

# **ENVIRONMENT & HIGHWAYS CABINET BOARD**

## **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING - N.PEARCE**

**23<sup>rd</sup> JULY 2015**

### **SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION**

**WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL**

### **NEATH PORT TALBOT BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN**

#### **Purpose of Report**

To report on the new format for the Local Biodiversity Action Plan and to seek support for the Council's continued commitment to facilitating the implementation of the plan.

#### **Background**

The Neath Port Talbot Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) highlights the proposed action that is needed to safeguard and enhance the species and habitats of importance in the County Borough. The previous 5 year Plan produced by the NPT Biodiversity Forum, running until 2012, was adopted by the Council in June 2008. The 2008-2012 Plan was agreed to be applied until such time as a review had taken place. The Plan indicated targets for maintaining, achieving favourable conditions, in addition to restoring and enhancing priority and locally important habitats and species. Many of the targets had been set and filtered down from the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) which was reviewed via the Wales Biodiversity Partnership (the leading and co-ordinating partnership for biodiversity action in Wales).

In 2012 the UK BAP was succeeded by the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. This demonstrates how the work of the four countries and the UK contributes to achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (see <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/ukbap> for a timeline of Biodiversity Action in the UK). Each UK Country is now committed to having its own biodiversity strategy. The Welsh Government is now working on the Natural Resource Management programme which will include biodiversity conservation embedded in an ecosystem approach - *“A strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an*

*equitable way*” (CBD1993). This change in direction from conservation of single species and habitats to conserving ecosystems fundamentally changes the way biodiversity is dealt with by government and helps to create direct links with biodiversity conservation and our wellbeing. The allocation of funding from the Welsh Government will also change as a consequence of this new approach.

### **The Reviewed LBAP**

The NPT LBAP is facilitated by NPTCBC Countryside and Wildlife Team on behalf of the NPT Biodiversity Forum. The Forum is made up of representatives from voluntary and government organisations, local businesses plus individuals with an interest in local wildlife and has a wealth of expertise relating to the local area. The Forum is responsible for the production and implementation of the LBAP.

The Forum with support from the Countryside and Wildlife Team has undertaken a review of the LBAP, and a new simpler approach has been agreed to be taken forward. Work on this new approach allows greater freedom for local plans to be tailored to their areas rather than trying to slot in to an overarching UK wide approach, although reporting of losses and successes will be compatible with required UK reporting mechanisms.

The overarching commitment of the new plan is to restore and enhance the biodiversity of Neath Port Talbot, this links in with the Authority’s statutory duty for Biodiversity Conservation under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006). The plan will particularly focus on ensuring that this commitment is applied through appropriate action for all habitat and species set out as of principal importance for conservation in Wales under the said mentioned Act (S42 list), that occur within the County Borough. In addition, the NPT Biodiversity Forum is able to put forward additional species/habitats and argue for their inclusion in the LBAP as local priority species. Any additional species will only be added as part of the review process mentioned below and reported to committee prior to inclusion. Only one local species not included on the S42 list has been agreed to be added to the LBAP as part of the current review: Double-Line Moth.

In light of this refocus for the LBAP, the NPT Biodiversity Forum has agreed a new way of prioritising wildlife conservation in NPT. The reviewed approach will set out a framework for conservation action that will be populated with projects in response to identified need, allowing action to be appropriately targeted. Whilst detailed targets and actions are not to be proposed from the outset unlike previous versions of the plan, actions or projects will be added as

specific issues, such as declines and threats, are identified. All actions and projects will contribute towards the overarching commitment of the LBAP to restore and enhance the biodiversity of Neath Port Talbot; thereby aiding the Authority to deliver in respect of its duty for biodiversity conservation.

The reviewed plan contains spreadsheets for individual habitats and species or collections such as pollinators. These show the current status and trends in NPT, known threats and records all projects that contribute to the conservation, restoration and enhancement of the habitats and species. All work, however small, is recorded here. This is mapped and can be compared with other information such as known distribution of a species. These maps show how much work is being done in NPT by all partners; it also allows the Biodiversity Forum to focus resources where most needed in reaction to declines and threats. The plan is a fluid document. At each NPT Biodiversity Forum meeting project information is collected. The Countryside and Wildlife Team maintains the data and highlights any issues that need to be addressed. In addition, the data can be easily accessed and queried in response to any specific requests for information or for necessary reporting to Natural Resource Wales, Welsh Government and UK Government. The document is not published because it is constantly changing, although detail of the reviewed plan will be provided on the NPTCBC website.

Examples of individual habitat and species spreadsheet details and an example of mapped recent projects in the Neath area are appended to this report. For any of these projects more detailed information can be obtained from the Lead Partner organisation to be named in the spreadsheet.

A review report will be produced every 5 years, or as required for reporting in line with emerging Welsh Government legislative requirements, to assess the effectiveness of this approach and report on the works completed. In addition, as the plan is intended to be iterative and able to respond to changing pressures periodic reports will also be prepared and presented to Members to provide an update on any necessary changes, to add or remove any local species or habitats; and to provide an update on delivery.

## **Equalities**

A Screening Assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the assessment it has been determined that this function does not require an Equality Impact Assessment.

## **Consultation Outcomes**

Consultations have taken place with members of the NPT Biodiversity Forum, and the Action Plan has been designed as a consequence of those discussions.

## **Financial Implications**

The changes to the format of the LBAP will allow projects to be slotted in to the ecosystem approach, especially though the enhanced mapping function. This means that however future funding schemes are implemented NPTCBC will be in a position to draw down grant money to carry out a range of biodiversity and ecosystem conservation projects.

## **Sustainability Appraisal**

The introduction of Action plans to reinforce Post 2010 Biodiversity Framework helps develop sustainable communities and a more sustainable environment.

## **Recommendation**

It is therefore recommended that the Authority support the new approach to the Local Biodiversity Action Plan, including any actions that come forward (where resources are available to do so and where relevant permissions have been obtained).

## **Reason for Proposed Decision**

To ensure that local ecological systems are managed and protected in accordance with National Legislation and to ensure that NPTCBC are able to draw down on available funding streams.

## **List of Background Papers**

Post 2010 Biodiversity Framework  
Local Biodiversity Action Plan

## **Wards Affected**

All

## **Officer Contact**

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## **COMPLIANCE STATEMENT**

### **NEATH PORT TALBOT BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN**

#### **(a) Implementation of Decision**

The decision will be implemented after the three day call in period.

#### **(b) Sustainability Appraisal**

##### **Community Plan Impacts**

Economic Prosperity	No impact
Education & Lifelong Learning	Positive
Better Health & Wellbeing	Positive
Environment & Transport	Positive
Crime & Disorder	No impact

##### **Other Impacts**

Welsh Language	No impact
Sustainable Development	Positive
Equalities	No impact
Social Inclusion	No impact

#### **(c) Consultation**

This item is not subject to external consultation.

## APPENDIX 1

### Example 1

<b>Ponds</b>		Attention							
<b>Lead partner</b>									
<b>Local status 2014</b>	Increasing								
<b>Last survey date</b>	None								
<b>Actions needed</b>	Maintain existing ponds								
<b>Main achievements 2000+</b>	Chaelas ponds projects very successful								
<b>Actions</b>									
<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Action status</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Lead partner</b>	<b>More info</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>y</b>	
Banwen Ponds	Ponds	Boardwalk	Complete	2014	NPT CBC		285787	209572	
Banwen Ponds	Ponds	Native planting	Complete	2014	NPT CBC		285787	209572	
Afan Argoed centre	Ponds	Restoration x1	Complete	2013	NPT CBC		282077	195052	
Awel-y-mor Primary	Ponds	Creation x1	Complete	2013	NPT CBC		274621	190339	
Baglan Primary	Ponds	Replacement boardwalk 30 meters fu	Complete	2010	NPT CBC		274921	192682	
Baglan Primary	Ponds	Restoration x1 - lined - INNS found	Complete	2013	NPT CBC		274921	192682	
Catwg Primary	Ponds	Creation x1	Complete	2012	NPT CBC		275857	198655	
Cilpentan Farm Pond	Ponds	Creation x2	Complete	2013	NPT CBC		271573	211525	
Craig Gwladus CP	Ponds	Creation x2	Complete	2013	NPT CBC		276500	199300	
Craig Gwladus CP	Ponds	Creation x4	Complete	2009	NPT CBC		276500	199300	
Craig Gwladus CP	Ponds	Creation x1	Complete	2013	NPT CBC		276500	199300	
Crynalit Infants	Ponds	Restoration x1	Complete	2013	NPT CBC		276625	196417	
Crynalit Juniors	Ponds	Creation x2	Complete	2013	NPT CBC		276625	196417	
Cwmnedd Primary	Ponds	Creation x1	Complete	2013	NPT CBC		288024	206661	
Cwrt Sart Primary	Ponds	Creation x 3	Complete	2009	NPT CBC		274436	195438	
Fairyland Allotments	Ponds	Creation x1	Complete	2009	NPT CBC		276375	197581	
Gnoll Lake and Country Park	Ponds	Creation x6	Complete	2009	NPT CBC		276000	197000	
Godre r Graig	Ponds	Creation x1	Complete	2009	NPT CBC		275144	206857	
Margam Country Park	Ponds	Creation x5 - Million Ponds Project	Complete	2009	NPT CBC		280600	186300	
Margam Country Park	Ponds	Restoration x1	Complete	2013	NPT CBC		280600	186300	
Margam Country Park	Ponds	Creation x5 Margam mini nature rese	Complete	2008	NPT CBC		280600	186300	
Plas Farm Cottages	Ponds	Creation x1	Complete	2013	NPT CBC		274869	204053	
St Joseph's Primary	Ponds	Creation x1	Complete	2013	NPT CBC		275726	190540	
St Teresa's Primary	Ponds	Creation x1	Complete	2013	NPT CBC		274360	190473	
Tairgwaith (GCG CC)	Ponds	create 3 ponds Planting event and hib	Complete	2013	NPT CBC		270357	212307	
Wauanceirch Primary	Ponds	Creation x1	Complete	2013	NPT CBC		274581	198248	
YGG Pontardawe	Ponds	Creation x1	Complete	2013	NPT CBC		272088	204649	
Ysgol Hendre Primary	Ponds	Restoration x1 - lined	Complete	2010	NPT CBC		274297	200328	
Banwen Ponds	Ponds	Created x5	Complete	2013	NPT CBC	P:\PROJEC	285787	209572	

## Example 2

<b>DEPTFORD PINK</b>	Dianthus armeria	Attention	Deptford Pink						
<b>Lead partner</b>									
<b>Local status 2014</b>	Stable								
<b>Last survey date</b>	2013								
<b>Actions needed</b>	Monitor mitigation sites for success								
<b>Main achievements 2000+</b>	1 mitigation wall established in 2012								
<b>Actions Completed/Ongoing</b>									
<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Action status</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Lead partner</b>	<b>More info</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>y</b>	
The Wall	Deptford Pink	Weeding of the wall	Complete	2014	NPT CBC	Done by Ed Tucker on behalf of the biodiversity unit	273869	193320	
The Wall	Deptford Pink	Weeding of the wall	Ongoing	2014	NPT CBC	Countryside and Wildlife section - officers trained in identification of DP and Wall bedstraw and will undertake weeding as appropriate	273869	193320	
The Wall	Deptford Pink	Weeding of the wall	Complete	2013	NPT CBC	Done by hand by the Biodiversity unit	273869	193320	
The Wall	Deptford Pink	Monitoring of the wall	Complete	2013	NPT CBC		273869	193320	
Baglan Reservoir	Deptford Pink	Survey	Complete	2013	CH	Annual survey	274100	192900	



## Map of recent projects in the Neath area

