

Environment Minister, John Griffiths has today announced an extra £1million to help create new habitats and stronger ecosystems for Wales.

The money will be used to enhance Wales' precious natural environment and in doing so will benefit its wider economy.

It will also be used to develop new pilot projects that support the Welsh Government's plans for managing the natural environment as set out in its natural environment consultation, 'A Living Wales'. The consultation set out an ecosystems approach aimed at ensuring that Wales has increasingly resilient and diverse environment, managed to deliver economic, social and environmental benefits for Wales.

Speaking about the funding, the Minister said:

"Wales' natural environment provides us with a wide range of vital services including food, water, timber and energy. It also helps us to regulate climate, water supply and air quality. If we want to continue to enjoy these ecosystems services in a sustainable way we need to improve our management of the natural environment.

"The funding I am announcing today will be used to support activities aimed at enhancing Wales' natural environment. This might include restoring priority habitats like native woodland, wetlands and grasslands, improving connectivity between separate protected areas and managing the impact of invasive non-native plant and animal species.

"It demonstrates our commitment to a new approach and a more holistic way of managing the natural environment. "

The Minister was speaking ahead of his attendance at the Wales Biodiversity Conference in Trinity College, Carmarthen. Here he talked more broadly about his priorities for managing the natural environment and about the development of an Environment Green Paper to progress

the Government's new approach to protecting the environment.

The Minister said:

"I want to challenge the old orthodoxy and test the appetite for fundamental change to the way we manage our natural capital.

"The Environment Green Paper, the Sustainable Development Bill and the Environment Bill contained in our legislative programme will all contribute to a Welsh approach that puts ecosystem health and the sustainable use of our land, sea and air at centre stage.

"I am confident this will ensure that we have increasingly resilient ecosystems that are managed to deliver the best sustainable economic, social and environment outcomes for Wales."