

APPENDIX 1: Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Action Log (March 2023)

Scrutiny Inquiry Projects Completed During 2022/23

Inquiry Recommendation Ref	Project	Comment/Update	Target date
3.	Preparation of Swansea Local Nature Recovery Action Plan	<p>Preparation of draft plan ongoing – work to be taken forward by Local Nature Partnership (LNP) Coordinators – 2 x part time officers employed April 2022.</p> <p>Feedback received on initial framework draft by Swansea Local Partnership members. Two workshops also held in the autumn 2022 with members from 15 different organisations</p> <p>Plan is currently being re-drafted by Local Nature Partnership Coordinators to incorporate input from LNP members.</p> <p>Target of preparation by March 2023 met. Plan expected to be finalised and adopted Summer 2023.</p> <p>Plan preparation and adoption progress now being reported to and monitored by Climate Change Corporate Development Committee</p>	March 2023

5.	Prepare a County wide GI Strategy	<p>This collaborative project has fallen behind the preparation programme due to unforeseen staffing resource issues in Natural Resources Wales, with whom the Strategy is being jointly prepared. Delayed community engagement recommenced in Feb 2023. and a draft strategy produced later this year. Date for commencement of preparation met</p> <p>Strategy preparation and adoption progress now being reported to and monitored by Climate Change Corporate Development Committee</p>	March 2023
10.	Develop and deliver biodiversity training for Council staff, elected Members and PSB Members	<p>Ongoing action by biodiversity officer and others. Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and addressing biodiversity training needs • Identification of opportunities and actions within each relevant Service Area to maintain and enhance biodiversity • Identifying Service Areas where advisory support could be provided by the Nature Conservation Team • Development of on and offline training packages including further development of web pages • Development and implementation of a Comms Strategy for biodiversity • Ecological advice and support provided for Development Management Section on planning and SUDs applications ranging from 	Ongoing

		<p>advice on the installation of bird and bat boxes to carbon literacy training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other specific training delivered over the past year includes grassland management of parks/verges; cut and collect; right tree in right place; nature emergency • Two CC&NR non-mandatory introductory courses have been published on e-learning staff website for all staff and councillors, publicised through staff news and Chief Exec blog • Forthcoming training includes 3 x grant funded green wall and roof regional webinars for Council staff during March and April 2023 <p>Training will always remain an ongoing requirement for staff and Members and future opportunities will be reported to the Climate Change and Nature Recovery Programme Board and Steering Group to ensure it is targeted at the right audience and where it is needed most.</p>	
15.	Co-ordinate and deliver the Local Places for Nature Grant programme (2020-2023)	<p><u>2020/21</u> Successfully bid for and delivered capital projects worth over £190k, including tree planting in various parks and other sites, green infrastructure enhancements e.g., green roofs and walls, establishment of a new tree nursery; as well as local events, habitat management and flood alleviation works</p>	March 2023

		<p><u>2021/22</u> Successfully bid for and delivered projects worth over £240k, including request for additional £53k to cover increased costs. These projects to be delivered by end of financial year include the City Centre Pop up Park; green wall at Pier Street; green bin shelters; and tree planting; biodiversity enhancements to school grounds.</p> <p><u>2022/23</u> Successfully bid for and delivered projects worth £439k, including revenue costs. Includes proposals to restore existing and create new natural capital assets within Swansea focussing on urban and peri-urban areas. The aim is to facilitate, support and deliver an increase in biodiversity and ecological resilience across Swansea by increasing the diversity, extent condition, connectivity and adaptability of Swansea's natural assets and contributing to the enhancement of Swansea's Nature Network.</p> <p>Projects have included tree planting, nature improvements in schools, supporting wildlife-friendly food growing schemes, Green infrastructure such as rain planters and green walls, habitat creation and restoration (bird/bat boxes, fencing on Swansea Bay sand dunes, etc), and wildflower plants/seeds.</p>	
--	--	---	--

17.	Co-ordinate and deliver the ENRAW Green Infrastructure grant programmes	<p>Grant finally awarded in full Nov 2021. Part time Woodland Officer recruited Dec 2021.</p> <p>Recruited 3 temporary posts in April 2022 to deliver programme, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 x Community Green Space Officers to work with local communities to develop and delivery green infrastructure improvements • Natural Environment Volunteer Co-ordinator to develop and support opportunities for environmental volunteering <p>Works undertaken have included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planting orchards, trees, bulbs, plants and providing hand tools to community centres and friends of groups. • Installing a polytunnel for community growing • Providing interpretation for city centre nature. • Designed nature friendly landscapes in Penderry. • Working on the first Bio-solar roof to be installed in Swansea. • Working with The Wildlife Trusts to improve community spaces in Uplands. • Enhancing Glynollen woods with a nature trail, sculptures, natural play, remedial tree work and orchard. <p>Current funding for this project ends June 2023 and the posts will temporary posts will not be extended unless further revenue grant funding is obtained – awaiting outcome of further 3-year grant bid March 2023</p>	March 2023
-----	---	--	------------

20.	Undertake a preliminary biodiversity audit of Council owned land and where possible manage our corporate assets for the benefit of biodiversity and natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity audit of Swansea Central Area commissioned • Countywide as well as Council owned land tree canopy cover surveys and opportunity mapping ongoing. • SINC and Local Nature Reserve being reviewed. Habitat Management Plans for the reserves being prepared <p>All due for completion May 2023</p>	March 2023
22.	Develop a set of 'Wild about your Ward ' maps and packs	<p>Being delivered in through grant funding by Community and Nature Project officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapped existing Green Infrastructure assets and ecosystem service provision, and identifying areas, which provide the best opportunities for improvement and will seek, where appropriate, match funding opportunities afforded by Member's community fund • Schemes being prepared for Townhill and Morriston wards. Future roll-out will depend on continuation of grant funding 	March 2023
23.	Deliver and provide support for school biodiversity awareness activities and practical initiatives and opportunities for schoolchildren to access and learn about their natural environment	<p>Seek to identify an environmental link within all school governing bodies e.g., premises committee or schools eco-committee, etc</p> <p>Not yet fully achieved but engagement being pursued through Climate Change and Nature Recovery Programme Board and Steering Group</p>	March 2023

24.	Investigate and secure grant funding for tackling biodiversity and climate emergencies	<p>Apply for Local Places for Nature grant annually (details in recommendation 15 above)</p> <p>Latest application for Welsh Government Nature Networks Round Two grant, through Heritage Lottery. Seeks to keep 3.5 temporary staff employed for 3 further years. Grant requested £904.5k. Progressed through first stage, awaiting decision in March 2023</p>	March annually
27.	External Environment Enhancement on Council owned Housing land	<p>Enhancements to Housing land greenspace within Estates as part of an environmental works programme to meet the Council's commitment to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard and to address deficiencies in access to natural greenspace. Being successfully rolled out. Includes ongoing Japanese Knotweed control programme within Penlan, St Thomas, Port Tennant and Bonymaen</p>	Ongoing

Previously Reported Completed Projects

1.	Facilitate, co-ordinate, deliver and monitor the steps in the Corporate Plan Objective for Maintaining and Enhancing Swansea's Natural Resources and Biodiversity	Steps monitored by Climate Change and Nature Steering Group and Programme Board. Currently being reviewed for 23/24 Corporate Plan.	Completed Monitored every 6 weeks and reviewed annually
2.	Prepare Corporate Section 6 Biodiversity Duty Action Plan	<p>Section 6 duty monitoring report agreed and submitted to Welsh Government in Dec 2019 and again in Dec 2023</p> <p>Links with other relevant cross organisational policies at a strategic level being monitored by Climate Change and Nature Programme Board which includes representatives dealing with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Environment • Green Infrastructure • Local Development Plan • Sustainable Development Policy • Sustainable Transport Plan • Energy Strategy • Waste Management • Parks • Housing • Education • Procurement 	Completed Bi-monthly meetings

4.	Adopt Swansea Central Area Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy and Green Space Factor Tool	<p>Adopted by Cabinet Feb 21.</p> <p>The Green Space Factor Tool provides practical guidance to help assess the level of green space required for developments in urban areas. The tool is now being used by applicants for planning applications in the city centre. Advice is being given regarding GI throughout the planning process, including how to meet target GSF tool scores.</p>	Completed Feb 2021
6.	Develop and adopt a Council tree policy	<p>Suite of tree policies/protocols developed over the past couple of years, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protected Tree Protocol • Ash Die-back guidance • City Centre GI Strategy • Tree Planting checklist and consultation protocol • Local Development Plan Tree protection policy • Supplementary Planning Guidance (Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands) <p>In Feb 2022 a Tree Management Strategy was approved by Cabinet setting out protocols relating to management of trees on /affecting property land in Council ownership and setting out the Council's duties in relation to protected trees. All above documentation is cross referenced in this document</p> <p>https://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/13807/17-February-2022</p>	Completed Feb 2022

		Ongoing work in support this year includes mapping all sites on Council land that may be suitable for tree planting as well as mapping all trees planted in celebration of designation as a Queen's Green Canopy Champion City.	
7.	Prepare and adopt Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)	Guidance prepared and adopted by Planning Committee https://www.swansea.gov.uk/ The SPG is referred to in consults on planning applications, including the requirement to use the Tree Replacement Standard where necessary.	Completed Oct 2021
8.	Prepare and adopt Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)	<p>SPG Adopted by Planning Committee https://www.swansea.gov.uk/biodiversityspg</p> <p>The SPG is referred to in consults on planning applications, including the requirement to provide ecological enhancements.</p> <p>The requirement for biodiversity conservation and enhancement has also been included in the following SPG which have been adopted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gower AONB Design Guide • Placemaking Guidance for Residential Development • Placemaking Guidance for Infill and Backland Developments • Placemaking Guidance for Householder Developments <p>All available to view here: https://www.swansea.gov.uk/spg</p>	Completed Feb 2021

9.	Prepare and upload Biodiversity SPG guidance notes onto Council webpages	Guidance available on Council webpages https://www.swansea.gov.uk/biodiversityspg	Completed Nov 2021
11.	Develop, promote, and deliver a programme of public environmental events and activities	Annual programme of events published online to improve awareness and understanding of our natural environment	Completed May annually
12.	Appoint new Section 6 Duty Biodiversity Officer	Permanent appointment made to 0.5 Post	Completed June 2021
13.	Appoint new Planning Ecologist	<p>Additional Planning Ecologist now in permanent full time post to complement previous 0.8 post on the structure. Planning Ecologist has weekly open session with Planning Officers for the officers to raise any biodiversity queries when needed. Queries being used to determine further training requirements.</p> <p>Planning Ecologists also provide services and advice to Council Highways, Parks, Drainage and Housing teams as well as local councillors, external developers, ecologists and planning applicants. Fee-earning works are also undertaken.</p> <p>Planning ecologists attend Local Nature Partnership meetings, Association of Local Government Ecologist (ALGE) meetings and Welsh Govt Biodiversity & Planning Forum meetings.</p>	Completed June 2021

14.	Facilitate and support the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) meetings and projects	Meetings held quarterly on an ongoing basis. Covered initially by temporary appointment to LNP post during 21/22. Permanent appointment agreed Feb 2022 (2 x part time posts)	Completed Feb 2022
16.	Co-ordinate and deliver the Natural Resources Wales (NRW) grant programmes	Annual NRW grant programme coordinated by AONB team and split between AONB, Countryside Access and Nature Conservation Teams	Completed March annually
18.	Plan, support and deliver new tree / woodland/hedgerow/orchard planting initiatives	No. of trees planted on Council land is a Corporate Performance Indicator Measured annually. During 20/21 a total of 230 heavy standard trees and 2800 whips were planted on Council land. Through 21/22 up to 1000 trees and over 5600 whips are planned to be planted across all Council land by various services and departments. Recorded to date during 22/23 around 260 heavy standard trees have been planted	Ongoing Monitored end of March annually
21.	Promote and support community biodiversity projects /initiatives, green projects for well-being, facilitate environmental voluntary groups, etc	Despite the impact of the pandemic, considerable support for, and collaboration with, community groups and other partners has been maintained and increased over the past year. This includes support for the Swansea Local Nature Partnership, Clyne Community Volunteers, Rosehill Quarry, various Friends of Parks Groups, the Environment Centre, etc.	Ongoing annually through grants and volunteer work

		Recent grant awards have targeted greater engagement with local communities to encourage volunteering and to support them taking action to enhance and maintain and enjoy their local greenspaces and wildlife sites	
19.	Deliver new wildflower meadow planting and management initiatives	<p>Extent of wildflower planting is an annual Performance Indicator</p> <p>On the ground the Council's wildflower planting programme has now extended to around 40,000sq.m (about 6 football pitches) of wildflowers across approximately 190 sites. In support of this new grant funded cut and collect machinery has been trialled to help better manage grass cutting and help boost wildflowers and pollinators by maintaining species-rich vegetation. Plans are being prepared for extending this method of cutting next season using lessons learned and further public and stakeholder engagement.</p>	Ongoing. Monitored end of March annually
25.	Targeted Regeneration Investment (TRI) funding of Green Infrastructure (GI) projects	<p>GI Projects undertaken: Completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastal Office High Street - green roof • Potter's Wheel - green roof <p>Being delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dragon Hotel - green walls <p>Green roof bin shelters around the city centre</p>	Completed March 2022

26.	City Centre GI improvements	Wind St: Public realm improvements include additional tree planting and large planting beds along whole length of street with a mixture of trees shrubs and pollinator attracting herbaceous species	March 2022
-----	-----------------------------	--	------------