



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL

### CABINET

30<sup>th</sup> April 2025

### Report of the Head of Planning and Public Protection

Ceri Morris

#### Matter for Decision

Wards Affected      All

**Neath Port Talbot Biodiversity Duty Plan (BDP) 2023-2026 – to consider policies to prevent the installation on Council land of (i) artificial grass; and (ii) honeybee hives in Neath Port Talbot.**

#### Purpose of the Report

To consider policies to prevent the installation on Council land of (i) artificial grass; and (ii) honeybee hives in Neath Port Talbot.

#### Executive Summary

On 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023, Council approved the new Biodiversity Duty Plan (2023-2026). The plan introduced 8 new actions. This report proposes two new policies to address one of those actions – i.e. *‘to address current issues that cause a threat to nature such as preventing the installation of artificial grass and honeybee hives on Council land’*.

#### ***Proposed Policies***

The Council periodically receives requests from lessees and other users of Council land for permission to install infrastructure that could inadvertently cause damage to local biodiversity. In light of the Council’s legal duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, to maintain and enhance biodiversity, it is considered necessary to publish formal policies in regard to these issues – the proposed policies are in accordance with action 1.11 of the adopted Biodiversity Duty Plan (2023-2026):

1. **Artificial Grass** – despite the initial appeal of artificial grass for its appearance and lower immediate maintenance needs, it poses significant environmental and health risks. Its contribution to plastic pollution, potential health hazards, negative impact on local ecosystems, and disposal challenges outweigh the benefits for many people and communities.
2. **Honeybees** – whilst honeybees (*Apis mellifera*) are very important for food production and in some cases for well-being, unfortunately under some circumstances, managed hives can have a harmful effect on local biodiversity. There is increasing concern that declines in wild pollinators may be exacerbated by unnaturally high densities of honeybees, associated with some forms of beekeeping.

In light of the above, it is considered necessary to introduce policies to prevent the installation of artificial grass and honeybee hives on any Council owned or controlled land in order to prevent damage to local biodiversity – exceptions to this are included in the proposed policies.

## **Background**

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 introduced a duty (the S6 Duty) on public authorities to maintain and enhance biodiversity, thereby promoting the resilience of ecosystems in the exercise of its functions.

The Council is one of the largest landowners in the County Borough and is fortunate to be home to many parks, gardens and recreational areas. It is recognised that activities within our green open spaces can have a significant impact on the local environment. The Council already has well-established policies to protect the environment where considered necessary – e.g. policy covering the release of sky lanterns and balloons on Council land (adopted in 2014).

### ***Policy – Use of artificial grass on Council owned/managed land***

The proposed policy concerning artificial grass on Council owned/managed land is presented in **Appendix 2**, with the policy seeking to prevent the installation of artificial grass in the public estate, with the exception of some high-performance sports pitches or play areas, which may be rendered unusable without it. This policy is in accordance with action 1.11 of the Biodiversity Duty Plan (2023-2026) – implications are summarised as follows:

- Artificial grass will not be installed on Council owned or managed land (excluding exceptions listed).
- Permission will not be granted for installation of artificial grass on leased land.
- Alternatives will need to be sought for these areas (e.g. short-flowering lawn, wood chips, gravel).

## ***Policy – Installation of honeybee hives on Council owned/managed land***

The proposed policy concerning honeybee hives on Council owned/managed land is presented in **Appendix 3**, with the policy seeking to prevent the installation of honeybee hives on any land owned or controlled by the Council (including leased land). Exceptions to this policy will be considered for sites with historic or heritage history of bee keeping or if required for food production.

Members should note that the only beehives currently present on Council land are those at Margam Country Park, within the orchard/meadow which provides sufficient food to support the hive. For other areas of land, very few requests for permission to install honeybee hives have been received by Estates (no permission has been granted) and Neighbourhood Services already do not allow beehives on sites such as allotments as part of tenancy agreements.

If an exception to the policy is required and a hive is installed on Council land, beekeepers will be required to provide enough new suitable habitat to support the hive, to prevent competition with the wild bees already present. This policy is in accordance with action 1.11 of the Biodiversity Duty Plan (2023-2026) – implications are summarised as follows:

- Honeybee hives will not be installed on Council owned or managed land (excluding exceptions listed).
- Permission will not be granted for installation of honeybee hives on leased land.

## **Financial Impacts**

The policies set out in this report place no direct cost on the council. Furthermore, given there is no additional funding available for the implementation of these policies, implementation is to be achieved within current budgets and resource constraints.

## **Integrated Impact Assessment**

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The first stage assessment (presented in **Appendix 1**) has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. In summary, the policies as proposed will make a positive contribution to biodiversity conservation and enhancement in Neath Port Talbot, which has knock-on positive benefits for residents in the County Borough, particularly in relation to health and well-being.

The scheme would contribute to helping the Council comply with its statutory duty under the Environment Wales Act and particularly contribute to the Resilient Wales Goal of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act as well as the Council's Well-being objectives.

### **Socio-Economic Duty**

Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society. Implementation of these policies would be inclusive and as such would support equality and social cohesion. The policy and any related communications would be provided in Welsh as well as English. Through the conservation of biodiversity, the health and well-being of the people of Neath Port Talbot would benefit, particularly communities of high deprivation and health inequalities, for example, providing increased opportunities for people to connect with nature and access/see biodiverse green space.

### **Valleys Communities Impacts**

There will be an improvement to the environment and health and well-being of valleys communities associated with these proposals.

### **Workforce Impacts**

There are currently no anticipated workforce impacts associated with the proposed policies. However, work impacts will be monitored and kept under review.

### **Legal Impacts**

There is a potential failure to comply with the Biodiversity Duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 if these policies are not implemented.

### **Risk Management Impacts**

The Council will be failing to comply with the Biodiversity Duty Plan should there be a failure to adopt the proposed policies, which would be subject to reporting to Welsh Government.

Continued decline of biodiversity and failure to respond to the nature emergency as declared by Welsh Government on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

### **Consultation**

The policies have been the subject of internal consultation. There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

## **Recommendations**

Having considered the issues raised in this report and having given due regard to the Integrated Impact Assessment, it is recommended that:

1. The policy for the Use of Artificial Grass on Council owned/managed land as presented in Appendix 2 be agreed.
2. The policy for the Installation of Honeybee Hives on Council owned/managed land as presented in Appendix 3 be agreed.

## **Reasons for Proposed Decision**

The recommendations are needed to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and to ensure that the Council commits to take steps to help nature recover.

## **Implementation of Decision**

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three-day call-in period.

## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1** – First Stage Integrated Impact Assessment.

**Appendix 2** – Policy: Use of artificial grass on Council owned/managed land.

**Appendix 3** – Policy: Installation of honeybee hives on Council owned/managed land.

## **List of Background Papers**

Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Nature Recovery Plan for Wales 2015.

State of Nature and Nature Recovery Action Plan for Neath Port Talbot 2023.

Neath Port Talbot Council Biodiversity Duty Plan (2023-2026).

Neath Port Talbot Corporate Plan 2023.

## **Officer Contacts**

Lana Beynon – Planning Policy Manager

[Tel: 01639 686314 / E- mail: [l.beynon@npt.gov.uk](mailto:l.beynon@npt.gov.uk)]

Rebecca Sharp – Countryside and Wildlife Team Leader

[Tel: 01639 686149 / E-mail: [r.sharp@npt.gov.uk](mailto:r.sharp@npt.gov.uk)]

## **Appendix 1 – First Stage Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)**

This Integrated Impact Assessment considers the duties and requirements of the following legislation in order to inform and ensure effective decision making and compliance:

- Equality Act 2010
- Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016

### **Version Control**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Job title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Version 1	Rose Revera	Ecologist	19/9/24
Version 2	Chloe Angelone	Coastal & Marine Environment Coordinator	14/01/24

### **1. Details of the initiative**

	<b>Title of the Initiative:</b> To consider and agree the proposed policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policy for the use of artificial grass on NPT Council owned/ managed land</li><li>• Policy for the installation of honeybee hives on NPT Council owned/ managed land</li></ul>
<b>1a</b>	<b>Service Area:</b> Planning Policy – Countryside & Wildlife
<b>1b</b>	<b>Directorate:</b> Environment and Regeneration
<b>1c</b>	<b>Summary of the initiative:</b>  Neath Port Talbot Council periodically receives requests from lessees and other users of council land for permission to install infrastructure that could inadvertently cause damage to local biodiversity. In light of the council's legal duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, to maintain and enhance biodiversity, it is considered necessary to publish formal policies with regards to these. These policies are in line with the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2023-2026 Action 1.11.  1. Artificial Grass

	<p>Despite the initial appeal of artificial grass for its appearance and lower immediate maintenance needs, it poses significant environmental and health risks. Its contribution to plastic pollution, potential health hazards, negative impact on local ecosystems, and disposal challenges outweigh the benefits for many people and communities.</p> <p>2. Honeybees</p> <p>Whilst honeybees (<i>Apis mellifera</i>) are very important for food production and in some cases for wellbeing, unfortunately, under some circumstances, managed hives can have a harmful effect on local biodiversity. There is increasing concern that declines in wild pollinators may be exacerbated by unnaturally high densities of honeybees, associated with some forms of beekeeping.</p> <p>We propose that, considering the above, it is necessary to implement policies to prevent the installation of artificial grass and honeybee hives on any NPTC owned or controlled land, in order to prevent damage to local biodiversity. Exceptions to this are included in the policies.</p>
1d	<p><b>Is this a 'strategic decision'?</b>      <b>No</b></p>
1e	<p><b>Who will be directly affected by this initiative?</b></p> <p>Anyone who may wish to install honeybee hives or artificial grass on council land e.g. leasees / community groups.</p>
1f	<p><b>When and how were people consulted?</b></p> <p>Staff members whose service areas may be implicated have been consulted on the implications of the policies. External consultation has not been undertaken as the proposed actions are considered to be the minimum necessary to meet the statutory Section 6 duty.</p>
1g	<p><b>What were the outcomes of the consultation?</b></p> <p>Capability to make exceptions if there is a strong case for installation for wellbeing or heritage reasons was added to the policy.</p>

## 2. Evidence

What evidence was used in assessing the initiative?

- Feedback from internal staff consultation
- State of Nature and Nature Recovery Action Plan for NPT
- NPT Well-being Plan
- 'Human Health: Impacts, Adaptation, and Co-benefits' IPCC 2014
- Díaz S, Fargione J, Chapin FS 3rd, Tilman D. Biodiversity loss threatens human well-being. PLoS Biol. 2006.
- [Position statement on managed honeybees](#). Bumblebee Conservation Trust.
- Colla SR. The potential consequences of 'bee washing' on wild bee health and conservation. Int J Parasitol Parasites Wildl. 2022 Apr 2;18:30-32.
- Jonas Geldmann, Juan P. González-Varo; Conserving honeybees does not help wildlife. Science359,392 393(2018).
- Iwasaki JM, Hogendoorn K. Mounting evidence that managed and introduced bees have negative impacts on wild bees: an updated review. Curr Res Insect Sci. 2022 Jul 22;2:100043. doi: 10.1016/j.cris.2022.100043.
- NatureScot; Guidance – Honeybees and Beekeeping on protected areas.
- Anna Torné-Noguera, Anselm Rodrigo, Sergio Osorio, Jordi Bosch; Collateral effects of beekeeping: Impacts on pollen-nectar resources and wild bee communities. Basic and Applied Ecology. Volume 17, Issue 3, 2016
- Casanelles-Abella, J., Moretti, M. Challenging the sustainability of urban beekeeping using evidence from Swiss cities. Urban Sustain 2, 3 (2022)
- Ropars L, Dajoz I, Fontaine C, Muratet A, Geslin B (2019) Wild pollinator activity negatively related to honeybee colony densities in urban context. PLoS ONE 14(9)
- Herrera Carlos M. 2020 Gradual replacement of wild bees by honeybees in flowers of the Mediterranean Basin over the last 50 years Proc. R. Soc.
- Mark Patterson. 2019. The need for adequate forage and nutrition for Honeybees.
- Elbgami, T., Kunin, W.E., Hughes, W.O.H. et al. The effect of proximity to a honeybee apiary on bumblebee colony fitness, development, and performance. Apidologie 45, 504–513 (2014)
- David W. Roubik; Competitive Interactions Between Neotropical Pollinators and Africanized Honey Bees.Science201,1030-1032(1978)
- Effects of Introduced Bees on Native Ecosystems; Dave Goulson ; Vol. 34:1-26 (2003)
- PAINI, D.R. (2004), Impact of the introduced honey bee (*Apis mellifera*) (Hymenoptera: Apidae) on native bees: A review. Austral Ecology, 29: 399-407
- William P. de Haan, Rocío Quintana, César Vilas, Andrés Cózar, Miquel Canals, Oriol Uviedo, Anna Sanchez-Vidal. The dark side of artificial greening: Plastic turfs as widespread pollutants of aquatic environments. Environmental Pollution, Volume 334, 2023
- Sánchez-Sotomayor D, Martín-Higuera A, Gil-Delgado JA, Gálvez Á, Bernat-Ponce E. Artificial grass in parks as a potential new threat for urban bird communities. *Bird Conservation International*. 2023
- Francis, Robert. (2018). Artificial lawns: Environmental and societal considerations of an ecological simulacrum. Urban Forestry & Urban Greening. 30. 10.1016/j.ufug.2018
- Golden, Leslie M. 2021. The Contribution of Artificial Turf to Global Warming. Sustainability and Climate Change.



### 3. Equalities

a) How does the initiative impact on people who share a **protected characteristic**?

Protected Characteristic	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Age	x			Consultation with relevant internal officers indicates that the proposed policies will not have any negative impacts on those who share a protected characteristic. A built-in mechanism for exceptions to the policies if there is a strong case for them will mitigate for any potential negative effects on protected characteristics. Additionally, groups with protected characteristics have been identified as most at risk from biodiversity loss and climate change. The ecosystem services we receive from our natural environment e.g. flood management / pollination, are at risk from biodiversity loss. This is likely to disproportionately affect those with protected characteristics, who are most vulnerable to the loss of ecosystem services. Protecting native biodiversity through implementing this policy will have a positive impact for protected characteristics.
Disability	x			
Gender reassignment	x			
Marriage & civil partnership	x			
Pregnancy and maternity	x			
Race	x			
Religion or belief	x			
Sex	x			
Sexual orientation	x			

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?
If implementation of the policies will have a negative impact, an exception can be made.

b) How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Public Sector Equality Duty**?

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?

To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation			x	The proposed policies do not positively or negatively discriminate against any individuals or groups of people.
To advance equality of opportunity between different groups			x	The proposed policies will not have an impact on advancing equality of opportunity between different groups.
To foster good relations between different groups			x	The proposed policies will not have an impact on fostering good relations between different groups.

**What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?**

n/a

#### 4. Socio Economic Duty

Impact	Details of the impact/advantage/disadvantage
Positive/Advantage	Those living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in the same society are most at risk from biodiversity loss and climate change. These policies, by helping to maintain and enhance nature in NPT, will benefit all who live and work in NPT and though it does not directly target those with socio-economic disadvantage, the benefits may be more pronounced.
Negative/Disadvantage	n/a
Neutral	n/a

**What action will be taken to reduce inequality of outcome**

n/a

**5. Community Cohesion/Social Exclusion/Poverty**

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Community Cohesion			x	If a potential negative impact on community cohesion would be caused through the application of these policies, an exception could be made if considered necessary to do so and if there are no alternatives.
Social Exclusion			x	If a potential negative impact on social exclusion would be caused through the application of these policies, an exception could be made if considered necessary to do so and if there are no alternatives.
Poverty			x	If a potential negative impact on poverty would be caused through the application of these policies, an exception could be made if considered necessary to do so and if there are no alternatives.

**What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?**

Exceptions are built into the policies to ensure there will not be negative impacts.

## 6. Welsh

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this effect?
What effect does the initiative have on: – people's opportunities to use the Welsh language			x	The policies will be published bilingually and application of these policies will adhere to the Welsh Language Standards.
– treating the Welsh and English languages equally			x	The policies will be published bilingually and application of these policies will adhere to the Welsh Language Standards.

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?
n/a

## 7. Biodiversity

How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Biodiversity Duty**?

Biodiversity Duty	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To maintain and enhance biodiversity	x			Preventing the unnecessary installation of honeybee hives will have a positive effect on wild pollinators in the proposed areas. Managed honeybees are known to affect wild pollinators in two main ways: competition for floral resources, and the spread of diseases. The honeybee is not an endangered species and in NPT we have small populations of endangered wild pollinators, such as the Shril Carder Bee ( <i>Bombus sylvarum</i> ). These endangered wild bees are threatened by the introduction of honeybees, which could outcompete them for resources. Preventing unnecessary installation of honeybee hives will help to maintain and enhance the wild bee populations of NPT, which are already under pressure.

			Artificial grass has also been shown to have negative impacts on biodiversity e.g. by reducing foraging opportunities for wild birds, as well as leaching micro-plastics into the environment. Preventing unnecessary use of artificial grass will contribute to the maintenance of biodiversity in the county.
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.	x		Using the latest estimates, an artificial lawn of 60sqm for an average urban garden will create about 435kg CO2e of greenhouse gas emissions through the plastic manufacturing process. Artificial grass also reaches significantly greater temperatures than those reached by natural grass under the same weather conditions, contributing to the urban heat island effect. Preventing the unnecessary use of artificial grass will help to promote the resilience of ecosystems in the county.

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?
<p>If there is an exception to this policy where there is a strong case for the installation of a hive for food production (in exceptional circumstances) or heritage reasons, the beekeeper will be required to provide additional forage in order to avoid overwhelming the natural resources already in place, which wild bees will already be relying on. Creation of approximately 1 hectare of diverse, flowering habitat will be required per hive. This area should provide a continuous source of nectar and pollen throughout the growing season, without putting a strain on wild bee populations already present. The beekeeper will also be required to practise good husbandry to prevent disease.</p> <p>If there is an exception to the policy where there is a strong case for the installation of artificial grass, the proposer will be required to create alternative habitat of greater area than that which is being lost to artificial grass e.g. an area of amenity grassland will be required to be managed going forward as wildflower meadow.</p>

## 8. Well-being of Future Generations

How have the five ways of working been applied in the development of the initiative?

Ways of Working	Details
i. <b>Long term</b> – looking at least 10 years (and up to 25 years) ahead	Although the installation of artificial grass may seem like the best option at the time, it is not a long-term solution. Artificial grass only has a shelf life of 8-15 years. Whilst technically it is recyclable, it is not widely recycled in Wales. Currently (September 2024), the Council has no viable option but to dispose of it via energy from waste. At the end of the lifespan, the artificial grass will be required to be replaced at a cost. It is not a sustainable long-term solution.

ii. <b>Prevention</b> – preventing problems occurring or getting worse	The proposed policies are part of the solution helping to tackle the loss of biodiversity and meet the Council's Section 6 Duty. Application of the policies will help to maintain and enhance biodiversity and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems.
iii. <b>Collaboration</b> – working with other services internal or external	Application of the policies will be delivered by the Countryside and Wildlife Team in collaboration with Estates, Streetcare and Planning Policy, as well as other service areas which it may implicate, assisting all service areas to meet their Biodiversity Duty and achieve against the Well-being Objectives.
iv. <b>Involvement</b> – involving people, ensuring they reflect the diversity of the population	These policies have been drafted with input from other service areas including Streetcare and Estates. Feedback has indicated that the policies will not have negative impacts, particularly due to the built-in mechanism for exceptions where there is a strong case for them.
v. <b>Integration</b> – making connections to maximise contribution to:	Positive action on biodiversity is far reaching and all-encompassing and therefore will have a positive impact on the Council's wellbeing objectives. A species and habitat-rich environment will ultimately improve the well-being of children, young people and all adults living in the County Borough.
<b>Council's well-being objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To ensure all our communities are thriving and sustainable.</li> <li>▪ To ensure our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations.</li> </ul>
<b>Other public bodies objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To ensure all our communities are thriving and sustainable.</li> <li>▪ To ensure our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations.</li> </ul>

## 9. Monitoring Arrangements

Provide information on the monitoring arrangements to:

Monitor the impact of the initiative on Equalities, Community Cohesion, the Welsh Measure, Biodiversity Duty and the Wellbeing Objectives.

Application of these policies will be monitored and recorded via the NPTC Biodiversity Duty Plan Implementation Report, which is due to be published in 2026.

## 10. Assessment Conclusions

Please provide details of the conclusions reached in relation to each element of the assessment:

	Conclusion
<b>Equalities</b>	Biodiversity affects all generations, and all areas of society and nature recovery will help to reduce the risks for groups with protected characteristics. Consultation with relevant internal officers indicates that the proposed policies will not have any negative impacts on those who share a protected characteristic. A built-in mechanism for exceptions to the policies if there is a strong case for them will mitigate for any potential negative effects on protected characteristics.
<b>Socio Economic Disadvantage</b>	Those living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in the same society are most at risk from biodiversity loss and climate change. The policies, by helping to maintain and enhance nature in NPT, will benefit all who live and work in NPT and though it does not directly target those with socio-economic disadvantage, the benefits may be more pronounced.
<b>Community Cohesion/ Social Exclusion/Poverty</b>	If a potential negative impact on Community Cohesion/ Social Exclusion/Poverty <b>would</b> be caused through the application of these policies, an exception could be made if considered necessary to do so and if there are no alternatives.
<b>Welsh</b>	The policies will be published bilingually and adhere to Welsh Language Standards.
<b>Biodiversity</b>	The proposed policies are specifically aimed at preventing negative impacts on maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems. Their application will have a positive impact on the biodiversity of the county.
<b>Well-being of Future Generations</b>	The policies have involved people in their development and will involve others in their application, seeks to prevent the nature emergency worsening and achieves against the Council's Well-being objectives.

## 11. Sign off

	Name	Position	Date
<b>Completed by</b>	<b>Rose Revera</b>	<b>Ecologist</b>	<b>15/1/2025</b>
<b>Signed off by</b>	<b>Ceri Morris</b>	<b>Head of Planning &amp; Public Protection</b>	<b>26<sup>th</sup> March 2025</b>

## **Appendix 2**

### **Policy: Use of artificial grass on Council owned/ managed land**

The Council is one of the largest landowners in the County Borough and is fortunate to be home to many parks, gardens and recreational areas. We recognise that activities within our green open spaces can have a significant impact on the local environment.

Artificial grass has become increasingly popular in recent years, due to the perceived notion that it is easier to maintain. Artificial grass is made of plastic and although it doesn't require mowing, it does require regular cleaning and only has a life span of 8 to 15 years, after which it is not currently possible to dispose of it sustainably. Using the latest estimates, an artificial lawn of 60sqm for an average urban garden will create about 435kg CO<sub>2</sub>e of greenhouse gas emissions through the plastic manufacturing process. Research has also shown that artificial grass has negative impacts on biodiversity, e.g. by reducing foraging opportunities for wild birds, as well as leaching micro-plastics into the environment. Artificial grass also reaches significantly greater temperatures than those reached by natural grass under the same weather conditions, contributing to the urban heat island effect.

Neath Port Talbot Council has a legal duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. We are also seeking to 'decarbonise' the county borough, by minimising the emission of greenhouse gases. Considering the above information about artificial grass, and these duties and responsibilities, the unnecessary use of artificial grass should be prevented.

The Authority doesn't currently use artificial grass on its public estate, with the exception of some high-performance sports pitches. In implementing this policy, this Council will:

- Prevent the installation of artificial grass on any Council owned or controlled land.

An exception to this policy is when artificial grass is required for high-performance sports pitches or play areas, which may be rendered unusable without it.

This policy is intended to cover future installations of artificial grass post-adoption of the policy. There may be Council owned or managed sites where artificial grass has been installed prior to the adoption of this policy. While this policy applies to all Council owned or managed properties, please note that management control over leased properties may be limited. As a result, the policy may not be fully enforceable in these locations.

This policy and its implementation will be monitored and will be reviewed in light of other Council policies and changing legislation as required.



## Appendix 3

### **Policy: Installation of honeybee hives on Council owned/ managed land**

The Council is one of the largest landowners in the County Borough and is fortunate to be home to many parks, gardens and recreational areas. We recognise that activities within our green open spaces can have a significant impact on the local environment.

Whilst honeybees (*Apis mellifera*) are very important for food production and in some cases for wellbeing, unfortunately, under some circumstances, managed hives can have a harmful effect on local biodiversity. There is increasing concern that declines in wild pollinators may be exacerbated by unnaturally high densities of honeybees, associated with some forms of beekeeping.

Managed honeybees are known to affect wild pollinators in two main ways: competition for floral resources, and the spread of diseases. Each hive introduces an extra 35-40,000 honeybees to the area, and therefore beekeepers should create significant floral resources for each hive in order to reduce the pressure on wild bees already present in the locality of the hive. The honeybee is not an endangered species and in NPT we have small populations of endangered wild pollinators, such as the Shrill Carder Bee (*Bombus sylvarum*). These endangered wild bees are threatened by the introduction of honeybees, which could outcompete them for resources.

NPTC has a legal duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. In light of the above information, the installation of honeybee hives on NPTC owned or controlled land should therefore be prevented, in order to prevent damage to local biodiversity. In implementing this policy, this Council will:

- Refuse permission for the installation of honeybee hives on any land that is owned or controlled by the Council.

Exceptions to this policy will be considered for sites with historic or heritage history of bee keeping, or if wanted for food production (in exceptional circumstances). However, beekeepers will be required to provide enough new suitable habitat to support the hive, to prevent competition with the wild bees already present.

This policy is intended to cover future installations of honeybee hives post-adoption of the policy. There may be Council owned or managed sites where honeybee hives have been installed prior to the adoption of this policy. While this policy applies to all Council owned or managed properties, please note that management control over leased properties may be limited. As a result, the policy may not be fully enforceable in these locations.

This policy and its implementation will be monitored and will be reviewed in light of other Council policies and changing legislation as required.

You can read more about honeybees and conservation in the position statement on the [Bumblebee Conservation Trust website](#).