

Isle of Anglesey County Council	
Report to:	Executive Committee
Date:	24 January 2023
Subject:	Annual Report on the Biodiversity Plan
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr. Nicola Roberts
Head of Service / Director:	Christian Branch
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Local Members:	Not applicable

A –Recommendation/s and reason/s

The Executive Committee is asked to accept the report and endorse the recommendations.

The Environment (Wales) Act introduced an enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty (Section 6 duty) on Public Authorities (PAs). As part of the duty's requirements, PAs must publish a report every three years from 2019 onwards in relation to the objectives set in their Biodiversity Plans.

This Report sets out the progress made by the County Council in respect of meeting the objectives set in its Biodiversity Plan to cover the last reporting period (2019-22). Where specific objectives or actions have not been met, the report makes recommendations as to how these should be achieved.

B – What other options did you consider and why did you reject them and/or opt for this option?

Not applicable

C – Why is this a decision for the Executive?

Having an adopted Biodiversity Plan is a statutory requirement as set out in section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Each PA must report on progress made in achieving the objectives set out in its Plan every three years from 2019 onwards.

Ch – Is this decision consistent with policy approved by the full Council?

The contents of the annual report align with the objectives of the current Council Plan. In particular, by committing to working with our communities to ensure they can cope effectively with change and developments while protecting our natural environment.

The report refers to the progress made against the Biodiversity Plan adopted by the Council in January 2021.

From a wellbeing perspective, as the Council Plan explains, encouraging our citizens to use the natural environment can deliver health benefits. It is widely acknowledged that immersion in biodiversity for a period each week can improve an individual's physical and mental health.

Biodiversity and our unique landscape creates a firm foundation for the Island's economy. For example, from a tourism perspective, our biodiversity and landscape rank amongst the main characteristics that attract visitors to the Anglesey.

Implementing the actions outlined in the action plan will reinforce biodiversity which, in turn, will improve the conditions that can contribute to improved wellbeing for the people of Anglesey, continue the provision of life resources in addition to providing a solid basis for maintaining the Island's economy.

D – Is this decision within the budget approved by the Council?

Co-ordination and governance activities will be undertaken within the Regulation and Economic Development Service's existing resources and every Service within the County Council will contribute towards achieving our duties. As section 6 (1) of the 2016 Act requires, it is the Council's corporate responsibility to ensure that it 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.

Dd – Assessing the potential impact (if relevant):

1	How does this decision impact on our long term needs as an Island?	It ensures that maintaining and improving biodiversity will be an important and central consideration to the County Council's decision-making process, thereby ensuring that future generations can benefit from the Island's diverse natural environment whilst ensuring that economic, social and environmental benefits accrue from its safeguarding.
2	Is this a decision which it is envisaged will prevent future costs /	The changes in the ways in which the Council's assets will be managed and maintained can lead to savings.

Dd – Assessing the potential impact (if relevant):		
	dependencies on the Authority? If so, how?	
3	Have we been working collaboratively with other organisations to come to this decision? If so, please advise whom.	Internal and cross-Service collaboration on the development of the report, and collaboration on the recommendations.
4	Have Anglesey citizens played a part in drafting this way forward, including those directly affected by the decision? Please explain how.	Not applicable
5	Note any potential impact that this decision would have on the groups protected under the Equality Act 2010.	Not applicable
6	If this is a strategic decision, note any potential impact that the decision would have on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.	Not applicable
7	Note any potential impact that this decision would have on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.	Not applicable

E – Who did you consult?		What did they say?
1	Chief Executive / Senior Leadership Team (SLT) (mandatory)	
2	Finance / Section 151 (mandatory)	
3	Legal / Monitoring Officer (mandatory)	
4	Human Resources (HR)	
5	Property	
6	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	
7	Procurement	
8	Scrutiny	
9	Local Members	

F - Appendices:
Section 6, Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Report & Non-Technical Summary

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Ff - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):
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CYNGOR SIR
YNYS MÔN
ISLE OF ANGLESEY
COUNTY COUNCIL



**Isle of Anglesey County Council –
Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 - Section 6
The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty
Report 2022**

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1.0 Introduction and Context

1.1 Statutory requirements

- 1.1.1 The purpose of the report is to state what the Isle of Anglesey County Council (IACC) has done to comply with the s6 duty of the Environment Act (Wales) to cover the period between 2019 and 2022. The report was prepared by the Regulation and Economic Development Service and includes the input of other Council Services.
- 1.1.2 Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act places a duty on public authorities (PAs) to 'seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity' so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions. In so doing, PAs must also seek to 'promote the resilience of ecosystems'. A PA must, before the end of every third year after 2019, publish a report on what it has done to comply with this requirement.
- 1.1.3 Section 7 of the Environment Act requires The Welsh Ministers to publish, review and revise lists of living organisms and types of habitat in Wales which they consider to be of principal importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in relation to Wales. This is known as the s7 list.

1.2 Description of Public Authority in relation to biodiversity

- 1.2.1 The County Council falls within the definition of a PA and carries the greater burden in terms of reporting on actions related to its Biodiversity Plan. The Plan was adopted following its reporting to the Council's Executive Committee on 25 January 2021 and can be accessed by following the link below:

<https://www.anglesey.gov.wales/documents/Docs-en/Biodiversity/Biodiversity-Plan.pdf>

1.3 Spatial Scale and Place

- 1.3.1 Anglesey is an island that covers an area of around 700km² and is mostly made up of small towns and villages. The island's population is just below 69,000 people.
- 1.3.2 The island boasts a coastline of around 225km with most of this designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Additionally, the island and surrounding sea are subject to numerous international and national ecologically-based designations and is widely renowned for its habitats and species. Its world-class geology is recognised through its designation as a UNESCO Global Geopark and, as an Island, our biodiversity is in some ways distinct to that of other areas of the UK.
- 1.3.3 Anglesey is an island whose landscapes and natural resources and assets, in addition to sustaining strong local communities, underpin a rich and varied biodiversity.

1.4 Public Service Delivery

- 1.4.1 IACC is a statutory member of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Service Board (PSB). PSBs were established to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the area by strengthening joint working across public services in Wales. The board will:
- a. Assess the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the area; and
 - b. Set objectives that are designed to maximise the PSBs contribution to the well-being goals.

1.4.2 The PSB published a Local Well-being Plan in 2018 with the promotion of the use of natural resources to improve health and well-being in the long-term being a key message.

1.4.3 IACC is a participant in the Area Statement process led by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and has contributed to the preparation of the Statement for North West Wales. The North West Area Statement was officially approved on 1 April 2020 and can be accessed by following the link below:
<https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/area-statements/north-west-wales-area-statement/?lang=en#:~:text=North%20West%20Wales%20Area%20Statement%20The%20area%20is,further%20upland%20moors%20to%20the%20east%20in%20Conwy>

1.5 How enhancing biodiversity contributes to and is affected by IACC's functions and strategic objectives

1.5.1 The Council's Corporate Plan identifies three strategic objectives, with one of these being "*working in partnership with communities to ensure that they can cope effectively with change and developments whilst protecting the natural environment.*" The commitment to protecting the natural environment is built in to the Council's corporate strategy and reflected in the objectives and actions set out in the Corporate Biodiversity Plan. A new Council Plan is being prepared for the period 2023-28. The current Plan can be accessed via the following link:
<https://www.anglesey.gov.wales/documents/Docs-en/Council/Democracy/Council-Plan/Council-Plan-2017-2022-Plan.pdf>

1.6 Key policies, objectives, performance indicators and monitoring arrangements

1.6.1 Several corporate and service-specific documents set a firm policy footing for maintaining and enhancing biodiversity. Monitoring provision is built-in to these documents, which include:

- a. IACC Plan
- b. Towards Net-Zero Plan
- c. Gwynedd and Anglesey Well-being Plan
- d. Individual Service Delivery Plans
- e. Joint Local Development Plan

1.7 Governance arrangements around the delivery of the s6 duty

- 1.7.1 The Head of Regulation and Economic Development has overall corporate management and operational responsibility. The Head of Service reports to the Council's Leadership Team. From a political perspective, the portfolio holder for Planning, Public Protection & Climate Change is tasked with the responsibility to champion biodiversity given the nature of the role and its interactivity with the wider environmental portfolio. Furthermore, the Action Plan contained in the Biodiversity Plan assigns specific actions to individual officers with managerial responsibilities.
- 1.7.2 In adopting the Biodiversity Plan, the County Council's Executive did so on the basis that there would be an annual report presented to the Executive Committee to advise on progress in terms of meeting agreed Plan objectives.
- 1.7.3 The County Council proposes to form a cross-service group of officers in 2023 to monitor, review and, where necessary, modify the actions set out in the Action Plan contained in the Biodiversity Plan in order to ensure that these actions remain current and relevant. The monitoring data will be used to inform future reporting requirements.

2.0 Highlights, Key Outcomes and Issues

2.1 Key biodiversity actions

- 2.1.1 The County Council formally adopted its Corporate Biodiversity Plan in January 2021. The Plan provides the basis for:
- a) a biodiversity audit of the Council estate which will identify the condition of sites and how these can be maximised in relation to habitat connectivity;
 - b) a holistic framework for management of biodiversity-rich and sensitive sites across the County Council's estate together with other sites with potential for improvement;
 - c) improving the County Council's green infrastructure provision, and
 - d) formalising a biodiversity reporting structure.
- 2.1.2 Politically, the portfolio member for Planning, Public Protection & Climate Change has responsibilities to champion biodiversity. A series of regular, quarterly meetings between the portfolio holder and relevant officer has been established to update on necessary developments, particularly in relation to biodiversity projects.
- 2.1.3 The Ynys Môn LNP is a key organisation in informing the wider community on biodiversity action. Its membership ensures a wide-ranging reach for disseminating biodiversity information. Members are encouraged to generate ideas for enhancement projects that can be considered for LPfN funding. The County Council oversees the award of grant monies to partners from the Local Places for Nature (LPfN) fund. Since its introduction the fund has awarded £450,000 in grant aid for numerous projects as indicated in the table below. Case studies are provided in Annex A.

Financial Year	Partner projects	Council projects	Challenge Fund projects	Total
2020-21	£40,785	£37,465	N/A	£78,250
2021-22	£47,179	£24,900	£167,000	£239,079
2022-23	£101,070	£32,050	N/A	£133,120
	£189,034	£94,415	£167,000	£450,449

Table 1: Local Places for Nature grant awards 2020-23

2.1.4 In addition to working with existing partners, the Authority's Local Wildlife Officer is actively encouraging new members to join the LNP through networking. Positive discussions have been held with CADW and the National Trust and a presentation to the Anglesey branch of One Voice Wales, the principal organisation for community and town councils in Wales, generated interest in membership of the Ynys Môn LNP.

2.1.5 Significant work, funded by the LNP Challenge Fund, has been undertaken in the landmark Clegir Mawr project that will provide a means of assessing the recovery of this former waste site to wildlife habitat. In addition, it can be used as an educational asset that can provide a mosaic habitat location for students to understand the interdependence of species on particular habitat types and provide a valuable study centre for research.



Wildflower meadow at Clegir Mawr, Gwalchmai

2.1.6 The importance of access to ecological records cannot be understated. As such, the County Council is close to concluding a service level agreement (SLA) with Cofnod, the Local Ecological Records Centre (LERC) for North Wales. Access to the data can inform specific work or projects where the presence of protected species is suspected and/or mitigation is considered necessary. The SLA is expected to be completed in early 2023.

2.2 Positive outcomes for health, social cohesion and economic benefits

2.2.1 Nature sites managed by the County Council initially saw significant reductions in footfall over the reporting period due to the effects of the Covid pandemic.

However, the recovery of visitor numbers supports the theory that immersion in nature is beneficial to both mental wellbeing and physical health.

Financial Year	Dingle	Breakwater Park	Combined	Comments
2018-19	63,129	124,607	187,736	*Boardwalk at Dingle closed for 6 weeks due to new bridge construction in Q3
2019-20	60,159	91,815	151,974	
2020-21	0*	91,051	91,051	Dingle Boardwalk closed from March 20 to June 21 / Breakwater Park also closed for some months due to COVID.
2021-22	65,412	107,550	172,962	
2022-23 (4/22 -9/22)	19,066	62,167	81,233	Only Partial Data – 6 months only of current financial year as a reference.
* Dingle figures provided by counter on Boardwalk therefore 0 return due to Boardwalk being closed for duration of period				

Table 2: visitor number at Council-managed wildlife sites

2.2.2 The provision of allotments on land owned by the Council are also proven to provide benefits in terms of wellbeing and social cohesion in addition to being havens for wildlife, providing valuable habitat for pollinators in particular. The Island currently has nine allotment sites, three of which are on County Council-owned or leased land with others provided on Town/Community Council sites. The County Council is currently considering the development of a further new allotment site on land in Holyhead.



Llangefni Allotment Society plots

2.2.3 The County Council's Plan (2017-22) recognises the value of the Island's natural environment, the importance of safeguarding this asset and its current and potential contribution to the Island's economic prosperity.

2.2.4 Although not strictly directly aimed at biodiversity enhancement, a project advocating green prescribing is run by the County Council's Countryside Service utilising SDF funding to arrange woodland activities for people who would not otherwise access them. The project aims to:

- a. improve people's health and wellbeing through social prescribing to regular activities in woodlands, which incorporate physical activity, nutrition and woodland skills; and
- b. promote an understanding of and interest in the AONB.

The project is hosted by the Llyn Parc Mawr community woodland group, one of the LNP partners.



Green prescribing activities at Llyn Parc Mawr, Newborough

2.3 Cost savings and efficiencies

2.3.1 Reviewing working practices and initiating change can, not only, deliver biodiversity enhancement but secure cost savings too. An example of such change delivering cost savings is that of a radical verge management programme. Reducing mowing frequency not only saves costs but also benefits biodiversity, through increasing areas of habitat. Further areas of wild flower meadows and habitat creation is interesting Council services with responsibilities for land to establish wildflower meadows on areas of grass that would otherwise be mown on a regular basis with no resultant biodiversity benefit.



Changed mowing practices to encourage wildflower growth, Talwrn

2.3.2 On average, it is estimated that the changes in mowing practices have saved the County Council around £7,000 per annum between 2010 and 2022. The recent significant increases in fuel mean that savings, although still being achieved, are not as great as they could be. The table below indicates the extent of the Conservation Management Mowing programme.

Report on Conservation Mowing Management Areas 2019-20				
CMA No.	Location	Species diversity	Management	Managed verge length
1	Tal Poncau, Dwyran	63 plant species recorded: 88 early purple orchids this year.	No cut in summer, routine 2 swathe cut in Autumn.	200m
2	Lon Cwrt, Dwyran	64 species incl. primroses, violets and 148 early purple orchids.	No cut in summer, routine 2 swathe cut in Autumn.	100m
3	Lon Bacsia, Llangefn	52 species incl. Columbines, Early purple & Common spotted orchids.	No cut in summer, routine 2 swathe cut in Autumn. Conservation cut in winter.	100m
4	Tyddyn Philip, Brynteg	105 species incl. Bloody Cranesbill, Rockrose & Field Scabious.	No cut in summer, 2 swathe cut in Autumn. Conservation cut. Bracken control.	100m
5	Frigan, Brynteg	92 species incl. Bloody Cranesbill, Rockrose & Bladder Campion	No cut in summer, 2 swathe cut in Autumn. Conservation cut.	100m
6	A5025, Pentraeth	63 species incl. Common spotted orchid. Lesser Butterfly orchid re-appeared	Edge cut in summer, cut and baled, or raked off in Sept.	
7	Tyddyn Waen, Talwrn	115 species incl. Early purple & Common spotted orchids, & Primroses.	No cut in summer, 2 swathe cut in autumn. Farmer cut verge and hedge in Sept.	600m
8	Bryn Gors, Talwrn	98 species incl. Common spotted orchids, Common Fleabane, Purple Loosestrife.	No cut in summer, 2 swathe cut in autumn.	100m
9	Tan y Bryn, Brynsiencyn	56 species incl. Early purple orchids, Primroses & Spurge laurel.	No cut in summer, 2 swathe cut in autumn + conservation cut.	100m
10	Pant y Bugail, Marianglas	54 species incl. Early purple orchids & Common Twayblade orchids.	No cut in summer, 2 swathe cut in autumn.	500m
11	Ty Mwdwal, Dwyran	Scheduled for ditches with frogs, newts & water voles.	To receive summer and autumn cuts. Hedge to be trimmed in Autumn.	
12	A5025 Benllech Cross	66 species incl. Primroses, Common spotted orchids & Marjoram.	No cut in summer, 2 swathe cut in autumn. Conservation cuts, removal of arisings.	150m
13	Ty'n Pistyll, Llanddona	Site with a National Rarity - Greater Broomrape - parasitic on Gorse.	No cut in summer, 2 swathe cut in autumn + conservation cut.	20m
14	Rhos Llaniestyn Junction, Llanddona	No detailed plant list available but good range limestone flora	No cut in summer but to be clear cut in Autumn.	

15	Bypass, Cemaes	111 species have been recorded including several orchids	Slope not cut in summer. Clear cut to top of bank. Arisings raked off and removed	100m
16	Stone Science, Talwrn	74 species recorded including cowslips, Meadow Cranesbill & Lady's mantle.	No cut in summer.	
17	Common, Marianglas	A good range of limestone grassland plants including Early purple orchids. Rockrose and Harebells.	A number of plots are marked with white stones and are only cut in the autumn allowing plants to flower.	
18	Tywyn Aberffraw, Aberffraw	A good range of dune grassland plants including several species of orchids.	No cut in the summer but routine double swathe cut in the autumn.	
19	Bwrdd Arthur, Llanddona	A good range of limestone plants with Field scabious, Saw-wort and extensive patches of Common Rockrose.	No cut in summer. 2 swathe cut in autumn plus a conservation cut to control bramble	400m
20	Small site on a minor road North of Talwrn	Established to protect the only known roadside site for the Frog orchid	No cut in summer. Verge protectors installed to protect from damage by agricultural vehicles	
21	Ffordd Maelog, Rhosneigr	59 species recorded including Pyramid Orchid, Field Madder, Lady's Bedstraw, Green Field Speedwell & Fern Grass	No cuts in summer, but a mid meadow cut will be required in September.	

Table 3: Conservation Management Areas 2019-20

2.3.3 Savings and efficiencies can be achieved through the prompt management or eradication of invasive species. In the case of Himalayan balsam for instance, it is mostly prevalent along river banks and its removal allows native vegetation to populate banks and provide soil stability whereas balsam could destabilise banks as it dies down over winter and exposes bare earth. Flooding and sediment build-up further downstream could result, thereby entailing management cost for the County Council.

2.3.4 Using volunteers to undertake work such as the clearance of invasive species and to undertake litter picks can deliver biodiversity benefits, through maintaining habitat, whilst also delivering cost savings. Volunteer labour is widely used by the Council's Countryside and AONB function to undertake such projects. Additionally, similar work with schools will have the same benefits in terms of biodiversity and savings/efficiencies whilst also delivering educational benefits where such activities address curricular needs.

2.4 Key enablers to biodiversity action

2.4.1 The resurrection of the Ynys Môn Wildlife Forum as the Ynys Môn Local Biodiversity Partnership (LNP) represented a significant step in enabling successful, community-based biodiversity action. Ynys Môn LNP is a body constituted of a number of different organisations representing a varied spectrum of interests. Its remit includes:

- a. Building cross-sector partnerships;
- b. Capacity-building;

- c. Local activities that meet multiple needs while delivering NRAP priorities;
- d. Building the evidence-base;
- e. Advocacy and influencing; and
- f. Succession.

2.4.2 The LNP Co-ordinator has been in post for a year and, dependent upon whether revenue funding is made available for 2023-24 or not, the intention is to employ an assistant to the Co-ordinator in order to build capacity to enable a more focused approach to biodiversity project development and implementation.

2.4.3 As previously referred to, access to current ecological data is a key enabler to biodiversity action hence the pursuit of a SLA with Cofnod LERC. It is anticipated that this matter will be concluded during the first quarter of 2023.

2.4.4 Collaborative working with other organisations can deliver larger projects with greater biodiversity benefits. The Wild Landfill project is a collaboration between the County Council, Gwynedd Council and Natural Resources Wales (NRW). It seeks to optimise conditions for biodiversity at closed landfill sites and has resulted in significant work at both the Penhesgyn and Clegir Mawr sites (including the planting of 24,000 trees). The improved sites have significant potential to provide an educational resource for local schools and colleges.



Tree planting at Penhesgyn Landfill Site, Menai Bridge

2.5 Barriers to action

Understanding the requirements of s6

2.5.1 The need to fully understand the responsibilities laid out by s6 is imperative if the duty is to be properly discharged. An effective means of doing this would be to establish a cross-service officer group. This remains an outstanding priority of the Action Plan but will be addressed in early 2023.

2.5.2 Training on biodiversity matters is essential in order to foster understanding in relation to the s6 duty. In this regard, arrangements for an in-house training event for relevant officers/elected members are being made and it is expected that such an event will be held in the first quarter of 2023.

Access to ecological data

2.5.3 Having little or poor access to ecological data can be detrimental to the success of projects hence the need to conclude the SLA process with Cofnod. As

previously referred to, it is anticipated that this process will be concluded in early 2023.

Climate change

- 2.5.4 UNESCO succinctly describes the relationship between climate change and biodiversity as:

Climate change is a major driver of biodiversity erosion, and loss of biodiversity also accelerates climate change processes, as the capacity of degraded ecosystems to assimilate and store CO₂ tends to decrease. Humanity therefore has a global responsibility to address these two challenges and the interactions between them.

<https://www.unesco.org/en/climate-change/biodiversity>

- 2.5.5 The County Council declared a climate emergency in September 2020 and committed the Council to becoming a Carbon Neutral organisation by 2030. The Corporate Biodiversity Plan recognises the obvious links between climate change and biodiversity in setting the following objective:

Link biodiversity benefits to Climate Change Strategy, decarbonisation agenda and waste reduction/recycling programmes

- 2.5.6 The Net Zero Plan reciprocates this recognition in listing land use and biodiversity amongst its projects and interventions to assist in reaching a Net Zero position by 2030. In this regard, the Plan commits to enhancing the variety of biodiversity on Council land, increasing tree cover on Council land and developing new green public infrastructure.

Habitat loss and degradation

- 2.5.7 Habitat loss or degradation arises from practices that are incompatible with habitat integrity such as industrial or other development. The previously-mentioned projects at Clegir Mawr and Penhesgyn are examples of projects aimed at restoring habitat and reversing degradation.



Pollution

- 2.5.8 Pollution can take several forms and all can impact negatively on nature. The Dark Skies Partnership has published “Goleuo Da”, a good lighting guide for business and communities developed to counter disruption to wildlife, the impact on human health and to address climate change impacts. In terms of the impact of inappropriate lighting on wildlife, the document states:

Plants and animals depend on Earth’s daily cycle of light and dark to govern life-sustaining behaviours such as reproduction, nourishment, sleep and protection from predators. Evidence shows that artificial light at night has negative and deadly effects on many creatures including amphibians, birds, mammals, insects and plants. Over 60% of wildlife in the UK depends on darkness for its survival.

Goleuo Da (Dark Skies Partnership 2022)

- 2.5.9 In terms of reducing air pollution and the impact of vehicle emissions in particular, the County Council has expanded its fleet of electric vehicles. The Authority’s Countryside Service recently took delivery of three electric vehicles, two of which (a car and a van) were grant funded with an award made by Welsh Government, the other being a utility vehicle being funded by a grant award from NRW. These vehicles are in regular use by service staff.

Invasive species

- 2.5.10 Invasive species are among the leading threats to native wildlife. Their impacts on our natural ecosystems and economy can be extremely costly with many of our commercial, agricultural and recreational activities dependent on healthy native ecosystems. The County Council is involved in several projects (see Annex A) that attempt to address this problem.
- 2.5.10 The Countryside and AONB function are involved in several projects aimed at controlling or eradicating Invasive species and include:
- Anglesey’s Himalayan Balsam Partnership has developed a work programme targeting the species at source within catchment areas on the Island with the assistance of volunteers, contractors and landowners / occupiers.
 - Menai Rivers project involves protecting and raising awareness of two s7 priority species, namely water voles and otters, principally through working to control the invasive non-native American Mink.
 - Saving Our Squirrels Project looks to conserve red squirrels from the threat of greys.
- 2.5.11 The planning system provides a means to control invasive species where the development of land is concerned. Planning conditions can be used in this respect to prevent the introduction or spread of invasive species through development activity. Such conditions can require the submission and agreement of Biosecurity Risk Assessments and of long-term monitoring plans to manage any potential occurrence.

Compromised Biosecurity

- 2.5.12 Biosecurity refers to measures aimed at preventing the introduction and/or spread of harmful organisms (e.g. viruses, bacteria, etc.) to animals and plants in order to minimize the risk of transmission of infectious disease. Two current examples related to biosecurity on Anglesey are those of Ash Dieback (ADB) and Avian Influenza. The diseases pose significant risks to human and animal health and safety but also, in the case of ADB in particular, pose significant threats to habitat and to the numerous species of flora and fauna known to be dependent on ash trees.
- 2.5.13 The County Council initially employed an ADB Co-ordinator to address the impacts of ADB but has since expanded the role to that of ADB Project Manager with responsibilities to ensure that the county can recover from the impacts of the disease.
- 2.5.14 Avian Influenza has the potential to spread to the wild bird population and has been witnessed in other parts of the UK to devastating effect. The Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales emphasised that such a breakout reinforces the need for all keepers of poultry and other captive birds to practice the very highest levels of biosecurity so as to prevent its spread.

Staff resources

- 2.5.15 The County Council experienced difficulty in recruiting a suitably qualified ecologist following the departure of its Ecological Adviser in September 2021. The post was not filled until June 2022, is reflective of similar recruitment difficulties elsewhere and is an area of future concern. However, with the post now filled, a LNP Co-ordinator in post and the prospect of taking on a LNP assistant, if funding allows, future capacity in relation to biodiversity appears positive.

3.0 Case studies

- 3.1 The County Council has undertaken numerous projects related to biodiversity and habitat enhancement over the period 2019-22, some of which have been referred to earlier in this report. Such projects have mainly been grant-funded, whether in part or wholly, with grants obtained from various, diverse sources such as Local Places for Nature (Greening the Public Estate), Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and Green Recovery Fund grants.
- 3.2 Projects have varied in size and impact with the expected outcome for biodiversity proportionate to the size of project. Annex A of this report focuses on specific projects that have been undertaken and these case studies offer an insight into the varied nature of work undertaken to enhance biodiversity over a diverse range of sites and with focused expectations in terms of the delivery of specific outcomes.
- 3.3 In addition to undertaking Council-only projects, there have been instances where the County Council has worked collaboratively with other agencies on biodiversity-related projects. The case studies provided in the Annex will offer

a flavour of the variety of project undertaken and the expected outcomes in relation to biodiversity enhancement.

4.0 Action Report

- 4.1 Six objectives related to the Nature Recovery Action Plan were identified in the Action Plan contained within the Corporate Biodiversity Plan and the end of the first reporting period provides an appropriate time for assessing progress in their achievement. The progress identified provides a basis for a review of the Plan, an opportunity to update existing and set new objectives and align those objectives to other plans adopted by the County Council, principally the Council Plan, the Towards Net Zero Plan and individual service plans.
- 4.2 The Biodiversity Plan assigned several actions to each of the six objectives and listed these in tabular form with each action assigned to a particular lead officer and/or Service. Performance measures and expected outcomes were also attached to each action. Rather than review each action within the body of the report, Annex B of the report addresses the progress made in discharging the actions and working towards achievement of the overall objectives. Where expectations have not been met, recommendations are made as to how these issues should be addressed.
- 4.3 Overall, this report concludes that the majority of actions listed in the Action Plan have been fully or partially discharged contributing towards achievement of the objectives. However, certain key actions remain to be addressed and these form part of the recommendations that follow.

5.0 Conclusions (Review of Section 6 Duty)

- 5.1 The s6 duty places a specific requirement on PAs to maintain or enhance biodiversity so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions. In so doing, PAs must also seek to 'promote the resilience of ecosystems'. In adopting a Biodiversity Plan the County Council has recognised relevant actions that will contribute towards discharging the duty.
- 5.2 Overall, the County Council considers that it is discharging its responsibilities to maintain and enhance biodiversity through:
- a. Preparing and adopting a Biodiversity Plan which sets out clear actions that provide a basis to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity;
 - b. Aligning the Plan with other Council plans/policy documents thereby avoiding potential areas of conflict in terms of meeting set objectives eg Towards Net Zero Plan;
 - c. Identifying means of changing working practices that will benefit biodiversity but also result in cost/efficiency savings for the Authority;
 - d. Establishing strong working relationships with external partners and accessing appropriate funding streams (principally through the LNP but also by working in collaboration with other agencies) to deliver projects and initiatives that are focused on maintaining or enhancing biodiversity;

- e. Managing local nature sites for biodiversity gain;
- f. Addressing the problem of invasive species that negatively impact upon our native species;
- g. Restoring and/or creating new habitat as a means of increasing the range of species able to inhabit such areas;
- h. Where possible, addressing occurrences of biosecurity threats to local biodiversity;
- i. Engaging with educational and cultural establishments to encourage an interest in biodiversity and raise awareness of the benefits of a more biodiverse environment;
- j. Encouraging volunteering in nature-based initiatives; and
- k. Ensuring that development proposals deliver biodiversity enhancements.

5.2 The aim should be to build upon these strengths, ensuring that the Section 6 Duty continues to be discharged effectively by the County Council.

5.3 The County Council has shown itself to be a strong partner in delivering a diverse range of biodiversity-related projects. This sets a benchmark for continuity of performance whilst being focused upon the singular objective of delivering benefits to biodiversity and addressing the effects of the nature emergency declared by the Welsh Government on 30th June 2021.

5.4 The end of the first reporting period for the Biodiversity Plan provides an opportunity to review the Plan and consider whether the actions initially set in terms of meeting the six NRAP objectives remain relevant, whether some can be removed as completed or whether actions need to change in order to meet evolving or new challenges.

6.0 Recommendations for future action

6.1 Despite considering that it is discharging its section 6 duty effectively, the County Council recognises that several actions identified in the Biodiversity Plan remain outstanding. These are identified below and will be considered as priorities to address in the period following the publication of this report.

Recommendation 1: Cross-service Group
Establish a cross-service officer group to ensure the maintenance or improvement of biodiversity remains a consideration in formulating work programmes and activities. Each service will nominate appropriate officers to attend regular group meetings.
Reason: The need for dialogue is imperative in order to be able to continue to discharge the section 6 Duty effectively. It is imperative to work closer across services in this regard.
Action Plan objective(s): 1.5, 3.1, 6.1, 6.4

Recommendation 2: Biodiversity Monitoring and Reporting Structure
Establish a formal reporting structure within each service on actions to maintain or enhance biodiversity.
Reason: The lack of baseline data to enable the measurement of success of certain actions can affect the assessment of the contribution of those actions to biodiversity enhancement. Gathered data to inform the annual report to be presented to the Executive Committee.
Action Plan objective(s): 1.4, 6.1

Recommendation 3: Biodiversity Audit and Review of Policy Documents
Undertake a biodiversity audit of Council buildings and landholdings and assess relevant corporate/service plans and policy documents to establish extent of consideration of biodiversity coverage in relation to operational elements of service provision.
Reason: To understand the range of biodiversity interest present on the Council estate and to provide baseline data for the assessment of the effectiveness of actions contained within the Biodiversity Plan. Ensure that relevant policy documents include reference to the Duty in respect of maintaining or enhancing biodiversity
Action Plan objective(s): 1.1, 1.6, 1.7, 3.2, 5.3, 5.4

Recommendation 4: Staff and financial resources
Take advantage of revenue funding opportunities to build capacity to deal with biodiversity-related issues within the County Council whilst maximising capital funding opportunities to secure sufficient means to undertake new and maintain existing programmes.
Reason: Need to ensure sufficient capacity to deal with biodiversity issues within services (eg LNP revenue funding to strengthen LNP team) whilst attracting funding to finance biodiversity-related projects and initiatives that will ensure that the County Council can show progress in addressing the biodiversity duty, raise awareness of its responsibilities in relation to biodiversity enhancement and its benefits from the perspective of responding to climate change and the net zero agenda.
Action Plan objective(s): 1.2, 3.9, 6.3

Recommendation 5: Cofnod Service Level Agreement
Conclude SLA with Cofnod (LERC for North Wales).
Reason: To ensure ready access to ecological data that can be used to inform projects and other activities where biodiversity impacts may arise and mitigation may be required.
Action Plan objective(s): 2.1, 3.1

Recommendation 6: Collaboration
Seek opportunities to collaborate with other agencies to deliver larger projects that can have wider-ranging benefits for biodiversity.
Reason: To deliver biodiversity enhancements on a larger scale
Action Plan objective(s): 3.5, 3.8, 3.9, 6.3

Recommendation 7: Training
Provide appropriate training on biodiversity-related issues to relevant officers and elected members.
Reason: The lack of understanding in relation to the Section 6 Duty has to be addressed to ensure that the duty's requirements are applied to all relevant work areas.
Action Plan objective(s): 5.2, 6.2

THE BIODIVERSITY AND RESILIENCE OF ECOSYSTEMS DUTY REPORT 2022

CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1: Planting and landscaping	
Project Title:	Pencadlys Glas (Green Headquarters) – biodiversity enhancement at the County Council office campus
Project Timetable:	Summer/Autumn
Project/Activity Lead:	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Funding Source:	Local Places for Nature (LPfN) - Greening the Public Estate
Grant Allocation:	£25,000
<p>The purpose of the project was to introduce measures to enhance biodiversity on the grounds around the main Isle of Anglesey County Council Offices and the library in Llangefni.</p> <p>Although the area already had significant tree cover and supported an array of species, both flora and fauna, it was somewhat fragmented and it was felt could be improved to create a better, richer habitat for biodiversity. The conversion of areas of the existing grassland to wildflower meadow was considered to be of particular importance to support pollinators. Notable species that have been observed on site that were considered may benefit from enhanced habitat work included kingfisher, red squirrel and otter.</p> <p>MAIN OBJECTIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance areas of habitat by increasing tree cover, improving existing hedgerows and planting of new hedgerows to reduce fragmentation. • Plant native species that are most beneficial to wildlife, which will provide food and shelter throughout the year. • Ensure that the work is aesthetically pleasing and accessible. Evidence shows that a thriving, wildlife-rich environment can benefit people’s physical and mental health <p>Area 1 Plant 4 (1.75 - 2 metre) relatively small growing trees (such as birch, rowan or crab apple) on the steep bank at rear of main council office building to conform with trees that are planted on other steep grass banks in the vicinity. A row of dogwood (40 plants) will also to be planted to form a new hedgerow to match existing hedges in the area.</p> <p>Area 2 Plant 50m² wild flower turf on area of bare ground and plant 6 trees (1.75 -2 metre).</p> <p>Area 3 Plant approximately 3 (1.75 - 2 metre) relatively small growing trees such as birch, rowan or crab apple on the grass along road side whilst ensuring trees are planted in a manner that does not impact visibility for traffic using council car parks. Also scope to plant 3 more trees on the grass adjacent verge.</p> <p>Area 4 Fill gaps in existing dogwood hedgerow by planting approximately 20 plants (60cm). Additional dogwood or similar hedgerows (30 plants) to be created on two sides of generator compound along fence.</p> <p>Area 5 Fill gaps in existing beech hedgerow by planting approximately 20 plants (60cm). 10 Trees (1.75 – 2 metre) to be planted on grass bank in front of beech hedge and on grass verge behind beech hedge. Areas of wildflowers (30m²) to be planted on grass areas adjacent to council offices entrance.</p> <p>Area 6 Plant 220m² of wild flower turf near main council office building in between existing hedges.</p>	

Area 7

Plant 50m² area of wild flower turf near bridge in car park.

Area 8

Plant 800m² area of wild flower turf and plant 30 trees (1.75-2 metre) of mixed native species on grass area between library and council offices. Trees to be widely spaced in order to maintain open “park land” style. Plant 30 metres of hazel (40 plants) to form hedgerow against library fence.

Area 9

Plant 120m² area of wild flower turf around library entrance and on elevated grass down the side of building adjacent to road.

Specification of products / species to be used in project.

WILD FLOWER TURF – LANDSCAPE 34 MIX

- Turf is made up of 34 UK native wildflowers and grasses, minimum 75% wildflowers.
- Suitable for a range of soil types.
- All ground landscaping applications from 30m² to 10,000m².
- Shade and drought tolerant.
- Low Maintenance – one to two cuts a year.

Most abundant species in mix include:

Common Name	Scientific Name
Autumn Hawkbit	<i>Scorzoneroides autumnalis</i>
Betony	<i>Stachys officinalis</i>
Birdsfoot Trefoil	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>
Bladder Campion	<i>Silene vulgaris</i>
Cats Ear	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>
Common Knapweed	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>
Common Sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>
Common Vetch	<i>Vicia sativa ssp. segetalis</i>
Common Toadflax	<i>Linaria vulgaris</i>

LARGE POT GROWN TREES (175-200CM)

- All native species
- Larger size to make instant impact on site

Species to be considered (subject to availability) include:

Common Name	Scientific Name
Sessile Oak	<i>Quercus petraea</i>
Common Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>
Silver Birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>
Rowan	<i>Sorbus acuparia</i>
Whitebeam	<i>Sorbus aria</i>
Wild Cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>
Small Leaved Lime	<i>Tilia cordata</i>
Yew	<i>Taxus baccata</i>
Scots Pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>

Field Maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>								
<p><u>SMALLER CELL GROWN TREES (60CM)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All native species • Smaller size primarily to be used as hedging <p>Species to be considered (subject to availability) include:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="193 414 978 577"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="193 414 568 459">Common Name</th> <th data-bbox="568 414 978 459">Scientific Name</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="193 459 568 504">Hazel</td> <td data-bbox="568 459 978 504"><i>Corylus avellana</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="193 504 568 548">Dogwood</td> <td data-bbox="568 504 978 548"><i>Cornus alba</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="193 548 568 577">Beech</td> <td data-bbox="568 548 978 577"><i>Fagus sylvatica</i></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Common Name	Scientific Name	Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Dogwood	<i>Cornus alba</i>	Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>
Common Name	Scientific Name								
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>								
Dogwood	<i>Cornus alba</i>								
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>								
Outcomes and future management	<p>The scheme was implemented during September 2019. One tree failed and will have to be replaced although its location does not affect the main part of the scheme which is located around the office building's main car park. The plants used to block up the gaps in the dogwood hedge have all taken and will fulfil their purpose fairly promptly.</p> <p>The areas of wildflower meadow successfully germinated and have produced striking displays of wild flowers over the last two summers, providing an attractive display to those entering the campus premises. The intention is to increase the area of wildflower planting on land adjacent to the Public Library. This area consists of steeply sloping land which is currently maintained as mown grassland. Mown paths will be provided through the wildflower areas making it a pleasant environment for the public and staff members to walk through. It is also intended to provide benches/picnic tables within this area so as to enable staff members to take their breaks in a pleasant environment, particularly during the spring and summer.</p>								

Case Study 2: Verge Management	
Project Title:	Verge Mowing Policy
Project Timetable:	Ongoing
Project/Activity Lead:	Isle of Anglesey County Council (Highways, Property & Waste Service)
Funding Source:	Service budget
Grant Allocation:	n/a
<p>The County Council's current mowing policy dictates that the verges on all Class I and II roads are mown three times during the season whilst verges on Class III and unclassified roads are mown twice. The number of cuts has been reduced on rural roads since 2010 as a result of budgetary constraints but also with a view to encouraging wild flower growth and the establishment of essential habitat for wildlife on the Island's road network.</p> <p>The mowing of verges is principally undertaken on the basis of maintaining the safety of road users. Without careful management and maintenance work, verges would become overgrown and populated by brambles and scruff and their biodiversity value would reduce as a result. By regularly managing rural road verges this helps to increase species diversity and suppresses competing species, such as grasses, from suppressing wild flower growth.</p> <p>Verges on Class III and IV roads are mown twice a year with the first cut usually timed to commence at the beginning of summer with the second cut being undertaken in early autumn. During both cycles only a 1m strip is mown on all such roads, especially on highways where there is a wealth of species present.</p> <p>There is not much habitat value to the first metre back from the edge of the carriageway given its proximity to the areas traversed by vehicles. The third cycle represents a full cut and occurs at the completion of the flowers' lifecycle and when they have set their seed. As such, striking displays of wild flowers can be seen on the highway network and these provide a rich source of pollen and nectar for pollinators throughout the spring and summer months.</p> <p>Not only does the two-cut programme curb grass growth and replenish the wild flower seed bank, but it also improves safety for road users, reduces the management burden over time and saves money.</p> <p>The County Council has consulted with the North Wales Wildlife Trust (NWWT) in relation to this work and have formulated a specific plan which protects wildlife in particular areas. The NWWT fully supports the County Council's current highway verge mowing policy. Additionally, the authority has been collaborating with NWWT for a number of years to manage 20 individual areas of verge specifically for wildlife. The sites in question are marked on the highway with a white triangle and, on some verges, the grass that is mown is moved from the site during the winter in order to prevent the suppression of wild flowers in the following season.</p> <p>Operation of the policy is estimated to have realised savings of around £7,000 per annum .</p>	
Outcomes and future management	The operation of this policy has certainly seen an increase in wildflower presence in highway verges and this has been instrumental in the growth of habitat for wildlife, especially for pollinators. It is a policy that has succeeded in delivering on its proposed outcomes, not only in terms of achieving cost savings/efficiencies but also in improving the conditions for biodiversity to flourish.

Case Study 3: Habitat Creation/Restoration	
Project Title:	Clegir Mawr Habitat Restoration
Project Timetable:	Summer 2021 with ongoing management and aftercare
Project/Activity Lead:	Collaboration between the County Council (Waste Management and Planning Services) and Natural Resources Wales
Funding Source:	LNP Challenge Fund (Clegir Mawr)
Grant Allocation:	£167,000 plus additional £32,050 for additional enhancement work
<p>The grant funded the restoration of nature on a total of 133 acres of land and the project was based on the demonstration flagship project at Penhesgyn landfill site on Anglesey, and the two landfill sites, Ffridd Rasmus and Llwyn Isaf, in Gwynedd.</p> <p>The capital asset that was created extended to 10 acres of wildflower meadow management and 10 acres of mosaic woodland habitat (tree planting), increasing connectivity and extent of the landscape. This was combined with soil ecosystem restoration, glade and pond/scrape creation to encourage an increase in amphibians, insects and native mammals such as Water Voles. The scheme maximises the increase in biodiversity through mosaic habitat creation, encouraging a rich and varied edge habitat, increasing site water storage and carbon capture as well as increasing biodiversity.</p> <p>The grant funded contractors to plant approximately 10,000 trees and shrubs, undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (statutory for all large planting schemes), wildflower meadow, management, including machinery for meadow management and seed harvesting, and infrastructure for stock management for sustainable grazing practice. Ecological Consultants surveys were also necessary to ensure the right environmental outcomes for the site and measure success at the end of the programme.</p> <p>This project followed on from a similar flagship/first for Wales demonstrator project with the County Council at Penhesgyn Closed Landfill. Up to 10,000 trees and shrubs have been planted, hedge and boundary expansion and restoration, carbon and soil ecosystem improvement, water storage and purification, pond formation and biodiversity enhancement amongst many other outcomes. Given the flagship project implemented at Penhesgyn Landfill, the approach was known to work. The project has expanded this successful initiative and further demonstrates this approach as a potential template for habitat creation and connectivity across the whole of Wales as landfill are ubiquitous in the landscape. Multiple partners were engaged across third sector and universities, local authorities, politicians and NRW creating a template for extensive habitat creation on brownfield sites an associated improved grassland across Wales.</p> <p>The grant funded access to the site to allow ponds and scrape creation, scrub encroachment, meadow management, and stock grazing. A rocky outcrop, important for its sensitive botanical habitat was protected from trampling by fencing and a platform for people to stand on.</p> <p>The First Ministers 'modest measures' were targeted as part of this proposal. Responding to the climate change emergency, increasing the scale and extent of wildflower meadow and increasing capacity for wildflower and tree seed harvesting and distribution through Plantlife and community groups. Carbon capture and soil storage was achieved through the establishment of a carbon rich mosaic habitat across 133 acres on the site. Multiple ecosystems were developed through management of pre-existing conditions. In addition up to 10,000 native new trees were planted. This mosaic habitat development including extensive marginal habitat enhances the biodiversity value of the closed landfill. By creating this area, it has increase connectivity of similar habitats already in the area, increasing biodiversity.</p>	
Outcomes and future management	<p>The work undertaken has created new and restored favourable, mosaic habitat for a more diverse habitat and the work undertaken has fulfilled the brief in this regard.</p> <p>A Biodiversity Baseline Survey prepared for the site provides indication of where to target management and what increases in biodiversity might look like. The initial survey recorded 145 (increased to 166 following second survey) plant species, 28 bird species (including 8 significant species) and</p>

	<p>67 species of moth and butterfly (including two significant butterfly species and four s7 species of moth) recorded.</p> <p>Future management will focus upon conservation grazing to control grasses and ensure more favourable conditions for species of wild flower to flourish. Appropriate aftercare measures will be applied to the trees planted with dead or dying trees being replaced with trees of similar size and species.</p> <p>Follow-up ecological surveys will enable assessment of the success of the project through demonstrating changes to species numbers and the incidence of new species.</p> <p>The site will also be available to be utilised as an educational/training resource for local schools and colleges.</p>
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Case Study 4: Invasive Species	
Project Title:	Himalayan Balsam Control
Project Timetable:	2022-24
Project/Activity Lead:	Isle of Anglesey County Council (Countryside & AONB Unit)
Funding Source:	Natural Resources Wales
Grant Allocation:	c.£40K
<p>Isle of Anglesey's AONB Invasive Species project works along Anglesey river catchments to control Himalayan Balsam. Anglesey's Himalayan Balsam Partnership develop a work programme targeting Himalayan Balsam at source within catchment areas on the Island with the assistance of volunteers, contractors and landowners / occupiers. The project also engages with community groups and schools to raise awareness, understanding and participation.</p> <p>The work undertaken in relation to this project was able to continue through the Covid-19 period although depended fully on the use of contractors due to the restrictions in place. The project did not involve the use of volunteers during the period when Covid restrictions were in force. During this period, contractors undertaking the work had to adapt and abide by the Covid-19 restrictions which required the use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), the completion of Covid-19 risk assessments and abiding by social distancing rules.</p> <p>During 2022, the contractors prioritised controlling Balsam on the same sites as previous years to ensure continuous improvement whilst looking to tackle the problem at new sites too.</p>	
Outcomes and future management	<p>A reduced incidence of balsam in the areas covered by the project.</p> <p>In terms of future management, the use of volunteer labour will resume. Although 2024 is the cut-off in respect of current funding, it is expected that volunteer input will remain beyond this point.</p>

Case Study 5: Invasive Species	
Project Title:	Menai Rivers Biodiversity Project
Project Timetable:	January 2019 - present
Project/Activity Lead:	Menter Môn/Isle of Anglesey County Council (Countryside & AONB Unit)
Funding Source:	SDF
Grant Allocation:	£10,750
<p>This biodiversity-led project covers fifteen different river catchments in Anglesey and Gwynedd and is undertaken as a response to the threat to local biodiversity posed by the American Mink. Without intervention the predation problems caused by the mink could lead to a significant reduction in numbers and the eventual extinction of the water vole which is a s7 species.</p> <p>The work consists of the location of a combination of monitoring rafts and trail cameras which are used to monitor particular stretches of river for the presence of mink. The project involves working with communities and has resulted in the establishment of a network of River Custodians, a group of volunteers responsible for implementing a programme of monitoring, engagement and control to ensure Anglesey remains a refuge for protected species. In addition to this, the project arranges guided walks, talks, survey days and training events for volunteers.</p> <p>In terms of outputs, the project has created 3 jobs with one being a full-time post and the remaining two, part-time. The work entails the continual monitoring of 76 mink rafts across 15 different sites and river catchments. Two water vole surveys have been undertaken.</p> <p>Social media accounts provide regular updates on the project's activities and progress and the expectation is that this will engage the public and raise awareness of issues affecting riverside wildlife. The project has generated in excess of 400 followers on its social media platforms.</p>	
Outcomes and future management	<p>Establish a programme of monitoring; local engagement of volunteers; control mink numbers and ensure a safer environment for protected species to flourish and grow.</p> <p>It is important that collaborative working continues between partners in relation to this project.</p>

Case Study 6: Educational & Cultural	
Project Title:	Massey Sisters (Oriel Môn)
Project Timetable:	Summer 2021 with ongoing management and aftercare
Project/Activity Lead:	Isle of Anglesey County Council (Learning Service)
Funding Source:	LPfN (Greening the Public Estate)
Grant Allocation:	£24,900
<p>The project involves the establishment of a wildflower meadow and the formation of a pond for habitat creation. Alongside the establishment of the meadow is the provision of interpretation to highlight the work of the Massey Sisters.</p> <p>The sisters hailed from Llangoed and were botanists and artists with a remarkable talent for making detailed and exceptional botanical studies despite not having benefitted from much training! The paintings were of watercolour and there are known to be more than 500 studies, annotated with the species names in Welsh, English and Latin. The collection of watercolour paintings was bought at auction by Anglesey Borough Council for £2,000 in 1982 and are retained and displayed at the Oriel.</p> <p>The interpretation boards focus on the loss of wild flower meadows from the landscape due to modern agricultural practices and incorporate the paintings of the Massey Sisters.</p> <p>The plants depicted on the interpretation boards include Welsh and English descriptions and are amongst the wild flowers that can be seen in the planted meadow. The linkage between the sisters and the planted meadow is apparent and can be further appreciated by visitors to the Oriel by viewing the collection items that are on display inside the building. The meadow, once in flower, will also contribute to an aesthetically pleasing setting for the Oriel.</p> <p>The pond will provide habitat for a number of species in addition to providing an attractive feature in the overall setting of the Oriel. The margin of the pond will be planted with wetland species and a dipping platform will provide an educational asset for use by local schools.</p>	
Outcomes and future management	<p>The project seeks to highlight the loss of wild flower meadows over time and explains how their re-establishment can contribute to a greater diversity of habitat and species that inhabit them. This is especially true of pollinators. The pond will provide habitat for further species in addition to being an educational asset for local schools.</p> <p>Future management will involve maintaining appropriate mowing practices in relation to the meadow so that the wild flowers can establish and thrive.</p>

Case Study 7: Species Establishment/Consolidation	
Project Title:	Saving Our Squirrels
Project Timetable:	2021-22
Project/Activity Lead:	Red Squirrel Trust Wales (RSTW)
Funding Source:	SDF
Grant Allocation:	£9720
<p>The project has conserved Red Squirrels from the threat of non-native invasive Grey squirrels crossing the Menai Strait from Gwynedd to Anglesey. It has involved working with local people including those currently voluntarily managing 235 red squirrel feeding stations which together form an 'island early warning and detection network' to detect disease in squirrels and the presence of grey squirrels. The project has raised awareness of the impact of invasive species.</p> <p>A contractor was employed (Red Squirrel Ranger) to co-ordinate volunteers and to control grey squirrels within the AONB including woodlands on the Gwynedd side of the Menai Strait where they threaten to repopulate Anglesey.</p> <p>The project contributed towards conserving 80% of the Welsh red squirrel population through preventing incursion by grey squirrels onto Anglesey and their live capture trapping and dispatching along the Menai Strait on the Gwynedd mainland. Since 2017 there have been three outbreaks of Squirrelpox and projects run by the RSTW have successfully prevented the infection spreading from the mainland to the island.</p> <p>Over the duration of this project, 72 grey squirrels were dispatched across Treborth, Faenol and Nantporth. No grey squirrels were detected on the island. Disease surveillance of the red squirrel population continued and relied on local people reporting sick animals. A number of animals were found with skin lesions suggestive of the <i>staphylococcus</i> virus however, none have proved to be Squirrelpox virus.</p> <p>Operating during Covid-19 restrictions there was a significant increase in numbers of people using the Faenol coastal woodlands. During this period the project experienced difficulties as three remote passive infra-red wildlife cameras were damaged and stolen. Volunteers have since met with the Red Squirrel Ranger who has provided new suitable locations for monitoring where there are reduced visitor numbers.</p> <p>Regular news was shared about the project on RSTW's social media feeds. The Facebook page in particular is very popular with the local community with many people sharing photographs of red squirrels in their gardens or in local woodlands, thus demonstrating the enjoyment people experience from seeing this charismatic, iconic species.</p> <p>RSTW have contributed data to Welsh Government officials developing a new Agriculture White Paper which contains new laws to better protect red squirrel habitat. Soon, enforceable conditions to protect or enhance wildlife will be included in tree felling licences as necessary.</p> <p>RSTW have co-worked with a number of organisations (including: NRW, National Trust, Menter Môn) through providing habitat and land management advice. RSTW have liaised with Dr Josh Twining and Dr Dave Tosh to learn about their experience of pine marten research in Ireland. In parallel they contributed data to a modelling project undertaken by Heriot Watt University which showed that in the absence of grey squirrel control, grey squirrels would colonise Anglesey quickly. When pine marten are present the rate of colonisation is reduced and could reverse grey squirrel spread if predation rates on greys are high. Four pine martens have been released in the Bangor area with the hope that they will breed. Pine martens can catch grey squirrels thereby reducing populations and assisting the red squirrel population to recover.</p>	
Outcomes and future management	The expected outcome for this project is to control the incidence of grey squirrels to enable native red squirrels to flourish. The use of pine martens to predate on grey squirrels in woodland on the Gwynedd side of the Menai Strait is expected to act as a good deterrent to grey squirrels being able to come over to the Island.

	<p>The use of “citizen science” is central to this project with the vigilance of local residents to record and report incidences of grey squirrel incursion to Red Squirrel Trust Wales being key to the continued successful re-population of the Island with red squirrels.</p>
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Case Study 8: Volunteering	
Project Title:	Wild Volunteering
Project Timetable:	2 years
Project/Activity Lead:	NWWT
Funding Source:	SDF
Grant Allocation:	£7,257
<p>The aim of the project is to improve the lives and prospects of young people in North Wales by strengthening their connection to the natural world.</p> <p>The project works with cohorts of young people from schools, colleges and youth groups and encourages them to continue volunteering and contribute to positive environmental action in their communities. This project aims to support/raise awareness of four key species on Anglesey, which are at risk; these include Yellowhammer, Swift, Harvest Mouse and Sandwich Tern.</p> <p>The project has been delivered to four primary schools (total of 146 pupils) and 1 secondary school (total of 22 pupils) and has so far provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 On site Walks and Events held (124 attendees); • 4 Talks held (101 attendees); and • 7 Surveys / Workshops (26 attendees). 	
Outcomes and future management	<p>The project will encourage participants to continue volunteering in addition to raising awareness of species that are at risk.</p> <p>A new bid for funding is to be made for the work to continue.</p>

Case Study 9: Addressing Climate Change	
Project Title:	Tree Nursery
Project Timetable:	2022-25
Project/Activity Lead:	Isle of Anglesey County Council (Countryside & AONB Unit)
Funding Source:	Sustainable Landscape Sustainable Places (SLSP)
Grant Allocation:	£85K
<p>This project involves the growing and planting of trees to support Welsh Government's proposed Sustainable Farming Scheme, other relevant schemes within the AONB and increase tree planting due to current and future losses attributed to ash die-back on Anglesey.</p> <p>Anglesey is the least wooded lowland landscape in Wales.</p> <p>Over 80% of trees grown will be planted in the AONB with the remaining 20% planted on land adjoining the AONB to enhance connectivity.</p> <p>In terms of the nursery's operation, this is expected to be on a co-operative/partnership model to be established with relevant members of the AONB's Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) and Local Nature Partnership (LNP).</p>	
Outcomes and future management	Growing and planting of trees will contribute to nature recovery, connectivity and in the longer term mitigate against the impacts of climate change through carbon capture and storage.

Case Study 10: Habitat Restoration and Management	
Project Title:	Heathland
Project Timetable:	2022-25
Project/Activity Lead:	Isle of Anglesey County Council (Countryside & AONB Unit) & relevant partners
Funding Source:	SLSP
Grant Allocation:	£120,000
<p>Lowland heathland is a rare and threatened priority habitat. Anglesey supports approximately 900ha (2003 data) of lowland heathland which represents 1.3 % of the whole land surface of the island. In a national context, Anglesey constitutes around 12.5% of the lowland heathland in Wales (Anglesey Heathland Strategy 2003)</p> <p>The project involves the production of a Heathland Strategy and Action Plan for Anglesey's AONB and will also involve heathland conservation and management in high priority areas.</p> <p>The project will be undertaken in collaboration with the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) and Local Nature Partnership (LNP)</p>	
Outcomes and future management	<p>Production of Heathland Strategy and Action Plan for Anglesey's AONB which will necessitate revising and updating the 2003 Anglesey Heathland Strategy.</p> <p>Future management will entail the undertaking heathland conservation and management on high priority areas in years 1-3 of the SLSP funding programme</p>

Case Study 11: Habitat Restoration and Management	
Project Title:	Wildflower Meadows
Project Timetable:	22-25
Project/Activity Lead:	C & AONB & partners
Funding Source:	SLSP
Grant Allocation:	£70K
<p>97% of the UK's wildflower meadows have been lost since the 1930s. The project involves the planting, conservation and management of wildflower meadows. This is to counter the significant loss of such meadows that support important biodiversity, pollinators especially.</p> <p>The project will be delivered in partnership with the Joint Advisory Committee and Local Nature Partnership.</p>	
Outcomes and future management	The project will deliver the production of Wildflower Meadows' Strategy and Action Plan for Anglesey's AONB in addition to undertaking wildflower meadows' conservation and management on high priority areas in years 1-3 of the SLSP funding programme.

Case Study 12: Habitat Restoration and Management	
Project Title:	Anglesey Rivers
Project Timetable:	22-25
Project/Activity Lead:	Isle of Anglesey County Council (Countryside & AONB) & North Wales Rivers' Trust
Funding Source:	SLSP
Grant Allocation:	£75K
<p>99% of British rivers have artificial barriers obstructing migrating fish. There has been an 83% decline in freshwater species globally since 1970. 1% of the earth's surface is made of freshwater ecosystems, yet they provide habitat for over 100,000 species.</p> <p>The Anglesey Rivers project will be undertaken in collaboration with the North Wales Rivers Trust (NWRT) and will introduce buffer zone fencing with the provision of alternative drinking water supplies for livestock.</p> <p>Additionally, trees will be planted to connect isolated patches of woodland along the river corridor.</p>	
Outcomes and future management	<p>The outcomes are expected to be improved habitat connectivity in addition to improving the footpath links and public access between communities</p> <p>Landowners/tenants/NWRT will have future management responsibilities</p>

ANNEX B

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

No.	Action	Evidence of achievement	Comment	Future Actions
1.1	<i>The County Council needs to consider its impact and relationship to the natural environment in all its activities.</i>	<p><i>The County Council's Plan (2017-22) recognises the island's natural and built environments are vital to the tourism sector. It continues that these unique features need to be safeguarded and enhanced and their value as socio-economic resources maximised.</i></p> <p><i>In doing so, the County Council commits to developing the Island sensitively whilst safeguarding its natural assets, ensuring that Planning decisions support the aims and objectives of the Council Plan and increasing recycling rates to 70% whilst reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill</i></p>	<i>Inclusion of strategic objective in Council Plan (2017-22)</i>	<i>Continuation of inclusion of environmental protection in forthcoming Council Plan (2023-28). Include more explicit reference to maintaining and improving biodiversity in line with the s6 requirement.</i>
1.2	<i>Reactivate Anglesey Wildlife Forum as the Local Nature Partnership and ensure that there is a strong relationship between the LNP and Council services</i>	<i>Partnership reactivated and several meetings held.</i>	<i>Partnership reactivated and Local Wildlife Officer appointed to act as co-ordinator</i>	<i>Look to increase frequency of LNP meetings, principally to discuss ideas for new and updates on ongoing projects. Meetings currently held on 6 monthly basis.</i>
1.3	<i>Adopt a Corporate Biodiversity Plan to deliver on the biodiversity and ecosystems resilience duty</i>	<i>Corporate Biodiveristy Plan adopted</i>	<i>Adopted by Executive Committee in January 2021</i>	<p><i>Continue to deliver against the objectives set in the Action Plan and seek to address outstanding actions.</i></p> <p><i>Review Plan to identify areas that require updating and/or</i></p>

				<i>amending to reflect changed circumstances</i>
1.4	<i>Publish report on how actions set out in the Biodiversity Plan are being met or worked towards</i>	<i>Draft report completed and to be presented to Executive for agreement before publishing</i>	<i>Draft report for period 2020/2022 completed</i>	<i>None necessary until next reporting period deadline</i>
1.5	<i>Engage with Heads of Service to note the requirements within the Biodiversity Duty</i>	<i>Consultation on draft Biodiversity Plan</i>	<i>Consultation on draft versions of the Plan but little response – liaison group to be formed as a conduit to relay information etc. to individual services</i>	<i>Establish inter-service officer topic/liaison group to integrate biodiversity as a consideration in setting work programmes and priorities</i> <i>Align and log-in with corporate processes surrounding service delivery planning and self-assessments</i>
1.6	<i>Assess relevant policy documents for inclusion of biodiversity references and suggest amendments where necessary</i>	<i>Not yet done</i>	<i>There needs to be a review of relevant policy documents to ensure that biodiversity is a consideration. Although some documents consider biodiversity eg Joint Local Development Plan, Ash Dieback Action Plan</i>	<i>Consider policy documents to be assessed for inclusion of relevant policies</i>
1.7	<i>Link biodiversity benefits to Climate Change Strategy, decarbonisation agenda and waste reduction/recycling programmes</i>	<i>Regular meetings between Climate Change Manager and Built & Natural Environment Manager to discuss biodiversity benefits/projects and how they contribute towards meeting net-zero objectives</i>	<i>Regular meetings contribute to quarterly reporting schedule on Towards Net Zero progress</i>	<i>Continue meetings that have mutual benefits in terms of addressing both climate change and nature emergencies.</i>

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

No.	Action	Evidence of achievement	Comment	Future Actions
2.1	Enter into service level agreement (SLA) with Cofnod Local Environmental Records Centre (LERC)	Agreement in process of being finalised and implemented	Discussions near to being finalised. Draft SLA comments being considered by Cofnod prior to finalising	Ensure that need for access to data are covered by SLA and remain relevant and renew SLA when appropriate
2.2	Give significant weight to the inclusion of biodiversity enhancements in planning applications	Planning applications now readily provide biodiversity enhancement as part of the proposed development. Where none proposed, applicants are requested to provide.	Failure to provide relevant proposals can be a reason to refuse permission. The Chief Planning Officer for Wales' letter of October 2019 clearly outlines this requirement	Continue to monitor planning applications for the inclusion of biodiversity enhancement and request submission where none provided
2.3	Securing compliance with relevant planning conditions/planning obligations requiring biodiversity enhancement in approved schemes to develop land	Planning enforcement team react to failure to comply with planning conditions	In addition to reacting to complaints, breaches of planning condition can be identified and pursued during site visits	Planning enforcement team set up to identify and react to breaches of condition relating to biodiversity enhancement
2.4	Provision of advice on biodiversity-related issues when consulted on applications	Consistent achievement of performance targets for responding to planning application consultations	There was a hiatus in performance following departure of Ecological Adviser in summer 2021 but, following a difficult recruitment process, a replacement ecologist has since been appointed and is maintaining levels in relation to meeting performance targets	Review performance targets to ensure they respond to service requirements. Continue to provide responses to consultation requests

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

No.	Action	Evidence of achievement	Comment	Future Actions
3.1	<i>Include biodiversity enhancements in new IACC schemes. For example: tree planting and wildlife areas for new schools. Create habitats in new projects, such as ponds, wetland, new tree planting.</i>	<i>Several examples highlighted in case studies provided in this report (Appendix 1)</i>	<i>Ensure that biodiversity continue to be included in Council-designed schemes</i>	<i>Cross-service officer group will be a useful forum for ensuring that biodiversity remain a consideration and important constituent of schemes/projects</i>
3.2	<i>Protect and Enhance Wildflower verges</i>	<i>See case study in Appendix 1 in relation to verge mowing policy</i>	<i>Policy advises mowing practices and frequency with regard to highway verges. Highways Service working with NWWT on appropriate management</i>	<i>Ensure adherence to mowing policy and review and amend where necessary. Maintain working relationship with NWWT</i>
3.3	<i>Removal/replacement tree planting arising from Ash Dieback (ADB) and establishment of recording system (including acquisition of tree asset management software)</i>	<i>ADB Action Plan; project manager appointed; LUTRA tree recording system utilised and numerous condition surveys undertaken of Council trees</i>	<i>Significant progress made in this regard including survey and mapping of Council trees. Need to consider ecological survey if tree felling necessary. Replanting schemes to include native species for habitat restoration</i>	<i>New project manager post will enable dedicated response to ADB issues whilst managing felling and re-planting programmes and the biodiversity implications of such programmes</i>
3.4	<i>Require maintenance/replacement of hedgerow in development schemes and enforce unauthorised removal</i>	<i>Conditioned in planning permissions and enforced where breaches of the Hedgerow Regulations</i>	<i>Enforcement action initiated when unauthorised removal identified or when breaches to conditions requiring retention</i>	<i>Planning enforcement team set up to identify and react to breaches of condition relating to hedgerow retention or unauthorised removal</i>
3.5	<i>Take necessary actions to ensure cleanliness of rivers and waterways</i>	<i>Project work undertaken in relation to excessive nitrate release to river water</i>	<i>Afon Wygyr project worked with local farmers to reduce nitrate seepage into river water with resultant improvements to conditions for freshwater fish and improved bathing conditions downstream</i>	<i>Seek further opportunities to be involved in similar projects with a view to improving water quality</i>
3.6	<i>Adopt a Tree Plan</i>	<i>Not yet done</i>	<i>Scheme similar to Welsh Government's "Plant!" scheme</i>	<i>Need to devise a scheme where trees planted on</i>

				<i>Council-based projects can be adopted by the public</i>
3.7	<i>Identify opportunities for habitat creation/improvement within the Council estate</i>	<i>Numerous projects undertaken within the Council Estate (eg Pencadlys Glas, Oriel Môn etc.)</i>	<i>See case studies for examples of work undertaken</i>	<i>Ensure that proper aftercare and management framework is in place to ensure continued success of projects to provide improved conditions for biodiversity.</i>
3.8	<i>Engagement with Volunteer groups to capitalise on opportunities to promote biodiversity and identify possible collaborative working opportunities</i>	<i>LNP work and further contacts made outside the LNP eg National Trust, Cadw etc.</i>	<i>There have been regular meetings of the LNP and talks have been given by the Local Wildlife Officer to numerous interest groups. In addition, there have been discussions with organisations such as Cadw and the National Trust on how they can improve their sites for the benefit of biodiversity.</i>	<i>Continue to hold regular LNP meetings and make contacts with external groups to advise as to improving conditions for biodiversity enhancement.</i>
3.9	<i>Identify and apply for external funding where necessary</i>	<i>Funding for projects has been accessed from a multitude of sources including LPfN, SDF and GRF</i>	<i>Case studies demonstrate the breadth of funding that has been utilised to fund projects</i>	<i>Continue to identify and apply for relevant funding sources</i>

NRAP Objective 4: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

No.	Action	Evidence of achievement	Comment	Future Actions
4.1	Ensure that development proposals maximise use of previously developed land	Applications for use of previously developed land considered in accordance with relevant national and local policies.	Identify brownfield sites for inclusion in future development plans	Continue to apply relevant planning policy considerations to proposals for the development of previously developed land.
4.2	Ensure that development proposals include provisions for biodiversity enhancements where appropriate	Planning applications tend to be accompanied by relevant biodiversity enhancement measures and, where not, applicants will be advised to provide in order that the application can be determined	Requirement reinforced by letter of Chief Planning Officer for Wales, October 2019. Applications can technically be refused if biodiversity enhancements are not proposed.	Continue to maintain position in respect of submission of biodiversity enhancement proposals to accompany planning applications.
4.3	Prepare a Plan to adapt to and mitigate climate change and enable the Island and County Council to adapt to life in a changing climate	Towards Net Zero Plan adopted 2022	Regular meetings between Climate Change Manager and Built & Natural Environment Manager to report on how projects contribute towards Net Zero	Maintain regular meetings to ensure that up-to-date information is available to enable reporting
4.4	Continue to promote waste reduction and build upon the Council's successful recycling initiatives	One of highest performers in Wales	Comprehensive information on differing methods of waste management on Council website	Seek to explore further, innovative methods of waste reduction
4.5	Increase fleet of pool electric cars and prioritise their use over personal vehicles when on Council business	Fleet of pool cars and booking system available. Regular reminders to staff to use pool cars for business travel	Need to increase use of pool electric cars	Reinforce message in relation to pool car use and seek opportunities to increase fleet if possible
4.6	Realise opportunities for active travel routes, particularly where disused former transport corridors are concerned	Active Travel Network Map approved by Welsh Government in August 2022	Need to build on use of active travel routes experienced during lockdown periods (eg Lon Las Cefni)	Look to develop routes that can provide habitat and connectivity for biodiversity
4.7	Support projects/initiatives undertaken to secure removal of INNS eg projects overseen by Countryside and AONB Team and partners	Projects undertaken by Countryside & AONB Team in relation to Himalayan Balsam, American Mink and Grey Squirrel	See case studies for details	Projects ongoing. There will be a need to reconsider position upon expiry of funding streams

4.8	<i>Encourage the use of secondary/recycled aggregates over primary material where appropriate in development</i>	<i>Highways' material recycling centre at Gaerwen. Material generated to fulfil low-grade uses in place of primary aggregates</i>	<i>Need to ensure that where low-grade uses for fill material that this continues to be met by the use of recycled aggregates</i>	<i>Continue the practice of recycling highway-derived waste to produce secondary aggregates and use for lower-grade purposes</i>
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NRAP Objective 5: Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring

No.	Action	Evidence of achievement	Comment	Future Actions
5.1	Prepare and circulate electronic bulletin/newsletter highlighting relevant areas for compliance with wildlife law (all IACC elected members, staff and Town and Community Councils). Bulletin to be reviewed on a regular basis and updated where necessary	No general biodiversity newsletter had been prepared as yet but Local Wildlife Officer in process of developing social media options to reflect work related to LPfN project work and LNP work in general.	Revenue funding from LNP grant to be used in realising this work	Look to expand social media and other communication tools to inform about biodiversity enhancement and the s6 duty in general
5.2	Roll out appropriate biodiversity training to relevant officers and elected members	Some internal training events for members of the Development Management Team within the Planning Function	Discussion with Portfolio Holder in respect of arranging training events for members in relation to work for biodiversity enhancement undertaken on the Clegir Mawr and Penhesgyn closed landfill sites	Need to discuss training provision with HR so that a series of events can be held to inform relevant staff and elected members
5.3	Undertake a biodiversity audit of IACC buildings and landholdings	Not yet done, although there has been a survey undertaken of all trees on Council land	Data from tree survey can be used to inform biodiversity audit	Need to arrange for audit to be undertaken in order to identify areas of biodiversity value and manage these appropriately
5.4	Option to target obvious gain areas rather than blanket approach, e.g. where bat boxes and nest boxes could be fitted to IACC buildings.	Some evidence of this approach in Council-led projects (eg Clegir Mawr)	Need to consider doing more in this respect	Biodiversity audit of Council property can identify opportunities for biodiversity enhancement opportunities

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

No.	Action	Evidence of achievement	Comment	Future Actions
6.1	<i>Establish an inter-service officers' group with responsibilities to monitor progress of Plan actions and coordinate the reporting function.</i>	<i>Not yet done</i>	<i>To be done – identify relevant contacts to represent each service</i>	<i>Form inter-service group from identified contacts and establish regular meeting and reporting structure</i>
6.2	<i>Undertake a programme of regular briefing updates (at least every quarter) with the Environmental Portfolio Holder/Biodiversity Champion</i>	<i>First meeting held with new Portfolio Holder in August and subsequent guided visits to Clegir Mawr and Penhesgyn to view restoration/habitat creation/tree planting work</i>	<i>Meetings to be held on a quarterly basis to advise on biodiversity updates and on project progression</i>	<i>Adhere to the quarterly meeting programme unless extraordinary events dictate otherwise</i>
6.3	<i>Increase collaboration between IACC & relevant organisations / partnerships in order to improve collaborative working and joint funding opportunities on biodiversity matters</i>	<i>Have been working in partnership with several organisations. Much of this work facilitated by the LNP</i>	<i>Case studies highlight the breadth of organisations worked with in partnership</i>	<i>Continue to work collaboratively with external organisations looking to undertake work that will benefit biodiversity</i>
6.4	<i>Explore opportunities for IACC procurement team to include biodiversity in procurement considerations e.g. using wood products from sustainable sources and using peat-free compost</i>	<i>Not yet done</i>	<i>Need to ensure consistency of approach where procurement is concerned and that, where possible, materials procured can be demonstrated to be sustainably sourced</i>	<i>Can be addressed as part of work of the inter-service group</i>

1.0 Introduction and Context

1.1 Statutory requirements

- 1.1.1 In responding to the requirements of section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act (Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty), Public Authorities (PAs) must before the end of every third year after 2019, publish a report on what it has done to comply with this requirement. This report, prepared by the Regulation and Economic Development Service and includes the input of other Council Services, states what the County Council has done to comply with the section 6 duty between 2019 and 2022.

1.2 Description of Public Authority in relation to biodiversity

- 1.2.1 The County Council is a PA that carries the greater burden in terms of reporting on actions related to its Biodiversity Plan.

1.3 Spatial Scale and Place

- 1.3.1 Anglesey is an island of approximately 700km² in area whose population is around 69,000. The Island boasts numerous international, national and local biodiversity designations underpinned by varied natural resources and landscape.

1.4 Public Service Delivery

- 1.4.1 The County Council is a statutory member of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Service Board and a contributor to the North West Wales Area Statement. Both of these processes seek to conserve and promote the natural environment.

1.5 Biodiversity and IACC's functions and strategic objectives

- 1.5.1 One of the Council's three strategic objectives advocates protection of the natural environment whilst accommodating change and development in the Island's communities. This is reinforced by the objectives and actions laid out in the Corporate Biodiversity Plan.

1.6 Key policies and monitoring

- 1.6.1 Several corporate and service-specific documents set a firm policy footing for maintaining and enhancing biodiversity. Monitoring provision is built-in to these documents, which include:
- a) IACC Plan;
 - b) Towards Net-Zero Plan;
 - c) Gwynedd and Anglesey Well-being Plan;
 - d) Individual Service Delivery Plans;
 - e) Joint Local Development Plan.

1.7 Governance arrangements around the delivery of the s6 duty

- 1.7.1 The Head of Regulation and Economic Development has overall corporate management and operational responsibility and reports to the Council's Leadership Team. The portfolio holder for Planning, Public Protection & Climate Change carries political responsibility.
- 1.7.2 A cross-service group of officers will be formed in Q1 2023 to monitor, review and update Biodiversity Plan actions which will inform future reporting responsibilities.

2.0 Highlights, Key Outcomes and Issues

2.1 Key biodiversity actions

2.1.1 The following key actions for biodiversity have been implemented:

- a) Adoption of the Biodiversity Plan which provides a basis for assessing the Council's delivery of actions for biodiversity enhancement, improving green infrastructure provision and formalising a reporting structure;
- b) Assigning political responsibility for biodiversity to the relevant portfolio holder and holding regular meetings to update on biodiversity action;
- c) Establishing the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) to encourage community involvement and the distribution of grant funding for biodiversity projects - £450,000 over the last three years.
- d) Undertaking significant biodiversity enhancing projects such as the one at Clegir Mawr, Gwalchmai which seeks to provide mosaic habitat to accommodate a wide variety of species;
- e) Negotiating a service level agreement with the local environment records centre to obtain direct access to ecological data.

Financial Year	Partner projects	Council projects	Challenge Fund projects	Total
2020-21	£40,785	£37,465	N/A	£78,250
2021-22	£47,179	£24,900	£167,000	£239,079
2022-23	£101,070	£32,050	N/A	£133,120
	£189,034	£94,415	£167,000	£450,449

Table 1: Local Places for Nature grant awards 2020-23



Wildflower meadow at Clegir Mawr, Gwalchmai

2.2 Positive outcomes for health, social cohesion and economic benefits

2.2.1 Nature sites managed by the County Council have seen visitor numbers recover after significant reductions due to Covid restrictions supporting the theory that immersion in nature is beneficial to both mental wellbeing and physical health.

Financial Year	Dingle	Breakwater Park	Combined	Comments
2018-19	63,129	124,607	187,736	*Boardwalk at Dingle closed for 6 weeks due to new bridge construction in Q3
2019-20	60,159	91,815	151,974	
2020-21	0*	91,051	91,051	Dingle Boardwalk closed from March 20 to June 21 / Breakwater Park also closed for some months due to COVID.
2021-22	65,412	107,550	172,962	
2022-23 (4/22 -9/22)	19,066	62,167	81,233	Only Partial Data – 6 months only of current financial year as a reference.
* Dingle figures provided by counter on Boardwalk therefore 0 return due to Boardwalk being closed for duration of period				

Table 2: visitor number at Council-managed wildlife sites

2.2.2 Allotments are proven to provide benefits in terms of wellbeing and social cohesion in addition to being havens for wildlife, providing valuable habitat for pollinators in particular. Three allotments are located on Council-owned land with another being considered in Holyhead.



Llangefni Allotment Society plots

2.2.3 The green prescribing programme run by the Countryside Service promotes programmes involving immersion in nature with a view to improving health and wellbeing.



Green prescribing activities at Llyn Parc Mawr, Newborough

2.2.4 The County Council's Plan recognises the value of the Island's natural environment, the importance of safeguarding this asset and its current and potential contribution to the Island's economic prosperity.

2.3 Cost savings and efficiencies

2.3.1 Changing working practices that will benefit biodiversity can achieve savings and other efficiencies for the County Council. The following are provide examples:

- a) The Conservation Mowing Management Areas programme saves, on average, £7,000 per annum from reduced mowing frequencies in addition to providing enhanced habitat.
- b) Management of invasive species could prevent further, increased costs associated with larger eradication and other remedial projects;
- c) Use of voluntary labour offers obvious cost savings whilst delivering educational/skills benefits for volunteers.



Changed mowing practices to encourage wildflower growth, Talwrn

2.4 Key enablers to biodiversity action

2.4.1 Several key enablers to achieving biodiversity action have been identified. Amongst these are:

- a) Anglesey LNP which enables community-based biodiversity action;
- b) Access to ecological data enables Council projects to be well-informed from the planning stage through to completion;
- c) Working in collaboration with other organisations helps deliver larger, more ambitious projects that can deliver significantly greater biodiversity benefits. Such projects include the Wild Landfill initiative which has delivered significant biodiversity enhancement (including the planting of 24,000 trees) to previously degraded sites.



Tree planting at Penhesgyn Landfill Site, Menai Bridge

2.5 Barriers to action

2.5.1 Several elements have been identified as being barriers to biodiversity action. The County Council has sought to address these as follows:

- a) Looking to provide appropriate training to ensure that the requirements of the section 6 duty is fully understood.

- b) Seeking to address the lack of access to ecological data through agreeing a SLA with the local records centre;
- c) Appointing a Climate Change Manager to address the issue of climate change and to focus on becoming a net zero organisation by 2030;
- d) Addressing habitat loss and degradation through targeting projects to restore and enhance habitats;
- e) Addressing the effects of pollution through taking particular steps to reduce impacts that may detrimentally affect the natural environment eg, increase electrical vehicle fleet, producing technical guidance on lighting;
- f) Managing the presence of invasive species through several projects aimed at enhancing conditions for native species to thrive;
- g) Reacting promptly to biosecurity risks to the extent that further spread to wild/indigenous species are reduced or eliminated;
- h) Ensuring that there is capacity within services to deal with biodiversity-related issues.



Cattle used for conservation grazing at Clegir Mawr, Gwalchmai

3.0 Case studies

3.1 Over the reporting period, the County Council has undertaken numerous projects aimed at enhancing biodiversity. This has included working on an individual basis, working in partnership with others or in distributing funding awards to other organisations. The following table highlights a variety of such projects.

Project Name	Project Summary	Expected outcomes	Grant Funding	Funding Source
Pencadlys Glas	Biodiversity enhancement on Council HQ campus. Meadow sowing and tree planting.	Enhance habitat, particularly for pollinators and provide pleasant environment for site users.	£25K (2020)	LPfN – Greening the Public Estate
Conservation Management Programme	Reduce frequency of verge mowing to encourage habitat expansion.	Network of increased wildflower verges that will attract a wider variety of species.	N/A	Service budget
Clegir Mawr landfill restoration	Enhance the former landfill site by meadow and tree planting and	Creation of mosaic habitat to increase variety of species on site. Use as an	£167K (2021)	LNP Challenge Fund

	surface water feature repair/creation	educational/research asset		
Himalayn Balsam Partnership	Working on Anglesey river catchments to control Himalayan Balsam	Reduced incidence of Balsam to enable re-establishment of native species	c.£40K (22-24)	Natural Resources Wales
Menai Rivers Biodiversity Project	Eradication of American Mink numbers.	Enable water vole (s7 species) to recover and thrive	£10.75K (2019 - present)	Strategic Development Fund
Massey Sisters (Oriol Môn)	Wildflower meadow/pond development and interpretation.	Project will complement Oriol's Massey Sisters' collection of botanical artwork.	£24.9K (2021)	LPfN (Greening the Public Estate)
Saving Our Squirrels	Management of grey squirrel numbers.	Recovery and increase of red squirrel numbers.	£9.72K (21-22)	Strategic Development Fund
Wild Volunteering	Improve lives and prospects of young people.	Strengthening their connection to the natural world.	£7.25K	Strategic Development Fund
Tree Nursery	Develop a nursery to grow local provenance trees	To meet local demand for trees driven by Sustainable Farming Scheme, Ash Dieback etc.	£85K (22-25)	Sustainable Landscape Sustainable Places
Heathland Management	Retain heathland habitat on Anglesey.	Production of a Heathland Strategy and Action Plan for Anglesey's AONB.	£120K (22-25)	Sustainable Landscape Sustainable Places
Wildflower Meadows	Planting, conservation and management of wildflower meadows.	Counter significant loss of meadows that support important biodiversity, pollinators especially.	£70K (22-25)	Sustainable Landscape Sustainable Places
Anglesey Rivers	Buffer zone fencing and alternative drinking water sources for livestock.	Improved habitat connectivity in addition to improving the footpath links and public access between communities	£75K (22-25)	Sustainable Landscape Sustainable Places

4.0 Action Report

4.1 The Action Plan appended to the Biodiversity Plan identifies 6 main objectives with a number of actions listed under each objective. Achievement or completion of each action allows the County Council to assess its response to the section 6 duty. Overall, the majority of the actions have been fully or partially discharged. However, several actions remain outstanding and these will form the basis of the recommendations for action beyond the end of this reporting period.

5.0 Conclusions (Review of Section 6 Duty)

5.1 Overall, the County Council considers that it is discharging its responsibilities to maintain and enhance biodiversity through:

- a) Preparing and adopting a Biodiversity Plan which sets out clear actions that provide a basis to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity;
- b) Aligning the Plan with other Council plans/policy documents thereby avoiding potential areas of conflict in terms of meeting set objectives eg Towards Net Zero Plan;
- c) Identifying means of changing working practices that will benefit biodiversity but also result in cost/efficiency savings for the Authority;

- d) Establishing strong working relationships with external partners and accessing appropriate funding streams (principally through the LNP but also by working in collaboration with other agencies) to deliver projects and initiatives that are focused on maintaining or enhancing biodiversity;
- e) Managing local nature sites for biodiversity gain;
- f) Addressing the problem of invasive species that negatively impact upon our native species;
- g) Restoring and/or creating new habitat as a means of increasing the range of species able to inhabit such areas;
- h) Where possible, addressing occurrences of biosecurity threats to local biodiversity;
- i) Engaging with educational and cultural establishments to encourage an interest in biodiversity and raise awareness of the benefits of a more biodiverse environment;
- j) Encouraging volunteering in nature-based initiatives; and
- k) Ensuring that development proposals deliver biodiversity enhancements.

6.0 Recommendations for future action

6.1 Despite considering that it is discharging its section 6 duty effectively, the County Council recognises that several actions identified in the Biodiversity Plan remain outstanding. These are identified below and will be considered as priorities to address in the period following the publication of this report.

	Recommendation	Reason	Action Plan Objectives met
1	Establish a cross-service officer group to ensure the maintenance or improvement of biodiversity remains a consideration in formulating work programmes and activities. Each service will nominate appropriate officers to attend regular group meetings.	The need for dialogue is imperative in order to be able to continue to discharge the section 6 Duty effectively. It is imperative to work closer across services in this regard.	1.5, 3.1, 6.1, 6.4
2	Establish a formal reporting structure within each service on actions to maintain or enhance biodiversity.	The lack of baseline data to enable the measurement of success of certain actions can affect the assessment of the contribution of those actions to biodiversity enhancement. Gathered data to inform the annual report to be presented to the Executive Committee.	1.4, 6.1
3	Undertake a biodiversity audit of Council buildings and landholdings and assess relevant corporate/service plans and policy documents to establish extent of consideration of biodiversity coverage in relation to operational elements of service provision.	To understand the range of biodiversity interest present on the Council estate and to provide baseline data for the assessment of the effectiveness of actions contained within the Biodiversity Plan. Ensure that relevant policy documents include reference to the Duty in respect of maintaining or enhancing biodiversity	1.2, 3.9, 6.3
4	Take advantage of revenue funding opportunities to build capacity to deal with biodiversity-related issues within the County Council whilst maximising capital funding opportunities to secure sufficient means to undertake new and maintain existing programmes.	Need to ensure sufficient capacity to deal with biodiversity issues within services (eg LNP revenue funding to strengthen LNP team) whilst attracting funding to finance biodiversity-related projects and initiatives that will ensure that the County Council can show progress in addressing the biodiversity	1.2, 3.9, 6.3

		duty. Raise awareness of its responsibilities in relation to biodiversity enhancement and its benefits from the perspective of responding to climate change and the net zero agenda.	
5	Conclude SLA with Cofnod (LERC for North Wales).	To ensure ready access to ecological data that can be used to inform projects and other activities where biodiversity impacts may arise and mitigation may be required.	2.1, 3.1
6	Seek opportunities to collaborate with other agencies to deliver larger projects that can have wider-ranging benefits for biodiversity.	To deliver biodiversity enhancements on a larger scale	3.5, 3.8, 3.9, 6.3
7	Provide appropriate training on biodiversity-related issues to relevant officers and elected members.	The lack of understanding in relation to the Section 6 Duty has to be addressed to ensure that the duty's requirements are applied to all relevant work areas.	5.2, 6.2