

Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Section 6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Action Plan for Swansea Council (January 2023 - December 2025)

Introduction

- Since 2015, Swansea Council (together with all other public bodies) has been given increased responsibilities and legal duties to maintain and enhance the natural environment and biodiversity in order to comply with the following legislation:
 - The [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#), 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 [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016 \(Part 1\) Section 6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty](#) which requires 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’.
- Swansea Council has a legal duty to report to the Welsh Government every 3 years outlining actions undertaken to comply with the Statutory Biodiversity Duty, this is called the Section 6 Report.
- Swansea Council has provided Section 6 Reports for the years 2016-2019 and 2020-2022.
- This is the first detailed Section 6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Action Plan (Section 6 Action Plan henceforth) to aid future reporting. Previously the Council’s corporate Objective for ‘Protecting and enhancing our Natural Resources and Biodiversity’ provided a high-level strategic framework which identified the key steps that the Council would take to meet its Biodiversity Duty.

Why do we need a Section 6 Plan?

- Swansea Council [declared a Nature Emergency](#) in November 2021, shortly after the [Senedd had also declared one](#) at a national level in June 2021.
- Swansea Council owns a significant area of land assets so there is considerable opportunity for the Council to implement actions for nature recovery in Swansea. This plan has prioritised key actions the council can take that best impact positively on nature in Swansea.



- The [Swansea Local Nature Recovery Action Plan \(LNRAP\)](#) published in 2023 identifies 25 Action Themes for Nature Recovery in Swansea. Swansea Council is a key member of the Swansea Local Nature Partnership and as well as helping to co-ordinate collaborative actions through the Partnership will contribute to the delivery of the Swansea LNRAP through its Section 6 Action Plan.
- The Section 6 plan will also contribute to a number of other national, regional and local plans/strategies which recognise the importance of biodiversity, and the wider benefits it can provide for people including:
 - Swansea Public Service Board Well-being plan (Climate Change and Nature Recovery objective).
 - [Swansea Council's Corporate Plan 2023-28](#) - One of the key corporate wellbeing objectives in the is 'Delivering on Climate Change and Nature Recovery'.
 - Council [Green Infrastructure \(GI\) strategies](#) and plans.
 - Natural Resources Wales [South West Area Statement](#) and [Marine Area Statement](#).
 - Welsh Government [Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales](#).
 - Welsh Governments biodiversity [deep dive](#).

Structure of the plan and key points to note

- Many of the actions are dependent on, and subject to, available funding and staff resources.
- The following sections set out tables of actions that the Council aims to progress over the reporting term of the Section 6 Plan.
- The action plan below sets out the work we will undertake from now until December 2025 to deliver our commitments to maintaining and enhancing Biodiversity.
- Actions have been set out under the six key objectives of the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales, which are the main headings in the action table below.
- The Swansea LNRAP Action Themes addressed are noted in column 2. It is worth reading and referring to the Swansea LNRAP as it provides an overview of nature recovery in Swansea.
- Key departments or teams primarily responsible for actions listed in the plan are identified in column 3.



- Some of the actions listed are aspirational and long-term, we don't expect to complete them all by December 2025.
- Other actions reflect the day-to-day work already being undertaken that contribute to nature recovery.
- The S6 plan is everyone's responsibility but the Nature Conservation Team are happy to support and advise.

Monitoring and updating of the plan

- This action plan is a living document which will be reviewed and reported on regularly through the Climate Change and Nature Recovery Programme Board and annual Corporate Plan reporting.
- Additional actions may be added as needed.
- The next Section 6 monitoring report will be published in January 2026 and will be combined with the updated version of this action plan.
- Where there are fundamental changes to policy, terminology, or advancements in our understanding of ecosystems, this plan may be updated to reflect those changes at any time.



Swansea Council Nature Recovery Actions	LNRAP action themes addressed	Key department(s)/team(s)
NRAP Objective 1: Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels		
1a. Deliver external nature recovery training, citizen science and educational awareness raising events for communities, groups, schools and businesses.	1.1; 1.2	Nature Conservation & AONB
1b. Deliver bespoke biodiversity and Green Infrastructure training to council staff and elected members.	1.2; 1.4	Nature Conservation, Landscape
1c. Raise awareness of threats to nature and positive nature recovery efforts through official council social media platforms, website and other.	1.1	Communications, Nature Conservation, AONB
1d. Participate in online nature recovery training.	1.1; 1.2; 1.4	All staff and Elected Members
1e. Engage and support elected members, including the biodiversity champion, on relevant nature recovery issues and opportunities within their ward and portfolio responsibilities.	1.2; 1.4	Nature Conservation, Elected Members
1f. Facilitate council sections with land and building management responsibilities to undertake appropriate short, medium and long-term management and actions to enhance biodiversity.	1.3; 1.4	Parks, Housing, Nature Conservation, Schools, Social Services, Highways, Corporate Property, Building Control, Cemeteries, RoW
1g. Planning decisions must maintain and enhance biodiversity by considering all relevant information available which may include species and habitats of principle importance, SINC, ecosystem resilience, and relevant SPGs.	1.4	Planning and Strategic Planning, Nature Conservation (advice) SAB Officers, Tree Officers
1h. Continue to embed nature recovery within current and future Corporate Plans, the Wellbeing Plan, and the Replacement Local Development Plan, to ensure that it is considered in decision making and is prioritised at the same level as the Climate Emergency.	1.4	Planning Policy, Climate Change

NRAP Objective 2: Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management		
2a. Ensure collation of up-to-date and accurate data on statutory protected nature sites in council ownership to monitor condition and inform appropriate management and nature recovery interventions.	2.1; 5.1	Nature Conservation, AONB
2b. As the responsible authority, conduct a review of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and in line with relevant guidance. Begin to re-survey the 73 SINCs that are largely or partly council-owned regularly to maintain accurate and up to date data that informs management and conservation intervention.	2.1; 5.1	Nature Conservation, AONB
2c. Audit current council buildings and aim to install at least one bat and bird nesting feature on all suitable, existing and new, council owned or council-leased buildings.	2.2; 2.3; 3.1	Nature Conservation, Building Services, Schools, More Homes
2d. Prepare, implement and monitor management plans for Council owned SINCs and LNRs plus other public green spaces including beaches and parks, where appropriate and funds allow.	2.1: 2.2	Nature Conservation, Parks, and other relevant landholding departments
NRAP Objective 3: Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation		
3a. Expand current wildflower meadow management (cut and collect) scheme across suitable council land, where funding and resources allow.	3.1; 3.2	Nature Conservation, Parks
3b. Work corporately and with stakeholders to continue to implement city centre GI Strategy and prepare and adopt the county wide Green Infrastructure strategies.	3.5	Nature Conservation, Landscape, Planning and Strategic Planning, Development Management, Economic Regeneration, Parks Services, Highways and Drainage
3c. Improve the management of council owned sites to improve their condition and overall ecosystem resilience.	3.3; 3.4; 2.2; 3.2	Nature Conservation, Parks, and other relevant landholding departments
3d. Increase and monitor tree canopy cover throughout the county using relevant opportunity mapping data.	3.5; 3.2	All landowning departments
3e. Prioritise and deliver the nature recovery elements of the Gower AONB management plan, within and surrounding the AONB.	3.1; 3.1:2	AONB, Nature Conservation
3g. Ensure the Active Travel Fund Scheme maintains and enhances biodiversity in all its planned works going forward.	3.2	Active Travel, Nature Conservation, Planning and Strategic Planning,
3h. Explore opportunities to declare, enhance and manage new Local Nature Reserves on Council owned land to contribute to the Swansea LNRAP and WG 30x30 targets.	3.3	Nature Conservation, AONB
3i. Work with schools to support the delivery of biodiversity and green infrastructure enhancements within school grounds'	3.3; 3.4; 2.2; 3.2	Education, Schools Corporate Property, Nature Conservation , Parks
NRAP Objective 4: Tackle Key pressures on species and habitats		
4a. Reduce and minimise the use of pesticides and herbicides used in council operations where feasible alternatives are available.	4.1	Parks, Nature Conservation
4b. Within the remits of the council's responsibilities reduce incidences of water, soil and air pollution.	4.1	Pollution team, Highways, Nature Conservation, Landscape (GI)
4c. Further improve sustainable procurement throughout all council services so biodiversity is maintained and enhanced.	4.6	Procurement
4d. Create a council-wide Artificial Light at Night (ALAN) guidance note in collaboration with all relevant sections/teams to reduce the council's light pollution impact and increase ecosystem resilience by minimising light pollution barriers to species.	4.1	Nature Conservation, Housing, Highways, Planning and Strategic Planning, AONB, Street Lighting team
4e. Develop and utilise a checklist to ensure council organised activities and events minimise disturbance/damage to habitats and species.	4.4; 4.6	Nature Conservation, Special Events, Other
4f. Manage Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) on council owned land. Prioritising protected sites contributing to being in effective management for 30x30.	4.2	Nature Conservation, Parks,

4g. Create a council-wide Japanese knotweed guidance note in collaboration with all relevant sections/teams to control the species on council land.	4.2	Nature Conservation, Parks
4h. Raise awareness of INNS internally within the council, especially regarding kerbside waste collection and managing INNS on council land.	4.2; 1.2	Parks and Waste, Nature Conservation
4i. Support actions that work towards the Net Zero 2030 Plan to tackle the climate emergency, which also helps nature recovery.	4.3	All staff/departments
4j. Use official media platforms, plus tourism and visitor promotional material to raise awareness about how tourism and the public can contribute towards wildlife disturbance and advise on how to minimise impacts within Swansea.	4.4; 1.4	Nature Conservation, CBEEMS, Communications, Tourism Marketing Events and Support
4k. Increase ecological connectivity and resilience using relevant data (such as ecosystem resilience mapping and ward mapping) to identify priority areas for improvement and prevent any further losses to key connectivity areas.	4.5; 3.1	Nature Conservation, all landholding departments
4l. Ensure that all available ecological data are considered during allocation of sites for the Replacement Local Development Plan, as well as identifying any gaps in the data and undertake work to fill the gaps.	4.5	Nature Conservation, Planning
4m. Explore ways in which special events, such as large crowd drawing events, can offset negative impacts on nature by undertaking mitigation and/or financially contributing to nature recovery in Swansea.	4.4; 4.1; 2.2	Nature Conservation, Tourism Marketing Events and Support
NRAP Objective 5: Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring		
5a. Continue the annual Service Level Agreement (SLA) with South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBRc) to maintain access to up-to-date species and habitat records to be able to use the best available evidence for decision making.	5.2	Nature Conservation, Planning and Strategic Planning
5b. Support the development of new mechanisms and plans that use local environmental data to identify and target nature recovery opportunities.	4.5	Nature Conservation, AONB others?
5c. Ensure all council funded ecological survey reports are provided to the Nature Conservation team and data is submitted to SEWBRc by contractors.	5.1	Nature Conservation, Planning and Strategic Planning, Development and Physical Regeneration, Estates
5d. Investigate mechanisms for ensuring compliance with planning conditions related to biodiversity.	1.4; 2.3; 4.5	Nature Conservation, Planning and Strategic Planning.
<i>*Actions 2a, 2b + 6c overlap with this objective too*</i>		
NRAP Objective 6: Put in place a framework of governance and support delivery		
6a. Continue to be a lead member of the Swansea Local Nature Partnership and co-ordinate and assist other members in the delivery of the Swansea Local Nature Recovery Action Plan.	6.1; 6.3; 5.3	Nature Conservation, AONB, Elected Members
6b. Seek opportunities to source more core revenue and capital funding for nature recovery through grant bids, fee charging and contributions from other internal budgets, Section 106 agreements, including administrating and co-ordinating the delivery of the Welsh Government's Local Places for Nature grant.	6.2; 6.3	Nature Conservation, Planning and Strategic Planning
6c. All council sections to report annually on work undertaken to achieve above listed actions, via the CCNR programme board and steering group, S6 report and new plan to be submitted to WG by December 2025.	6.2	All sections
6d. Nature Recovery is embedded within the Public Service Board Well Being Plan.	1.4; 6.2	Nature Conservation