

Panel Ymchwiliad Craffu – Yr Amgylchedd Naturiol

Lleoliad: Councillor Meeting Room 235 Guildhall

Dyddiad: Dydd Iau, 4 Hydref 2018

Amser: 10.00 am

Cynullydd: Y Cynghorydd Peter K Jones

Aelodaeth:

Cynghorwyr: E W Fitzgerald, L S Gibbard, P R Hood-Williams, Y V Jardine,
J W Jones, I E Mann, H M Morris, S Pritchard a/ac W G Thomas

Agenda

Rhif y Dudalen.

- 1 Ymddiheuriadau**
- 2 Datgeliadau o fuddiannau personol a rhagfarnol**
www.abertawe.gov.uk/DatgeliadauBuddiannau
- 3 Cwestiynau gan y Cyhoedd**
 - Rhaid i gwestiynau ymwneud â materion yn rhan agored agenda'r cyfarfod ac ymdrinnir â hwy o fewn cyfnod o 10 munud.
- 4 Adroddiad Casgliadau** **1 - 180**
 - Cyfle i'r panel adolygu'r dystiolaeth sydd wedi bod yn sail i'r ymchwiliad hyd yn hyn.
- 5 Cynllun Gwaith** **181**

Cyfarfod nesaf: Dydd Mercher, 31 Hydref 2018 ar 2.30 pm



Huw Evans
Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Democraidd
27 Medi 2018

Cyswllt: Craffu 636292

Agenda Item 4



Report of the Convener of the Natural Environment Scrutiny Inquiry To the Natural Environment Inquiry Scrutiny Panel – 4th October 2018

Findings and Emerging Themes

Purpose:	The purpose of this report is to help the Panel to develop its conclusions and recommendations from the scrutiny inquiry into the Natural Environment.
Content:	This report provides a summary of the evidence from the review. The report also includes some emerging themes for discussion by the Panel, which have been drawn up based on the evidence.
Councillors are being asked to:	To consider these findings and discuss possible conclusions and recommendations.
Lead Councillor:	Councillor Peter K Jones
Lead Officer & Report Author:	Bethan Hopkins – Scrutiny Officer Tel: 01792 636292 E-mail: bethan.hopkins@swansea.gov.uk

1. Background

- The Inquiry into the Natural Environment commenced on the 26th March 2018 and evidence has been gathered from a number of sources over the past 6 months. The Panel will now start the process of concluding their inquiry and agreeing recommendations that will be presented to Cabinet.

Inquiry key question is: How can the Council, with its partners, develop and improve regional working for the benefit of Swansea and its residents?

2. Briefing/Main body of report

- This report highlights some of the key themes arising from the evidence gathered by the Panel and forms the basis for writing the final report.
- The final report when written will answer the key question by using the findings from the inquiry to draw conclusions. The final report will provide recommendations to Cabinet based on evidence which has been provided throughout the inquiry.

3. Emerging Themes

1. Not having an environmental corporate priority is preventing it from being embedded in business and strategic plans
 - Draft currently submitted – awaiting outcome of acceptance as 6th corporate priority
 - The level of commitment seems to be dependent on the staff working under a specific service. Additionally, knowledge levels and priority of the topic differs across the Council
 - It is at odds with the WBFGA and the EA which call for a corporate level commitment to the issue. *‘The S6 duty requires that public authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as consistent with the proper exercise of their functions and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems. To follow the S6 duty public authorities 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.’*
2. The profile of the Natural Environment and Biodiversity is not high enough across the Council
 - Some services may not recognise their role in relation to the natural environment
 - Not all services recognise the direct and indirect benefits that a thriving natural environment brings to them (health/financial/tourism etc)
3. Specialist and high quality work is being undertaken currently
 - There is a high level of preventative and day to day work including policy development which is currently being undertaken by Swansea Council
 - Staff are regarded highly amongst their peers for their knowledge and experience
4. From a prevention perspective, the financial benefits of undertaking work in relation to the Natural Environment and Biodiversity may not be fully realised
 - It has been suggested that preventative work now will ensure funds will be available going forward to focus on other corporate priorities
 - If there is an incident e.g. flooding the cost to fix it will outweigh any preventative cost (catastrophe cover?)
5. The Nature Conservation Team has an excellent professional reputation
 - External providers have commented on the level of expertise and passion the team have

6. Not enough awareness of current work

- There is a range of work being undertaken by the Nature Conservation Team which is not publicised enough
- The team have productive working relationships with a range of other providers and are well regarding in their area of work

7. Could be better external partnership working on a strategic scale

- There are a range of departments which link in with partners at various stages for various reasons but there is not enough strategic direction about the level of input and the financial benefits from joint working

8. There is commitment from voluntary groups based in the Councils green spaces making significant contributions

- From parks to Kilvey Hill and green spaces, the Council has an extremely committed and passionate group of volunteers
- The amount of work being undertaken by these volunteers is substantial
- A mapping exercise would establish the amount of land covered and could produce a financial cost of maintenance for the Council (if volunteers left)

9. Should be more cross departmental working with common objectives

- Whilst legislation obviously is the same across all services, the aims and priorities of the services are seen as conflicting – environmental/financial
- Volunteers have commented that when contacted different services they do not get a consistent response on the Councils approach to that issue

10. The recognition and desire to maintain green spaces is evident

- People who have engaged in the process so far have had very positive things to say about the green spaces in Swansea
- The positive impact on health and wellbeing has also been brought up

11. Success is limited due to lack of enforcement

- Enforcement of this type is not a statutory requirement
- There is concern that ecological mitigation and biodiversity requirements are not being followed through due to the lack of enforcement after the fact

12. Potential misinterpretation of 'Resilient Wales' goal in WBFGA

- Concerns that organisations are misinterpreting this
- 'Resilience' means ecological resilience not social or personal resilience

13. Policy conflicts – income and biodiversity

- There are potential conflicts between some Council policies
- Enhancing and maintaining biodiversity can be seen as a barrier

- There should be an embed of biodiversity in all planning and strategy from a top down level to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation

14. Taking risks and new ways of working

- Public bodies are being encouraged to take risks when planning projects and look at new and radical ways of including biodiversity
- There are current projects in other areas doing this – project on River Taff
- Swansea has already undertaken work which looked at green solutions successfully – Marram grass to stabilise sand dunes

15. Review of current agreements relating to land use

- Opportunity to review the agreements the Council currently has with users of its land to ensure that biodiversity is protected
- Community groups, land with grazing rights and any other relevant land
- This would ensure that there is an up to date clause referencing relevant legislation restricting actions which could put the Council in breach of relevant legislation

16. Biodiversity and funding

- Currently, work relating to biodiversity is delivered under one team and funded from one team's budget
- Discuss options and ideas

4. Conclusions/Task

- Taking into account all of the information provided in the evidence pack, the aim of this session is to create first stage recommendations
- These recommendations will be used to create the initial draft of the final report of the inquiry

Appendices: Evidence pack

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- 12. Meeting 6 – Legislation Session**

1. Terms of Reference

Natural Environment Scrutiny Inquiry Panel

Terms of Reference

Key Question

The panel has agreed that the primary focus for the inquiry is to be the natural environment and biodiversity in Swansea. The key question, therefore, is:

‘What should Swansea Council be doing to maintain and enhance its natural environment and biodiversity, and in so doing promote the resilience of eco-systems?’

The two main legislative guides will be the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The inquiry will look in particular at how council planning processes and development will need to take into account duties and requirements in Part I the Environment Act, and the importance of the natural environment and biodiversity in strategic decision making.

Reasons to carry out this piece of work

There is considerable international evidence from a wide spectrum of leading academics and practitioners that the natural environment and its biodiversity are essential for future resilience and environmental sustainability. These natural assets also have substantial benefits to health and are linked to the prosperity and well-being of communities. It is essential that these issues are at the forefront of decision making processes throughout the whole Council.

“Nature is not a drag on growth. Its protection is an unavoidable prerequisite for sustaining economic development” - Tony Juniper, sustainability and environment adviser (2013)

Lines of Inquiry

The inquiry will look in particular at how the natural environment and biodiversity are considered at planning stages and during development projects and how attitudes and culture impact on success. It will also consider what the Council does well and what can be improved. This will include the following key lines of inquiry:

- **What is meant by maintaining, enhancing and promoting?** What is involved in the day to day activities of Swansea Council and its partners to achieve this? What is being done well that can be expanded and what needs to change to achieve the goal?
- **Cause and effect:** What are the causes of natural environment and biodiversity depletion in Swansea? What are the effects of natural environment and biodiversity depletion in Swansea? How do we tackle these issues? What are the consequences (environmental/legal/financial/economic/social/political) if we do not meet the requirements under the relevant Acts?

- **Partners/professional relationships:** Who is involved in maintaining, enhancing and promoting the natural environment and biodiversity in Swansea, and how do we work together effectively to achieve this aim, particularly in relation to meeting the requirements under the relevant Acts?
- **Working with other service areas:** How are services working together to ensure that all parts of Swansea Council are aiming for the same level of success in relation to the natural environment and biodiversity?
- **Impact:** What have been the impacts of those initiatives that help maintain, enhance and promote the natural environment and biodiversity?
- **Good Practice (Internal and External):** What guidance and examples of good practice in improving the maintenance, enhancement and promotion of the natural environment and biodiversity are there, and can these be adopted by Swansea Council?

Intended Impact and Contribution

This inquiry intends to support the work of the Council by:

- Providing a councillor perspective on how the current approach to the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity is working
- Drawing together operating principles and practices for the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity in Swansea, together with the promotion of ecosystem resilience
- From the above, making recommendations for improvement to current operating principles and practices in the long, medium and short term
- Pointing to good practice examples
- Summarising and considering the ideas and suggestions both of Council officers and of external organisations

2. Foreword and Scrutiny Briefing Paper

What should Swansea Council be doing to maintain, enhance and promote its natural environment and biodiversity?

Why are we undertaking this inquiry?

- Every Council has a duty to enhance and maintain its natural environment and biodiversity
- It is important that the preservation and promotion of ecosystems is a top priority of the Council as it is in everyone's best interests.
- Most people are not aware of how reliant we are on ecosystems for provisions, regulation and culture.
- Although statistics don't always paint a picture – 70% of the principal habitats in Wales are found in Swansea, 50% of the UK priority species are found in Swansea and 50% of Swansea is made up of sites which are identified as important for nature conservation. This is astonishing and if we are not careful and do not encourage the enhancement of them these areas will deteriorate or disappear
- As is the case for all Councils, we face severe austerity. This means that money which we could have directed toward nature conservation in the past has now been used for other purposes. Teams have had cuts which have majorly impacted their ability to undertake essential work and external funding from grants continues to dwindle.
- As a result, all services have to be very creative to achieve their aims and the Nature Conservation Team and the teams who feed into this type of work are no exception.
- It is easy to think of the natural environment and biodiversity as something which has always existed and will always exist – this is not the case.
- If you look more closely at the areas which we assume are thriving habitats, you will see that this is no longer the case. Plant and animal life is disappearing at an alarming rate and areas we believe are thriving ecosystems are failing.
- Once these areas lose their important species they run the risk of losing their protected status. Once this goes, these areas can become available for different land uses including development
- There are a multitude of studies both in the UK and internationally which shows the benefit of the natural environment and its positive impact on health. This ranges from the quality of air to the way in which our mental wellbeing is improved when we are surrounded by nature.
- Future generations will not see some of these areas if there is not an immediate push for their renewal
- Not all areas of ecological importance are immediately obvious. Whilst areas like Gower and parks are integral to biodiversity, much of the plant and animal life relies on connectivity. This means that there needs to be green corridors or stepping stones of unspoilt land so that species can link and move to create a robust and resilient ecosystem. Isolated patches of land wall off nature from their complimentary environments and this seriously impacts the ability to survive. Gardens and green spaces in urban areas are often disregarded, unused or undervalued but this has to change

- Swansea is at the forefront of urban development. The City Deal will be a once in a generation opportunity to redesign our landscape and allow Swansea to be a leader in city regeneration. This Panel believes that rural development can be built in to this and that Swansea can be trailblazer for well-planned and cutting edge ecosystem renewal
- The green spaces currently planned can have the right plants to encourage the right species to create the right environment for nature to thrive
- It is everyone's responsibility to commit to this and to ensure that the future of Swansea is also the future of nature

Scrutiny Natural Environment and Biodiversity Inquiry – January to July 2018

This paper outlines why there is a need to explore the Council's past and current management of the natural environment and biodiversity within the City and County of Swansea; notes the Welsh Government's recently adopted natural environment and well-being legislative framework for public bodies in Wales; and recognises that recommendations will be needed concerning how the Council conducts itself in future across a whole range of operations.

Why is this Inquiry necessary?

As is true across the whole of the planet, Nature in the UK is in steep decline. Biodiversity – the range of life forms, both plant and animal, terrestrial and marine – has suffered major losses in both numbers and habitats in recent decades. The *State of Nature 2016 report*, published by and available on the RSPB website, gives the most recent data concerning both declining and recovering species since 1970; a separate report is also published for species in Wales. These data are from a baseline that is itself the product of previous marked decline, so that even the recovery figures for some species must be considered with concern.

Species and habitat loss are generally recognised to be a consequence of ever increasing human pressures on the natural world, especially from the onset of industrialisation and subsequent urbanisation in the mid-18th century but, also, of course, from the very beginnings of *homo sapiens* and its species skills in tool making, hunting, fishing, forest clearance and agriculture.

A startling statistic is that the global human population in 1900 was c1.5 billion; it is now 7.3 billion, and expected to reach 9/10 billion by 2050. Even in 1950, the global population was c3 billion, so growth has been accelerating exponentially. All need to be fed, housed, clothed and given meaningful employment, with a consequential loss of living space – habitat – for all other species.

A further consequence of industrialisation, of course, has been the extraction of fossil fuels, principally coal, oil and natural gas (methane) for energy generation, leading to rising levels of atmospheric greenhouse gases, global warming and climate change. This development is potentially as catastrophic for wildlife as it likely will be for humans.

Swansea Council impacts in a variety of ways on the natural environment within the geographical area that it covers and, therefore, if the wider decline of biodiversity and the natural world is to be halted and reversed, we need to understand what those impacts are, especially if negative in their effects. From this better understanding, we can then move towards better practices and solutions.

Such impacts are likely to include, but not be limited to:

- the planning system and the criteria used in relation to change of use, especially where this involves the loss of green space.
- construction developments undertaken by, or involving, the Council.
- travel and transport modes.
- parks and other open green space management, including wildflower planting.
- roads and footways.
- beach management.
- urban trees and their management.
- energy systems.
- allotments and the growing of both food and ornamental plants.
- flood risk management.
- provision and management of National Nature Reserves.

This Inquiry makes a presumption that, hitherto, a culture of putting the economy and society before the natural environment has, in general, prevailed, in line with the wider UK-wide approach. We shall need to look at past examples of decisions and actions under each of these headings. The issue, of course, is how to change this culture and, hence, benefit biodiversity and the natural environment, whilst also meeting legitimate human development needs.

We need to explore ways of Working with Nature to both meet Council objectives whilst also sustaining and enhancing biodiversity and ecosystems.

WG legislation and management of the natural environment

Two pieces of recent Welsh Government legislation are central to the future role of public authorities in Wales, including Swansea Council, in defining and meeting their future responsibilities for management of the natural environment:

1. The Well-being of Future Generations (WFG) (Wales) Act 2015; and
2. The Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The WFG Act is, first and foremost, about sustainable development – indeed, it started life as a Sustainable Development Bill, with the name change thought by WG to make it more meaningful to the general public. The Act recognises that living sustainably includes making provision for wildlife recovery, and this is made specific in the second of the seven well-being goals listed in section 4 of the Act:

‘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)’

Section 3 (2) requires public bodies to ‘maximise’ their contributions to achieving ‘each of the well-being goals’; and to take ‘all reasonable steps (in exercising its functions) to meet this requirement. Public bodies are required to set ‘well-being objectives’ in relation to the well-being goals, with the aim of delivering each of them.

Local authorities are required under Schedule 1 of the Act to publish annually reports on the progress they have made towards meeting the well-being objectives. The Future Generations Commissioner appointed under the Act has the power to conduct a review into the extent to which a public body is ‘safeguarding the ability of future generations to meet their needs’ (section 20 (1)); this, of course, includes delivery of the requirement under the well-being goal for A resilient Wales’.

A resilient Wales, therefore, requires the Council not only to ‘have regard’ to biodiversity in the exercise of its functions (NERC Act 2006), but to take positive steps to maintain and enhance biodiversity, ie a pro-active approach in everything that it does.

The Environment Act builds upon A resilient Wales. Section 6 of the Act, under the heading of ‘Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty’, states (sub-section (1)) that ‘A public authority must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of its functions...and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions’. Sub-section (2) of the section spells out that public authorities ‘must take account of the resilience of ecosystems’, in particular:

- diversity between and within ecosystems.
- the connections between and within ecosystems.
- the scale of ecosystems.
- the condition of ecosystems (including their structure and functioning).
- the adaptability of ecosystems.

Sub-section (7) states that, before the end of 2019, and every third year thereafter, a public authority ‘must...publish a report on what it has done to comply with sub-section (1).

In summary, therefore, the Act requires the Council to show by the end of 2019 what it has done to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of its functions, ie it can no longer simply ignore negative environmental impacts should they be inconvenient. This suggests a much bigger role for the Nature Conservation Team in the everyday conduct of the Council’s business, insofar as such conduct impacts upon biodiversity and ecosystems.

Inquiry recommendations

Clearly, recommendations from the Inquiry will follow from its research and findings, but the likelihood is for a change of operating culture towards giving the natural environment a greater prominence than hitherto. This culture change will need to be expressed in the form of specific activity-related recommendations, that the Council can then take on board and apply.

It is recognised that many relevant activities affecting the natural environment are undertaken by other bodies outside of the Council's control. However, the Council can influence the behaviour of others, by example, by clear statements of policy, by procurement decisions and criteria and, of course, through a more sustainable exercise of its planning role.

How will the Inquiry be conducted?

Many of us are new to the Inquiry process and will need initial guidance from Scrutiny officers. However, it is suggested that we shall need to seek information and inputs from, *inter alia*:

- relevant Council officers.
- outside environmental bodies, including NRW and NGOs (egs RSPB, Wildlife Trusts, National Trust).
- Swansea Environmental Forum.
- The wider Swansea public.

The following documents are likely, *inter alia*, to prove necessary and/or useful:

- The Nature Recovery Plan for Wales 2015.
- Green Infrastructure – WTW report 2017.
- The State of Nature Report (Wales) 2016.
- The State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) 2016.
- The Swansea PSB local well-being plan 2018.
- The Council Corporate Plan 2017.

I would also recommend Tony Juniper's little book 'What Nature Does For Britain' (2015), published by Profile Books.

Peter Jones
January 2018.

3. Work Plans

Natural Environment Inquiry Work Plan – First Draft

Meeting 1 26 th March 2018	Overview – Richard Rowlands
Meeting 2 24 th April 2018	Service Policy Briefing – Paul Meller and Deb Hill
Meeting 3 18 th June 2018	Roundtable Session – External Organisations
Meeting 4 26 th July 2018	Roundtable Session – ‘Friends of Volunteer Groups
Meeting 5 30 th August	Service Overviews – Corporate Building Services and Corporate Property Services
Meeting 6 21st September 2018 1pm – 3pm Committee Room 1 Civic	Legislation Session – What are the Councils legal obligations/implications regarding biodiversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Local Government Association • Natural Resources Wales • Future Generations Commissioners Office
Meeting 7 4 th October 2018 10am – 12pm Councillor Meeting Room 235	Findings Session (Panel Only) – To discuss the findings of the Panel to date
Meeting 8 31 st October 2018 2.30pm-3.30pm CR6 Guildhall	Senior Brief – An overview of draft conclusions and inquiry messages before final report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phil Roberts • Cllr Rob Stewart • Cllr Mark Thomas

Natural Environment Inquiry Planning Meeting
10th May 2018

The Panel met to plan the inquiry going forward. The Panel have had service overviews and have a clear idea of the current situation in relation to the Councils approach to the Natural Environment and Biodiversity.

The Panel are now in a position to decide who they want to hear from in an evidence gathering capacity and the direction of the inquiry.

The draft Panel sessions are listed below.
 There will also be additional meeting sessions for the Panel

<u>Sessions/Information Gathering</u>	<u>Invited Attendees</u>
Meeting 1 June 18th 9.30am CR1 Civic Roundtable Session	NRW, RSPB, National Trust, Wildlife Trust Wales, Bug Life, Plant Life, Marine Conservation Society, Butterfly Conservation Wales, Wales Environment Link
Information Gathering July Financial Aspect	European Funding Team/ Ben Smith – Head of Finance
Meeting 2 July Roundtable Session	SCVS, Friends of Parks (Ian Beynon?), Swansea Friends of Parks Forum
Meeting 3 August Legislative Aspect	Future Generations Commissioners Office and representative on the Environment Act
Meeting 4 August Panel Session	Planning Phil Holmes – Head of Planning 1. Regeneration/City Planning 2. Domestic Planning Applications
Meeting 5 Panel Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Executive Phil Roberts • Leader Cllr Rob Stewart • Cabinet Member David Hopkins

The inquiry is focusing on maintaining, enhancing and promoting the natural environment and biodiversity in Swansea.

Much of the discussion took place around how the natural environment and biodiversity are considered not only during day to day decision making processes but also at key moments such as major development project planning and budget setting.

The issue of planning keeps occurring. There was discussion around how the concepts of environmental wellbeing are considered when making decisions around development in Swansea.

The Panel feel that there should be a much stronger stance around protection of green spaces and the biodiversity in them and also the environmental connectivity of sites.

This also raises the question for the Panel over the involvement of the Nature Conservation Team. Are they being involved at the right time in the decision making process? Are they given the opportunity to explore the issue sufficiently (time scales)? Does the team have the resources in the first place to undertake the amount of work required?

It was clear that the Panel are mindful of not only the environmental impacts of these decisions, but the legislative ones.

It has been made clear that there could be a range of consequences flowing from both the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 if the stipulations under them are not met. This may include but not be limited to financial, reputational, legal, environmental and political fallout.

This has led the panel to extend an invite both the Future Generations Commissioner and an officer from the Environment Team in Welsh Government to advise on the legislative impacts if the requirements under the acts are not fully met.

The next session will be a roundtable discussion with organisations who contribute to the natural environment and biodiversity in Swansea.

4. Legislative link diagram

Legislation for sustainable development to secure the long term well-being of Wales

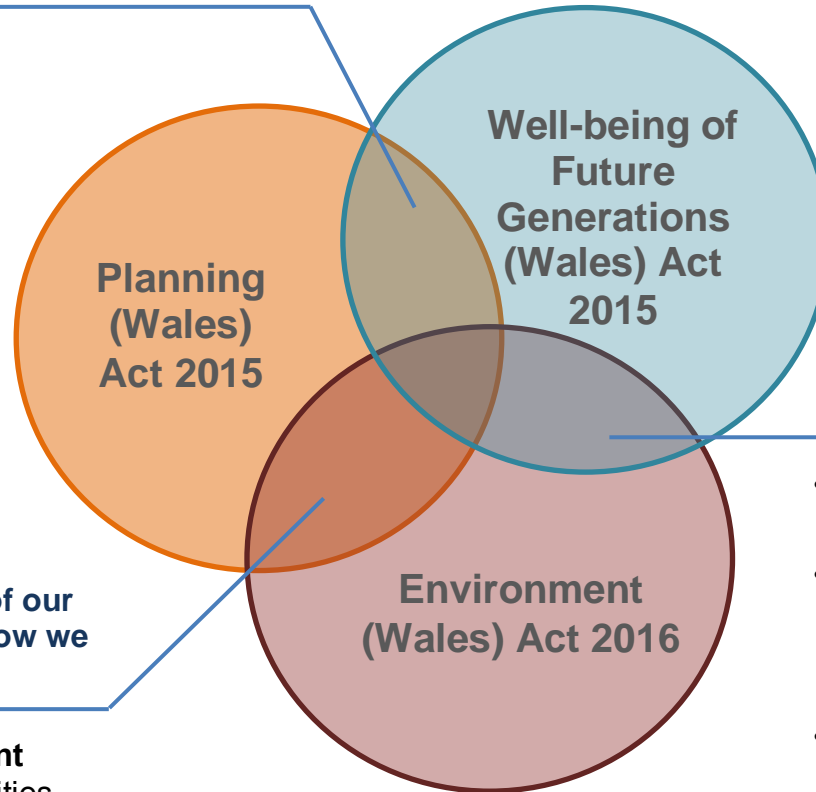
For Wales to develop sustainably, we need to change the law to put in place the key elements that will enable it to happen:

- A clear idea of what we are aiming for and an undertaking of the key principles that guide us;
- A clear picture of the natural resources we have, the risks they face and the opportunities they provide; and,
- An efficient process that ensures the right development is located in the right place to make it happen.



To help achieve the goals we need to plan how we use our land, and how our cities, towns and communities change over time

- A **plan-led system** means that Local Planning Authorities need to understand what their communities need. Local Planning Authorities will be under a duty to have regard to the ‘local well-being plan’ published by the Public Service Board (PSB)
- Greater development engagement at the **pre-application stage** will ensure local communities are able to engage early on in the planning process to influence development proposals.
- **Strategic Development Plans** will focus planning for areas with matters of greater than local significance. The key is to focus on areas where development is of a strategic nature.
- The **National Development Framework** will set out the Welsh Government’s land use priorities.



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Linking how we manage the use of our land must be done in alongside how we manage our natural resources

- **Natural resource management** informs priorities and opportunities through area-based evidence.
- More consistent, proactive and prioritised **evidence base** for natural resource use aligned to national and local goals.
- Prioritised opportunities to inform and underpin investment decisions and ensure the **right development**, supporting positive planning.

Our natural resources are essential for us to achieve the well-being of a sustainable Wales:

- The use and resilience of natural resources is reflected in the 7 well-being **goals**
- Natural Resources Wales are one of the 44 identified **public bodies** subject to the sustainable development duty and a member of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales’ **Advisory Panel**.
- **State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR)** will provide the evidence base for our natural resources which will inform Public Services Boards’ assessments of well-being.
- Natural Resources Wales will be a statutory member of all **Public Services Boards**, supporting partnership working across the public sector to maximise their contribution to the well-being goals.
- **Area statements** will identify local needs, opportunities and challenges within the context of both natural resource management and local well-being plans.

5. Heads of Service Responses

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY INQUIRY QUESTIONNAIRE

Staff Name:	Alex Williams
Position:	Head of Service
Service Area:	Adult Services
Directorate:	People - Social Services

1. Prior to receiving this questionnaire, did you know that the City and County of Swansea has a Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty?

Please tick

YES	<input type="checkbox"/>
NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2. Briefly describe below the main local authority functions undertaken in your service area.

All aspects of social services that relate to adults with support needs. This includes; older people and younger adults with physical and sensory impairments, learning disabilities and mental health support needs. Adult Social Services covers a broad range of services aimed at ensuring that people live fulfilled lives within supportive communities. Services are provided directly by the local authority, commissioned from the private and voluntary sector or are organised via a direct payment to the service user. These include Domiciliary Care, Residential, Respite and Day Services.

In line with the principles of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act, Adult Services have the following key principles at its core:

- Better prevention
- Better early help
- A new approach to assessment
- Improved cost effectiveness
- Working together better
- Keeping people safe.

The Head of Service also has a key role in relation to the protection of vulnerable adults, domestic abuse and the personalisation of social services agendas.

Adult Social Services are required to work in close partnership with all key stakeholders, service users, their carers and local communities to enable individuals to obtain the information, support and protection they need when they need it and to build individual, family and community capacity to enable the citizens of Swansea to achieve their full potential.

- 3. During your day to day work, do you currently consider biodiversity when making decisions? If YES please describe what you currently do to maintain and enhance the Natural Environment and Biodiversity.**

Not directly but in relation to service provision, in using and maintaining our range of premises, we seek to be as cost effective (both environmentally and financially) as possible.

For example, sensors in rooms which will automatically switch off lights when not in use.

In designing outside space for people using our residential or day services, we seek to encourage wildlife or introduce plants into barren spaces.

- 4. Do you have any ideas about how your department could do more/work differently to contribute to the maintenance, enhancement and promotion of the natural environment and biodiversity in Swansea Council?**

Awareness sessions for staff (as both employees but also citizens of Swansea/neighbouring authorities) on how we can contribute to maintaining the natural environment and biodiversity.

Guidance, advice and support on enhancing the natural environment and biodiversity across our sites and premises.

There are a number of partnership projects that we run with people who use our services, such as the Neighbourhood Environment Action Team and Grounds for Action. There may be opportunity for some collaboration with the Nature Conservation Team in further developing skills and knowledge on preserving the natural environment.

5. Please list below any constraints that may prevent the delivery of the above actions.

Available budget to provide training, releasing staff to attend training or for any costs associated with maintaining or enhancing the natural environment and biodiversity.

Health & Safety regulations, which may conflict with developing natural environments whilst ensuring vulnerable people are safe and have access to buildings and outside space in order to meet their needs and outcomes.

6. What help and support would enable you overcome these constraints? If you have any other comments, please list them here.

Better joint working between Departments, seeking to share knowledge, expertise and resources.

Knowledge and expertise to seek grant or other sources of funding.

Please return completed questionnaire to Bethan Hopkins, Scrutiny Officer by 28 August
bethan.hopkins@swansea.gov.uk 01792 636292

THANK YOU

*If you would like further information regarding the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Duty please contact: Deborah Hill, Team Leader/Arweinydd Tîm
(01792) 635777 Mob 07967 138 016*

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY INQUIRY QUESTIONNAIRE

Staff Name:	Ben Smith
Position:	Head of Financial Services and the Service Centre
Service Area:	Financial Services and the Service Centre
Directorate:	Resources

- 1. Prior to receiving this questionnaire, did you know that the City and County of Swansea has a Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty?**

YES Please tick
NO

Y

- 2. Briefly describe below the main local authority functions undertaken in your service area.**

Financial grip and governance Forward planning Resilience Reputation Solvency Grant management Income and Payment processing Payroll Pensions payments, management, fund investment Council Tax and NDR collection Benefits payments

- 3. During your day to day work, do you currently consider biodiversity when making decisions? If YES please describe what you currently do to maintain and enhance the Natural Environment and Biodiversity.**

Yes even if only in terms of at the margin considering the environmental impact of financial decisions having due regard to our Wellbeing of Future generations obligations.

- 4. Do you have any ideas about how your department could do more/work differently to contribute to the maintenance, enhancement and promotion of the natural environment and biodiversity in Swansea Council?**

Ever more explicit wording for the due regard to Wellbeing of Future Generations and biodiversity duties in particular in any financial sign off of any project.

Progress being made in terms of our divestment strategy in the Pension Fund subject to constraints on returns and protecting member assets.

- 5. Please list below any constraints that may prevent the delivery of the above actions.**

Financial constraints mean it is often difficult to not “prefer” the cheap now option.

Pension fund objectives are to protect member assets and deliver fund returns primarily notwithstanding the objective of fossil fuel divestment and diversification into more sustainable funds, infrastructure etc. We’re pushing boundaries where we can through the WPP pension partnership around for e.g. Tidal Lagoon support, future cleaner more sustainable infrastructure investment

6. What help and support would enable you overcome these constraints? If you have any other comments, please list them here.

**Some explicit funding in future settlements from WG/UK government
ot help recognise that investment and spend now on projects that
could improve biodiversity and eco systems or protect for future
generations are worthwhile in the longer term interests of us all.**

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY INQUIRY QUESTIONNAIRE

Staff Name:	CHRIS WILLIAMS
Position:	HEAD – COMMERCIAL SERVICES
Service Area:	COMMERCIAL SERVICES
Directorate:	RESOURCES

1. Prior to receiving this questionnaire, did you know that the City and County of Swansea has a Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty?

Please tick

YES
NO

x

2. Briefly describe below the main local authority functions undertaken in your service area.

Support for other Council Services relating to income development opportunities and also support for the purchase of goods and services (procurement).
--

3. During your day to day work, do you currently consider biodiversity when making decisions? If YES please describe what you currently do to maintain and enhance the Natural Environment and Biodiversity.

Sustainable procurement principles as set out within the Wales Procurement Policy Statement underpin the Council's procurement practice. Procurement officers work informally with services at the earliest stages of the procurement process so specifications can be developed by managers that consider value for money on a whole life basis (costs relating to maintenance, disposal and consumables are taken into account).

Supplier Suitability Questionnaires also include a section on sustainability focusing on environmental issues and but also address equalities safeguarding in addition to more traditional technical and economic criteria.

Beyond Bricks and Mortar is an award winning initiative which secures social benefits from construction and regeneration activity across sectors in the City & County of Swansea for the lasting benefits of the community. Community benefit clauses offer a new approach to public procurement and can be defined as requirements made of a development or contract that would not normally have them as a defined or measured outcome. Clauses can be included to influence the following areas:

- Targeted training and recruitment, e.g. long term unemployed
- Supply chain initiatives, committing to local sourcing
- Community consultation (considerate contractors)
- Contributions to education
- Promotion of social enterprises
- Environmental benefits during works and at completion

Our Community Benefit Policy was updated in 2016 broadened this approach to enable all council procurement projects, activities and contracts to be considered for community benefits. By introducing community benefit clauses such as targeted recruitment and training into contracts our aim is to ensure that members of our community, especially young people and those who have been out of the job market for some time are given opportunities of meaningful training and employment. This maximises opportunities to achieve added value and maximise contribution to the well-being goals as a result of public sector spending in Swansea.

Swansea council actively supports local supplier development and understands the added value generated by procuring locally. For major projects, a supplier awareness session is run for local businesses with further support on E-tendering provided by Business Wales. The Transformation & Future Council PDDC has developed an action plan to implement sustainable procurement principles that allow local suppliers to bid for Council contracts. This action plan was reviewed in line with the five ways of working. Moving forward, this process will be further improved by trialling the adaption of the Future Generations Framework for Service Design.

Steps have also been taken towards promoting a circular economy approach with the refurbishment of a new agile working environment achieved by repurposing and re-using existing materials and equipment rather than buying new off catalogue. This approach which developed new ways of working with social enterprise was enabled by learning from, working with and building on the experience of other public bodies particularly Public Health Wales.

4. Do you have any ideas about how your department could do more/work differently to contribute to the maintenance, enhancement and promotion of the natural environment and biodiversity in Swansea Council?

No

5. Please list below any constraints that may prevent the delivery of the above actions.

N/A

6. What help and support would enable you overcome these constraints? If you have any other comments, please list them here.

N/A

Please return completed questionnaire to Bethan Hopkins, Scrutiny Officer by 28 August
bethan.hopkins@swansea.gov.uk 01792 636292

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY INQUIRY QUESTIONNAIRE

Staff Name:	Geoff Bacon
Position:	Interim Head of Corporate Property Services
Service Area:	Corporate Property Services
Directorate:	Place Directorate

1. Prior to receiving this questionnaire, did you know that the City and County of Swansea has a Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty?

Please tick

YES
NO

x

2. Briefly describe below the main local authority functions undertaken in your service area.

Property services covers three distinct operational areas; Commercial Estate Management, Strategic Asset Management and Facilities Management. With regards specifically to land management and land disposal, it is only when it comes to disposal of land that the service would have greater consideration of bio-diversity and environmental issues.

3. During your day to day work, do you currently consider biodiversity when making decisions? If YES please describe what you currently do to maintain and enhance the Natural Environment and Biodiversity.

As we do not hold or have responsibility for management of land, day to day, there is limited consideration of bio-diversity when making decisions. When it comes to disposal of land, Council officers would follow the normal statutory processes but more specifically, would consult with planning colleagues over any environmental or bio-diversity issues that may have an impact on potential development.

4. Do you have any ideas about how your department could do more/work differently to contribute to the maintenance, enhancement and promotion of the natural environment and biodiversity in Swansea Council?

The core function of the property team is to maximise efficient and effective use of council assets, due to the considerable financial and resource constraint, any different ways of working would have an effect on core business. Furthermore, it is often that the promotion or enhancement of the natural environment is in direct conflict to the requirement to maximise any financial return which is critical to the subsidising of core council services.

5. Please list below any constraints that may prevent the delivery of the above actions.

- Limited resource
- Policy conflict

6. What help and support would enable you overcome these constraints? If you have any other comments, please list them here.

Please return completed questionnaire to Bethan Hopkins, Scrutiny Officer by Friday 6th July 2018 bethan.hopkins@swansea.gov.uk 01792 636292

THANK YOU

*If you would like further information regarding the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Duty please contact: Deborah Hill, Team Leader/Arweinydd Tîm
(01792) 635777 Mob 07967 138 016*

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY INQUIRY QUESTIONNAIRE

Staff Name:	Lee wenham
Position:	Head of Communications and Marketing
Service Area:	Communications and Marketing
Directorate:	Chief Executive's

1. Prior to receiving this questionnaire, did you know that the City and County of Swansea has a Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty?

Please tick

YES
NO

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2. Briefly describe below the main local authority functions undertaken in your service area.

<p>Communications and marketing – promoting the council and its services. Design print – providing design and print services and commissioning support to services. CMT Support – providing business support to the CX and Directors.</p>
--

3. During your day to day work, do you currently consider biodiversity when making decisions? If YES please describe what you currently do to maintain and enhance the Natural Environment and Biodiversity.

All service areas consider recycling and reusing materials as part of their daily work.

- 4. Do you have any ideas about how your department could do more/work differently to contribute to the maintenance, enhancement and promotion of the natural environment and biodiversity in Swansea Council?**

The comms and marketing team could help to promote biodiversity across the council and to the wider public.

- 5. Please list below any constraints that may prevent the delivery of the above actions.**

Prioritising what we promote with fewer resources.

- 6. What help and support would enable you overcome these constraints? If you have any other comments, please list them here.**

Simply a change in emphasis on what the council and my service prioritises.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY INQUIRY QUESTIONNAIRE

Staff Name:	Tom Price
Position:	Team Leader. Pollution Control Division
Service Area:	Housing and Public Protection
Directorate:	Place

1. Prior to receiving this questionnaire, did you know that the City and County of Swansea has a Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty?

Please tick

YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Briefly describe below the main local authority functions undertaken in your service area.

<p>Pollution Control Housing & Public Health Housing Management (Landlord Services, Business Planning and Renewals/Adaptations) Food Safety Health and Safety Trading Standards Licensing Division Burials, Cremations, Registrars Building Control</p>
--

3. During your day to day work, do you currently consider biodiversity when making decisions? If YES please describe what you currently do to maintain and enhance the Natural Environment and Biodiversity.

Primarily within the Pollution Control Division. The team deals proactively and reactively with the Air, Land and Water media.

The team's ongoing work within the field of Air Quality requires the monitoring and assessment of ambient air quality in-line with the Air Quality Objectives set out by the EU, UK Government and devolved administrations. Whilst it is not the team's role to provide comment upon pollutant concentration in the ecosystem they are responsible for carrying out the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) duties, as required by the Environment Act 1995. Part of the LAQM function requires the assessment of ambient air quality and the development of an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to work towards compliance and further reduce exposure. Examples include the current AQAP in development looking at the potential to introduce 'Living Fences' i.e. hedges alongside specific road 'hot spots' to provide screening for the residential premises.

The Pollution Control Team carries out seawater sampling to enable assessment against bathing water standards. Previous sampling works involved within the Interreg Study led to the collection of samples and data from discharge events in tributaries to Swansea Bay. This collaborative work enabled the data to be fed back to Dwr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) to be considered within their infrastructure upgrade works for pumping stations and combined sewer overflows (CSO's).

As statutory consultees in the Planning Process the Pollution Control team also comment upon applications on 'Brownfield Sites' with a view to ensuring that the relevant pathways to receptors are not created as a result of the development.

The Housing service is required to consider biodiversity when developing new Council housing via Planning conditions for example.

- 4. Do you have any ideas about how your department could do more/work differently to contribute to the maintenance, enhancement and promotion of the natural environment and biodiversity in Swansea Council?**

- 1. Partake collaborative work with the relevant teams looking at green infrastructure improvements and ways to enable development of mutually beneficial schemes**
- 2. Support any applications for Electric Vehicles.**
- 3. Could look at Emission constraints on vehicles however this would need to be consulted with the trade and could affect**
- 4. Housing's commitment to the Welsh Housing quality Standard means there will be enhancements to green/open space via environmental works programme over the next few years. We are intending to join this up with other Council services to ensure a cross dept approach**

- 5. Please list below any constraints that may prevent the delivery of the above actions.**

1. Financial requirements for potential green infrastructure schemes (outside of the HRA funded WHQS Programme) would need to be met; budgets are restricted at present so would most likely need to be sourced.
2. Applications would need to be made by the trade. Cost is quite prohibitive at the moment for purpose built taxis and the infrastructure is not in place in Swansea.
3. Some Authorities have imposed caps on the emission rate on vehicles, this would need to be researched, consulted upon prior to the introduction, if agreed by Members.

6. What help and support would enable you overcome these constraints? If you have any other comments, please list them here.

An open dialogue between colleagues would enable up to date discussion of ideas, workstreams of interest that would be mutually beneficial.

An overview awareness of potential crossovers of workstreams.

Please return completed questionnaire to Bethan Hopkins, Scrutiny Officer by Friday 6th July 2018 bethan.hopkins@swansea.gov.uk 01792 636292

THANK YOU

*If you would like further information regarding the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Duty please contact: Deborah Hill, Team Leader/Arweinydd Tîm
(01792) 635777 Mob 07967 138 016*

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY INQUIRY QUESTIONNAIRE

Staff Name:	Nigel Williams
Position:	Interim Head of Service
Service Area:	Corporate Building Services
Directorate:	Place

1. Prior to receiving this questionnaire, did you know that the City and County of Swansea has a Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty?

Please tick

YES
NO

X

2. Briefly describe below the main local authority functions undertaken in your service area.

**To carry out all building repairs and maintenance to the Authorities property portfolio, including new build schools and houses.
All legislative and compliance servicing for Gas, Electric, Legionella, Fire and Asbestos management.**

3. During your day to day work, do you currently consider biodiversity when making decisions? If YES please describe what you currently do to maintain and enhance the Natural Environment and Biodiversity.

We recycle as many components as possible from the waste that we generate, all scrap materials are returned to the depot so that they may be recycled. When purchasing materials we request how much of their product is sourced from recycled materials, and how they recycle any packaging etc. and if off cuts may be returned.

Certain employees have been trained on how to stop a spillage entering the water course, with spillage kits being available.

The Capital programme for the WHQS is aimed at improving the thermal efficiency of the building which in turn reduces the amount of CO2 that is generated.

We only install boilers that have a SEDBRUC band A which measures the efficiency of the boiler, all Band A are over 95% efficient again reducing the amount of CO2 generated.

We carry out repairs to White goods that have been supplied as part of a “Furniture pack” reducing the number of appliances that used to be scrapped.

A large amount of the waste that we produce is taken to Derwen plant who recycle over 90% of all waste taken to their depot.

Within our depot we have separate waste skips so that waste is segregated rather than using mixed skips further increasing the amount of recycling that may be achieved.

- 4. Do you have any ideas about how your department could do more/work differently to contribute to the maintenance, enhancement and promotion of the natural environment and biodiversity in Swansea Council?**

Access to information relating to how they may improve the natural environment, if they are given the knowledge then they will contribute more than they currently do.

- 5. Please list below any constraints that may prevent the delivery of the above actions.**

None, the information is available but not widely shared, it could be added as a topic on the Corporate briefing note so that all employees receive a particular topic each month.

6. What help and support would enable you overcome these constraints? If you have any other comments, please list them here.

None.

Please return completed questionnaire to Bethan Hopkins, Scrutiny Officer by Friday 6th July 2018 bethan.hopkins@swansea.gov.uk 01792 636292

THANK YOU

*If you would like further information regarding the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Duty please contact: Deborah Hill, Team Leader/Arweinydd Tîm
(01792) 635777 Mob 07967 138 016*

Rachel Moxey
Head of Poverty Prevention

The community growing schemes budget was cut last year and so no longer exists. The allotments have been transferred to Geoff Bacon's service. The link to Down to Earth is about support they offer through their outdoor activities to young people in Swansea. That is the basis of their business rather than environmental services. I hope this makes sense.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY INQUIRY QUESTIONNAIRE

Staff Name:	
Position:	
Service Area:	
Directorate:	

1. Prior to receiving this questionnaire, did you know that the City and County of Swansea has a Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty?

Please tick

YES	<input type="checkbox"/>
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Briefly describe below the main local authority functions undertaken in your service area.

3. During your day to day work, do you currently consider biodiversity when making decisions? If YES please describe what you currently do to maintain and enhance the Natural Environment and Biodiversity.

4. Do you have any ideas about how your department could do more/work differently to contribute to the maintenance, enhancement and promotion of the natural environment and biodiversity in Swansea Council?

We would hope that participants would become more aware of their natural environment through both the Parklives and walking projects. Although biodiversity is not a focus of the activities, the fact that we are encouraging positive use of the natural environment for physical well-being may subsequently raise awareness and appreciation of the open spaces within participant’s communities and Swansea generally.

Although our team and our partners specialise in Physical Activity delivery in open spaces, we could consider partnership working or signposting to colleagues working more closely in the field of biodiversity.

5. Please list below any constraints that may prevent the delivery of the above actions.

Workload and specialism of Sport and Health deliverers. The demands of our funding partners.

6. What help and support would enable you overcome these constraints? If you have any other comments, please list them here.

We should be able to improve our knowledge of other initiatives within the remit of the Council or it's partners and potentially signpost and/or promote activities through our networks linked to physical activity in the outdoors.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY INQUIRY QUESTIONNAIRE

Staff Name:	TRACEY MEREDITH
Position:	HEAD OF LEGAL, DEM SERVICES AND BI
Service Area:	HEAD OF LEGAL, DEM SERVICES AND BI
Directorate:	CORPORATE RESOURCES

1. Prior to receiving this questionnaire, did you know that the City and County of Swansea has a Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty?

Please tick

YES
NO

X

2. Briefly describe below the main local authority functions undertaken in your service area.

<p>Legal Services – to provide legal and statutory advice to the authority, members and committees</p> <p>Dem Services – to provide dem services support to committees, members and officers.</p> <p>Access to Services – to provide equality and engagement advice to authority, members and committees. To liaise with outside organisations to provide assistance in accessing services. Advice on consultation.</p> <p>Scrutiny – to provide scrutiny support to officers, members and committee.</p>

3. During your day to day work, do you currently consider biodiversity when making decisions? If YES please describe what you currently do to maintain and enhance the Natural Environment and Biodiversity.

**In general the department does not make decisions. It does however provide legislative advice in decision making to client departments.
The department has already engaged with client department in relation to provision of advice on biodiversity duties. A dedicated legal officer has been identified to research and provide advice where necessary and appropriate.**

- 4. Do you have any ideas about how your department could do more/work differently to contribute to the maintenance, enhancement and promotion of the natural environment and biodiversity in Swansea Council?**

The dedicated legal officer has been requested to provide an advice note to legal officers (for wider circulation if necessary) on duties under the legislation. This will enable legal officers when considering reports to ensure that duties are understood by client department.

- 5. Please list below any constraints that may prevent the delivery of the above actions.**

None.

- 6. What help and support would enable you overcome these constraints? If you have any other comments, please list them here.**

7. Meeting 1 – Overview



Report of the Corporate Director (Resources)

Scrutiny Inquiry Panel 'Swansea's Natural Environment' – 26 March 2018

Briefing – the Council's response to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Purpose: The report presents some background and contextual information to the Scrutiny Inquiry on 'Swansea's Natural Environment' to illustrate how the Council has responded so far to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and how it intends to develop this response.

Report Author: Richard Rowlands, Strategic Delivery and Performance Manager

Finance Officer: Paul Roach

Legal Officer: Debbie Smith

Access to Services Officer: Sherill Hopkins

For Information

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This briefing provides some background information to help inform the Scrutiny Inquiry into 'Swansea's Natural Environment'. It provides contextual information on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the 'Act') and the Council's response and plans to implement the Act more generally.
- 1.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.
- 1.3 The Act is intended to make public bodies think more about the long term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach.
- 1.4 The Act established a statutory Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, whose role is to act as a "guardian for the interests of future

generations in Wales”, and to support the public bodies listed in the Act to work towards achieving the seven national well-being goals.

1.5 The Auditor General for Wales may carry out an examination of public bodies to determine the extent to which they have acted in accordance with the duties set out for them by the Act.

1.6 The Act also establishes Public Services Boards (PSBs) for each local authority area in Wales. Each PSB must improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of its area by working to achieve the well-being goals.

2.0 Requirements on Public Bodies

2.1 In summary, the Act sets out a ‘Well-Being Duty’. The Well-Being Duty requires public bodies to carry out sustainable development and encompasses two main obligations:

- a. Deciding priorities – the duty to set ‘Well-Being Objectives’.
- b. Meeting priorities – the duty to take ‘reasonable steps’.

2.2 Public bodies must set and publish ‘*Well-Being Objectives*’.

2.3 When setting Well-Being Objectives, public bodies must have regard to all seven of the national *Well-Being Goals* prescribed under the Act.

2.4 The national Goals are not to be considered a hierarchy (i.e. they are all of equal importance), but as an integrated set.

2.5 Well-Being Objectives must be designed to ‘maximise’ a public bodies contribution’ to achieving each of the seven national Well-Being Goals.

2.6 Public bodies must take ‘all reasonable steps’ (in exercising their functions) to meet them.

2.7 The Act introduces a ‘*Sustainable Development Principle*’, which tells organisations how to go about meeting their duty under the Act.

2.8 The Sustainable Development Principle is based upon five key ways of working that public bodies must adopt. It expects public bodies to:

- 1 *Long-term*: look to the long term as well as focusing on now;
- 2 *Prevention*: take action to try and stop problems getting worse - or even stop them happening in the first place.
- 3 *Collaboration*: work together with other public bodies;
- 4 *Integration*: work together better;
- 5 *Involvement*: involve people reflecting the diversity of our communities.

- 2.9 Public bodies are required to publish a *Well-Being Statement* along with their Well-Being Objectives.
- 2.10 The Well-Being Statement must outline why public bodies feel that each Well-Being Objective will see it maximise its contribution to the seven national Well-Being Goals.
- 2.11 Public bodies must publish an *Annual Report* each year showing the progress it has made in meeting its Well-Being Objectives.

3.0 Progress to date

3.1 Well-being Objectives

- 3.1.1 Swansea Council has made good progress implementing the Act. The Act legislates for things that in many cases we are already doing. The Act should help create further momentum and put important issues, such as climate change, onto the agenda.
- 3.1.2 The Council published its Well-being Objectives for 2017/22 in August 2017 in the Corporate Plan. The Council's Well-being Objectives are:
- Safeguarding People from Harm.
 - Improving Education & Skills.
 - Transforming our Economy & Infrastructure.
 - Tackling Poverty.
 - Transformation & Future Council development.
- 3.1.3 The development of the Council's Well-being Objectives involved an assessment of how the Council could maximise its contribution to the national goals and a review of evidence to support this. The Council involved the staff, Members and the public in this review through surveys and through face-to-face consultation events.
- 3.1.4 The outcome has been a set of Well-being Objectives that have a broader focus than in previous years, are cross-cutting and integrated with each other and are better at showing the Council's contribution to national goals and to the economic, cultural, environmental and social well-being of Swansea and Wales.
- 3.1.5 Although there is no specific Well-being Objective associated with nature, the Council's Well-being Objectives are an integrated set that address **all** aspects of well-being. The following steps to deliver the Well-being Objectives and set out within the Corporate Plan illustrates the Council's contribution to environmental well-being:
- Teach young citizens to respect rights, understand responsibilities and be globally aware and responsible citizens by continuing to support schools to become *Eco Schools* increasing understanding, respect and appreciation of our environment.

- Use our school building and maintenance programme to reduce our carbon footprint.
- Promote and enhance a diverse and sustainable rural economy.
- Promote the Green Economy, including renewable energy (such as SCEES, Tidal Lagoon) providing energy security, climate change mitigation and economic and employment benefits.
- Work with others to provide sustainable and low carbon transport and infrastructure providing improved and cheaper connectivity and mobility and associated economic benefits at reduced environmental cost and improved air quality.
- Promote biodiversity and protect Swansea's green spaces, including parks for recreation and play, to promote health and well-being.
- Manage Swansea's coastline, promote improved bathing water quality and maintain Blue Flag status at Swansea's beaches to encourage tourism, protect the environment and support well-being.
- Give priority to providing an affordable housing solution in rural areas.
- Support recycling and ensure we continue to be the leading urban authority in Wales for reusing waste.
- Invest to improve housing and build more energy efficient Council homes and affordable housing to help meet housing need, reduce fuel bills, regenerate estates and bring wider economic and employment benefits.
- Explore creating our own energy venture to provide low-cost energy to homes helping to tackle high domestic fuel bills and fuel poverty.
- Support tackling climate change and help eradicate fuel poverty and boost economic development through the ARBED scheme and energy efficiency measures in social housing.
- Provide free or low cost environmental events, including guided walks and cycle rides; a wide range of talks, workshops and training courses about wildlife and environmental issues and children's events promoting environmental literacy and improving health and wellbeing.
- Encourage greater community ownership of parks and work with 'friends of parks' organisations to ensure the long-term sustainability and control of parks and public spaces.

- 3.1.6 The Council acknowledges that more still needs to be done in the development of Well-being Objectives, particularly around involving and working with others, as we develop our understanding and build upon existing practice and learn from other public bodies.
- 3.2 *Embedding the Sustainable Development principle*
- 3.2.1 There have been a number of areas of work underway to embed the sustainable development principle into how the Council works.
- 3.2.2 *Sustainable Swansea*
The sustainable development principle is integral to our *Sustainable Swansea – Fit for the Future* programme to transform the Council and make it more sustainable to meet present and future challenges.
- 3.2.3 *Cabinet Member for Future Generations*
This cross-cutting Cabinet position seeks to lead on embedding the sustainable development principle into the Council's policy and practice. In addition, elected Members were offered training on the Act as part of their induction.
- 3.2.4 *Foresighting*
A series of foresighting workshops were held with different groups within the Council, including Corporate Management Team, Leadership Team and Cabinet. This has helped build understanding of future challenges to support the Welsh Government's Future Trends Report.
- 3.2.5 *Risk Management*
The Council's risk management policy and framework were revised to incorporate the Sustainable Development Principle and to help identify and respond to longer-term strategic risks.
- 3.2.6 *Prevention Strategy*
The Council needs to continue to develop its preventative approach and has developed a *Prevention Strategy*. This strategy will further embed early intervention and prevention into the Council's business and place an even greater focus on improving well-being.
- 3.2.7 *Working with others*
We are collaborating with others on a number of our key priorities. For example, the Swansea Bay City Deal involves working with three other local authorities, the Welsh Government, Universities and the private sector to transform the economic landscape of the area, boost the local economy by £1.8 billion, and generate almost 10,000 new jobs over the next 15 years. This partnership approach is likely to continue to develop as the reform of local government requires local Authorities to work increasingly on a regional basis.

3.2.8 *Involving people*

The Council already has established arrangements for consulting with and involving citizens. For example, Schools pupils are involved in their education through School Councils and through Pupil Voice, which is aimed directly at increasing pupil participation as set out in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC); Swansea was the first UK Council to adopt and embed UNCRC.

3.2.9 *Strategic Delivery Unit*

The Council has brought together strategic capability and capacity from across the Council, including staff from the former Sustainable Development Unit, into a single strategic policy and delivery unit. This will provide the required joined-up capability and capacity in strategic planning, policy, research and analysis in order to help the Council fulfil its obligations under the Act and embed the Act in everyone's everyday work.

4.0 Continuing work to embed the Sustainable Development Principle

4.1 The Council will continue with the work set out above in para 3. In addition, the following plans will continue to help embed the Sustainable Development Principle into the work of the Council.

4.1.2 *Organizational and workforce development*

The Council will support and train its workforce through an Organisational Development Strategy and Implementation Plan to deliver transformed services that are fit for the future so that we have the right people with the right skills, with the appropriate development pathway and rewards, and that we work in ways that provide the most sustainable outcomes for residents.

4.1.3 *Involvement and co-production*

The Council will provide the opportunity for local citizens to influence how policies are written and services are developed through the development of a Co-production Strategy. The Council will also seek to involve citizens by:

- working with others to build capacity and promote community action to involve and enable communities to run services and manage assets;
- working to ensure there is more targeted and effective engagement with the third sector to achieve both the Council's and shared priorities and outcomes;
- encouraging greater community ownership of parks and work with 'friends of parks' organizations to ensure the long-term sustainability and control of parks and public spaces;

- continuing to modernize public engagement in Council decision making through accessible meeting times, web broadcasting, electronic voting and e-petitions;
- making community budgets available so that Members can address local priorities.

4.1.4 *Service Planning*

Service Planning has been revised to help embed the Act, enabling services to show how they are embedding the Sustainable Development Principle and better show their contribution to the Council's Well-being Objectives.

4.1.5 *Cross-cutting Commissioning Reviews*

The Council's cross cutting *Commissioning Reviews* of services based on themes are aimed at making services more joined-up and sustainable providing better outcomes for citizens.

5.0 What the Council is doing differently

5.1 The following are some examples where the Council is already working differently.

5.1.2 *Long-term*

The Council has a number of strategic schemes, which help mitigate or adapt to future trends including:

- a 30% carbon reduction target over a 10 year period from 2011 as part of our overall Energy Strategy and Asset Management Plans;
- working in partnership with local organisations to improving energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions (Welsh Quality Housing Standard, ARBED);
- the development of the Local Flood Risk Management Plan;
- improving facilities in the city centre for sustainable modes of transport;
- developing a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Swansea;
- reducing waste through the 'Keep it to three' campaign;
- the Swansea Community Energy and Enterprise Scheme (SCEES) explores how local people in some of Swansea's most economically deprived areas can benefit from community renewable energy projects.

5.1.3 *Prevention*

The Council's *Safe Looked After Children Reduction Strategy* is framed by efforts to ensure a more preventative approach. It aims at safely

reducing demand for children's services and ensuring that other alternatives to statutory Child & Family Services are explored.

5.1.4 *Integration*

The Council's work with our Western Bay partners is enabling the integration of health and social care. Local Government Reorganisation will develop this further where integration and collaboration underpin all aspects of the Council's Corporate Plan.

5.1.5 *Collaboration*

The Council is taking steps to improve, expand and diversify leisure, cultural and heritage facilities and infrastructure to bring economic, environmental and cultural benefits. The Council is working in partnership with Swansea University to breathe life back into the site of the former Hafod-Morfa Copperworks through the Cu@Swansea project. The project includes a programme of physical works to reclaim the site from dereliction and enable people to visit and reconnect with the site, including schools, the public and community groups and a strong friends group has emerged.

5.1.6 *Involvement*

The Council is committed to involving young people in their education. The Council was the first in the UK to adopt and fully embed the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)* that sets out rights for all children and enables them to participate in society in an equitable way.

5.1.7 The formation of 'Friends' groups are being supported to regenerate local parks, beaches and allotments. Examples of success include *Parc Llewellyn*, where a Green Flag Award resulted from the work of the Friends Group.

5.1.8 The *Fforestfach Day Service* is doing great things to support adults with learning disabilities to benefit from jobs and work experience that makes a difference to them and to local communities and the environment. The ideas come from local communities themselves and a real benefit is had in people seeing people with learning disabilities improving their areas and challenging perceptions and stereotypes.

5.1.9 The service deserves great credit for seven brilliant projects ranging from the well-known Neighbourhood Environmental Action Team (NEAT) teams to catering services at the Victoria Park Kiosk, the Fforestfach fruit and vegetable nursery and the Grounds Maintenance Team, which supports management of wildlife and environmental habitats.

6.0 Barriers to implementing the Act

6.1 Some barriers exist to implementing the Act and embedding the Sustainable Development principle:

- Established working practices that may not reflect the Sustainable Development principle.
- Professional boundaries, culture and practices that may not reflect the Sustainable Development principle.
- Lack of awareness, understanding and consistency that may inhibit cross-service and integrated working.
- Reduced resources and capacity to help facilitate working in line with the Sustainable Development principle.
- Five-year political cycle with a risk that there is some focus on short-term and politically expedient priorities above longer-term needs.
- Annual budgeting cycle and an over-reliance on grants from Welsh Government in place of adequate core funding undermining sustainability.
- Differences in understanding when working with others and what that means for different organisations creating barriers to joint working and pooling budgets.
- A need for a more consistent and joined-up approach across government so that more regard is given by central government to integration and / or local governments' capacity to deliver new legislative requirements.
- Disproportionate inspection and regulation and a regulatory regime that is based upon 'naming and shaming' leading to 'blaming and gaming'. This regulatory culture undermines the idea of trial and error and iterative success.
- Bureaucracy – too much focus in the Act on setting priorities, writing plans and undertaking assessments at the expense of making the change. More focus should be on the outcomes (behavioural and cultural change – the 5 ways of working) and less on the process (setting objectives, making assessments, reporting, etc.).

7.0 Support that would be beneficial to implementing the Act

7.1 The following external support would help the Council and public bodies further embed the Sustainable Development principle

- Welsh government and regulators continuing to change the way that they work in line with the Sustainable Development principle so that we can change the way that we work. For example, moving towards a

regulatory regime and action planning that promotes iterative learning and takes account of ongoing learning.

- A Welsh Government funded Improvement agency to share learning and best practice.
- Less central guidance and prescription on embedding the Sustainable Development principle. Local Government should be judged on the outcomes it delivers.
- Improved funding for local government to improve capacity and capability to deliver.
- More certainty over medium-term funding for local government to allow for longer-term planning.
- More funding included in local government core funding as opposed to being distributed through grants.
- A more proportionate and risk based (light touch) audit and inspection regime that is more focussed on outcomes for citizens and less concerned with process.
- Accountability properly balanced with the need to learn lessons and make improvements – so that ‘failure’ is not always seen as a bad thing but as a necessary means of learning lessons and making improvements.
- More integrated working and collaboration between WAO and the other regulators and inspectors to account for local authorities adopting new models of delivery, including more collaboration and partnership working.
- Welsh government to work with professional bodies and training providers (including Universities) on building the sustainability principle into professional practice and training.
- Listening more to local government about what is working and what is not working in relation to the Act, guidance and regulation and then making changes in response to the feedback.

8.0 Equality and Engagement Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct equality and engagement implications to this briefing note. However, it is important to note that our legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales) continue to apply alongside the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

9.0 Legal Implications

9.1 There are no legal implications.

10.0 Financial Implications

10.1 There are no direct and immediate financial implications arising from this report. However as noted in the report itself there are potential financial barriers and potential implications arising from the well-being duty, the absence of long term financial certainty over the majority of our finances which are without the Council's control (predominantly block and specific grants) and the continued foreseeable constrained levels of overall resources. This may practically impact the Council's ability (simply due to constrained, or uncertain, short to medium term finances) to look "beyond" to the future generations.

For Information

Background papers: *none*

Appendices: none



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Natural Environment**

Committee Room 5 - Guildhall, Swansea

Monday, 26 March 2018 at 10.30 am

Present: Councillor P K Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)
E W Fitzgerald
Y V Jardine
S Pritchard

Councillor(s)
L S Gibbard
J W Jones

Councillor(s)
P R Hood-Williams
I E Mann

Officer(s)
Bethan Hopkins
Richard Rowlands

Scrutiny Officer
Corporate Performance Manager

Apologies for Absence
Councillor(s): L V Walton

1 Apologies

2 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

The Panel raised queries over memberships of groups, organisations etc which have an interest in the natural environment in some way.

I will find out if any of these memberships constitute a conflict and feedback to the Panel.

3 Public Questions

None

4 Swansea Council and the Future Generations Act

- Richard Rowlands came to present his report on what Swansea Council are currently doing to meet their requirements under the WFGA (Future Generations Act)
- The report aimed to provide the background of the WFGA – it is the legislation which underpins how Councils improve wellbeing
- A key part of the act is around culture and behaviour
- Richard discussed what the Council is already doing

- There was some discussion around how the public are consulted when it comes to policy development. Comments made that there needs to be more public input into policy development
- The KPI measures for working around the WFGA are not stand alone. It is assessed via a collective look at all KPIs

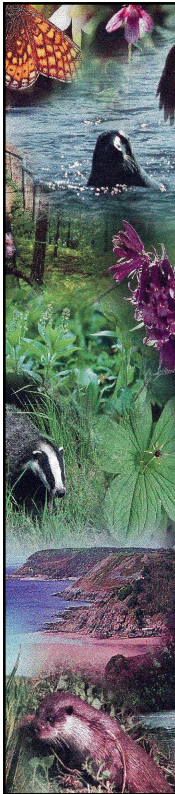
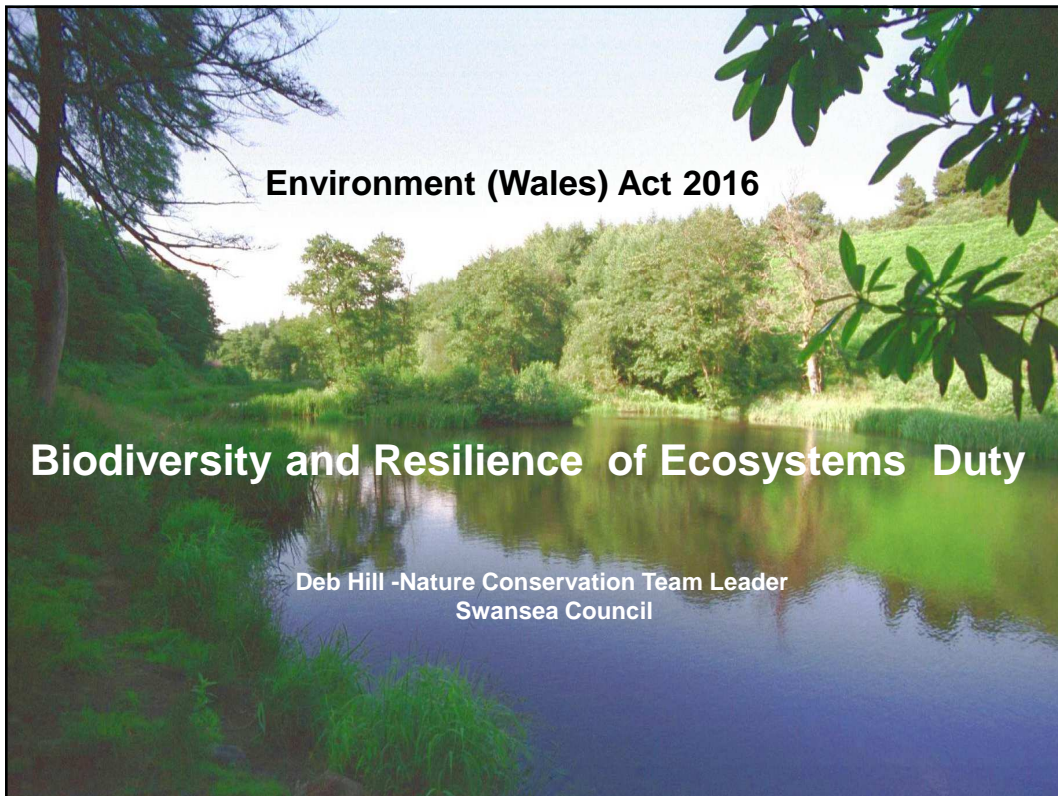
5 Discussion

- The Wellbeing Plan has an objective 'Working With Nature' and it seems that the Corporate Plan is incompatible as it does not have a designated target for nature and so the profile is not as high as it could be
- Any relevant findings from other Scrutiny activities will be fed back into the Panel to avoid duplication of work and to help create an up to date picture of what is going on
- Some conversations around how planning is decided and how issues around nature and biodiversity are considered and whether these considerations are at the right stage of the process
- There are integrated impact assessments to make sure that policies are linking in with the WFGA
- The Panel discussed the impact of noise and air pollution on health and the concern that schools would be impacted by these issues
- There is a reliance on grants to fund a lot of the work around nature and biodiversity and there is concern about the impact of loss of grants
- The Panel will have a Service Policy Overview at the next meeting and this will conclude the planning aspect of the inquiry and inform direction and scope of the work

The meeting ended at 12.30 pm

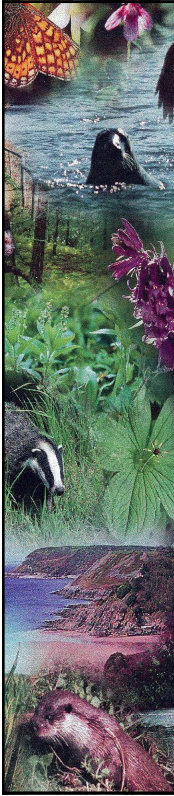
Chair

8. Meeting 2 – Service Policy Briefing



An overview of :

- Part 1 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016
- Swansea's natural environment /biodiversity resource
- Examples of work undertaken by the Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Section to meet biodiversity duties
- Risks and challenges

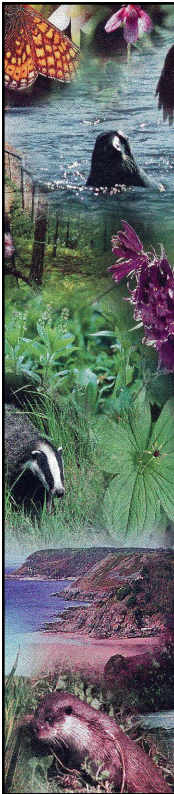


Environment (Wales) Act 2016

- Part 1: SMNR
- Part 2 : Climate Change
- Part 3: Carrier bag charges
- Part 4 :Collection of Waste
- Part 5 and 6 :Fisheries and Shellfish licensing
- Part 7 : Flood and Coastal Erosion

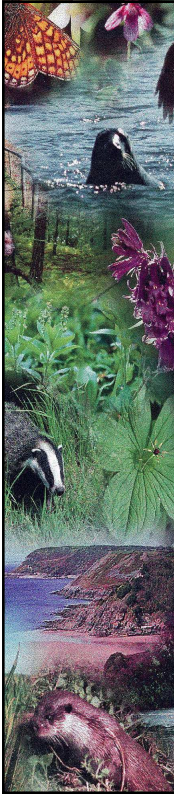
PART 1 :The sustainable management of natural resources (SMNR)

The overall objective is to help to reverse biodiversity decline and to maintain and enhance the resilience of ecosystems and the benefits they provide.



Part 1 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 provides a number of mechanisms to deliver the sustainable management of natural resources. These mechanisms include:

- **State of Natural Resources Report - SoNaRR**– the Environment Act places a duty on **NRW** to produce a report which will contribute to the evidence base for policy on how natural resources are managed and sustainably used.
- **National Natural Resources Policy- NRP** – the Environment Act places a duty on **Welsh Ministers** to prepare, publish and implement a National Natural Resources Policy, which will set out the Welsh Government's general and specific policies in relation to the sustainable management of natural resources.
- **Area statements** – to be produced by **NRW** in order to facilitate the implementation of the National Natural Resources Policy. Area statements will set out the key risks that need to be carefully managed and mitigated and the key opportunities and priorities for the sustainable use of natural resources at an area level.
- **The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty** – all public bodies, LA's, Community Councils ,Police, Health Authority etc

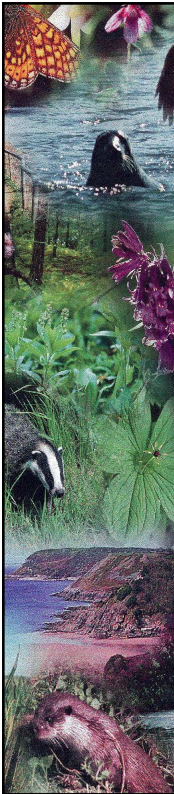


Section 6 : The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty

This new duty under Section 6 of the Environment Act replaces the biodiversity duty in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (referred to as the NERC Act) which required that public authorities **must have regard to conserving biodiversity**.

The Environment Act states that :

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.



What are ecosystems and biodiversity?

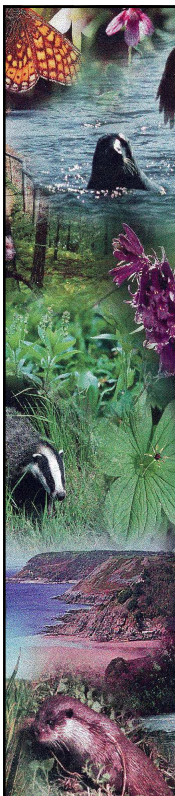
Biodiversity (biological diversity) means the diversity of living organisms, whether at the genetic, species or ecosystem level.

Ecosystem

A dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit.

An ecosystem includes all of the living things (plants, animals and organisms) in a given area, interacting with each other, and also with their non-living environments (weather, earth, sun, soil, climate, atmosphere).

A resilient ecosystem is one that is healthy and functions in a way that is able to address pressures and demands placed on it, and is able to deliver benefits over the long term to meet current and future social, economic and environmental needs.



Six key steps. In complying the Section 6 Biodiversity Duty a public authority :

1. Must take account of the resilience of ecosystems, in particular the following aspects

- (a) the **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);

2. 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.

3. Must prepare, publish and submit to Welsh Government a plan setting out what they propose to do to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and promote resilience (Section 6 Plan)

4. Must prepare and submit to Welsh Government a report on what the public authority has done to comply with the duty by the end of 2019 and then every three years after this date.

Environment (Wales) Act

The Duty to Promote the resilience of ecosystems

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

- **Diversity** - not only biological but also structural and physical



- **Connectivity** - within and between ecosystems facilitates the movement of genes, species and ecosystem components such as water across landscapes, allowing ecosystems to function effectively and to adapt spatially, for example in response to climate change
- **Extent** - bigger the ecosystem extends, without fragmentation, the more resilient it is likely to be

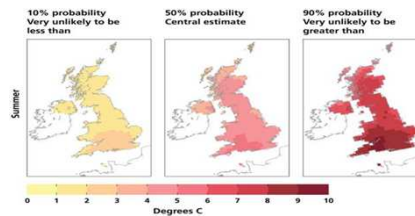


Promote the resilience of ecosystems

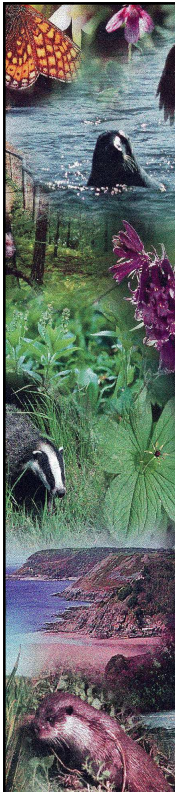
Condition - The underpinning supporting services of ecosystems need to be in a healthy condition to function effectively, to deliver a range of important ecosystem services



Adaptability - The key question here is whether the ecosystem in question will adapt and change in the desired direction given future environmental, and socio economic changes and demands such as climate change.



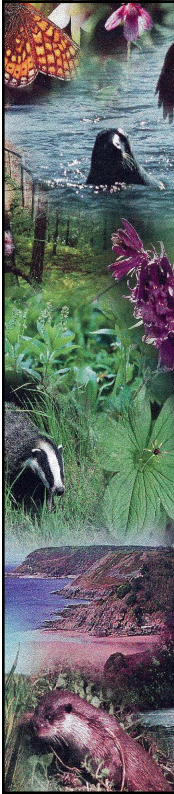
9



5. Must have regard to:

- The **section 7 list** of habitats and species of principal importance for Wales
- The **State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR)**, published by NRW
- Any **Area Statement** which covers all or part of the area in which the authority exercises its functions, once these are produced.

6. In addition, local authorities should take account of **The Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales (NRAP)** overseen by the Welsh Government the Wales Biodiversity Partnership and published in December 2015. This is the national biodiversity strategy and action plan required under the Convention on Biological Diversity to reverse the decline of biodiversity in Wales.

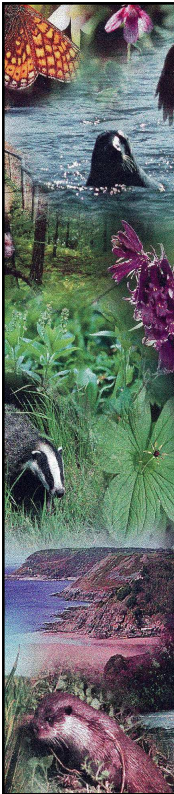


Section 6 Plan (Corporate Biodiversity Plan)

The Section 6 Plan should consist of a **statement** of what the public authority will do to maintain and enhance biodiversity, across **all** of its functions, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems. **This statement should be embedded within any corporate and /or business planning document.**

The Plan should also include **the steps** that will be taken to fulfil this commitment **across each of the functions of the organisation.** These steps should, as far as possible, be guided by the **six objectives** of the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales, which are:

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.



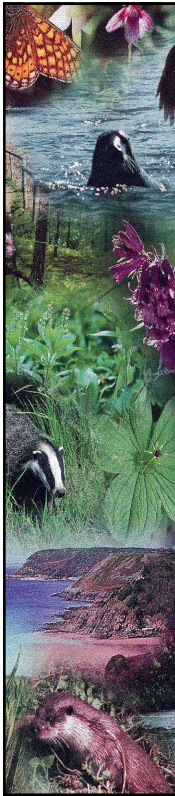
Integration and ownership

Key to compliance with the S6 duty is embedding biodiversity into decision making at all levels. This should start at the corporate level, where early thinking and planning should seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity, preventing its loss in the first instance.

Best practice would be that the S6 plan is an integral part of any business planning, asset management and/or corporate planning processes as this will demonstrate how the consideration of biodiversity is being embedded within the public authority

Each function of a public authority should consider where and how they can maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote resilience.

Biodiversity Questionnaire



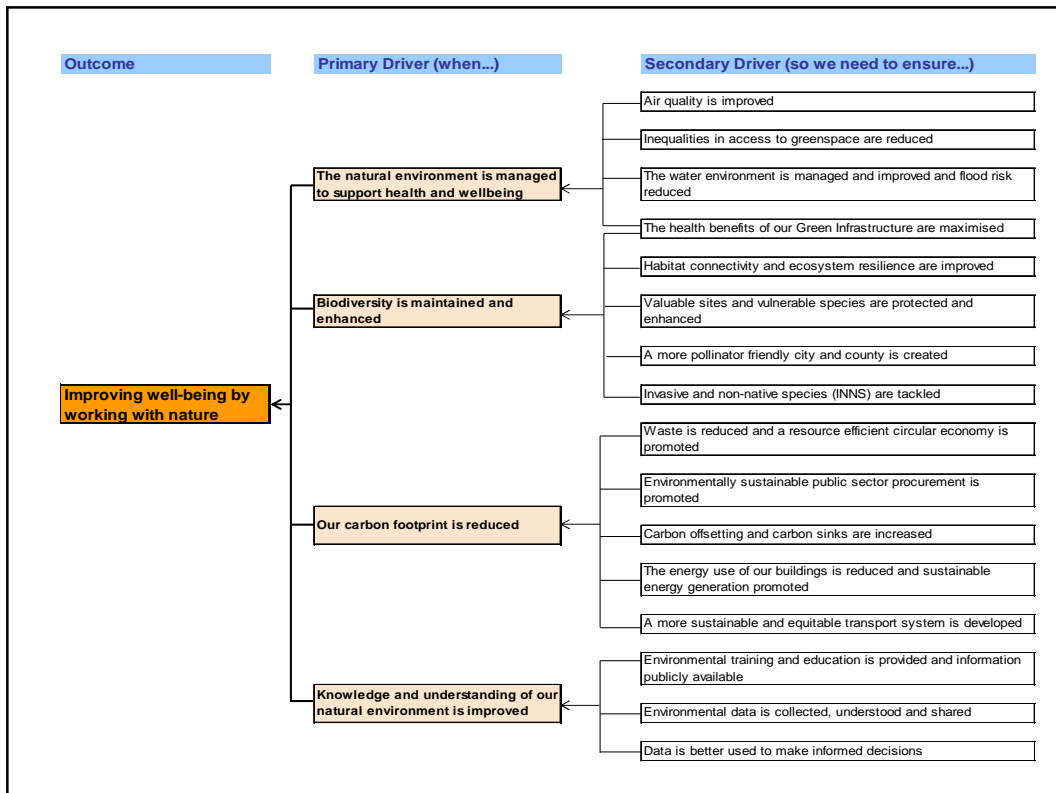
Links between the Environment (Wales) Act Section 6 Duty and the WCFG ACT

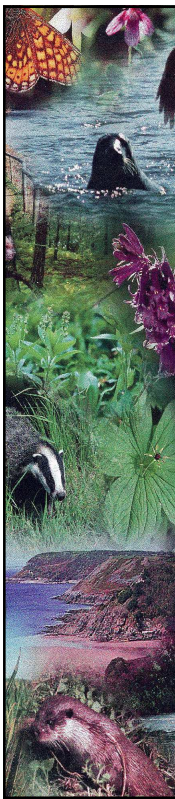
Complying with the S6 duty will help public bodies to maximise their contributions to the Well-being goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, in particular the Resilient Wales Goal:

‘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).

The S6 plan should be integrated into the Council’s statement of the steps to be taken to meet its well-being objectives, which in turn should be in their corporate plan.

Published well-being objectives and statements about them under the WFG Act must set out how biodiversity will be maintained and enhanced, and how in so doing the resilience of ecosystems will be promoted.



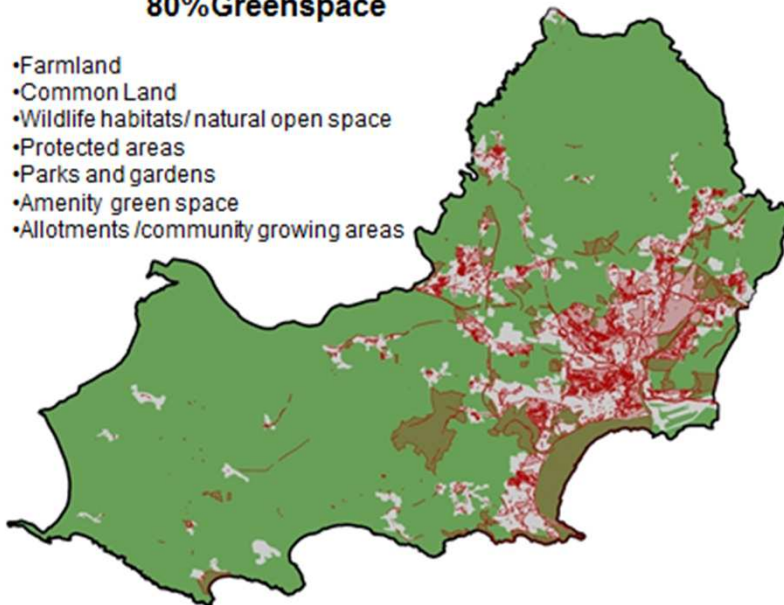


An Overview of Swansea's Biodiversity Resource



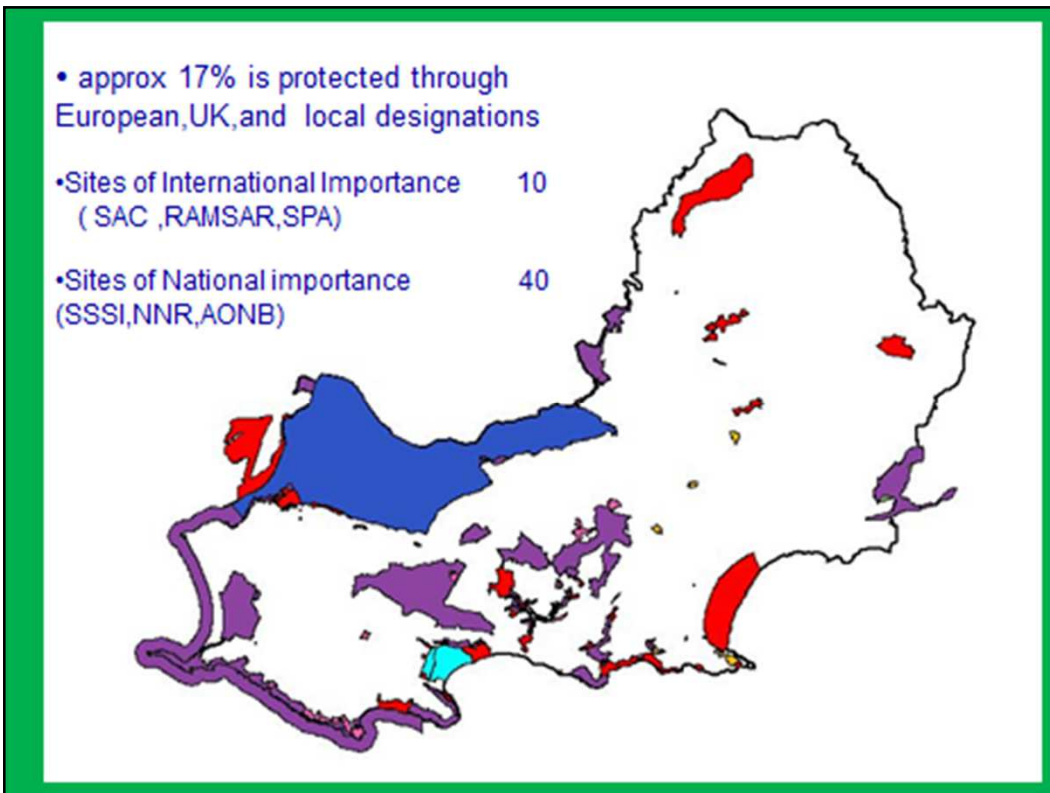
80% Greenspace

- Farmland
- Common Land
- Wildlife habitats/natural open space
- Protected areas
- Parks and gardens
- Amenity green space
- Allotments /community growing areas



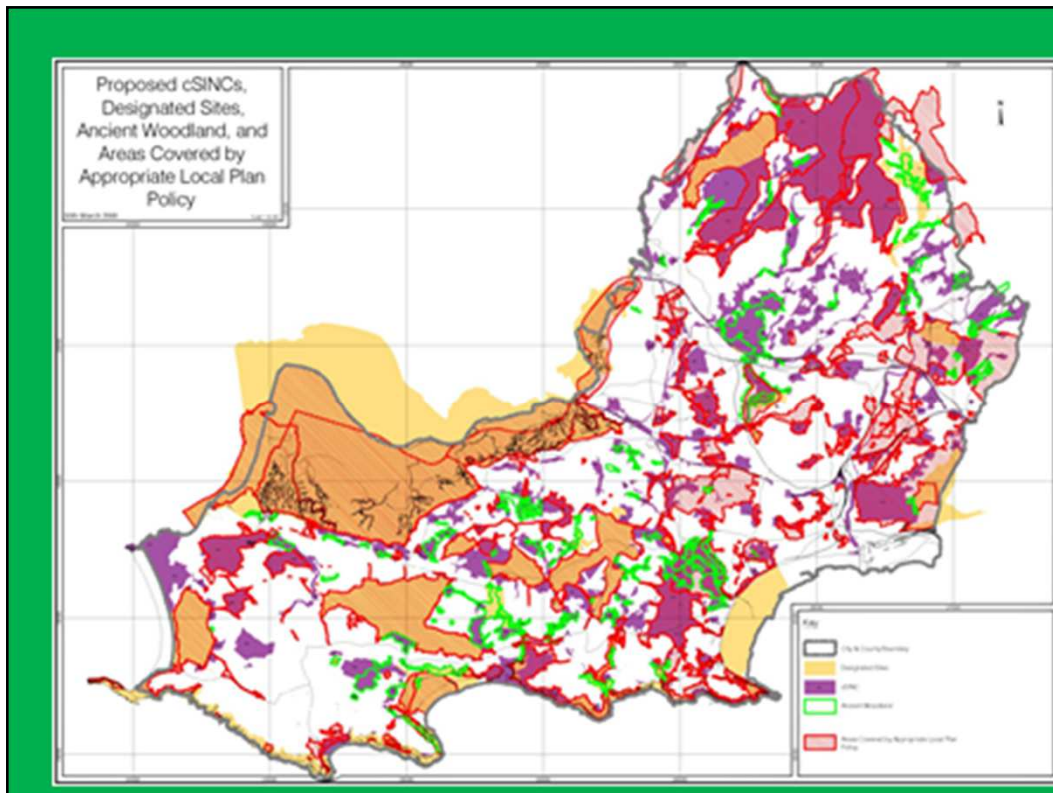


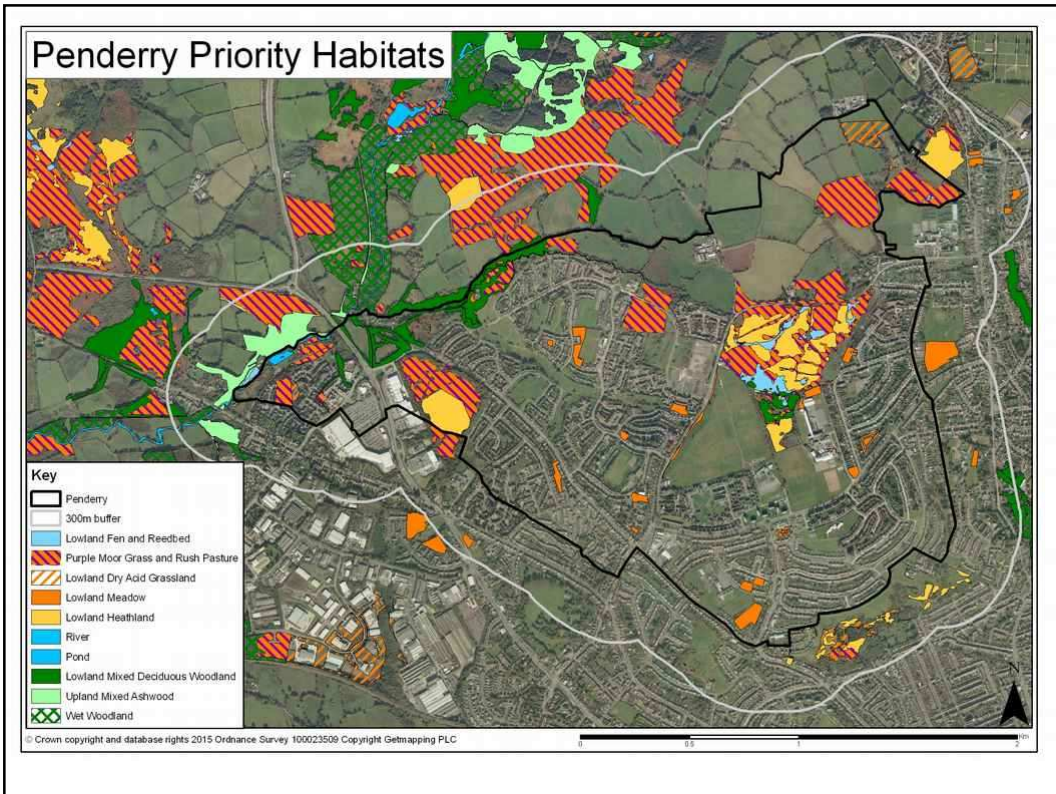
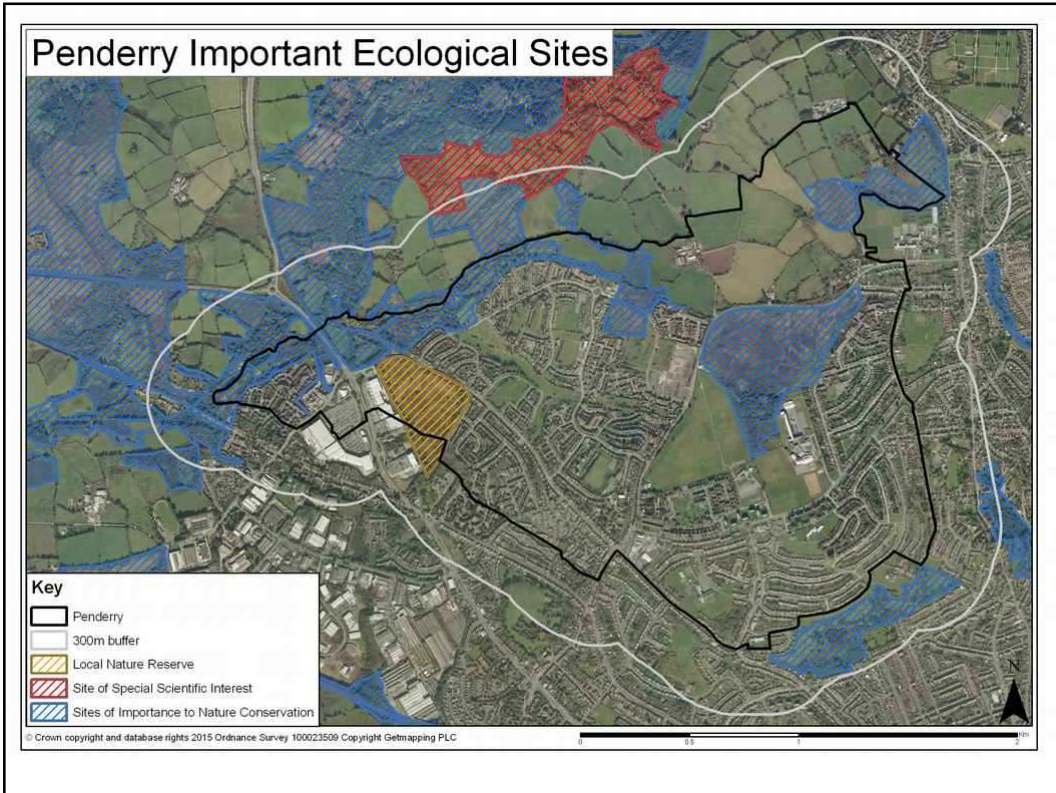


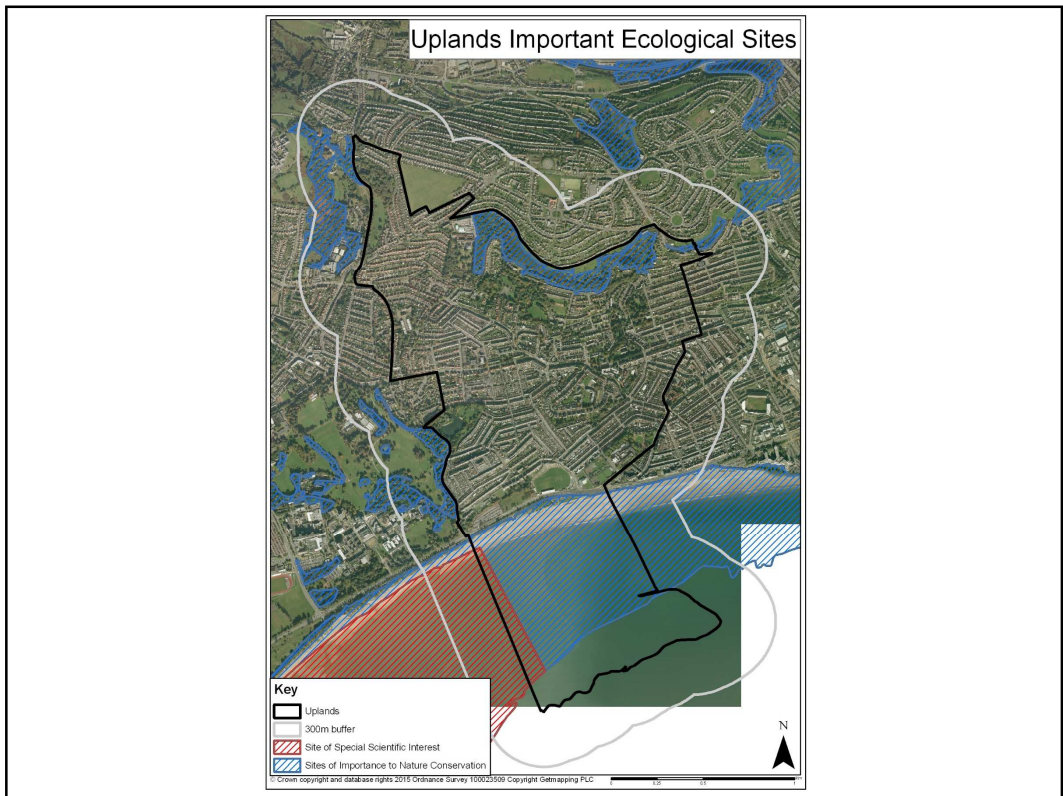


Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

GUIDELINES FOR THE SELECTION OF LOCAL SITES IN WALES
Wales Biodiversity Partnership
2008





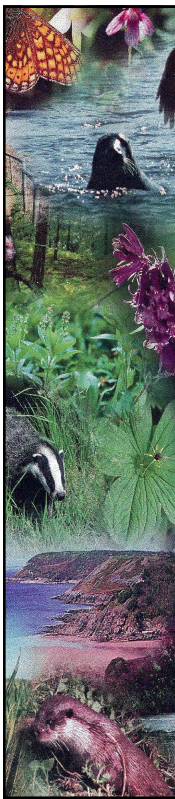


Promoting
Swansea's
natural environment

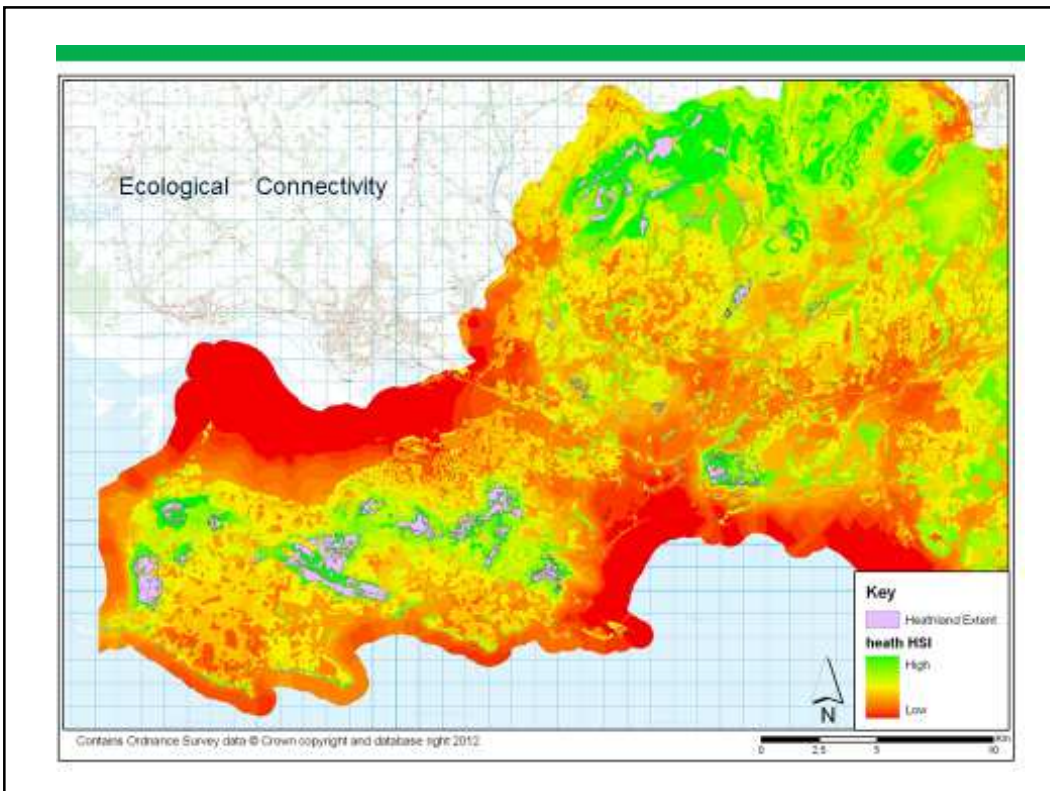
Hyrwyddo amgylchedd
naturiol
Abertawe

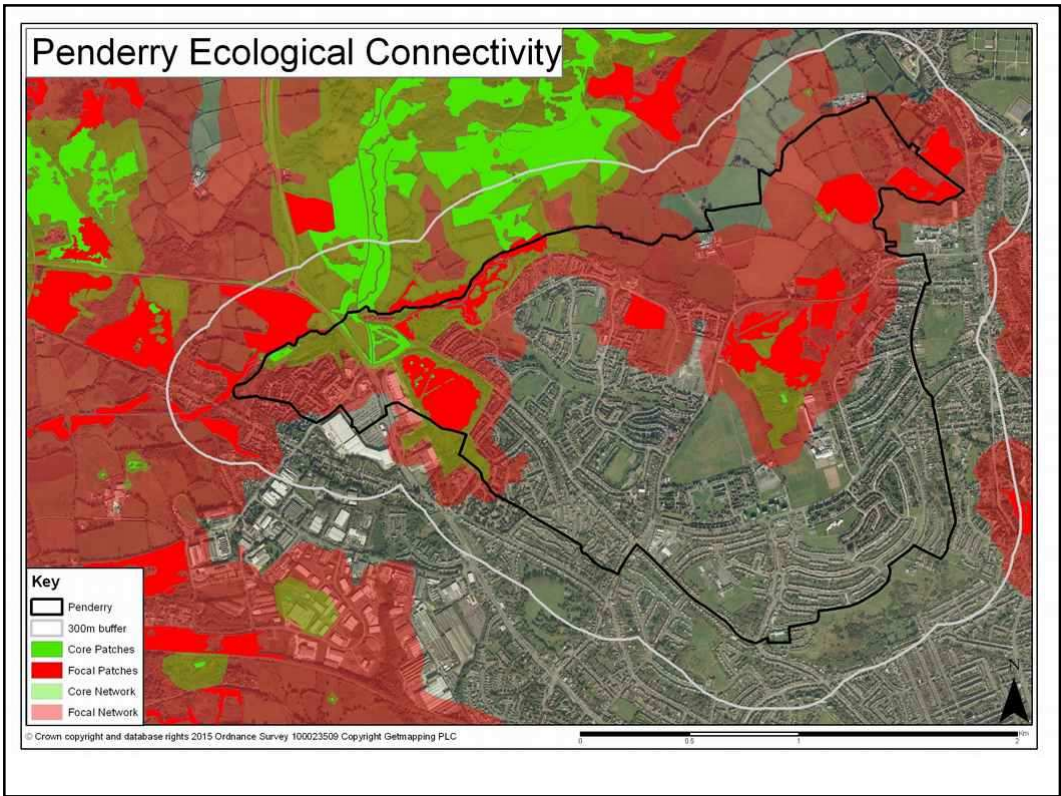
A Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
Strategaeth a Chynllun Gweithredu Bio-amrywiaeth lleol

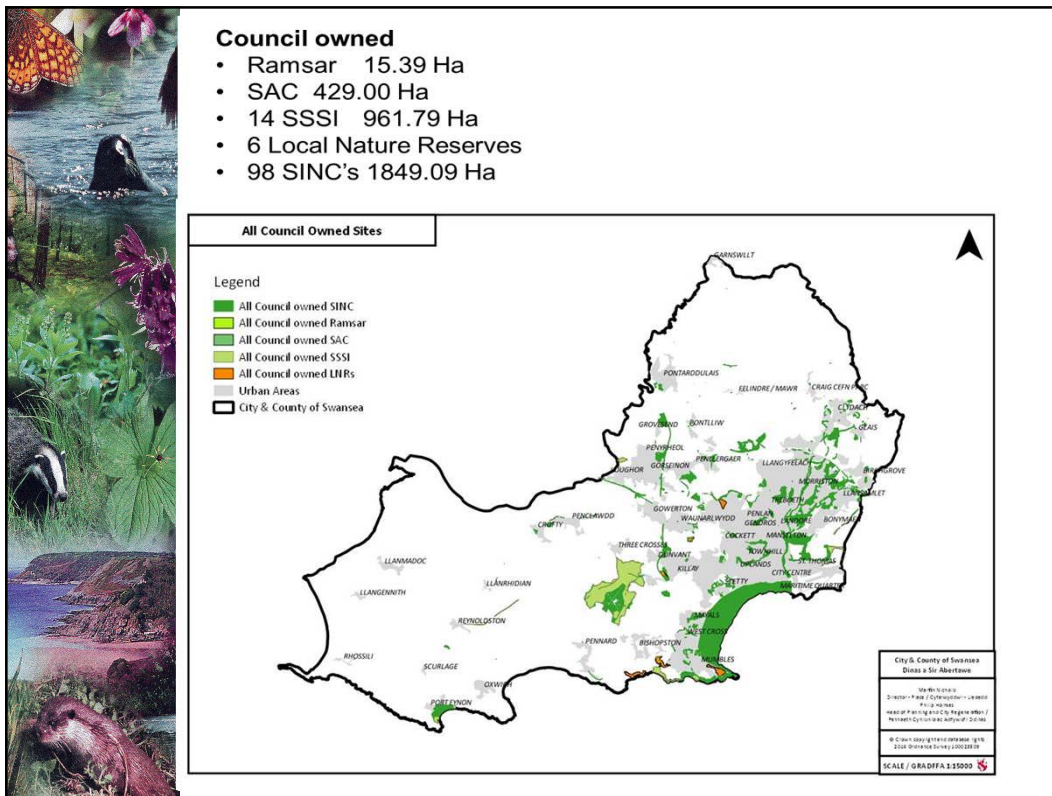
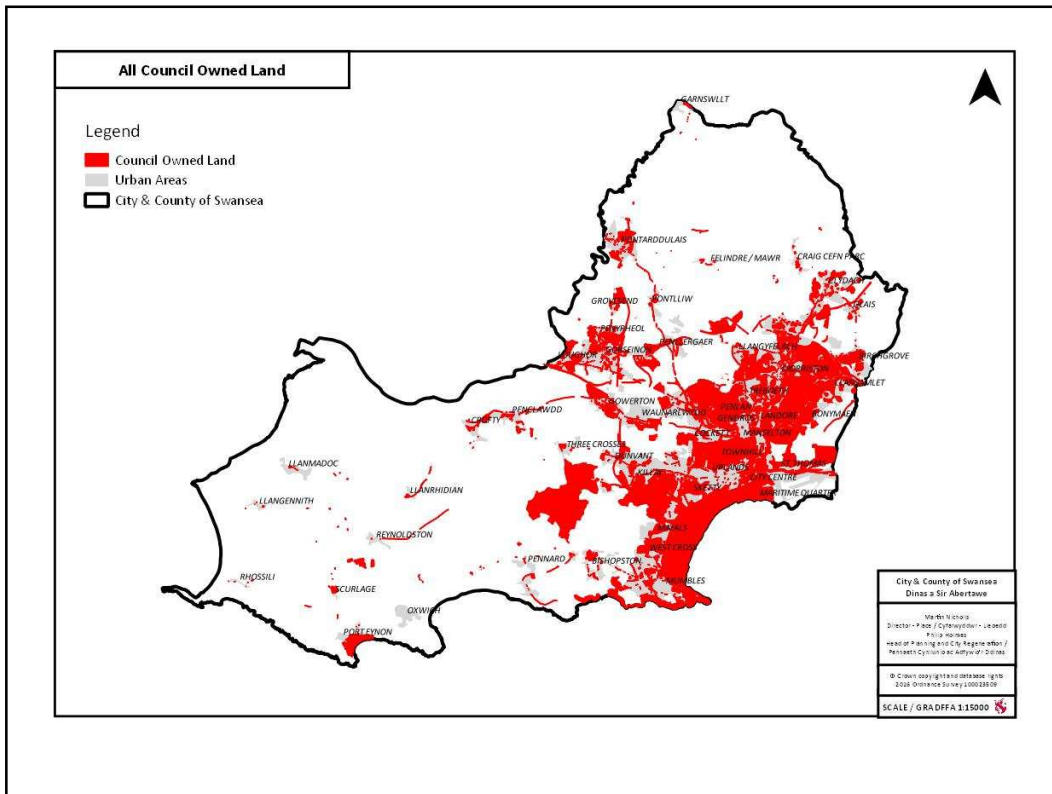
**A Local Biodiversity Strategy
and Action Plan for the
protection, enhancement and
promotion of Swansea's
outstanding natural environment**



These designated areas and priority habitats represent only the very best of our biodiversity. They do not, however, encompass all that is irreplaceable and cannot by themselves maintain biodiversity. Even common habitats, urban wildlife sites, parks, gardens and green spaces, are important in maintaining a network of the biodiversity resource as a whole.



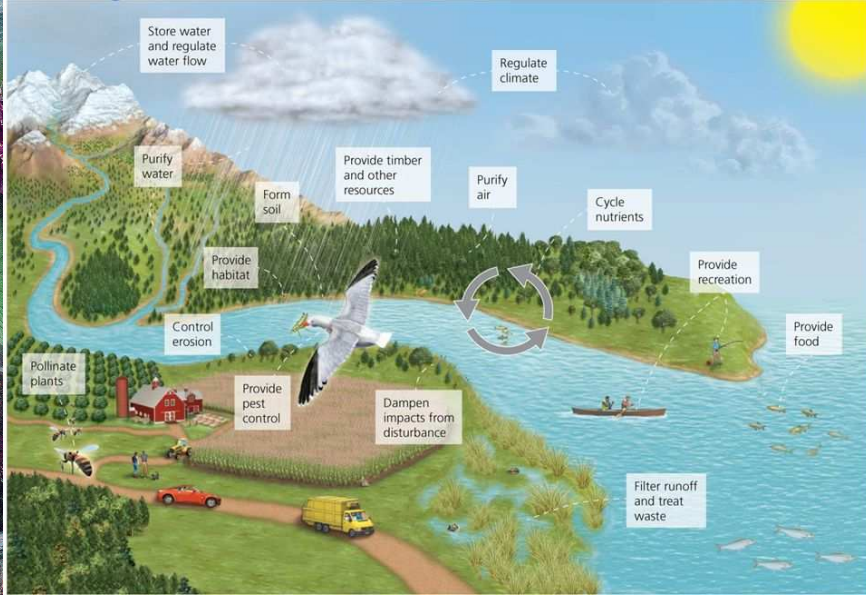




Benefits of Biodiversity



Ecosystem Services



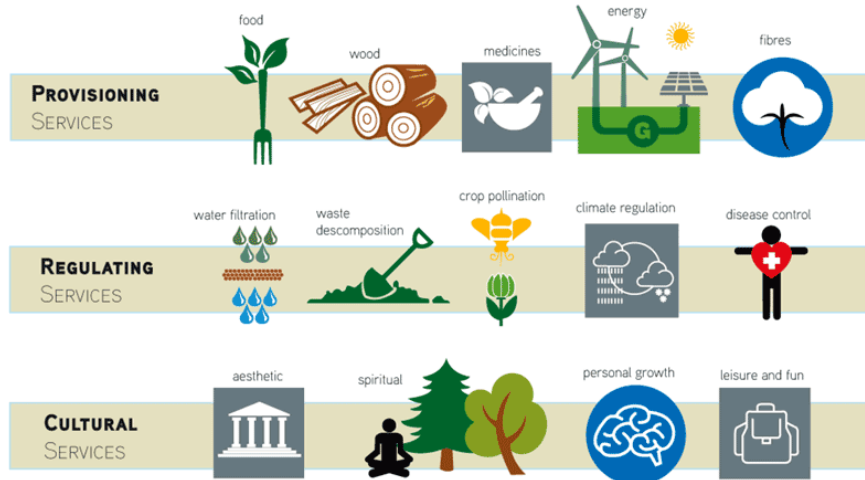
Ecosystem Services



Supporting= Functions
 Provisioning = Products
 Regulating= Results
 Cultural= Benefits



WHAT DO WE GET FROM ECOSYSTEMS?



Urban Tree Benefits



How much is our local ecosystem worth?



Case Study 1:
530,000 Trees in Tawe
catchment:

- Intercept 252m litres of water/yr = £339,000 in sewerage charges avoided
- Remove 136 tonnes pollutants/year = £715,500 saving in damage costs
- Remove 3000 tonnes of carbon/year worth £671,000
- Store 102,000 tonnes of carbon/year worth £23.1million
- Have a Replacement value of £234 million
- Have an Asset value of £816 million
- Collective value to local economy £1.72million/year

(Source Forest research i-Tree Eco Study, 2014)



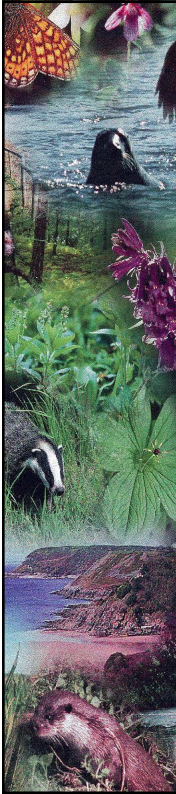
How much is our local ecosystem worth?



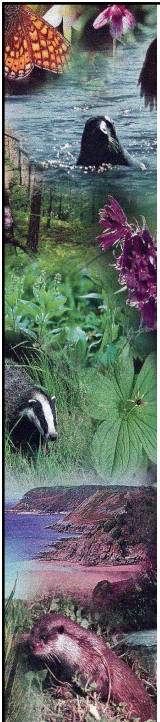
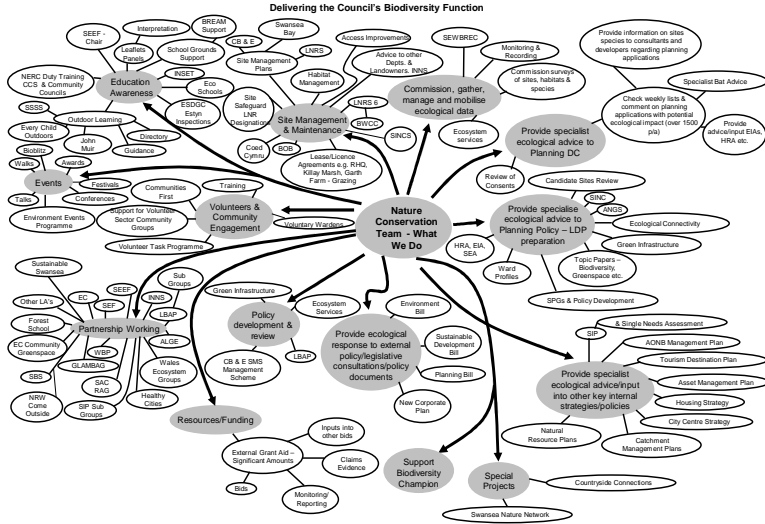
Case Study 2:
True Costs of Asset
Disposal

- Disposal of council land for £1m to accommodate 40 dwellings
- Value per dwelling plot = £25,000
- No of large trees to be felled = 50
- Estimated lifetime value of trees = up to £78,000 each
- Estimated asset value of trees on site = up to £3.9m



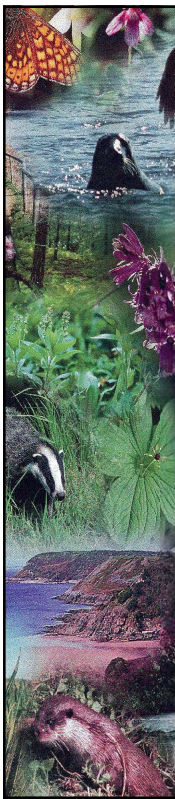


Examples of work undertaken by the Nature Conservation Team to deliver Biodiversity Duties



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

Recent Actions	Future actions
<p>Plans/Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Biodiversity Action Plan /Review LDP/Planning Policy AONB management Plan Open Space Assessment Site Management Plans Planning application advice TPO s <p>Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity Duty Training – Team Action Plans, Corporate Property, Planning, Parks, ROW, Cemeteries, NEAT team etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Ecology Corporate Biodiversity Plan SC Biodiversity Policy Green Infrastructure Strategy (SPG) Nature Recovery Plan Site management Plans Tree Policy Well Being Plan Continue Biodiversity Training



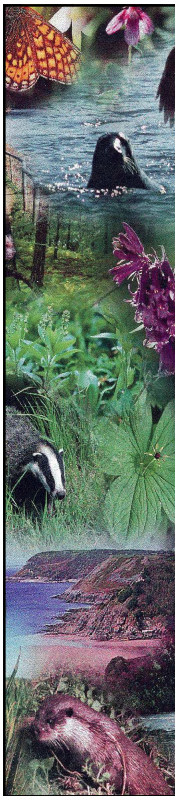
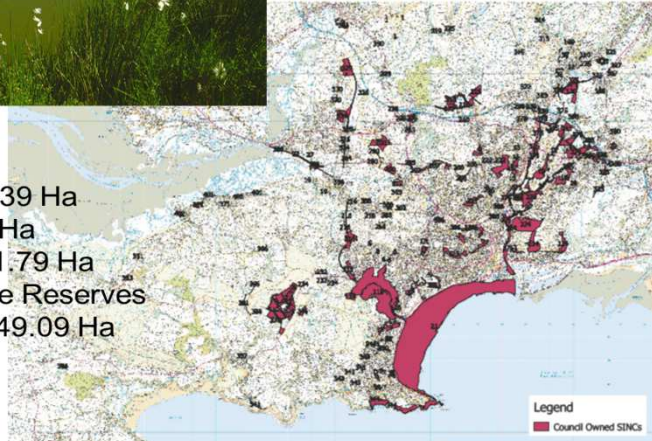
Objective 2: Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management

- Understand our local biodiversity and how it can be enhanced; undertake surveys, seek expert advice
- Protect and enhance biodiversity on our own land
- Funding



Council owned

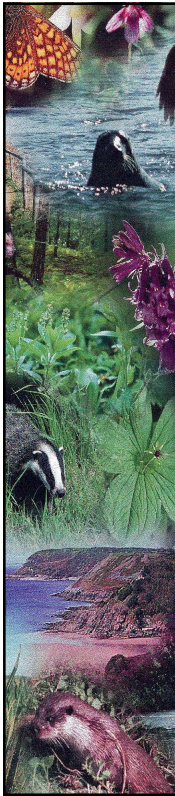
- Ramsar 15.39 Ha
- SAC 429.00 Ha
- 14 SSSI 961.79 Ha
- 6 Local Nature Reserves
- 98 SINC's 1849.09 Ha



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

- Green Infrastructure and Habitat creation
 - Action for pollinators- wildflower meadows, Bee Lines
 - Ponds





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

- Restore – restore degraded habitats – improve condition, increase extent, improve diversity and increasing connectivity
- Tree/woodland planting
- Control INNS

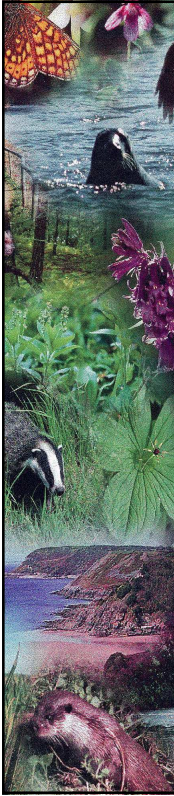


Objective 4: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

Increase awareness, engagement and participation

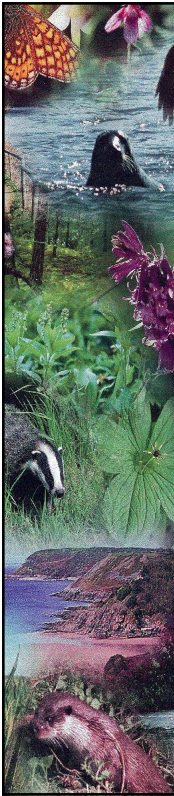
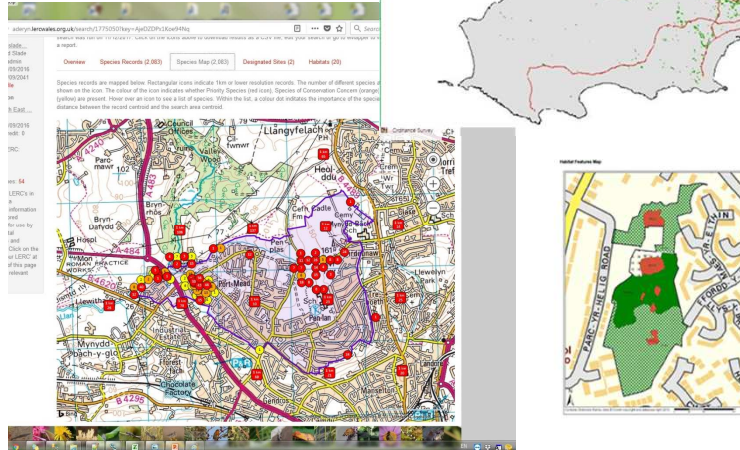
- Friends of Parks
- Volunteer engagement
- Events
- Interpretation
- Schools
- Bishop's Wood Centre





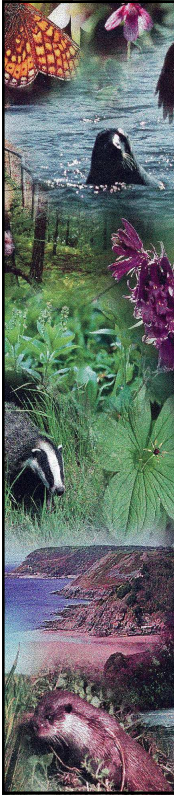
Objective 5: Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring

- Survey Data
- SEWBREC
- Wild about your Ward
- INNS



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

- Corporate Biodiversity Plan
- Well Being Plan PSB –Working with Nature Objective
- Swansea Corporate Plan - Current Priorities
 - Safeguarding vulnerable people
 - Improving pupil attainment
 - Creating a vibrant and viable city and economy
 - Tackling poverty
 - Building sustainable communities
- Service Plans
- Policy Commitments



ISSUES/CHALLENGES

- **Insufficient resource capacity (staff and funding) to meet legislative requirements and manage the Council's biodiversity estate**
- **Risk of loss of expertise and continuity due to temporary staffing, loss of grant aid etc.**
- **Lack of awareness, understanding and communication**
- **Land disposal and pressure for development**
- **Balancing competing/conflicting priorities**
- **BREXIT (potentially)**
- **Climate Change**
- **Invasive non-native species**
- **Inequalities in Access to natural Environment**
- **Nature deficit disorder**

Report of the Cabinet Members for Future Generations

Natural Environment Scrutiny Inquiry 24 April 2018

Swansea Council's Management of the Natural Environment and an overview of the Biodiversity of Swansea

Purpose	The report outlines the role of the Planning and City Regeneration Service and the Nature Conservation Team in managing the Natural Environment and Biodiversity within the County
Content	The report sets out <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An overview of the Biodiversity of Swansea• Recent legislative and organisational changes• Key activities and initiatives• Challenges, opportunities and risks
Councillors are being asked to	Consider the proposals in the report and agree a plan for the inquiry.
Lead Councillor	Councillor Peter Jones (Convener)
Lead Cabinet Member / Officer(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Councillor Mary Sherwood/Councillor June Burtonshaw (Future Generations)• Martin Nicholls, Director Place
Report Authors	Paul Meller, Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Manager and Deborah Hill, Nature Conservation Team Leader

1.0 General Description

The City and County of Swansea's natural environment is of outstanding quality and beauty. The diversity of landscapes, habitats and species it supports make it one of the most attractive and ecologically rich counties in the UK.

These unique natural assets bring significant benefits to, and are intrinsically linked to the health, well-being and prosperity of the local community. The future resilience and environmental sustainability of Swansea is dependent on the essential ecosystem services that our natural environment and biodiversity provide.

Further information on Swansea's Biodiversity resource is provided in Appendix 2.

The local authority has both a moral and a legal responsibility for, and a leading role to play in ensuring that this valuable and fragile resource is maintained, enhanced and sustainably managed now and into the future.

1.1 All Council departments and service areas have a duty to maintain and enhance the natural environment and biodiversity within the County in order to meet the Council's duties under the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Environment (Wales) Act. Some have a greater role to play than others and the ability to have a greater impact, for example, Education, Estates, Parks, Highways and Housing.

1.2 However, the specific Service tasked with leading and providing advice on this work is Planning & City Regeneration. This is a highly multidisciplinary Service, with a breadth of complementary professional and operational service areas that join up to support Swansea's urban and rural economies and to protect and enhance the natural and built environment. The work of the Service is both strategic and operational and has a high profile, with strong links to the Council's corporate priorities.

1.3 There are five Sections within the Service:

(i) Development, Conservation and Design: comprises forty FTEs and delivers the Council's statutory responsibilities in the regulation of development and use of land through the processing of in excess of 2000 planning and related applications and the investigation of approximately 500 enforcement cases per annum.

(ii) Development and Physical Regeneration: comprises 14 FTEs who provide the Council's developer interface for major and complex property development schemes. This includes the delivery of high profile City Centre development and regeneration projects such as Swansea Central, Kingsway, and Civic Centre Site masterplan; leading on the preparation of Swansea's City Deal bid; preparation of the Swansea Central Area Regeneration Framework; and delivering the Vibrant and Viable Places Programme. Responsibilities include delivery of a number of other regeneration projects including Swansea Vale, Felindre and Hafod Copperworks.

(iii) City Centre Management: comprises 7.5 FTEs and provides strategic leadership in terms of Swansea Market, Swansea Mobility Hire, on-street activities, the City Centre Ranger Service, and the City Centre's vibrant evening and night-time economy.

(iv) Economic Development and European Funding: responsible for the Council's European and other grant funding arrangements, setting the Council's strategic framework for

economic regeneration and contributing to the activities of Swansea Bay City Region (including the City Deal).

(v) Strategic Planning and Natural Environment (SP&NE): comprises 28 FTEs that seek to deliver a quality and resilient built and natural environment that supports well-being, prosperity and quality of life by providing a robust strategic planning and policy framework that maintains, enhances and promotes the built and natural environment for all, undertakes practical management and integrates sustainable development principles.

- 1.4 There are 5 teams within the SP&NE section, each of which plays a lead role in the delivery of a number of corporate priorities, initiatives, plans and strategies that relate either to the Natural Environment or Biodiversity. Current key priorities and statutory responsibilities are: adoption of the Swansea Local Development Plan; embedding and delivering Biodiversity duties and developing a Corporate Biodiversity Plan; implementing the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan; and reviewing the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).

(i) Strategic Planning: a team of eight officers responsible for the preparation, monitoring and review of the Council's statutory Local Development Plan (LDP), which upon adoption will be the blueprint for future development across the City and County until 2025. The LDP also sets out the Council's policies for the protection of natural heritage and recognises how maintenance of the high quality, beauty and ecological diversity of the County's natural heritage is fundamental to the economic, environmental and social well-being of the area. These policies have been developed following eight years of extensive public consultation and in collaboration with key stakeholders such as Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The policies have recently been independently examined by the Planning Inspectorate at LDP Hearing Sessions. An extract from the LDP setting out the County's Environmental Capital and Constraints is attached as Appendix 1 whilst policies on Habitats and Species (ER8) and Ecological Networks and Features of Importance for Biodiversity (ER9) are reproduced as Appendix 3. It is anticipated the LDP Inspector's Report will be published late 2018 and the current deposit draft plan may be viewed here: www.swansea.gov.uk/ldpdeposit. The team also produces Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to inform decision making in key development areas, such as Fabian Way Corridor, as well as current priorities such as planning for HMOs.

(ii) Countryside Access: a team of six officers who carry out the Council's statutory duties in relation to over 400 miles of Public Rights of Way (RoW) and 32 square miles of Access Land including the Gower Coast Path. The RoW network makes a

significant contribution to the local economy through activity tourism and generates considerable health and well-being benefits for the public. The team manages the condition of the RoW network, identifies where improvements are needed, deals with the legalities of footpath orders and diversions and delivers improvement schemes on the ground. The team has wide contact with local landowners and farmers as well as various activity/walking groups including the Ramblers.

(iii) Gower AONB: a team of two officers responsible for the conservation and enhancement of the Gower AONB. The team is responsible for the preparation, monitoring and review of the statutory AONB Management Plan, working with those who live, work and manage the land in Gower, as well as those charged with conserving and enhancing the landscape and wildlife of the area. The team also manage the Gower Landscape Partnership (GLP) – a £1.8m Heritage Lottery Funded Programme and the Sustainable Development fund on Gower – a Welsh Government grant funded scheme that enables community projects to embed sustainable development.

(iv) Landscape: an income earning team of three officers who provide a landscape architecture and arboricultural advice service. The team provide an independent service for landscape services to support other departments and organisations. The team are currently providing the design service for the delivery of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) external and general environment programme for all Council housing/tenants within the County. Other work includes statutory duties in relation to existing and new Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), Tree Works Applications, Hedgerow Removal Notices and Conservation Area Notifications, including the review of over 500 historic TPOs. The work of the team was subject of a Scrutiny Working Group Review in 2016 which identified a number of transformational improvements that have been introduced or are in the process of being introduced.

(v) Nature Conservation: the team with lead responsibility for protecting, enhancing and raising awareness of the areas of ecological and landscape importance within the County for the benefit of people and wildlife. The team covers both the terrestrial and marine environment and works at both a strategic and operational level. It provides specialist ecological information, advice and practical support to a wide range of internal and external 'customers'. The team comprises ten officers (only two full time), including a Team Leader; an Environment Officer; a Sustainable Policy Officer (0.8, transferred to the team 01.04.18); two Ecologists (0.6) and (0.5 temporary contract for 6 months - a shared post with Carmarthen CC); a Marine Biologist/Ecologist

(0.2 permanent, 0.2 temporary 12 month contract, and 0.6 temporary 6 month contract); a Countryside Connections Project Officer (0.8 temporary 6 month contract); a Nature Reserve Warden (0.5), a Volunteer Coordinator (0.2 temporary contract) and two Coed Cymru Officers (each 0.25, shared posts with NPTBC). The team covers a range of natural resource management functions including providing and maintaining information on Swansea's natural environment; ecological planning; formulating policy such as the forthcoming Green Infrastructure Strategy, Local Biodiversity Action Plan, Corporate Biodiversity Plan and inputting into the LDP and other corporate plans and strategies; commenting on Welsh Government Consultations; practical site management and enhancement; providing advice on control of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS); environmental awareness raising; supporting and delivering outdoor learning for Swansea schools and other groups; partnership working; and supporting volunteer and community engagement. The team regularly consult with the public regarding their views on biodiversity. The rest of this report focuses in more detail on the work of the Nature Conservation Team.

1.5 Welsh Government guidance recommends that Local Authorities must have sufficient ecological expertise to meet their Biodiversity duties under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 - ideally at least a Planning Ecologist and a Biodiversity Officer. This requirement is further strengthened since the Environment (Wales) Act enhanced Biodiversity Duty came into force in April 2016.

1.6 The 2017 Planning and City Regeneration Commissioning Review resolved that the Nature Conservation, Countryside Access and Gower AONB teams should be merged as part of a restructured Natural Environment/Resource Management Team. The rationale for this was the potential to increase grant income opportunities and develop service improvements through the more efficient and flexible use of resources. As part of this merger a number of transformational changes were identified. These are set out in more detail in Section 9.0 below.

The Section and Nature Conservation Team Unit Plans for 17/18 are attached as Appendices 4 and 5.

1.7 The Nature Conservation team provides specialist ecological advice to Planning and other Council staff to ensure compliance with biodiversity legislation. For example, advising on planning applications, planning policy formulation, land management and on large infrastructure projects such as the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon. Central to this is the provision of good ecological data and maintaining a sound understanding of the County's biodiversity resource. Work is currently underway to review the Local

Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) and prepare a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Swansea. The Team have also provided ecological advice in the preparation of the LDP and have been actively involved in the preparation of the Swansea Well Being Plan, in particular the 'Working with Nature Objective'. Biodiversity advice and training has been provided to staff and councillors including seminars on the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, which introduced additional statutory duties and responsibilities for the Council in relation to Biodiversity, including the need to prepare a Corporate Biodiversity Action Plan. A set of ecological ward profiles and ecosystem services and green infrastructure mapping is in the process of being prepared in support of this Plan.

1.8 The Nature Conservation Team plays a lead role in the management of Council owned land which is of ecological value. This includes Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) e.g. Bishop's Wood, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) e.g. Black Pill, six Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), such as Cadle Heath, and a number of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), such as Swansea Vale Nature Reserve, Kilvey Community Woodland, Garth Farm and Swansea Bay Wildlife Corridor. This includes the preparation and implementation of site specific management plans.

1.9 The team are currently seeking to develop, promote and implement an ecosystem services approach to natural resource management at a local level. For example, the Coed Cymru Officers are working with the Council's Highways and Drainage sections to help prevent flooding through strategically located new tree planting to reduce run-off and build resilience to climate change by improving ecological connectivity.

In recent years the team has also taken on commercial contracts for both external and internal clients. In 2017 the team delivered a wetlands habitat creation and enhancement project at the RSPCA's Llys Nini Animal Centre, Penllergare – a contract worth over £80k. The team have also helped plan, coordinate and deliver a natural sand dune trials system to tackle the problem of windblown sand from Swansea Beach onto the foreshore promenade and Oystermouth Rd.

1.10 The team supports and facilitates community engagement and volunteering, encouraging local people to get involved in looking after their wildlife sites, for example, joining one of the Nature Reserves' Friends Groups. It has recently appointed a temporary volunteer co-ordinator to support and expand this work. The team

also plays a lead role in supporting the work of a number of strategic partnerships, such as the Swansea Biodiversity Partnership, the Swansea Environmental Forum, Forest School SNPT , GLAMBAG and the Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries EMS Relevant Authorities Group

- 1.11 Raising awareness and understanding of the natural environment and providing opportunities for people to have contact with and enjoy the wildlife on their doorstep is also a key area of the Team's work. The Team co-ordinates the preparation of a range of interpretive materials e.g. interpretation panels and leaflets, and the annual Environmental Events programme. It runs regular events and activities at local Nature Reserves and other wildlife sites, with feedback for sought from those who attend. The Team also provides support for outdoor learning and has worked closely with schools and the Education Department to organise and deliver INSET training, field study visits and learning opportunities in the natural environment. A number of innovative projects working with schools to improve pupil attainment and well being through outdoor learning have been delivered. The Team is responsible for managing the Bishop's Wood Countryside Centre at Caswell which provides an excellent base for such activities. The Team is also seeking to actively encourage and support schools to make regular use of local wildlife sites and their school grounds for outdoor learning and well being .

2.0 Why We Do This

- 2.1 As well as meeting our statutory requirements, the work of the Nature Conservation Team has wide ranging benefits for the people of Swansea by way of helping to promote and maximise the positive contribution that the County's unique natural environment can provide in terms of learning, health/wellbeing and prosperity. The team's work also contributes to the development and delivery of a wide range of key Council strategies, priorities and strategic initiatives including the Corporate Plan, Healthy Cities Initiative and the AONB Management Plan
- 2.2 It is a legal requirement, overseen by Welsh Government, that each Council in Wales provides essential Biodiversity and Nature Conservation services to ensure compliance with and enforcement of the relevant Biodiversity legislation. This requirement has been strengthened through recent legislative changes which the team has had responsibility for embedding into the Council's ways of working, particularly under the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Environment (Wales) Act. Further information on Part 1 of the Environment (Wales) Act is provided in Appendix 1.

2.3 Other legal duties include those relating to the Habitat Regulations 2010, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Water Framework Directive 2003, the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, the NERC Act 2006 and the Planning Act.

2.4 The Council has a statutory duty to protect and enhance biodiversity on its own estate. The Nature Conservation team are responsible for a number of sites and are able to provide advice to other Council Departments/Services on the appropriate management of their land e.g. estates, housing, highways education. Management Statements are being prepared for all Council owned land of ecological importance.

2.5 The work of the team helps to prevent the risk of criminal conviction and potential significant financial penalties for the Council due to non-compliance with biodiversity legislation, as well as claims due to lack of site maintenance.

2.6 The team's links to the Council's objectives are set out in Appendix 6

The work of the team helps to prevent the risk of criminal conviction and potential significant financial penalties for the Council due to non-compliance with biodiversity legislation, as well as claims due to lack of site maintenance.

3.0 Management and Support

3.1 The service and team structure is set out in Appendix 7

4.0 Stakeholders

4.1 Over the last twenty years, the team has developed a strong track record of collaborative working arrangements with other agencies to deliver benefits for Biodiversity. This has partly been achieved through multi-agency partnerships such as the Swansea Environmental Forum (SEF), Swansea Environmental Education Forum (SEEF) , the Swansea Biodiversity Partnership, CBEEMS , Coed Cymru GLAMBAG and the Wales Biodiversity Partnership, and partly through working with individual organisations such as Natural Resources Wales, Swansea Environment Centre, RSPB, Forest School SNPT, the Wildlife Trusts of South and West Wales, and Bug Life, etc. There are many examples of successful schemes which have been delivered through such partnership working, for example the Cyd Coed Community Woodland Project, the Gower Commons Initiative, Sustainable Swansea and the SEF Community Greenspace initiative. In addition the team has engaged with, co-ordinated and supported thousands of volunteers who give their time freely to help manage and improve the local

environment. This 'in kind' help represents significant cost savings for the Council, and can often provide crucial match funding for grant bids.

4.2 A list of key external and internal stakeholders is set out in Appendix8

5. Finance

5.1 The current circa £150k annual cost of the Nature Conservation team to the Council is less than half of its operating costs. Grant aid and income earned from commercial activities offsets salary costs of £220k.

Nature Conservation Costs 16/17:

Description	Sum
Gross Expenditure	£319,833
Income	£171,800
Net Expenditure	£148,033

Nature Conservation Budget 17/18

Description	Sum
Gross Expenditure	£335,936
Income	£185,636
Net Expenditure	£150,300

6.0 Current Performance and Trends

6.1 There are no specific PI's for the Nature Conservation Team or in relation to the Natural Environment. In previous years the Team was responsible for delivering against Council Outcome Agreement and Sustainable development PI's, as well as those identified in the Swansea Environment Strategy. Many of the outputs are tied to delivering agreed grant outcomes and targets. In addition the Team provides information for Education Local Authority Estyn inspections with regard to delivery of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) outputs.

7.0 Future Challenges & Opportunities

7.1 There are many challenges and opportunities for the Nature Conservation Team going forward. Some of these are outlined below:

a) Adoption of a Corporate Green Infrastructure Strategy by March 2019

Green Infrastructure is seen as the catalyst for improving well-being of future generations. Existing and emerging policies seek to increase provision of and accessibility to open space, whilst landscape design schemes seek to Green the City. Green Infrastructure also has considerable ecological benefits, including improving wildlife connectivity, preventing habitat loss, improving air quality, providing carbon sinks and Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (SUDs) which all contributes to the sustainability of the wider economy.

Council policy seeks to prevent the loss of accessible greenspace and play space in the interests of promoting health and well-being. Green space provision must be an integral element of new schemes, particularly within the City Centre. Green Infrastructure also helps mitigate against climate change and supporting biodiversity/ecosystems.

Making better use of Green Infrastructure can lead to significantly reduced costs for the Council whilst promoting the health and well-being of residents, visitors and workers. Better management and enhancement of sites for biodiversity also contributes to other well-being objectives.

A Green Infrastructure strategy is being prepared in collaboration with NRW. The Council is also working jointly with internal and external partners, for instance, together with NPTBC and Bridgend Councils the Council has just been awarded grant funding by WG for pilot Green Infrastructure mapping projects over the next year.

b) Preparation and Adoption of a Corporate Biodiversity Plan

This is a requirement of the Environment Wales Act 2016. It needs to identify actions to show how biodiversity is being integrated and taken into account across all local authority service areas. The Act also requires the Local Authority to report to Welsh Government on what the Local Authority has done to comply with the new Duty every three years, with the first report due at the end of 2019. To inform this plan, a questionnaire was sent to all Heads of Service in 2017 asking them to identify existing and future actions and any support needed.

c) Ecosystem approach to Natural Resource Management

The Service already values and seeks to manage ecosystem services for the long term in its various long-term plans and strategies. However ecosystem resilience will only be improved when its benefits are more fully understood and embraced across

the Council.

Policies in the LDP and emerging Corporate Biodiversity Action Plan seek to prevent the loss of ecologically important habitats and species (including individual trees in urban settings) that provide the means of mitigating the effects of climate change at the local level.

Sustainable management of natural resources can significantly reduce costs for the Council whilst promoting the health and well-being of residents, visitors and workers alike. Better management of natural resources will also contribute to other well-being goals. The Council owns a significant area of ecologically important land including SSSI's, LNR's and SINCs. Current resources to ensure the appropriate management of these sites is limited and heavily dependent on grant income.

d) Delivery of outdoor learning activities and events programme

Activities and events undertaken by the Team relate to the well-being goals and activities of other services, such as the Council's Tackling Poverty Strategy and Action Plan, by:

- promoting greater awareness and appreciation of the natural environment and the benefit it provides for improving health and well-being, as well as developing transferable skills and knowledge.
- ensuring more people (including other departments and services) are enabled to better appreciate their natural environment and biodiversity and take action to protect it

e) Maintaining Resource Capacity

A key challenge is securing ongoing funding to maintain the staff capacity and expertise needed to meet the requirements of the legislation and the ever increasing demand for specialist ecological advice and information. This includes resources to undertake the sustainable management and enhancement of the Council's biodiversity assets. There are also opportunities for income generation through charging for ecological services.

f) The need to provide training to raise awareness of biodiversity and the legislative requirements across the whole authority,

g) The need to monitor change and maintain an ecological evidence base.

8. Risks

8.1 Whilst there are currently no corporate natural environment risks identified on the Council's Corporate Risk Register, tree loss, especially within urban areas is an emerging risk. There are also risks associated with corporate objectives as set out in Appendix 5 (not least the lack of a corporate objective relating to the Natural Environment).

There are, however, a number of existing and potential risks relating to the Council's management of the natural environment and its ability to fully meet its biodiversity and ecosystem resilience duties under the Environment Wales Act and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act .These include:

- Insufficient resource capacity (staff and funding) to meet legislative requirements and manage the Council's biodiversity estate
- Lack of awareness, understanding and communication
- Land disposal and pressure for development
- lack of integration with corporate priorities/policy
- Balancing competing/conflicting priorities
- Risk of loss of expertise and continuity due to temporary staffing/loss of grant aid etc.
- BREXIT (potentially)
- Climate Change
- Invasive non-native species

8.2 Failure to comply with statutory duties may lead to intervention by the Welsh Government, NRW or the Police. This could potentially result in criminal conviction, Judicial Review or European Infraction. Where there is non-compliance, the financial and political implications would also be significant. Ensuring compliance also helps to avoid potential negative publicity , loss of reputation and possible reduced access to grant funding.

8.3 Lack of maintenance, enhancement and promotion of the built and natural environment would impact on quality of life. Ecosystem function and resilience would be reduced resulting in a loss of vital ecosystem services, e.g. flood alleviation, improving air quality, pollination, food production and carbon sequestration. There would be a reduction of accessible natural greenspace – limiting access opportunities and impacting on health and well-being, loss of Biodiversity, trees and general degradation of the landscape

9.0 **Assessment**

9.1 The emphasis on local government reform and regional

collaboration will impact on the Service moving forwards, although there is not enough clarity at this stage to determine the full effect this will have. However, the current shared Planning Ecologist and Coed Cymru Officer arrangements with Carmarthenshire CC and Neath Port Talbot CC respectively have provided the opportunity to work more flexibly and share skills and experience.

- 9.2 The Service has recently gone through a Commissioning Review which identified transformation of the Nature Conservation Service in-house as the preferred option at this stage, and the agreed actions arising are in the process of being implemented. This will ensure that the Service operates as efficiently and effectively as possible, and is fit for purpose to respond to forthcoming reforms. Furthermore, it will strengthen the Service's ability to meet its statutory duties in the areas of biodiversity and nature conservation.
- 9.3 It is apparent that the reduction in resources elsewhere in the Council is affecting the Service's ability to deliver its priorities. In addition, difficulties in recruiting to specialist posts within the service remains a problem, as does the retention of existing skilled staff who are only on temporary, rolling, grant dependent contracts.
- 9.4 The service has an excellent track record of securing significant levels of external funding and will depend on continued success in securing funding.
- 9.5 Agreed transformational changes for the Nature Conservation Team are:
- Expand the team to include an additional part-time Ecologist/Biodiversity officer to meet enhanced Biodiversity Duty requirements – This has been achieved temporarily and an additional temporary part-time (0.5) member of staff has been in post since September 2017. Their contract runs until September 2018 with provision for extension until March 2019 subject to confirmation of grant funding.
 - Appoint a part time Volunteer Coordinator to develop, organise, supervise and support volunteer engagement in practical nature conservation work – This has been achieved temporarily with a part-time temporary (0.2) member of staff in post since Sept 2017. Grant funding has been applied for to extend this post until Nov 2019 on a temporary full-time basis.
 - Explore opportunities for income generation from outdoor learning/wellbeing initiatives - introduce charging for conservation services, such as Bishops Wood Centre/Roundhouse, walks and events, school grounds initiatives, grazing licences, establishment of a tree nursery,

growing and selling biomass crops – This is being investigated and a business case is to be prepared as a medium term option with no specific income stream identified, nevertheless £1k has been taken from 18/19 budget onwards on basis of assumed income. Walks and Environmental events are already planned for 18/19 including Seashore Safaris. The Bishops Wood Roundhouse is currently unusable following an arson attack which damaged the roof. The Countryside Connections Project officer has been running outdoor learning, health, and well-being weekend events at the Council's Activity Centres at no charge.

- Catch up with backlog of ecology work (following 3-month gap in ecology service after retirement of Council's ecologist in 2017) and introduce process efficiencies. Ongoing through current permanent and grant funded posts and contracted out work. To improve access to good ecological data the Team has signed up to access SEWBREC records from Dec 2017 to March 2018. Continuation of SEWBREC services requires up to £9k annual commitment – grant funding sought for 18/19.
- Stop the provision of free Invasive Non-Native Species advice to private landowners, mortgagees, etc. through provision of additional information on website – Not achieved. Parks provide a knotweed removal service which is charged for, but general queries and issues with Knotweed on Council owned land continue to be referred to the NC team to deal with at no charge.
- Use of Council NEAT team to assist with habitat/site management, including access improvements, scrub control, etc. – due to come into effect 2018/19. Welsh Government Single Revenue Grant has been used to support improvement of local environmental quality and resilience, for example, improving air quality, tackling noise, fly tipping, reducing flood risk, etc.
- Greater use of IT and social media for the purposes of promoting work, community engagement, professional news, funding c=sources and identifying local issues. This would need to be complemented by a document management system to replace the current paper-based filing/record system.

10.0 Legal Implications

10.1 Retention of existing resources is required as a minimum to be able to comply with statutory/legal obligations for biodiversity and natural resource management. The Council must have a nominated Biodiversity Champion who is active in ensuring that Biodiversity is considered throughout the Council's work.

10.2 The Council should also maintain sufficient ecological experience and capacity to ensure the Environment Wales Act Biodiversity Duty and other legal obligations are complied with as detailed in clauses 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 of this report.

11.0 Financial Implications

- 11.1 The current circa £150k annual cost of the Nature Conservation team to the Council is less than half of its operating costs. Grant aid and income earned from commercial activities offsets salary costs of £220k. External funding is reducing year on year.
- 11.2 The team has a proven track record of being innovative and securing significant amounts of external funding. New ways of working, new ways of improving the service and new ways of generating additional income are continually explored. As a consequence, over the past ten years grant income has totalled in excess of £5 million. This has enabled additional temporary staff to be taken onto deliver specific projects/outputs. However, this is an inherent weakness in the service with over-reliance on external grants and other income and staff on temporary contracts offering no job security and difficulty in retaining in-house expertise.

Background Papers:

- Options Appraisal for the Future Delivery of Services in the Scope of the Planning and City Regeneration Commissioning Review: Report to Cabinet 17th August 2017
- Environment Act (Wales) 2016

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Date: 11.04.18

Legal Officer: Jonathan Wills

Finance Officer: Adele Harris

Appendix 1. The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 - An overview of Part 1

Part 1 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 provides a number of mechanisms to deliver the sustainable management of natural resources. These mechanisms include:

- **State of Natural Resources Report - SoNaRR** – the Environment Act places a duty on Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to produce a report which will contribute to the evidence base for policy on how natural resources are managed and sustainably used. The first report was published in September 2016, and will be updated every 5 years
- **National Natural Resources Policy - NRP** – the Environment Act places a duty on Welsh Ministers to prepare, publish and implement a National Natural Resources Policy, which sets out the Welsh Government’s general and specific policies in relation to the sustainable management of natural resources. The policy (published in August 2017) sets out three National Priorities which are:
 - Delivering nature-based solutions,
 - Increasing renewable energy and resource efficiency,
 - Taking a place-based approach
- **Area statements** – to be produced by NRW by 2019 in order to facilitate the implementation of the National Natural Resources Policy. Area statements will set out the key risks that need to be carefully managed and mitigated and the key opportunities and priorities for the sustainable use of natural resources at an area level.
- **The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty** – applies to all public bodies, LA’s, Community Councils, Police, Health Authority etc.

This new duty under Section 6 of the Environment Act replaces and strengthens the biodiversity duty in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (the NERC Act) which required that public authorities must have regard to conserving biodiversity.

The Section 6 duty requires that:

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

In complying the duty a public authority:

1. Must take account of the resilience of ecosystems, in particular the following aspects—
 - (a) the 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.

2. 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.

3. Must prepare, publish and submit to Welsh Government a plan setting out what they propose to do to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and promote resilience (Section 6 Plan)

4. Must prepare and submit to Welsh Government a report on what the public authority has done to comply with the duty by the end of 2019 and then every three years after this date.

5. Must have regard to:

- The section 7 list of habitats and species of principal importance for Wales
- The State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR), published by NRW
- Any Area Statement which covers all or part of the area in which the authority exercises its functions, once these are produced.

6. In addition, local authorities should take account of The **Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales** (NRAP) overseen by the Welsh Government the Wales Biodiversity Partnership and published in December 2015. This is the national biodiversity strategy and action plan required under the Convention on Biological Diversity to reverse the decline of biodiversity in Wales.

Section 6 Plan (Corporate Biodiversity Plan)

The Section 6 plan should consist of a statement of what the public authority will do to maintain and enhance biodiversity, across all of its functions, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems. This statement should be embedded within any corporate and /or business planning document.

The Plan should also include the steps that will be taken to fulfil this commitment across each of the functions of the organisation. These steps should, as far as possible, be guided by the six objectives of the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales, which are:

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

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

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

Objective 4: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

Objective 5: Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring

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

Key to compliance with the S6 duty is embedding biodiversity into decision making at all levels. This should start at the corporate level, where early thinking and planning should seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity, preventing its loss in the first instance.

Each function of a public authority should consider where and how they can maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote resilience. In some cases action across the organisation as a whole is more appropriate. Best practice would be that the S6 plan is an integral part of any business planning, asset management and/or corporate planning processes as this will demonstrate how the consideration of biodiversity is being embedded within the public authority

Links between the Environment Wales Act Section 6 Duty and the WCFG ACT

Complying with the S6 duty will help public bodies to maximise their contributions to the Well-being goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, in particular the Resilient Wales Goal:

‘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)’.

For those public bodies subject to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015, the S6 plan should be integrated into their statement of the steps to be taken to meet their well-being objectives, which in turn should be in their corporate plan.

Published well-being objectives and statements about them under the WFG Act must set out how biodiversity will be maintained and enhanced, and how in so doing the resilience of ecosystems will be promoted.

Section 6 also applies to biodiversity in a global sense and requires public authorities to consider the effect of decisions taken, or activities carried out, within Wales, but also in relation to biodiversity outside of Wales e.g. those relating to climate change.

Appendix 2: The County's Environmental Capital and Constraints (LDP Written Statement July 2016, pp33-36)

.....1.4.18 The diversity of landscapes and habitats which make up over 80% of the County's total area include upland moorland, coastal cliffs, sandy beaches, heathland, woodland, wetlands, river valleys and estuaries. These habitats together with the many historic parks and gardens, pockets of urban green-space and large areas of farmland make it one of the most attractive and ecologically diverse counties in the UK, with over 50% of the County's area being of significant ecological interest. This wealth of wildlife habitats supports a huge diversity of plant and animal species. The collective term for this resource is biodiversity. Many of the habitats and species identified as being of importance for Biodiversity Conservation in the UK can be found in Swansea, and approximately 17% of the County's area is protected by designations at a European or National level.

1.4.19 These designated areas and priority habitats represent only the very best of the County's biodiversity. They do not, however, encompass all that is irreplaceable and cannot by themselves maintain biodiversity. Even common habitats, urban wildlife sites and green spaces, are important in maintaining a network of semi-natural sites, and the quality and extent of the biodiversity resource as a whole.

1.4.20 It is the unique relationship between a vibrant city and outstanding biodiversity and countryside that helps to make the County a unique and particularly attractive place to live, work and visit. The County's natural heritage contributes to a positive visual impression of the area, leading to a beneficial impact on the local economy through increased tourism, enhanced appeal for inward investment, and direct job creation and employment opportunities in the environmental sector. Contact with nature can also improve health and well-being, offering free or low cost opportunities for recreation and a place of refuge from the hustle and bustle of urban life.

1.4.21 Maintenance of the high quality, beauty and diversity of the County's natural heritage is therefore fundamental to the economic, environmental and social well-being of the area. The Plan seeks to capitalise on these benefits and highlight the role they play in delivering sustainable economic growth.

1.4.22 The network of open spaces and green areas (green infrastructure) within the County improves the amenity value for, and quality of life of, residents and encourages community interest and cohesion. The extent and quality of this network will be safeguarded and enhanced where appropriate, including requiring appropriate provision of open space to be an integral part of masterplanning new developments.

1.4.23 Woodlands, hedgerows, groups and individual trees, including ancient and veteran trees, play an important role in enhancing the County's landscape and biodiversity. They also provide a range of additional valuable services (ecosystem services) that include improving local air quality, reducing the impact of noise pollution, capturing carbon, reducing flood risk and enhancing social cohesion in communities. It is increasingly recognised that trees not only contribute to both the amenity and natural habitat of urban areas, rural villages and individual buildings but they also help to alleviate problems associated with urbanisation, pollution and climate change and will wherever possible be protected as part of development.

1.4.24 The Burry Inlet and Loughor Estuary is an internationally protected site of the highest quality. It is part of a network of important European sites designated under the European Union Habitats and Birds Directives. The Burry Inlet is a designated Special Protection Area (SPA) and the Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). These two sites combine to form part of the wider CBEEMS which stretches into

Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC). The quality of this highly valuable environmental resource will be safeguarded primarily by maintaining water quality in the Estuaries, which will in turn safeguard the important habitats and species. In addition, the Welsh National Marine Plan forms the foundation of a seascape assessment for the County that will inform Plan policy relating to coastal locations.

1.4.25 Water is an essential resource and its presence and purity is paramount for the sustainability of life. Poor and deteriorating water quality, as a result of pollution, and compromised water quantity as a result of over abstraction, will have a damaging effect on the water supply for domestic and industrial consumption, farming and food production, biodiversity, bathing, fishing and other leisure activities. The Plan will maintain and enhance the quality and quantity of water resources, including rivers, canals, lakes, ponds and other water bodies. Policy implementation will involve close collaboration with NRW and DCWW to secure adequate supply of water and sewerage infrastructure.

1.4.26 To avoid adverse effects on the integrity of all European Sites (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), development at certain locations across the County may need to provide adequate mitigation measures to avoid, cancel or reduce the effects on: the aquatic environment; the marine environment; the coast; and/or mobile species. Similar measures may also need to be provided to mitigate the effects upon these sites from disturbance from air pollution, noise and lighting.

1.4.27 The Plan recognises that the countryside and coast provide more than an enviable setting for the urban area. It is the distinctive relationship between the adjacent urban area and this outstanding landscape, encompassing a coastline of rugged cliffs and sandy beaches, lowland areas with mosaic field patterns and large stretches of open upland moorland, that gives the County its unique character, distinctiveness and sense of place. In their own right the countryside and coast make a vital contribution to quality of life, provide a stimulating environment to live and work, afford opportunities for a wide range of countryside recreation, sport and tourism activities, support a diversity of landscapes, habitats and species and make a significant contribution to the mitigation of climate change. It is these special qualities that make up the integrity of the countryside and coast, the protection of which will help ensure that rural areas thrive.

1.4.28 The challenge for the Plan is to allow for development associated with a new era of prosperity and opportunity for the County whilst ensuring protection and enhancement of the natural environment to support a high quality of life, health and well-being for individuals and communities, and providing an attractive environment for investment, space for nature to thrive and increased resilience to climate change impacts.

Appendix 3: LDP Policies ER8 (Habitats and Species) and ER9 (Ecological Networks and Features of Importance for Biodiversity)

ER 8: HABITATS AND SPECIES

Development proposals that would have a significant adverse effect on the continued viability of habitats and species, including those identified as priorities in the UK or Swansea Local Biodiversity Action Plan, will only be permitted where:

- i. The need for development outweighs the nature conservation importance of the site;**
- ii. The developer demonstrates that there is no satisfactory alternative location for the development which avoids nature conservation impacts; and**
- iii. Effective mitigation measures are provided by the developer.**
- iv. Any unavoidable harm is minimised by effective mitigation to ensure that there is no reduction in the overall nature conservation value of the area. Where this is not feasible, compensation measures designed to conserve, enhance, manage and, where appropriate, restore natural habitats and species must be provided.**

2.9.60 Development proposals should aim to minimise detrimental impacts on habitats and species. There should be no net loss in overall biodiversity as a result of development and where possible there should be biodiversity gains.

2.9.61 Protected habitats and species are those protected under European or UK legislation, as identified in TAN 5 and including the Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, Wildlife and Countryside Act, Environment Act, Section 42 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. They include priority habitats and species that are protected in UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans.

2.9.62 Factors to be taken into consideration in assessing the significant adverse effect development proposals are likely to have on habitats and species are:

- The current distribution and status of the protected habitat or species within the County;
- All likely effects, including cumulative effects and impacts during construction;
- The role of the habitats as connectivity pathways; and
- Whether effective mitigation and/or compensatory measures have been provided.

2.9.63 Where habitats and species are likely to be disturbed or harmed, development proposals will be assessed in accordance with National Planning Policy and Guidance. Developers will be expected to provide: an ecological survey; an assessment of the likely impact of the proposal on the protected species/habitats; and, where necessary, make appropriate provision for their safeguarding, mitigation and/or compensatory measures. In addition opportunities to enhance biodiversity, such as through habitat creation, will be encouraged.

ER 9: ECOLOGICAL NETWORKS AND FEATURES OF IMPORTANCE FOR BIODIVERSITY

Development proposals will be expected to maintain, protect and enhance ecological networks and features of importance for biodiversity. Particular importance will be given to maintaining and enhancing the connectivity of ecological networks which enable the dispersal and functioning of protected and priority species.

Development proposals that could result in a significant adverse effect on the connectivity of ecological networks and features of importance for biodiversity will only be permitted where:

- i. The need for the development outweighs the nature conservation value of the site;**
- ii. It can be demonstrated that there is no satisfactory alternative location for the development;**
- iii. A connected element of the natural resource is retained as part of the design of the development; and**
- iv. Compensatory provision will be made of comparable ecological value to that lost as a result of the development.**

2.9.64 There are a significant number of ecological habitats and features within the County, in addition to those that are legally protected, that lie outside the designated areas and make a significant contribution to the overall biodiversity resource. These include linear wildlife corridors such as rivers, hedgerows and cycle tracks and also 'stepping stones' such as ponds and copses.

2.9.65 The wildlife corridors and stepping stones are a vital part of the ecological network. Whilst it is important to protect and enhance biodiversity sites and species of importance dispersed throughout the County this cannot be achieved without protecting and enhancing the intervening habitats and spaces that provide crucial links between the designated sites.

2.9.66 The protection, management and enhancement of ecological networks is recognised as being particularly important for nature conservation. Wildlife corridors allow species to move between fragmented habitats, to recolonise areas and to move in response to climate change and development that may have destroyed part of their habitat. For example, the water vole, which is a priority species will not travel through unvegetated ground. If its habitat becomes isolated through development and then the colony within this isolated habitat become endangered, for example through disease, it is likely that it will not survive.

2.9.67 The Plan has been informed by an assessment of ecological connectivity across the whole of the County.¹⁰³ This assessment maps the existing ecological connectivity network and also identifies locations where ecological connectivity has the potential to be enhanced. The latest version of the Swansea Ecological Connectivity Assessment will inform the implementation of this Policy.

2.9.68 Providing ecological connectivity is an important ecosystem service of the green infrastructure network and its protection and/or enhancement accords with Policy ER 2 Strategic Green Infrastructure Network.

Appendix 4: Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Unit Plan 17/18

STRATEGIC PLANNING & NATURAL ENV SECTION

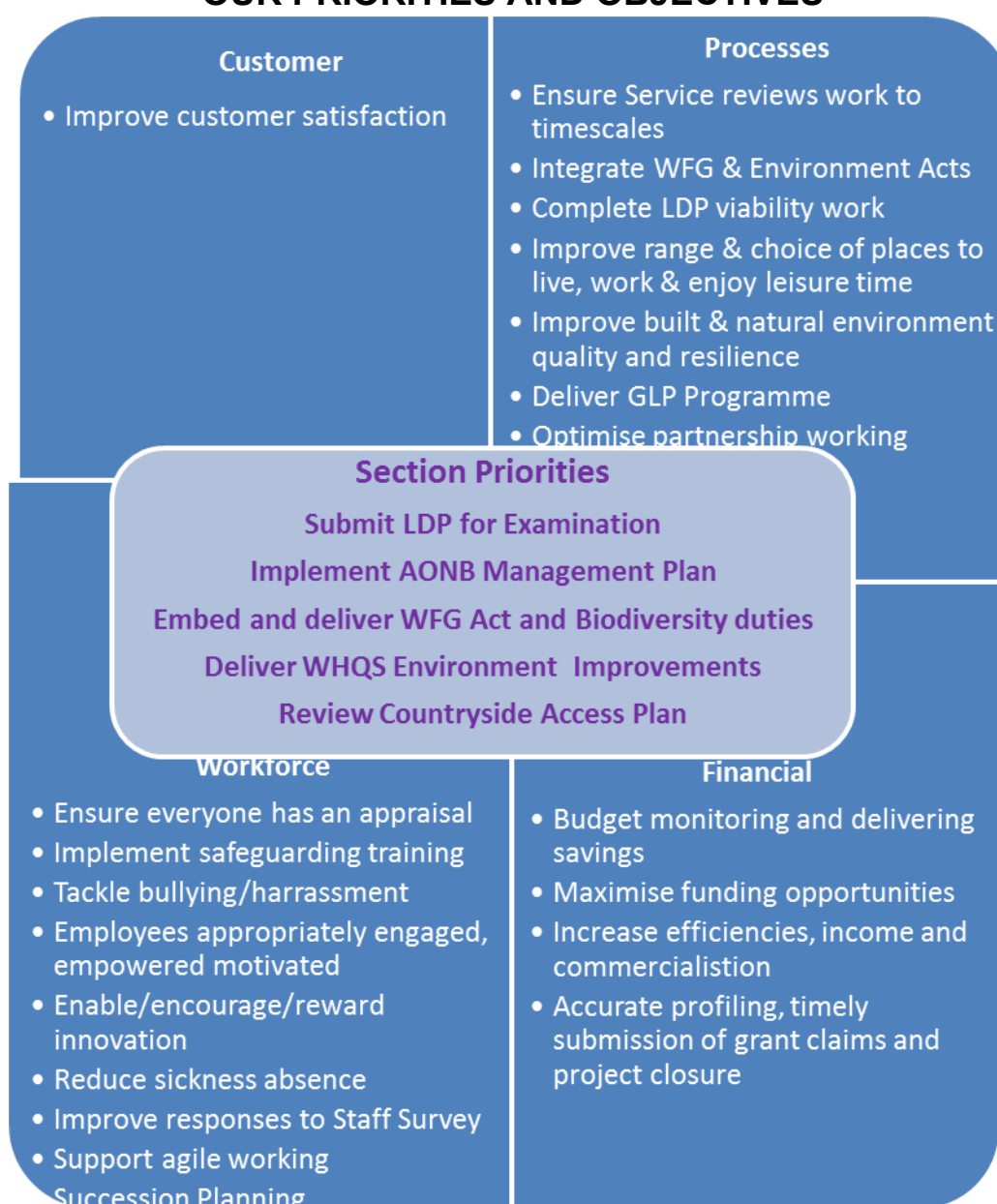
OUR VISION

To deliver a quality and resilient built and natural environment that supports well-being, prosperity and quality of life

OUR MISSION

To provide a robust strategic planning and policy framework; maintain, enhance and promote the built and natural environment for all; and integrate Sustainable Development principles into the delivery of all Council services

OUR PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES



Appendix 5: Nature Conservation Unit Plan 17/18

NATURE CONSERVATION TEAM

OUR VISION

Swansea has a more ecologically diverse & resilient natural environment that sustains ecosystem services and contributes to social & economic well-being

OUR MISSION

To maintain, enhance and promote a biodiverse and ecologically resilient natural environment that sustains ecosystem services and contributes to social, economic and environmental well-being

OUR PRORITIES AND OBJECTIVES



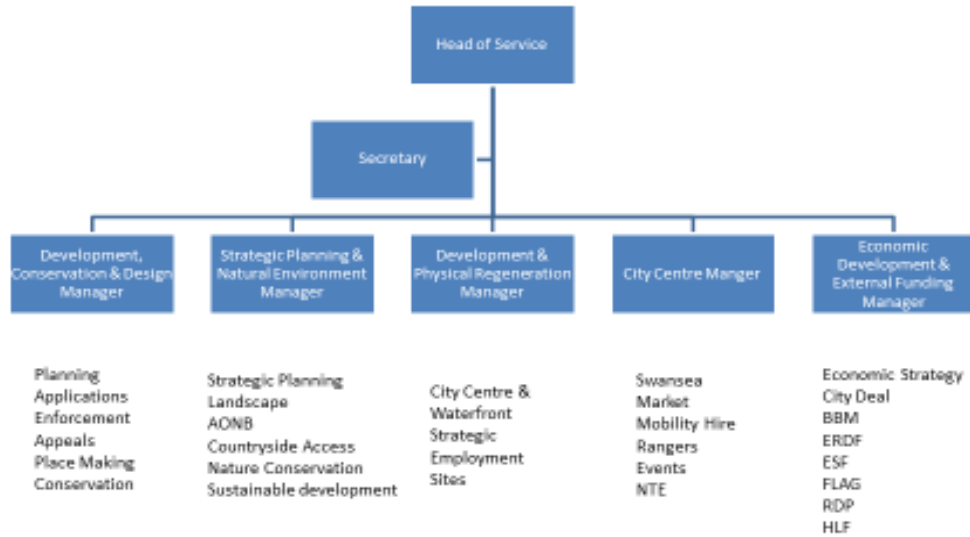
Appendix 6 Swansea Council's Nature Conservation Objectives, Opportunities and Risks

Council Objective	Steps towards Council Objective	Current Activity/Action	Gaps/ Opportunities	Risks
Transforming our Economy & Infrastructure	Promote biodiversity and protect Swansea's green spaces, including parks for recreation and play, to promote health and wellbeing	Green Infrastructure (GI) Workshops held - strategy to be drafted	Build greater awareness of the importance of greenspace and ecological advice generally to ensure it is fully taken into account across the Authority in all plans, strategies and projects (Biodiversity and Environment Act training). Make more services and information available on line, e.g. Invasive non-native species, Ash-Die back, Rights of Way Network. Need to adopt a Council Tree Policy and Corporate Biodiversity Plan	Disposal/loss of natural assets/resources without full appreciation of the benefits these natural resources provide for free and the true long term cost of their loss which outweighs short term capital gain (the sustainable management of natural resources)
Transforming our Economy & Infrastructure	Support and Deliver an ecosystem approach to natural resource management	Continue to deliver grant funded projects and site specific management plans	Wider biodiversity training and education within the Council.	Disposal/loss of natural assets/resources without full appreciation of the benefits these natural resources provide for free and the true long term cost of their loss which outweighs short term capital gain

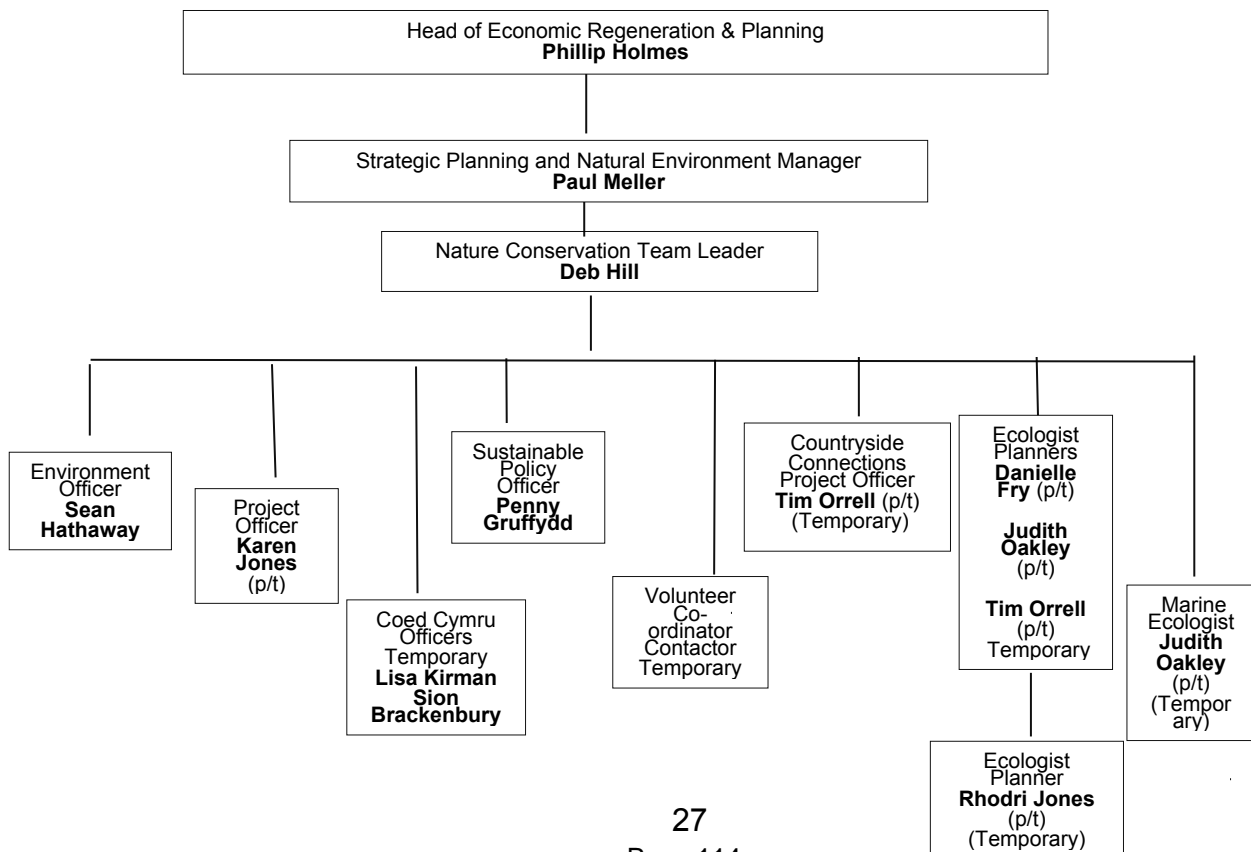
<p>Tackling Poverty</p>	<p>Provide free or low cost environmental events, including guided walks and cycle rides; a wide range of talks, workshops and training courses about wildlife and environmental issues and children's events promoting environmental literacy and improving health and wellbeing</p>	<p>Continued delivery of outdoor learning activities and events programme</p>	<p>Wider biodiversity training and education within the Council. Greater use of Bishops Wood LNR for (low cost) events - subject to reconstruction of fire-damaged Roundhouse .</p> <p>Well-Being Plan actions and City Centre regeneration schemes seeking to improve quality, prevalence and connectivity and access to green space will have and health/Well-Being benefits for people on low incomes, addressing a significant factor of health inequality.</p>	<p>Staff delivering these events/activities are on rolling temporary contracts that are fully dependent on external grant funding.</p>
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Appendix 7: Service and Team Management Structure

The service structure...



Nature Conservation Team



Appendix 8: Nature Conservation Team Stakeholders

Internal Stakeholders	External Stakeholders
Members/Cabinet	NRW
CMT/Senior Managers	Welsh Government
Development Control	Other Welsh Councils
Finance	SWEP/Media
Education/Schools	AMs, MP, MEPs
Cultural Services, including Parks	Community Councils
Regeneration	Gower Society
European Unit	Swansea Universities/local colleges
Corporate Property	Local landowners
Highways	Planning Officers Society for Wales
Legal	Planning/other consultants
Research & Information	Local contractors/arboriculturists
Communications Team	Professional Institutions
City Centre Management	Cadw
Tourism	WLGA
Waste	GGAT
Housing/Public Protection	Wildlife Trust
Outdoor Learning/Activity Centres	Local Community Groups/Projects
Poverty & Prevention	Local Development Trusts
Commercial Services	National Trust
Innovation Community	Gower AONB Partnership
	Swansea Environmental Forum
	ABMU
	Local farmers
	WCVA/SCVS
	Commoners
	Environment Centre
	Conservation Societies
	GLP
	Open Space Society
	Local Housing Associations
	Future Generations Commissioner
	DCWW
	RSPCA/RSPB
	Emergency Services
	Forest School/Coed Cymru
	Local Charities
	HLF and other funding providers
	CBEEMS/Severn Estuary Partnership
	Healthy Cities Network
	Horse Riding Clubs/
	FoE/Green Party
	Public Service Board
	Swansea/Wales Biodiversity Partnership
	GLAMBAG/GEMS



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Natural Environment**

Committee Room 5 - Guildhall, Swansea

Tuesday, 24 April 2018 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor P K Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)
L S Gibbard
S Pritchard

Councillor(s)
Y V Jardine

Councillor(s)
I E Mann

Other Attendees

Mary Sherwood

Cabinet Member - Future Generations

Officer(s)

Deb Hill

Nature Conservation Team Leader

Bethan Hopkins

Scrutiny Officer

Paul Meller

Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Manager

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): P R Hood-Williams and J W Jones

1 Apologies

2 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

- All Councillors who have a membership of an organisation with an interest in the natural environment have been asked to fill in a interests form after advice from legal. Advised that these would be personal interests at most.

3 Service Policy Briefing

- The Nature Conservation Team has outgoings which are more than double the amount of its annual budget.
- The department relies heavily on grants to make up the shortfall to fund staff and projects. Applying for grants is very time consuming and monitoring and administering them is also time consuming and takes staff away from their primary role and leaves the Team in a very vulnerable position.

- Restrictions on time means that the good work which is currently being undertaken by staff is often not promoted and advertised so there is little awareness of the positive actions achieved.
- There are potential legal implications if there is a failure to comply with statutory duties. Intervention by Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales and the police are possible along with judicial review or European infraction. There could also be significant financial and political implications.
- The team encourage and promote volunteering which provides extra help with site management works but also needs staff time to supervise and support ongoing involvement. Volunteers cannot, however, provide a substitute for the expert/professional advice and input that is required on a daily basis, e.g. providing consultation responses on planning applications, policy guidance, etc.
- The City Centre development is a huge opportunity to create a Green City and we shouldn't let this pass.
- This is a once in a generation chance to be at the forefront of urban green infrastructure development, to create a 'Natureful' City' excel and be a pilot for urban Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR).
- A discussion took place around ward members contributing some of their ward money to these activities and having activity in their wards as a result. Nature Conservation Team to prepare and submit a proposal.

4 The Environment Act and an Overview of Swansea Biodiversity

- We have a duty as a public body to comply with section 6 of the Environment Act.
- Best practice would be if section 6 of the Environment Act is an integral part of the business planning and policy of Swansea Council.
- The obligation is best coming from a senior level so it cannot be lost and so each department has biodiversity objectives embedded into their Service Plans.
- Swansea has extremely diverse biodiversity and we are very lucky to have this. Further details of Swansea's Biodiversity Resource (Priority Habitats and Species) can be found in the Local Swansea Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Approximately 50% of the County's area is of significant ecological value and of this 22% is protected through International and/or National designations. e.g. SAC, SSSI)
- Connectivity between green spaces is so important as this helps support ecological resilience.
- Swansea Council owns a lot of land in Swansea and this is both a huge opportunity, but also a big responsibility to maintain and manage ecologically important sites. Biodiversity is sometimes viewed as an obstacle rather than an asset.
- It is essential that we understand how reliant we are on ecosystems for provisions, regulation and culture.
- The ecological value in financial terms has to be offset against any sale/development value.

- Being able to map sites properly means information up front available for people (e.g. Planning Services).
- SINCs (Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation) are areas which support habitats and species of principal importance for biodiversity conservation in Wales (as listed under section 7 of the Environment Wales Act). A site which meets the SINC criteria (as set out in the All Wales Guidance) is afforded a degree of protection under the Environment Wales Act whether identified on the LDP constraints map or not.
- Losing any link SINC sites jeopardises and harms the connectivity of other designated sites and therefore reduces the resilience of ecosystems.
- Swansea could do better at monitoring biodiversity data but resources are very limited.
- There is a unique opportunity here to influence policies post BREXIT and reimagine how some sites/activities could work to be more beneficial for biodiversity e.g. common land.
- There are many opportunities ahead of us during this transition period
- Undermanagement of sites means that they deteriorate and we do not safeguard them from problems which end up costing more in the long run.
- Working with nature needs to be a headline objective in the Corporate Plan and this way, it will have more influence and more people would take the obligation seriously.

5 Discussion

The meeting ended at 12.00 pm

Chair

9. Meeting 3 – Roundtable External Organisations



Natural Environment Scrutiny Panel

Colin Cheesman, Head of Plantlife Cymru

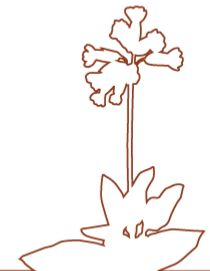
City and County of Swansea



Plantlife

“What should Swansea Council be doing to maintain and enhance its natural environment and biodiversity, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems?”

1. Understand what you have
2. Limiting factors
3. Make connections
4. Manage
5. Monitor
6. Celebrate all biodiversity



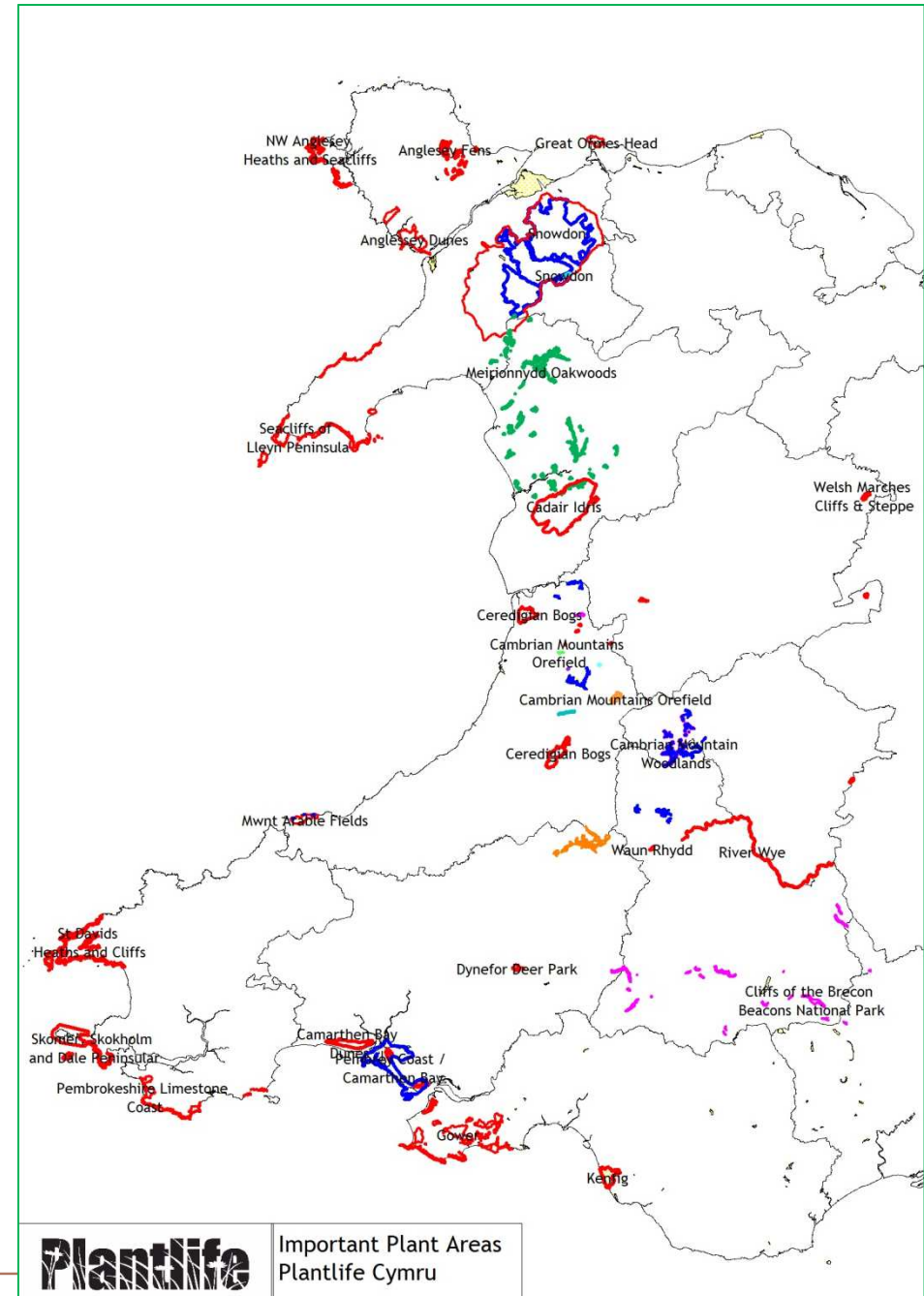
1. Understand what you have

Much of our understanding and knowledge comes through voluntary recording

Over time a whole set of designations has been applied to species, habitats and areas

Plantlife has developed Important Plant Areas which define the best sites for all 'plants' at a European level

The Gower is one of the 23 Important Plant Areas in Wales





Yellow Whitlowgrass,
Draba aizoides
restricted to Gower in
UK



Section 7 species - *Juniper communis*

City and County of Swansea

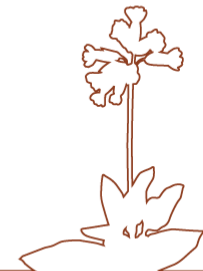
The Gower

700 species - one of the most diverse plant areas in Wales

Why?

Range of habitats

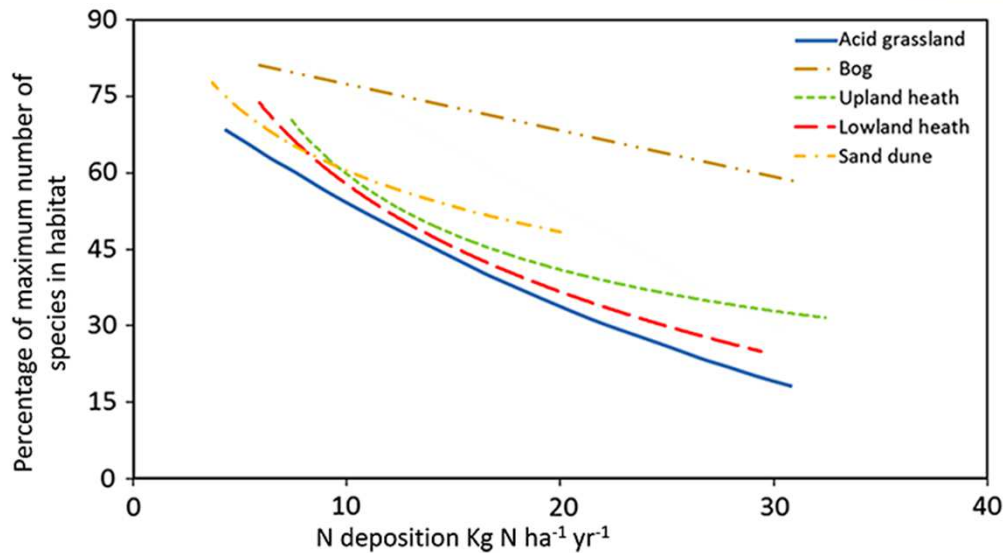
- Sand Dunes
- Heaths - dry and wet
- Sea cliffs
- Arable fields
- Meadows
- Woodlands
- Hedgerows
- Salt marshes



Plantlife

2. Limiting Factors

- a. Extent of habitat / niche
- b. Policy drivers - agriculture
- c. Competition - invasive species
- d. Pollution - nitrogen, ammonia



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3. Make connections

In the landscape

With partners

With people

“It needs to matter”



Plantlife

4. Manage

Are the actions going to make the change that is needed?

Are they sustainable?

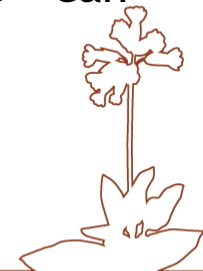
Without human intervention many species will be lost



5. Monitor

How do you know what is happening 'out there' without measuring it?

National Plant Monitoring Scheme - can we make it work at this level?



City and County of Swansea

Plantlife

6 - Celebrate all biodiversity

It doesn't matter if it is rare or common

Need to engage people as part of the well being agenda. It makes people:

- better,
- healthier,
- more involved/empowered
- and creates the biodiversity champions of the future.

A final thought

ALL biodiversity has its roots in 'plants'

'Plants capture energy from the sun and all life on land, directly or indirectly, depends on them. So, ultimately, plants fuel the diversity of life on earth'

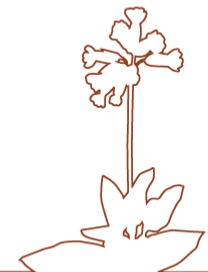
Sir David Attenborough

City and County of Swansea



Thank you

Colin Cheesman, Head of
Plantlife Cymru





City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Natural Environment**

Committee Room 1 - Civic Centre, Swansea

Monday, 18 June 2018 at 9.30 am

Present: Councillor P K Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)
E W Fitzgerald
Y V Jardine
S Pritchard

Councillor(s)
L S Gibbard
J W Jones
W G Thomas

Councillor(s)
P R Hood-Williams
I E Mann

Other Attendees

Colin Cheesman
Nigel Ajax-Lewis

Kerry Rogers
Adam Rowe

Steve Bolchover

Chris Dow
Heather Galliford
Chris O'Brien

Head of Plantlife Cymru
Head of Biodiversity and Policy – Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales
Senior Conservation Officer – Natural Resources Wales
Manager – South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre
Chair of Swansea Biodiversity Partnership and Chair of Environment Centre Swansea
Director – Forest School SNPT
Protected Sites Policy Officer – RSPB
Senior Policy Officer Planning - RSPB

Officer(s)

Deb Hill
Bethan Hopkins
Paul Meller

Nature Conservation Team Leader
Scrutiny Officer
Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Manager

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): H M Morris

1 Apologies

2 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

None

3 Minutes

Deferred to next meeting

4 Terms of Reference

5 Natural Environment - Roundtable Discussion

- Convener Peter Jones went through the terms of reference and the aims of the inquiry
- Two new pieces of legislation are driving the need for the inquiry
- Want to see biodiversity as integral in all Swansea Council decisions which are relevant
- The purpose of the session is to highlight problems and solutions
- **Colin Cheesman – Plantlife**
- Volunteers are very important to this area of work
- Swansea is extremely diverse and important for plant life
- By working in partnership we can achieve and overcome some of the barriers
- People need to understand biodiversity and how it matters to them
- Monitoring is very important so we can establish the situation and trends
- **Kerry Rogers – Natural Resources Wales (NRW)**
- NRW has a huge remit
- The cover all protected sites. There are 35 sites of Special Scientific Interest in Swansea, 6 Special areas of Conservation (SACs) 2 Special Protection Areas (SPAs), two Wetlands of international importance (Ramsars) and one candidate SAC.
- There is a loss of grazing in Fairwood and all the Swansea Commons
- Air quality is linked to transport networks
- Partnerships are very important (e.g. Fire Service, Water Agencies, third sector bodies etc)
- NRW interface with several departments in Swansea Council – would like to see that brought together much more
- There is a cost benefit to working together e.g. trapping sand dune project which meant highways didn't have to keep cleaning it up
- Managing the coast path encourages biodiversity and tourism
- Wildflowers are important (eg for pollinators and public engagement) but need to be carefully targeted
- Actions should consider impact on biodiversity
- Swansea is a very green city with lots of natural resource value
- **Adam Rowe - South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBReC) Limited**
- The role of SEWBREC is to observe and identify species and keep records
- They also arrange training events
- Much of the evidence is gathered by specially trained volunteers
- Because of the full coverage of important species in Swansea, you cannot undertake a project without impacting an important species
- Working in isolation is not an option
- The Aderyn site allows people to access this information
- Swansea Council didn't access SEWBREC information between 2004-2017
- SEWBREC can be used to create buffer zones around sites and o a full audit – by species too

- Information is sent via planning listings to officers which includes important species
- Having access will be essential and will cost £8,000 to £10,000 per year
- **Heather Galliford and Chris O'Brien - Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)**
- The Dartford Warbler is so special
- The biological diversity is global and so important
- The Nature Recovery Plan (Policy Document) is echoed via organisations today
- It is important for Swansea Council to govern effectively
- RSPB would like to see Swansea take the lead on embedding this policy documents
- The Public Services Board Wellbeing Plan and the Local Wellbeing Statement are mismatched
- Section 6 of the Environment Act 2016 requires reporting on progress and actions by the end of 2019 – will Swansea Council be ready for this
- Estates, parks, planning and regeneration all need to be on the same page when it comes to biodiversity and nature conservation
- **Nigel Ajax-Lewis - Wildlife Trust for South & West Wales (WWT)**
- WWT manage land, inform people of their work and progress and raise awareness
- Some concerns over rivers in Swansea
- Some of the activities throughout the Council are mismatched and need to be a more joined up approach to the natural environment and biodiversity
- **Steve Bolchover – Swansea Biodiversity Partnership and Chair of Swansea Environment Centre**
- People care about the natural environment
- Places like the Loughor Estuary and Oxwich are just two examples of important sites
- A large part of Swansea falls under important sites for insects
- Swansea is not very good at maintaining biodiversity
- It is important to protect sites between each other to encourage connectivity
- The Council is using foreign seed mixes for wildflowers when they should use native ones the benefit of bees and insects
- Be mindful of using weed killers before planning new flowers
- There are some plants which are spreading wild and disrupting native flora and fauna – this needs to be managed
- Fly tipping and litter is causing issues through behaviour, practice and policies
- Wheelie bins may be a better solution as it reduces road side litter and plastic bag use
- People need to use appropriate materials to burn in domestic wood burners and avoid collecting dead wood for fuel as this is important habitat for bugs
- Need to be resilient in relation to climate change and warmer, wetter weather. Provisions need to be put in place for potential flooding issues
- **Chris Dow – Forest School Swansea Neath Port Talbot**
- Schools have no money to focus on environmental education and making young people environmental champions even though they may want to
- Many voluntary organisations are going under due to the loss of grant funding

- It is not easy for organisations to make money from this area of work
- It must be sustainable
- **Discussion**
- There are some unregulated activities on the coast such as bait and driftwood collection for commercial use
- There are many invasive marine species and litter which has a negative impact
- Difficult to change culture and behaviour of people
- There is a process which needs to be followed in relation to planning applications and ecology reports
- Other Councils such as Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Monmouth are all undertaking activities to improve their green infrastructure or prioritise/raise profile of the work of biodiversity and natural environment in line with legislative requirements
- Each council department should embed biodiversity and share the burden of the work
- The best examples of funding is when the budget comes from each council department which impacts or benefits from the natural environment and biodiversity
- Tourism has a significant benefit from the state of the natural environment and this is an obvious place to draw money from
- The cost effectiveness of training children about the importance and maintenance of the natural environment and biodiversity is priceless but difficult to measure
- Councils can frustrate actions by not having all departments work together at the same time
- For some people/departments biodiversity has a negative value as it can prohibit or slow down work
- Flood risk management can be done more effectively and cheaply using natural methods
- The mix of services feeding into this work will release more money ongoing and this in turn will feed into higher aspirations such as extra funding for education and social services
- There is also a huge health benefit to having natural surroundings and the NHS are starting to use it as part of treatments
- Some species we have are important enough in their own right to warrant funding for maintenance and preservation
- **Suggestions for Swansea Council from organisations**
 1. Sign up to the Service Level Agreement with SEWBREC to access important mapping/species data for projects
 2. Stand by the policies it already has
 3. Work in partnership to achieve projects, this will reduce costs and bring in expertise
 4. Improve communication within departments and challenge those (including external organisations) who aren't doing what they should be
 5. Develop links with the right staff and consult at the right stage
 6. Don't ignore the Lower Lliw Valley. Biodiversity has to be maintained and improved for the future generations in line with the act

7. Take responsibility for developing plans and get departments to work together not against each other
8. Senior management need to be involved and this needs to be taken seriously at the highest level
9. Value volunteers and volunteer co-ordinators – some money and effort has to be put into this

The meeting ended at 12.30 pm

Chair

10. Meeting 4 – Volunteer Groups



Natural environment scrutiny inquiry panel

I am the Swansea Community Green Spaces Project Officer, an initiative that was funded by The Big Lottery up to December 2017, and has since been funded by Swansea Environmental Forum.

The Project's goal is to work with local communities to make better use of their public green spaces. About 20 local groups and projects have been supported during the project. This brings about a number of benefits including:

Community level

- Improved pride in the area;
- Maintenance or enhancement of the green open spaces;
- Enhanced outdoor facilities for the local community;
- Greater awareness of the existence of such green spaces;
- Improvements to the care for such sites by use of volunteers
- Reduction in anti-social behaviour;
- Closer community cohesion;
- Venue for outdoor community events, such as the Big Lunch, community picnics etc.

Individual level:

- Improved physical and mental wellbeing;
- Reduced isolation and loneliness;
- Local volunteering opportunities, that provide a meaningful activity and sense of worth;
- Greater confidence in visiting and enjoying the local outdoors.

Environmental level

- Encouraging the use of environmentally friendly practices;
- Provision of volunteers to maintain the site – e.g. knotweed control;
- Planting to increase local biodiversity, especially of native species;
- Reduction in litter, both through increasing vigilance by local residents and organised community litter picks;
- Observation of species – e.g. one group carrying out wildlife survey in conjunction with Nature Conservation Team

In all of the groups that I work with, I encourage them to place emphasis on maintaining and enhancing their spaces for the benefit of wildlife as a key priority.

In this capacity I have worked with Swansea Council's Nature Conservation Team (NCT), and other departments, to achieve the Project's goals.

Specific examples of activities that have been supported by the NCT include:

- Supply and planting of a bio-diverse range of native trees and shrubs at Pentyla Playing Fields (The Ganges) in Townhill. This involved a big community involvement, both in the





planting but also in the on-going care of the plants. This planting will extend westwards the Hillside Wildlife Corridor that has been a key 'green lung' for Swansea, and create a link with other green spaces in Cockett, Tycoch and further afield.

- Provision of fruit trees for the Seaview Community Green Spaces Project in Mount Pleasant. This very enthusiastic group has been very successful in creating community cohesion and improving individual wellbeing. It is a fine example of supporting people to get started in a project and then, as it grows in confidence, empowering them to self manage and set up as a constituted body. From a natural environmental point of view, organic growing practices are encouraged, thus preserving and enhancing the local flora and fauna. As well as the dietary benefits of growing food, getting regular exercise and working in a community plot builds relationships and confidence, all contributing to holistic wellbeing.

These are two examples of work done specifically with the Nature Conservation Team, but I have been supported by many other Departments, and Councillors, to increase access to and enjoyment of community green spaces.

Examples of this includes:

- Combined donations from Councillors in Uplands and Townhill Wards to provide 'anti-bike gates' at The Ganges – this improves wheelchair/buggy access to the site whilst restricting motorised bikes that have been an issue in the past. Making the site more accessible, whilst reducing anti-social issues, will help to get more people enjoying this community green space.
- Working with CCoS Housing, and supported by Cllr. Mary Sherwood, improvements have been made to pathway at Dyfatty Woods – a small pocket of woodland in an otherwise densely urbanised area. This improvement will encourage more footfall through the green space and also benefit Ysgol Crug Glas, a school for special needs students nearby. The school is keen to do more outdoor learning and the improvements to the pathway will facilitate this. Educating students about their natural environment will ensure future generations value and respect it.

Conclusion

With ever decreasing resources, projects such as this can fill the gap between what the Council is legally obliged to do and what it would have done previously. The Nature Conservation Team's approach is a very good example of harnessing the power of volunteer groups and what can be achieved with limited funding. They ensure health and safety, as well as environmental safeguards, are in place, whilst empowering individuals and groups to take ownership of roles traditionally undertaken in-house.

It is very reassuring to note that the Nature Conservation Team are about to appoint a volunteer co-ordinator funded by Natural Resources Wales to provide support to volunteers and groups to look after and improve their local environment and help to expand the volume of work that they undertake.





Expanding on this, other CCoS departments could embark on similar approaches, supporting and working with local communities and volunteer groups, to ensure that the natural environment is always preserved and enhanced for future generations and the wellbeing of all.





City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Natural Environment**

Committee Room 6 - Guildhall, Swansea

Thursday, 26 July 2018 at 1.00 pm

Present: Councillor P K Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)
E W Fitzgerald
I E Mann

Councillor(s)
P R Hood-Williams
S Pritchard

Councillor(s)
J W Jones

Co-opted Member(s)

Co-opted Member(s)

Co-opted Member(s)

Other Attendees

Mark Thomas

Cabinet Member - Environment & Infrastructure Management

Officer(s)

Bethan Hopkins
Paul Meller
Sue Reed
Sean Hathaway
Tim Orrell

Scrutiny Officer
Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Manager
Community Buildings Development Officer
Environment Officer
Country Connection Project Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): L S Gibbard and W G Thomas

Co-opted Member(s):

Other Attendees:

1 Apologies

2 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

- None

3 Notes

- Approved

4 Friends of Swansea Council Groups - Discussion

- Although not listed as an agenda item, a member of the public wanted to ask a question

- The Convener accepted this and the question and member of the public's details have been forwarded on to the relevant department
- The 'Friends of' volunteers were thanked by the Convener for their hard work and dedication to their areas
- The reason for the inquiry was explained along with the aims and objectives
- There are currently 3 Council officers supporting 40 sites and 27 'Friends of' groups
- There are no more Parks Development Officers
- Each group was given the opportunity to speak about their area and make comments

1. Pamela Morgan – Swansea City Botanical Complex

- A wildflower garden has been developed in Singleton
- The youngest horticulturist is 55 years old so there will be no trained horticulturists within 5-10 years
- Groups rely on that specialist expertise to support their projects
- There should be two main points of contact for the groups
- 1. A horticulture specialist
- 2. An education officer linking schools to the spaces
- There also needs to be signage for areas such as Clyne so people know they are there
- There is an increase of biodiversity with plants, bees and birds as a result of the work being done by the group
- Some areas are being allowed to be truly wild – sometimes this can be confused with 'neglected' but this is not the case
- It allows for the natural flora to grow

2. Neil Jones – Swansea Vale Nature Reserve

- Mr. Jones is an experienced person in relation to nature and biodiversity
- He commented that many of the wildflowers which have been planted are garden flowers and not native plants which does not benefit properly to the biodiversity e.g. bees
- Mr. Jones believes there have been issues in the past around the allocation of SINC sites
- Records need to be accurate to ensure decisions made are based on correct information
- Neath Port Talbot Council have a scheme where road verges were designated as 'wild' and mown/maintained differently
- Some people will complain that they are neglected but there needs to be culture change

3. Rosemary Harvard-Jones – Rosehill Quarry

- The quarry is a 7 acre inner city park
- There are some regular volunteers at the moment but they receive lots of help from officers like Sean Hathaway
- Knotweed is big problem – you can't get funding for some projects if you have knotweed on the site
- Would like to list the flora and fauna in the park but can't because they do not have the expertise to do this

- Again would like to link in with horticulture specialists and education officers
- **4. Phil Stockton – Pentyla Playing Fields (Ganges)**
- Mr. Stockton became involved due to a history of planning applications for the site which he wanted to challenge
- Ecological reports which are submitted for planning applications should be accurate and impartial
- Voluntary groups should not have to provide environmental/ecological evidence of sites because this should be mapped already
- The Council departments seem to have differing priorities from each other – some financial some environmental
- The site needs to be recognised as a green space
- A range of plants have been added by the group
- Groups want the Council to recognise the importance of sites to people and to the environment

5. Marian Francis – Kilvey Hill

- Close ties with the Nature Conservation Team, Forestry Commission and Natural Resources Wales to manage Kilvey Hill
- Currently working on keeping new conifers down to encourage native species such as oak to grow through. Proving very successful
- The Woodland Trust donated some new trees so they have been planted
- There has been a noticeable increase in dragon flies and butterflies
- The group have been doing a lot of litter picks
- There have been community events with children to encourage them to look after the site and learn but they want to do more
- Having a link to liaise with schools is essential as it encourages learning and involvement in the area
- The NEET team (Not in Education, Employment or Training) are a group which volunteers are keen to link with
- They would like to have a roundhouse on Kilvey Hill
- It is an opportunity for all relevant departments and interested people to work together
- Public signs advertising the areas would be very beneficial so people know the sites are there for visiting
- Litter picks are undertaken but volunteers need better links for removal
- Potential for section 106 money for community and social infrastructure money from developers in the area

6. Steffan Phillips – Morryston Park

- Morryston Park is the oldest garden in Swansea and dates back to 1775
- There is 47 acres in total
- Its role is mixed, it is an urban park you can play in and it contains a range of biodiversity
- A welcome pack and plans for each park would be useful when volunteer groups take over management
- Native perennials and meadows are more important than wildflowers
- Groups are desperate for expertise and the planning and identification of existing biodiversity
- Initiatives don't come with maintenance plans or budgets to keep projects sustainable

- Working between departments can be difficult as they have differing agendas
- Council work e.g. path building is often substantially more expensive than private contractors, it should be easier to have this kind of work done
- Needs to be a central point of expertise for groups to contact
- Needs to be a varied approach to different parks and sites
- Urban parks can help with education and serve as educational hubs for the community
- Need improved links with schools and community projects

7. John Ashley – White Rock

- It is a 48 acre site
- White Rock was not maintained for 3 years
- It is a scheduled monument under Cadw and a Site of Specialist Scientific Interest (SSSI) under Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
- Unusual because it is a riverside park
- There have been issues with vandalism and safety including deliberate fires
- The volunteers are working closely with PCSO's who are a great source of help
- There is a substantial amount of 'vegetative overburden'
- The volunteers are currently working with the nature conservation team to manage the site

8. Christine Thomas – Pontarddulais – Coed Bach

- Everyone must try and look after the environment
- Groups are able to pull in funding if they apply properly and with support
- You can learn so much about people and the environment when you volunteer
- It is so beneficial socially to get involved
- There are no resources from Welsh Government only direction about needs to be done
- Interrupting photosynthesis of any plants will damage its ability to grow – including knotweed
- There needs to be more joined up thinking between everyone who is involved
- Inspired by other people and learned so much

9. Nature Conservation Team

- The team are involved with various groups
- Do lots of litter picking
- Also link in with the Rights of Way team and the Ramblers
- Swansea does have a high concentration of knotweed

Discussion

- The issue of knotweed came up and some discussion around treatment – it was agreed that this requires a separate and dedicated consideration
- Housing developments can be a risk to biodiversity
- Not everyone is aware of section 106 agreements
- Environmental budgets have been hit
- Grant forms from Welsh Government are incredibly long and complicated – people need support to complete them
- Sharing services is vital to protect areas and benefit from expertise
- In urban areas particularly it is vital to encourage young people to get involved, it may then encourage them to green spaces further afield

- Culture needs to change around the abuse of sites – maintain close working with the PCSOs
- Tree and bird surveys are very important to sites to establish what is there, how to care for it and will help with publicity
- Some sites need expertise around ponds and water courses too
- The volunteers were thanked for their time and efforts by each of the Panel members – this work could not happen without them

The meeting ended at 3.00 pm

Chair

1. Meeting 5 – Service Overviews Corporate Buildings and Corporate Property

Questions for the Scrutiny Inquiry Session 29th August 2018

Corporate Property Services (Geoff Bacon)

- How do you put a financial 'value' on land for sale or lease; what is taken into account?
- What are your procedures for linking in with Nature Conservation Team and the ecologists? How and when does this happen?
- Are you linking in with external organisations such as Natural Resources Wales and appropriate wildlife NGOs?
- Do you undertake additional site surveys on land before you dispose of it, to get an up to date picture of its value in natural environment terms? Even if the land has already been identified as suitable for housing via the LDP?
- How do you manage enforcement if the new owners or leaseholders of land damage or clear a site with protected species, ie ahead of any planning consent?

Corporate Building Services (Nigel Williams)

- As a standard procedure, does your department issue guidance to building users concerning the presence on-site of any wildlife, ie, what to look for, and how to maintain and enhance any important species found, eg a leaflet?
- How do you deal with new wildlife issues which arise, such as the discovery of bats or other important species?
- Does each individual site e.g. a school determine its own responsibility in relation to the natural environment and biodiversity, or is each building held to the same Council-determined standard?
- Are there policies/contacts/procedures for each building if they discover a protected important species?
- Are regular ecological surveys undertaken to monitor the biodiversity profile of the property?



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Natural Environment**

Committee Room 1 - Civic Centre, Swansea

Wednesday, 29 August 2018 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor P K Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)
E W Fitzgerald
Y V Jardine
S Pritchard

Councillor(s)
L S Gibbard
J W Jones
M Thomas

Councillor(s)
P R Hood-Williams
I E Mann

Co-opted Member(s)

Co-opted Member(s)

Co-opted Member(s)

Other Attendees

Mark Thomas

Cabinet Member - Environment & Infrastructure Management

Officer(s)

Geoff Bacon

Head of Property Services

Deb Hill

Bethan Hopkins

Scrutiny Officer

Paul Meller

Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Manager

Tim Orrell

Country Connection Project Officer

Penny Gruffydd

Sustainable Policy Officer

Sion Brackenbury

Coed Cymru Officer

Judith Oakley

Planning Ecologist

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s):

Co-opted Member(s):

Other Attendees:

1 Apologies for Absence

- None

2 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

- None

3 Notes

- Approved

4 Public Questions

- None

5 Question and Answer Session - Corporate Property Services and Corporate Building Services

- Outlined the aim and objectives of the inquiry
- Brief overview of the meeting with the planning department
Head of Corporate Property Services – Q&A
- There are occasions when land is not disposed of due to ecological reasons
- Due diligence means that land has ecology surveys done at the start and this will establish how marketable it is or whether to retain it
- Only then will the land go on the disposal list
- Land is given a value differently depending on whether that land is for sale or for lease
- Tree Protection Orders don't tend to be put on Council land
- Environmental factors are considered and then a financial estimate is developed by the team
- There is a direct conflict between income maximisation and environmental issues which is a fundamental issue
- Policy determines this conflict and an outcome comes from negotiation
- Any statutory restriction will override any Council policy
- Debates arise over environmental mitigation
- There isn't a lot of contact with external agencies such as NRW unless necessary. Generally any issues go through the Nature Conservation Team
- External ecology surveys are sometimes undertaken on potential sites but the cost of undertaking these investigations needs to be offset by any income – it has to be financially viable
- There is emerging work which has a greater emphasis on ecosystems and the benefits of land such as flood and carbon alleviation – this means that land may be much more valuable than first thought
- Could there be potential for long term income rather than selling assets and only having one lot of money from the land
- The external data and surveys which are done are shared with ecology
- The land availability for development is very small – most of the land in Swansea will never be developed
- Generating income from a piece of land would be great but it takes staff to manage it and departments do not have the resources
- Someone needs to manage land with income generating projects and all land needs a co-ordinated approach
- Corporate Property Services do not manage any enforcement on the land. Enforcement is only monitored through other departments such as planning (if subject to planning) and other ecological enforcement
- People are prepared to take the risk and financial penalty for damaging land and species if it makes profit/ensures land development

- There are not enough resources for legitimate enforcement
- Local Councillors have a big role to play in reporting issues which require enforcement, if there is enough publicity it should deter people from doing them
- There is potential overage (clawback of money) if a developer expands the site they are issued and builds more properties making the land more valuable retrospectively
- Is the pre-application process fit for purpose and considering connectivity and other environmental issues – there may be potential to tighten this process up
- The right people need to be involved early on to ensure that the everyone is engaged in the process properly
- There could be potential to invest in the land which has value (the land which is marked for sale) and create long term income from it
- There are resource issues in all teams to manage problems and create opportunities
- Promotion and management of land costs money and this is at the other end of the aims of the service – to increase immediate income

Corporate Building Services

- The team link in with the Nature Conservation where they need to
- No building/premise manager is able to circumvent laws and link in with ecologists regarding bats etc when they need to
- The team are very keen on recycling and maintaining the natural environment
- The apprentices (in particular) are showing great initiative with recycling and reusing and are looking for opportunities to increase benefits to nature
- Would like to see a 'top down' approach to the issue of biodiversity and ensure the message is really filtered through the organisation in the same way that other important messages have
- The service would like 'tool box' talks on the issues and would welcome training and information which allows them to contribute to the issue
- Ecology surveys are done at 'trigger points' e.g. roof work not for example annually
- Each premise manager would welcome opportunities to enhance the wildlife of their premise and there could be training/top tips issued to each one
- There is no lack of desire to contribute to this important issue and ensure that the environment is maintained for future generations
- Again a lack of enforcement and deterrent is a big issue as people know there is no negative impact on them
- It would be really beneficial to have this as a corporate objective so that the status of the issue can be raised and the message stronger throughout the organisation

Discussion

- There can be confusion around over who manages pieces of land both for the public and internally
- There is a piece of work being undertaken at the moment to try and make this easier and the responsibility and management of the land is clearer
- There is no lack of will to pay regard and contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity
- Much of the restrictions come from a lack of resources
- There are also success stories and a lot of positive work

- The Council cannot police all sites and they rely on ward members and householders to contact the Council with any issues they see
- The council lease 50+ fields for grazing mainly via short term Farm Business Tenancies that are often based on old guidelines/legislation that could bring the council and the tenant into conflict with current WG legislation.
- There is no baseline data of what habitats and species are present which is needed to ensure the correct grazing regime is set up and inappropriate works e.g. over/under grazing, re seeding, turf removal are prevented.
- The grazing sites need to be surveyed to ensure the correct grazing and management regime is set up.
- Grazing is a valuable site management tool as it is an income generator, reduces costs of contractors and machinery and stops the need for use of herbicides.
- Income from existing grazing agreements can be used to pay for the surveys
- Looking at adding biodiversity as a Corporate objective
- Biodiversity and environmental issues needs to be embedded in all services and employees
- This starts from the top down and it is starting to happen
- The issue has substantial public support

The meeting ended at 3.40 pm

Chair

12. Meeting 6 – Legislation Session

Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru
Welsh Local Government Association



CLILC • WLGA

Swansea Council Natural Environment Scrutiny meeting.

Swansea

21st September 2018

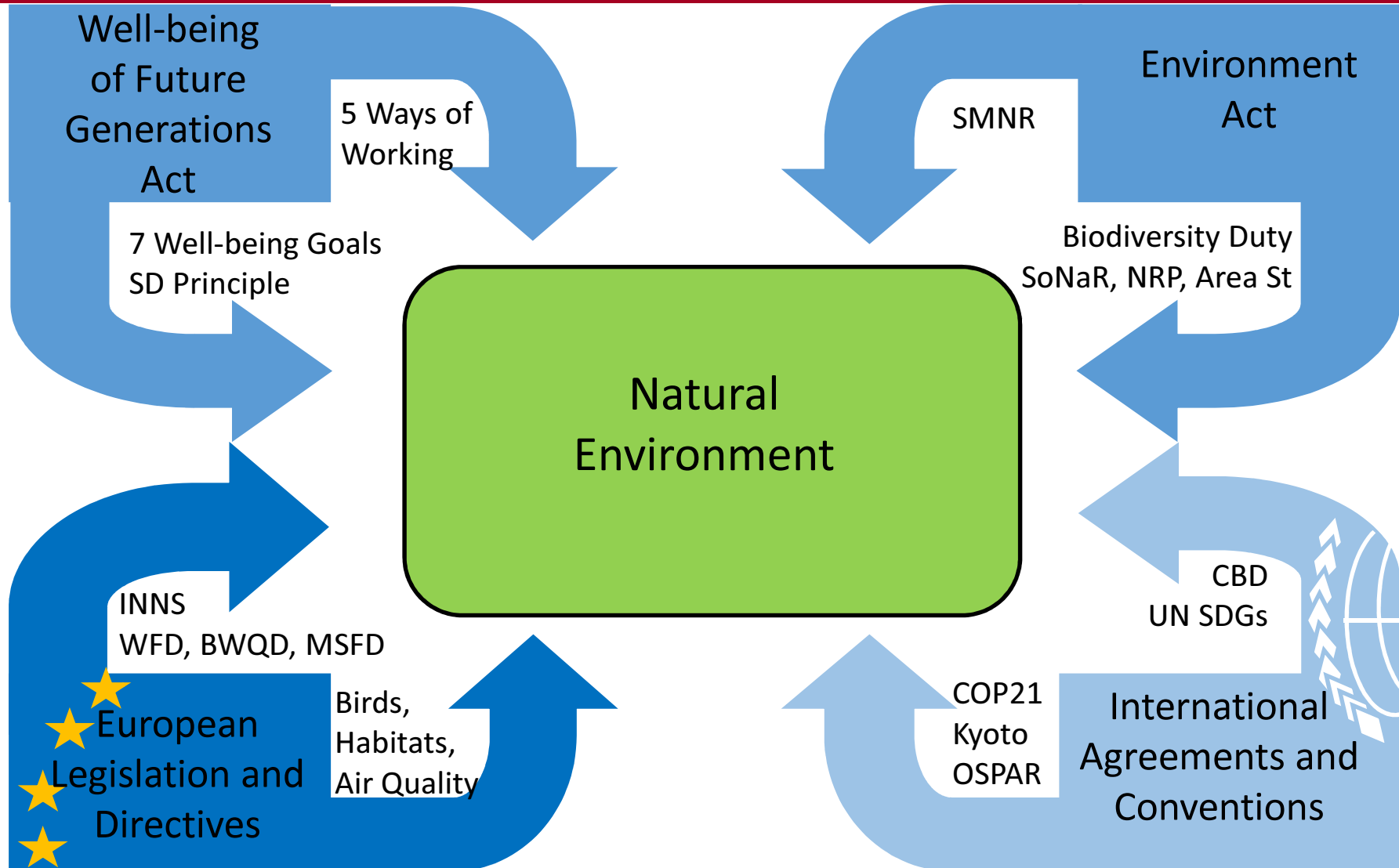
@WelshLGA

www.wlga.wales

Background



CLILC • WLGA





Environment

Scrutiny is an essential part of improvement and governance arrangements.

Is staffed, supported, informed and resourced effectively by all.

Is recognised by all as an important part of community and citizen engagement.

Impact

Scrutiny regularly engages in evidence based challenge of decision makers and service providers.

Finds viable and well evidenced solutions to recognised problems.

Decision makers give public account for themselves for port folio responsibilities.

Allows the voice of local people to be heard.

Practice

Scrutiny is non-political, methodologically sound and evidence based.

Is councillor led.

Meetings are well planned, chaired and conducted.

Scrutiny builds good relationships with internal and external stakeholders and the public.

1. What are the long, medium and short term legal and financial consequences of not meeting the requirements under the Act?



- Short Term – whilst still in EU – failure to meet requirements could result in infraction (EC ECJ)
- Medium Term- (Transition) EU Legislation still applies as above
- Long term – legislation will be UK-based what replaces European Commission and European Court of Justice

2. How will you measure success (or lack thereof) of Councils under the Act? What do performance measures look like?



CLILC • WLGA

- Outcomes or Outputs?
- Compliance
 - Biodiversity Duty
 - Carbon budgeting
 - WB Goals and Ways of Working
 - Water Framework Directive (Good Environmental Status)
- National Indicators

3. How are these requirements linking in with England and wider to contribute to overall improvement of the natural environment and biodiversity?



- Communication
 - Quadrilateral meeting (UK + devolved Ministers)
- Brexit
 - Frameworks
 - Brexit –our land
- Climate Change
 - UKCCC advice and guidance
- National Marine Planning

4. Will success or failure of meeting the acts requirements mean enhanced or limited access to grants? Will grant applications be success dependant?



- SRG – which is from WG ensuring a joined up approach i.e. emphasis on cross-sector/inter-organisation collaboration.
- WFG – strategy, policy and planning should be shaped and informed by 5 WoW and will be audited on how these have been applied
- Environment Grant - [Enabling Natural Resources and Well-Being in Wales 2019-2023.](#)

5. What do you see as the main **barriers** going forward for Councils and how can Councils overcome barriers taking into account austerity?



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- Awareness – getting Biodiversity Duty out there as part of the proper exercise of the public body functions. “Environment in all policies AND all policies in Environment”
- Breaking out of silo thinking – money spent in other departments and other sectors must also include biodiversity duty.
- WFG principle – what ever you do should seek to enhance the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales

6. Is there anything you think individual Councillors can do in their wards to contribute to success and maintenance and enhancement of the natural environment and biodiversity?



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- Raise awareness
- Work in schools- give nature a home
- Involve communities in environmental issues
- 'Plastic-free communities' [Aberporth, Chepstow.]
- Water refill
- Litter picks KWT
- Beach cleans – Marine Conservation Society, KWT
- River Clean ups [Cardiff Rivers Group]
- Marine Litter Plan [80% marine litter is of terrestrial origin]
- Pledges – Clean Seas Wales partnership
- UN Clean Seas <http://www.cleanseas.org/about>

Wales Marine Litter Action Plan



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- Terrestrial and Marine inextricably linked
- Clean Seas Wales Partnership
- Engagement, education and cross promotion
- Year of the Sea
- Volvo Round the World Ocean Yacht Race
- Pledges (businesses, communities, individuals, organisations)
- UN Clean Seas Campaign <http://www.cleanseas.org/about>

Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru
Welsh Local Government Association



CLILC • WLGA

Swansea Council Natural Environment Scrutiny meeting

21st September 2018

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Comisiynydd
**Cenedlaethau'r
Dyfodol**
Cymru

**Future
Generations**
Commissioner
for Wales

5 Dull o Weithio / 5 Ways of Working

The Five Ways of Working

Long-term

The importance of balancing short-term needs with the needs to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs



Integration

Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies



Involvement

The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves



Collaboration

Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives

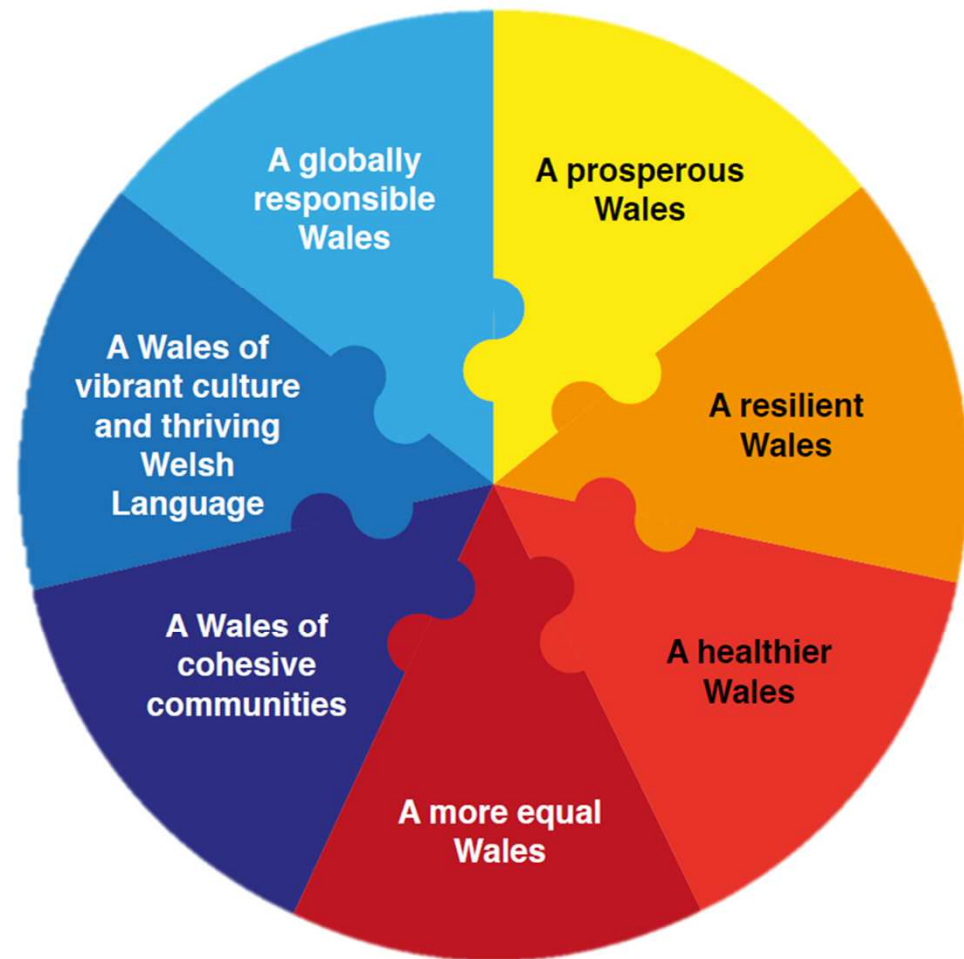
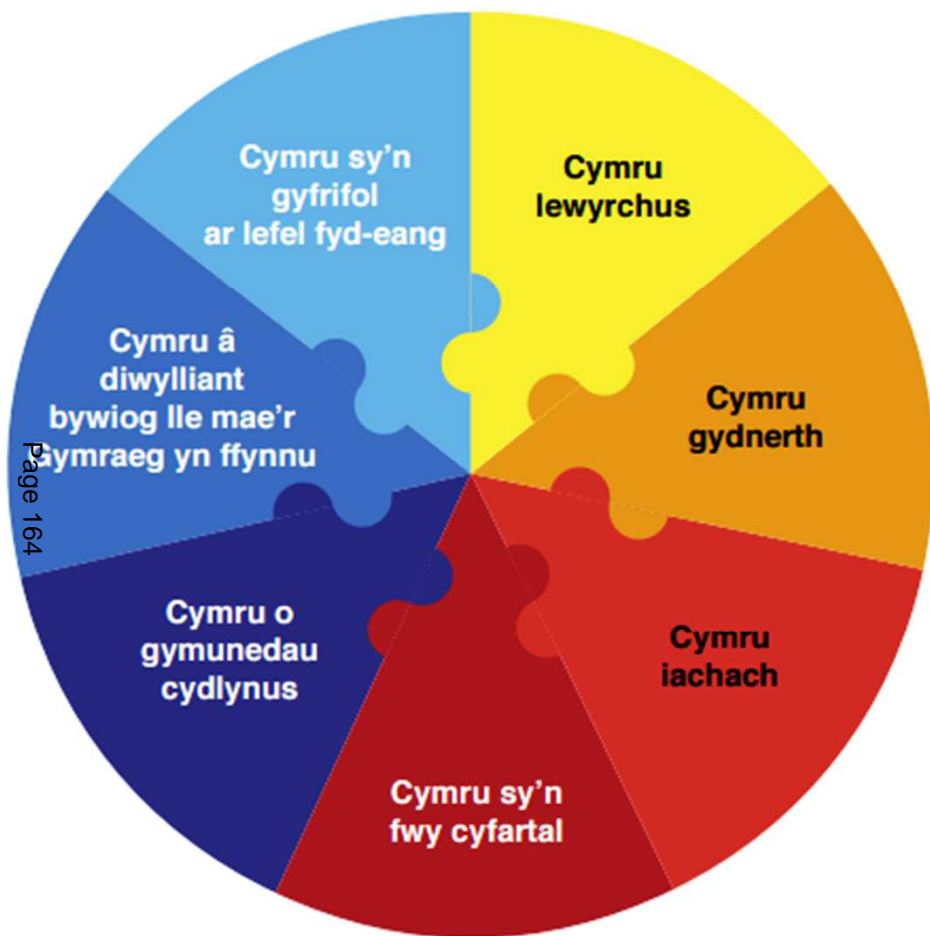


Prevention

How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives



7 nod llesiant / 7 well-being goals



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Cymru gydnerth / Resilient Wales

Cymru gydnerth

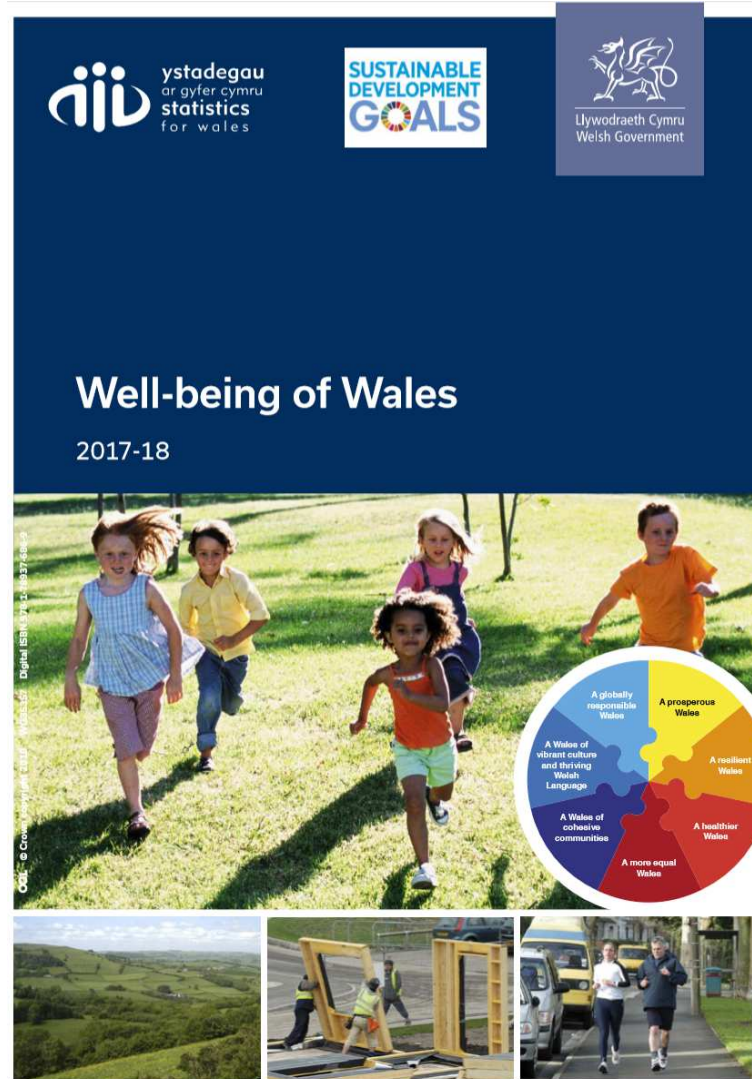
Cenedl sy'n cynnal ac yn gwella amgylchedd naturiol bioamrywiol gydag ecosystemau iach gweithredol sy'n cynnal cydnerthedd cymdeithasol, economaidd ac ecolegol ynghyd â'r gallu i addasu i newid (er enghraifft newid yn yr hinsawdd).

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).



'Well-being in Wales'



‘Well-being: the journey so far’

99

objectives, set by **38** public bodies relate to health, social care, social prescribing, safeguarding and ageing well

98

objectives set by **37** public bodies relate to service delivery, organisational change, staff training or financial management of the organisation

74

objectives, set by **38** public bodies relate to communities, cohesion, safety, facilities and access to services

74

objectives, set by **35** public bodies relate to education, training, improving skills and volunteering

59

objectives, set by **31** public bodies relate to environment, including natural resources, extreme weather events, resilience of the environment and climate change

51

objectives, set by **29** public bodies specifically relate to the economy, economic growth, business and wealth creation

40

objectives, set by **24** public bodies relate to transport, connectivity, digitalisation and digital connectivity

38

objectives, set by **27** public bodies relate to culture, heritage, Welsh language, sport, tourism and arts

29

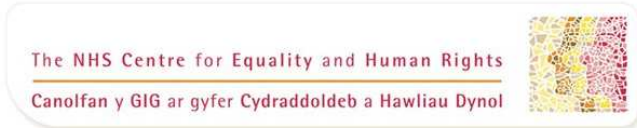
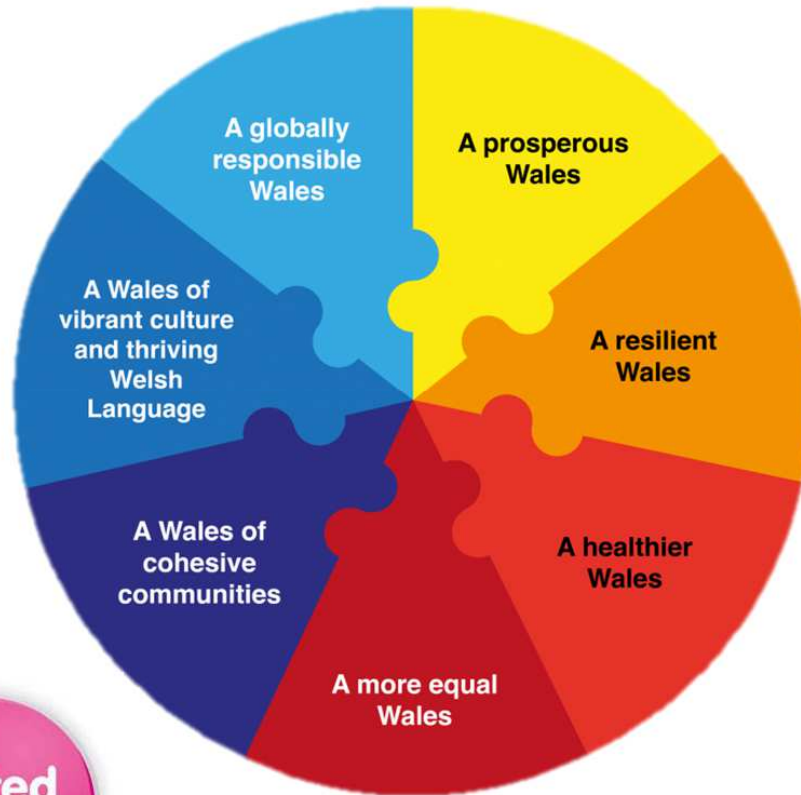
objectives, set by **21** public bodies relate to poverty, equality, fairness, (lack of) housing and homelessness



Art of the Possible



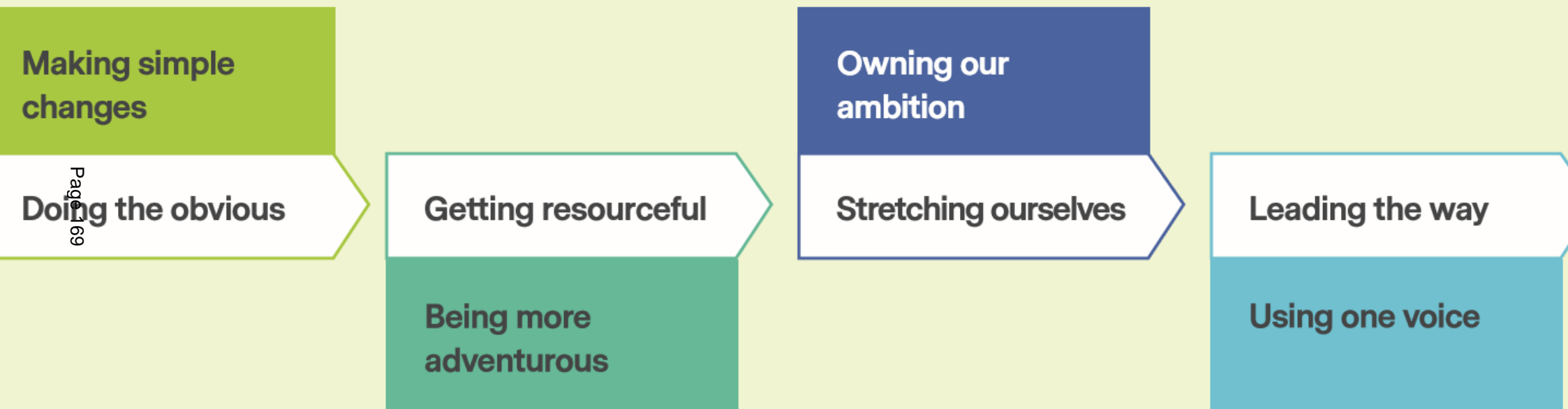
Gweithio mewn partneriaeth gyda
Llywodraeth Cymru
Working in partnership with
Welsh Government



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Journey checker - 'Where are we now?'



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Comisiynydd
Cenedlaethau'r
Dyfodol
Cymru

Future
Generations
Commissioner
for Wales

Future Generations framework for projects

Based on the well-being of Future Generations act

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act requires each public body to carry out sustainable development by setting (and publishing) well-being objectives designed to maximise contribution to achieving each of the well-being goals. Public Services Boards (PSBs) must also assess the state of well-being in its area, set local well-being objectives in its local well-being Plan, to maximise the PSBs contribution to achieving the well-being goals. It may be that the well-being objectives set out in (PSBs) local well-being plans are the same objectives that individual public bodies decide to adopt. [The Guidance on the Framework](#) explains its purpose and how it should be used.

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Green Infrastructure

A Catalyst for the Well-being of
Future Generations in Wales



— A special report by Wildlife Trusts Wales —



Responses from Welsh Government – Caryn LeRoux

1. What are the long, medium and short term legal and financial consequences of not meeting the requirements under the act?

Welsh Government cannot provide legal advice to other public authorities, although we have published guidance on how the duty is intended to operate. Each public authority is open to challenge from anybody as to how they are complying with the duty.

Investment in maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, and in so doing promoting healthy, functioning ecosystems directly supports the achievement of the Resilient Wales goal as well as contributing to all of the other goals, and the people of Wales's long term health and well-being. There is much evidence of these benefits although they can be difficult to quantify in overall monetary terms, as well as purely financial gains through, for example, flood prevention and cost savings on land management regimes.

2. How will you measure success (or lack thereof) of Councils under the Act? What do the performance measures look like?

It is for each public authority to determine how they comply with the duty. The duty requires that most public authorities (this does apply to Local Authorities) must prepare and publish a plan, prepare and publish a report, and must then review the plan in the light of the report, and may review the plan at any time. This in itself provides an element of performance management.

However, it will be useful in future to see how well the duty is working, and assess what public authorities can do differently. This may take the form of research and/or evaluation of how well public authorities in Wales are meeting the duty.

3. How are these requirements linking in with England and wider to contribute to overall improvement of the natural environment and biodiversity?

Our guidance on action to be taken to maintain and enhance biodiversity is to use the objectives listed in the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales. These objectives have been defined through a process of design and consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and expertise from across Wales. These objectives are listed in the guidance, and are specifically aligned to the Strategic goals of the UN Environment Programme's Convention on Biological Diversity. In this way they have much in common with the objectives and goals of the biodiversity strategies of the other UK nations, the EU biodiversity strategy and wider.

Although Welsh policy does differ in delivery, particularly as we have the Well-being of Future Generations and the Environment (Wales) Acts, there are many similar overarching objectives. The UK biodiversity indicators, for example, show where these objectives are aligned and how they are measured. They can be seen here: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4229>.

4. Will success or failure of meeting the act requirements mean enhanced or limited access to grants? Will grant applications be success dependant?

It's a factor that will influence the outcome of particular grant applications, for example the Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being in Wales Grant.

5. What do you see as the main barriers going forward for Councils and how can Councils overcome barriers taking into account austerity?

This will presumably be one of the questions the Inquiry will be addressing for Swansea Council itself. It was not intended that complying with the duty should be a financial burden on public authorities – it is about how the duty is delivered through the functions of each authority.

6. Is there anything you think individual Councillors can do in their wards to contribute to success and maintenance and enhancement of the natural environment and biodiversity?

Yes! There is a wealth of advice and best practice available through the Wales Biodiversity Partnership, NGOs and Local Nature Partnerships. Local communities are often best placed to identify the action needed to maintain and enhance biodiversity in their area, and taking a place based approach to managing natural resources is a national priority of the Natural Resources Policy.

A Task and Finish group has been established to collate and disseminate best practice and good ideas, as to how public authorities could comply with the duty. Information will be published here: <https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Section-6>

The Panel would like to invite you to a Scrutiny meeting to assist the members in their discussions about the Natural Environment and Biodiversity and the relevant legislation which impacts activity under this topic.

The Panel are hoping for a discussion around guidance if a Local Authority fails to meet its obligations under the relevant acts.

The main inquiry question which the Panel are exploring is;

'What should Swansea Council be doing to maintain and enhance its natural environment and biodiversity, and in so doing promote the resilience of eco-systems?'

Friday 21st September 1pm-3pm in Swansea Civic Centre

1. What are the long, medium and short term legal and financial consequences of not meeting the requirements under the act?

Long Term Legislation will be UK -based – unclear at the is stage what will replace the European Commission and the European Court of Justice and therefore financial infraction penalties

Medium Term – (Transition period) European legislation and EC and ECJ will still be effective

Short Term – Whilst still in EU, non-compliance will result in infraction penalties

No clear indication as to what happens if the requirements of the Environment Act are not realised
International Conventions signed up to Biological Diversity; Climate Change; COP21; OSPAR (protection of Marine Environment in NE Atlantic)

2. How will you measure success (or lack thereof) of Councils under the Act? What do the performance measures look like?

Outcomes/outputs; compliance; carbon budgets; indicators; Directives e.g. WFD Good Environmental Status

3. How are these requirements linking in with England and wider to contribute to overall improvement of the natural environment and biodiversity?

Frameworks; Health and Housing; River Basin Management; National Marine Plans; SMP

4. Will success or failure of meeting the act requirements mean enhanced or limited access to grants? Will grant applications be success dependant?

Cannot look in isolation; WFG; Environment Act; Planning Act; SSWB

Cannot look in isolation and focus on one WB Goal

SRG WG looking more and more to cross sector, collaborative approach

WFG Applying the 5 WoW to shape and inform upstream not to be used as a means to justify downstream

5. What do you see as the main barriers going forward for Councils and how can Councils overcome barriers taking into account austerity?

Awareness – getting the Biodiversity duty out there as part of the normal function of what you do- not as an add-on

Breaking out of silo thinking – monies spent in other sectors or departments must contribute to the realisation of the duty

WFG SD principle – whatever you do it should contribute to the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being

6. **Is there anything you think individual Councillors can do in their wards to contribute to success and maintenance and enhancement of the natural environment and biodiversity?**

- Raise awareness
- Work in schools- give nature a home
- Involve communities in environmental issues
- 'Plastic-free communities' [Aberporth, Chepstow.]
- Water refill
- Litter picks KWT
- Beach cleans – Marine Conservation Society, KWT
- River Clean ups [Cardiff Rivers Group]
- Marine Litter Plan [80% marine litter is of terrestrial origin]
- Pledges – Clean Seas Wales partnership
- UN Clean Seas <http://www.cleanseas.org/about>
 - Terrestrial and Marine inextricably linked
 - Engagement, education and cross promotion
 - Year of the Sea
 - Volvo Round the World Ocean Yacht Race
 - Pledges (businesses, communities, individuals, organisations)



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Natural Environment**

Committee Room 1 - Civic Centre, Swansea

Friday, 21 September 2018 at 1.00 pm

Present: Councillor P K Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)
E W Fitzgerald
J W Jones
M Thomas

Councillor(s)
L S Gibbard
S Pritchard

Councillor(s)
P R Hood-Williams
W G Thomas

Other Attendees

Mark Thomas

Cabinet Member - Environment & Infrastructure Management

Neville Rookes

Policy Officer - Environment, Welsh Local Government Association

Kerry Rogers

Senior Conservation Officer – Natural Resources Wales

Christian Servini

Change Maker - Office of the Future Generations Commissioner

Officer(s)

Bethan Hopkins
Paul Meller
Tim Orrell
Penny Gruffydd
Sean Hathaway
Rhodri Jones

Scrutiny Officer
Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Manager
Country Connection Project Officer
Sustainable Policy Officer
Environment Officer
Planning Ecologist

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): Y V Jardine

1 Apologies

2 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

- None

3 Notes

- Add notes about grazing rights on Council land and the legislation around it

4 Legislation Session

- Councillor Jones discussed the aims and objectives of the inquiry
- Explained that the aim of this session was to clarify the potential legal and financial implications of not meeting requirements in relation to biodiversity and the environment under the act
- Each organisation was asked to discuss and present in line with the following questions;
 1. What are the long, medium and short term legal and financial consequences of not meeting the requirements under the act?
 2. How will you measure success (or lack thereof) of Councils under the Act? What do the performance measures look like?
 3. How are these requirements linking in with England and wider to contribute to overall improvement of the natural environment and biodiversity?
 4. Will success or failure of meeting the act requirements mean enhanced or limited access to grants? Will grant applications be success dependant?
 5. What do you see as the main barriers going forward for Councils and how can Councils overcome barriers taking into account austerity?
 6. Is there anything you think individual Councillors can do in their wards to contribute to success and maintenance and enhancement of the natural environment and biodiversity?
- Each organisation was invited to deliver a short presentation and answer questions afterwards
Neville Rookes - Welsh Local Government Organisation
- PowerPoint delivered
- Can't look at projects in isolation
- Currently still in the EU and also have international agreements
- Scrutiny is important
- Must use the 5 ways of working to shape the strategy and policy – should be incorporated at the start
- In the short and medium term there is a risk of legal infractions and failure to meet EU requirements, in the long term it will be infraction of whatever UK law is in place after Brexit
- There will be outcome measurements rather than outputs. Will be looking at both strategy and performance
- It will take longer but be more meaningful
- The biodiversity duty should be incorporated into all plans and be part of the Councils every day activity
- There are meetings with both UK ministers and devolved ministers to bring a national picture together
- Also impacts around Brexit, climate change and National Marine Planning
- Not meeting requirements under the acts will have impacts on access to the Single Revenue Grant and the Environment Grant which has emphasis on joined up, cross sector working
- These grants will also have a focus on outcomes and the use of the WFG Act
- Councils need to raise awareness and include the environment in all policies
- Other departmental spending should embed biodiversity in its plans

- Councillors in a local way of working, can raise awareness, visit and include schools, encourage plastic free Swansea and support beach cleans
 - WLGA have been delivering presentations regionally to try and get the duty embedded. For example, services like planning and social services can all be involved. There should not be separate services who aren't engaged
 - There needs to be pragmatic approaches for Councillors
- Q. Do you think there will be conflict between policies e.g. planning and development?
- There should be 'environment in every policy and policy in every environment'
 - Projects need to include the environment at the planning stage and the intention needs to be set at the beginning of the projects
 - There are already some plans for sustainable drainage in new developments
 - Projects are starting to include environment, health, engineering etc – current project on the River Taff incorporating all of these aspects
 - Communities need to be involved
 - The Welsh Government Minister said that even if we do leave the EU Wales will maintain the standards

Christian Servini – Future Generations Commissioners Office

- The public sector should be trying to achieve a better future in Wales and this applies to everything the public sector does
- The Resilient Wales goal is really misunderstood – it is about ecological resilience and this is often interpreted as social or personal resilience
- There is a lack of emphasis on the environment
- The Wales Audit Office examines how public bodies develop objectives and will be looking at this
- There is a memorandum of understanding between Wales Audit Office and the Future Generations Commissioner
- There will be an aim to develop a self-evaluation tool
- The 'Art of the Possible' works towards the Wales we want
- There are currently future generations frameworks in development, one around how to plan projects and one around service design – these are currently getting feedback
- Councillors who are school governors can have a positive impact in that role

Q. What about housing associations?

- There is also a 3rd sector framework being developed
 - The Green Infrastructure report by Wildlife Trust Wales is important
- Q. Planning inspectors are not representing the resilience goals. They are misinterpreting it and not achieving the goals aim

- This happens often
- In terms of auditing performance under section 6 of the Environment Act it is likely that performance will be a self-assessment – no plans for formal auditing of reports

Q. Simple things and quick wins are important but we must not think we have solved issues this way, the answers are deeper and each ward needs a local level approach. The quick wins are just the start of the journey

- If we don't meet the requirements under the acts organisations could be subject to judicial review via the FGC or the WAO, the ombudsman, Welsh Government potential Welsh Government interventions and called to the assembly

Q. s.22 of the WBFGA says the Commissioner can issue advice and guidance, publish it and explain non-compliance

- The role is supportive but not policing

Kerry Rogers – Natural Resources Wales

- There are a range of frameworks in relation to the environment – WBFGA and Environment Act
- The 5 ways of working and the 7 goals underpin everything the public sector does
- Regarding the requirement to report under the duty there needs to be a plan on how public bodies will report on the duty, how all council duties respond to the s.6 requirement
- Look at 'Vital Nature' by NRW and 'Making Time for Nature' by Dwr Cymru
- Must find way of building biodiversity into everything the Council does – right across the organisation
- The SONARR report, the Green Infrastructure Report, LDP strategic assessments should all be considered
- The final s.6 report should pull all of this information together
- Want Swansea to look widely not just as a biodiversity duty
- There needs to be a top down approach
- Find new and innovative ways to get around barriers
- This work will be fundamental to how services are delivered from now on
- Swansea was at the forefront of industry for many years but it came at an environmental cost
- These new laws have been called the 'legislation of hope'

Q. The s.6 duty should be across all Council functions. It is easy to see links with some services but there are others like social services where it is more difficult to see how they fit in. do other local authorities have ideas and good practice to share?

- Need to bring best examples together. Senior managers need to buy in e.g. safe green spaces to play in/allotments and gardening projects have shown positive impacts for people with mental health problems

Q. Many people are members of Community Councils, how do these fit in?

- Community Councils will be vital. Like many other community groups, they will be delivering and on the ground. Councils can put the projects in place but people will live them
- Also community projects like selling local fruit and veg in local shops, selling local honey, having community spaces hold information about biodiversity to involve residents
- Community farms and gardens also play a huge role – social prescribing is important
- The answers for good health don't always lie in the health sector
- Statistics show that Welsh children are really disengaged from nature

Q. The word 'seek' seems weak in the legislation

- Seek is a positive word and encourages action – it isn't passive
- Planning may look functional but there are acts and regulations which need to be applied by developers
 1. Green solutions
 2. Looking at renewables
 3. Place based solutions

4. Looking at green and environmentally sound alternatives

- Swansea have an example of successful project-the sand fencing, dune creation and marram grass planting project saved money, solved the issue and was a green solution
- The Council needs to move forward and take some risks

5 Work plan

- Discussed remainder of work plan
- Next meeting will review the evidence so far which will form the recommendations

The meeting ended at 3.00 pm

Chair

Agenda Item 5

Natural Environment Inquiry Work Plan

Meeting 1 26 th March 2018	Overview – Richard Rowlands
Meeting 2 24 th April 2018	Service Policy Briefing – Paul Meller and Deb Hill
Meeting 3 18 th June 2018	Roundtable Session – External Organisations
Meeting 4 26 th July 2018	Roundtable Session – ‘Friends of Volunteer Groups
Meeting 5 30 th August	Service Overviews – Corporate Building Services and Corporate Property Services
Meeting 6 21st September 2018 1pm – 3pm Committee Room 1 Civic	Legislation Session – What are the Councils legal obligations/implications regarding biodiversity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welsh Local Government Association• Natural Resources Wales• Future Generations Commissioners Office
Meeting 7 4 th October 2018 10am – 12pm Councillor Meeting Room 235	Findings Session (Panel Only) – To discuss the findings of the Panel to date
Meeting 8 31 st October 2018 2.30pm-3.30pm CR6 Guildhall	Senior Brief – An overview of draft conclusions and inquiry messages before final report <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phil Roberts• Cllr Rob Stewart• Cllr Mark Thomas