets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. **Site ownership, plus lease and any other management arrangements.**

TBD as this is dependent on locations for workshops, events etc.

It is envisaged that our ‘celebratory’ events will take place at key identified LLDM2 ‘Hub’ locations with adequate facilities e.g. ample parking, well-lit (chances are that the events will be at night) for example, Newport Wetlands, Magor Marsh and Square.

Partners such as GWT, RSPB, NRW, and National Trust own or lease their sites under agreement and events should fall within the terms of their agreements.

Therefore, we would expect that the events will fall under their particular lease agreement terms.

15. **Consents**

Schools consents required once negotiated
Venue consent and hiring regulations to be followed.

16. **Will this project overlap or link up with other projects? If so, which?**

There is a very obvious fit with the ‘Levels Events Calendar’ as the eventual event(s) formulated following the series of workshops will be a key part in the Levels events programme.

There will also be links with other heritage themed projects such as ‘Stories from the Levels’ as many local stories could feed into the development of creations through conversations during the workshops (particularly during the ‘Open’ community workshops).
This project will link with the ‘Learning’ project by targeting some of the same schools that they are engaging with in order to increase the engagement of those children and others within the schools. This will help to deliver a strong Living Levels message and increase audience participation in the events as well as adding value to the exploration and discovery of the heritage of the Gwent Levels through the classroom.

Secondary links would be encouraging attendees of the various cluster events to explore our primary and secondary information hub venues such as Magor Marsh, Newport Wetlands and Newport Ship and explore our newly promoted cycle and walking routes and points of interest. As the Destination Plan recommends, the ‘Big Sky’ Community Art Project legacy should ideally be for the enrichment of the interpretation and access offer of the Living Levels landscape.

On a wider level, this programme of events is a potential fit for Visit Wales’ ‘Year of the Sea 2018’ and national themes under ‘Health and Wellbeing’.

The ‘Year of the Sea’ has very definite themes and we believe that the ‘Big Sky’ Community Art project will be very much in line the following themes:

- **EPIC Seascapes** - celebrating the epic struggles of the Severn estuary and its importance to the South East gateway to Wales and/or the tensions between man and the elements
- **Food and Drink** - the very origins and the subsequent management of the Gwent Levels can arguably be attributed to farming and food production since Roman times. Key hostelries and food producers can be found along the Levels and the landscape itself has a fine tradition of orchard growing of apples and pears (given a boost by the LLNH6 Orchards and Community Enterprise project)
- **Coastal Journeys** - we envisage these celebratory events will represent a visual and emotive journey through time and landscape - literally bringing a forgotten heritage to life for established and new audiences.

As previously outlined, by working in a series of Levels’ ‘clusters’ it can be argued that by encouraging this creative participation, it makes for genuine empowerment with a real potential to grow a perception of connected communities in what is such a diverse and ‘scattered’ landscape. There is the potential for artwork to help bind these differing communities of traditional, new and ‘hard to reach’ closer together through an evolving tradition. These art activities can represent a positive metaphor for community optimism and hope for the future of the Gwent Levels landscape, appealing to local residents, visitors and the wider communities within our cities of Newport and Cardiff and in commuter belts.

There are also developing festivals all along the stretch beyond the Gwent levels area with natural linkage, such as the Wye Valley River Festival and the potential to be a part of a substantial visitor package for the South East Wales region.
| 17. | **What plans do you have to manage and maintain the work done through this project for 10 years? Who will take responsibility for this maintenance?** | The project aims to equip our Gwent Levels communities with the skills, inspiration and confidence required to be able to take this activity beyond the life of the programme into annual events and installations, helping to attract visitors to this unique stretch of the South Wales coastline.

The vision is that these events will start to build a reputation to the level of similar outdoor celebrations such as Caerphilly’s Rivers of Light and eventually aspire to the global attraction of such events especially if linked to other festivals along this coastal stretch.

As with the overall Levels Festival as part of the Destination Plan, we would aspire to a positive contribution to the local economy particularly in the cluster vicinity of the ‘celebratory’ events. |
| 18. | **Alignment to Living Levels Objectives and Vision** | We are attempting to portray the Gwent Levels, its heritage, biodiversity and people in a new and creative way. We hope that this process will tease out and celebrate the unique stories and preserve them for future generations. By ensuring these events are based in different clusters across the Levels, every year, we are going some way to connecting the landscape through its communities and hopefully this tradition will continue.

Therefore this project focuses on delivering against the following primary partnership objectives

1. Recapturing and enhancing the natural and historic heritage
2. Celebrating its stories
3. Providing new opportunities for learning, developing skills, participation and investment

This project will contribute to the overall desired impact areas:

- The Gwent Levels will be better understood by all those who live in, work on and choose to enjoy the area
- People will have developed skills; learnt about the landscape and its heritage
- A greater diversity and number of people will be participating
- The local area will be a better place to visit |
| 19. | **Changes from stage one application** | The ‘**Big Sky**’ Community Art project was not a project in the R1 application – it has been developed as part of audience development work started in the Development Phase |
| 20. | **Climate Change** | Over the three year Delivery period of Living Levels we are not expecting climate change to have a direct impact on the project, however, many of the themes that may come out of the workshops would likely cover climate change on the Levels including the effects in the past (the Great Flood of 1607) and the threat of the future.

By encouraging cycling and other forms of alternative transport to and from the workshops and events on the Levels, we will be promoting the use of alternative transport and possibly a reduction in car usage in traversing the Levels |
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<th>Opportunities for media and profile raising</th>
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<td></td>
<td>The on-line community will be targeted via the ‘Our Living Levels’ Facebook and Twitter pages enabling us to engage and interact with an increasingly wide range of users and local contacts such as cyclists, walkers, farming networks, newspapers, key local bloggers and even some Community Councils. Schools Social Media is particularly strong and we are hoping that this will be a huge bonus in terms of communicating about not only the workshops but also the final events. Our developing website will eventually be a major engagement tool.</td>
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<td>The team has great links with more traditional local media outlets to engage with a wider audience from village websites and newsletters like ‘The Villager’, to organisational publications such as FONS (Friends of Newport Ship), local papers such as the South Wales Argus and even the spoken media such as Radio Cardiff and Newport City Radio</td>
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<td>We have also established great volunteer contacts for support i.e. Tesco Spytty Park and Coleg Gwent.</td>
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<td>A set paragraph will be included about the LLLP, its aims, funders and partners on all media releases.</td>
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