



COFNOD O BENDERFYNIAD WEDI'I DDIRPRWYO GAN SWYDDOG
RECORD OF DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION

Penderfyniad Allweddol | Key Decision ✓

Mae'r Penderfyniad Wedi'i Ddirprwyo hwn wedi'i bennu yn 'Benderfyniad Allweddol' gan ei fod yn debygol o:

This Delegated Decision has been established as a 'Key Decision' as it is likely:

a) arwain at y Cyngor yn ysgwyddo gwariant sylweddol neu wneud arbedion sylweddol;
to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant;

neu / or:

b) fod yn arwyddocaol o ran sut mae'n effeithio ar gymunedau sy'n byw neu'n gweithio mewn ardal sy'n cynnwys dwy etholaeth neu adran etholiadol neu ragor.
to be significant in terms of its effects on Communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral wards.

c) Eraill / Other:

PWNC | SUBJECT:

S.6 Biodiversity Duty: Three Year Report to Welsh Government 2023 to 2025

DIBEN YR ADRODDIAD | PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:

The purpose of the report is to:-

- Provide an update on the progress in developing and implementing the Council's S.6 Biodiversity Duty Action Plan and to seek approval to submit the Action Plan (Appendix A) to Welsh Government and to publicise it on the Council's website as required by the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
- Advise of the pre scrutiny by the Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee (Appendix B).



PENDERFYNIAD WEDI'I DDIRPRWYO | DELEGATED DECISION:

It is AGREED to:

Endorse the report and Appendix 'A' for submission to Welsh Government and for inclusion on the Council's website.

Llofnod y Prif Swyddog
Chief Officer Signature

Simon Gale
Enw (priflythrennau)
Name (Print Name)

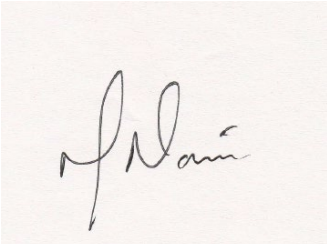
Director, Housing & Regeneration
Swydd
Designation

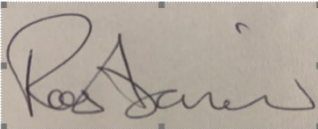
18/12/2025
Dyddiad
Date

Mae'r penderfyniad yn cael ei wneud yn unol ag Adran 15 o Ddeddf Llywodraeth Leol 2000 (Swyddogaethau'r Corff Gweithredol) ac yn y cylch gorchwyl sy wedi'i nodi yn Adran 5 o Ran 3 o Gyfansoddiad y Cyngor.

The decision is taken in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act, 2000 (Executive Functions) and in the terms set out in Section 5 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF****YMGYNGHORI | CONSULTATION**

	Councillor Mark Norris Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing	18.12.25
LLOFNOD YR AELOD YMGYNGHOROL O'R CABINET CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE	ENW A SWYDD NAME AND DESIGNATION	DYDDIAD DATE

	Councillor Ros Davis Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources	18.12.25
LLOFNOD YR AELOD YMGYNGHOROL O'R CABINET CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE	ENW A SWYDD NAME AND DESIGNATION	DYDDIAD DATE

LLOFNODSWYDDOG YMGYNGHOROL CONSULTEE OFFICER SIGNATURE	ENW A SWYDD NAME AND DESIGNATION	DYDDIAD DATE

A FYDD Y PENDERFYNIAD YMA'N CAEL EFFAITH AR Y WARD?



WILL THIS DECISION HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE WARD?

BYDD | YES ✓

NA FYDD | NO

Unrhyw sylwadau pellach/Oes angen rhoi gwybod i'r Aelod Lleol:

Any further comments/Need for Local Member to be informed:



RHEOLAU'R WEITHDREFN GALW-I-MEWN | CALL IN PROCEDURE RULES.

A YW'R PENDERFYNIAD YN UN BRYN A HEB FOD YN DESTUN PROSES GALW-I-MEWN GAN Y PWYLLGOR TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU?:

IS THE DECISION DEEMED URGENT AND NOT SUBJECT TO CALL-IN BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

YDY | YES ✓ NAC YDY | NO

Rheswm dros fod yn fater brys | Reason for Urgency: To allow the Council's formal submission of the Action Plan (Appendix A) to the S.6 Biodiversity duty to Welsh Government by Welsh Governments required timeline.

Os yw'n cael ei ystyried yn fater brys - llofnod y Llywydd, y Dirprwy Lywydd neu Bennaeth y Gwasanaeth Cyflogedig yn cadarnhau cytundeb fod y penderfyniad arfaethedig yn rhesymol yn yr holl amgylchiadau iddo gael ei drin fel mater brys, yn unol â rheol gweithdrefn trosolwg a chraffu 17.2:

If deemed urgent - signature of Presiding Member or Deputy Presiding Member or Head of Paid Service confirming agreement that the proposed decision is reasonable in all the circumstances for it being treated as a matter of urgency, in accordance with the overview and scrutiny procedure rule 17.2:

.....
(Llywydd | Presiding Member)

18/12/2025

(Dyddiad | Date)

DS - Os yw hwn yn benderfyniad sy'n cael ei ail-ystyried yna does dim modd galw'r penderfyniad i mewn a bydd y penderfyniad yn dod i rym o'r dyddiad mae'r penderfyniad wedi'i lofnodi.

NB - If this is a reconsidered decision then the decision Cannot be Called In and the decision will take effect from the date the decision is signed.



AT DDEFNYDD Y SWYDDFA YN UNIG | FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

DYDDIADAU CYHOEDDI A GWEITHREDU | PUBLICATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATES

CYHOEDDI | PUBLICATION

Cyhoeddi ar Wefan y Cyngor | Publication on the Council's Website:- 19/12/2025

DYDDIAD | DATE

GWEITHREDU'R PENDERFYNIAD | IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

Nodwch: Fydd y penderfyniad hwn ddim yn dod i rym nac yn cael ei weithredu'n llawn nes cyn pen 3 diwrnod gwaith ar ôl ei gyhoeddi. Nod hyn yw ei alluogi i gael ei "Alw i Mewn" yn unol â Rheol 17.1, Rheolau Gweithdrefn Trosolwg a Chraffu.

Note: This decision will not come into force and may not be implemented until the expiry of 3 clear working days after its publication to enable it to be the subject to the Call-In Procedure in Rule 17.1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

Yn amodol ar y drefn "Galw i Mewn", caiff y penderfyniad ei roi ar waith ar:

Subject to Call In the implementation date will be: N/A

WEDI'I GYMERADWYO I'W GYHOEDDI: | APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION :



Rhagor o wybodaeth | Further Information:

Cyfadran Directorate:	Housing and Regeneration
Enw'r Person Cyswllt Contact Name:	Jim Bailey
Swydd Designation:	Head of Planning
Rhif Ffôn Telephone Number:	01443 281114



DELEGATED DECISION

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO ACCOMPANY A DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND REGENERATION

18 DECEMBER 2025

S.6 BIODIVERSITY DUTY: THREE YEAR REPORT TO WELSH GOVERNMENT 2023 TO 2025

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to:

- 1.1 Provide an update on the progress in developing and implementing the Council's S.6 Biodiversity Duty Action Plan and to seek approval to submit the Action Plan (Appendix A) to Welsh Government and to publicise it on the Council's website as required by the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
- 1.2 Advise of the pre scrutiny by the Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend to:

- 2.1 Endorse the report and Appendix 'A' for submission to Welsh Government and for inclusion on the Council's website.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (S.6) created a Duty which states that public bodies, including local authorities
"...must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions".

The Act also establishes a 3 yearly reporting schedule, the third report is due in December 2025.



4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 When the Duty was introduced by the Environment Act an initial report for Members was prepared in 2017 and procedures were established within the Council to identify existing biodiversity activity, raise awareness of the Duty, identify new initiatives and develop a reporting mechanism.
- 4.2 The first report (2017-19) was considered by Members in Autumn 2019 <https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s18207/Report.pdf?LLL=0> and subsequently submitted to Welsh Government. The second report was considered by members in Autumn 2022 [Report.pdf](#), [Appendix A.pdf](#). The third report for the period 2023-25 is now due.
- 4.3 Welsh Government produced guidance with regard to the Duty in 2019, ([Section 6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty: reporting guidance](#)) which encouraged public bodies to develop procedures to suit local circumstances but wherever possible align and integrate these with existing corporate arrangements. The RCT procedure, described below, was well established before the guidance was issued and satisfies the general requirements.
- 4.4 The Council's performance management system has been utilised to embed the routine consideration of biodiversity across the Authority. Each year since 2017 (except during Covid), a 'Biodiversity Duty' question has been included in the Service Self Evaluation (SSE) undertaken by each Council service which informs their subsequent Service Delivery Plans. This encourages managers to think about their impacts on biodiversity, report on progress and identify opportunities. The SSE and Delivery Plans are signed off by the relevant Cabinet Members. The next round of SSE is currently underway to inform the delivery plans for 26/7.
- 4.5 Welsh Government undertook an evaluation of the first round of Duty submissions from public bodies and the process used in RCT featured in a good practice presentation by Welsh Government to Local Government Environmental Directors in November 2021.
- 4.6 In 2021, Welsh Government declared a Nature Emergency and undertook a [Biodiversity 'deep dive' with recommendations](#). One of the recommendations was to 'Embed Nature Recovery in policy and strategy in public bodies in Wales', supported by actions to strengthen the delivery of the S.6 Duty across all Government portfolios and public bodies. Wales has committed to the targets and goals of the UN (Kunming-Montreal) Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) to halt and reverse biodiversity loss. The Framework includes the '30by30' target for 30% of land and sea to be in biodiversity management by 2030.



- 4.7 Legislation is currently in the Senedd [Environment \(Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets\) \(Wales\) Bill](#) which will strengthen environmental governance in Wales and introduce a target setting framework to drive delivery of the GBF.

5.0 THE PROPOSED REPORT TO WELSH GOVERNMENT: THE DUTY ACTION PLAN 2022/23 TO 2025/26

- 5.1 The reporting mechanism established for the previous rounds has been continued for the current three-year period. This is based on an Action Plan spreadsheet, appended to this report (Appendix A). The Action Plan themes reflect the main areas of Council activity, namely:
- public engagement,
 - planning,
 - estate management,
 - water management,
 - education,
 - advice to the public,
 - corporate planning, and
 - working with neighbours and statutory bodies.
- 5.2 Individual actions under these headings are classified as ‘on-going’ or ‘project’ (with start and finish dates) and a summary of progress is given for the financial years 22/23, 23/24, 24/25 and 25/26 (to Sept). The use of financial years follows normal Council reporting, but this means there are four reports to cover the 3-year period given in the legislation. Other columns provide information about the officers involved and any general comments.
- 5.3 In the last reporting round, a column (NRAP objectives) was added to the spreadsheet, as recommended in the Welsh Government guidance, that public bodies should show how their actions contribute to the objectives of the Wales Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP). These are
- Objective 1: Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels.
 - Objective 2: Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management,
 - Objective 3: Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation,
 - Objective 4: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats,
 - Objective 5: Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring,
 - Objective 6: Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery.



- 5.4 The Action Plan shows the range of biodiversity activity across the Authority and the steady progress in addressing biodiversity issues at both a strategic level and in practical applications. Progress has been made across all the themes, and cross departmental working is beginning to make a real difference to the work of the Council as a whole. The continuation of appropriate and prioritised in-house expertise to support managers in progressing biodiversity integration in their services will be key as well as providing ecological advice on a case-by-case basis. This is largely provided by the Council's Senior and Assistant Ecologists, whose workload has expanded significantly since the Duty came into force, alongside the on-going requirement for an organisation wide approach to deliver this challenging agenda and ensure the Council continues to meet its statutory responsibilities. Some of the successes and issues highlighted by the updating of the Action Plan are given below.
- 5.5 The long-standing integration of biodiversity into the **planning** system has been a major success, from initial enquiries and 'pre-app' through to long term management, via S.106 agreements. Several of the Council's managed sites now feature as part of the Living Landscape project and provide Nature on Your Doorstep' opportunities for local residents and businesses. Good progress has been made in this 3 year period in addressing the backlog of S.106 issues arising from the Covid disruption which was identified in the previous (2022) report.
- 5.6 Members will be aware that Planning Policy Wales has considerably strengthened the priority given to biodiversity in planning decisions and the requirement for developers to provide biodiversity enhancement as well as compensation and mitigation. The long-standing integration of biodiversity into the planning system in RCT has enabled the authority to continue to deliver its regeneration objectives, whilst protecting and enhancing our biodiversity.
- 5.7 For local residents and businesses, it is important to ensure the delivery of effective planning mitigation and enhancement works, and to ensure that the benefits to biodiversity can be maintained for the duration of planning agreements. This may be for 25 years or occasionally for the lifetime of the development. As the number of agreements (and the number of long-term habitat management conditions) increases, the resources required for monitoring and enforcement will also increase.
- 5.8 With regard to **estate management**, the Nature's Assets Climate Change officer group continues to consider biodiversity, alongside carbon storage, tree cover, water retention and community engagement. Internal procedures set up to evaluate proposed community uses of Council owned land, ensure biodiversity issues are addressed. Similarly, works to structures like roads, bridges and retaining walls routinely include consideration of biodiversity. Some biodiversity issues relating to building maintenance have been identified in this reporting period, and it is proposed that these are addressed through the



processes set up in the Corporate Asset Management Plan. It is also proposed that Objective 3: 'Reduce the Estate's Environmental Impact' should include reference to the S.6 Biodiversity Duty.

- 5.9 A developing area of estate management relates to the new requirements for colliery spoil tips arising from new Wales legislation and guidance. The tips team have been working very closely with the Council's ecologists and, wherever possible, essential safety works are being undertaken in ways that support the extraordinary biodiversity of these sites. Members will be aware of the remediation work at Tylorstown, where the final use of the site will be as a Nature Reserve.
- 5.10 Since 2018, there have been various changes to what was once the wider Countryside section. This section was historically made up on one side of officers whose primary role was outdoor land management. The other side of the section then included biodiversity officers/ecologists and the rights of way team. The latter had multiple cross-service roles and also included a professional advisory role in ecological management of sites. A few years ago the Countryside section was split with the land management staff moving to the new Public Spaces Department. The Countryside team was formally disbanded in 2024, with the new 'Biodiversity' team (including invasive species) and Rights of Way officers sitting within the Planning Service. Consideration of land ownership, land management and capacity of roles, is ongoing between these two and other service areas within the Council. This is to seek accordance with the Welsh Government and the Future Generations Commissioner's priorities for biodiversity consideration in land management (see para 6.4 below). Significant grant aid for biodiversity land management machinery has been provided by WG Local Places for Nature in recent years, specifically to drive change in management practices by public bodies. As an example of positive joint working to achieve this change, all grant funded biodiversity land management machinery is now held and operated by the Public Spaces department with advice supplied by the Council's ecologists on the details of the most appropriate works.
- 5.11 With regard to **water management**, routine consideration of biodiversity in Council ordinary watercourse consent procedures has been extended to the Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) procedures, to address issues identified in the last S.6 report. This additional work has been taken on by the Assistant Ecologist. This is an important area, as managing the biodiversity impacts of SUDS is not straight forward. The preferred 'natural solutions' can be very damaging to biodiversity and, as SUDs is a separate regulatory process, it can be challenging to integrate this with the planning requirements.
- 5.12 The nature of **education** actions has shifted since the first round of S.6 reporting, as NRW funding for environmental education ceased and new opportunities arose. Members will be aware of the schools EcoAward promoted



by the authority and LPfN funding (see 5.14) has allowed the development of the schools' Swift programme.

- 5.13 The key focus of **public engagement**, is on the RCT Local Nature Partnership (LNP), which brings together all the organisations and committed individuals with an interest in nature conservation locally. During Covid, the LNP began reviewing the RCT Action for Nature Plan, first produced in 1999 and reviewed in 2008. The new version was published on-line in 2022 <https://rctlnp.wixsite.com/rct-actionfornature>. The Partnership continues to grow and provides a pool of expertise as well as a promoting and implementing the actions in the Plan.
- 5.14 From 2020, Welsh Government has provided Local Places for Nature funding to Local Authorities and National Parks to support their LNPs and deliver nature on your doorstep as set out in the Programme for Government. The funding has continued and increased over this reporting period and, with the achievement of the original targets in the Programme for Government, the scope has been broadened to encompass WG's more recent biodiversity priorities.
- 5.15 The new **Corporate Plan** for the period 2024-2030 was developed during this reporting period and has considered biodiversity from the outset. One of the potential areas for improvement identified in this reporting period is the scope to embed this approach in all strategic planning across the authority. The officer working groups set up to integrate climate and nature across services were instrumental in the Corporate Plan development and this role could fall within their remit.
- 5.16 Several departments identified the need for service specific training to develop their understanding of biodiversity in RCT and the scope for further engagement. This is very welcome but provision would require further consideration.

6.0 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

- 6.1 March 2025 saw the publication of [The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty | Audit Wales](#) considering the implementation of the Duty, across all public bodies, since its introduction. It states that public authorities *'still need to do more to create a culture adequately focused on the nature emergency' and that 'Welsh Government is not holding public authorities to account'*. A number of recommendations were made for Welsh Government on monitoring compliance and resources for implementation. Audit Wales advised that *'Welsh Government has been incorrect to assume it is excluded from the duty's planning requirements'*.



- 6.2 In April, two additional reports, from the Future Generations Commissioner [Future Generations Report 2025 - Future Generations Wales](#) and Audit Wales [No time to lose: Prioritising prevention - audit.wales](#) marking 10 years of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, have findings relevant to the implementation of the S.6 Biodiversity Duty. The focus on prevention of harm, the need for long-term solutions rather than short-term fixes and for the well-being objectives to inform strategy, the redirection of resources and service delivery are all pertinent. The Council considered its response to the Future Generations Commissioners report in October 2025 [Report.pdf](#). The following paragraphs identify specific actions relevant to the Biodiversity Duty Action Plan.
- 6.3 To assist the Council in considering biodiversity in policy and strategy, the current Service Self Evaluation biodiversity question includes an element relating to biodiversity consideration at a strategic level.
- 6.4 A specific action in relation to Asset Management has been included in Section 3 Estate Management, to pick up on the Future Generations Commissioner's Recommendation 12, to further support raising awareness of and compliance with the Bio-diversity Duty.
- 6.5 Welsh Government is currently revising the Wales National Nature Recovery Action Plan referred to in section 5.3 above as well as progressing the [Environment \(Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets\) \(Wales\) Bill](#). This will be followed by the establishment of the governance body and secondary legislation to set biodiversity targets. These will address some of the governance issues raised in the Audit Wales and FGC reports and may have implications for the S.6 Duty.
- 6.6 Welsh Government has set up a number of Wales Task and Finish groups relating to the UN target of 30 percent of land and sea to be in biodiversity management by 2030 (30x30) and other UN biodiversity goals. Information relating to 30x30 in RCT has been added to action 1.4 Living Landscapes. The new Asset Management action reflects the Council's role as a major landowner, with a significant area of land already in biodiversity management. RCT officers have contributed to the Naturfa Task and Finish group, which is looking at land in biodiversity management outside of statutorily protected sites. A number of case studies have been submitted for consideration.

7.0 PRE SCRUTINY

- 7.1 Pre scrutiny on the Environment (Wales) Act S6 Biodiversity Duty was undertaken by the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee on the 10 December 2025 and the comments and feedback are referenced in the Feedback Report (Appendix B).



8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/ SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 8.1 There are no equality or diversity implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

9.0 CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

- 9.1 As described in 4.4 above, a collaborative approach has been developed across the Authority to progress the Duty. The RCT Local Nature Partnership was consulted at an early stage to advise on the suitability of the action themes.
- 9.2 The report was subject to pre-scrutiny by the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee on the 10 December 2025 and the comments and feedback is referenced at Appendix B.

10.0 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no direct implications as a result of this report, however, the Welsh Language Impact Assessment of any scheme that will be implemented as a result of the Action Plan will be considered in the development of those projects.

11.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 11.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report. However, financial implications may arise in association with the actions the Council undertakes to comply with the Duty and these will be considered as and when necessary.

12.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 12.1 The Council has a statutory duty to prepare a plan of action regarding the Biodiversity Duty and to report to Welsh Government, as set out in S.6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

13.0 LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

- 13.1 This report contributes to the Council's priorities as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan for 2024 to 2030. Specifically addressing the nature and



environment well-being objective and the priorities to protect and enhance the natural environment and to use nature's assets to benefit people and communities.

- 13.2 The Duty Action Plan reflects the five ways of working in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. Biodiversity work must be based on long-term considerations and is focused on preventative and precautionary action. It draws on the knowledge and skills of officers, members and the Local Nature Partnership, and seeks to integrate biodiversity and ecosystem resilience into projects to realise multiple benefits for local residents and wildlife.
- 13.3 Biodiversity work contributes specifically to the Resilience and Global Responsibility goals of the Act, but in the longer term it could have implications for all the goals

14.0 STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

- 14.1 The Biodiversity Duty is of strategic importance across the whole of RCT.

15.0 CONCLUSION

- 15.1 The Council is required to report progress in the discharge of its Biodiversity Duty to Welsh Government every three years. This report and the action plan presented at Appendix A show the actions undertaken over the last 3 years. Approval is sought for submission to Welsh Government.

Other Information: -

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

	2022/25 Biodiversity Duty: Action spreadsheet	main contact	on-going or project	started	progress 2022/23	progress 23/24	progress 24/25	progress 25/26	Comments (J) and Wales Nature Recovery Plan (NRAP) objective (K) objective 1: Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels. Objective 2: Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management, Objective 3: Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation, Objective 4: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats, Objective 5: Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring, Objective 6: Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery.	completed
	1. Biodiversity and the local community									
1.1	Local Nature Partnership (formerly LBAP partnership)	Richard Wistow / Kate Stock	on-going	1997	Amendments made to Action for Nature website, report of consultation completed and circulated to Partnership and respondents.'Under construction' banner removed by Partnership. Partnership meetings held in April and July (on line), with a site visit to Cefn yr hendy Living Landscape site in September and in-person Partnership meetings in Oct. and Jan 23. £36k revenue funding from WG including support for LNP. Report to Members Oct 22- Cabinet Report MTSP One4aLL LG (moderngov.co.uk)	In person Partnership meetings in May, July, October and Jan24, translation of Action for Nature website completed, Biodiversity revenue funding from WG £48k includes support for LNP	In person Partnership meetings held in April, Jul, Oct and Jan. Biodiversity Revenue funding from WG (£48k) includes support for LNP administration. Discussion of 30 by 30 and outline plan for RCT.	Biodiversity Revenue funding from WG (£48k) includes support for LNP administration. Meetings held in April, July and Nov 25,and planned for Feb 26		1,2,3,4,5,6
1.2	Recorders’ Newsletter	Richard Wistow / Kate Stock	on-going	1997	investigation of use of Sway programme	sway training undertaken	decision made to focus on RCT LNP social media and weekly posts, as Recorders Newsletter too staff intensive with current resources. Promote the South East Wales Biodiversity Record Centre (SEWBRc), who collect information from naturalists across RCT and their Recorders Newsletter.		Recorders' Newsletter summarised wildlife reports from members of the public sent to the Council's Ecologist. Publication ceased during COVID but the archive is available on the website https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/PlanningandBuildingControl/Countryside/BiodiversityRCT/RecordersNewsletter.aspx	1,2,5 2019/2024
1.3	council sites and community groups	Liz Dean/ Richard Wistow	on going	1997	Some COVID disruption but a gradual return of community events at various sites. LNP visit to Cefn Yr Hendy Living Landscape site in Sept. Loss of staff and pressures of routine and grant funded work has severely limited community engagement. 'Grab a rake' a casualty. Commissioned 5 biodiversity recording training events across RCT with LPfN grant funding. Interpretation panels provided at 29 sites with LPfN capital funding and using wildlife photos supplied by local photographers.	Interpretation panels provided at 15 more sites, using wildlife photos supplied by local photographers	Interpretation panels provided at 15 additional sites, using wildlife photos supplied by local photographers	Further interpretation panels are planned in the current financial year with capital LPfN grant funding. Commissioned events programme with Local Nature Partnership members at Living Landscape sites for period 25/26 to 26/27 with LPfN 'flexible capital' grant funding		1

1.4	Living Landscapes	Liz Dean/ Richard Wistow/ Kate Stock/ Bob Lewis and Bethan Dalton	on-going	formally 2020	Welsh Government Capital Local Places for Nature (LPfN) of (£373k) grant confirmed April, plus revenue (£72k) for posts (to Mar23). Appointment following advertisement and interview of the 2 former Biodiversity Apprentices in late Sept. Capital spend on 29 Living Landscape sites (fencing, water, geo-collars, woodland management, interpretation etc.) undertaken by March 23	WG capital Local Places for Nature (LPfN) grant confirmed July with £413.5k for 23/24 , plus £72k revenue for posts, and similar for 24/25. 15 new Living Landscape sites completed by March 24	WG capital Local Places for Nature (LPfN) grant confirmed July with £538.8k for 24/25 , plus £72k revenue for posts.. 15 additional new Living Landscape sites completed by March 25, bringing the total to 59 sites.	WG Capital LPfN grant allocation for 25/26 and 26/27 announced but guidance delayed. Some works approved by WG in advance of guidance. Spending Plan approved Oct25 (Capital £502.4k, Flexible capital £107.7k and £66k revenue for posts in 25/6 with similar in 26/7). Participation in WG Task and Finish group for Naturfa (formerly OECM) under the 30x30 goal. 3 case studies submitted (2 on council owned land, one developer owned Planning Agreement site)	Living Landscapes (LL) features in https://rctlnp.wixsite.com/rct-actionfornature . The Corporate Plan includes a target for 100 Council owned LL sites to be brought into biodiversity management by 2030. The project will contribute to the UN/WG 30x30 goal to bring 30% of land and sea into biodiversity management by 2030.	2,3,4,6	
1.5	Let's Talk RCT	Chris Davies/ Leon Marenghi to mar25/ Liz Dean	project	2020	Let's Talk Trees launched in Oct to celebrate trees and woodland in RCT and to support the consultation on the Council's draft tree strategy	Let's Talk Wildflowers , Let's Talk Trees	Let's Talk Wildflowers , Let's Talk Trees	Let's Talk Wildflowers and Let's Talk Trees no longer monitored corporately.	initiated for public consultation on wildflower management policy (2020) and draft Tree Strategy (2022), dependant on corporate resources to monitor the sites.	1,2,4,5	2025
1.6	Eisteddfod	Bethan Dalton/ Bob Lewis	project	2024		initial discussions re biodiversity input to Eisteddfod	Council decision to feature Biodiversity as one of 5 themes. Staff involvement (BD) at the Maes in Pontypridd and preparation of 8 short habitat films (RL) for the rolling display	films shown at Senedd Biodiversity Day in May		1,2,	2024
Biodiversity and the Planning System											
2.1	implement current policy and guidance	Richard Wistow/ Kate Stock	on-going	2011	Ecological review has been undertaken of 1339 planning applications received by the local planning authority, including the review of SEWBREC data Observations submitted on 403 applications	1159 planning applications reviewed, including the review of SEWBREC data, observations submitted on 444 applications	1146 planning applications reviewed, including the review of SEWBREC data. Observations submitted on 451 applications.	observations submitted on 244 planning applications to Oct. Full year data available in April/May 26	Ecological review covers the full range of ecological scrutiny in the planning process. From initial sifting and consideration of ecological potential of planning applications and pre-apps (ex. adverts and non material changes apps), through to site visits as necessary, scoping for, review and scrutiny of submitted ecological assessments, negotiating proposed mitigation/ enhancement, making ecological recommendations in accordance with adopted planning policy and discharge of conditions. PPW12 in 2024 significantly strengthened ecology requirements.	1,2,4,5,6	
2.2	monitor implementation of planning mitigation	Richard Wistow/ Kate Stock/ Leanne Lott	on-going	2019	Further work with windfarm operators with S106 for on-going habitat restoration projects, to identify potential benefits of peatland restoration to Natural Floodrisk Management (NFM) in high risk catchments (led by CE). Further work required to re-establish contacts with developers (post COVID) with approved mitigation schemes (see 2.4 below)	regular s106 meetings monitoring progress on schemes, also addressing issues relating to developer contacts, supply of habitat management plans and routine monitoring reports.	steady progress as a result of regular s106 meetings monitoring progress on schemes, also addressing issues relating to developer contacts, supply of habitat management plans and routine monitoring reports. Submitted an application to the Heritage Fund NNF4' Building Nature Networks in RCT', based on the s106 habitat management plan network to test how it might be contributing to the Wales Protected Sites Network (SSSI/SAC etc).	At least 31 long term habitat management plans are in place, with implementation by the developer or by the Council with commuted funds. Further detail is given at 2.4 below Further progress as a result of regular s106 meetings monitoring progress on schemes, also addressing issues relating to developer contacts, supply of habitat management plans and routine monitoring reports. NHLF approved NNF4 application for 'Building Nature Networks n RCT'. Project Officer recruited Nov25- Mar28.	Good progress made in addressing the backlog due to loss of regular meetings and contacts with developers/ changes in personel during COVID.	3, 4,5,6	

2.3	monitor the impact of development on SINC	Richard Wistow/ Kate Stock/ Clare Hewitt	on-going	2011	2 consented schemes directly affected designated SINC. 21/1631/10, Silvercloud farm Castellau (0.25 ha of mitigation secured via condition), and 15/05666/10 craig yr hesg quarry (0.71ha mitigation, secured through Habitat management condition and a Section 106 for air quality/public health).	3 consented schemes directly affected a designated SINC: 20/1056/10 community building Henre Mynydd car park Rhigos mountain (0.96 ha of mitigation secured through a condition), 23/0588/10 roundhouse Cynon Valley organic adventures (no mitigation required due to minimal impact on the SINC) and 22/0676/10 housing at former aberdare hospital (S106 ref365)	1 consented scheme directly affected a designated SINC: 22/1413/10 solar farm Rhiwfelfinfawr (11.1ha mitigation secured through S106 no 366)	This data will be available in May 2026 Note: re DNS applications decisions made on 22/1129/DNS (DNS/3280378), 22/1128/DNS (DNS/3282038), and 22/1272/DNS (DNS/3272053), all affecting SINC	Data is collated for LDP Monitoring. Follow up DNS consents affecting SINC	1,2,3,4,5,6	
2.4	management of S106 agreements	Richard Wistow/ Kate Stock	on-going	1998	Outline management plans prepared for 5 sites (Parc Eirin, Cefn yr Hendy, Danygraig Heights, Pant Marsh and Llanharan Quarry) where land and funding is vested with the Council. Two new sites added from 21/22 consents at Pantydrainnen and CraigyrAllt Nantgarw. Annual (or more frequent) monitoring of 9 developer management plans by Ecologist, negotiations regarding 13 agreements not currently being implemented post development, 14 agreements under negotiation or awaiting trigger. 1 agreement lost to SUDS development. Contractor works at Danygraig , Cefn yr hendy and Llanharan Quarry, plus in-house practical works at a number of Council managed sites.	2 new sites added to register as a result of planning consents, 5 sites managed by the Council with commuted sums	1 new site added to register as a result of planning consents, 5 sites managed by the Council with commuted sums (Parc Eirin, Cefn yr Hendy, Danygraig Heights, Pant Marsh and Llanharan Quarry), 15 sites subject to annual (or more frequent) management plan monitoring with developers, 21 sites where negotiations are ongoing with developers currently in default giving a total of 41 sites , plus 24 sites awaiting the 'development trigger' to commence. In this period consent has expired on 4 sites and 1 has been withdrawn. The Heritage Fund NNF4 'Building Nature Networks in RCT' bid was successful	Heritage Lottery funded post to March 2028, project commenced July 25, post advertised. This will allow information from existing habitat management plans to be collated and the relationship with the Wales Protected Site Network explored. Data for 25/26 S106 management will be available in May 26	During this three year period, the concern re COVID impact/developer engagement has been systematically adressed by the CIL officer and the Council's Ecologists. The SUDs issue has been addressed with routine input to the process by the Asst. Ecologist (KS) see 4.2 below.	1,2,3,4,5,6	
2.5	evidence relating to the multiple benefits of negotiated S106 agreements to inform the review of the LDP	Liz Dean / Richard Wistow/ Kate Stock	project	2015	discussions of benefits of peatland restoration and Natural Flood Management initiated with some S106 windfarm developers (CE)	green infrastructure work, peatland and carbon emissions	Green Infrastructure work, Peatland GIS carbon audit tool available on ishare, The Heritage Fund NNF4 'Building Nature Networks in RCT' bid was successful	Green Infrastructure work, commencement of NNF project to identify role of s106 in suporting the Wales Protected Sites Network.		1,3,4,5,6	
2.6	Ensure the Biodiversity Duty is reflected in the review of the LDP	Owen Jones/ Liz Dean/ Richard Wistow/ Kate Stock	project	2018	New RLDP agreed by WG April 22, to begin a new timetable from then. The initial assessment of candidate sites previously submitted was completed. This included the consideration of sites against the existing and proposed SINC and higher level ecological designations. A 2nd call for sites was also opened. Update of ISA in preparation. Updating of SINC descriptions commenced	Observations made on the proposed revision of PPW12, publication of final PPW12 in Feb24, biodiversity enhancement required for all new development. RLDP discussed at Natures Assets officer working group, development of Prefered Strategy, including strategic biodiversity policy published for public consultation in Feb 24.	review of Preferred Strategy consultation (Cabinet Oct24). Progress data gathering for strategic sites, including ecology requirements.	evidence gathering for policy development		1,2,3,4,5,6	

2.7	and in regional planning including the SEWales Corporate Joint Committee, the Strategic Plan for the Cardiff City Region, City Deal and Metro proposals etc.	Owen Jones/Liz Dean / Richard Wistow/ Kate Stock/ Pete Mortimer	project	2018	The SEWCJC published their first S6 duty report in Dec 2022. No formal preparation of the SDP has begun, but the South East Wales Strategic Planning Group continue to prepare pieces of joint evidence, where possible, on a region wide basis. Consideration is also being given to options of how the funding of the preparation of the SDP could take place between member authorities. This is in advance of the formal set up of the necessary CJC committees. Ad hoc contacts re ecological surveys for metro works.	RCT led on the development of the Northern Valleys Initiative (NVI) in the CCR to bring back and redevelop brownfield and derelict sites. Construction work continues on the Porth Transport Hub as a major investment to support the Metro supported by UK Gov LUF and WG Metro+ funding and an anchor project of the Porth Town Centre Regeneration Strategy. No formal preparation of the SDP has begun, the South East Wales Strategic Planning Group continue to prepare joint evidence base on a region wide basis. Funding discussions are continuing. Ad hoc contacts continue re ecological surveys for metro works.	The NVI is launched for delivery and managed by the CCR/CJC. RCT is developing a pipeline of projects for investment including the Former Chicken Factory site at Trecynon, Aberdare. The Porth Transport Hub construction is completed and preparations made to bring it into service. No formal preparation of the SDP has begun, the South East Wales Strategic Planning Group continue to prepare joint evidence base on a region wide basis. Funding discussions are continuing. Ad hoc contacts continue re ecological surveys for metro works.	The SEWCJC has a Biodiversity plan on the policy page of their website and will be preparing an annual report for 25-26 in the next reporting cycle. Porth Transport Hub opens in January as a state of the art transport interchange to support the Metro. Pipeline development of the CCR/CJC NVI continues with the Rock Grounds Building Aberdare redevelopment added as an RCT priority. A Delivery Agreement has been agreed that will see the formal preparation of the SDP begin at the end of 2025. In the interim the South East Wales Strategic Planning Group continue to work together.		1,2,3,4,5,6	
2.8	and in Strategic Opportunity Area proposals	Liz Dean/ Pete Mortimer	project	2018	The Pontypridd Placemaking Plan has undergone a range of consultation and has been approved for use subject to the inclusion of amendments following consultation (Cabinet JUNE 22). The A4119 Dualling project has been successful in securing UK Government Levelling Up Funding and the main construction contract is in place and work on delivery has commenced on site in 2022/23. Work to prepare a new Town Centre Strategy for Aberdare is in preparation and the draft will be subject to a programme of engagement and consultation with the public, key stakeholders and organisations.	–Following a period of formal public consultation the draft Aberdare Town Centre Strategy was adopted for use by a Cabinet decision in December 2024. On major regeneration projects, work continued on the construction of the A4119 dualling at Coedely, work commenced on the Muni Redevelopment and former Bingo Hall site in Pontypridd.	work begins on the preparation of the Tonypandy Town Centre Strategy with a public and stakeholder engagement programme prior to a draft Strategy being prepared. On major regeneration projects the National Heritage Lottery funded Parks for People programme of restoration and improvement at Ynysangharad Park was successfully completed. Both the Muni and Bingo Hall site developments were successfully completed to be an integral part of the delivery of the National Eisteddfod at Pontypridd in August 2024. The A4119 dualling was completed and opened in March 2025.	A draft Tonypandy Town Centre Strategy was approved for formal public consultation which will run between August and October with the Strategy planned to be adopted in January 2026. On major regeneration projects, the redevelopment of the former M&S, Burtons/Dorothy Perkins site in Pontypridd continues with the start of construction work on the riverside plaza which will be the future use of the site.	The Strategic Opportunity Areas provide a broad framework to inform the focus of regeneration, investment and development opportunities. In this way priorities will be informed and developments, investment, initiatives and detailed plans and strategies will consider how best the Biodiversity duty is reflected. The areas are: Cynon Gateway, Wider Pontypridd and Trefforest, Pontypridd Town, A4119 Corridor: Regional Rhondda Gateway and Llanilid on the M4.	1,2,3,4,5,6	
2.9	use of sewbrec data	Richard Wistow/ Kate Stock, Bethan Jenkins	on-going	2009	Planning have a Service Level Agreement with SEWBREC. Ongoing issues with planning application data arising after the ecologists observations have been submitted to planning officers, and with the staff time required for in house searches of the database.	Issues with late data resolved. Routine use for Planning applications	Routine use for Planning applications.	Routine use for Planning Applications, and data searches for review LDP SINC descriptions		5	
2.10	Green Infrastructure Assessment	Liz Dean/ Clare Hewitt/ Emma Lewis	on going	2019	good practice examples collated and training events attended.	updated GI requirements in relation to new PPW12	GI themes and typology compiled	evidence gathering for policy development		1,2,3,4,5,6	
2.11	Ensure new statutory nature conservation designations are mapped onto Corporate GIS systems - responsible body ITC	Gillian Hobbs	project	2019	SSSI data uploaded again feb 22			SSSI updated 240725 following designation of Bodwigiad a NantyDeri (Penderyn)		5	2019, but new errors subsequently found, corrected 2022
3. Biodiversity and land /estate management											

3.1	cut and collect	Alistair Crichlow from Nov24/ Gareth Henson to Nov24/ Richard Wistow/ Kate Stock	on-going	2016	1,262,817 m2 cut and collected. Additional equipment (Rytec and trailer) ordered for Streetcare with LPfN funding.	1,279,654 m2 cut and collected.Capital funding from WG 'Local Places for Nature' purchase of barrier cutter to reduce pesticide use	Awaiting data from Streetcare/Public Spaces Dept. on extent cut and collected. Capital funding from WG 'Local Places for Nature' to purchase a new Softrak for wet grassland sites, a spearhead flail to prepare overgrown sites for cut and collect and a further Rytec cut and collect machine.	Awaiting data from Streetcare/Public Spaces Dept.	Re-organisation of service provision has seen 'Cut and Collect' machine operation moved to the(former Streetcare) Public Spaces Department. Grant funded machinery must be used for biodiversity purposes, with evidence collected and data provided. Ecological input continues.	1,2,3,4,6	
3.2	Transfer of management works from Parks and Countryside section to Streetcare to identify biodiversity training/information provision (as raised in 2017SSE), in particular with regard to the Wildlife Law aspects, such as protocols for nesting birds, sensitive areas (e.g. dormouse priority areas, SSSI) etc.	Richard Wistow/ Alister Crichlow	project	2018		Countryside Rangers transferred to Streetcare	Restructuring in Nov removed the Countryside Team completely and transferred all operational land management to Streetcare, with discussions around responsibility for the former Countyside portfolio ongoing. Ecology advice provided by new Biodiversity Team in Forward Planning.	creation of the new Public Spaces Dept, ecological advice and training materials provided by Biodiversity team in Forward Planning	Operational changes in land management since April 2018 have centralised operations in the Public Spaces Dept. Work continues to embed new operational relationships arising from changes to the Countryside service to maintain effective land management arrangements.	1,2,3	2025
3.3	Corporate Estates Department liaise with Council's Countryside section regarding occasional third party requests for positive biodiversity land management licences on Council owned land	Richard Wistow/ Kate Stock/ Richard Skinner/Kelly Daniels/ Deb Hanney	on-going	2017	ecological advisory role continued as opportunities and issues arise, including advice on potential grazing opportunities for 'rented' grazing sites. Healthy Hillside project (see below), increasing enquiries re community uses (see 3.6 below)	observations provided on community use of Council sites	observations provided on community use of Council sites	observations continue to be provided on community use of Council sites by the Biodiversity team		1,2,4	
3.4	Japanese Knotweed management on Council land	Gareth Henson to nov24 / David Brown	on going		Council treatment of 324 sites,	Council treatment of 335 sites,	Council treatment of 348 sites, some survey work of invasives undertaken by Cardiff Woods project at 2 RCT-owned sites.	Council treatment data available Dec 25, including treatment as part of the Cardiff Woods project		2,4	
3.5	Fly Tipping control/removal	Steve Owen/ Tim Jones	on going		3,322 flytips cleared	3,563 flytips cleared	4,022 flytips cleared	q1 1064 fly tipping incidents, final data available May 26		2,4	
3.6	Corporate estates department liaise with Council's Countryside section regarding biodiversity implications of land disposal, and building refurbishments, demolitions and new developments	various/ Richard Wistow/ Kate Stock	on going				ensure continuation with demise of Countryside Team	Corp Estates Liaison with Biodiversity Team in Forward Plans. Ensure this continues with the current restructuring of Corporate Estates.	See also Nature's Assets below. The Council's land portfolio is increasingly being seen as an important contributor to community well-being and ecosystem resilience and this has resource implications, in particular for ecological expertise.	1,2,3,4,5,6	

3.7	Healthy Hillside/s/Grazing site work	Richard Wistow/ Kate Stock/ Kelly Daniels	on going	2013	Conservation grazing licences which cover 6 RCT owned sites, some of which were not grazed this season due to drought conditions. Living Landscapes project funding enabled the installation of water troughs at some sites. Healthy Hillside/s project continues.	ENRAW funded Healthy Hillside/s project ended in July 2023. RCT continuing to conservation graze land at Clydach vale Countryside park as a result of the project. Conservation grazing continued on other Council owned sites. Input to grazing license review.	New conservation grazing licenses developed with Legal, additional grazing site at Bryngwyn added and further water troughs, with LPfN grant funding.	lessons from Healthy Hillside/s project being taken forward to minimise grassfire risk and promote biodiversity. Conservation grazing of 8 sites and land management options to minimise fire risk, where grazing not possible, also under consideration.	Healthy Hillside/s project identified in RCT and Merthyr Community Safety plan as a multiple partnership project delivering best practice for grass fire prevention. Wild fire identified as a risk in the PSB climate risk assessment for RCT/Bridgend/Merthyr	1,2,3,4,5	
3.8	Highways Infrastructure Programme	Richard Wistow/ Kate Stock/ Jacqueline Mynott	on-going		A4119 dualling under construction,including mitigation and enhancement works. Cynon gateway received planning consent, mitigation and enhancement package agreed. Llanharan bypass still in design and negotiation of mitigation and enhancement measures. WG Roads Review. Tylorstown tip reclamation proposals under discussion in addition to minor engineering projects. Nant Cwmparc cantilever works for sandmartin.	Following publication of the Welsh Government 'Future of Road Investment in Wales' Cynon Gateway and Llanharan subject to review. A4119 dualling under construction.	Design work for Llanharan Sustainable Transport Corridor including biodiversity mitigation and enhancement. A4119 dualling opened Mar25	Design work for Cynon Gateway including biodiversity mitigation and enhancement, pre-app consultation on Llanharan Sustainable Transport Corridor (from 28 Sept)		1,2,3,4,5,6	
3.9	Tips management programme	Richard Wistow/ Kate Stock/ Jacqueline Mynott/ Beth Jones	on-going	2021	contribution to discussion re prospective legislation re importance of Tips for biodiversity. Input to Tylorstown restoration as a Nature Reserve. Dare Valley CP and Clydach Vale CP among the 29 Living Landscape sites.	Tylorstown tip restoration continues, Buglife Lottery funded 'Coal Spoil Connections' succesful. Biodiversity guidance for Tips team re drainage works. Living Landsape sites include Gilfach Goch, Gelliwion and Barry Sidings.	Tylorstown tip restoration and Coal Spoil Connections continue, artist worked with primary school for Tylorstown with LPfN funding. Inclusion of a number of coal tips as Living Landscape sites (Gelli, Wattstown, Tylorstown, Cefn Pennar, Cwmaman, Aberaman, Albion, Lady Windsor and the Rhondda Fach community route).	positive impact of drainage works on tip flora, Tip legislation passed in the Senedd, conclusion of current Coalspoil Connections (conference in Nov), JM/RW spoke at Tip Safety workshop, new grant application by Buglife in prep. Further Living Landscape coal tip sites under consideration.	WG funding and legislative review following storm Dennis and the Tylorstown slip	1,2,3,4,5,6	
3.10	Asset Management	Paul Griffiths/ David Pugsley/ Jim Bailey/ Richard Wistow/ Kate Stock/ Liz Dean	on-going	2025		On-going work required in respect of building management arrangements for nesting birds. Guidance available.	Corporate Asset Management Plan 2024-2030 completed. On-going work required in respect of ensuring compliance with Wildlife law. Guidance available.	Utilise the Council’s existing and well-established asset management arrangements (including Corporate Asset Management Plan) to further support raising awareness of and compliance with the Bio-diversity Duty.	The FGC rec 12 states that' From 2025, public bodies must prioritise climate resilience, net benefit for biodiversity, and pesticide reduction in how they manage their estates, including their buildings, tenant farms, parks, roadside verges and other land assets.' Issues with wildlife law relating to bats and nesting birds can have serious consequences for the Council as well as the species affected.	1,2,4,,6	
4. Biodiversity and water management											
4.1	ordinary water course consents	Anthony Chorley/ Liam Swanwick/ Richard Wistow/ Kate Stock	on going	2012	53 valid ordinary watercourse applications	79 valid ordinary watercourse applications	80 valid ordinary watercourse applications	data available May 26	Numbers rising year on year, adding pressure for ecologist's workload. Lack of detail in submissions an issue.	1,2,4	
4.2	introduction and operation of sustainable drainage (SUDS) regulations	Owen Griffiths/ Richard Wistow/ Kate Stock	on going	2015	68 valid SUDS applications received	75 valid SUDS applications received. KS commenced comments on Suds (69)	77 valid SUDS applications received KS provided obs on 65 applications	data available May 26	Following concern that 'natural solutions' can be very damaging for biodiversity and can conflict with agreed planning mitigation /enhancement for biodiversity if not considered at the same time, ecologists now consulted on all SUDS.	1,2,4	

4.3	Ely Catchment Partnership	Owen Jones/ Andy Stone/ Liz Dean/ Becky Davies NRW	currently project	2022	further occasional meetings co-ordinated by NRW to develop and share natural capital studies commissioned from consultants and progress the Partnership. Funding for works to remove barriers to Rivers Trust	Continuation of Rivers Trust work in the Ely catchment	UK Floodplain Meadows group visit to Pant Marsh, NRW proposals for NFM at WG woodland estate sites in the Ely, further work by the Rivers Trust	New funded Rivers Trust project to engage with communities across the catchment and in particular repeat water quality work undertaken by sixth formers in Tonyrefail Comp. in the 1970s with current students.	Ely is Wales' worst river with regard to the Water Framework Directive, with the Clun classified as 'bad' and a programme of remedial works required. NRW initiated investigation of catchment wide partnership for the river Ely (Cardiff/ Vale/ RCT/ WW/ NRW and voluntary sector), to address the Water Framework Directive failures.	1,2,3,4,5,6	
5. Biodiversity and education											
5.1	swifts in schools	Liz Dean/ Bethan Dalton/ Richard Bowen to Mar25/ Sarah Nicholls	project	2022	Local Places for Nature funding being explored for a wider project across RCT. Some schools installing nest boxes provided by Learning Curve projects	Swift nest box project commenced, examining all schools for potential nest box sites, boxes purchased and erection commenced with Local Places for Nature grant funding. Concern expressed re building maintenance and nesting birds by consultant.	Further funding for erection of boxes and call systems where appropriate. Bi-lingual teaching pack prepared and distributed with LPfN grant.	Swift Champion scheme, funded by LPfN, being developed with schools to contribute to the RCT schools EcoAward.	swifts, swallows and house martins rely on buildings for their nest sites and were once common and widespread across RCT. Populations have crashed in recent years and providing nest sites may help to reverse this decline.	1,2,3,4,5	
6. Biodiversity and advice to the public											
		Richard Wistow/ Kate Stock/ Bethan Dalton/ Robert Lewis	on-going	1997	advice/queries received on an ad hoc and on-going basis covering a wide range of ecological issues. LNP co-ordination returned to RCT apr 22, appointment of Biodiversiy Officers (BD/RL) with Grant funding. Facebook page requires monitoring KS/BD	advice/queries received on an ad hoc and on-going basis covering a wide range of ecological issues. Grant funding continues to march 25. In house training and consent to allow management of RCTLNP site and social media.	advice/queries received on an ad hoc and on-going basis covering a wide range of ecological issues. Weekly social media posts for RCTLNP	advice/queries received on an ad hoc and on-going basis covering a wide range of ecological issues. Weekly social media posts for RCTLNP		2,3,4,5	
7. Biodiversity and corporate planning											
7.1	Service Self Evaluation of Biodiversity	Lesley Lawson to May24/ Leon Marenghi to Mar25/ Joanna Hillier/ Liz Dean	on going	2017	Input to SSE biodiversity question, review of responses	Input to SSE biodiversity question, review of responses	Review of biodiversity responses to SSE	Action plan updated. Amendment made to the biodiversity q for SSE for 25/6 to consider biodiversity in Strategy (Services to complete by Dec 25). Further changes in 26/27 to address recommendations from FGC, Audit Wales and new Environmental Governance and Targets legislation.		1,6	
7.2	Biodiversity Duty Plan	Richard Wistow/ Kate Stock/ Liz Dean	on going	2016	Action plan updated, report to scrutiny 10th Oct and Cabinet 21st Nov to allow submission to Welsh Government by December 2019. https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s18906/Report%201.pdf?LLL=0	Actions progressed.	Actions progressed.	Updated Action Plan report to scrutiny and Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation Cabinet sub-Committee Dec for submission to WG by end of 2025	Environment (Wales) Act 2016 S6. Legal duty to report to WG every 3 years (Dec 2019, Dec 2022 and Dec 2025)	1,6	

7.3	Procurement Services continue to address biodiversity within its service provision and consider in policy reviews and associated documentation and processes.	Liz Dean/ Marc Crumbie/ Ceri Millard	on-going	2018	The Procurement Service use the Welsh Government Sustainability Risk Assessment in our Invitations to Tender. Unless otherwise agreed, any products or services procured under this Contract shall (where possible) meet the minimum mandatory Government Buying Standards (https://www.gov.uk/government/collecti- ons/sustainable-procurement-the-government-buying-standards-gbs) In respect of single use plastics, we’ve widened the scope of this to ‘single use items’	The procurement service continues to support single use plastic reduction. This has involved working with schools and catering to reduce plastic cutlery and other disposables. A change to paper straws from plastic has been implemented for school milk.	The procurement service continues to support single use plastic reduction. Community meals trays have been changed to a compostable alternative. A trial has begun with Cleaning Services to use disposable pods as an alternative to plastic bottles.	Adoption of Policy Note 06/21 Taking Account of Carbon Reduction Plans. The procurement service continue to support biodiversity initiatives for the areas we support. Continued support for cleaning disposable pods trial.SEW procurement project to be setup to look specifically at biodiversity in procurement.Capital projects continue to be delivered with sustainability in mind.		1,6	
7.4	Climate Change Strategy now integrated with the Corporate Plan 2024-2030	Lesley Lawson to May24, Leon Marenghi to Mar25	project	2019	Following consultation, the Strategy adopted by Cabinet in June 2022, Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee with decision making powers established. Decarbonisation dashboard launched for internal pilot. Member site visit to Cwmparc and Penycymoedd peatbog sites (05.01.23).	Development of the new Corporate Plan for RCT 'Working with Communities' including community engagement, Joint Consultative Committee (20/12/23), Overview and Scrutiny Committee (29/01/24) and Cabinet (20/03/24). Incorporates former Climate Change Strategy. Climate Change Cabinet sub-committee continues to receive regular reports on progress. Member site vists to Living landscape sites at Parc nant celyn and Llantwit Fardre marsh (05.03.24)	RCT Corporate Plan 2024-2030 'Working with Communities' approved by the Council (24/04/24). Climate Change Cabinet sub-committee continues to receive regular reports on progress	Climate Change Cabinet sub-committee has been renamed as the Energy Efficiency and Carbon Reduction Cabinet sub-Committee and continues to receive regular reports on progress.		1,6	2024
7.5	Natures' Assets Group	Jon Arroyo and Ffion Edwards to Oct 22/ Simon Gale /Jim Bailey/ Kate Stock	on-going	2021	May announcement of Glyncornel Woods, Llwynypia as one of the 70 Ancient Woodlands selected to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth. Draft Tree Strategy (Cabinet June, consultation Sept-Oct), Let's Talk Trees from Oct, NRW Peatland Restoration Grant submitted Jul, approved Sept for investigative project in Cwmparc, completed Mar23, Living Landscape project (see above), input to landuse and land-use change element of Net Zero reporting including proposals for a baseline survey of regenerating woodland on Council owned land. Solar farm proposals (report 031022)	commissioned work to estimate the natural regeneration of woodland on Council owned sites > 10ha 2003-2020 from air photos. Result: woodland increased from 24% to 40% overall, almost exclusively from natural regeneration (not tree planting). Continuing support for peatland projects via Lost Peatlands project (led by NPT) and commissioned audit work. Input to Local Area Energy Plan for RCT.	Support for Lost Peatlands 2 application to NHLF. RCT Peatland audit work completed and data made available on ishare. Baseline carbon emissions data available. Report to Climate Change subcommittee 17 Mar 25, report to same committee on the progress of the Living Landscapes Project and WG Local Places for Nature grant funding for 25/26 and 26/27	Peat update report to Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation Cabinet Subcommittee due Dec 25		1,2,3,4,5,6	
8. Working with neighbouring authorities and other statutory bodies											
8.1	Input to area statements	Liz Dean / Richard Wistow/ Kate Stock	on-going	2017	Ecosytem Profiles published on NRW website. Input to initial work by NRW on resilient ecosystems and networks across South Central. Input to NRW Forest Resource Plans for the southern part of the County Borough		Initial work on 30 by 30 in RCT by NRW Area team.	further work on 30 by 30 including participation in WG Naturfa task and finish group and NRW South Central resilient ecosystems and networks meetings.	the NRW South Central area includes RCT, Bridgend, Merthyr, Cardiff and the Vale	1,2,3,4,5,6	
8.2	WG ENRaW grant bids	Richard Wistow/ Liz Dean	project	2018	Healthy HillsideS (NRW/WildlifeTrust) see 3.7 above. CwmTaf Nature Networks (BCBC) works planned for Barry Sidings, Gelliwion, Glyncornel, Aberdare Park and Cefn yr Hendy	all ENRAW funded projects completed by June 2023				1,2,3,4,5	all projects end by june 23
9. Other											

Scrutiny Feedback from the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee held on the 10.12.25

Dear Members of the Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation Cabinet Sub Committee,

I have been instructed by this Council's **Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee** to convey the comments and observations of Members in relation to the Council's S.6 Biodiversity Duty Three Year Report to Welsh Government, prior to its consideration at the Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation Cabinet Sub Committee meeting on the 18th December 2025.

The Scrutiny Committee received the above-mentioned report for consideration and provided feedback and comments in respect of the Council's S.6 Biodiversity Duty Action Plan at its meeting on the 10th December 2025. Members undertook a constructive discussion in respect of the content of the report and specific issues raised.

In summary, the following points were noted:

- ▶ Members praised the Planning Policy Wales for strengthening the priority given to biodiversity in planning decisions. Members suggested that the Council should be encouraging developers to put Swift boxes in new residential properties. Members also recommended that Swift boxes should also be promoted with third sector organisations and community halls within RCT;
- ▶ Members emphasised how important coal tips are to biodiversity and the success of the Coal Spoil Connections programme in highlighting the variety of insect friendly habitats uniquely found in spoil tips. Members recommended that this should be extended to other spoil tips across RCT to identify additional unique habitats that support wildlife and biodiversity across the region. Members also felt that making coal tips a nature reserve and part of the Living Landscape programme should be a priority for the Council and recommended that the plan for coal tips across RCT should be strengthened within the LDP;
- ▶ Members were encouraged to hear that the Authority works closely with neighbouring Local Authorities in this area, particularly in respect of the close working relationship with Neath Port Talbot Council on Pen Y Cymoedd wind farm, the largest inland windfarm in England and Wales;
- ▶ Members were pleased to hear that the amalgamation of the Planning department and the Biodiversity department within the Council has enhanced biodiversity works throughout the County Borough and has had a positive effect in respect of prioritising biodiversity in planning decisions;
- ▶ Members recommended that the Council strengthen its public engagement work with the local business communities in RCT and third sector organisations to support them in becoming more biodiverse aware;
- ▶ Members praised the Council's work with wider partner organisations in helping to spread biodiversity planning work to community ecological groups and encouraged the Council to strengthen the work of the Local Nature Partnership to encourage biodiversity awareness going forward;

- ▶ Members recommended that when considering planning applications for approval, biodiversity is considered as part of the process and that any conditions or stipulations related to biodiversity are actively followed up to check they are compliant to avoid fostering a culture where they are viewed as optional rather than compulsory;
- ▶ Members pointed out that the 'Let's Talk RCT - Trees' website appears to be out of use and not regularly updated. Members recommended that this page is reviewed and that Council websites such as the Living Landscapes website, Local Nature Partnership website and social media sites are promoted to residents in its place;
- ▶ Members felt that the Authority could be doing more in terms of its social media campaigns to encourage residents to report wildlife sightings to SEWBReC as this will ensure that any decisions the Authority is making based on SEWBReC records is based on the most up to date records available;
- ▶ Members felt that more could be done to ensure that subs schemes take on board the requirement for biodiversity and ecology; and,
- ▶ Members were encouraged to learn that the new LDP will include more detail in respect of biodiversity requirements.

At the conclusion of the Committee's discussions, Members wished for their comments and recommendations to be considered and conveyed to the Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation Cabinet Sub Committee at its meeting on the 18th December 2025.

Yours sincerely

Christian Hanagan

Service Director Democratic Services, Welsh Language and Communications