



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL

CABINET

17th November 2021

Report of the Director of Environment and Regeneration Nicola Pearce

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All

Environment (Wales) Act 2016 – Consideration of the updated Biodiversity Duty Plan (2020-2023); the publication procedures to be implemented; and becoming a signatory of the ‘Edinburgh Declaration’ on global biodiversity.

Purpose of the Report

To consider the updated Biodiversity Duty Plan (BDP) 2020-2023, the publication procedures to be implemented and becoming a signatory of the ‘Edinburgh Declaration’ on global biodiversity.

Executive Summary

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 S6 Duty requires formal demonstration of compliance. The Council is therefore required by the Act to prepare, publish and keep under review a plan setting out how it intends to comply with the duty.

The first iteration of the Council’s Biodiversity Duty Plan (BDP) was published in December 2017. Subsequently, in accordance with legislative requirements the Council considered the BDP Implementation Report in December 2020 which set out a limited number of recommendations to be incorporated into a revised version of the Plan.

In addition, in September 2021, Julie James MS – Minister for Climate Change, invited all Local Authorities in Wales to sign up to the ‘Edinburgh Declaration’ on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

This report therefore seeks Member endorsement of both the second iteration of the BDP (2020-2023) and becoming a signatory of the 'Edinburgh Declaration' on global biodiversity.

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 required by the Act to prepare and publish a plan setting out how it intends to comply with the Duty.

Following the publication of the Plan, the Act further requires that all public authorities must publish a report on what they have done to comply with the S6 Duty. In order to comply with the Duty, Councils should embed the consideration of biodiversity and ecosystems into their early thinking and business planning, including any policies, plans, programmes and projects, as well as their day to day activities.

In December 2017, the Council published its first Biodiversity Duty Plan outlining the natural resources that exist within Neath Port Talbot, why they are so important and what activities were already underway to protect them. It also set out the mechanisms for delivery, along with detailed actions to be achieved and milestones for reporting.

Implementation of the Biodiversity Duty Plan

In December 2020, the Council considered the 'Implementation Report' associated with the first BDP – this report set out what had been achieved, what needed to be improved and set out what revisions and improvements were necessary to the published BDP, including recommendations of how to move each of the actions forward.

Following endorsement of the Implementation Report by Council on 2nd December 2020, the key outcomes and recommendations set out have informed the preparation of the updated BDP.

Biodiversity Duty Plan (2020-2023)

The updated Biodiversity Duty Plan (2020-2023) is presented in **Appendix 1**. As before, the Plan has been prepared by the Countryside and Wildlife Team in consultation with departments across the Council. The document outlines actions already being undertaken by the Council and further actions that will be undertaken to ensure compliance with the Duty.

The Plan focuses on evaluating our existing work practices and assimilating the statutory duty into wider Council functions. This will result in a more joined-up approach between services, fulfilling both the Environment (Wales) Act requirements and the sustainability ethos embedded in the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

Following Welsh Government guidance, the actions assigned to the Plan have been drawn up in line with the objectives of the Welsh Government's Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) for Wales. The NRAP sets out the objectives needed in Wales to deliver its ambition to reverse the decline in biodiversity. It also sets out the actions needed to contribute to these objectives, which, where relevant to the Council, have been incorporated into the Plan.

The 6 objectives incorporated into the Plan include requirements such as embedding biodiversity into decision making at all levels; managing and enhancing our habitats; improving our understanding and monitoring of biodiversity; and putting in place a framework for delivery.

Advice and guidance on implementation of the Duty, and reporting against the Plan, will be undertaken by the Countryside and Wildlife Team.

Publication Procedures and Next Steps

Pending approval by Council, the BDP will be made available on the Council's website. In accordance with the Council's Welsh Language Standards Policy, the document will be made available in Welsh.

Hard copies of the Plan will also be available for purchase at a reasonable charge. In common with previous practice, it is suggested that the price be based on the cost of printing together with post and package at the prevailing cost. Electronic copies will be made available at no cost.

Moving forward, at the end of every 3 year period an Implementation Report will be prepared in order to again review the actions and progress made towards achieving them. The next report will therefore be produced towards the end of 2023.

Edinburgh Declaration on Global Biodiversity

In September 2021, Julie James MS – Minister for Climate Change, invited all Local Authorities (LAs) in Wales to join Welsh Government in supporting the 'Edinburgh Declaration' – the Declaration is a political statement setting out commitments to implement the post-2020 global biodiversity framework locally.

The Minister recognises the key role of LAs in taking forward local level actions for nature and is requesting all Councils to support the principles as set out in the Declaration, thereby ensuring people who live across Wales can live in harmony with nature and protect valuable local ecosystems for future generations.

In signing up to the Declaration, the Council will be signalling its support to call upon UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Parties to:

- Take the transformative action required to halt biodiversity loss;
- Recognise the vital role of subnational and local governments;
- Support a dedicated decision on a new Plan of Action for subnational governments, city and local authorities. A decision to be taken at COP15: the Conference of Parties, who signed the UN Convention on Climate Change, and are meeting in China in Autumn 2021; and
- Develop a multi-stakeholder platform for the implementation of the post-2020 framework.

Members should note that the majority of commitments set out in the Edinburgh Declaration are already aligned with and being delivered through the various actions outlined in the Council's Biodiversity Duty Plan.

As part of the Declaration approach however, a new plan of action and targets to monitor progress will emerge. Once further clarification is available on such targets and plan of action, the Biodiversity Duty Plan and associated resources will be reviewed to establish its suitability to deliver local action to address the nature emergency and continue to meet the commitments of the Declaration.

Financial Impacts

Given there is no additional funding being made available for the implementation of the S6 Duty, the actions assigned to the Plan are intended to be achievable within current budgets, with a focus on making changes to work practices that can be achieved without placing a financial burden on the Council.

Improvement works requiring additional resources are intended to be delivered through the use of external grants or partnership working.

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 2**) has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required.

In summary, the updated BDP and signing of the Edinburgh Declaration will make a positive contribution to biodiversity conservation and enhancement in Neath Port Talbot and beyond, which will have knock on positive outcomes for people in the county borough, particularly in relation to health and well-being.

The plan ensures the Council will comply with its statutory duty under the Environment Wales Act and particularly contribute to the Resilient Wales Goal of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, Council Well-being objectives and global commitments for biodiversity.

Socio-Economic Duty

Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society. Implementation of the actions will be inclusive and as such will support equality and social cohesion. The plan and any related communications will be provided in both Welsh and English. Through the conservation of biodiversity the people of Neath Port Talbot will benefit through improved health and well-being, particularly in communities of high deprivation and health inequalities.

Valleys Communities Impacts

Delivering on the S6 Duty through implementation of the Biodiversity Duty Plan would bring equal benefits across the whole of the County Borough.

Workforce Impacts

No current implications, but will be kept under review following further development of the Edinburgh Declaration's action plan and targets.

Legal Impacts

No implications.

Risk Management Impacts

The Council will be in breach of its statutory duties to prepare, publish and report on the implementation of the Biodiversity Duty Plan should there be a failure to implement the proposed recommendations.

Consultation

The Plan has been the subject of internal consultation and its final form reflects

the outcome of that process. There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

That having considered the report and having due regard to the Integrated Impact Assessment, it is resolved to commend the following to Council for approval:

1. The Biodiversity Duty Plan (2020-2023) as presented in **Appendix 1** be agreed.
2. The publication procedures as set out in the report are implemented.
3. That authorisation is given to the Head of Planning and Public Protection to make the necessary arrangements for the Council to become a signatory to the Edinburgh Declaration on Global Biodiversity.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

The recommendations are needed to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and to recognise the key role of the Council in taking forward local level actions for nature, thereby supporting the principles as set out in the Edinburgh Declaration.

Implementation of Decision

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

Appendices

Appendix 1 – NPTC Biodiversity Duty Plan (2020-2023).
Appendix 2 – First Stage Integrated Impact Assessment.

List of Background Papers

Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
Nature Recovery Plan for Wales 2015.

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APPENDIX 1

Biodiversity Duty Plan
(2020-2023)

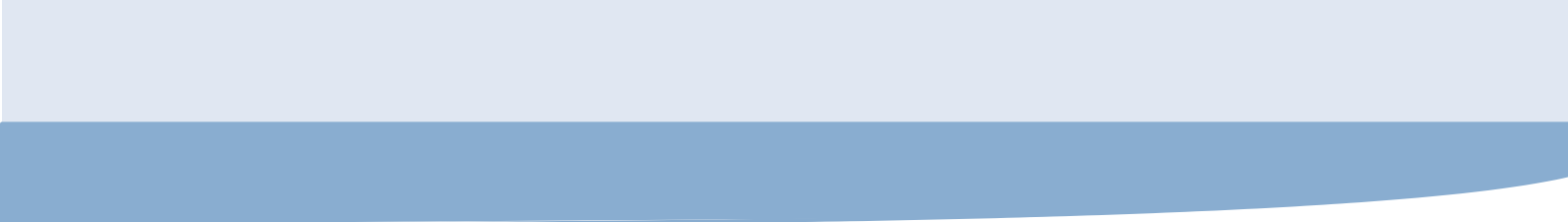


Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Neath Port Talbot Council Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023

December 2021

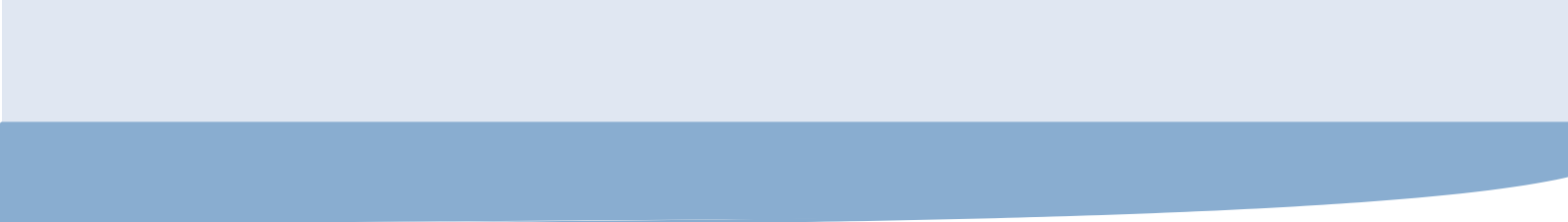




Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Foreword..... | 5 |
| 1 Introduction | 6 |
| 2 Structure and Content | 7 |
| 3 Natural Resources in Neath Port Talbot | 8 |
| 4 Environment (Wales) Act 2016 | 10 |
| 5 Other Legislative and Policy Context | 12 |
| 5.2 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015..... | 12 |
| 5.3 Well-being Goals..... | 12 |
| Table 1: Biodiversity Duty Plan – contributing to the Well-being Goals..... | 13 |
| 5.4 Sustainable Development Principle | 13 |
| Table 2: Biodiversity Duty Plan – applying the sustainable development principle..... | 14 |
| 5.5 Neath Port Talbot Public Service Board (PSB) Local Well-being Plan (2018-2023) | 15 |
| 5.6 Neath Port Talbot Corporate Plan (2019-2022)..... | 15 |
| 5.7 National Policies..... | 16 |
| 5.8 State of Natural Resources Report | 16 |
| 5.9 Natural Resources Policy..... | 17 |
| 5.10 Area Statements | 17 |
| 5.11 Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales..... | 18 |
| 5.12 Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (2011-2026) | 19 |
| 5.13 The Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy | 20 |
| 5.14 Destination Management Plan (2015-2020) | 20 |
| 6 Implementation and Monitoring | 21 |
| 6.1 Implementation | 21 |
| 6.2 Monitoring and Reporting | 21 |
| 7 Actions | 23 |
| 8 Abbreviations and Acronyms..... | 36 |
| 9 Glossary..... | 36 |
| Appendices..... | 38 |

Cover page – pond dipping, Bogbean, Comma butterfly



Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the Neath Port Talbot Council (NPTC) Biodiversity Duty Plan, 2020. This Plan has been produced following a review of the actions in the 2017 plan.

Neath Port Talbot has a diversity of habitats, from the coast, through river valley floors, woodland covered valley sides and onto hilltop moorland. This allows the county to be home to many varieties of species. It is a special place for biodiversity and I feel privileged to work and live in such an incredible area.

Neath Port Talbot Council 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 fulfil that duty. It will act as a driver for conservation activities throughout Neath Port Talbot.

There is a long tradition of environmental conservation in NPT with many groups involved. While still working with these groups for the benefit of biodiversity, this plan sets out what we, as a Local Authority, are doing to meet this legal duty.

Recently the Welsh Government has introduced a number of new legislative requirements for public bodies and local authorities to comply with. These aim to change the way we plan and deliver services. They put sustainable development principles at the heart of all public bodies' decision making. The NPTC Corporate Plan, Shaping NPT 2019 -2022, recognises this requirement for change and the preparatory work needed to ensure we discharge our statutory duties. The Biodiversity Duty Plan outlines how we will deliver our statutory duties with regards to biodiversity. It also explains how, through this, we are delivering well-being objectives and the ways of working under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

In this age of a climate and ecological crises, NPTC are committed to protecting and enhancing biodiversity in carrying out all of our functions.



Councillor Annette Wingrave
Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Sustainable Development

1 Introduction

“The Earth is at a tipping point and we face a stark choice: either we continue as we are and irreparably damage our planet, or we remember our unique power as human beings and our continual ability to lead, innovate and problem-solve. People can achieve great things. The next ten years present us with one of our greatest tests – a decade of action to repair the Earth.”

Prince William

From <<https://earthshotprize.org/>>

- 1.1 Governments around the globe have recognised the Climate and Nature emergencies. [The State of Nature Report for Wales](#) produced in 2019 paints a worrying picture for nature with key headlines including: 8% of species in Wales are threatened with extinction; since 1970 the UK has seen 41% of species have seen declines in their populations; in Wales wildlife is found in 30% fewer places. Much of these declines in nature are attributable to human activity such as agricultural practices, pollution and urbanisation. Loss of nature impacts our lives. The benefits we rely on day to day that are gleaned from nature, e.g. pollination of our food, flood alleviation and scrubbing of air pollutants from the air we breathe, are rapidly being eroded by such declines in nature.
- 1.2 Wales has a suit of strong environmental legislation. The United Nations stated “We hope that what Wales is doing today the world will do tomorrow” about the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#). This act, together with the [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016](#), seek to ensure that Wales is a sustainable and forward looking country.
- 1.3 Under Section 6 of the [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016](#) “the Act”, Neath Port Talbot Council (NPTC), has a statutory duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of its functions. As part of that duty we are required to prepare and publish a plan on how we intend to comply with this; the biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty.
- 1.4 The first [Biodiversity Duty Plan for Neath Port Talbot](#) (NPT) was published in December 2017. In this there were targeted actions that would be undertaken by the Council to meet the requirements of the Act. Subsequently, a report on progress against the plan was produced in 2020, for the period from December 2017 to the end of March 2020. This report, titled the [Implementation Report](#), is available to view on the Council’s website.

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.

1.5 The Implementation Report highlights the positive work undertaken by NPTC for biodiversity, demonstrating good progress against delivery of the biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty. The report also identified changes that should be made to the actions in development of the new, and updated Biodiversity Duty Plan (the Plan). This new Plan, covering the period April 2020 to March 2023, sets out the means by which the Council will deliver against its statutory duty for biodiversity, and consequently support global action in reversing the decline in biodiversity.

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”

2 Structure and Content

2.1 In this Plan we will:

- Outline what natural resources NPT has and why they are so special.
- Explain the legislative background and relevance across multiple policy areas of delivery of the Plan.
- Set out how the plan works and the mechanisms for delivery, monitoring and reporting.
- Give detailed actions to be achieved, with milestones for reporting.



Baglan Dunes

3 Natural Resources in Neath Port Talbot

3.1 NPT 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 allow many important ecosystem services to work and improve our lives.

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

3.2 Some examples:

- Peatland and bogs – peat soils capture and store atmospheric carbon dioxide. This 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 during high rainfall events reducing flooding downriver.
- Species rich grasslands – provide essential habitat and connectivity for pollinators and food for livestock.
- Woodlands – help clean the air of pollutants, provide flood alleviation, reduce the heat island effect in urban environments, provide oxygen and timber products.

3.3 The varied habitats also bring job opportunities. NPT is well known for its waterfalls, country parks and seafront. Recreational activities here include glamping, walking and mountain biking. Easy access to these resources provide opportunities to improve health and well-being.

3.4 Many sites in NPT are [designated for nature conservation](#). These include local, national and international designations.

3.5 Our marshy grasslands in the valleys support Marsh Fritillary butterflies. Their populations fluctuate, so having connected, good quality habitat is key to retaining the species in the area. Much work has been done by Butterfly Conservation to map and manage this species. The habitat is also important for Harvest Mice and Barn Owls.



Marsh fritillary

3.6 Our woodlands provide a home to the rare Honey Buzzard. This bird of prey specialises in eating wasp grubs. It is a very scarce breeder in the UK and the Neath population is well known and studied. Recently a population of Blue Ground Beetles was discovered in ancient woodland in Skewen. This is the only site where they have been found in Wales. Spectacular displays of Bluebell carpets can be seen each spring in many of our ancient woodlands.



Blue Ground Beetle

3.7 Our fens and canals at Pant y Sais are home to the only Welsh population of one of Europe’s largest spiders – the Fen Raft Spider. Also found here is Royal Fern, one of the largest in Europe. This species has stayed mostly unchanged for 180 million years. Otters are found on all our waterways.



Neath Canal

3.8 Our coastal dune systems are important for rare plants and invertebrates. Sea Stock is an attractive plant found in our sand dunes, its main stronghold in the UK is the coastal strip of Wales. Shrill Carder bees are also found on the coast, one of our rarest bumblebees, NPT is a stronghold for them in south Wales. Also along the coast are the rare Small Blue butterflies, the UK’s smallest butterfly.

3.9 Peat bogs, important for storing carbon, can be found on upland plateaus. They form at a rate of 1mm per year from partially decayed organic matter. They are home to plants such as heathers and cotton grasses and the carnivorous Round-leaved Sundew. Nationally important numbers of Nightjar breed in our uplands.



Round-leaved Sundew

3.10 We have even discovered recently just how good our brownfield sites are for wildlife. Along the coastal strip many have become home to nationally important numbers of breeding Lapwing. Inland our coal spoil appears to be providing much needed habitat for species displaced from the coast. To date over 900 invertebrate species have been identified on coal spoil. Some of these species are new to Glamorgan, Wales, the UK and even new to science!

4 Environment (Wales) Act 2016

4.1 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. It establishes 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](#), which allows Wales to enjoy a prosperous economy, a healthy and resilient environment and vibrant, cohesive communities.

4.2 Specifically, the Act places an enhanced biodiversity duty on public authorities (see appendix A, for the full text of Section 6 of the Act).

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.

- 4.3 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, requiring formal demonstration of compliance, by publishing a plan setting out how we intend to comply with the Act.
- 4.4 The Act stipulates that we must publish a report on delivery of the Plan every three years. Following each reporting round, we would update the Plan, however if necessary, the Plan may be revised at any time.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 The focus of the Plan is to introduce changes in work practices, which will deliver positive change for biodiversity, without placing a financial burden on the Council.
- 4.7 Section 7 of the Act requires the Welsh Ministers to publish lists of species and habitats of principle importance in Wales. We are required to have regard for these lists when carrying out our functions. These are referred to as S7 habitats and species.

Sct. 7 (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.



Ground smoothing techniques to restore functioning peatland

5 Other Legislative and Policy Context

5.1 There is supporting legislation, and a number of national, regional and local plans/strategies which recognise the importance of biodiversity, and the wider benefits it can provide for people and communities. Delivery of the Biodiversity Duty Plan will support delivery of these wider legislations, plans and strategies, the most relevant of which are outlined below.

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

- 5.2.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the WCFG Act) is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It sets out new ways of working where all elements of well-being are considered together. It aims to facilitate collaborative working.
- 5.2.2 The WCFG 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. Action should be taken in line with the sustainable development principle so that the well-being goals are achieved.



Spending time in nature improves our physical and mental wellbeing

5.3 Well-being Goals

- 5.3.1 There are 7 well-being goals that have been identified by the WCFG Act (see appendix B). Table 1 sets out how the Plan contributes to the goals of the WCFG Act.

Table 1: Biodiversity Duty Plan – contributing to the Well-being Goals

| | |
|---|---|
| A Prosperous Wales | Building environmental resilience underpins future economic growth, especially in the context of climate change. Natural resources provide opportunities for employment and economic activity. For example, wildlife and outdoor activity, tourism is very popular in NPT, bringing in revenue for a variety of businesses. |
| A Resilient Wales | NPT’s biodiversity, mountains, moorlands and heaths, semi-natural grasslands, woodlands, urban greenspaces, rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands, coastline and marine ecosystems all contribute to supporting Wales’ ability to adapt to climate change. |
| A Healthier Wales | Natural resources make a significant contribution to the physical health and mental well-being of people in Wales. Access to nature and greenspace through NPT’s many parks and coastline has positive impacts on physical and mental health. NPT’s Working With Nature Project provides that link. |
| An Equal Wales | Equal access to ecosystems providing cultural services contributes to equality in Wales. By managing areas of our estate for biodiversity, and supporting delivery of community focused activities, we are providing better access. |
| A Wales of Cohesive Communities | Involving communities in the management of their local parks and woodlands has been shown to improve community cohesion and reduce antisocial behaviour. NPTC are supporting community and friends groups to access the biodiversity of their local sites. |
| A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language | Landscapes have played an important role in developing distinct cultural practices. These include local building techniques that rely on local materials, along with locally specific art and literature. All our communications about biodiversity are bilingual in English and Welsh. |
| A Globally Responsible Wales | The environment supplies all our material resources. By looking after our natural resources, we are contributing to global wellbeing and taking a responsible approach to global challenges e.g. climate change and biodiversity loss. |

5.4 Sustainable Development Principle

- 5.4.1 The WCFG Act sets out 5 ways of working that public bodies must follow in order to demonstrate how they are applying the sustainable development principle (see appendix C). Any plan/project must now demonstrate that they are following these. These are set out below with an explanation of how this plan meets each one.

Table 2: Biodiversity Duty Plan – applying the sustainable development principle.

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Long Term | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through this plan the identification of areas for long term management and changes to policy and working practices 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPTC have set and published our well-being objectives. Delivery of this plan will continue to form a key part of the delivery of these objectives, and in maximising the Authority’s contribution to the Well-being Goals. |
| Involvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through supporting the NPT Local Nature Partnership, this plan allows engagement with residents of NPT in making decisions on the nature conservation priorities of the county borough. • This plan has allowed better integration of biodiversity into other service areas priorities. |
| Collaboration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By assessing the policies and working practices of different service areas of NPTC we are identifying further ways of working together. • Through the Area Statements we will work with NRW and other partners to deliver action on the ground. • Supporting the NPT Local Nature Partnership allows 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 helps to identify potential issues and allows 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. • National and local data is being compiled to identify local pressures. |



Collaborative working between departments removing the arisings to maintain healthy meadows

5.5 Neath Port Talbot Public Service Board (PSB) Local Well-being Plan (2018-2023)

5.5.1 [The Well-being Plan](#) sets out the Public Service Board’s (PSB) long term vision for NPT, as required by the WCFG Act. The Plan lays out 4 key objectives to improving the well-being of people in NPT, and identifies the priorities for action. The following has been identified as a cross-cutting objective, delivering against each of the objectives within the plan:

‘Value our green infrastructure and the contribution it makes to our well-being’



Volunteering at a Country Park

5.6 Neath Port Talbot Corporate Plan (2019-2022)

5.6.1 A healthy natural environment is at the heart of the [Corporate Plan](#), as set out in its vision:

We want our county borough to be a place where everyone has an equal chance to get on in life – a place where people want to live, learn and work and bring up their family.

We want our beautiful natural environment, and our rich cultural and industrial heritage to be appreciated and protected for many future generations to enjoy. We also want to pursue new and existing opportunities for economic growth so we can sustain our diverse communities for years to come.

5.6.2 The Corporate Plan’s objectives have been set in line with the WCFG Act. Through the following objectives, the Council will maximise its contribution to the well-being goals:

- To improve the well-being of children and young people;
- To improve the well-being of all adults who live in the County Borough; and
- To develop the local economy and environment so that the well-being of people can be improved.

5.6.3 Both the Well-being Plan and Corporate Plan have a strong focus on improving well-being, alongside valuing and protecting our local environment. Delivery of actions outlined within this Plan will be an integral element of meeting the Council’s, and PSB’s, well-being priorities and goals. Furthermore, whilst this plan contributes to all of the goals set out in the legislation, in particular it can be used to demonstrate our contribution to the *A Resilient Wales* goal.

5.7 National Policies

5.7.1 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 findings of this underpin the Natural Resources Policy (NRP) produced by Welsh Ministers. The priorities identified in the NRP are delivered at a local level through Area Statements.

5.8 State of Natural Resources Report

5.8.1 First published in 2016 and updated in 2020, [SoNaRR](#) sets out the importance of natural resources and describes the different ecosystems. The report analyses the state of natural resources and ecosystems or broad habitats, dealing with extent, condition, trend and evidence gaps. This allows an assessment of the extent to which natural resources in Wales are being sustainably managed. It then links the resilience of Welsh natural resources to the well-being of the people of Wales, and particularly looks at green recovery post-pandemic and considers the threat of the climate crisis.



SoNaRR

5.9 Natural Resources Policy

5.9.1 The [NRP](#) was published in 2017. It identifies 3 national priorities; Delivering nature-based solutions; Increasing renewable energy and resource efficiency; Taking a place-based approach. It goes on to describe the policy framework that will deliver these and sets out the key challenges and opportunities in relation to our natural environment.

5.10 Area Statements

5.10.1 NRW have prepared and published the [Area Statements](#). The Area Statement are informed by SoNaRR and bring together special evidence covering topics such as habitats, ecosystem networks, water quality and population health. It specifies priorities, risks and opportunities to implement the priorities of the NRP.

5.10.2 Wales has been split into seven areas and NPT falls within the [South West Wales](#) area along with Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Swansea. In the statement NRW have identified 4 main themes in our area. Many of our actions contribute to several themes.

5.10.3 [Reducing health inequalities](#): examine the opportunities to address health inequalities by using natural resources and habitats.

5.10.4 Our actions relating to awareness raising, green infrastructure and the NPT Nature Recovery Action Plan will aim to allow people to become familiar with the natural world around them. They will encourage interaction and appreciation of natural resources and habitats.



Wildlife explorer trail engaging children with the natural world

- 5.10.5 Ensuring sustainable land management: ensuring our land is sustainably managed for future generations.
- 5.10.6 Our actions relating to development management, providing advice and our own land management all enable us to influence land management.
- 5.10.7 Reversing the decline of, and enhancing, biodiversity: explore how we can reverse the decline of biodiversity by building resilient ecological networks.
- 5.10.8 Our actions relating to development management, providing advice, our own land management, supporting the NPT Nature Partnership, Green Infrastructure, invasive non-native species and the NPT Nature Recovery Action Plan all offer opportunities to building resilient ecological networks.
- 5.10.9 Cross-cutting theme: mitigating and adapting to a changing climate: looks at how we can adapt and respond to a changing climate.
- 5.10.10 Our actions relating to development management, green infrastructure, air quality and Coed Cymru can all contribute to tackling climate change.

5.11 Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales

- 5.11.1 The [Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales \(2015\) \(NRAP\)](#) was published by the NRAP Implementation Group. The group has a wide range of membership from Welsh Government, NRW, Nature Conservation Organisations, the farming sector and other public and private sector organisations.
- 5.11.2 The NRAP recognises the importance of biodiversity as underpinning healthy functioning ecosystems, human well-being and the economy. The NRAP 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
- 5.11.3 It sets out how Wales will deliver the commitments of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the EU Biodiversity Strategy It sets out how the United Nations Environment Programme’s Convention on Biological Diversity’s (CBD) Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the associated Aichi Biodiversity Targets for 2011-20 in Wales would be addressed, and is the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Wales under Aichi target 17. The NRAP sets out the commitment to reversing the loss of biodiversity in Wales. The ambition of the plan is: *To reverse the decline in biodiversity, for its intrinsic value, and to ensure lasting benefits to society.*
- 5.11.4 Part 1 of the NRAP sets out the objectives needed in Wales to achieve the ambition. The objectives are set out below with full details in Appendix D

| NRAP 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 |

5.11.5 Part 2 of the NRAP (updated 2020) sets out an action plan, with a number of actions allocated to Local Authorities as key partners for delivery.



Working with communities to protect vital animal corridors – toad ladders

5.12 Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (2011-2026)

5.12.1 Adopted January 2016, [the Local Development Plan](#) guides the future development of the county. It is an important tool in biodiversity conservation. Policies help protect important habitats and species. This includes sites that have international to local designations. Undesignated but important natural features such as trees, woodlands or ponds are also protected.

- 5.12.2 Details on how to design a development to achieve this protection is found in the [Biodiversity and Geodiversity Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) (May 2018). The Countryside and Wildlife Team (C&WT) screen and, where appropriate, comment on planning applications to ensure the policies are met.
- 5.12.3 NPTC provide an [Annual Monitoring Report](#) (AMR) for submission to Welsh Government. Within the AMR are indicators and trigger points. The hitting of trigger points can result in a number of interventions from training staff to policy review.

5.13 The Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy

- 5.13.1 The [Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy](#) sets out how we will lead by example and reduce our carbon footprint when carrying out our operations and functions. It recognises the importance of ecosystems for carbon sequestration. Actions in the strategy commit us to explore green infrastructure and habitat solutions to tackle climate change.

5.14 Destination Management Plan (2015-2020)

- 5.14.1 A [Destination Management Plan](#) (DMP) is a shared statement of intent to manage a destination, outlining the roles of different stakeholders and identifying the actions that they will take. The DMP recognises the important role that the natural environment and biodiversity play in encouraging visits to the local area, as part of the wider landscape and in allowing us to showcase the species and habitats special to NPT.



Living roofs can be used to mitigate habitat loss, stabilise heating and sound within a building and contribute to decarbonisation

6 Implementation and Monitoring

6.1 Implementation

- 6.1.1 Delivery of the Plan is the responsibility of the Council as a whole, however coordination and reporting is undertaken by the Council’s Countryside and Wildlife Team, with a dedicated Ecologist (Plans & Projects) in place to oversee this function.
- 6.1.2 The C&WT works closely with other departments to deliver the requirements of the Plan, and ultimately compliance with the Ecosystems and Resilience Duty.
- 6.1.3 The Biodiversity Duty Actions (as detailed in Sect. 7) of the Plan set out specifically what the Authority intends to do to meet its legal requirements of the biodiversity and ecosystem resilience duty. In accordance with Welsh Government guidance on reporting, the actions of the Plan have been drawn up in line with the NRAP objectives. The actions allocated to Local Authorities in the NRAP are also incorporated into this plan.
- 6.1.4 The actions are organised into the most appropriate NRAP Objective. As actions often deliver against more than one objective, the coloured table below each action highlights all objectives relevant to that action. The reporting mechanisms and the next 3 year milestones are also set out against each action.
- 6.1.5 Where there are fundamental changes to terminology, or advancements in our understanding of ecosystems, this plan may be updated to reflect those changes at any time.

6.2 Monitoring and Reporting

- 6.2.1 A report on progress against the plan was produced in 2020, for the period from December 2017 to end of March 2020 (Years 1 and 2). This report, titled the Implementation Report, is available to view on the Council’s website.
- 6.2.2 Monitoring of the Plan will continue to be undertaken by the Countryside and Wildlife Team, aligning with financial years and allowing us to monitor actions in line with grant funding. Monitoring will be carried out to the following timetable:
 - Year 3 = April 2020– March 2021
 - Year 4 = April 2021 – March 2022
 - Year 5 = April 2022 - March 2023 etc.
- 6.2.3 Delivery of the Plan will be reported as an Implementation Report every 3 years, in line with the requirements of the Environment Wales Act. The implementation report will be undertaken by early September in any reporting year to allow sufficient time to follow the committee process aiming for the report to be taken to Cabinet and Full Council towards the end of October. Reporting will be for monitoring Years 3-5 at the end of 2023.
- 6.2.4 The Implementation Report, alongside the most up to date Plan, will be made publicly available on the Council website.

6.2.5 The preceding plan will remain in force until the new one is formally agreed.

6.2.6 Delivery of the Plan is also integrated into the Council’s Corporate Plan, with key outcomes reported as part of the Corporate Plan’s monitoring and reporting process. This includes a key performance indicator for the extent of council owned land being managed for biodiversity. Progress reports are published on a quarterly and annual basis.



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7 Actions

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

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1.1 | BIODIVERSITY ADVISORY SERVICE |
| Action | The Council currently considers biodiversity in a wide range of functions, including through implementing the policies of the LDP when making decisions through the development management process and as part of the SuDs (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) Approving Body. |
| Reporting mechanism | C&WT planning spreadsheet |
| Milestone year 3 | All advice recorded in the spreadsheet followed |
| Milestone year 4 | All advice recorded in the spreadsheet followed |
| Milestone year 5 | All advice recorded in the spreadsheet followed |
| NRP Objectives | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1.2 | SERVICE ASSESSMENT |
| Action | All services to be risk assessed to determine their potential impact on biodiversity and opportunities for best practice. Training provided as appropriate. |
| Reporting mechanism | Standard reports by the C&WT for each service. |
| Milestone year 3 | Service assessments ongoing |
| Milestone year 4 | Service assessments ongoing |
| Milestone year 5 | Service assessments completed |
| NRP Objectives | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

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|---------------------|---|
| 1.3 | C&WT EARLY ENGAGEMENT |
| Action | The C&WT are regularly consulted by other service areas and give appropriate advice and services. |
| Reporting mechanism | C&WT Consultancy Spreadsheet /PASTA (time recording database) |
| Milestone year 3 | Retain internal consultancy function and continue to provide early advice to service areas throughout the Authority. All advice followed. |
| Milestone year 4 | Retain internal consultancy function and continue to provide early advice to service areas throughout the Authority. All advice followed. |
| Milestone year 5 | Retain internal consultancy function and continue to provide early advice to service areas throughout the Authority. All advice followed. |
| NRP Objectives | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1.4 | DECISION MAKING PROCESS |
| Action | The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) that accompanies all committee reports which require a decision, includes an assessment of the impact on biodiversity in line with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. |
| Reporting mechanism | Standard section in committee reports |
| Milestone year 3 | All committee reports which require a decision, to contain a report on outcomes of the impact assessment |
| Milestone year 4 | All committee reports which require a decision, to contain a report on outcomes of the impact assessment |
| Milestone year 5 | All committee reports which require a decision, to contain a report on outcomes of the impact assessment |

NRP Objectives 1 2 3 4 5 6

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1.5 | TRAINING |
| Action | Opportunities are taken to integrate biodiversity into any Elected Member or officer training (where appropriate) being delivered to raise awareness of S6 Duty / Biodiversity. |
| Reporting mechanism | Attendance at training |
| Milestone year 3 | Investigate training options |
| Milestone year 4 | Deliver training |
| Milestone year 5 | Deliver training |

NRP Objectives 1 2 3 4 5 6

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1.6 | BIODIVERSITY SPG |
| Action | Implement the Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) in line with LDP policies |
| Reporting mechanism | C&WT Planning spreadsheet |
| Milestone year 3 | Implement SPG |
| Milestone year 4 | Implement SPG |
| Milestone year 5 | Implement SPG |

NRP Objectives 1 2 3 4 5 6

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1.7 | WELL-BEING PROCESS |
| Action | Deliver against 'Shaping NPT, the Council Corporate Plan's Improvement Priority 3.5; protect, conserve and enhance our natural environment and increasing awareness of its value and encouraging wider participation. Support delivery of the Green Infrastructure Cross Cutting Objective of the Public Service Board's Well-being Plan. |
| Reporting mechanism | Via the Corporate Plan and PSB annual reports. |
| Milestone year 3 | As required by the Corporate Plan and PSB reporting mechanisms |
| Milestone year 4 | As required by the Corporate Plan and PSB reporting mechanisms |
| Milestone year 5 | As required by the Corporate Plan and PSB reporting mechanisms |

NRP Objectives 1 2 3 4 5 6

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1.8 | NEW COUNCIL STRATEGIES |
| Action | C&WT to collaborate where appropriate with other sections to aid in the development of strategies or plans that contribute towards biodiversity conservation, and respond to consultations and reviews of existing plans. |
| Reporting mechanism | BDP Reporting Spreadsheet |
| Milestone year 3 | N/A |
| Milestone year 4 | N/A |
| Milestone year 5 | N/A |
| NRP Objectives | 1 2 3 4 6 |

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

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| 2.1 | DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCESS |
| Action | NPTC 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 mechanism | C&WT planning spreadsheet |
| Milestone year 3 | 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 4 | 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 5 | 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 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

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| 2.2 | NPT NATURE PARTNERSHIP |
| Action | The Council will support the NPT Nature Partnership in developing and implementing the NPT Nature Recovery Action Plan. The Action Plan is a key mechanism for species and habitat conservation in the County. |
| Reporting mechanism | A plan will be in place and actions will be recorded and published. |
| Milestone year 3 | Timescale and Process will be agreed with the Nature Partnership. |
| Milestone year 4 | TBC |
| Milestone year 5 | TBC |
| NRP Objectives | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

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|---------------------|---|
| 2.3 | AWARENESS RAISING |
| Action | 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 mechanism | Project delivery and ongoing upkeep of the NPTC web pages and NPT Wildlife Facebook page |
| Milestone year 3 | 2 awareness raising projects per year and year on year increase in followers on the Facebook page |
| Milestone year 4 | 2 awareness raising projects per year and year on year increase in followers on the Facebook page |
| Milestone year 5 | 2 awareness raising projects per year and year on year increase in followers on the Facebook page |
| NRP Objectives | 1 2 3 5 |

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|---------------------|--|
| 2.4 | BIODIVERSITY AUDIT |
| Action | <p>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:</p> <p>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</p> |
| Reporting mechanism | First report will be results of audit |
| Milestone year 3 | Assessment ongoing |
| Milestone year 4 | Advice provided as part of assessment followed |
| Milestone year 5 | Ongoing communications. Advice followed. |
| NRP Objectives | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

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| 2.5 | NATIONAL GUIDANCE |
| Action | 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 mechanism | C&WT Planning spreadsheet |
| Milestone year 3 | All national/regional guidance to be integrated into the planning system within 3 months of its release |
| Milestone year 4 | All national/regional guidance to be integrated into the planning system within 3 months of its release |
| Milestone year 5 | All national/regional guidance to be integrated into the planning system within 3 months of its release |

NRP Objectives 1 2 3 4 5 6

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| 2.6 | FUNDING |
| Action | Apply for funding as opportunities arise, to continue to deliver on Working with Nature, for biodiversity, or as part of strategic, multi-functional projects delivering multiple benefits. |
| Reporting mechanism | As funding requirements |
| Milestone year 3 | As opportunities arise |
| Milestone year 4 | As opportunities arise |
| Milestone year 5 | As opportunities arise |

NRP Objectives 1 2 3 4 5 6

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

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| 3.1 | CURRENT MANAGEMENT |
| Action | NPTC areas are being managed for biodiversity and to ensure their resilience. |
| Reporting mechanism | Extent of area under management reported through the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) within the Corporate Plan. |
| Milestone year 3 | Agree an amended KPI as part of the Corporate Plan. |
| Milestone year 4 | As set by the KPI |
| Milestone year 5 | As set by the KPI |

NRP Objectives 1 2 3 4 5 6

| | |
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| 3.2 | HABITAT MANAGEMENT THROUGH DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT |
| Action | 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 mechanism | C&WT Planning spreadsheet |
| Milestone year 3 | Appropriate assessments of ecosystems resilience submitted through the planning process and appropriate measures to deliver improvements taken |
| Milestone year 4 | Appropriate assessments of ecosystems resilience submitted through the planning process and appropriate measures to deliver improvements taken |
| Milestone year 5 | Appropriate assessments of ecosystems resilience submitted through the planning process and appropriate measures to deliver improvements taken |

NRP Objectives 1 2 3 4 5 6

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| 3.3 | COED CYMRU |
| Action | NPTC 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 mechanism | Annual funding reports |
| Milestone year 3 | As Coed Cymru objectives |
| Milestone year 4 | As Coed Cymru objectives |
| Milestone year 5 | As Coed Cymru objectives |

NRP Objectives 1 2 3 4 5 6

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|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.4 | AREA STATEMENTS | | | | | |
| Action | NPTC will assist NRW in implementing Area Statements as required. | | | | | |
| Reporting mechanism | As required | | | | | |
| Milestone year 3 | As appropriate | | | | | |
| Milestone year 4 | As appropriate | | | | | |
| Milestone year 5 | As appropriate | | | | | |
| NRP Objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| 3.5 | GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT | | | | | |
| Action | The Council will undertake a Green Infrastructure Assessment (GIA) in line with the requirements of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) for Neath Port Talbot. | | | | | |
| Reporting mechanism | LDP Planning Inspectorate and Welsh Government approval as part of the evidence base that will underpin the LDP. | | | | | |
| Milestone year 3 | Engagement, participation and contribution in partnership with the LDP Team to produce a GIA for the Authority. | | | | | |
| Milestone year 4 | Engagement, participation and contribution in partnership with the LDP Team to produce a GIA for the Authority. | | | | | |
| Milestone year 5 | GIA complete. | | | | | |
| NRP Objectives | | | 3 | 4 | 5 | |

Objective 4: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| 4.1 | INVASIVE NON-NATIVE SPECIES (INNS) |
| Action | A proactive approach is taken to dealing with INNS including Development Management Process and treatment on Council land. |
| Reporting mechanism | C&WT Planning spreadsheet and BDP Spreadsheet. |
| Milestone year 3 | As appropriate |
| Milestone year 4 | As appropriate |
| Milestone year 5 | As appropriate |
| NRP Objectives | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

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|---------------------|---|
| 4.2 | AIR QUALITY |
| Action | The air quality implications of plans and projects are fully assessed for their potential effects on sensitive habitats and species through the HRA process |
| Reporting mechanism | C&WT Planning spreadsheet |
| Milestone year 3 | All development proposals assessed as appropriate |
| Milestone year 4 | All development proposals assessed as appropriate |
| Milestone year 5 | All development proposals assessed as appropriate |
| NRP Objectives | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

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| 4.3 | STATE OF NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT (SONARR) |
| Action | Collate all of the local information and identify local pressures, including SoNaRR, a NPT State of Nature Report, the Green Infrastructure Assessment and Area Statement evidence. |
| Reporting mechanism | Report on local pressures identified. |
| Milestone year 3 | Agree mechanism for reporting |
| Milestone year 4 | TBC |
| Milestone year 5 | TBC |
| NRP Objectives | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

Objective 5: Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| 5.1 | DATA CAPTURE |
| Action | 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 mechanism | Metadata from MapMate |
| Milestone year 3 | Maintenance of the MapMate database and Biodiversity GIS layers. |
| Milestone year 4 | Maintenance of the MapMate database and Biodiversity GIS layers. |
| Milestone year 5 | Maintenance of the MapMate database and Biodiversity GIS layers. |

| | | | |
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| NRP Objectives | 2 | 4 | 5 |
|----------------|---|---|---|

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| 5.2 | SITES OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION |
| Action | NPTC 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. We will continue with a programme of, on average, 10% of SINCs being reviewed annually and GIS layer updated and shared with SEWBRc. |
| Reporting mechanism | Annual SINC report produced |
| Milestone year 3 | Carry out a review of all SINCs that are scheduled for review this year. Undertake SINC surveys on new sites as necessary, designating where appropriate. |
| Milestone year 4 | Carry out a review of all SINCs that are scheduled for review this year. Undertake SINC surveys on new sites as necessary, designating where appropriate. |
| Milestone year 5 | Carry out a review of all SINCs that are scheduled for review this year. Undertake SINC surveys on new sites as necessary, designating where appropriate. |

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|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NRP Objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|

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| 5.3 | SURVEYS |
| Action | NPTC 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 mechanism | Evidence based report by C&WT |
| Milestone year 3 | Work with the Local Nature Partnership to take forward specialist surveys where most appropriate |
| Milestone year 4 | Work with the Local Nature Partnership to take forward specialist surveys where most appropriate |
| Milestone year 5 | Work with the Local Nature Partnership to take forward specialist surveys where most appropriate |

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|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NRP Objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
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| 5.4 | RECORD CENTRE SEARCHES |
| Action | All planning applications containing biodiversity information must be accompanied by a SEWBReC 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 mechanism | C&WT Planning spreadsheet |
| Milestone year 3 | All biodiversity information contained in a planning application must be accompanied by a SEWBReC search, unless agreed otherwise |
| Milestone year 4 | All biodiversity information contained in a planning application must be accompanied by a SEWBReC search, unless agreed otherwise |
| Milestone year 5 | All biodiversity information contained in a planning application must be accompanied by a SEWBReC search, unless agreed otherwise |
| NRP Objectives | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

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| 5.5 | BIODIVERSITY COMPENSATION SCHEME |
| Action | Implement the compensation scheme as set out in the Biodiversity SPG. |
| Reporting mechanism | C&WT Planning spreadsheet |
| Milestone year 3 | Implement SPG via the development management process |
| Milestone year 4 | Implement SPG via the development management process |
| Milestone year 5 | Implement SPG via the development management process |
| NRP Objectives | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

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| 5.6 | RESILIENT WALES GOAL |
| Action | Contribute data towards the Wales biodiversity indicators for the Resilient Wales goal of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 |
| Reporting mechanism | Responses |
| Milestone year 3 | As required |
| Milestone year 4 | As required |
| Milestone year 5 | As required |
| NRP Objectives | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| 5.7 | BIODIVERSITY PLAN EVIDENCE |
| Action | Evidence to be collected to ensure compliance with this plan |
| Reporting mechanism | All reporting to be gathered and collated to report on this plan |
| Milestone year 3 | Ongoing |
| Milestone year 4 | Ongoing |
| Milestone year 5 | Ongoing |
| NRP Objectives | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

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

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|---------------------|---|
| 6.1 | COUNTRYSIDE AND WILDLIFE TEAM RESOURCES |
| Action | There is currently enough skills and capacity in the C&WT 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 mechanism | The duty report |
| Milestone year 3 | Maintain current core staff levels and retain / employ additional project staff to deliver grant funded projects as and when funding becomes available. |
| Milestone year 4 | Maintain current core staff levels and retain / employ additional project staff to deliver grant funded projects as and when funding becomes available. |
| Milestone year 5 | Maintain current core staff levels and retain / employ additional project staff to deliver grant funded projects as and when funding becomes available. |

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| NRP Objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
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| 6.2 | NPT LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIP |
| Action | Continue to support the NPT Local Nature Partnership, providing the secretariat, steering the objectives and collating information on member activities through the C&WT |
| Reporting mechanism | Partnership minutes |
| Milestone year 3 | Continue to provide secretariat for the NPT Local Nature Partnership |
| Milestone year 4 | Continue to provide secretariat for the NPT Local Nature Partnership |
| Milestone year 5 | Continue to provide secretariat for the NPT Local Nature Partnership |

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| NRP Objectives | | | | | | 6 |
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| 6.3 | BIODIVERSITY CHAMPION |
| Action | A NPTC Councillor is appointed Biodiversity Champion and attends events/meetings as appropriate |
| Reporting mechanism | Attendance at regular meetings |
| Milestone year 3 | Continued engagement as appropriate |
| Milestone year 4 | Continued engagement as appropriate |
| Milestone year 5 | Continued engagement as appropriate |

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| NRP Objectives | 1 | | | | | 6 |
|----------------|---|--|--|--|--|---|

| | |
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| 6.4 | NATURE RECOVERY ACTION PLAN |
| Action | Through the NPT Nature Plan, maximise opportunities to deliver priorities via volunteers and partners |
| Reporting mechanism | <i>Awaiting new reporting mechanisms from WG.</i> |
| Milestone year 3 | Delivery of biodiversity conservation as per Nature Action Plan/ LNP Cymru Project. Reporting as per grant requirements |
| Milestone year 4 | Delivery of biodiversity conservation as per Nature Action Plan/ LNP Cymru Project. Reporting as per grant requirements |
| Milestone year 5 | Dependent on future funding |
| NRP Objectives | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| 6.5 | NATURE CONSERVATION SITES SCHEME |
| Action | Undertake a review of the Nature Conservation Sites scheme to include management of all verges and of key council owned sites. |
| Reporting mechanism | GIS layer of verges to be managed as conservation verge |
| Milestone year 3 | A working group is underway to develop the new scheme |
| Milestone year 4 | Implement the new scheme |
| Milestone year 5 | Implement the new scheme |
| NRP Objectives | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

8 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 |
| GIS | Geographic Information System |
| HRA | Habitat Regulations Assessment |
| INNS | Invasive non-native species |
| NPTC | Neath Port Talbot Council |
| NPT | Neath Port Talbot |
| NRAP | Nature Recovery Plan for Wales |
| NRW | Natural Resources Wales |
| 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 |
| WBFg | Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 |

9 Glossary

Terms and references which will be useful while reading this document

Coed Cymru: Welsh woodland organisation working to improve the condition of Welsh woodland.

Local Records Centre: Centres for the collation, management and dissemination of biodiversity data.

MapMate: Biological recording software

Natural Resources:

- 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

NPT Local Nature Partnership: A group of individuals and organisations working collectively to enhance biodiversity in NPT

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.

UN Convention on Biological Diversity: A multilateral treaty with three main goals:

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

Appendices

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.

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 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 healthier Wales | A society in which people's physical and mental wellbeing is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood |
| 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 Action 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 and the report on the 2017 actions are 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.

APPENDIX 2

First Stage Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

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

| Version | Author | Job title | Date |
|-----------|--------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Version 1 | Laura Palmer | Biodiversity Implementation Officer | 14/05/2021 |
| Version 2 | Laura Palmer | Senior Ecologist | 19/10/2021 |

1. Details of the initiative

| | |
|-----------|--|
| | Title of the Initiative: Neath Port Talbot Council Biodiversity Duty Plan (BDP) 2020 – 2023 and Edinburgh Declaration |
| 1a | Service Area: Planning Policy, Planning and Public Protection |
| 1b | Directorate: Environment and Regeneration |
| 1c | Summary of the initiative: Update to the Biodiversity Duty Plan (2017), following the consideration of monitoring information presented and agreed in the Implementation Report and agree a new version – Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023. Support and sign up to the Edinburgh Declaration. (The commitments under the Edinburgh Declaration largely align with the Biodiversity Duty Plan and as such is not considered separately below). |
| 1d | Is this a ‘strategic decision’? No |
| 1e | Who will be directly affected by this initiative? Service Users, Staff, Wider Community |
| 1f | When and how were people consulted? The Plan has been the subject of internal consultation and its final form reflects the outcome of that process. |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 1g | What were the outcomes of the consultation? Internal departments have agreed the actions included in the plan. |
|-----------|---|

2. Evidence

What evidence was used in assessing the initiative?

The plan is a requirement under section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The plan has been steered by the Welsh Government objectives as set out in the Nature Recovery Action Plan (2015). Individual actions were drawn up in consultation with the relevant NPTC departments.

3. Equalities

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

| Protected Characteristic | + | - | +/- | Why will it have this impact? |
|--------------------------|---|---|-----|--|
| Age | | | ✓ | <p>Neutral Impact - Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society, the actions set out within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023, encourage inclusivity and involvement. Many of the projects supported by the plan aim to bring communities together creating and improving spaces for all members of society to meet, explore, exercise and learn. Research states being close to nature improves mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Implementation of the actions will be inclusive and will involve the Countryside and Wildlife Team (C&WT) working with all staff/sections throughout the Council, the wider public and a wide range of partner organisations including those from the public, private and community/voluntary sectors.</p> |
| Disability | | | ✓ | <p>Neutral Impact - Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society, the actions set out within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023, encourage inclusivity and involvement. Many of the projects supported by the plan aim to bring communities together creating and</p> |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--|---|--|
| | | | <p>improving spaces for all members of society to meet, explore, exercise and learn. Research states being close to nature improves mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Implementation of the actions will be inclusive and will involve the Countryside and Wildlife Team (C&WT) working with all staff/sections throughout the Council, the wider public and a wide range of partner organisations including those from the public, private and community/voluntary sectors.</p> |
| Gender reassignment | | ✓ | <p>Neutral Impact - Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society, the actions set out within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023, encourage inclusivity and involvement. Many of the projects supported by the plan aim to bring communities together creating and improving spaces for all members of society to meet, explore, exercise and learn. Research states being close to nature improves mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Implementation of the actions will be inclusive and will involve the Countryside and Wildlife Team (C&WT) working with all staff/sections throughout the Council, the wider public and a wide range of partner organisations including those from the public, private and community/voluntary sectors.</p> |
| Marriage & civil partnership | | ✓ | <p>Neutral Impact - Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society, the actions set out within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023, encourage inclusivity and involvement. Many of the projects supported by the plan aim to bring communities together creating and improving spaces for all members of society to meet, explore, exercise and learn. Research states being close to nature improves mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Implementation of the actions will be inclusive and will involve the Countryside and Wildlife Team (C&WT) working with all staff/sections throughout the Council, the wider public and a wide range of partner organisations including those from the public, private and community/voluntary sectors.</p> |
| Pregnancy and maternity | | ✓ | <p>Neutral Impact - Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society, the actions set out within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023, encourage inclusivity and involvement. Many of the projects supported by the plan aim to bring communities together creating and improving spaces for all members of society to meet, explore, exercise and learn. Research states being close to nature improves mental health and wellbeing.</p> |

| | | | |
|--------------------|--|---|--|
| | | | <p>Implementation of the actions will be inclusive and will involve the Countryside and Wildlife Team (C&WT) working with all staff/sections throughout the Council, the wider public and a wide range of partner organisations including those from the public, private and community/voluntary sectors.</p> |
| Race | | ✓ | <p>Neutral Impact - Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society, the actions set out within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023, encourage inclusivity and involvement. Many of the projects supported by the plan aim to bring communities together creating and improving spaces for all members of society to meet, explore, exercise and learn. Research states being close to nature improves mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Implementation of the actions will be inclusive and will involve the Countryside and Wildlife Team (C&WT) working with all staff/sections throughout the Council, the wider public and a wide range of partner organisations including those from the public, private and community/voluntary sectors.</p> |
| Religion or belief | | ✓ | <p>Neutral Impact - Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society, the actions set out within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023, encourage inclusivity and involvement. Many of the projects supported by the plan aim to bring communities together creating and improving spaces for all members of society to meet, explore, exercise and learn. Research states being close to nature improves mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Implementation of the actions will be inclusive and will involve the Countryside and Wildlife Team (C&WT) working with all staff/sections throughout the Council, the wider public and a wide range of partner organisations including those from the public, private and community/voluntary sectors.</p> |
| Sex | | ✓ | <p>Neutral Impact - Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society, the actions set out within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023, encourage inclusivity and involvement. Many of the projects supported by the plan aim to bring communities together creating and improving spaces for all members of society to meet, explore, exercise and learn. Research states being close to nature improves mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Implementation of the actions will be inclusive and will involve the Countryside and Wildlife Team (C&WT) working with all staff/sections throughout the Council, the wider public and a wide range of partner organisations including those from the public, private and community/voluntary sectors.</p> |

| | | | | |
|--------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Sexual orientation | | | ✓ | <p>Neutral Impact - Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society, the actions set out within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023, encourage inclusivity and involvement. Many of the projects supported by the plan aim to bring communities together creating and improving spaces for all members of society to meet, explore, exercise and learn. Research states being close to nature improves mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Implementation of the actions will be inclusive and will involve the Countryside and Wildlife Team (C&WT) working with all staff/sections throughout the Council, the wider public and a wide range of partner organisations including those from the public, private and community/voluntary sectors.</p> |
|--------------------|--|--|---|--|

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

N/A

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 | | | ✓ | <p>Neutral Impact - Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society, the actions set out within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023, encourage inclusivity and involvement. Many of the projects supported by the plan aim to bring communities together creating and improving spaces for all members of society to meet, explore, exercise and learn. Research states being close to nature improves mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Implementation of the actions will be inclusive and will involve the Countryside and Wildlife Team (C&WT) working with all staff/sections throughout the Council, the wider public and a</p> |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| | | | wide range of partner organisations including those from the public, private and community/voluntary sectors. |
| To advance equality of opportunity between different groups | | ✓ | <p>Neutral Impact - Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society, the actions set out within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023, encourage inclusivity and involvement. Many of the projects supported by the plan aim to bring communities together creating and improving spaces for all members of society to meet, explore, exercise and learn. Research states being close to nature improves mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Implementation of the actions will be inclusive and will involve the Countryside and Wildlife Team (C&WT) working with all staff/sections throughout the Council, the wider public and a wide range of partner organisations including those from the public, private and community/voluntary sectors.</p> |
| To foster good relations between different groups | | ✓ | <p>Neutral Impact - Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society, the actions set out within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023, encourage inclusivity and involvement. Many of the projects supported by the plan aim to bring communities together creating and improving spaces for all members of society to meet, explore, exercise and learn. Research states being close to nature improves mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Implementation of the actions will be inclusive and will involve the Countryside and Wildlife Team (C&WT) working with all staff/sections throughout the Council, the wider public and a wide range of partner organisations including those from the public, private and community/voluntary sectors.</p> |

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 | Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society, the actions set out within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023, encourage inclusivity and involvement. Many of the projects supported by the plan aim to bring communities together creating and improving spaces for all members of society to meet, explore, exercise and learn. Research states being close to nature improves mental health and wellbeing. As such biodiversity recovery can contribute to health inequalities in deprived areas. |
| Negative/Disadvantage | |
| Neutral | |

| 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 | | | ✓ | Neutral Impact - Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society, the actions set out within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023, encourage inclusivity and involvement. Many of the projects supported by the plan aim to bring communities together creating and improving spaces for all members of society to meet, explore, exercise and learn. Research states being close to nature improves mental health and wellbeing. |

| | | | | |
|------------------|--|--|---|---|
| | | | | |
| Social Exclusion | | | ✓ | Neutral Impact - Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society, the actions set out within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023, encourage inclusivity and involvement. Many of the projects supported by the plan aim to bring communities together creating and improving spaces for all members of society to meet, explore, exercise and learn. Research states being close to nature improves mental health and wellbeing. |
| Poverty | | | ✓ | Neutral Impact - Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society, the actions set out within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023, encourage inclusivity and involvement. Many of the projects supported by the plan aim to bring communities together creating and improving spaces for all members of society to meet, explore, exercise and learn. Research states being close to nature improves mental health and wellbeing. |

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

Implementation of the actions will be inclusive and will involve the Countryside and Wildlife Team (C&WT) working with all staff/sections throughout the Council, the wider public and a wide range of partner organisations including those from the public, private and community/voluntary sectors.

6. Welsh

| | + | - | +/- | Why will it have this effect? |
|--|---|---|-----|---|
| What effect does the initiative have on: - people's opportunities to use the Welsh language | | | ✓ | All of the actions contained within the BDP adhere to the Welsh Language Standards and any amendments to actions or new proposed actions recommended by the Implementation Report will also adhere to these Regulations. The report will be provided in English and Welsh. |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| | | | | As all of the technical names of species and habitats are required to be translated by the Regulations, as a result, it is felt that the opportunity for people to use and expand upon their Welsh Language vocabulary has increased providing a positive impact (albeit low) on people's use of the Welsh language. |
| - treating the Welsh and English languages equally | | | ✓ | <p>All of the actions contained within the BDP adhere to the Welsh Language Standards and any amendments to actions or new proposed actions recommended by the Implementation Report will also adhere to these Regulations.</p> <p>The report will be provided in English and Welsh.</p> <p>As all of the technical names of species and habitats are required to be translated by the Regulations, as a result, it is felt that the opportunity for people to use and expand upon their Welsh Language vocabulary has increased providing a positive impact (albeit low) on people's use of the Welsh language.</p> |

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

All public communications will be bi-lingual.

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 | ✓ | | | This is the remit of the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023. Actions contained within the BDP and monitored, with recommendations, through the Implementation Report, ensures that the Authority meets its statutory duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity as set out within the Environment (Wales) 2016 Act. |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| | | | One of the actions incorporated within the original 2017 BDP was to include the impact on Biodiversity into the Council's Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) to improve the Council's decision-making process. This has been actioned. |
| To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc. | ✓ | | <p>This is one of the aims of the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023. Actions contained within the BDP and monitored, with recommendations, through the Implementation Report, ensure that the Authority meets its statutory duty to promote the resilience of ecosystems, supporting protection of the wider environment, as set out within the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.</p> <p>Numerous projects and initiatives organised by the C&WT and partners to contribute towards meeting the Authority's Biodiversity Duty (as required by the Act) are set out within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023 which actions proposals set out in the Implementation Report for the 2017 plan.</p> |

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

Biodiversity conservation and enhancement is the remit of the plan as such will continually ensure ongoing improvement and recovery of biodiversity in NPT. The commitments under the Edinburgh Declaration largely align with the Biodiversity Duty Plan and recognise the role local authorities have to play in delivering local action for nature.

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. Long term – looking at least 10 years (and up to 25 years) ahead | The actions set out within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023 allow the Authority to plan long term projects that will support well-being in the future. Conserving and enhancing Biodiversity now will benefit the long term well-being of future generations. |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>ii. Prevention – preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p> | <p>The Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023 builds on recommendations from the previous Implementation Report. Through monitoring and reporting early identification of any emerging problems can be addressed and forward planning can help us prevent them. The various actions (individually and collectively), will seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems.</p> |
| <p>iii. Collaboration – working with other services internal or external</p> | <p>Achieving the identified actions set out within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023 and subsequent revisions, will require significant contributions internally from across the Council and externally from a wide variety of partner organisations, including cross-boundary collaboration where appropriate. Partner organisations will include those from the public, private and community/voluntary sectors.</p> |
| <p>iv. Involvement – involving people, ensuring they reflect the diversity of the population</p> | <p>While officers from across the Council’s Environment Directorate have been mainly involved in developing the actions included within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023, the progress review of the actions contained within the Plan has been undertaken by the Biodiversity Implementation officer within the C&WT who ensures that the data on the actions is appropriately stored, assessed and accurately reported.</p> <p>Implementation of the Biodiversity Duty will be delivered through the functions of the Authority as a whole. There are a number of established internal and external working groups where issues are raised, information disseminated and best practice shared. The Working Groups, together with partners, stakeholders, volunteers and Members (promoted by the Biodiversity Champion) provide the mechanism to ensure the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 – 2023 is fit for purpose and responsive to changes in circumstances. The 2020 Plan is the result of the Implementation Report on the 2017 Plan which was welcomed by Council on 02/12/2020.</p> |
| <p>v. Integration – making connections to maximise contribution to:</p> | |
| <p>Council’s well-being objectives</p> | <p>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 NPT and beyond.</p> |
| <p>Other public bodies objectives</p> | <p>Signing up to the Edinburgh Declaration will ensure NPT local action will contribute to the wider global action for nature.</p> |

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.

Monitoring of the plan is undertaken annually and an implementation report that reports progress is produced every 3 years.

10. Assessment Conclusions

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

| | Conclusion |
|---|---|
| Equalities | Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society. Implementation of the actions will be inclusive and will involve the Countryside and Wildlife Team working with all staff/sections throughout the Council, the wider public and a wide range of partner organisations including those from the public, private and community/voluntary sectors. |
| Socio Economic Disadvantage | Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society, the actions set out within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023, encourage inclusivity and involvement. Many of the projects supported by the plan aim to bring communities together creating and improving spaces for all members of society to meet, explore, exercise and learn. Research states being close to nature improves mental health and wellbeing. As such biodiversity recovery can contribute to health inequalities in deprived areas. |
| Community Cohesion/ Social Exclusion/Poverty | Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society. Implementation of the actions will be inclusive and will involve the Countryside and Wildlife Team working with all staff/sections throughout the Council, the wider public and a wide range of partner organisations including those from the public, private and community/voluntary sectors. |
| Welsh | All of the actions contained within the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023 adhere to the Welsh Language Standards and any amendments to actions or new proposed actions recommended by the Implementation Report will also adhere to these Regulations. All communication via the Authority's social media platforms and websites; radio broadcasts and reports etc... are translated into Welsh and the technical names of species and habitats are also translated which increases people's opportunity to use and expand upon their Welsh Language vocabulary. The report will be produced in English and Welsh. |
| Biodiversity | This is the remit of the Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023 and Implementation Report. Actions contained within the plan and monitored, with recommendations, through the Implementation Report, ensures that the Authority meets its statutory duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity as set out within the Environment |

| | |
|---|--|
| | (Wales) 2016 Act. One of the actions incorporated within the original 2017 Biodiversity Duty Plan was to include the impact on Biodiversity into the Council's Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA). Additionally, numerous projects and initiatives organised by the C&WT and partners contribute towards meeting the Authority's statutory duty to promote the resilience of ecosystems, supporting protection of the wider environment. |
| Well-being of Future Generations | The Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020 - 2023 embraces all five ways of working. The plan follows recommendations in the previous Implementation Report, securing long term, positive results. The plan positively integrates with the Council's well-being objectives; involves people and partners in its development and implementation; and seeks to prevent problems getting worse. |

Overall Conclusion

Please indicate the conclusion reached:

- **Continue** - as planned as no problems and all opportunities have been maximised
- **Make adjustments** - as potential problems/missed opportunities/negative impacts have been identified along with mitigating actions
- **Justification** - for continuing with the initiative even though there is a potential for negative impacts or missed opportunities
- **STOP** - redraft the initiative as actual or potential unlawful discrimination has been identified

Please provide details of the overall conclusion reached in relation to the initiative

The updated Biodiversity Duty Plan and signing of the Edinburgh Declaration will make a positive contribution to biodiversity conservation and enhancement in NPT (and beyond), which have knock on positive outcomes for people in the county, particularly in relation to health and wellbeing. The plan ensures the Council will 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, the Council Wellbeing objectives and global commitments for biodiversity.

Biodiversity affects all generations and all areas of society. Implementation of the actions will be inclusive and as such will support equality and social cohesion. The plan and any communications about it will be provided in Welsh as well as English. Through the conservation of biodiversity and the health and wellbeing and other services the people of NPT will benefit, particularly communities of high deprivation and health equalities.

11. Actions

What actions are required in relation to obtaining further data/information, to reduce or remove negative impacts or improve positive impacts?

| Action | Who will be responsible for seeing it is done? | When will it be done by? | How will we know we have achieved our objective? |
|--------|--|--------------------------|--|
| N/A | | | |

12. Sign off

| | Name | Position | Date |
|----------------------|--------------|--|------------|
| Completed by | Laura Palmer | Senior Ecologist | 19/10/2021 |
| Signed off by | Ceri Morris | Head of Planning and Public Protection | 27/10/2021 |