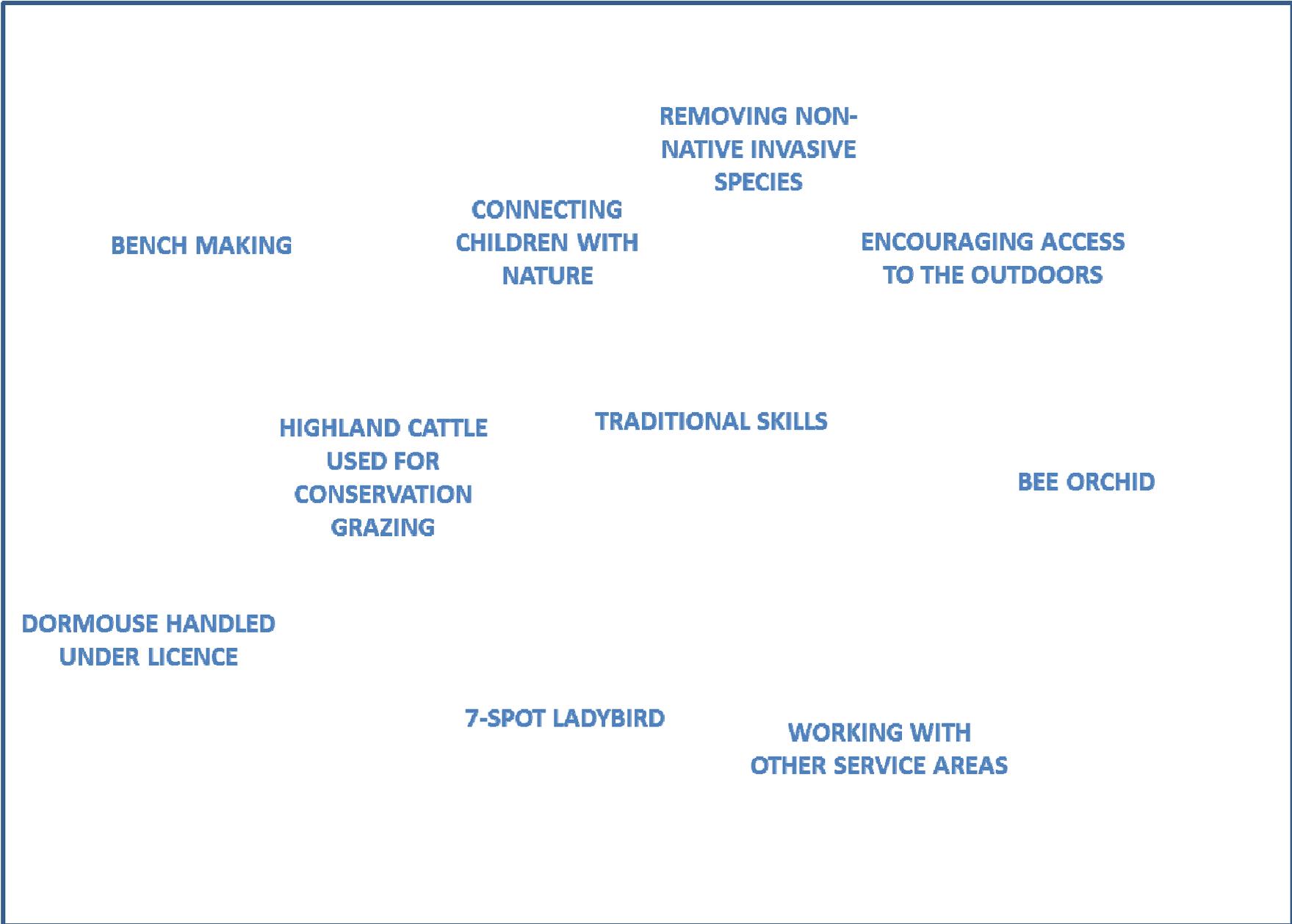




Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Environment (Wales) Act 2016—Biodiversity Duty Plan

December 2017



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC) has a legal duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and in so doing, promote the resilience of ecosystems under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. This plan demonstrates how we will fulfil that duty and will act as a driver for conservation activities throughout Neath Port Talbot (NPT).

There is a long tradition of environmental conservation in NPT with many groups involved. Whilst the Authority will still work with these groups, including facilitating the NPT Nature Partnership, this plan sets out what we, as an Authority, will be doing to meet this legal duty.

Over the last two years, the Welsh Government has introduced a number of new legislative requirements for public bodies and local authorities to comply with, which will change the way we plan and deliver services, putting sustainable development principles at the heart of all public bodies' decision making. The NPTCBC Corporate Plan 2017-2022 recognises this requirement for change and the preparatory work needed to ensure we discharge our statutory duties. The Biodiversity Duty Plan not only delivers our statutory duties with regards to biodiversity but also explains how, through meeting the Biodiversity Duty, we are delivering well-being objectives and the ways of working under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The plan can be revised at any time but must be formally reported on by the end of 2019 and every 3 years thereafter.

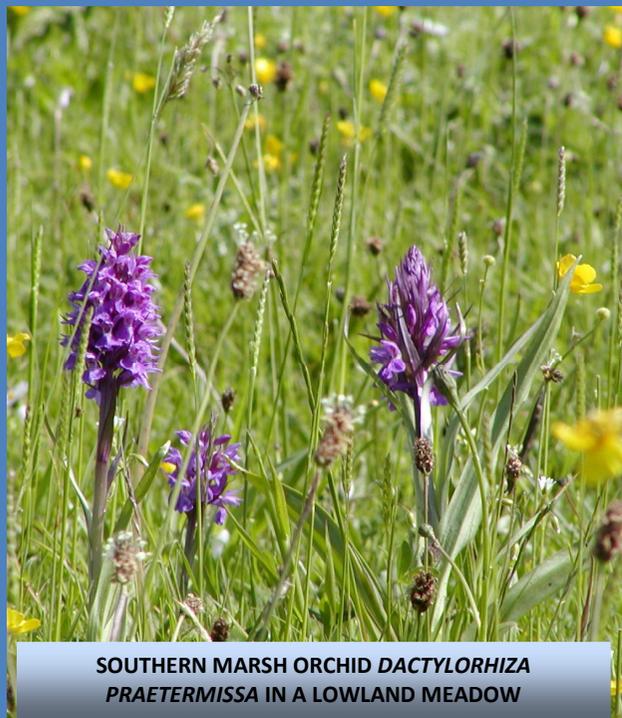


INTRODUCTION

This plan has been published as part of the Authority's legal obligation, as set out in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 "the Act". All public bodies must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. The Authority is required to prepare and publish a plan on how they intend to comply with this; the biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty.

In this plan the Authority will:

- Outline what natural resources NPT has, why they are so special and some of the activities already underway to protect them
- Explain the legislative background to this plan and the multiple benefits resulting from the proposed actions
- Set out how the plan works and the mechanisms for delivery
- Give detailed actions to be achieved, with milestones for reporting



NATURAL RESOURCES IN NPT

Neath Port Talbot has traditionally been associated with heavy industry and mining communities; however this doesn't do justice to the incredible variety and quality of biodiversity that exists here. Our underlying geology, the geography and hydrology of the county borough allow many important ecosystem services to work and improve our lives. Some examples:

- Peatland and bogs – peat soils capture and store atmospheric carbon dioxide which can be held in the soil permanently when the soil is in good condition.
- Saltmarsh on the coast – helps dissipate wave action and high tides to prevent flooding and erosion.
- Floodplains in the valleys – help dissipate water at high rainfall preventing flooding downriver.
- Species rich grasslands – provide essential habitat and connectivity for pollinators and food for livestock.
- Woodlands – help clean the air of pollutants, flood alleviation, reducing the heat island effect in urban environments, provide oxygen and timber products.

The varied habitats also bring job opportunities, particularly in the tourism sector where Neath Port Talbot is well known for its waterfalls, country parks, seafront and recreational activities such as glamping and mountain biking. The accessibility of these resources throughout the county borough provides opportunities to improve health and well-being, for example through walking and other outdoor activities.

There are a number of sites within Neath Port Talbot that have been designated for nature conservation including local, national and international designations¹. These special habitats support some unique wildlife assemblages and nationally important species such as Honey buzzards, Great crested newt and the Fen raft spider. Even our brownfield sites support nationally important numbers of breeding Lapwing.



¹ <https://www.npt.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=4147>

DEFINITIONS

NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural resources are defined in the Act as:

- a) *Animals, plants and other organisms.*
- b) *Air, water and soil.*
- c) *Minerals.*
- d) *Geological features and processes.*
- e) *Physiographical features.*
- f) *Climatic features and processes.*

Individually and in combination these components provide benefits for us. As Human beings we are an element of these things and rely on them. Together they provide us with ecosystem services that enable us to live and prosper.

Biodiversity is defined in the Environment (Wales) 2016 Act as:

“the diversity of living organisms, whether at the genetic, species or ecosystem level”

Biodiversity drives the functioning and resilience of our ecosystems.²



The UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) defined **ecosystems** as:

“a dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organisms and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit”³

The CBD describes the **ecosystem approach** as:

“a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way”⁴

This is widely recognised as international best practice for addressing the decline in biodiversity



ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Supporting – underpins all other services and includes nutrient cycling, soil formation and primary production

Provisioning – all our food, fresh water, wood and fibre, fuel

Regulating – cleaning air and water, flood control, carbon sequestration

Cultural – aesthetic, spiritual, educational, recreational

² <http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/natural-resources-management/environment-act/?lang=en> ^{3/4} <https://www.cbd.int/ecosystem>

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

ENVIRONMENT (WALES) ACT 2016

The Environment (Wales) Act became law on 21st March 2016. It puts in place legislation to enable Wales' resources to be managed in a more proactive, sustainable and joined up manner and to establish the legislative framework necessary to tackle climate change. The Act supports the Welsh Government's wider remit under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, so that Wales benefits from a prosperous economy, a healthy and resilient environment and vibrant, cohesive communities.

Specifically, the Act places an enhanced biodiversity duty on public authorities (see appendix A).

Sct. 6(1) A public authority must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.

The intention of this duty is to ensure biodiversity becomes an integral part of decision making in public authorities. The duty came into force in May 2016. As no further resources are available to deliver this legislation, the focus of the Plan will be to introduce changes in work practices that deliver change for biodiversity, without placing undue financial burden on the Authority.

Unlike the previous duty provision the new duty requires formal demonstration of compliance. The Authority is, therefore, required by the Act to prepare and publish a plan setting out how it intends to comply with the duty. Furthermore, by the end of 2019 the Authority is required to publish a report on what it has done to comply with the duty; this must then be reported every 3 years. If a public authority fails to meet its obligations under the Act it could ultimately be subject to judicial review and there is the potential for the Welsh Ministers to issue directions to a public body under Section 10 of the Act.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) are required by the Act to publish a State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) setting out the current status of natural resources in Wales. The Authority is required to have regard to the findings of this report in exercising its functions. NRW also have a requirement to prepare and publish Area Statements, for the areas of Wales that it considers appropriate for the purpose of facilitating the national natural resources policy. Public bodies must provide information and assistance to NRW in preparing/delivering SoNaRR and Area Statements.

WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (“the WBFG Act”) is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It sets out new ways of working that ensure all elements of well-being are considered together, and to facilitate collaborative working.

The WBFG Act places a duty on public bodies to carry out sustainable development. This is defined as a process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. This is done by taking action in accordance with the sustainable development principle so that the well-being goals are achieved.

There are 7 well-being goals that have been identified by the WBFG Act (see appendix B). To meet statutory requirements contained within the Act, the Authority has recently published its Corporate Plan for the period 2017-2022, which contains 3 well-being objectives. For each of these objectives, steps have been identified to improve the well-being of people living in Neath Port Talbot with a particular focus, under the 3rd objective, on the contribution of the natural environment to improving people’s well-being. While this plan contributes to all of the goals set out in the legislation, compliance with the plan can, in particular, be used to demonstrate how the Authority is contributing to the A Resilient Wales goal.



Sustainable Development Principle

The WCFG Act sets out 5 ways of working, that public bodies must adhere to in order to demonstrate how they are meeting their duty (see appendix C). Any plan / project must now demonstrate that they are following these ways of working.

These are set out below with an explanation of how this plan meets each one.

Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Through this plan the identification of areas for long term management and changes to policy will allow the safeguarding of long term needs of the people of NPT.• The Development Management process allows us to ensure long term management of sites with mechanisms for enhancement.• This plan is the starting point for identifying further improvements to the way we manage our land and resources which will have a long term benefit.
Integration	<p>NPTCBC have set and published our well-being objectives. It is envisaged that this plan will form a key part of the delivery of these objectives, and in maximising the Authority's contribution to the Well-being Goals.</p>
Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Through supporting the NPT Nature Partnership, this plan allows engagement with residents of NPT in making decisions on the nature conservation priorities of the county borough.• An internal consultation process was undertaken as part of this Plan's development. Early involvement and engagement will be sought for the next stage of the Plan.
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By assessing the policies and working practices of different service areas of the Authority we will identify further ways of working together.• Through the Area Statements we will work with NRW and other partners to deliver actions on the ground.• Supporting the NPT Nature Partnership will allow us to work in collaboration with a wide range of partners, particularly non-government organisations and community groups.
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early collaboration between service areas will help identify potential issues and allow them to be addressed at an early stage.• Working with the NPT Nature Partnership provides an opportunity for us to benefit from expertise outside the Authority, to allow us to identify issues at an early stage before they escalate.• SoNaRR will be used to identify issues within NPTCBC and to address them appropriately.

NATURE RECOVERY PLAN FOR WALES

The Nature Recovery Plan for Wales (2015) (“NRP”) recognises the importance of biodiversity as underpinning healthy functioning ecosystems, human well-being and the economy. The NRP builds on the new legislative frameworks set out above and identifies how, in Wales, we can address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss. Specifically by:

- Putting nature at the heart of decision making
- Increasing the resilience of our natural environment
- Taking specific action for habitats and species

It sets out how Wales will deliver the commitments of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the EU Biodiversity Strategy to halt the decline in our biodiversity by 2020 and then reverse that decline. The ambition of the plan is: *To reverse the decline in biodiversity, for its intrinsic value, and to ensure lasting benefits to society.*

Part 1 of the NRP sets out the objectives needed in Wales to achieve the ambition. The objectives are set out below with full details in Appendix D

NRP Objectives	
1	Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels
2	Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management
3	Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation
4	Tackle key pressures on species and habitats
5	Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring
6	Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery

Part 2 of the NRP sets out an action plan. A number of actions are allocated to Local Authorities as key partners for delivery.

THE NPTCBC BIODIVERSITY DUTY PLAN

This plan has been produced to fulfil NPTCBC's legal obligation, as set out in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. All public bodies must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. The Authority is required to prepare and publish a plan on how it intends to comply with this; the biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty.

Whilst the Welsh Government guidance on this plan has not been finalised, we are informed that the guidance will recommend that public authorities adopt and apply the NRP objectives in their plans. Therefore, the actions have been drawn up in line with those objectives. The actions allocated to the Authority in the NRP are incorporated into this plan.

Key Features of the NPT Biodiversity Duty Plan:

- The first 12 months of this plan will largely consist of auditing our current practices and biodiversity resource. At the 2019 reporting stage, or earlier where appropriate, a revised plan will be produced to take forward actions to maintain and enhance biodiversity following the outcomes of the audits. The findings of SoNaRR will be taken into account as part of this process.
- All proposed actions will be reported on in 2019. as required by the Act.
- Where there are fundamental changes to terminology, or advancements in our understanding of ecosystems, this plan may be updated to reflect those changes.
- Whilst this is an Authority wide plan, the Countryside and Wildlife Team will coordinate the plan and be responsible for reporting on it.
- The plan applies to both terrestrial and marine equally.

The **Biodiversity Duty Actions** set out specifically what the Authority intends to do to meet its legal requirements. The actions are organised into the most appropriate NRP Objective, with recognition of other objectives they contribute towards in the coloured table below each action. The ways of reporting and first two year milestones are also set out against each action. The actions currently being undertaken by the Authority in order to comply with the previous biodiversity duty have been incorporated into the plan.

Current actions are titled in **Blue** and future actions in **Green**.

C&WT = Countryside and Wildlife Team

NRP Objective 1: Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity through decision making at all levels



1.1 BIODIVERSITY ADVISORY SERVICE

NPTCBC currently consider biodiversity in a wide range of functions, specifically through implementing the policies of the Local Development Plan when making decisions through the development management process.

Reporting	C&WT Planning spreadsheet
Milestone year 1	Meet with development management to ensure recommendations are in an appropriate format and update on the latest legislation/policy/regulations
Milestone year 2	Continue to liaise with development management to ensure recommendations are in an appropriate format and update on the latest legislation/policy/regulations

1.2 NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

The NPT Natural Resources Management working group has been set up to consider opportunities to deliver sustainable natural resource management through the functions of the Environment Directorate.

Reporting	Attendance at regular meetings
Milestone year 1	In line with the requirements of the group
Milestone year 2	In line with the requirements of the group

NRP Objectives **1**

3 **4**

6

1.3 SERVICE ASSESSMENT

All services to be risk assessed to determine their potential impact on biodiversity and opportunities for best practice. Training provided as appropriate.

Reporting	Standard reports by the C&WT for each service
Milestone year 1	Programme of assessment to be drawn up by C&WT. Assessments started.
Milestone year 2	Assessments progressing and actions put forward for the next stage of the plan

1.4 C&WT EARLY ENGAGEMENT

The C&WT will identify service areas and set up regular meetings as appropriate, to discuss work plans and identify early issues/opportunities for biodiversity/ecosystem enhancements.

Reporting	Attendance at regular meetings
Milestone year 1	Programme of meetings to be agreed. Meetings started
Milestone year 2	Meetings continuing

NRP Objectives



1.5 DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Biodiversity will be integrated into the impact assessment toolkit being developed as part of the Council’s decision making process.

Reporting	Standard section in reports
Milestone year 1	Proposals put forward for inclusion in the toolkit.
Milestone year 2	All committee reports to contain a report on outcomes of the impact assessment.

1.6 TRAINING

Integrate biodiversity into any Elected Member or officer training being delivered as part of the Well-being and Future Generations Act, 2015.

Reporting	In line with well-being objectives. Training provided
Milestone year 1	Agreement made to include biodiversity in training material being developed.
Milestone year 2	Biodiversity integrated into the training programme.

1.7 BIODIVERSITY SPG

Prepare, adopt and implement the Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Guidance in line with LDP policies.

Reporting	SPG written
Milestone year 1	SPG draft June 2017
Milestone year 2	Implement SPG



1.8 WELL-BEING PROCESS

A healthy, functioning ecosystem is a vital component of our well-being, and the principles of the Biodiversity Plan will need to be integrated into the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015. Ensure that actions taken to deliver the Biodiversity Duty are part of the Council's Well-being objectives.

Reporting	Via Well-being objectives
Milestone year 1	TBC from Well-being objectives
Milestone year 2	TBC from Well-being objectives

NRP Objective 2: Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management

NPTCBC Actions

2.1 RE-VISIT CURRENT SCHEMES

2.2 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCESS

2.3 WG ESD LA GRANT

2.4 WORKING WITH NATURE

2.5 NPT NATURE PARTNERSHIP

2.6 AWARENESS RAISING

2.7 BIODIVERSITY AUDIT

2.8 NATIONAL GUIDANCE

2.9 FUNDING

CURRENT ACTION

FUTURE ACTION

2.1 RE-VISIT CURRENT SCHEMES

Through a series of previous projects, including Conservation Areas and Verges, other service areas are aware of the importance of biodiversity. C&WT are reviewing these projects to assess their effectiveness, and if relevant, will seek amendments to existing schemes.

Reporting	Review report
Milestone year 1	The review will be complete
Milestone year 2	If necessary, an amended scheme will be put in place, incorporating the Local Authority land under management for biodiversity

2.2 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCESS

NPTCBC currently consider biodiversity (including species and habitats of principal importance, designated sites, sites of importance for nature conservation (SINC), habitats and species that meet the SINC criteria, and important natural features) through the development management process, in line with the Local Development Plan. Losses of protected/priority habitat/species (where known) are recorded.

Reporting	C&WT planning spreadsheet
Milestone year 1	No net loss and, where possible, net gain of S7 and SINC habitats/species through the planning process. No net loss of habitat / species that are designating features of a site.
Milestone year 2	No net loss and, where possible, net gain of S7 and SINC habitats/species through the planning process. No net loss of habitat / species that are designating features of a site.

NRP Objectives



2.3 WG ESD LA GRANT

NPTCBC draw down funding from the WG Environment and Sustainable Development (ESD) Grant. This is partly allocated to the C&WT who utilise it to administer biodiversity enhancement and engagement projects .

Reporting	As grant requirements
Milestone year 1	As grant requirements
Milestone year 2	As grant requirements



2.4 WORKING WITH NATURE

The grant funded Working with Nature Project undertakes conservation and community engagement activities at publicly accessible sites, focusing on the multiple benefits to be had from the natural environment.

Reporting	As grant funded requirements, including RDP LEADER and WG ESD LA Grant.
Milestone year 1	As grant requirements
Milestone year 2	As grant requirements

2.5 NPT NATURE PARTNERSHIP

NPTCBC facilitates the NPT Nature Partnership which implements the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP). This is a key mechanism for species and habitat conservation in the County Borough.

Reporting	The NPT LBAP reporting spreadsheet
Milestone year 1	Continue to provide secretariat for the NPT Nature Partnership, providing support in the delivery of targeted action.
Milestone year 2	Continue to provide secretariat for the NPT Nature Partnership, providing support in the delivery of targeted action.



2.6 AWARENESS RAISING

The C&WT raise awareness of biodiversity through a variety of methods; training, public engagement (walks/talks), interpretation panels, leaflets, web pages, social media.

Reporting	Project delivery and ongoing upkeep of the NPTCBC web pages and NPT Wildlife Facebook page
Milestone year 1	2 awareness raising projects per year and year on year increase in visitors to the web pages and likes on the Facebook page
Milestone year 2	2 awareness raising projects per year and year on year increase in visitors to the web pages and likes on the Facebook page

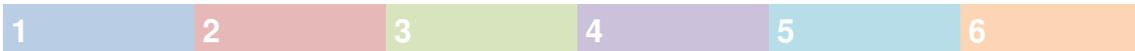
2.7 BIODIVERSITY AUDIT

Undertake a biodiversity audit on land within our ownership and control, to identify where we have protected/S7 habitats and species on our land. Priority will then be given to those areas / sites where protected Section 7 habitats / species have been identified which offer the greatest benefit to biodiversity, considering one of the following options:

- 1) The status quo – with no further action being taken.
- 2) Be brought into appropriate management for the benefit of biodiversity. This may be through:
 - The Authority and, where necessary, suitable revenue sources can be secured by way of external funding to support and manage the identified sites.
 - Lease to external parties.

NB Any notional financial loss to the Authority needs to be reported and agreed before any lease is granted.
- 3) Any future disposal of a site will include relevant information from the audit so that the purchaser / tenant can comply with the relevant requirements.
- 4) In advance of undertaking any works and / or any material changes in land use on sites owned and controlled by the Authority, it will take into consideration the findings of the audit, taking steps to conserve and where possible enhance the biodiversity value.

Reporting	First report will be results of audit
Milestone year 1	Programme of assessment to be drawn up by C&WT. Assessments started
Milestone year 2	Assessments completed and actions put forward for the next stage of the plan



2.8 NATIONAL GUIDANCE

Implement any national/regional guidance on enhancing biodiversity and ecosystems resilience through the planning system. Any new guidance will be taken into account and integrated into the system.

Reporting	C&WT Planning spreadsheet
Milestone year 1	All national/regional guidance to be integrated into the planning system within 3 months of its release
Milestone year 2	All national/regional guidance to be integrated into the planning system within 3 months of its release

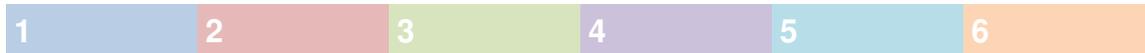


2.9 FUNDING

Apply for funding as opportunities arise, either specifically for biodiversity or as part of wider schemes delivering multiple benefits.

Reporting	As funding requirements
Milestone year 1	As opportunities arise
Milestone year 2	As opportunities arise

NRP Objectives



NRP Objective 3: Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation

NPTCBC Actions

CURRENT ACTION
FUTURE ACTION

3.1 CURRENT MANAGEMENT

3.2 HABITAT MANAGEMENT THROUGH DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

3.3 COED CYMRU

3.4 AREA STATEMENTS

3.1 CURRENT MANAGEMENT

NPTCBC areas are currently being managed to ensure their resilience.

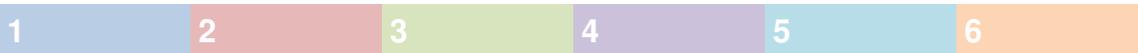
Reporting	GIS layer kept of areas under active management
Milestone year 1	Sites continue to be managed for the resilience of our natural environment
Milestone year 2	There is an increase in sites being managed for the resilience of our natural environment



3.2 HABITAT MANAGEMENT THROUGH DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Through the development management process habitat management plans are put in place increasing the resilience of our natural environment and improving the management of S7 habitats.

Reporting	C&WT Planning spreadsheet
Milestone year 1	Appropriate assessments of ecosystems resilience submitted through the planning process and appropriate measures to deliver improvements taken
Milestone year 2	Appropriate assessments of ecosystems resilience submitted through the planning process and appropriate measures to deliver improvements taken



3.3 COED CYMRU

NPTCBC are key partners in the Coed Cymru initiative, Wales' foremost woodland organisation. Coed Cymru aims to improve the condition of Welsh woodland and integrate new woodlands into the landscape, through the provision of advice, support, innovation and access to grant aid. They bring research about the role of trees in flooding, soils and water, agricultural productivity and wider ecosystem services into practice.

Reporting	Annual funding reports
Milestone year 1	As Coed Cymru objectives
Milestone year 2	As Coed Cymru objectives

NRP Objectives



3.4 AREA STATEMENTS

NPTCBC will assist NRW in writing and implementing Area Statements as required.

Reporting	As required
Milestone year 1	As appropriate
Milestone year 2	As appropriate



NRP Objective 4: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

NPTCBC Actions

CURRENT ACTION

4.1 INNS

4.2 AIR QUALITY

4.3 GLAMORGAN GRAZING

FUTURE ACTION

4.4 SoNaRR

4.1 INVASIVE NON-NATIVE SPECIES (INNS)

INNS are dealt with through the development management process by requesting surveys and conditioning remedial actions where appropriate.

Reporting	Planning decision notices
Milestone year 1	Appropriate conditions applied where INNS are identified
Milestone year 2	Appropriate conditions applied where INNS are identified

NRP Objectives 1

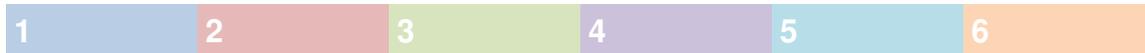
3 4 5 6

4.2 AIR QUALITY

The air quality implications of development proposals are fully assessed for their potential effects on sensitive habitats and species through the HRA process.

Reporting	C&WT Planning spreadsheet
Milestone year 1	All development proposals assessed as appropriate
Milestone year 2	All development proposals assessed as appropriate

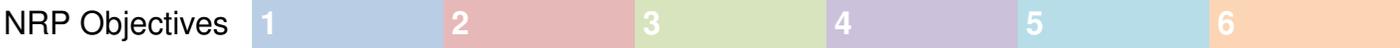
NRP Objectives



4.3 GLAMORGAN GRAZING

NPTCBC is currently supporting PONT to set up a Glamorgan Grazing project which allows land to be managed in a sensitive way. Whilst the project continues to be led by PONT, we will input into the project through landowner and grazier engagement, and identification of sites.

Reporting	Database will be held by PONT, with local contacts shared with C&WT
Milestone year 1	Project set up and initial lists of grazers and landowners available
Milestone year 2	List is being utilised to bring sites under our ownership into conservation grazing



4.4 STATE OF NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT (SONARR)

Review the SoNaRR report and identify key pressures for NPT.

Reporting	Report on key pressures identified via SoNaRR
Milestone year 1	Report written
Milestone year 2	Any additional actions identified and actioned, or built into the next review process

NRP Objective 5: Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring

NPTCBC Actions

CURRENT ACTION

- 5.1 DATA CAPTURE
- 5.2 SINCS
- 5.3 SURVEYS
- 5.4 RECORD CENTRE SEARCHES
- 5.5 BIODIVERSITY COMPENSATION SCHEME

FUTURE ACTION

- 5.6 RESILIENT WALES GOAL
- 5.7 BIODIVERSITY PLAN EVIDENCE

5.1 DATA CAPTURE

NPT uses a range of data capture tools and techniques. This has led to a large number of species records which are passed on to the Local Records Centre and, therefore, shared with the wider community.

Reporting	Metadata from MapMate
Milestone year 1	Maintenance of the MapMate database
Milestone year 2	Maintenance of the MapMate database

NRP Objectives

2

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5

5.2 SITES OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

NPTCBC have a programme of identifying sites that qualify as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). This allows us to assess the quality of a site against national guidelines and each site will be reviewed within 10 years.

Within this reporting round, we will ensure that all SINCS have been reviewed within the 10 year timescale. Following this, we will introduce a programme of, on average, 10% of SINCS being reviewed annually and QGIS layer updated and shared with SEWBRReC.

Reporting	Annual SINC report produced
Milestone year 1	Put together a programme of sites to be reviewed.
Milestone year 2	Carry out a review of all SINCS that are scheduled for review this year.

NRP Objectives



5.3 SURVEYS

NPTCBC provides secretariat for the NPT Nature Partnership which includes a number of specialist surveyors and SEWBRc. We utilise this expertise by organising surveys for targeted sites and species.

Reporting	Evidence based report by C&WT
Milestone year 1	Work with the Partnership to take forward specialist surveys where most appropriate.
Milestone year 2	Work with the Partnership to take forward specialist surveys where most appropriate.

NRP Objectives



5.4 RECORD CENTRE SEARCHES

All planning applications containing biodiversity information must be accompanied by a SEWBRReC search undertaken by/on behalf of the applicant, unless agreement is reached with the C&WT that sufficient justification exists to negate this need.

Reporting	C&WT Planning spreadsheet
Milestone year 1	All biodiversity information contained in a planning application must be accompanied by a SEWBRReC search, unless agreed otherwise.
Milestone year 2	All biodiversity information contained in a planning application must be accompanied by a SEWBRReC search, unless agreed otherwise.

5.5 BIODIVERSITY COMPENSATION SCHEME

The grant funded Biodiversity Compensation Scheme is currently researching the potential for a compensation scheme that would allow development to move along quicker by banking compensation sites.

Reporting	As grant funding reporting
Milestone year 1	Incorporate research findings into Biodiversity SPG
Milestone year 2	Implement SPG via the development management process



5.6 RESILIENT WALES GOAL

Contribute data towards the Wales biodiversity indicators for the Resilient Wales goal of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

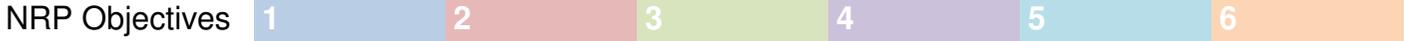
Reporting	Responses
Milestone year 1	As required
Milestone year 2	As required

5.7 BIODIVERSITY PLAN EVIDENCE

Evidence to be collected to ensure compliance with this plan.

Reporting	All reporting to be gathered and collated to report on this plan
Milestone year 1	End of year report
Milestone year 2	End of year report

NRP Objective 5



NRP Objective 6: Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery

NPTCBC Actions

CURRENT ACTION

6.1 C&WT RESOURCES

6.2 NPT NATURE PARTNERSHIP

6.3 BIODIVERSITY CHAMPION

6.4 LOCAL NATURE PLAN

FUTURE ACTION

6.5 AREA STATEMENTS

6.1 COUNTRYSIDE AND WILDLIFE TEAM RESOURCES

There is currently enough skills and capacity in the Countryside and Wildlife Team to co-ordinate the work needed to comply with the legislation, however sustaining this in the long term will be a challenge given budgetary pressures.

Reporting	End of year report
Milestone year 1	Secure the temporary post on a permanent basis
Milestone year 2	Maintain current staffing levels

NRP Objectives



6.2 NPT NATURE PARTNERSHIP

Continue to support the NPT Nature Partnership, providing the secretariat, steering the objectives and collating information on member activities through the Biodiversity Officer post.

Reporting	Partnership minutes
Milestone year 1	Continue to provide secretariat for the NPT Nature Partnership
Milestone year 2	Continue to provide secretariat for NPT Nature Partnership

6.3 BIODIVERSITY CHAMPION

A NPTCBC Councillor is appointed Biodiversity Champion and attends events/ meetings as appropriate.

Reporting	Attendance at regular meetings
Milestone year 1	Continued engagement as appropriate.
Milestone year 2	Continued engagement as appropriate.

6.4 NPT NATURE PLAN

Through the NPT Nature Plan maximise opportunities to deliver priorities via volunteers and partners.

Reporting	The NPT Nature Plan reporting spreadsheet
Milestone year 1	Spreadsheet is being updated with a continual process of new actions being added and delivered.
Milestone year 2	Spreadsheet is being updated with a continual process of new actions being added and delivered.



6.5 AREA STATEMENTS

Feed into the delivery of Area Statements where appropriate.

Reporting	As appropriate
Milestone year 1	As appropriate
Milestone year 2	As appropriate

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Abbreviations and acronyms which will be useful while reading this document

CBD	UN Convention on Biological Diversity
C&WT	Countryside and Wildlife Team
DM	Development Management
GIS	Geographic Information System
HRA	Habitat Regulations Assessment
INNS	Invasive non-native species
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
LEADER	Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale
NPTCBC	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
NPT	Neath Port Talbot
NRP	Nature Recovery Plan for Wales
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
PONT	Pori, Natur a Threftadaeth
QGIS	Geographic Information System software
RDP	Rural Development Plan
S7	Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016
SEWBRcC	South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre
SINC	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
SoNaRR	State of Natural Resources Report
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance
SRG	Single Revenue Grant
WCFG	Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
WG	Welsh Government

GLOSSARY

Terms and references which will be useful while reading this document

Area Statements	NRW are required by the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to produce Area Statements which set out the priorities and opportunities for management of natural resources.
Biodiversity	The diversity of living organisms, whether at the genetic, species or ecosystem level
Coed Cymru	Welsh woodland organisation working to improve the condition of Welsh woodland.
Ecosystem Approach	A strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way
Ecosystems	A dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organisms and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit
LEADER	A funding stream under the Rural Development Programme
Local Biodiversity Action Plan	Plan outlining how the NPT Nature Partnership propose to take forward biodiversity enhancement in NPT
Local Records Centre	Centres for the collation, management and dissemination of biodiversity data.
MapMate	Biological recording software
National Natural Resource Policy	Sets out the key risks, priorities and opportunities for the sustainable development of natural resources in Wales
Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Animals, plants and other organisms. b) Air, water and soil. c) Minerals. d) Geological features and processes. e) Physiographical features. f) Climatic features and processes

GLOSSARY

Terms and references which will be useful while reading this document

Nature Recovery Plan for Wales	Sets out how Wales will deliver the commitments of the Convention on Biological Diversity
NPT Nature Partnership	A group of individuals and organisations working collectively to enhance biodiversity in NPT
NPTCBC Improvement Plan 2017-2022	Sets out NPTCBCs key priorities for improvement
PONT	Not-for-profit organisation encouraging and facilitating grazing for the benefit of the wildlife, landscape and cultural heritage of Wales
Section 7 Habitats and Species	In line with Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, WG will publish, review and revise lists of living organisms and types of habitats in Wales, which they consider are of key significance to sustain and improve biodiversity
State of Natural Resources Report	The report sets out the state of Wales' natural resources
Sustainable development	The process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals.
Sustainable development principle	Acting in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
The Authority	NPTCBC
UN Convention on Biological Diversity	A multilateral treaty with three main goals: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. conservation of biological diversity (or biodiversity); 2. sustainable use of its components; and 3. fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources

Appendix A

The Environment (Wales) Act duties

6 The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty

(1) A public authority must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.

(2) In complying with subsection (1), a public authority must take account of the resilience of ecosystems, in particular the following aspects—

- (a) diversity between and within ecosystems;
- (b) the connections between and within ecosystems;
- (c) the scale of ecosystems;
- (d) the condition of ecosystems (including their structure and functioning);
- (e) the adaptability of ecosystems.

(3) Subsection (1) does not apply to—

- (a) the exercise of a function by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, or
- (b) the exercise of a judicial function of a court or tribunal.

(4) In complying with subsection (1)—

- (a) the Welsh Ministers, the First Minister for Wales, the Counsel General to the Welsh Government, a Minister of the Crown and a government department must have regard to the United Nations Environmental Programme Convention on Biological Diversity of 1992, and
- (b) any other public authority must have regard to any guidance given to it by the Welsh Ministers.

(5) In complying with subsection (1), a public authority other than a Minister of the Crown or government department must have regard to—

- (a) the list published under section 7;
- (b) the state of natural resources report published under section 8;
- (c) any area statement published under section 11 for an area that includes all or part of an area in relation to which the authority exercises functions.

(6) A public authority other than a Minister of the Crown or government department must prepare and publish a plan setting out what it proposes to do to comply with subsection (1).

(7) A public authority must, before the end of 2019 and before the end of every third year after 2019, publish a report on what it has done to comply with subsection (1).

(8) A public authority that has published a plan under subsection (6)—

- (a) must review the plan in the light of each report that it publishes under subsection (7), and
- (b) may revise the plan at any time.

(9) In this section—

“Minister of the Crown” (*“Gweinidog y Goron”*) has the same meaning as in the Ministers of the Crown Act 1975 (c. 26);

“public authority” (*“awdurdod cyhoeddus”*) means—

- (a) the Welsh Ministers;
- (b) the First Minister for Wales;
- (c) the Counsel General to the Welsh Government;
- (d) a Minister of the Crown;

(e) a public body (including a government department, a local authority, a local planning authority and a strategic planning panel);

(f) a person holding an office—

(i) under the Crown,

(ii) created or continued in existence by a public general Act of the National Assembly for Wales or of Parliament, or

(iii) the remuneration in respect of which is paid out of money provided by the National Assembly for Wales or Parliament;

(g) a statutory undertaker.

(10) In subsection (9)—

“local authority” (*“awdurdod lleol”*) means a council of a county, county borough or community in Wales;

“local planning authority” (*“awdurdod cynllunio lleol”*) has the meaning given by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (c. 8);

“statutory undertaker” (*“ymgymerwr statudol”*) means any of the following—

(a) a person authorised by any enactment to carry on any railway, light railway, tramway, road transport, water transport, canal, inland navigation, dock, harbour, pier or lighthouse undertaking or any undertaking for the supply of hydraulic power;

(b) an operator of an electronic communications code network (within the meaning of paragraph 1(1) of Schedule 17 to the Communications Act 2003 (c. 21));

(c) an airport operator (within the meaning of the Airports Act 1986 (c. 31)) operating an airport to which Part 5 of that Act applies;

(d) a gas transporter (within the meaning of Part 1 of the Gas Act 1986 (c. 44));

(e) a holder of a licence under section 6(1) of the Electricity Act 1989 (c. 29);

(f) a water or sewerage undertaker;

(g) the Civil Aviation Authority or a holder of a licence under Chapter 1 of Part 1 of the Transport Act 2000 (c. 38), to the extent that the person holding the licence is carrying out activities authorised by it;

(h) a universal service provider within the meaning of Part 3 of the Postal Services Act 2011 (c. 5);

“strategic planning panel” (*“panel cynllunio strategol”*) means a strategic planning panel established under section 60D of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (c. 5).

7 Biodiversity lists and duty to take steps to maintain and enhance biodiversity

(1) The Welsh Ministers must prepare and publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which in their opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in relation to Wales.

(2) Before publishing a list under this section the Welsh Ministers must consult the Natural Resources Body for Wales (“NRW”) as to the living organisms or types of habitat to be included in the list.

(3) Without prejudice to section 6, the Welsh Ministers must—

- (a) take all reasonable steps to maintain and enhance the living organisms and types of habitat included in any list published under this section, and
- (b) encourage others to take such steps.

(4) The Welsh Ministers must, in consultation with NRW—

- (a) keep under review any list published by them under this section,
- (b) make such revisions of any such list as appear to them appropriate, and
- (c) publish any list so revised as soon as is reasonably practicable after revising it.

(5) In exercising their functions under this section, the Welsh Ministers must apply the principles of sustainable management of natural resources.

Appendix B

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 goals

GOAL	DESCRIPTION OF THE GOAL
A prosperous Wales	An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.
A resilient Wales	A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).
A healthier Wales	A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.
A more equal Wales	A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).
A Wales of cohesive communities	Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.
A globally responsible Wales	A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

Appendix C

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 5 ways of working

5 The sustainable development principle

(1) In this Act, any reference to a public body doing something “in accordance with the sustainable development principle” means that the body must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

(2) In order to act in that manner, a public body must take account of the following things—

(a) the importance of balancing short term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to meet long term needs, especially where things done to meet short term needs may have detrimental long term effect;

(b) the need to take an integrated approach, by considering how—

(i) the body’s well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals;

(ii) the body’s well-being objectives impact upon each other or upon other public bodies’ objectives, in particular where steps taken by the body may contribute to meeting one objective but may be detrimental to meeting another;

(c) the importance of involving other persons with an interest in achieving the wellbeing goals and of ensuring those persons reflect the diversity of the population

of—

(i) Wales (where the body exercises functions in relation to the whole of Wales), or

(ii) the part of Wales in relation to which the body exercises functions;

(d) how acting in collaboration with any other person (or how different parts of the body acting together) could assist the body to meet its well-being objectives, or assist another body to meet its objectives;

(e) how deploying resources to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may contribute to meeting the body’s well-being objectives, or another body’s objectives.

Appendix D

The Nature Recovery Plan for Wales objectives

Objective 1: Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels.

Placing nature at the centre of decision making is essential to address the underlying cause of biodiversity loss. In 2011, the UK National Ecosystems Assessment (UK NEA) identified the underlying cause of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation:

'The natural world, its biodiversity and its constituent ecosystems are critically important to our well-being and economic prosperity, but are consistently undervalued in conventional economic analyses and decision making.'

A lack of awareness, and subsequent valuation of the critical contribution that our nature makes to our well-being and livelihoods, means we often do not account for that contribution in decision making, at all levels of society, from individuals, through local authorities, to businesses. This can lead to damage or overexploitation of our nature. There is also a lack of mechanisms to support this accounting. For example, 'income foregone' does not adequately account for the value of ecosystem services provided by a farm habitat.

Objective 2: Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management

Species and habitats are wonderful and awe-inspiring and we have a moral obligation to protect them and their genetic variety for future generations. They are the building blocks of our ecosystems and their functioning from which we derive many services and benefits, and we need to ensure we have resilient populations of species to support these.

Sites designated for nature conservation play an important role: they are a key mechanism for maintaining natural diversity required for resilience, and disproportionately contribute to a wide range of ecosystem services and benefits.

Sites are designated for nature conservation purposes to protect and enhance our rarest habitats and species, and the best examples of our natural biodiversity and geo-diversity in Wales. These environments are complex, often ancient, systems with great richness and genetic reserves of plants and animals.

The traditional approaches to nature conservation based on designated sites and the protection of species and habitats have had notable successes and we will continue to use these approaches. Our protected sites and species are a core resource, but they can become isolated, and outside pressures on sites can make management challenging.

Objective 3: Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation

Degraded habitats are ones which no longer support the full potential of our native wildlife. In order to safeguard our protected species and to improve the resilience of more widespread species and habitats, we need to restore networks of habitats to a healthy condition across Wales, both on land and in the sea.

Restoration of degraded habitats and habitat creation will build the resilience of our natural environment through taking action on the four attributes of resilience:

- Increasing diversity
- Increasing ecosystem extent through reducing fragmentation
- Increasing connectivity within and between ecosystems
- Improving habitat condition.

This resilience will also increase the ability of species and habitats to adapt to other pressures including climate change.

Objective 4: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

The UK NEA identified changing land management practices, through agriculture and urbanisation, pollution and invasive non-native species as key pressures leading to habitat and species loss and fragmentation. This, together with acidification and eutrophication, has changed the quantity and quality of habitats and the species they can support.

In the marine environment key pressures include unsustainable human activity, climate change leading to the warming and acidification of the world's seas and oceans, and the introduction of invasive non-native species.

It is vital to anticipate, prevent and mitigate the causes of biodiversity loss at source, using both our legislation, and innovative and holistic nature-based solutions.

Objective 5: Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring

To help nature to recover we need to inform the delivery of action by a better understanding of the ecology and science of our habitats and species, their status and trends, and the pressures and drivers leading to changes.

Objective 6: Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery

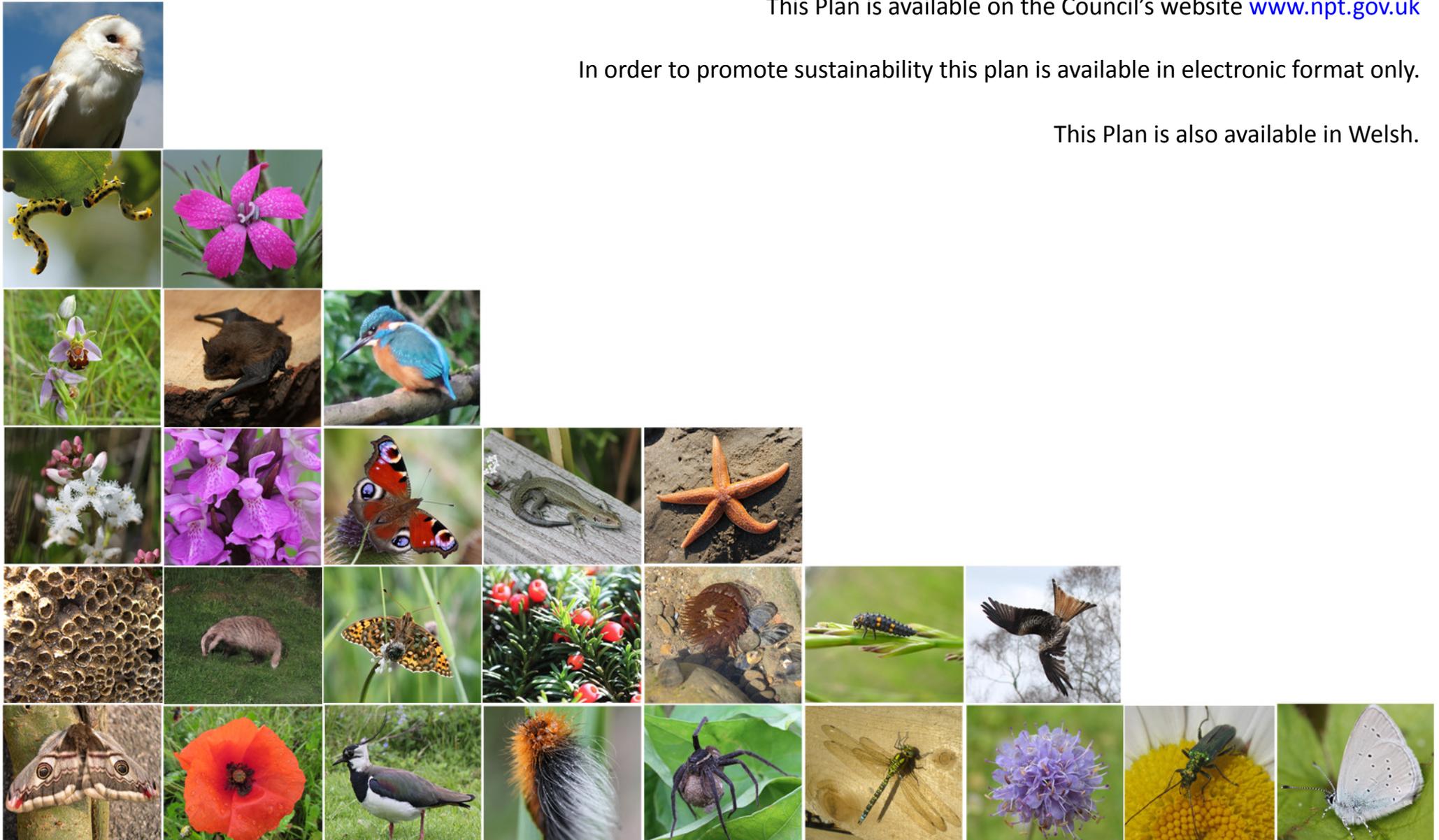
Underpinning our action, we also need a governance structure that is fit for purpose to support and deliver action on the ground. We need to ensure we have the skills, expertise, personnel and functions in place to deliver.

This Biodiversity Duty Plan is Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's plan required under section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

This Plan is available on the Council's website www.npt.gov.uk

In order to promote sustainability this plan is available in electronic format only.

This Plan is also available in Welsh.



Barn owl <i>Tyto alba</i>								
Birch sawfly caterpillars <i>Cimbex femoratus</i>	Deptford pink <i>Dianthus armeria</i>							
Bee orchid <i>Ophrys apifera</i>	Common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i>						
Bogbean <i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i>	Southern marsh-orchid <i>Dactylorhiza praetermissa</i>	Peacock <i>Aglais io</i>	Viviparous lizard <i>Lacerta vivipara</i>	Common starfish <i>Asterias rubens</i>				
Sabellaria reef <i>Sabellaria spp.</i>	Badger <i>Meles meles</i>	Dark green fritillary <i>Argynnis aglaja</i>	Yew <i>Taxus baccata</i>	Beadlet anemone <i>Actinia equina</i>	7-spot ladybird larvae <i>Coccinella septempunctata</i>	Red kite <i>Milvus milvus</i>		
Emperor moth <i>Saturnia pavonia</i>	Common poppy <i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Garden tiger caterpillar <i>Arctia caja</i>	Fen raft spider <i>Dolomedes plantarius</i>	Southern hawker <i>Aeshna cyanea</i>	Devil's-bit scabious <i>Succisa pratensis</i>	Swollen-thighed Beetle <i>Oedemera nobilis</i>	Small blue <i>Cupido minimus</i>