



ENVIRONMENT (WALES) ACT 2016

Monmouthshire County Council

Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience (Section 6) Report 2020-2023

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1. Introduction & Context

1.1. Reporting structure

This report has been produced in response to the legislative requirement for public authorities to report on progress made under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Guidance has been made available by Welsh Government¹ and this has been followed where appropriate throughout the report. A specific data gathering exercise was undertaken to engage with relevant service areas for report preparation. Ongoing recording of implementation of the section 6 duty has been undertaken since the last report (2019).

The report considers how the Biodiversity Duty applies to Monmouthshire County Council, how other plans, policies, and interrelated commitments have been met, and how we have performed against the objectives of Monmouthshire County Council's Forward Plan for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, with the use of case studies. Throughout the document we have also acknowledged how work has contributed to the Welsh Government Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) objectives. There was a requirement to report on the plan in 2019 and every three years following this. The 2022 reporting period is being completed now (including action from 2023). The next report will be due at the end of 2025.

Figure 1. Monmouthshire's biodiverse landscape

Box 1: Environment (Wales) Act 2016 - The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty

Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 places a duty on public authorities to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity where it is within the proper exercise of their functions. In doing so, public authorities must seek to promote the resilience of ecosystems. This means that Monmouthshire County Council must take a pro-active approach to improve and not reduce biodiversity when carrying out its functions.

The duty came into force on 21st May 2016 and replaces the earlier *Biodiversity Duty* in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.



¹ - Welsh Government (2019) Guidance for Section 6 – The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty. Reporting Guidance

1.2. The Public Authority: Monmouthshire County Council

Monmouthshire County Council is a democratic organisation made of 46 elected councillors which employs around 4,500 officers who are responsible for day-to-day management and operation of the public body. Monmouthshire County Council falls into Group 3 of the “Types of organisations and possible S6 actions relative to their functions” as given in Figure 3 of the Welsh Government Reporting Guidance (See [Appendix 1](#)). This means that the minimum actions that the organisation should be reporting on include actions related to buildings management, procurement, sustainability, awareness raising, training, or in partnership with other organisations; actions related to grounds management, cascading funding criteria, providing education and training; and, actions related to land management to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and promote the resilience of ecosystems.

1.3. The Spatial Scale of delivery

The county covers approximately 850 km² and has a population of approximately 94,142 (2018 census). It is a rural county with agriculture and forestry shaping the rich biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems in the landscape. Monmouthshire’s Section 6 duty applies to the whole of the Unitary Authority area including the Monmouthshire part of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park (BBNP) where Monmouthshire County Council has functions such as waste, grounds maintenance and highways.

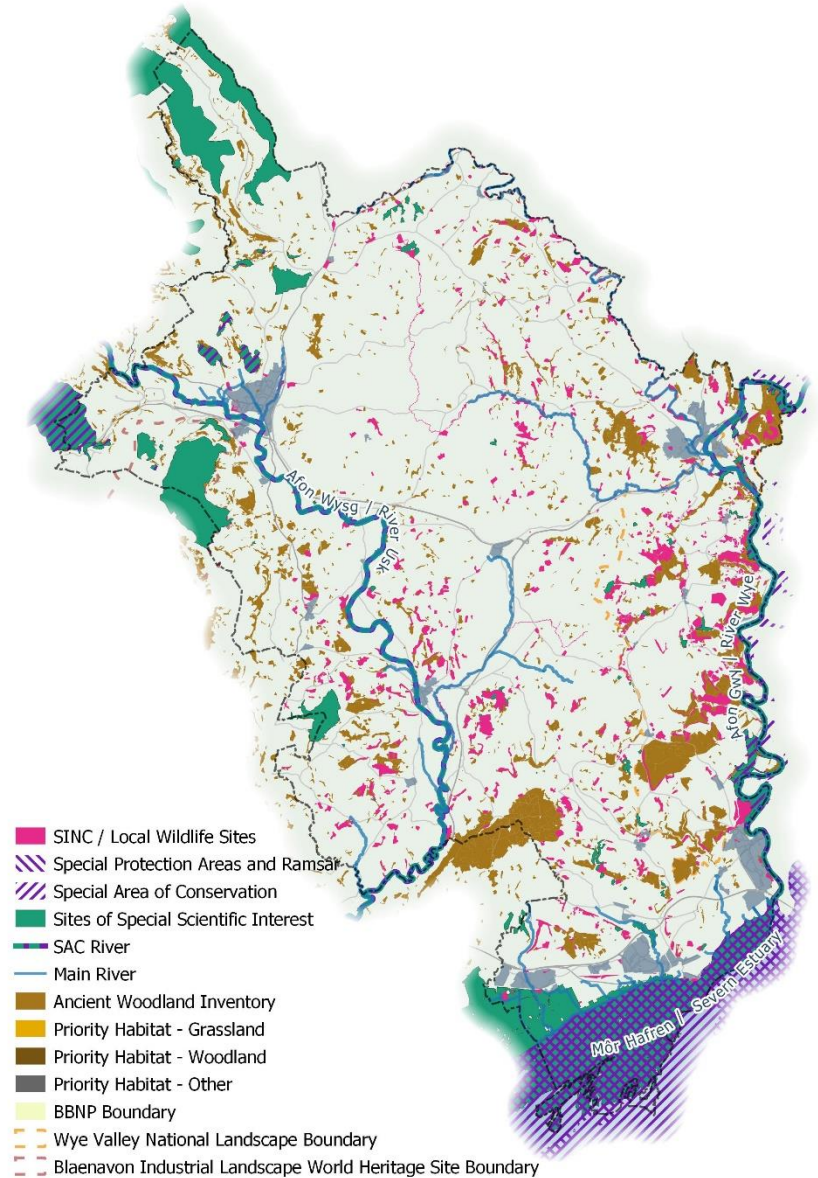


Figure 2. Designated Sites and Landscapes in Monmouthshire

1.4. Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan

In response to the Environment Act, Monmouthshire County Council prepared and adopted a **Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan**² in March 2017. Monmouthshire County Council has also taken into consideration the functions of individual service areas which could have an impact on Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience and the work of other key organisations with whom the council can collaborate with to maximise delivery under the Environment (Wales) Act to develop our commitments under the seven Forward Plan Objectives.

The objectives have been developed to maintain and increase the resilience of our ecosystems by increasing scale and extent, connectivity, condition, diversity, and ability of ecosystems to adapt. All objectives apply to both marine and terrestrial habitats as required by the Environment (Wales) Act.

Guidance published by Welsh Government states that public authorities must take into account relevant evidence when complying with the Section 6 duty including the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) published by Natural Resources Wales (2016), The Environment (Wales) Act Section 7 lists of habitats and species of principal importance in Wales, and relevant Area Statements prepared by Natural Resources Wales under Section 11 of the Environment (Wales) Act.

The Objectives of the Forward Plan are reviewed in this document and recommendations for any changes are made. An updated Forward Plan shall be published alongside this document to be reported on in 2025.

Box 2: Monmouthshire County Council Forward Plan Objectives (2017-2023)

- Objective 1:** Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels
- Objective 2:** Provide environmental education to raise awareness and encourage action
- Objective 3:** Undertake land management for biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience
- Objective 4:** Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience
- Objective 5:** Tackle key pressures on species and habitats
- Objective 6:** Support landscape scale projects and partnerships to maximise delivery
- Objective 7:** Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and review

² - Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/documents/s8227/Biodiversity%20and%20Ecosystem%20Resilience%20Forward%20Plan.pdf>

1.5. Framework of Governance and support for delivery

Delivery of the Section 6 duty is ultimately the responsibility of the Chief Executive of Monmouthshire County Council; however, it is acknowledged that compliance with the Section 6 duty is relevant to all parts of the Council including Elected Members and the Biodiversity Champion who sits on the Council’s Cabinet. A major enabler of action is the MonLife grouping of services including the Green Infrastructure (GI) team who prepared the Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan, have taken a lead on reporting, review and updating the Forward Plan.

However, as this report will show, the delivery of the biodiversity duty is far reaching with large scale delivery from services that may have in the past seemed to not fully be aware of the need to consider biodiversity in their decision making and operations. Some of the biggest delivery areas including Grounds & Cleansing, Development Management & Planning Policy and Highways including Flooding.

Volunteers and partnership organisations are recognised as key enablers to biodiversity action including the Wye Valley Designated Landscape (AONB), key roles being directly employed by Monmouthshire County Council. Policy and governance teams support local community groups in grassroots project delivery e.g., community food growing and tree planting.

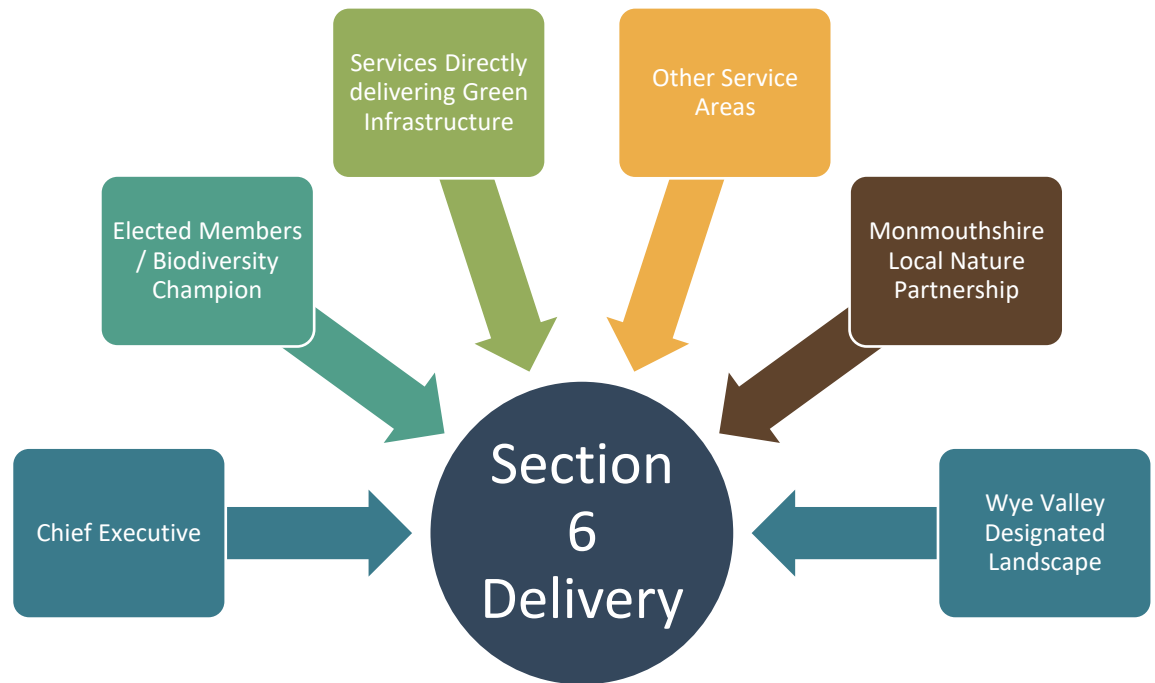


Figure 3. Shared responsibility for Section 6 Delivery at Monmouthshire County Council

³ - Monmouthshire Climate Emergency <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/climate-emergency/>

⁴ - Motion for the Rivers and Ocean <https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/documents/s32681/1c%20Motion%20for%20ocean%20Action%20plan%20DRAFT.pdf>

Box 3: A Local Nature Partnership (LNP) for Monmouthshire and Nature Recovery Action Plan

Between 2019 and 2022 a joint Local Nature Partnership was in place for Monmouthshire and Newport counties supported by the LNP Cymru project via Welsh Government Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing funding. Through the LNP Cymru project, the partnership was able to support a small grants scheme in the area and delivered funding to local groups delivering action for biodiversity.

The LNP also delivered separate Local Places for Nature projects funded by Welsh Government to bring nature to the doorstep of residents and visitors of the areas. In Monmouthshire this has included extension of Nature Isn't Neat management of council estate for wildlife and projects such as Community Nature Spaces to deliver Welsh Government's programme of 'modest measures' for nature and people.

In 2023, it was decided that the partnership would return to separate Local Authority areas with collaborative working being focussed at a south east Wales scale in line with the Area Statement for the region through the Gwent Green Grid Partnership.

In July 2023 the refreshed Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership was launched with a meeting at County Hall, Usk. The partnership currently has approximately 70 members. The LNP governance is laid out in agreed Terms of Reference and has a steering group and an independent Chair ensure delivery.

Work is currently underway on a Nature Recovery Action Plan for the County. Part 1, a consultation draft, will be published alongside this report. The NRAP is very much written for and lead by the LNP which is hosted by MCC. Monmouthshire CC are however a key partner for delivery. The plan will provide practical, achievable actions for partners designed to help reverse the decline in biodiversity and build ecosystem resilience.

The NRAP including a strategy and the first set of action plans for priority species and habitats will be published by the end of the financial year. Part 1 will also include a General Action Plan to provide a set of actions not related to a specific habitat or species that have been identified as local priorities to deliver nature recovery in Monmouthshire.

³ - Monmouthshire Climate Emergency <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/climate-emergency/>

⁴. Motion for the Rivers and Ocean

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/documents/s32681/1c%20Motion%20for%20ocean%20Action%20plan%20DRAFT.pdf>

2. Reporting on the MCC Forward Plan Objectives

2.1. Objective 1: Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels

Monmouthshire County Council Community & Corporate Objectives.



Figure 4. Community & Corporate Objectives

In 2023 Monmouthshire County Council adopted the **2023-28 Community and Corporate Plan**. This Plan sets the Council's ambition for the council and county of Monmouthshire as summarised in the diagram below.

The **Green Place** objective positions the considerations of the Climate and Nature emergencies alongside other challenges and opportunities for the county. The Plan acknowledges the outstanding beauty of Monmouthshire. As custodians of this stunning place, we need to encourage residents and visitors to enjoy it, protect it and conserve it. The natural world in all its guises is the backdrop to our tourism and visitor economy. It also commits to work with others to promote access to our special places whilst protecting the environment, support nature recovery, reduce our carbon emissions, reduce the risk of flooding, and promote the circular economy.

The plan sets out three areas of for achievement:

- ✦ Council operations are net zero by 2030 and local communities are supported to reduce their own carbon footprint.
- ✦ Nature recovery, improved environmental and river health.
- ✦ Sustainable local agriculture and farming practices with public services and residents consuming more local and seasonal produce.

Climate & Nature Emergency

In May 2019 Monmouthshire County Council declared a Climate Emergency and later that year adopted its first Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan. In November 2021 the Climate Emergency Action Plan was amended and updated to strengthen the emphasis on nature recovery¹, amongst other changes. This plan is currently being reviewed considering the need to increase the extent of the strategy for nature recovery, the rivers and oceans action plan and climate adaptation.

As well as having an estuary coastline, Monmouthshire also has the rivers Wye and Usk running through it, both of which are facing significant challenges in terms of water quality, with much publicity about pollution from sewage and agricultural runoff hitting the local and national media. Considering this, in March 2022 elected members voted for not just a **Motion for the Rivers and Ocean**², recognising the importance of taking a catchment to coast approach to protecting water quality. Actions in the underpinning delivery plans (see figure 5) shall be overseen by the Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy. Delivery plans shall be complimentary and cross cutting themes such as climate adaption shall be carefully considered.

Well-being Assessment and Well-being plan

Monmouthshire is currently reviewing the well-being plan following an updated **well-being assessment** (March 2022). During the engagement process, when asked what is good about where they live, the second most-cited reason by residents was the landscape, countryside and green spaces

³ - Monmouthshire Climate Emergency <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/climate-emergency/>

⁴ - Motion for the Rivers and Ocean

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/documents/s32681/1c%20Motion%20for%20ocean%20Action%20plan%20DRAFT.pdf>

Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy



Figure 5. Relationship between Climate & Nature Emergency Strategy delivery plans

MCC Well-being Objectives	Fair place to live where the effects of inequality and poverty have been reduced
	Green place to live and work with reduced carbon emissions, making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency
	Thriving and ambitious place where there are vibrant town centres, where businesses can grow and develop
	Safe place to live where people have a home and community where they feel secure
	Connected place where people feel part of a community and are valued
	Learning place where everybody has the opportunity to reach their potential

Table 1. MCC Well-being Objectives

Other strategic plans and business plans

The **MonLife Service Area** delivers leisure, youth and outdoor education, green infrastructure and countryside access, play, learning, destination management, arts, museums, attractions, the Borough Theatre, corporate communications, customer care, libraries and community hubs. The **MonLife Service Business Plan** is clearly aligned with the Environment Wales Act through its priority for ‘enriching lives’ and more specifically through the Green Infrastructure Service delivery.

Table 2. MonLife Service Plan

<p>MonLife Service Strategy & Priorities2023-</p>	<p>MonLife is dedicated to enhancing people’s lives and encouraging vibrant communities through our extensive range of services and memorable experiences. We strive to make individuals feel healthier, inspired, heard and connected.</p> <p>Every year, we proudly support thousands of individuals from Monmouthshire and beyond, knowing that we are making a tangible difference to their lives, improving their health and overall well-being.</p> <p>By enriching lives, we also have a profound impact on our communities. Our efforts align with local, regional, and national strategies that address significant issues and work towards shared goals of our people, communities, and environment.</p> <p>Our goal is to promote healthier lifestyles, inspire unforgettable experiences and showcase Monmouthshire as an extraordinary place to live, work, play, and visit.</p>
<p>Green Infrastructure</p>	<p>To maintain and enhance landscape, biodiversity and increase our resilient ecological networks by increasing extent, connectivity, condition, diversity, and ability of ecosystems to adapt. To protect and enhance the resilience of our natural and local environments through enhancing green infrastructure supporting sustainable growth, improving quality of life and place, delivering ecosystem services and tackling climate change. Contributes to the potential of the natural & built environment delivering the Green Infrastructure Strategy, Biodiversity & Ecosystems Resilience Forward Plan and Local Development Plan.</p>

MonLife as a service area has set out to achieve:

Green place to live and work with reduced carbon emissions, making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency.

1. Promote nature recovery and support our special landscapes.
2. Contribute to the improvement of the water quality of our rivers.
3. Manage and deliver a well-connected multi-functional Green Infrastructure network.
4. Reduce the carbon footprint of our sites.

The **Service Business Plan** for Landlord Services including Asset Management aims to Utilise Monmouthshire County Council’s land and property portfolios to promote sustainability, regeneration, economic development, de-carbonisation, and agricultural policies. The Service Business Plans for Grounds & Cleansing Services and Planning recognise commitment to Biodiversity.

Policy and plan adoption including the **Replacement local Development Plan** process are key areas where embedding biodiversity will be vital to meet the Section 6 duty. Monmouthshire County Council’s Local Development Plan was adopted prior to the Section 6 duty coming into force however, it does include a Green Infrastructure policy that promotes multifunctional connectivity between habitats and the biodiversity policy, Natural Environment 1 (NE1) is closely aligned with Planning Policy Wales 10 which aims to consider the impact on locally designated sites, Section 7 Habitats & Species and result in a net benefit for biodiversity. Updated development management policies are currently being developed.

The **AONB Management Plan 2021-2026**⁵ sets out the vision for the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the priorities for its management over a 5-year period. It is a statutory document of the four local authorities under Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 which includes Monmouthshire County Council alongside Gloucestershire County Council, Forest of Dean District Council and Herefordshire Council. The management plan adopts an ‘Ecosystems Approach’ with an aim to: Conserve, enhance and restore, the biodiversity of the AONB through robust ecological network. The AONB project work is discussed further under other Objectives.

The **Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site (BILWHS) Management Plan 2018-2023**⁶ contains Management Objectives for Caring for the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape. These acknowledge the need to Align the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plans for Torfaen and Monmouthshire and NRW Area Statements with the Management Plan’s vision and policies for the BILWHS. A key principle for the Caring for the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site is to Maintain and enhance the Site’s natural resources and ecosystem services for the benefit of future generations by contributing to Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience in line with the duty on public bodies under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Actions relating to landscape crime and vegetation management are listed under *Policy 2.2 – Improve the care and management of the relict upland landscape, particularly with regard to landscape crime, vegetation growth and climate change adaptation*. The management plan is due for Review before the end of this financial year.

⁵ - Wye Valley AONB Management Plan <https://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/caring-for-wye-valley-aonb/management-plans>

⁶ - Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site Management Plan 2018-2023

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/documents/s20804/4b.%20Blaenavon%20WHS%20Management%20Plan%20FINAL%20SEPTEMBER%202018.pdf?LLL=1>

The **Green Infrastructure Strategy** for Monmouthshire was updated in 2019 and is currently being updated. The strategy sets out Monmouthshire County Council's approach to enhancing biodiversity and increasing ecosystem resilience through Green Infrastructure in line with the Monmouthshire Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan and Nature Recovery Action Plan. It identifies green infrastructure projects through an Action Plan developed in collaboration with town councils and interest groups.

Monmouthshire County Council Decisions and Consents

Objective 1 is relevant to all types of consents that Monmouthshire County Council issues including Planning Permission, Suds Approving Body consents & Ordinary Watercourse Consent. It also applies to decisions taken in relation to procurement, contracts, licences, asset management and wider land management policies such as road verge management. Planning and Development Management shall be discussed in more detail in Section 3, Case study 4.

Operational decisions particularly those associated with countryside access, highways and grounds maintenance are informed by ensuring that officers are adequately trained, there is early consultation with the Biodiversity Team and where appropriate, ecological surveys are undertaken to inform projects and where appropriate and if necessary, Habitats Regulations Assessments are undertaken.

The Countryside Access team continues to use the Public Rights of Way Biodiversity Action Plan to guide its decisions and operations to limit the impact on biodiversity whilst referring to the MCC GI Strategy and regional Green Corridors projects for opportunities to deliver net benefit for biodiversity.

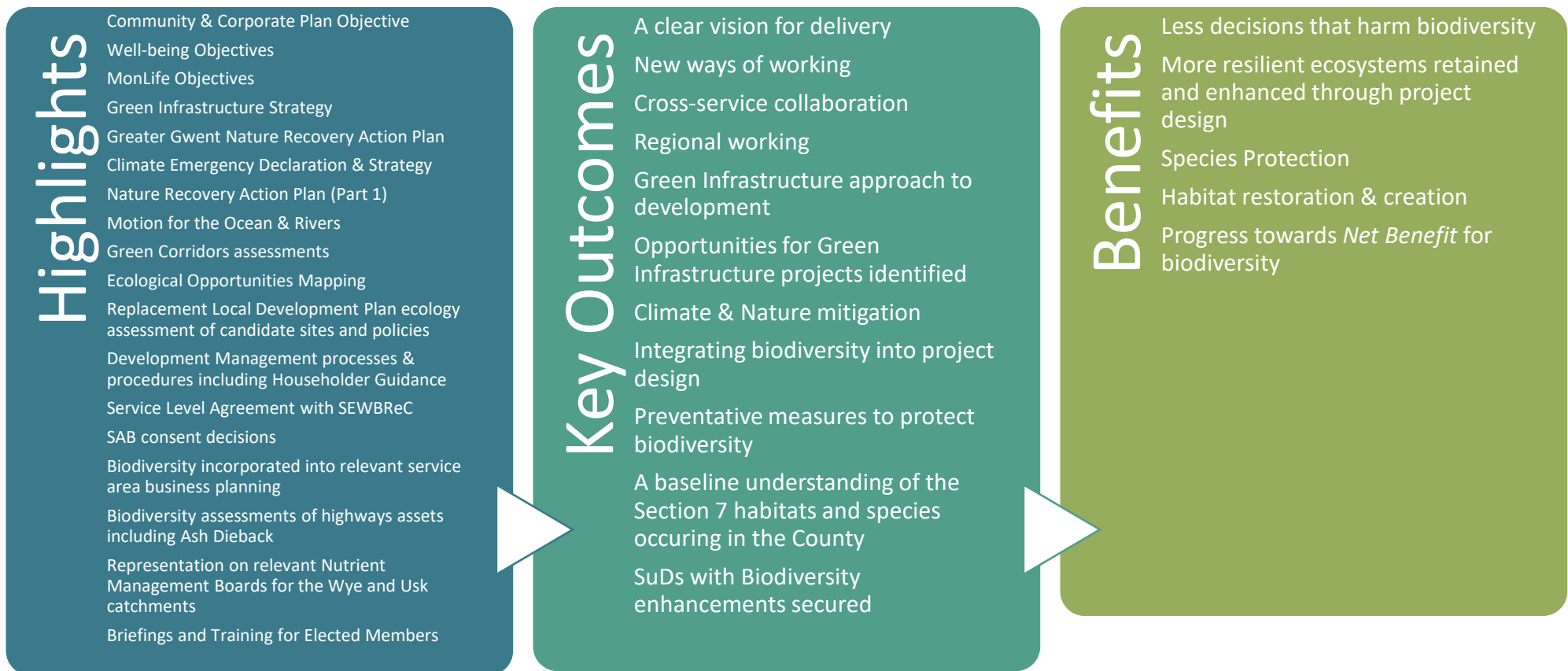
Critical to the decision-making process is a sound evidence base. Monmouthshire County Council has held a Service Level Agreement with the **South East Wales Biodiversity Record Centre (SEWBReC)** for more than 15 years. This service includes a weekly screen of all 'received' planning applications for protected sites and protected and priority species and Partner access to the Aderyn platform.

Procurement services at Monmouthshire County Council is now led by Cardiff City Council through the Ardal Procurement Service which also covers Newport, Torfaen, and the Vale of Glamorgan. A Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Procurement Guidance Note has been produced for use across the authorities which includes specific ecology considerations including sustainable timber sources, peat free compost, use of native species etc.

Box 4. Challenges in implementation of Objective 1 Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels:

- ✦ Balancing conflicting priorities of Local Planning Authority delivery e.g., identifying a Preferred Strategy for Growth whilst not compromising Ecosystem Resilience.
- ✦ Some sites identified for potential allocation in the Replacement Local Development Plan include Priority Habitat and areas designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation.
- ✦ Ecological value of potential development sites continues to be destroyed by developers before planning applications / decisions are made which impacts on planning decisions.
- ✦ Arising challenges between post planning decision SAB consents and ecological constraints.
- ✦ Challenging for all relevant service areas to incorporate biodiversity and ecosystem resilience into Service Business Plans.

Summary of achievements 2020-2023 Objective 1: Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels.



2.2. Objective 2: Provide environmental education to raise awareness and encourage action.

This objective has seen a marked increase in works due to the increased availability of funding, resource and collaboration over the reporting period.

Regional collaboration

The Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing (ENRaW) funded **Resilient Greater Gwent (RGG)** and **Gwent Green Grid (GGG)** projects undertook and supported an extensive range of projects to provide environmental education and to raise awareness of nature and encourage action for the recovery of ecosystems. GGG is an ongoing Regional Project which is hosted by the Monmouthshire County Council **Green Infrastructure Team** and has worked to raise awareness from grass roots levels with individuals and community groups up to other authorities working at Public Service Board level to raise the agenda of green infrastructure, biodiversity, and wellbeing. It has worked to facilitate system change and with citizens of the region through the creation of a digital resource, citizen science and pollinator projects. The work of these projects shall be discussed further in **Case Studies 1 & 3**.

Another critical outreach delivery mechanism has been the **Living Levels Landscape Partnership Programme** which delivers different elements of awareness raising, education, training, and liaison through its work programmes across the Gwent Levels in Cardiff, Newport & Monmouthshire. The Landscape Partnership employs a Community Engagement Officer and several other roles that make this possible.



Figure 6. Gwent Green Grid at an outreach event



Figure 7. Gwent Green Grid Logo

Local Action

Local partnerships in Monmouthshire provide important networks to share best practice, engage with individuals and groups whilst providing training and support in action for nature. The **Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership** is newly reformed and developing links across the county to celebrate, conserve and enhance our unique and rich habitat, and bring people together to share best practice and resources to maximise benefits for people and wildlife. Key activity includes interpretation development for Community Nature Spaces in Monmouth and plug planting with primary schools in Chepstow. The Community Nature Spaces project is covered further in Section 3, Case Study 2.

The **Green Corridors** project supported by funding from Gwent Green Grid (ENRaW and SPF) has presented an opportunity to discuss the importance of green spaces and the interconnecting spaces with interest groups such as Abergavenny Civic Society and decision makers such as Town and Community Councils.



Figure 8. Local Nature Partnership work with schools in Chepstow



Figure 9. Green Corridors workshop in Abergavenny



Figure 10. Engaging Children at the Reuse Shop

Grounds & Cleansing services have an Education Officer who has delivered education sessions in primary schools throughout the County focussing on the impact of litter on wildlife and preventing it from reaching the sea via our rivers, streams, and drains. Between 2020 and 2023 the **One Planet Centre** hosted around 800 children. The classroom sized facility has been open since 2011 and is based at Llanfoist Household Waste Recycling Centre. Using colourful interactive exhibits, children are taught about reducing, reusing and recycling waste against the backdrop of a busy recycling centre and transfer station.

Solutions to the climate and nature emergencies are also explored with emphasis placed on the importance of greening up our gardens with trees, hedges and long grass to increase important connecting habitat for our urban wildlife.

Visits to the One Planet Centre are coupled with a visit to the site's **Reuse shop** where items are salvaged from the skips and sold with the profits going to tree planting. Stories and poems are used to link the rubbish and recycling on site to the importance of looking after our natural environment.

Grounds & Cleansing services have also had a 'Treemendous Trees' social media campaign in 2023 highlighting the value of trees, MCC's tree planting activity, and the benefits of trees to our lives in Monmouthshire.

'**Friends of**' groups continue to be an important mechanism to manage & maintain council owned sites with benefits for biodiversity and people. In addition to active groups at Castle Meadow, Linda Vista Gardens and Bailey Park in Abergavenny, and the Friends of Rogiet Country Park; a new group has been formed by Grounds at Orchid Drive Open Space in Caldicot.

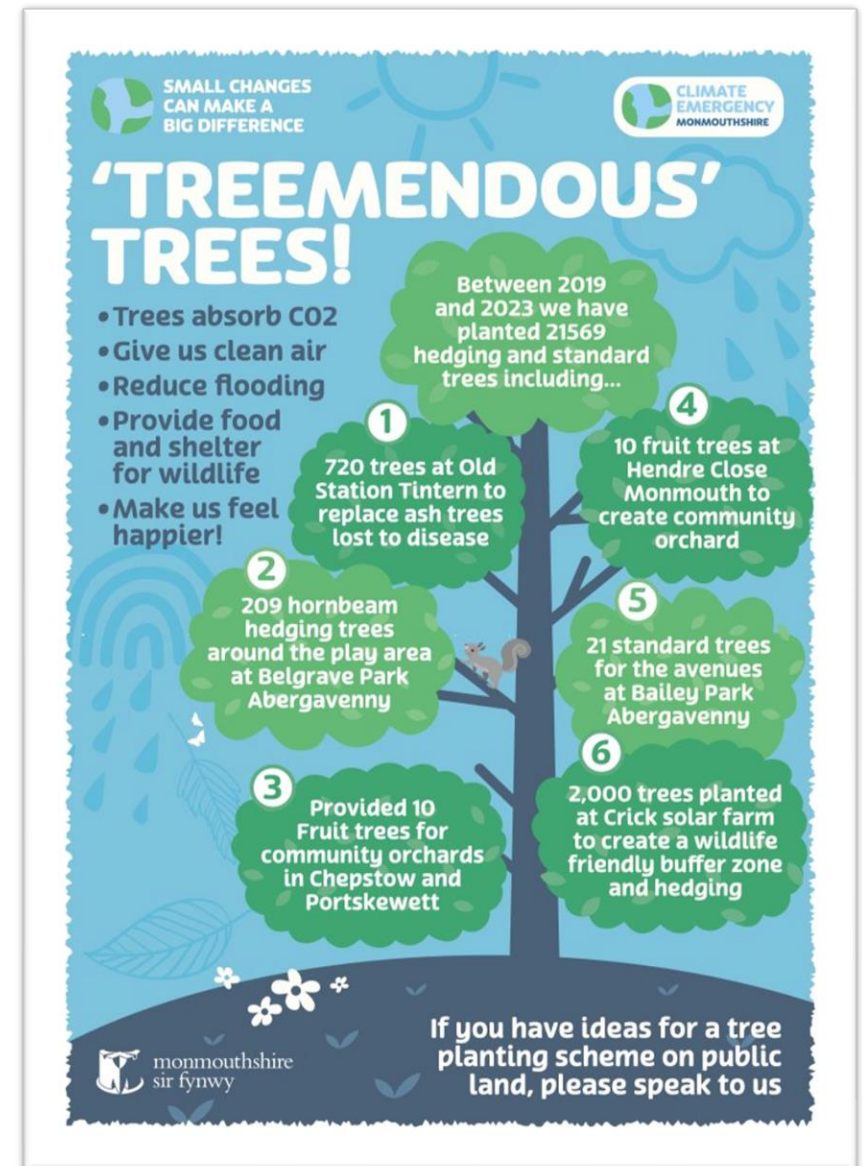


Figure 11. Treemendous Trees campaign 2023

The **Sustainable Food** team has been working to promote the benefits of local food and reduce food waste. Four community growing events have been held, focused on growing food, managing soil, and reducing waste for human and planetary health. Contractors are working on sustainable food stories for social media and (forthcoming) website celebrating, among other things, regenerative agriculture, no-dig gardening, composting, foraging, traditional orchards and fruit varieties.

The **Wye Valley National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)** offers extensive opportunities for volunteers and provides training and support to the communities in the designated landscape. The Volunteer task force makes a special contribution to the conservation and management of the Wye Valley including habitat management and restoration of features such as dry-stone walls.

Training, Interpretation & Resources

Training of Monmouthshire County Council staff is a critical delivery pathway for the consideration of nature in decision making and behaviour change. The GGG **Nature Isn't Neat** project has built upon the works of the pilot to deliver training for operatives across the Gwent region including an Operatives Handbook and a range of videos explaining the rationale for management practices which also raise understanding and awareness of the wider public. **Local Places for Nature, Active Travel** and GGG funding has presented opportunities to design and install a range of artwork, interpretation boards and signage to raise awareness of the importance of nature and to explain new management practices. MonLife Learning has worked with the Green Infrastructure Team to develop a set of resources to send to schools and use at Attractions sites such as Old Station Tintern.

An ongoing training programme with new **Development Management** officers and 'refresher' training for existing officers has been undertaken during this reporting period to ensure that officers consider biodiversity early in the planning process. Specific training on the consideration of wildlife during operations e.g., site maintenance including grass cutting has been carried out by the Green Infrastructure Team for **MonLife Attractions** Wardens and Grounds operatives.



Figure 12. Code of Action Handbook produced by NIN

Following the success of the Carbon Literacy training, a similar approach in partnership between the Green Infrastructure team and **Organisational Learning** is considered necessary to increase awareness of the Biodiversity Duty. Work has commenced to deliver an E Learning module in consortium with LNP Cymru and other Local Authorities in Wales. This shall be funded via the Gwent Green Grid Shared Prosperity Funding.

Visit Monmouthshire's brand purpose aligns with MCC's corporate and community plan priorities of equality and decarbonisation with emphasis on local shopping, short supply chains, locally produced / inspired products and regenerative visitor experiences. Walking in the beautiful countryside is one of three key content pillars (alongside food & drink and events). Visit Monmouthshire also promote Visit Wales' Addo promise to encourage visitors to care for our communities and environment and campaigns specifically target environmentally and socially responsible visitors. Our 'Destination for All' Shared Prosperity Fund project is also helping to improve the accessibility of Monmouthshire's visitor experiences for the benefit of everyone in Monmouthshire, whether they're here for a day, a week or a lifetime.

Box 5. Challenges in implementation of Objective 2 Provide environmental education to raise awareness and encourage action:

- ✦ Short term, vulnerable, public sector funding streams making continuity & long-term planning difficult.
- ✦ Cost of living impacts on school budgets for management and maintenance are slowing progress for change.
- ✦ Small teams at MCC are unable to meet demand from schools and community groups.
- ✦ Lots of disparate support for schools that would benefit from being more coordinated.
- ✦ Training for MCC staff is often reactive following incident(s) where environmental damage has already occurred.

Summary of achievements 2020-2023 Objective 2: Provide environmental education to raise awareness and encourage action

Highlights

- Resilient Greater Gwent
- Perfect Pollinators
- Urban biodiversity
- Gwent Green Grid Partnership
- Nature Isn't Neat
- Nature & Climate Awareness officer
- Funding secured for a Section 6 E-Learning Module
- Nature based activities
- Interpretation Boards
- Community Artwork
- Ongoing training programmes
- Supporting secondary school Work Experience
- Visit Monmouthshire campaigns

Outcomes

- Engaged communities
- A range of audiences reached including the youngest and oldest in our communities
- People understand what action they can take for biodiversity
- Decision makers and operatives are aware of the legislative context of nature conservation including s6
- Sharing best practice
- Promotion of experiences for environmentally and socially responsible visitors

Benefits

- Citizens understand the reasons for land management changes
- Citizens take action
- Operatives empowered to manage for biodiversity
- Less decisions that harm biodiversity
- Less impactful and more positive experiences by visitors to Monmouthshire

2.3. Objective 3: Undertake land management for biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience.

Grassland Management: Nature Isn't Neat

Nature Isn't Neat (NiN) is an approach that encourages us all to alter the way we manage grassland on our verges, open spaces, and parks to benefit nature. Grasslands in green spaces are allowed to grow in the spring and summer to create meadow areas and space for nature.

The Nature isn't Neat project is establishing joined-up green space management to create wildflower-rich pollinator habitats across Gwent local authority areas – Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, and Torfaen – as part of the **Gwent Green Grid Partnership**. The Regional Nature Isn't Neat Project Officer is hosted by the MCC Green Infrastructure Team.

In Monmouthshire, where the project began, huge changes to grassland management have taken place since 2019. **Grounds & Cleansing services** have now reached a level of almost maximum capacity in terms of operations and available land under Nature Isn't Neat management. Improving the quality of management is the next step alongside closing the loop to deliver sustainable disposal of grass cuttings using a mulcher and composting bays at depots for making a material which can be used in future planting projects. Vegetation surveys were undertaken in 2023, to be repeated in subsequent years, to monitor the effect of management change on wildflower diversity and abundance in our grasslands.

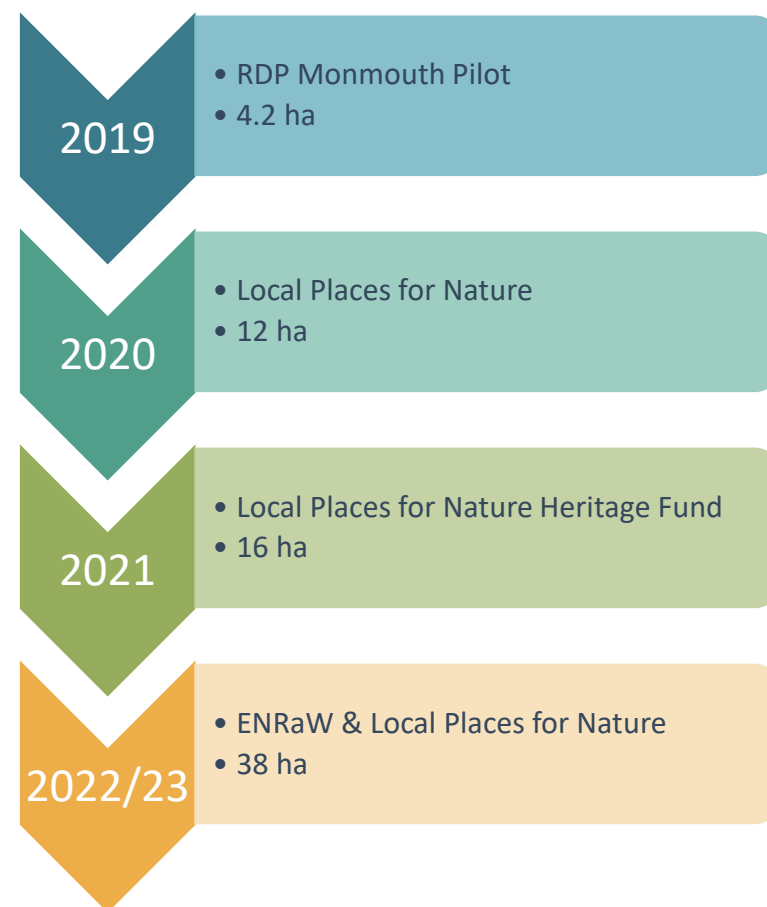


Figure 13 The expansion of Nature Isn't Neat and the associated funding.



Figure 14. Nature Isn't Neat management at Usk Island



Figure 15. Officers implementing Nature Isn't Neat representing MCC shortlisted at the LGC Awards

The **Green Infrastructure team** and **Local Nature Partnership** have facilitated in the grant acquisition to purchase several pieces of 'cut and collect' machinery and have secured funding for the mulcher and associated infrastructure for the compost project via Local Places for Nature Welsh Government Funding.

Public perception surveys relating to Nature Isn't Neat have identified very positive results across the region. There has been a good response from Monmouthshire residents with 486 responses in 2022. 85% of Monmouthshire respondents reported that they were happy or very happy with NiN management.

- ✦ Positivity remains strong throughout summer, people like it a bit less as summer progresses but positive responses did not drop below 80% for the duration of the survey.
- ✦ Most respondents did not feel as though their opportunities for recreation were negatively impacted, instead most felt more connected to nature, and thought the new meadow areas brought more beauty and wildlife into their communities.
- ✦ There is a good understanding/appreciation of the reasons behind changes in management 'Nature isn't neat'.

Communications are delivered across all channels on an on-going basis each season.

Monmouthshire County Council were shortlisted in the Environmental Services category of the **Local Government Chronicle Awards** in 2022 for the Nature Isn't Neat project. Monmouthshire County Council are used as an exemplar of sustainable grassland management by a local authority across the U.K. and features as one of the case studies by conservation charity Plantlife⁷ as a demonstration of best practice.

7- <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/our-work/local-councils-and-no-mow-may/>

Pesticides

As of April 2023, **Grounds and Cleansing** are working to reduce the use of glyphosate use on the highway network and to evaluate the other options that are available regarding the control/management of vegetative growth within hard surfaces where necessary e.g., removal by hand on a reactive basis. We have reduced the use of Glyphosate on MCC Green Infrastructure by 90%, using the chemical for the control of Knotweed and Giant Hogweed only.

Management of Rivers

As part of the rivers workstream of the **Resilient Greater Gwent** Project, practical restoration works were undertaken on key watercourses in Monmouthshire. The Afon Cibi and the River Gavenny, tributaries of the river Usk Special Area of Conservation (SAC) benefitted from a river clean. The banks of the Neddern Brook benefited from scrub clearance to improve the vegetation diversity and light levels entering the channel.

As part of the planning approval process for the Deri Farm Local Development Plan site in Abergavenny, **Section 106** money has been secured to undertake a small project associated with the health of the river Gavenny. This project being coordinated through the Local Nature Partnership shall look at opportunities for further river cleans and riparian habitat works. Funding through the **Gwent Green Grid** has enabled the development of a Neddern Brook Strategy for the section of river through the Caldicot Castle Country Park. The strategy makes evidence-based management recommendations for the Attractions service area to confidently manage the site.

Green Infrastructure Management Plans

Countryside Access and MonLife Attractions sites continue to be managed in accordance with Green Infrastructure Management Plans which reflect the multifunctional green infrastructure of at the sites and their importance for nature recovery and ecosystem resilience. A draft GI management plan for Rogiet Country Park has been compiled as part of the Severn Tunnel Junction car park project as part of the compensation for the loss of habitat to the car park development.

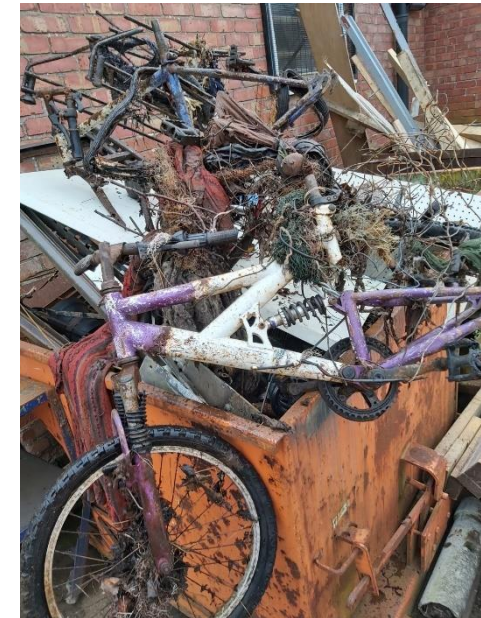


Figure 16. River Gavenny clean

Box 6. Challenges in Implementing Objective 3 Undertake land management for biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience.

- ✦ Practical challenges of optimum grassland management including removal of cuttings and timing of the works
- ✦ Management changes are not possible where they will incur an additional cost due to budgetary constraints
- ✦ Establishing priorities for land use e.g., capital receipts from land disposal versus retaining land for ecosystem services value
- ✦

Summary of achievements 2020-2023 Objective 3: Undertake land management for biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience.

Highlights

Nature Isn't Neat expansion
Local Government Awards
Nomination
Funding secured to deliver
projects
River cleans and management
Land management changes at
Attractions sites
Tree Policy

Outcomes

Sites being managed to
maximise biodiversity benefits
Enabling community groups to
help manage sites for
biodiversity
Reduced use of pesticides
No cutting of grass under the
drip line of trees
No unnecessary tree cutting
Identifying Trends & Constraints
that influence management
Integrated management of GI
assets to maximise multiple
benefits

Benefits

Increased ecosystem resilience
Trees in better condition
Managing linear routes for
biodiversity
Improved pollinator habitats
Improved ecological
connectivity
Green spaces absorb carbon
and water providing resilience to
climate change

2.4. Objective 4: Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience.

Positively influencing management undertaken by others can increase the impact Monmouthshire County Council has on improving ecosystem resilience across the region and beyond. Working with external partners and landscape scale projects.

Sustainable and regenerative farming practices.

The RDP-funded Living Land Management Wales project ended in 2023, having worked with four landholdings in Monmouthshire to test and trial innovative open-source satellite mapping technology to monitor land cover, habitats, and water persistence and run-off. Findings have been fed into ongoing system development and GIS innovation at Aberystwyth University, Welsh Government, NRW and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water. Partner organisations continue to use the system to map, model, and monitor habitats, biomass, water movements, and habitats.

A regenerative agriculture mentoring scheme has been established in partnership with ACE Monmouth, Monmouthshire Food Partnership, and world-renowned Herefordshire-based regen ag consultant Ben Taylor-Davies (**RegenBen**⁸). Three Monmouthshire farm businesses including one MCC County Farm tenant were selected through an open application and scoring process. Mentoring will run through 12 months to mid-to-late 2024. Key themes of the mentoring are increasing soil health, reducing chemical inputs, and seeking alternatives to soya and palm in livestock feed.

A regenerative agriculture discussion group (**Talk Farm Regen Monmouthshire**⁹) has been launched, led by a local farmer with support from Sustainable Food Development officers. Two farm walks have been held. A WhatsApp and Facebook group provide forums for discussion and knowledge exchange. Focus is on the 5 principles of regenerative agriculture as applied in Monmouthshire and surrounding area

⁸ - [Regen Ben – Regenerative Agriculture | Farming that won't cost the earth](#)

⁹ - [Talk Farm Regen Monmouthshire | Facebook](#)



Figure 17. Sustainable Food mentoring

Principles of Regen Farming	Keep the soil covered
	Keep living roots in the soil
	Minimise soil disturbance
	Grow a wide variety of crops
	Include livestock in the system

Table 3. Principles of Regenerative Farming



Figure 18. Sustainable Food knowledge exchange event

Several knowledge exchange events have been held or are planned:

- ✦ Introduction to regenerative farming, led by local farmers at Raglan Livestock Market
- ✦ The Weatherproof Farm Workshop, Llanover Estate [focus on soil health, including diversity of sward and soil biology], run in collaboration with the Nature Friendly Farming Network
- ✦ Rotational Grazing webinar, Pasture for Life
- ✦ Cover crops farm walk
- ✦ Carbon foot printing and nutrient management planning event

Through this work, connections are building with a range of other organisations, including Nature Friendly Farming Network, Wye and Usk Foundation, Farming Connect, who are working towards similar or related objectives and where we can offer each other mutual support to strengthen the cause.

Delivery through Development Management

Development Management continues to influence land management through a Green Infrastructure (GI) approach to design, development and subsequent management of sites under the GI Policy and Supplementary Planning Guidance. Where land is not being offered for adoption by the LPA and managed via a management company GI Management Plans have been secured to ensure GI is maintained and enhanced. To protect priority habitats & species during the construction phase, Development Management and the GI Team secure construction methods and practices to limit impacts.

Housing associations

Monmouthshire County Council continue to be an exemplar of best practice for management and encourage other Public Authorities to make changes. With housing associations making changes in line with the Nature Isn't Neat approach.

Promoting community access to land for growing food.

Monmouthshire Food Partnership (MFP) awarded 10 small grants to local schools and community groups for food growing. To be eligible, projects had to demonstrate that they:

- ✦ are climate and nature-friendly
- ✦ encourage a positive attitude to diversity

Another round of 10 grants will open in early 2024, using the same criteria. To support the grant scheme, MFP organised two training sessions about food growing for schools and community groups, each led by organic no-dig gardener Adam Jones (Adam Yn Yr Ardd). The sessions focussed on how to grow happy healthy plants without using chemicals. Best practice guidance has been developed to support schools to run gardening and food-growing projects.

Natural Flood Management

A key priority of Welsh Government's National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales is to deliver more natural interventions and catchment approaches to help improve environmental, social and economic resilience. This includes working with natural processes and green infrastructure, defined as Natural Flood Management (NFM). NFM can be described as "reducing flood and coastal erosion risk by implementing measures that help to protect, restore and emulate the natural functions of catchments, floodplains, rivers and the coast". Examples of NFM include interventions such as tree planting, offline storage areas, in-stream obstructions, soil and land management, dune and beach management and creation of new wetlands. In accordance with this national priority, since 2020 Monmouthshire County Council has been working to identify NFM opportunities across the county. This work, funded through Welsh Government grants has included identification of priority catchments, landowner engagement, hydraulic modelling, site surveys and multi-agency collaboration. Whilst it has been largely difficult to identify landowners willing to engage with the process, a number of sites within the river Wye catchment are progressing to detailed design stage, with construction anticipated in 2024/25. Further work to develop NFM opportunities in other catchments is ongoing.



Figure 19. Community Food Growing opportunities at Hendre Close, Monmouth

Box 7. Challenges in Implementation of Objective 4: Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience.

- ✦ Tenant farms present opportunities but these are limited to those most proactive tenants that are interested in Regenerative Farming and Wildlife
- ✦ MCC no longer offers financial incentives to small landowners to facilitate positive management of Local Wildlife Sites
- ✦ Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation / Local Wildlife Sites quality are frequently destroyed before planning applications are submitted.
- ✦ Despite Construction Environmental Management Plans being secured during the planning process, Priority Habitats continue to be irreparably damaged during site development e.g., ancient woodland and watercourse pollution.

Summary of achievements 2020-2023 Objective 4 Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience.



2.5. Objective 5: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

This objective covers project works that go beyond management and maintenance of green infrastructure and considers the delivery of enhancements, often through external funding in line with the adopted Green Infrastructure Strategy which highlights need and opportunities.

Woodland, Trees and New Tree Planting

Across Monmouthshire County Council, the **tree planting** total since winter 2019/20 is now more than 21,500 (see Appendix 2 for a detailed breakdown). Current plans are not to increase tree planting significantly in coming years but to focus on maintenance of already planted trees and replacements of those lost to summer drought particularly in 2021. We have engaged with *Stump up for Trees* and **Grounds and Cleansing** have supplied them with wood chip to support their tree nursery. Grounds have also engaged with a new, Monmouthshire based social enterprise growing trees using biodynamic principles to improve the provenance and environmental impact of the supply chain of tree planting.

The **Gwent Green Grid** project undertook an iTree Eco project in the Severnside area of the County which assessed the value of the trees (see Figure 17).

A Gwent Woodland Priority Planting Programme is being delivered as part of the ENRaW funded project's legacy. The Urban Tree Canopy has been mapped by Grounds to highlight opportunities for improving canopy cover and connectivity through planting.

The Gwent Green Grid **Nature Networks** project has a 'Woodlands' workstream. A regional woodland subgroup linked to planning and delivery is being established. This

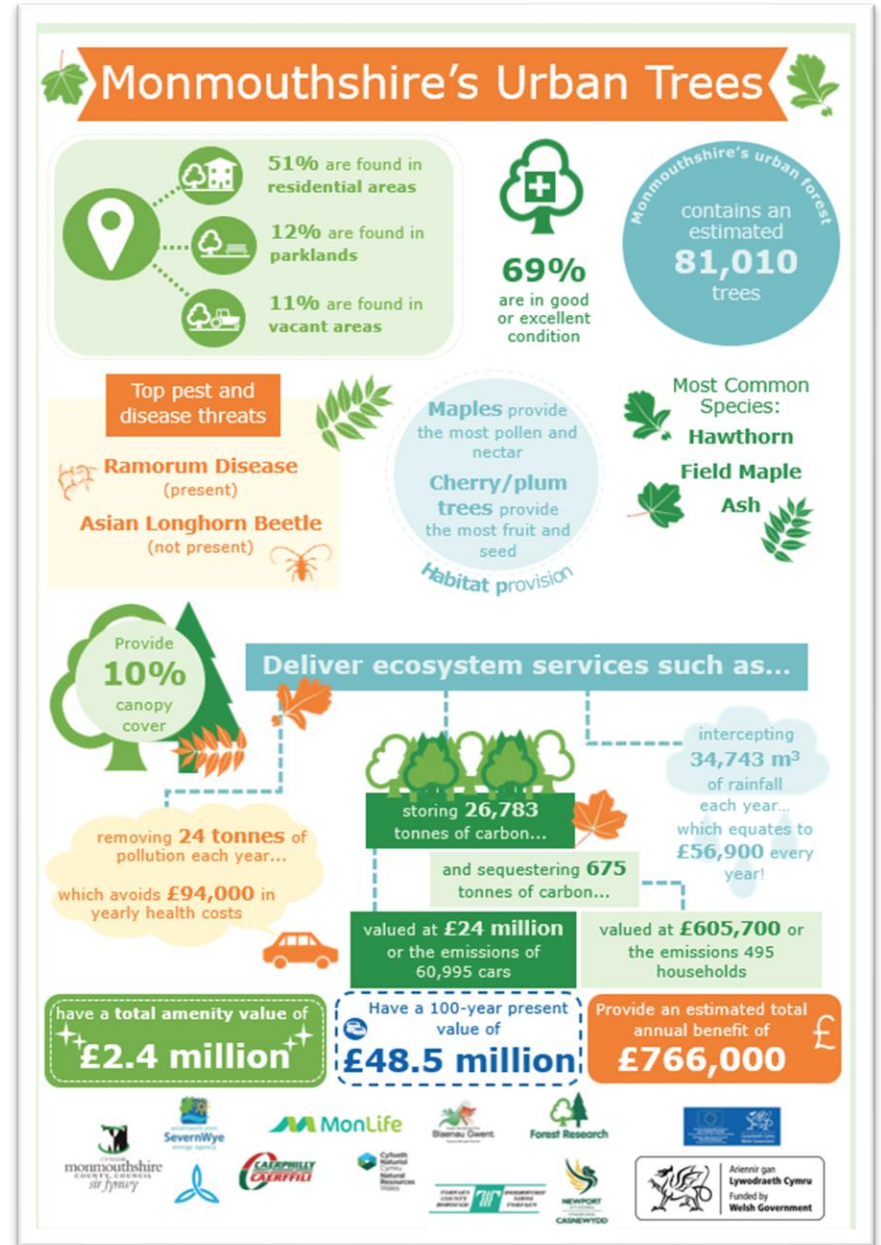


Figure 20. iTree Eco infographic for Severnside trees 2021

is preparing to apply for The Woodland Investment Fund (TWIG) from Welsh Government to support sustainable management on several woodland sites. As part of this project, **National Forest** Accreditation for sites across the region including Warren Slade / Parc Redding and Goytre Hall woods will be sought.

Planning approval for a site in Magor has resulted in funding for woodland management via a **Planning Obligation** to attempt to compensate for loss of secondary deciduous woodland on the brewery site. This will be used to secure a woodland management plan for Mill Common in Magor resulting in woodland management and engagement.

Caldicot Green Connections

A range of Green Infrastructure improvements in the eastern part of Caldicot town were delivered as part of the Council's Green Connections project funded by the 2020/21 WG Town Centre and Green Infrastructure funding. These were made along a selection of green route ways and in parks and amenity spaces which form important Active Travel routes through the town. The project laid 334m² of wildflower turf and enhanced a further 1630m² of grassland with native wildflower meadow seed mix, seeded an area of 1065m² with pictorial meadow seed mix, planted 386 shrubs, planted 486 flowering plants and over 8000 mixed bulbs, 111 native and ornamental specimen trees and 22 fruit trees, 2967 native hedgerow trees.

Peatland Restoration

The Wye Valley Designated Landscape (AONB) has been restoring Cleddon Bog SSSI with grant funding from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the Welsh Government's **Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places** programme the programme of work includes engaging stakeholders and increasing understanding, sapling control, conservation grazing and site monitoring. To reverse the decline of the Bog, they are working closely with NRW's SSSI team, Forestry, and the National Peatlands Action Programme (NPAP), Gwent Wildlife Trust, the local commoners, local communities, and local contractors.



Figure 21. Tree Planting in Caldicot as part of the Green Corridors project



Figure 22. Pollinator signage designed by Caldicot school children

Invasive non-native species control

Monmouthshire County Council are working with external partners such as Living Levels, Wye Valley Designated Landscape (AONB) and Keep Wales Tidy to tackle invasive species throughout the county. The AONB has a dedicated, award-winning invasive species project; Wye Invasive Species Project (WISP) which aims to support the local communities of the lower Wye Valley AONB in tackling 3 Invasive Non-Native Species– Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and American Skunk Cabbage (*Lysichiton americanum*). These are the worst offenders, causing significant problems and they are found throughout the lower Wye Valley. Controlling the spread of these species is helping to reverse the catastrophic decline of our biodiversity and improve the resilience of our river catchments.



Figure 23. Himalayan Balsam



Figure 24. Japanese Knotweed



Figure 25. American Skunk Cabbage

Active Travel

Since 2020 Monmouthshire County Council has been working to deliver Active Travel to increase walking and cycling to replace car travel for “purposeful journeys” i.e. journeys that are not purely for recreation purposes but result in a destination such as school, work, the shops etc. Multiple projects are underway in our Main Settlements and Severnside. The schemes have considered the impacts of the proposals and design on biodiversity at an early stage and maximised opportunities for contributing to the delivery of net benefit for biodiversity and ecosystems resilience. As part of the Williamsfield Lane to Kingswood Gate scheme, an improved public open space was delivered with tree, shrub and pollinator friendly planting and seeding, interpretation and improvements for play and quiet enjoyment of the site. Schemes for enhancement associated with Abergavenny Castle Meadows, the new Monmouth footbridge and Caldicot Links are all designed, approved and due to be implemented.

Street Lighting

The impacts of lighting on Mammals, birds and insects are well documented with white and blue LED lights being some of the most problematic. The design of street lighting is a key consideration during the planning process and is highlighted to applicants at pre-application stage to maintain dark corridors and only provide light where it is needed.

The replacement of lighting columns by Street Lighting with LED to meet energy reduction objectives, if not carefully managed, could be in conflict of nature recovery objectives. However, this new technology allows very specific lighting changes to be made. At present we hold around 12,000 lights in total - 60% are now converted to Dimmable stock this is pre-programmed at the factory to burn full power 12W till 12.00 then the lantern will automatically dim down to 8W till 5.00am. Areas which run full 12w - all night are Junctions /roundabouts /traffic calming / areas of high anti-social behaviour. Areas which run dimmed 8W - less populated rural areas/ villages / town centres / a limited number of identified bat flight paths.

In 2020 a complaint to street lighting on the impact of lighting in the Pen y fal area of Abergavenny presented an opportunity to review lighting levels on specific light columns close to the lesser horseshoe roost site at the Chapel resulting in darker flightlines and less disturbance to light sensitive species.



Figure 26. King's Fee enhanced play area with Active Travel route

Box 8. Challenges in Implementation of Objective 5: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

- ✦ Many pressures are outside of the direct control of Monmouthshire CC e.g., river pollution.
- ✦ Tree Planting in urban areas isn't always popular with residents.
- ✦ Most funding for GI improvements does not include long term maintenance e.g., tree maintenance.
- ✦ Funding for INNS projects can be short term whereas treatment requires long-term commitment.
- ✦ Lighting considerations for ecology often come late in project design after the principle of the scheme has been established and funding has been obtained.

Summary of achievements 2020-2023 Objective 5: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

Highlights

Development Management procedures
Replacement Local Development Plan Objectives and Policies
Gwent Green Grid
Invasive Species Projects
Active Travel delivery
Local Nature Partnership small grants
Resilient Greater Gwent
Living Levels Landscape Partnership
Climate Emergency Action Plan
GI Management Plans for sites
Green Infrastructure Strategy
GI Supplementary Planning Guidance
Street Lighting technology

Key Outcomes

INNS control
Reduced pesticide use
Reduced single use plastics
Identification of the trends and constraints that influence management
Green Infrastructure incorporated into development & projects
Net benefit for Biodiversity delivered through project design
Use of Natural Flood Management techniques
Reduction in light pollution

Benefits

Increased ecosystem resilience
Habitat restoration & creation
Improved pollinator habitats
Improved ecological connectivity
Green spaces absorb carbon and provide resilience to climate change
Less disturbance to species
Reduced ecological and carbon footprint

2.6. Objective 6: Support landscape scale projects and partnerships to maximise delivery.

Monmouthshire County Council continues to lead and play an active role in partnerships which support cross-boundary working with neighbouring authorities and organisations, as well as supporting and identifying opportunities for information sharing, best practice, new ways of working and further collaborative work with partners, community groups and volunteers at scale. The **Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership**, a key delivery mechanism for nature recovery in the County is described in Box 3, Page 11.

There has been a shift to more regional working following the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015, Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and the scale of the Area Statement reflecting the south east Wales Area (Gwent). Including the work of the **Gwent Green Grid** which Monmouthshire Leads (see Section 3, Case Study 1).

The **Living Levels Landscape Partnership**¹⁰ (led by RSPB) remains an important mechanism for collaborative delivery on the Gwent Levels which is both historically and ecologically important to the counties of Monmouthshire, Newport & Cardiff. The partnership primarily funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund has delivered a £3.7M scheme including

Monmouthshire County Council is a member of the **Severn Estuary Partnership (SEP)**, **Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities (ASERA)** and the **Severn Estuary Coastal Group**. The Council's approach to the declaration of a Motion for the Rivers & Ocean was presented to SEP in 2023.

Box 9. Highlights of Living Levels Landscape Partnership work across the project area to date:

- ✦ 6km of reens and field ditches restored, allowing the recovery of aquatic plant and animal communities
- ✦ 150+ willows pollarded
- ✦ 160+ fruit trees planted and traditional orchards restored and restocked
- ✦ 27ha of land managed for the shrill carder bee and other pollinators
- ✦ 30+ fly-tipping cases investigated, and 7 prosecutions made
- ✦ 120,000+ unique visits made to the website
- ✦ 10 gateway and visitor hubs created
- ✦ New pre-history display at Newport Museum and Levels display at Caerleon National Roman Legion Museum
- ✦ 5 'People of the landscape' sculptures installed
- ✦ 8 walking and 4 cycling routes created
- ✦ PROW network upgraded and improved with new bridges, stiles and way marking
- ✦ 17 community hubs funded
- ✦ 239 events and activities delivered with over 16,000 attendees
- ✦ 37 history Research & Transcript Service (RATS) volunteers recruited
- ✦ 52 oral histories recorded
- ✦ 73 schools, 1000+ primary pupils and 150+ college students reached
- ✦ Over 600 volunteers contributed 25,144 hours, equivalent to £177k of support.

¹⁰ - <https://www.livinglevels.org.uk/>

In light of achieving funding for **Coastal Capacity** activities from Welsh Government, a grouping of partners led by Monmouthshire County Council including Severn Estuary Partnership, Newport City Council, RSPB, Gwent Wildlife Trust, and a local Marine Consultant are working to deliver the Severn Vision, deliver a citizen science project and undertake a seascape assessment. This is seen as a major delivery mechanism for the Motion for Rivers & Ocean commitment.

The **Wye Catchment Partnership** coordinated by the Wye and Usk Foundation has been working to collaborate on projects, and share data and best practice between Statutory Agencies, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, Local Authorities, third sector organisations and communities in the River Wye catchment. The partnership is currently working towards a Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) undertaking systems mapping of the issues important to the catchment to identify and prioritise work to restore the degraded catchment. MCC is represented on the Catchment Partnership and sits on the Nutrient Management Board for the river which specifically addresses solutions to the issues caused by pollution in the catchment.

The newly formed **Usk Catchment Partnership** is taking a co-design approach to developing a structure to progress a deliverable action plan for the River Usk. Monmouthshire County Council is proactively represented at all levels of the partnership and is starting to identify projects through the Nature Networks programme to support delivery in the catchment.

Monmouthshire CC **Sustainable Food** facilitates the **Monmouthshire Food Partnership** (*8) as a forum for cross-sector working on sustainable food development towards the wellbeing goals. The Food Partnership meets regularly with a diverse cross-sector steering group including Soil Association and Farming Connect, who collaborate on project delivery against the objectives of the Food Charter. The Partnership agreed the Food Charter in early 2023 and use this to guide activity and planning.

Box 10. Challenges in Implementation of Objective 6: Support landscape scale projects and partnerships to maximise delivery

- ✦ Multiple priorities are a challenge to manage between partners
- ✦ Funding for landscape scale projects can be challenging to secure and is often relatively short term in nature.

¹¹ - <https://www.sustainablefoodplaces.org/members/monmouthshire/>

Summary of achievements 2020-2023 Objective 6: Support landscape scale projects and partnerships to maximise delivery.

Highlights

Living Levels Landscape Partnership
Coastal Capacity funding
Gwent Green Grid Partnership
Resilient Greater Gwent
Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership
Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site
Bannau Brychieniog National Park
Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal & Rivers Trust
Severn Estuary Partnership, Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities
Monmouthshire Food Partnership
Usk Catchment Partnership
Valleys Regional Park
Wye Valley National Landscape
Wye Catchment Partnership
Wye Nutrient Management Board

Outcomes

Clear delivery of WFG goals and objectives
New ways of working
Collaboration and co-production
Cross boundary projects following landscape types and ecosystems
Sharing resources
Data sharing
Sharing best practice
Behaviour Change
Supporting long term decision making

Benefits

Delivering multiple benefits
Better working practices
Appropriate scale for delivery
Wider range of expertise resulting in more rounded schemes and projects
More communities & citizens engaged
Increased ecosystem resilience
Habitat creation
Improved pollinator habitats
Improved ecological connectivity
Effective preventative delivery

2.7. Objective 7: Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and review.

The Biodiversity & Ecosystems Resilience Forward Plan made a commitment to monitoring and evaluation to inform reporting and review of the plan. The following considers the Objectives of the existing forward plan adopted in 2016 and their effectiveness in ensuring action and capturing all the work undertaken by the authority and its partnerships. Elements that are missing from the objectives are identified for inclusion in a refreshed Section 6 Forward Plan to be drafted alongside this report.

Table 4 : Review of Forward Plan Objectives

Existing Objective	Review	Future Objective
<p>Objective 1: Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels</p> <p>Wales NRAP (see Appendix 3)</p> <p>Meets Objectives: 1,2,3,4,5 & 6</p>	<p>Significant action has been undertaken to deliver this objective which captures much of the core function of the Local Authority around decision making, procedures and protocols.</p> <p>It is considered that the current objective continues to be fit for purpose for the refreshed Section 6 Forward Plan. Whilst it is a departure from the Wales NRAP Objective wording, the second element of the Wales objective around engaging and supporting participation and understanding is covered by MCC's broader second objective for raising awareness.</p>	As existing.
<p>Objective 2 Provide environmental education to raise awareness and encourage action</p> <p>Wales NRAP (see Appendix 3)</p> <p>Meets Objectives: 1 & 2</p>	<p>Significant action has been undertaken to deliver this objective largely reflective of funding available through the Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing (ENRAW) Gwent Green Grid funding but also delivery through long running projects such as the One Planet Centre.</p> <p>It is considered that the wording of this Objective needs to be expanded to include nature-based solutions for health & well-being in line with other national and local policy.</p>	Objective 2: Provide nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being and encourage action for nature
<p>Objective 3 Undertake land management for biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience.</p> <p>Wales NRAP (see Appendix 3)</p> <p>Meets Objectives: 2,3 & 4</p>	<p>Significant action has been undertaken to deliver this objective which has required cultural and behavioural change by staff and residents of the County around the management of greenspaces. It has also been delivered through Local Places for Nature, and the ENRaW funded Gwent Green Grid and Resilient Greater Gwent projects.</p> <p>It is considered that the current objective continues to be fit for purpose for the refreshed forward plan. Whilst it is a departure from the wording of the Wales NRAP Objective, it cuts across three Wales NRAP objectives and reflects the way that the Local Authority works.</p>	As existing.

<p>Objective 4 Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience</p> <p>Wales NRAP (see Appendix 3)</p> <p>Meets Objectives:1,2,3 &4</p>	<p>Significant action has been undertaken to deliver this objective; however this is an area where even more could be achieved with the right funding streams to support projects such as sustainable & regenerative farming.</p> <p>The current objective continues to be fit for purpose for the refreshed forward plan. Whilst it is a departure from the wording of the Wales NRAP Objective, it cuts across multiple Wales NRAP objectives and reflects the way that we work as a Local Authority.</p>	<p>As existing.</p>
<p>Objective 5: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats</p> <p>Wales NRAP (see Appendix 3)</p> <p>Meets Objective: 4</p>	<p>Significant action has been undertaken to deliver this objective; however, this is an area where we expect growth in both pressures and how we tackle them in the next plan period with the implementation of emerging plans such as the Replacement Local Development Plan and Nature Recovery Action Plan.</p> <p>This objective is where new capital projects are best reported on i.e., non- management / maintenance for biodiversity as covered by Objective 3.</p> <p>This objective reflects the Wales NRAP objective.</p>	<p>As existing.</p>
<p>Objective 6 Support landscape scale projects and partnerships to maximise delivery.</p> <p>Wales NRAP (see Appendix 3)</p> <p>Meets Objectives: 1, 2, 3 & 6</p>	<p>Significant action continues to be delivered under this objective through established landscape scale partnerships associated with the Severn Estuary and Gwent Levels and new partnerships to restore the Rivers Wye and Usk.</p> <p>The current objective continues to be fit for purpose. It is not directly related to a single Wales NRAP objective but is a critical mechanism for delivery for Monmouthshire County Council.</p>	<p>As existing.</p>
<p>Objective 7 Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and review.</p> <p>Wales NRAP (see Appendix 3)</p> <p>Meets Objective: 5</p>	<p>Monitoring of the effectiveness of the plan and subsequent reviews are important mechanisms to keep Monmouthshire County Council's commitments to nature recovery and statutory responses current and transparent.</p> <p>The current objective continues to be fit for purpose. It is not directly related to a single Wales NRAP objective but is a valuable step for Monmouthshire County Council in reviewing progress and being accountable.</p>	<p>As existing.</p>

What is missing?

During feedback on the published Section 6 Forward Plan in 2016, the lack of reference to the importance of up to date evidence bases was highlighted. Upon data gathering for reporting, it was clear that some elements of the work undertaken and planned by Monmouthshire County Council are not being captured, particularly around development of nature network mapping and monitoring. In review of the Wales NRAP Objectives, it has been identified that an additional Objective should be incorporate for future reporting: **Use improved evidence, understanding and monitoring to inform action**

Box 10: Updated Forward Plan Objectives

Objective 1: Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels	Objective 5: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats
Objective 2*: Provide nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being and encourage action for nature	Objective 6: Support landscape scale projects and partnerships to maximise delivery
Objective 3: Undertake land management for biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience	Objective 7**: Use improved evidence, understanding and monitoring to inform action
Objective 4: Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience	Objective 8: Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and review

* Updated ** New

3. Case Studies

3.1 Case Study 1 Gwent Green Grid Partnership (ENRaW 2020-2023)

The GGGP was comprised of the 5 local authorities which make up the Greater Gwent area together with Natural Resources Wales, Forest Research and the Severn Wye Energy Agency. These organisations have been working together ensuring that the area’s natural resources are healthy, resilient, and better able to provide vital health and well-being benefits for current and future generations. Monmouthshire County Council were the lead organisation and hosted the Collaboration Lead for the project alongside the Nature Isn’t Neat team, Resilient Communities Officer and Administration support.

The aspirations of this GGGP were ambitious, as the partnership sought to:

- ✦ improve and develop green infrastructure (GI), that’s the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers, and lakes, across Greater Gwent
- ✦ provide green job opportunities within the area
- ✦ help address the nature, climate change and health emergencies

Monmouthshire County Council Service Areas: Green Infrastructure Team, Grounds & Cleansing Services, Attractions, MonLife Learning, Attractions.

Partners: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Caerphilly Borough Council, Newport City Council, Torfaen County Borough Council, Natural Resources Wales, Forest Research, Severn Wye Energy Agency.

GGG Workstreams	1: GI Strategy & Partnership
	2: Gwent Strategic Access: Green Corridors, Trainee Rangers
	3: i-TREE Eco Study
	4: GI Projects
	5: Pollinator Friendly Gwent: Nature isn’t Neat Project, Cut and Collect Gwent

Table 5. GGG Workstreams

The partnership adopted an innovative and collaborative approach to address these challenges, delivering strategic and local outcomes and a regional approach to Green Infrastructure in Gwent. The programme was supported by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe Investing in Rural Areas and funded by the Welsh Government’s Enabling of Natural Resources and Well-being Grant. The GGGP is delivering Gwent Public Service Board’s commitment to implementing the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and the Environment (Wales) Act and acts as a delivery mechanism for Natural Resources Wales’ South East Wales Area Statement.



Figure 27. Community Artwork at Bailey Park, Abergavenny

Nature Isn't Neat

Nature isn't Neat formed part of Workstream 5: Pollinator Friendly Gwent of the ENRAW funded phase of the Gwent Green Grid Partnership, along with the Resilient Grasslands cut and collect trial.

This workstream focussed on establishing joined-up green space management to create wildflower-rich pollinator habitats and community engagement projects to raise awareness of the decline in pollinators and encourage local action.

The Nature isn't Neat project created a coordinated approach to grassland management through the development of the Code of Action and cross-border workshops which facilitated the spread of ideas and sharing of best practices.

The project also helped raise awareness of the benefits of pollinator-friendly grassland management for helping combat the nature and climate crisis. School workshops were held across Gwent to help engage young people with wildflowers and pollinators so that future generations will value pollinators and wildflower habitats.

Community engagement events and social media were used to increase knowledge and awareness of the project and to promote ways that local residents could take actions in their own green spaces to help pollinators.

Citizen science workshops were held to promote and deliver training for pollinator monitoring schemes which members of the public can contribute to. Not only do monitoring schemes help increase our knowledge about the effects of grassland management changes on pollinator species but helps foster a sense of ownership of the Nature isn't Neat sites.

Nature isn't Neat also funded the creation of new nature inspired **Community Artworks** for green spaces across Gwent, to inspire more people to value the nature we can find in our communities.

Over the summer of 2022, communities designed and built mosaic artworks which reflect the beauty of nature in their local green spaces. The sculptures were developed by mosaic and visual artist, Stephanie Roberts to create a lasting legacy to the Nature isn't Neat campaign.

Each sculpture is inspired by a local plant and pollinator species, which can be seen in the mosaics. Two workshops were held in our target communities in which volunteers helped design and build the final artwork that reflects the nature that surrounds them. The artworks are situated across Gwent, in Gilfach, Bargoed, Bryn Bach Park, Tredegar, Rogerstone Welfare Grounds, Rogerstone, Fairhill, Cwmbran.

Bailey Park, Abergavenny is home to the Monmouthshire sculpture, and you will find it located near to the Rugby Club. The mosaic celebrates the humble daisy and its role for pollinators with an iridescent thick-legged flower beetle stealing the show. The oxeye daisy (*Leucantheum vulgare*) flowers between June and September. Easily identified by its large flower heads that appear on tall single stems. The oxeye daisy thrives on road verges and waster ground as well as meadows. The thick legged flower beetle (*Oedemera nobilis*) gets its name from the male beetles swollen back legs used to impress the females. These beetles can be seen from April to September across Wales pollinating wildflowers.

Cut and Collect trial - Severn Wye Energy Agency

As part of Workstream 5, the GGG partnered with Severn Wye Energy Agency on the Resilient Grasslands project for a trail of cut and collect management across Gwent to assess the economic value of the potential arisings (cut vegetation) in each local authority area.

Monmouthshire was used as the trail area for real world data analysis & waste characterisation of samples taken from cut vegetation around high pollution areas.

The study found no evidence in the trial of any potentially toxic elements above permissible limits even in roadside locations, indicating its potential use in anaerobic digestion for green energy.

Potential usage for the cut vegetation to be used for Biochar production, a carbon-rich material created through a pyrolysis process was examined in the report. This provides further economic potential for arisings to be used, as biochar has highly useful applications across agriculture, forestry, and industry, in addition to being carbon neutral.

Further development is required to achieve this at scale, but the study supported the economic and net-zero case for the potential of this waste material to establish a circular carbon economic model for cut and collect.

Study scope	Costings
	Yields
	Management plans
	Identification of the barriers to effective management of GI grasslands
	Roadmap for future opportunities

Table 6. Scope of the Cut and Collect Study



Figure 28. Greater Gwent Goes Wild in Bailey Park



Figure 29. Minibeast Mansion built as part of Greater Gwent Goes Wild

Greater Gwent Goes Wild

This was a wonderful and very successful celebration of the Gwent Green Grid Partnership's work. It was an opportunity for all the partners involved in the GGG to showcase the work they have delivered across the region via the 5 workstreams and the positive impacts it has had and will continue to have on people, the environment and in helping to address the nature and climate crises. Over 1500 people attended on the day! With 25 different stalls and fun craft activities on offer, there was something for everyone to get involved in, and find out about the amazing biodiversity of Gwent. An Augmented Reality trail, Pollinator Safaris, Otter Talks and Bumble and Bee's singalong story sessions were available all day. Many hands made light work of building a magnificent Minibeast Mansion. The highlight of the day was the Pollinator Parade, which over 50 children took part in with their families, showing off their very own perfect pollinator wings to celebrate our precious pollinators. Plenty of information about environmental and community projects across Gwent was on hand so attendees could find out about local, regional, and national environmental initiatives. The feedback received from visitors and organisations was enthusiastic and appreciative. It was an enjoyable, engaging, informative day that inspiring everyone to do what they can to look after and improve their local green places and spaces for people and biodiversity.



Figure 30. A mural legacy of Greater Gwent Goes Wild

Digital Resource

Exploring the Natural Environment Through the Expressive Arts: A learning resource has been designed to help teachers and learners experience, explore, and observe the wonders of the natural world through the 5 Disciplines of the Expressive Arts. The environment and its variety of living things, its biodiversity, provide the inspiration and focus for the varied, engaging, and enjoyable cross curricular activities in this resource.

The resource uses the amazing adaptations of the flowers, birds, bees, butterflies, bugs, and trees around us, to provide innovative opportunities for learners to develop their knowledge of the environment and creative skills. All of the activities are linked to and support the delivery of the new curriculum for Wales.



Figure 31. Digital resource for schools

GGGP 2023-2026

In 2023, successful bids resulted in the GGGP being awarded almost £1million by the National Lottery Heritage Fund in Wales to promote resilient ecological Nature Networks in landscapes across Gwent, with additional funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This was great news as it means the work of the Partnership can continue. The delivery of the work programmes for these funding streams shall contribute significantly to the delivery for nature recovery and ecosystem resilience during the next reporting period.

3.1. Case Study 2: Community Nature Spaces

Community Nature Spaces are places for people and for nature. This primarily **Local Places for Nature** (Welsh Government) funded project aims to transform smaller and poorer-quality play areas and green spaces into mini havens for wildlife and provide local residents with opportunities for wild play, community growing and places for quiet reflection. Infrastructure was supported by Active Travel, GGG ENRaW, WG community food funding and Section 106 funding. Our public outdoor spaces provide opportunities for us to be active, connect with others, be creative and interact with nature. Taking quiet time to reflect on our natural surroundings can be positive for mental health and wellbeing. Having the opportunity to play in natural environments helps children develop social skills, language, and comprehension. Managed appropriately, urban spaces are becoming increasingly important areas for wildlife. Nature is in trouble; we are facing a global nature crisis and we can see the signs in our own back gardens. Recent studies show that half of British butterflies are threatened with extinction and in Gwent the number of flying insects has declined by 40% between 2004 and 2021.

Community Nature Spaces create mini meadows and beds of plants specially chosen to be of high value to pollinators. Native tree and shrub planting to support our wildlife by providing food and shelter. Bird and bat boxes provide safe nesting and roosting opportunities. Carbon is stored in plant material and undisturbed soils. The network of spaces creates steppingstones to allow wildlife to move urban areas safely.

Figure 32. Oaklands Drive Local Area of Play



Service Areas: Green Infrastructure, Grounds & Cleansing Services, Community Infrastructure, Play
Partner organisations: Local residents, Town Councils

Figure 33. Oaklands Drive following enhancements



Figure 34 Community Nature Spaces Outputs



- ✦ 12 Sites
- ✦ Approx. area: 0.6 ha
- ✦ Capital: £133,288

2021/2022 Monmouth

- Native provenance seeds and plug plants (200).
- Improved management via longer grass (12 sites)
- Planting of fruit and native trees (60),
- Native hedge plants & shrubs (1563)
- Ornamental pollinator plants (1711).
- Tree nursery infrastructure for local provenance tree growing (now used for food growing)
- Flower rich mounds and slopes (12 sites)
- Bird/bat/insect boxes; hibernacula; hedgehog homes (39)
- Increased community food growing opportunities including raised beds (3 sites planned, now 4 sites).



- ✦ 4 sites
- ✦ Approx. area: 5.5Ha
- ✦ Capital: £89,000

2022/2023 Chepstow

- Increased wildflower planting (1891)
- Wildflower turf (630m²)
- Plug Plants (10,000)
- Increased community food growing opportunities including 1 new site at Strongbow Road, enhancement of 2 existing sites at Severn Crescent and Woolpitch Wood
- Orchard trees (13),
- Planting of fruit bushes/plants (62)
- Increased local tree planting (85 shrubs and trees)
- Hedgerow Planting (187m)
- Flower rich mound (1 site)
- Bird/bat/insect/reptile homes (41)



- ✦ 10-15 Sites
- ✦ Up to: 8.5 ha
- ✦ Capital up to: £200,000

2023/2024 Abergavenny

- Wildflower planting
- Increase community food growing opportunities
- Increase local tree planting including street trees, orchards and small woodlands
- Habitat creation projects at transport interchanges
- Restore or create community orchards, cultivating native fruit
- Encourage wildflowers and improve biodiversity by changing mowing practices of local authorities.
- Sensory gardens for therapeutic purposes, delivered in partnership with the Welsh NHS
- Bird/bat/insect boxes; hibernacula; hedgehog homes

3.2 Case Study 3: Resilient Greater Gwent: Pre-School Perfect Pollinators

An amazing 33 sessions were delivered to over 400 children and 83 staff as part of the *Sustainable Communities* workstream of Resilient Greater Gwent ENRaW project.

Our Pre-school Perfect Pollinators project was all about having fun exploring our local environment, the importance of the incredible pollinating insects on our doorstep and showing that the small actions we can all take can have a positive impact on pollinators and other wildlife.

This project set out to:

- ✦ nurture the innate fascination that pre-school children have for the beautiful butterflies and other incredible pollinating insects that they encounter in their local environment,
- ✦ enable the children to develop an understanding of how amazing the natural world is and the vital role that pollinators play in helping provide the healthy food we like and need,
- ✦ provide resources to enable preschool settings to take action for pollinators,
- ✦ deliver fun and enjoyable learning and health and wellbeing opportunities for preschool children and staff at settings,
- ✦ increase pollinator habitats and food sources across Monmouthshire.

What we did:

To ensure the project's form and content would be suitable for settings and support the new Curriculum for Wales 2022 Monmouth County Council's (MCC) Healthy and Sustainable Preschool Scheme (HSPSS) Officer Adele Jones was involved from the start of the project. Her input and assistance were invaluable.

'Perfect Pollinator' resource bags were prepared for the settings, containing an information sheet, sweep net, large insect tower and Field Studies Council (FSC) Pollinator Pack, complete with bee bombs and identification guides. A Fascinating Factsheet about butterflies was also produced, with a QR code linking to a specially designed pre-school butterfly activity booklet.

Monmouthshire County Council Service Areas: Green Infrastructure, Children & Young People.

Partner organisations: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Pre-schools.

We developed a short, very hands-on, interactive session for our visit. This was based around Bronwen the Butterfly, a large, felted wool butterfly, sharing her knowledge about butterflies, with pollinator games and a butterfly life-cycle song and dance activity too. We also explained how the contents of the special butterfly bag could help pollinators around their setting to the children and staff. The sessions were delivered by teachers with experience in both early years and environmental education.

The feedback from the pre-school leaders was very informative. They found the sessions informative, interesting, and enjoyable. They were thrilled with the resources they received for their settings. Those settings using social media, posted lovely comments and fantastic photos. It was wonderful to hear that some settings were using the butterfly life cycle song which they learnt as part of the session for assemblies at the end of the term.

Project legacy

The wide-ranging benefits to children and staff from spending more time outside are well known. This project delivered learning opportunities, together with promoting health and well-being. It enabled everyone to develop enhanced awareness of the wonderful world around us, how we are all connected to and part of our local environment.

Following the sessions, Pre-school staff and learners were eager to discuss how they might use the resources in their pack to find out more about the pollinators around them and to create more habitats for pollinators around their settings.

This project was part of the work delivered by the **Resilient Greater Gwent (RGG) Partnership**¹¹, funded by Welsh Government's Enabling of Natural Resources and Well-being Grant. Work to help pollinators continues to be delivered by the **Gwent Green Grid Partnership**¹².



Figure 35. Pollinator Pack

¹¹ - [Resilient Greater Gwent \(RGG\) Partnership](#)

¹² - [Gwent Green Grid Partnership - MonLife](#)

3.3 Case Study 4: Planning Policy & Development Management

Monmouthshire County Council continues to have a Service Level Agreement with the South East Wales Biodiversity Record Centre (SEWBRc) which screens planning applications via the LERC Wales Aderyn system to identify Protected and Priority Species and Protected Sites. We are proud to be one of the only LA's to have maintained an SLA since the record centre started trading in 2005. This service provides Development Management team with an up-to-date evidence base for decision making.

In response to the increased strength of policy around delivery of net benefit for biodiversity through planning, we have produced (via Resilient Greater Gwent ENRaW funding) a Householder Net Benefit Leaflet which identifies simple ways in which Householder applicants can meet the requirements.

Since 2020 Biodiversity & Ecology Officers in the GI Team have responded to 2,048 planning consultations. Monmouthshire County Council have undertaken 55 Habitats Regulation Assessments during the reporting period which has increased significantly due to challenges around phosphate levels in protected watercourses.

Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience continue to face threats from development pressures including from destruction pre-planning application. We continue to work with our partners in Natural Resources Wales, the Gwent Police Rural Crime Team and the Plant Health & Environmental Protection Branch of Welsh Government to protect sites and species and take action on any biodiversity losses.

We currently have **seven** applications in various stages of the planning process which have Priority Habitats on site at threat of being lost or degraded by development. The table below records losses since the last reporting period. With the

Monmouthshire County Council Service Areas: GI & Countryside Access, Development Management, Heritage, Planning Policy, Building Control, Highways

Partner organisations: SEWBRc, Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE), Gwent Wildlife Trust, Planning Officers of South Wales (POSW), Wales NRAP Planning Group, Natural Resources Wales, South Wales Landscape Liaison Group, Gwent Police.

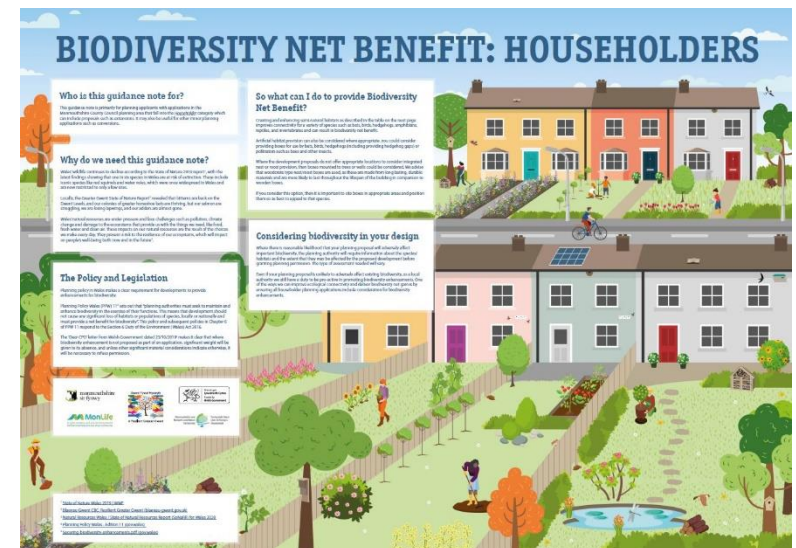


Figure 36. Information for Householders Leaflet

introduction of PPW Chapter 6 we hope to see less habitat loss and the delivery of net benefit for biodiversity through the planning process and we will monitor this more effectively through the Replacement Local Development Plan monitoring. Over 3 Hectares of SINC or Priority habitat have been lost during the reporting period, predominantly as the result of pre-development clearance.

Table 6. Losses of habitat during the reporting period

Reporting Year	SINC affected(m ²)	SINC Habitat Type	Priority Habitat affected (m ²)	Priority Habitat Type	Loss Type
2020-21			5720	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	Pre-development
2020-21			Unknown	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	Pre-development
2020-21	240	Neutral Grassland			Unauthorised clearance
2020-21			Unknown	Hedgerow	Pre-development
2020-21	Unknown	Grassland and mature trees			Approval of allocated site
2021-22	10000	Neutral grassland			Pre-development & development
2021-22			1500	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	Development
2021-22			86	Hedgerow	Development
2021-22			5720	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	Pre-development
2021-22			Unknown	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	Pre-development
2022-23	120	Neutral Grassland			Unauthorised clearance
2022-23			250	Neutral grassland	
2022-23			2240	Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land	Development
2022-23	5000	Scattered trees and neutral grassland			Development
2022-23	Unknown	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland			Development
TOTAL	>15,360 m²		>15,516m²		

Appendix 1: Types of organisations and possible Section 6 actions relative to their functions

Group	Description of organisation relative to biodiversity. Organisations:	Minimum Actions	Examples	NRAP objectives for Action Reporting (see template Annex 1)
1	Organisations that own or occupy an office building only and whose functions are not directly connected to biodiversity and/or land management.	Actions related to buildings management, procurement, sustainability, awareness raising, training, or in partnership with other organisations	Commissions, DVLA	NRAP objectives 1, 4, 6
2	Organisations that own, occupy or manage land their own buildings and grounds, whose functions are connected with biodiversity and/or land management, or that can influence those who own or manage land.	As per Group 1 above PLUS grounds management, cascading funding criteria, providing education and training	Public Health Wales, Universities, Sport Wales	NRAP objectives 1,4,6 as above NRAP objectives 2, 3, 5 relating to own grounds
3	Organisations that own or manage land beyond their own grounds, whether their functions are connected with biodiversity and/or land management or not.	As per Groups 1 and 2 above PLUS land management to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and promote the resilience of ecosystems.	Dŵr Cymru, Local Authorities, NRW, Welsh Government	All NRAP objectives

Appendix 2: Tree Planting Figures 2019-2023

	2019-2020		2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023		Total all years	
	Trees	Whips	Trees	Whips	Trees	Whips	Trees	Whips	Trees	Whips
Abergavenny	0	0	700	0	20	29	200	49	920	78
Chepstow	0	0	0	0	1300	10	0	41	1300	51
Monmouth	0	0	0	0	1283	62	100	40	1383	102
Severnside	0	0	3881	139	2000	0	3700	74	9581	213
Other	200	156	2875	195	0	0	4415	100	7490	451
Total	200	156	7456	334	4603	101	8415	304	20674	895
Total planting	356		7790		4704		8719		21569	

Appendix 3 Objectives and Themes for action from Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales



Six Nature Recovery Objectives

- Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels;
- Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management. Including the requirement on Welsh Ministers to prepare and publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which are of principal importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in Wales
- Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation
- Tackle key pressures on species and habitat
- Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring; and,
- Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery



Five themes of action

- Maintaining and Enhancing Resilient Ecological Networks
- Increasing Knowledge and Knowledge Transfer
- Realising new Investment and funding
- Upskilling and capacity for delivery
- Mainstreaming, Governance and Reporting our Progress