

## Appendix 1

# Swansea Council's Second Monitoring Report on progress towards delivering the Environment (Wales) Act Section 6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty for the period January 2020 – December 2022.

## 1. Introduction and Context

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:

- 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'*

In complying with the Section 6 Biodiversity Duty, the Council is required to prepare and submit to Welsh Government, every 3 years, a report (Section 6 monitoring Report) outlining what it has done to comply with the Biodiversity Duty. The Council's first report was submitted in 2019 covering the period from Jan 2016 to December 2019.

This report is Swansea Council's second Section 6 Biodiversity Duty monitoring Report to Welsh Government. It provides an overview of the key Biodiversity Duty actions and initiatives that the Council has undertaken between January 2020 to December 2022. It shows how this work has contributed to 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.

## **2. Highlights, Key Outcomes, and Issues**

A selection of key outcomes achieved throughout this reporting period are detailed below.

### **2.1. Nature Emergency**

Following the declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019, the Council declared a Nature Emergency in November 2021. External partners and community organisations are now being encouraged to sign up to a Climate and Nature Charter.

### **2.2. Section 6 plan included in new corporate well-being objective**

The previous corporate objective for 'Maintaining and enhancing Swansea's Natural Resources and Biodiversity' was recently updated to '[Delivering on Nature Recovery and Climate Change](#)'. It outlines several key actions including the preparation of a Section 6 Action Plan for the next 3 years (Jan 2023-Dec 2025) and the planting of more trees.

An enhanced governance structure has been put in place to drive forward and monitor progress in delivering the new Corporate Objective. This includes the establishment of a new Steering Group for Climate and Nature chaired jointly by the Cabinet members for Climate Change and Nature Recovery, respectively. Following the 2022 local elections, a new Biodiversity Champion has been appointed

### **2.3. Local Nature Recovery Action Plan (LNRAP) for Swansea**

Work has commenced on the preparation of the Local Nature Recovery Action Plan for Swansea in collaboration with the Swansea Local Nature Partnership.

### **2.4. Green Infrastructure Strategy for the City Centre adopted**

Following extensive engagement activity, the Swansea Central Area Green Infrastructure strategy, 'Regenerating our City for Wellbeing and Wildlife' was formally adopted in February 2021. Work is now progressing on developing a Countywide Green Infrastructure Strategy.

### **2.5. 'Biodiversity and Development', and 'Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands' Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) adopted.**

A Biodiversity and Development SPG was adopted in February 2021. The SPG specifically focusses on how the Council will follow a "stepwise approach" to implementing the biodiversity duty through its own planning decision making process. It will integrate greater obligations around biodiversity with some major developments approved subject to Section 106 agreements providing financial contributions towards practical on/off site mitigation and/or compensation measures against biodiversity loss and in support of maintenance agreements.

A Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands SPG was adopted in October 2021. This document provides guidance on how the relevant policies of the Local Development Plan should be applied to planning applications with respect to all existing, retained and newly planted trees, hedgerows, and woodland on development sites.

The requirement for biodiversity conservation and enhancement has also been included in the following SPGs which have been adopted over the past year:

- Gower AONB Design Guide
- Placemaking Guidance for Residential Development
- Placemaking Guidance for Infill and Backland Developments
- Placemaking Guidance for Householder Developments

All available to view here: <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/spg>

## **2.6. Staff capacity improvements**

Since 2020 the Council has committed to increasing staff capacity as follows:

- In June 2021, a part-time permanent Biodiversity Officer was employed based in the Nature Conservation Team to help implement the Section 6 duty.
- Also in June 2021, an additional full time permanent Planning Ecologist was employed based in the Nature Conservation Team.
- In July 2021, the Gower AONB Team employed a full time Communities and Nature Project Officer, and this role was made permanent in Feb 2022.
- In April 2022, two part-time Local Nature Partnership Coordinators were appointed and made permanent on a job share arrangement within the Nature Conservation Team.
- In May 2022, two full-time Community Greenspace Officers; a full-time Volunteer Co-ordinator; and a Woodland Officer (shared part time with Neath Port Talbot Council) were appointed to the Nature Conservation Team through Welsh Government grant funding on fixed term until June 2023.
- In May 2022, a permanent full time Strategic Climate Change Project Manager was employed based in the Property Services Team

Partnership and collaborative working, volunteering and positive actions for biodiversity have been significantly increased since the appointment of these new staff. Combined with external funding, primarily through Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales, this has enabled the delivery of many practical nature recovery actions including:

- New ways of managing and improving wildlife sites and green spaces
- Increased community engagement and volunteering in nature recovery
- Purchase of cut and collect machinery to enable the management and enhancement of amenity grassland and highway verges to increase create species rich wildflowers for pollinators
- New tree planting
- New Green Infrastructure interventions such as green roofs and green walls, and
- A swift conservation initiative.

## **2.7. Key enablers to biodiversity action**

The Welsh Government ENRAW and Local Places for Nature (LP4N) grants have enabled many nature recovery actions and increased staff capacity to deliver them. This has included new ways of managing wildlife sites and green spaces, tree and wildflower planting and green infrastructure enhancements.

## **2.8. Barriers to action**

Notwithstanding the above increases in staff, capacity is still stretched as capital grant funding often surpasses the revenue funding to employ staff to manage projects. This is compounded by short-term revenue funding cycles necessitating staff time applying for other grants to maintain staff contracts. As such more full-time permanent roles are required to secure skilled staff and deliver capital nature recovery action. Indeed, all service areas across the council need increased resources and capacity to increase nature recovery actions. There is also a lack of long-term funding for maintaining capital works, such as tree maintenance and watering.

Increased education is required in all service areas to empower staff to take further action for nature recovery without needing to rely heavily on support from the Nature Conservation team. A programme of nature recovery education and awareness raising is being developed but there will be a time lag between education and empowerment of staff.

The UK and Welsh Governments tree planting targets do not consider each county 's specific situation to ensure that they follow 'right tree, right place' guidance. These targets also reinforce in the public eye that tree planting is the most important task for the climate and nature emergencies, when a whole suite of nature-based solutions are required, including the importance of healthy species rich grasslands.

## **2.9. Case study – Amenity grassland and verge management trial**

The Council has been undertaking a trial in 12 sites covering approximately 15.2 ha of parks, amenity grasslands and on road verges to manage them as species rich wildflower meadows. Through LP4N funding five 'cut and collect' machines were purchased in 2020/21 to enable this work. The twelve trial sites are in their first year of cut and collect management, so it is too early to assess outcomes, but they are being monitored for changes in wildflower composition using rapid grassland assessment surveys. Sites are also being planted up with native local provenance perennial plugs and yellow rattle to aid wildflower establishment.

Additionally, as part of this project, native perennial seed was planted in 2021 in at least 14 flower beds, verges, roundabouts etc. that were previously sprayed with glyphosate, with the aims of improving the diversity of the flowering plants and providing a higher quality resource for pollinators. These seeds were from the National Botanical Garden of Wales SSSI meadow. Monitoring surveys on a selection of the beds carried out in the summer of 2022 indicated that native perennial wildflowers were present in all five beds surveyed.

## **3. Action Report**

The following section provides an overview of the more significant actions that Swansea Council has undertaken over the past 3 years to comply with the Biodiversity Duty. They are grouped under the six Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales Objectives in accordance with Welsh Government guidance.

**3.1. NRAP OBJECTIVE 1: Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels.**

**3.1.1. The Climate Change and Nature Scrutiny Performance Panel**

The Climate Change and Nature Scrutiny Performance Panel is responsible for ongoing monitoring of Council performance in relation to climate change and the natural environment. It monitors delivery of the Council's work, commitments, and implementation of agreed plans, and assess progress. In accordance with the agreed Scrutiny Work Programme, the Panel meets every two months. The development of this Panel followed a scrutiny inquiry, which looked at how the Council manages its responsibilities in relation to the natural environment in Swansea, including statutory requirements under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, and subsequent introduction of a new Corporate Priority of Maintaining and Enhancing Swansea's Natural Resources and Biodiversity. This also links with the Climate Emergency, declared by the Council in June 2019, and the recent declaration by the Council in November 2021 of a Nature Emergency.

The Panel was established in July 2019 as the Natural Environment Panel and was renamed the Climate Change and Nature Panel in July 2022. The Panel has been focused on contributing to the ongoing development and enhancement of Swansea's natural resources and biodiversity, acting as a critical friend for the Cabinet, and helping to ensure accountability for performance. To support regular monitoring of key activities the Panel has received a 'Nature Conservation - Project Updates' report annually, providing an overview of all projects and assessment of progress. The Panel has then, where necessary, drilled down on specific work, to provide a more in-depth level of scrutiny. For example, during 2021/22 this included discussion on: Ash Dieback, Water Pollution, Local Flood Risk and the Climate Emergency Declaration Action Plan.

**3.1.2. Heads of Service Questionnaire**

A questionnaire was sent around to all council Heads of Service in September 2022 to gather information on any biodiversity actions that had been undertaken during the past three years and actions planned to be implemented in the coming three years.

**3.1.3. Green Infrastructure Strategy for the City Centre adopted**

Following extensive engagement activity, the Swansea Central Area Green Infrastructure strategy, 'Regenerating our City for Wellbeing and Wildlife' was formally adopted in February 2021. Green Infrastructure describes all the green space, soil, vegetation, and water that provide the ecosystem services that make places more liveable and resilient. This includes, for example, street trees, green roofs and walls, natural play spaces, wildlife / nature gardens, pollinator corridors, landscaping, drainage, and air quality management solutions. The strategy sets out a vision for the central area of Swansea to be much greener, creating spaces which deliver resilience, prosperity, health, and well-being.

It identifies the benefits and cost-effectiveness of Green Infrastructure (GI) i.e., reduced flood risk, summer cooling, winter shelter, cleaner air and water, reductions in noise, better mental and physical health, gains in biodiversity, reduced CO2 emissions and energy costs and a strengthened

economy. The aim is to double the amount of GI (except for open water) within 10 years to create a distinctive destination city with a high-quality environment that is more liveable, better adapted to climate change and better for people and wildlife.

The Strategy also includes a Green Space Factor Tool. This practical tool is designed to increase the quantity and quality of green infrastructure and maximise compliance to the Welsh Government's statutory Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Standard 2019. The tool is not mandatory, but developers will be encouraged and expected to use it as part of the pre-application planning process for the central area.

This work is already helping to guide developers on how nature can be integrated into their designs including vertical wall gardens, urban allotments, and more trees. This strategy has influenced several projects including the following:

- Coastal Housing Group Offices, High Street – green roof
- Environment Centre, Pier Street, - green roof, green wall, planters in the public realm,
- Potter's Wheel, Dillwyn Street - green wall
- Coastal Park – green wall and green roof bin storage
- St Helen's public realm – green roofed bin shelters
- Mumbles to Margam pollinator corridor
- Public Realm Swansea Central North – Pop up Park
- Swansea Train Station – public realm improvements for people and nature (biodiverse planters and seating)

Plus, others in development including (but not exclusive to):

- 71-72 the Kingsway
- Biophilic Living
- Pilot of green roof bus shelters

The inclusion of biodiverse green space is now an expectation in both the planning of new developments and the refurbishment of existing buildings and public spaces in the City Centre. This best practice approach developed in Swansea has inspired and is referenced within a new national assessment framework and has led to a Wales-wide programme of investment.

Additionally, work has commenced on a County-wide GI strategy in collaboration with Natural Resources Wales.

### **3.1.4. Local Planning Authority Supplementary Planning Guidance and Tree Guidance**

The Local Planning Authority (LPA) has successfully delivered the Biodiversity and Development Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) which was adopted by the Council in February 2021. This SPG supports the delivery of adopted LDP Policies ER6, ER8 and ER9. It sets out how the Council will seek to ensure that development within Swansea maintains and enhances the County's biodiversity and delivers long term ecosystem resilience. The Biodiversity SPG aims to embed the Environment Act's key principles of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources into decision making into the Development Management process. In addition, the Trees Hedgerows and Woodlands SPG was also

adopted in February 2021. This SPG provides guidance as to how trees, hedgerows and woodlands will be managed in the planning system.

In addition, a number of other of tree policies/protocols have been adopted during 2021/22 including: the Swansea Tree Replacement Standard, Tree Planting Guidance, and a Management Strategy for trees on Council owned land.

The aims of the Swansea Council Tree Management Strategy 2021 in relation to Council owned land are to:

- Ensure risks from and to trees are managed.
- Ensure the Council meets its biodiversity duties in respect of trees.
- Conserve trees of value.
- Maintain and expand tree canopy cover.

As of 2021, around 43,000 individual trees in Council ownership had been surveyed with more than 1439 woodlands and tree groupings plotted and surveyed containing an estimated 100k additional trees. However, significant areas of Council land ownership remain to be surveyed.

The Council has continued to implement an Ash dieback management strategy to tackle Ash trees affected by Ash Dieback. A cross cutting Ash Dieback Action Plan is in place. Over 3,000 Ash trees have been surveyed on public land, many of which show varying signs of Ash Dieback. Council resources are focussed on dealing with diseased trees on public land to reduce the risk that diseased trees will fall on people, property, power lines and roads in future. Online advice has been provided for landowners, householders, and businesses with Ash trees on their land.

The documents are available here: [Biodiversity and Development](#) & [Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands SPG](#)

### **3.1.5. Public Services Board**

The council has been actively engaged in the delivery of the ‘Working with Nature’ objective in the Swansea Public Services Board Well-being Plan.

### **3.1.6. Toolbox talk**

An online toolbox talk has been produced for all staff and councillors to give examples of simple actions they can undertake at home to contribute to Nature Recovery and Climate emergencies.

### **3.1.7. Climate Change and Nature Recovery Training Modules**

At the end of 2022, the council released the first in a series of non-mandatory Climate Change and Nature Recovery introductory modules through the staff net electronic Learning Pool web site. More modules will follow, including a more detailed Nature Recovery specific module. These are designed for all officers and councillors.

### **3.1.8. Building Services Training and awareness**

The council's building services department has established and undertaken training and awareness with design and construction officers. As well as maintaining regular dialogue with internal and externally appointed ecologists to continue to develop knowledge and understanding.

### **3.1.9. Green Infrastructure Training**

One of the Strategic objectives of the Swansea Central Area Green Infrastructure strategy is to 'create a skilled and knowledgeable local economy to deliver and maintain Green Infrastructure'. As part of the delivery of this objective several staff training sessions have been delivered to services who are directly involved in the delivery of the strategy including Planning, Highway, Parks services, and Regeneration. Training seminars and workshops have covered sustainable urban drainage (SuDS) in the highway, an introduction to Swansea Central Area Green Infrastructure strategy, 'Regenerating our City for Wellbeing and Wildlife', and an Introduction to the Green Space Factor tool. These sessions have been designed and delivered in collaboration with Natural Resources Wales by Council staff with leading industry experts.

Training has also been designed to help provide local businesses with the skills to build a local GI economy in Swansea. Using Central Government Community Renewal Funding for Green Recovery a GI training programme for Swansea business and Social Enterprises is currently being delivered (September to December 2022). Working in collaboration, and delivered by industry experts, the Council, Natural Resources Wales, and Urban Foundry, have designed and delivered five seminars on living roofs, green roofs (LANTRA accredited), rain planters and tree planting along with two practical workshops on tree planting and green roofs. A further two seminars on SuDs and grounds maintenance for wildlife, along with two practical workshops on rain planters and maintenance for wildlife are due to be delivered by the middle of December 2022.

Additionally, bespoke support is offered to both internal staff and external stakeholders, and GI typology information sheets have been produced on green roof and green walls and are available on the Council's webpages.

### **3.1.10. Beaches Management Group (BMG) (Cultural Services)**

As part of Blue Flag Criteria, all Blue Flag beaches display an environmental code of conduct relating to conservation and biodiversity. Blue Flag beaches promote a minimum of five educational activities per year that are aimed at raising awareness and strengthen biodiversity around our coastline. The Beaches management group are represented by colleagues in Nature Conservation, and the AONB. Visit Swansea Bay run campaigns aimed at responsible [tourism](#), which is strengthened with onsite signage that encourages two-minute beach cleans, leaving only footprints and responsible BBQ use.

### **3.1.11. Queens Green Canopy**

In 2022 the council was awarded Champion City Status under the Queen's Green Canopy initiative to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee. This was in recognition of the significant work being undertaken by the Council together with a wide range of local community groups to increase tree cover throughout the City and County.



## **3.2. NRAP OBJECTIVE 2: Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management**

### **3.2.1. Using the planning system to maintain and enhance species and habitats**

The Local Planning Authority promotes implementation of biodiversity policy regarding Section 7 priority species and habitats, including DECCA principles (Diversity, Extent, Connectivity, Condition and Adaptability), during pre-app/planning consultations. This includes highlighting the importance of non-statutory Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) designations in improving connectivity.

Planning applications are assessed against these Local Development Plan policies relevant to biodiversity:

- ER 6: Designated Sites of Ecological Importance;
- ER 8: Habitats and Species;
- ER 9: Ecological Networks and Features of Importance for Biodiversity;
- ER 1: Climate Change;
- ER 2: Strategic Green Infrastructure Network; and
- ER 11: Trees, Hedgerows and Development.

The full policy wording can be viewed online: <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/ldp>

Applicants are also encouraged to provide proposals for ecological enhancements upfront with planning applications. Where this is not the case, a pre-commencement condition is added to any permission to secure enhancements.

### **3.2.2. Local Nature Reserve Management Plan Updates**

Management plan reviews have been commissioned from the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales for the Council's six Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) that the council owns and manages. These are being developed with input from the council and NRW and will include suggestions for management actions aimed at conserving priority species and habitats within the LNRs.

### **3.2.3. Special Site Habitat Management for Priority Species and Habitats**

Practical habitat management and restoration works have been carried out across Council owned LNRs, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation and other sites that the council owns and manages to address/manage threats to priority habitats/species. This includes the following examples:

- Targeted conifer (0.65 ha), fire breaks, and scrub removal was carried out in areas of calaminarian grassland (priority habitat) in Kilvey Hill SINC between 2020 and 2021.
- Bracken rolling was carried out across areas of Pwll-Du SSSI between 2020 and 2022(15,000m<sup>2</sup>), to prevent the bracken overtaking and encroaching coastal grassland which contain several rare and priority plant species e.g., red-hemp nettle which is a special feature of the site.

- Scrub treatment and clearance was carried out in Swansea Vale Nature Reserve SINC to manage scrub encroachment onto wetland habitats within the site, some of which are priority habitats (e.g., reedbeds, purple moor grass and rush pastures etc.)

#### **3.2.4. Bat and Bird Box Provision**

Through building services, swift-bricks and bat boxes are being included in the design of new-build properties built by More Homes for the council, where appropriate. This initiative is also being incorporated into roof repair and improvements schemes (subject to preliminary ecology surveys) through the Council Housing Maintenance Planning & Delivery programme funded by the Housing and Public Health Service. Additionally building services are continuing to commission ecological surveys and assessments pre-design to identify opportunities for biodiversity enhancement in new developments.

Similarly, through planning applications and advice from the planning ecologists, residential developments are expected to include bird and bat boxes on new build houses. Householders are also encouraged to add these enhancements and since January 2022, 90 swift boxes have been conditioned through this mechanism.

The Nature Conservation Team have been working with Building services on their external wall insulation of council houses scheme. A trial is underway to offer residents bird (swift) and bat box installation while scaffolding is in place. This is funded through the Welsh Government Local Places for Nature grant scheme and there is the potential for thousands of nesting opportunities to be installed

#### **3.2.5. City Centre Biodiversity Audit**

A biodiversity audit of the Swansea City Centre was commissioned by the Council in 2022 using Welsh Government ENRAW funding. The audit includes vascular plants, selected invertebrates (e.g., butterflies and moths), invasive non-native species, and birds. The audit will be completed in 2023 and will give a baseline assessment of biodiversity in the city centre as well as a method for repeating surveys. This can be used in future years to monitor changes in biodiversity/nature recovery in the city centre over time.

#### **3.2.6. Gower Commons SAC (Special Area of Conservation) management**

Works have been undertaken across Gower Commons SAC to improve its management and conservation of habitats and species of principle importance. This includes,

- Works to restrict car parking on Cefn Bryn summit to reduce erosion and habitat damage.
- Provision of a water supply, collars for livestock, and firebreaks to facilitate conservation grazing on Fairwood common.
- Installation of a bat grille on a known roost cave at Bishops Wood to protect the long-term viability of the roost, reducing disturbance and making the area safer for the public.

#### **3.2.7. Bat roosts in Gower AONB**

Seven pill boxes have had grills/doors installed in Clyne Valley Woodland to secure their use as bat roosts. Additionally, the Gower Places of Worship project has commenced with the aims of

improving management of church buildings and grounds for biodiversity with a focus on species such as bats, swifts, and barn owls. This is funded by the Welsh Government Sustainable Landscapes, Sustainable Places Programme for Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and National Parks. So far baseline surveys have been conducted in 11 churches to assess the species currently present and management interventions. This project is to continue to 2025.

**3.3. NRAP OBJECTIVE 3: Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation**

**3.3.1. Saving Swansea's Swifts**

In 2021 the council established a Swift conservation project in collaboration with the Gower Ornithological Society. The aims of the project are to assess the presence and extent of swifts throughout Swansea through spatially targeted swift surveys and analysis of baseline data, as well as increasing nesting opportunities through the provision and installation of nest boxes at suitable locations. So far 29 nest boxes have been deployed. Additionally, nine community swift surveys were carried out across Uplands, Brynmill, Gorseinon, Tycoch, Mount Pleasant and Dunvant in the 2022 survey season. A total of 14 confirmed nests were identified because of these surveys which adds to the current knowledge of the presence of swifts across Swansea.

**3.3.2. Special Site Habitat Restoration**

Targeted habitat restoration, management, and enhancement work has been undertaken in selected Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and other special sites around Swansea with the aims of improving functional ecosystem services. Dunvant Brickworks SINC had approximately 0.49ha area of grassland subject to new cut and collect meadow management. Mumbles Hill LNR had small areas of grassland, around 0.31ha, subject to new cut and collect meadow management.

**3.3.3. Tree Planting Schemes**

Over the last three years, the impact of repeated lockdowns reduced the extent to which it was possible to involve local communities in participating in tree-planting initiatives. Opportunities to involve citizens and local groups were taken forward where possible, this included providing support for several community tree planting schemes on Council owned sites including Rosehill Quarry, Primrose Park, the Three-Cornered field, Cockett Park, and the Ganges. The Council continues to work closely with partners such as the Community Green Space project, the Orchard Project and Coeden Fach, a local and not-for-profit tree nursery, where volunteers help nurture indigenous trees.

100 large heavy standards were planted in parks/wards requiring re-stocking in 2021. The parks selected were Cwmbwrla, Dunvant, Hafod and Ravenhill. This was a Low maintenance scheme with community consultation and educational tree planting for two local primary schools. Pupils lent a hand and learned more about the multiple benefits associated with trees, such as habitat creation and carbon capture. 300 native whips were planted at Tir John on an old grazing site, in 2021 to

restore some of the woodland habitat. 300 native whips were also planted to fill in an existing hedgerow at Leadfield.

Visitors to two Swansea parks are enjoying the spectacular sight of 100 new cherry blossom trees. They are gifts to the city from a project linked with the 2019-20 Japan-UK Seasons of Culture. Half have been planted by Swansea Council tree specialists in Cwmdonkin Park, Uplands; the other 50 have been planted in Jersey Park, St Thomas. The trees will be particularly attractive when they blossom each spring. Ceremonies were held at each park to celebrate the initiative.

Around the city centre we are creating new parkland, new green areas, planting many more trees and a delivering a huge re-greening programme. The £12 million Kingsway development has resulted in 170 new trees being planted in the adjacent areas. The total number of trees in the Kingsway area - more than 220 – is now more than double the number previously there and is boosting biodiversity alongside large areas of grass and scores of new shrubs and plants.

This investment not only helps combat the Climate and Nature Emergencies but makes Swansea a pleasant place to live in, work and visit and the growing greenery is creating a positive environment, which is helping to attract visitors and business back to the city centre supporting the economic recovery." Green cover in the city is currently estimated at 13% but the Council's aim is to increase this to 26% by 2030.

Despite the pandemic, further extensive tree planting has been undertaken on Council land throughout the County, including over 230 heavy standard trees and 2800 whips. The total number of trees planted by Nature Conservation Team in parks and greenspaces since Oct 2020 numbered 3400 whips and 100 heavy standards funded by a variety of sources including Glastir, Local places for Nature, and Trees for Cities.

#### **3.3.4. Places for Pollinators Project**

The council has been undertaking a trial in 12 sites covering approximately 15.2 ha of parks, amenity grasslands and on road verges to manage them as species rich wildflower meadows. Through LP4N funding five 'cut and collect' machines were purchased in 2020/21 to enable this work. The twelve

trial sites are in their first year of cut and collect management, so it is too early to assess outcomes, but they are being monitored for changes in wildflower composition using rapid grassland assessment surveys. A planting programme is also currently underway with native perennial seeds/plugs (e.g., yellow rattle) being planted in the trail sites this winter (November to December 2022) to aid wildflower meadow establishment.

Additionally, as part of this project native perennial seed was planted in 2021 in at least 14 flower beds, verges, roundabouts etc. that were previously sprayed with glyphosate, with the aims of improving the diversity of the flowering plants and providing a higher quality resource for pollinators. Monitoring surveys on a selection of the beds carried out in the summer of 2022 indicated that native perennial wildflowers were present in all five beds surveyed.

#### **3.3.5. Mumbles to Margam Pollinator Corridor Scheme**

As a part of the wider multi-county wide Mumbles to Margam Pollinator Scheme a total of approximately 1.5ha of native sand dune plug planting was undertaken in 13 enrichment units across Swansea Bay in 2020 and 2021.

### **3.3.6. Plantasia Rain Pool Habitat Restoration**

Native wetland plants of local provenance have been planted in the rain pools around Plantasia to increase species diversity in 2021. Species were planted with the help of children from Leonard Cheshire and Admiral volunteers. Monitoring surveys in 2022 identified that some species had begun to establish.

### **3.3.7. Schools Making Space for Nature Project**

Various wildlife friendly greenspace improvements (including wildflower/tree planting, bat, and bird boxes) were undertaken within five school grounds in Swansea. These were Dunvant Primary, Plasmarl Primary, Seaview Primary, Townhill Primary and Waunarwydd Primary School. School children and teachers helped with the planting, as there was a strong focus on engagement and education around wildlife issues and well-being benefits of nature.

### **3.3.8. Urban Green Infrastructure**

Some local examples of urban green infrastructure projects influenced by the City Centre GI Strategy are detailed below. These provide habitat and resources for invertebrates, including pollinators, plus other wildlife in the more urban areas of Swansea.

Swansea Environment Centre - A green roof was installed at the Environment Centre in March 2021 by The Urban Greening Company, funded by a Welsh Government Local Places for Nature grant. The green roof was planted and sown with 48 locally grown native wildflowers by Celtic Wildflowers and Environment Centre staff. A new green wall has also been installed with LP4N Funding. Technical advice was provided by the Green Infrastructure Company and Celtic Wildflowers who supplied the plants.

Coastal Offices High Street - A semi-intensive green roof was installed by The Urban Greening Company on the Coastal Office building High Street in March 2021, funded by the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns Green Infrastructure Grant. Designed to bring coastal habitat into the city the green roof is a good example of creating a city centre space for people and nature.

Coastal Housing, Potter's Wheel: Designed and installed by Scotscape, using Welsh Government's Transforming Towns Green Infrastructure Grant. The green wall was part of the refurbishment of 85-86 the Kingsway. The planting and breathable soil pouches filter particulates and vegetation provides food and shelter for birds and insects along with amenity value.

Coastal Park: Copr Bay's 1.1 acre coastal park is an intensive green roof, currently Wales largest living roof, including a green façade living wall running along the Oystermouth Road side of the new car park. The living wall provides year-round colour and amenity value, offers shelter and food for birds and insects, absorbs pollution and surface water run off providing summer cooling.

Swansea Train Station, Public Realm: Enhancements for nature and wildlife, using Welsh Government Local Places for Nature grant funding, local social enterprise Ways of Working and

Network Rail collaborated to improve the public realm outside Swansea Station. This excellent example of 'place making' has used the talents of local artists to create a space for people and wildlife with raised planters and seating and has made a real difference to the feel of the area.

**Biodiverse Pop-up Parklet:** This temporary parklet funded by Welsh Government's Local Places for Nature Challenge Fund was designed to bring more biodiversity in to the city centre by celebrating the county's natural habitats. These stylised planters include native hedgerows and wildflowers, Calcareous grass lands and Gower sand dunes and cliffs. The planters have been designed to be moveable to respond to development opportunities across the city, meaning the parklet will 'go on tour' indefinitely.

**GI enhancements Pier Street:** Streetscape enhancements to help develop a green corridor to connect green spaces within the Maritime Quarter. Funded by Welsh Government's Local Places for Nature Challenge Fund, The Environment Centre working in collaboration with Pobl Group and volunteers have built planters to green a significant section of wall with vegetation and wildlife friendly features. Another excellent example of 'place making' using the talents and skills of the local community members and businesses to create a space for people and wildlife.

**Green roof bin shelters St Helens Road:** Instillation of green roofed bin shelters forming part of wider improvements work to St Helens Road area. The green roof is planted with a mix of sedum and wildflowers and will help develop wildlife steppingstones across this part of the city. The wildflowers will provide food and shelter for insects and butterflies and the mixture of species will provide all year-round interest and amenity continuing the placemaking theme for people and wildlife.

**New 'green' bus shelters:** Swansea Council is in the process of replacing more than 100 ageing bus shelters across the city, with many having been installed 30 years ago. The new shelters are being provided by Bus Shelters Ltd. Part of the city-wide upgrade will include 10 new 'green roof' bus shelters which will help filter out dust particles and contribute to better air quality. The 'green' bus shelters will be installed along the roadside at Mumbles Road, Oystermouth Road Quay Parade, Walter Road, and St Helen's Road.

As a part of the councils 'More Homes Strategy', rain gardens and SuDS features were installed as part of the Hillview Crescent development, which contains 25 energy-efficient homes.

### **3.3.9. Green Infrastructure Secured Through Local Planning Authority**

The Local Planning Authority has continued to ensure planning permissions granted require the implementation of biodiversity enhancements and green infrastructure measures that provide/create habitat on strategic sites, in accordance with the Biodiversity SPG. This has been secured through net biodiversity enhancement conditions included on householder schemes through to major development proposals.

### **3.3.10. Housing & Public Health Service – Council Housing Maintenance Planning & Delivery**

An extensive tree planting programme has been undertaken on communal estate land as well as wildflower planting. Additionally, to encourage the retention of garden hedges on rented properties

the service has delivered a programme to cut overgrown hedges, and thus make them easier for tenants to maintain and discourage removal.

#### **3.4. NRAP OBJECTIVE 4: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats**

##### **3.4.1. Reducing pesticides**

The Council's Parks service has already reduced to absolute minimum the use of herbicide and pesticides. Highways weed spraying is now strictly by hand or using scanner technology to minimise chemical use. Trials of native perennial flower beds are being undertaken that do not require the use of pesticides. Furthermore, grazing farm business tenancy agreements for council owned land are being amended to consider biodiversity and remove old fashioned practices, such as 'grandfather rights' for using herbicides.

##### **3.4.2. Tackling invasive species**

Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) have been mapped and sites are subject to an ongoing programme of treatment. The removal of INNS from Nature Reserves and Council owned housing land has continued, supported by grant funding. Species subject to control include Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam and Rhododendron

A Japanese Knotweed advice leaflet has been produced and guidance and advice are provided on the Council's website. There is now a planning condition for knotweed and other schedule 9 species. Commercial Services are supporting the marketing, promotion and sale of services that tackle invasive species, such as the Japanese Knotweed control service.

Advice is provided to landowners in various formats to raise awareness of the problem to help control the spread of INNS. Annual treatment programmes to mitigate spread and control Japanese Knotweed are ongoing on all communal Housing land and within the curtilage of individual properties

The Council's Cemeteries/Bereavement/Registrar team now have a clause that no animal releases (e.g., butterflies, doves) are allowed at funerals. This is to prevent release of potential INNS and protect animal welfare.

Targeted treatment and/or removal of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) has been carried out across several nature sites including:

- Hendrefoilan Woods – Rhododendron control across approximately 1.9 ha of woodland.
- Hillside Corridor – Himalayan knotweed removal/control in a small patch (less than 0.01ha).
- Mumbles Hill LNR – Cotoneaster removal across approximately 0.37ha of the Local Nature Reserve.
- Rosehill Quarry – Bamboo and knotweed control/removal across approximately 0.16ha of the site.

- Clyne Valley Community Woodland – A three-year Japanese knotweed treatment programme is underway across the site, as well as targeted rhododendron control.
- Ilston Valley/Gower Ash woods SAC - A three-year Japanese knotweed treatment programme is underway across the area.
- Bishops Wood LNR – Targeted removal of Wilson’s honeysuckle (*Lonicera nitida*) during nature conservation volunteer task days.
- Swansea Bay dunes - Italian Alder and Japanese Rose are being removed to protect the dunes by stopping them establishing themselves and spreading.

### **3.4.3. Work towards creating a low carbon economy, which promotes renewable energy and takes actions to reduce our carbon footprint.**

Climate change is already having and will increasingly have an impact on biodiversity and therefore actions taken to mitigate for and adapt to climate change will make a direct and /or indirect contribution to nature recovery. The Council’s current governance structure and reporting mechanisms for delivering on Climate and nature emergencies are linked. In taking action to reduce our carbon footprint, streams of work have been divided into a 2030 target of Net Zero emissions for Swansea Council and 2050 for Swansea as a whole. A Climate and Nature Charter and Pledge Wall have been developed to encourage Swansea groups, public bodies, businesses, schools, and individuals to make a commitment to nature recovery and get to Net Zero by 2050.

Training and awareness campaigns for Nature Recovery and Climate have commenced with internal staff and work is underway to develop an awareness programme for the business sector.

Swansea Council is seeking to receive accreditation for the work it's doing to reduce its overall ecological footprint. As well as decarbonisation, this covers buildings, travel, land use and waste as well as biodiversity and the impact on natural resources. The *One Planet Standard* recognises organisations who seek to respect Planet Earth’s natural boundaries and capacities by adjusting the impacts of their activities to a level commensurate with what the planet can provide. At the same time, it can help to combat climate change and re-introduce more biodiversity and nature into our environment.

### **3.4.4. Act in response to the Climate Emergency.**

Following on from the Council declaring a Climate Emergency in June 2019, a Nature Emergency was declared in 2021 and an Energy Crisis in February 2022. A Climate Change and Nature Recovery Strategy was approved in November 2021 and an Action Plan is currently being developed.

The Council’s Climate Survey, aimed at all residents of all ages and organisations of all types, represented the start a conversation as the council aims to create a strategic city-wide approach to achieving a net zero carbon Swansea. Results from the survey were published in November 2021

### **3.4.5. Continue to participate in and support the Low Carbon Swansea Initiative.**

The Council has maintained its membership of and commitment to the Low Carbon Swansea Bay (LCSB) network. Activities and events were once again disrupted by the pandemic this year, but



online webinars took place and the key focus for LCSB partners this year was the preparation of a Swansea Bay Healthy Travel Charter in collaboration with Public Health Wales and Swansea Environmental Forum.

#### **3.4.6. Review the Council's approach to procurement to secure local economic, environmental and community benefits, in line with sustainable development principles.**

During 2021/22, we have continued to build upon our approach to sustainable procurement and the incorporation of sustainable procurement principles based on revised Wales Procurement Policy issued in 2021. Our approach enables our Procurement Officers to engage with services at the very earliest stages of procurement and to consider value from every stage of a project from planning, inception and to completion. In addition, our approach to procurement considers wider social values such as safeguarding, equalities and environmental issues, in addition to financial costs and traditional value for money criteria. This year we initiated a pilot project to further review enhanced Social Value based on the 2021 report into public procurement produced by the Future Generations Commissioner. The pilot programme aims to test several tools / methodologies of analysis (e.g., the Themes and Outcomes model developed by the independent 'Social Value Portal' with input from the WLGA) and consider if there is further best practice that can then be integrated into our procurement model e.g. to take more account of biodiversity. Some examples include the Landscape Team purchasing materials from sustainable certified sources (e.g., FSC timber, Peat Free Compost where possible), and where practical materials are locally sources and/or re-used.

#### **3.4.7. Tree removal avoided**

Mitigation hierarchy is applied to trees on highways such that they will only be removed if necessary. Other interventions such as root cutting, ramping and protective measures will always be considered prior to removal.

#### **3.4.8. Waste Management Plan and Pollution prevention Plan Obligations**

All internal and external contractors are required to develop waste management and pollution-prevention plans for all development projects prior to their commencement to avoid, minimise and prevent pollution. For example, to prevent surface-water run-off from sites which could leach into watercourses.

#### **3.4.9. More Homes Initiative - Green Infrastructure and materials**

The SuDs and rain gardens installed with 25 homes at Hillview Crescent will aid with pollution control through the absorption of surface water run-off. Additionally, efforts were made to reduce the amount of plastic used in the construction of the homes. As such timber cladding was used instead of plastic, to reduce microplastic pollution from water run-off on the properties.

#### **3.4.11. Light Pollution Reduction**

Highways now use LED lights in all new streetlights installed.

The Council has worked to be able to submit an application to the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) to gain Gower Dark Sky Community status. A pre-requisite for this is the review and adoption of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) relating to lighting within the Area of Outstanding

Natural Beauty (AONB); this has now been incorporated within the revised AONB Design Guide, which was consulted on in 2020. As part of Gower AONB's pending application for Dark Sky Community Award with the International Dark Sky Association (IDA), we are required to undertake annual monitoring of sky quality within the AONB; the latest of these was undertaken on the evening of 9 January 2022.

#### **3.4.12. Minimise our use of non-recyclable products and materials and recycle more waste.**

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, Swansea Council met its reuse and recycling target of 64% for 2020/21. The Council is also keen to encourage reuse rather than recycling where possible. As a result, our services avoid sourcing virgin materials where possible, reuse parts and offer surplus materials at cost to the public or our partners. Collaborative work has focused on seeking long-term recycling improvements and improving the circular economy potential.

#### **3.4.13. Actions to Improve Air and Water Quality**

The council has continued to carry out several actions to monitor and improve air and water quality around Swansea, to improve the health and well-being of residents and minimise the effects of pollution on habitats and species.

The Pollution Control & Private Sector Housing Team continues to monitor air quality across the authority, working with other Council departments. Collaboration with the Council's Highways Service takes place to provide input and assessment of air quality impacts for highway schemes. As part of a collaboration with the Nature Conservation Team, a 'Green Screen' has been installed along Fabian Way.

Bathing water quality is monitored by Natural Resources Wales and Gower beaches easily surpass standards; however, Swansea Bay is more complex and changeable throughout the day. The Council therefore [post information](#) up to 3 times a day on site and also broadcast on social media.

### **3.5. NRAP OBJECTIVE 5: Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring**

#### **3.5.1. Ecosystem Resilience Mapping**

The Swansea Ecosystem Resilience Mapping Project (2022) was commissioned by the council's Nature Conservation Team and delivered by South East Wales Biological Records Centre (SEWBRc). It produced a 'heat map' identifying areas of higher and lower resilience within the county of Swansea which can be used to measure existing levels of ecosystem resilience and identify areas to be targeted for nature recovery interventions.

#### **3.5.2. Access to up-to-date species records**

The council has a Service Level Agreement with our Local Environmental Records Centre (SEWBREC), allowing the council to utilise important species records to inform our work.

#### **3.5.3. Planning**

Data collected as part of consultations on planning applications includes: the number of European protected species licences required, the number of Environmental Impact Assessments required/undertaken, the number of Habitats Regulations Assessments undertaken, and numbers of swift boxes proposed on new developments.

Planning officers and planning ecologists have access to SEWBRc desk study data for all planning applications, and SEWBRc produce a weekly risk rating for new applications to aid the officers in decision-making. The Biodiversity & Development SPG encourages ecological consultants and developers to take biodiversity into account at the earliest stages of a project/development design and to submit any records from their surveys to SEWBRc.

#### **3.5.4. Species surveying and monitoring**

Biological data recorded as a part of community engagement events and monitoring projects are submitted to the local records centre (SEWBRc) and/or national monitoring schemes. Some examples are included below:

- Plant species recorded in the cut and collect trial sites were submitted to SEWBRc.
- Two community butterfly surveys were conducted in the summer of 2022. All species recorded at the sites were submitted to the Great British Butterfly Count, which is a national butterfly monitoring scheme.
- Swifts recorded during community swift surveys in spring and summer 2022 were submitted to the Swift Mapper app. This data will then be shared with the relevant records centre.
- Data from a Bio-blitz event at Cadle Heath Local Nature Reserve in summer 2021

#### **3.5.5. Local Nature Partnership Quarterly Meetings and Workshops**

Swansea Council is a lead member of the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) and hosts the two part-time Local Nature Partnership Co-ordinators. Quarterly meetings have been held every year for the LNP during the reporting period, which facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience between members and provide a platform to share evidence and results of projects. Current membership of the Swansea LNP includes 50 organisations and over 80 individuals. Additionally, two workshops with LNP members were held in 2022 to identify objectives and priorities for the Swansea Local Nature Recovery Plan which is currently in draft. These workshops were attended by 24 LNP members from 16 different organisations.

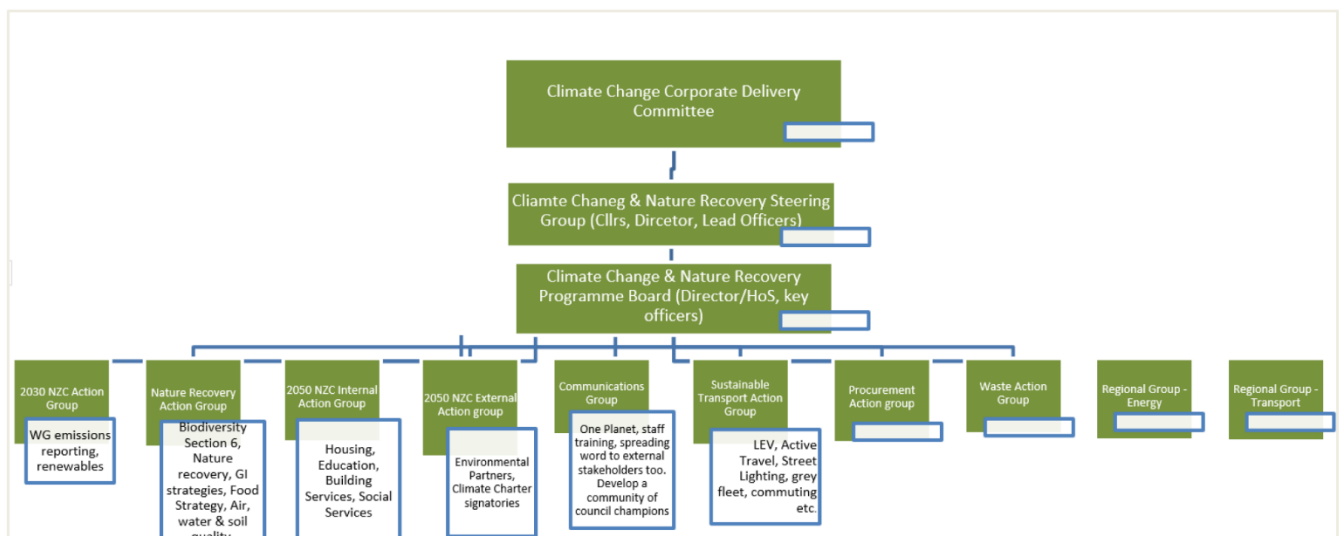
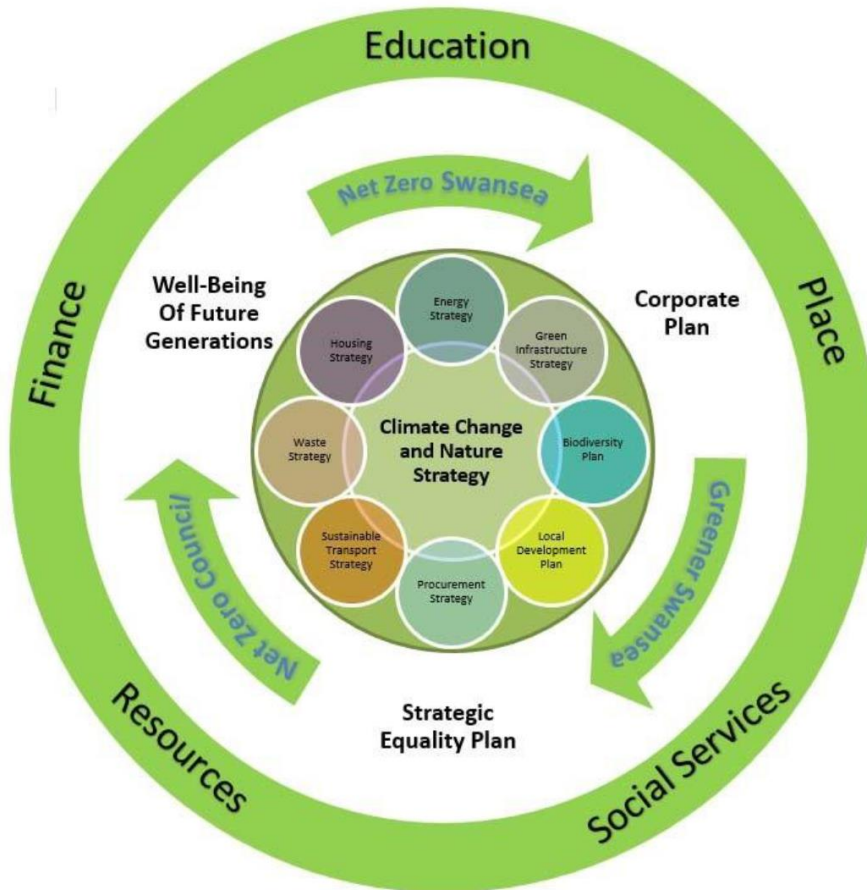
#### **3.5.6. Wild About Your Ward – Mapping Swansea’s Ecological Resources**

Through ENRAW funding the council has an ongoing programme of ward level GIS mapping of ecological and environmental assets and opportunities for improvement. The ‘Wild About your Ward’ project is in its initial stages, but the aim is to first map existing ecological and environmental features and data (some examples include, species records, habitat data, flood risk, and ecological resilience) within each ward in Swansea and make this accessible to the communities within the wards. This data will also be used to engage communities in identifying opportunities for green Infrastructure and biodiversity interventions/improvements that will benefit both nature and communities within the wards. Subject to funding this programme will continue in 2023-2026.

### 3.6. NRAP OBJECTIVE 6: Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery

As outlined above the council's corporate (Well-Being) objective for Biodiversity has been expanded to include Climate Change and a new governance structure has been developed to drive and monitor progress as outlined below.

Governance structure Diagrams:



### **3.6.1. Section 6 Biodiversity duty monitored and reviewed**

The increase in staff capacity since June 2021, when a part-time permanent Biodiversity (Section 6) Officer was employed, has allowed the Nature Conservation Team to more effectively monitor and review the section 6 duty and to identify and support the delivery of actions for nature recovery across all council services. Going forward we hope to have mechanisms in place to do this on a more regular basis and in a more inclusive and user-friendly way.

### **3.6.2. Staff capacity improvements - ecological expertise**

The council has committed to increasing staff capacity as follows:

- In June 2021, a part-time permanent Biodiversity Officer was employed by the council within the Nature Conservation team to help implement the Section 6 duty.
- A second full time permanent Planning Ecologist was employed in June 2021 based in the Nature Conservation Team. The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Team employed a full time Communities and Nature Project Officer, and this role was made permanent subject to funding.
- In April 2022, two part-time Local Nature Partnership Coordinators were made permanent on a job share arrangement within the Nature Conservation Team, subject to funding.
- Two full-time Community Greenspace Officers, one full-time Volunteer Co-ordinator and a Woodland Officer (Shared part time with Neath Port Talbot Council) were appointed to the Nature Conservation team in May 2022 through Welsh Government ENRAW funding on fixed term until June 2023.
- In May 2022, a permanent full time Strategic Climate Change Project Manager was employed based in the Property Services Team
- Partnership and collaborative working have been greatly increased since the appointment of these new staff.

### **3.6.3. Grant funding (List of funding sources directed towards biodiversity)**

The Welsh Government ENRAW and LP4N grants have enabled many nature recovery actions and increased staff capacity to deliver them. Grant aid through Natural Resources Wales and others has supported several biodiversity projects such as Rivers of Gower, Gower Meadows, and Hedges and Coeden Fach.

### **3.6.4 Local Nature Partnership Quarterly Meetings and Workshops**

Swansea Council is a lead member of the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) and hosts the two part-time Local Nature Partnership Co-ordinators. The Swansea Local Nature Partnership (LNP) is an active group with representatives from many organisations and individuals united by an interest in conserving, enhancing, and raising awareness of Swansea's biodiversity. These include relevant local authority departments, the charitable conservation sector, landowners, and professional and amateur naturalists. Quarterly meetings have been held every year for the LNP during the reporting period, which facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience between members and provide a platform to share evidence and results of projects. Current membership of the Swansea LNP includes 50 organisations and over 80 individuals.

### **3.6.5. Local Nature Recovery Action plan for Swansea**

The Local Nature Recovery Action Plan (LNRAP) for Swansea is currently being drafted. The LNRAP will set out the priorities for nature recovery in Swansea (aligning with the six objectives identified in the NRAP for Wales) and will act as a high-level plan with common goals to guide the actions and other plans produced by LNP members, including the council's section 6 plan. To date an initial draft framework was written and sent out to LNP members (July-Sept 2022). Written feedback from at least 17 members from 7 different organisations were received. Two workshops were held (September – October 2022) to further advance the LNRAP and these were attended by around 24 individual LNP members from 16 different organisations. The outcomes of the workshop and the written feedback will feed into the LNRAP re-draft which will continue into 2023.

### **3.6.6. Supporting other environmental organisations and projects (List of local/national environmental groups actively or substantially engaged and/or supported)**

Through the local places for nature (LP4N) grant the council has engaged with and supported several local NGOs including the following:

- The Orchard Project: LP4N funding was provided in 2020, 2021 and 2022. Thus far this has enabled the creation of 7 new orchards on council owned land in Swansea.
- Penllergaer Trust: LP4N funding provided in 2021 allowed the Trust to purchase equipment for woodland management, which has enabled staff and volunteers to carry out habitat restoration works in Penllergaer Valley Woods.
- Grant funding through LP4N also enabled the Environment Centre to create a new Green Roof and Green Wall and new planter beds on the street outside their building at Pier Street
- It is also enabling the construction of a green wall at Swansea Community Farm

### **3.6.7. Encouraging and supporting volunteer participation in action for biodiversity**

An annual programme of environmental events (Wild about Swansea) is published [online](#) to improve awareness and understanding of the local natural environment. Wales Environment Week is an annual celebration of Wales' magnificent wildlife with a host of local, national, and online events which highlight different habitats and species and encourages people to get actively involved in looking after the wildlife on their doorstep.

### **3.6.8. Seed Planting Events with Libraries**

Libraries have delivered several events with local event providers, funded by grants for Summer of Fun, to provide children with an opportunity to plant seeds and encourage an interest in nature in 2022.

### **3.6.9. AONB and Nature Conservation Teams Encouraging Access to Nature**

A series of actions undertaken by the AONB team have enabled communities to access and participate in nature. These include refreshing the nature trail at Clyne Valley Country Park, installing

biodiversity interpretation panels at Penclawdd, educational/awareness raising stalls at the Gower Show 2022, and conducting education events in Bishops Wood LNR. There have also been many school visits and support for Forest School activities.

#### **3.6.10. Seashore Safaris**

Seashore safaris were delivered in the reporting period. These are education tours of various beaches including Port Eynon and Swansea Bay. Designed to instruct participants about coastal biodiversity.

#### **3.6.11. ENRAW funded volunteer/community events programme**

A comprehensive series of volunteer task days and environmental events were organised throughout Spring to Autumn 2022 by the Nature Conservation Team's Volunteer Coordinator. This included 44 different days with events such as guided bat walks, litter picks, swift walks, bird guided bird walks, and moth trapping events, with a total of 413 participants/volunteers.

#### **3.6.12. Schools**

Our education service area provides a key role in creating nature recovery informed children. Some examples of work they have undertaken include encouraging their pupils outside and interacting with nature after the covid lockdowns, creating, insect hotels, hedgehog houses, dead hedging, planting sapling trees, sowing native local wildflower seed, feeding birds, using recycled materials, den building, sensory garden, and wellbeing in nature sessions. The Service also supports participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme – volunteering for RSPB, coppicing, bird boxes, brush piles, planting, Forest School, food growing projects, composting, working with Cae Tan CSA, planting fruit trees etc. Some schools have eco committees. Nearly all Swansea schools have developed their own eco code to support sustainability and the theme of developing 'ethical citizens' features strongly in the new Curriculum for Wales (2022).

Swansea Rural Development Partnership have supported the development of a Nature Area for Outdoor Learning delivered by Bishopston Primary. The Partnership has successfully allocated £5,000 of funding through the Welsh Government Rural Communities - Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. The Nature Area for Outdoor Learning project is a response to pupils of Bishopston Primary and local community who want to encourage Outdoor Learning, through the creation of a dedicated nature area, which can be used every day as a working area for children.

#### **3.6.13. Engaging and Supporting Local Community Action**

The Council has continued to encourage greater community ownership of parks, nature reserves and wildlife sites and have worked with 'friends of parks' organisations to ensure long-term sustainability of parks and public spaces. We currently have more than 30 active Friends of Parks/Open Spaces with several groups undertaking leases and considering a Community Asset Transfer. This year, Swansea Council was able to support Swansea Community Farm, the only City Farm in Wales by granting it a new 35-year lease at a peppercorn rent. The volunteer run farm not only hosts a range

of animals, growing spaces and a cafe but improves health and wellbeing, builds skills, produces local food and cares for the natural environment. It helps to manage one of the Council's Local Nature Reserves (Cadle Heath LNR) which adjoins the farm. The Nature Conservation Team have appointed two Communities and Nature Project Officers and a Volunteer Co-ordinator to work with local communities and individuals at a Ward Level and to encourage and support their involvement in nature recovery activities.

Several roles across Council services and partner organisations now include volunteer coordination. This involves liaison with all relevant Service Areas, Ward members and external organisations such as Community Councils to encourage and provide volunteering opportunities for adults and children. Co-ordinators also recruit, train, and engage with new volunteers. Since the pandemic, requests for help and information from partners and groups have increased relating to environmental volunteering.

#### **4. Review of s6 duty**

The above evidence shows that over the last three years the Council has made considerable progress towards meeting its biodiversity duty both through practical action and, at a strategic level with its declaration of climate and nature emergencies the establishment of a related corporate programme board and member steering group and a scrutiny committee which oversees progress in relation to addressing climate and nature issues. There is greater tie in with the work of the Public Service Board and other organisations with responsibility for climate and nature matters. Additional staff resources and grant funding have been made available to help deliver projects and support partnership working, community engagement and volunteering to deliver nature recovery at a local level. There is now greater support for the Local Nature Partnership and the development of a Local Nature Recovery Action Plan.

During the next few months we will be reviewing our existing actions and preparing our Section 6 Action Plan for the next 3 years (Jan 2023- Dec 2025). This will involve ongoing engagement and awareness raising across all service areas and with elected members and the provision of advice and practical support where needed.