



## Report of the Cabinet Member of Corporate Services & Performance

Cabinet - 19 October 2023

### Local Nature Recovery Action Plan for Swansea

<b>Purpose:</b>	The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet endorsement of the draft Local Nature Recovery Action Plan for Swansea.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Corporate priority for Climate Change &amp; Nature Recovery</li><li>• Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) for Wales.</li><li>• Environment Wales Act (Section 6 Biodiversity Duty).</li><li>• Wellbeing of Future Generations Act – Resilient Wales Objective</li></ul>
<b>Consultation:</b>	Finance, Legal, Access to Services
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It is recommended that Cabinet:  1. Approves the Swansea Local Nature Recovery Action Plan (LNRAP) and notes its importance as an overarching partnership framework to deliver on Nature Recovery.
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## 1. Background

### Policy background

- 1.1. Local Nature Recovery Action Plans (LNRAP) are non-statutory partnership plans produced by Local Nature Partnerships (LNP) in the relevant Local Authority or National Park in Wales. LNRAPs are aligned with and informed by Welsh national biodiversity policy which is currently the [Nature Recovery Action Plan \(NRAP\) for Wales](#).

- 1.2. The NRAP for Wales is the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Wales and sets out how the United Nations Environment Programme’s Convention on Biological Diversity’s (CBD) Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (and the associated Aichi Biodiversity Targets for 2011-20 in Wales) is addressed in Wales. It was originally published in 2015 and then updated in 2020/21. The NRAP for Wales will be updated in line with changes in global biodiversity policy, most recently the ratification of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which solidified global so-called ‘30x30 targets’. This includes [Target 2 in the global framework states to “ensure that by 2030 at least 30 percent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and of marine and coastal areas \[...\] are effectively conserved and managed \[...\]”](#) The Welsh Government has also committed to a ‘30x30’ target, announcing in the Biodiversity Deep Dive recommendations that they aim to protect [“at least 30% of the land and 30% of the sea by 2030.”](#) The NRAP for Wales has not yet been updated to reflect global policy changes, but when this happens it is likely that ‘30x30’ will be incorporated in some manner.
- 1.3. The NRAP for Wales as it currently stands sets out 6 objectives for nature recovery in Wales and is complemented by 5 themes of action aimed at addressing issues that are driving decline in biodiversity, and to support recovery (Table 1).

Table 1. NRAP for Wales objectives and themes of action.

Objectives	Themes of Action
1. Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels.	1. Maintaining and enhancing resilient ecological networks.
2. Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management.	2. Increasing knowledge and knowledge transfer.
3. Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation.	3. Realising new investment and funding.
4. Tackle key pressures on species and habitats.	4. Upskilling and capacity for delivery.
5. Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring.	5. Governance, mainstreaming and reporting our progress.
6. Put in place a framework of governance and support delivery.	

- 1.4. Local NRAPs are one of the delivery mechanisms to meet the six objectives for nature recovery set out in the NRAP for Wales at a local level. The Swansea LNRAP is a plan produced by the Swansea LNP, which is an active group of over 50 member organisations including relevant public sector bodies, third sector conservation organisations,

voluntary conservation groups, landowners, and professional and amateur naturalists.

### **Nature Emergency**

- 1.5. Outside of policy drivers for LNRAPs there is also a real need for them as a tool in delivering nature recovery as we are in a nature emergency. The [Senedd](#) and [Swansea Council](#) declared nature emergencies in 2021, [species are declining in abundance and distribution](#), habitats and [protected sites are in poor condition](#) and overall ecosystem resilience is poor. There is therefore the urgent need for coordinated and cohesive action at all scales to achieve nature recovery.
- 1.6. Collaborative landscape scale action is required as well as the need to spread awareness and facilitate access to and engagement with nature. The Swansea LNRAP as a tool, and in its content, aims to do just this.

## **2. Report Overview**

- 2.1. The Swansea LNRAP identifies priorities for achieving nature recovery in Swansea as so-called action themes. These are guided at the top level by the six objectives and five themes of action in the NRAP for Wales, but they are underpinned by local knowledge and priorities, as well as the themes highlighted in the [South West Wales](#), and [Marine Area Statements](#) (Table 2).

Table 2. South West Wales and Marine Area Statement Themes

South West Wales Area Statement Themes	Marine Area Statement Themes
1. Reducing health inequalities.	1. Building resilience of marine ecosystems.
2. Ensuring sustainable land management.	2. Nature-based solutions and adaptation at the coast.
3. Reversing the decline of, and enhancing, biodiversity.	3. Making the most of marine planning.
4. Mitigating and adapting to a changing climate (cross-cutting theme).	

- 2.2. In the draft Swansea LNRAP there are 25 action themes. It is intended that the action themes be narrower in focus than the six objectives in the NRAP for Wales to effectively guide LNP partner actions, but also broad enough to act as an umbrella for partner actions, as the Swansea LNP is a diverse partnership. Table 3 below provides two examples to illustrate the linkages between Swansea LNRAP action themes and the 6 objectives.

Table 3. Relationship between NRAP for Wales objective and Swansea LNRAP action themes.

NRAP for Wales Objective	Swansea LNRAP Action Theme
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Objective 1: Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels.	1.1. Provide accessible educational and awareness raising events in-person and/or online, especially focussing on expanding the reach of initiatives outside of people/groups already engaged in nature recovery and conservation.
Objective 3: Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation.	3.3. Ensure that at least 30% of Swansea County is protected and effectively managed for nature by 2030, including marine*, terrestrial and freshwater** areas

*\* Marine habitats between high and low mean water springs \*\*terrestrial and freshwater land/habitats down to high mean water springs within the county boundary.*

2.3. The Swansea LNRAP has been created with:

- Engagement and feedback from Swansea LNP members through one-to-one and group workshops, presentations, LNP quarterly meetings, plus written feedback, and suggestions.
- Key global, national, and regional legislation, policies, and plans in mind, as well as relevant public consultations.
- Regard to relevant evidence reports.
- Consideration of data regarding nature in Swansea, including habitats, species, and ecosystem resilience.
- Consultation with the Climate & Nature STC Committee.

Table 4 below details the timeline of development for the Swansea LNRAP thus far.

Table 4. LNRAP development timeline.

April – June 2022	Initial framework written from review of other LNRAPs, relevant evidence reports, and advice from LNP Cymru mentors.
July – September 2022	Initial framework sent for review to Swansea LNP (18 <sup>th</sup> July), deadline 9 <sup>th</sup> September 2022.
September – October 2022	Written feedback collated and summarised. Responses to feedback written and issued to LNP (26 <sup>th</sup> September 2022).
	Two workshops held with LNP members to discuss themes arising from written feedback on first draft, 30 <sup>th</sup> September, and 28 <sup>th</sup> October.
November 2022 – June 2023	Feedback from first review and workshops incorporated into the redraft, as well as relevant local community consultations, plus follow up discussions with relevant LNP members.
June – July 2023	Second draft report sent out to LNP partners (6 <sup>th</sup> June) for comments, deadline 10 <sup>th</sup> July 2023.

July – August 2023	Second draft presented and shared with Climate & Nature recovery STC on 17 <sup>th</sup> July and members were to provide feedback. Deadline 10 <sup>th</sup> August 2023. Informal workshop held with STC members on 31 <sup>st</sup> July.
4 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2023	Final Draft Local Nature Recovery Action Plan( LNRAP) formally approved by the Local Nature Partnership at its meeting on 4 <sup>th</sup> September.
4 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	Final draft of LNRAP endorsed by the Climate Change and Nature Recovery Service Transformation Committee on 4 <sup>th</sup> September

- 2.4. The Swansea LNRAP was endorsed by the Climate Change and Nature Recovery Service Transformation Committee at its meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> September and is now forwarded to Cabinet for approval.
- 2.5. The Swansea LNRAP can be divided into four broad sections, with the first focussing on introducing key concepts such as the importance of nature, ecosystem services, ecosystem resilience, and the relationship between these concepts. It also provides an overview of nature and ecosystem resilience in Swansea and the main barriers to nature recovery.
- 2.6. The second section focusses on the action themes. Firstly, identifying global, regional, and local influences and then introducing the action themes in six tables organised by the six objectives for nature recovery in the NRAP for Wales (table 1). For each action theme a brief case study of a project is provided, that gives a real-life example of how LNP members have, had, or are planning to undertake actions that align with the action theme.
- 2.7. The third section provides further detail on nature in Swansea. This is achieved through descriptions of Habitats of Principal Importance (Section 7) and other habitat groupings including woodland, wetland, open water, heath & grassland, coastal habits, the marine and urban environment. As well as pages that give examples of 11 species and 12 sites that are 'special' in Swansea, for example chough, horseshoe bats, Atlantic grey seals, Whiteford National Nature Reserve, Swansea Bay Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), and Pluck Lake SINC. It is intended that an audit summary of Species of Principal Importance (Section 7) will also be included, but this is currently incomplete.
- 2.8. The fourth and final section focusses on awareness raising and provides suggestions for what members of the public rather than the LNP per say can do for nature recovery in Swansea. These are provided by the way of eight infographics. These are not fully comprehensive lists but rather some ideas to help lead people in the right direction. The ideas and suggestions were generated from other LNRAPS, input from Swansea LNP as well as existing biodiversity campaigns, and contain links to additional resources.
- 2.9. It is intended that the Swansea LNRAP be used to guide LNP partner actions towards nature recovery using the action themes. For example,

within the council, a Section 6 Plan<sup>1</sup> is currently in draft that will set out actions the council will aim to take over the next three-year Section 6 reporting cycle. These actions will be directly guided by the LNRAP action themes, and so in this way the LNRAP priorities for nature recovery will be translated into the actions as a council and partner of the Swansea LNP.

- 2.10. Please note that the Swansea LNRAP does not commit any one LNP partner to any specific actions. It is therefore the responsibility of individual LNP partners to identify where and how they can contribute to actions towards the Swansea LNRAP action themes.
- 2.11. Through the LNP it is intended to informally review partner actions towards LNRAP action themes, likely on annual basis. So that progress can be monitored and any action themes that are potentially being over or under actioned can be identified.
- 2.12. A formal review of the LNRAP as a plan, is intended to be carried out by 2030 in line with likely national and global policy changes around that time e.g., 30x30 targets.

### **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1. There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. However, to reach both the 2030 and 2050 targets, further grant funding will be required, and any bids would be subject to the Councils standard grant procedures. For the next two financial years £1,192,300 Local Places for Nature Grant has been approved by Welsh Government.

### **4. Legal Implications**

- 4.1. This Swansea LNRAP will contribute to Swansea Council's Corporate Objective for Climate Change and Nature Recovery. It will inform Swansea Council's emerging Section 6 Plan therefore aiding the Council in its Biodiversity Duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, which places a statutory duty on the Council to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of its functions. The Plan will also assist the Council in its Well-being Duty, especially with regard to the 'Resilient Wales Goal,' under the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

### **5. Integrated Assessment Implications**

- 5.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

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<sup>1</sup> The Section 6 Plan is linked to the Section 6 Biodiversity Duty Swansea Council is subject to under the [Environment \(Wales\) 2015 Act](#). That is we must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as consistent with the proper exercise of our functions, and in so doing, promote the resilience of ecosystems.

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

- 5.2. An IIA screening report was completed, and no significant risks were identified. The cumulative impacts were deemed low but positive, and as such a full IIA strategy is not deemed necessary. Screening report attached at appendix B

### **Background Papers**

- [Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales 2015 and 2020/21 Update.](#)
- [South West Wales Area Statement.](#)
- [Marine Area Statement.](#)
- [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016.](#)
- [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015.](#)
- [Strategic Plan for Biodiversity \(and the associated Aichi Biodiversity Targets for 2011-20\).](#)
- [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.](#)
- [Welsh Government Biodiversity Deep Dive.](#)
- [Swansea Local Nature Partnership.](#)
- [State of Nature 2019.](#)
- [Protected Sites Baseline Assessment 2020.](#)
- [Section 7 Habitats and Species of Principal Importance.](#)

### **Appendices**

Appendix A - Draft Swansea LNRAP

Appendix B -.IIA Screening report