

Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 - Section 6 The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Report 2023-2025



Torfaen County Borough Council

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Summary

This report fulfils Torfaen County Borough Council's statutory three-year reporting requirement for 2023-2025 under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, commonly referred to as the Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty (the S6 Duty). The report follows the Welsh Government's prescribed format and details the Council's contribution to the six objectives of the national Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) 2020.

Now in its third iteration, this report reflects input from a wide range of Council service areas, with significant contributions from the Natural Environment Team and officers across the wider organisation. It highlights continued progress in embedding the S6 Duty, including the integration of biodiversity considerations into land-use planning processes, the expansion and diversification of green-space management practices, and sustained engagement with the Climate and Nature Emergency Action Plan through established Officer Delivery Groups.

During this reporting period, the Council completed a full review and update of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Plan, originally commissioned in 2019. The updated plan reflects legislative, policy, and organisational changes and will guide future actions aligned with both the S6 Duty and the Climate and Nature Emergency.

Partnership working continues to be a significant strength. Landscape-scale, cross-boundary initiatives such as the Gwent Green Grid Project (GGGP) and Local Places for Nature (LP4N) illustrate the benefits of collaborative delivery. The long-standing partnership with Blaenau Gwent through the joint Local Nature Partnership remains a key mechanism for coordinated action. Following on from the fantastic Go Wild event held in Blaenau Gwent in 2023, in 2024 the Partnership delivered a highly successful 'Go Wild' event in Pontypool Park, celebrating local achievements in biodiversity enhancement. Additionally, Torfaen secured £808,000 funding in 2025 for the Nature Towns and Cities programme, which will support further nature-recovery actions over the coming years.

A rolling programme of habitat management is maintained across all eight Local Nature Reserves (LNRs). Strategic heather cutting on Council-owned land within the Bloreng Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) continues to meet landowner obligations and reduce wildfire risk. Heather condition surveys have also been undertaken in collaboration with NRW. A growing proportion of Council-managed grassland is now subject to annual cut-and-collect management for biodiversity and carbon benefits. Additional actions include meadow creation, tree planting, conservation grazing, and river-habitat enhancement. The Council has also acquired Coed Meyric Moel, a woodland near Henllys LNR, to secure long-term management for biodiversity. Torfaen has also successfully designated an eighth local nature reserve – Blaenserchan LNR and celebrated its designation with an official public opening in 2025.

Robust evidence underpins effective decision-making. Ongoing updates to GIS datasets and continued access to verified biodiversity information from the South-East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBReC) are fundamental resources for officers. Work on the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) is supported by updated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) surveys and ecological and landscape assessments of candidate sites. A joint review of the SINC selection criteria for Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent has been completed and undergoing cabinet approval. The revised criteria aim to:

- Modernise and strengthen biodiversity protection in line with current legislation, policy, and ecological understanding.
- Support ecosystem resilience through application of the DECCA framework.
- Ensure SINC's continue to provide an effective planning and conservation tool that delivers community and well-being benefits.
- Fulfil statutory duties and contribute to national targets, including the commitment to protect 30% of land for nature by 2030.
- Promote long-term, evidence-led nature recovery through cross-authority partnership working.

Governance arrangements for the S6 Duty are now embedded within the Climate and Nature Emergency Action Plan and continue to be supported by a suite of complementary strategies, including the Green Infrastructure Strategy (2020), the Tree Strategy, and the Torfaen Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Plan 2025–2030: *Nature Positive by 2030*. Together, these form a strengthened policy framework for delivering the Section 6 duty across Council functions.

While the report demonstrates substantial progress since 2022, officer consultation also identified areas where further action is needed. In line with Welsh Government's reporting template, the report therefore proposes a series of additional measures to support deeper and more consistent integration of the S6 Duty across Council services.

1.0 Introduction and context

The structure and content of this report adhere to the requirements set out in the Welsh Government's *Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1: Guidance for Section 6 – The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty (Reporting Guidance, 2019)*. The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 places an enhanced duty on public authorities to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and in doing so, to promote the resilience of ecosystems when exercising their functions in relation to Wales. In accordance with Section 6, public authorities are required to ensure that consideration of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience is embedded at the earliest stages of policy development, business planning, programme and project design, and throughout day-to-day operations. This proactive approach is essential to fulfilling the duty and contributing to wider national ambitions for nature recovery.

The natural environment of the County Borough is characterised by its heather moorlands, ancient woodlands and wildflower rich meadows that are known to support nationally declining and locally characteristic wildlife. Many of the species and habitats are of principal importance in Wales as listed under section 7 (S7) of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Torfaen has four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), eight Local Nature Reserves (LNR), and more than 150 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The Afon Lwyd, the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, and the green corridors associated with the cycleway network function as strategic linear habitats that extend across the county borough.

Implementation of the S6 duty contributes to the delivery of other statutory duties, especially sustainable development duty under the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and the Climate and Nature Emergency Action Plan 2022 with its 30x30 target. The Torfaen Well-being Statement 2022-2027 has embedded the natural environment into its objectives.

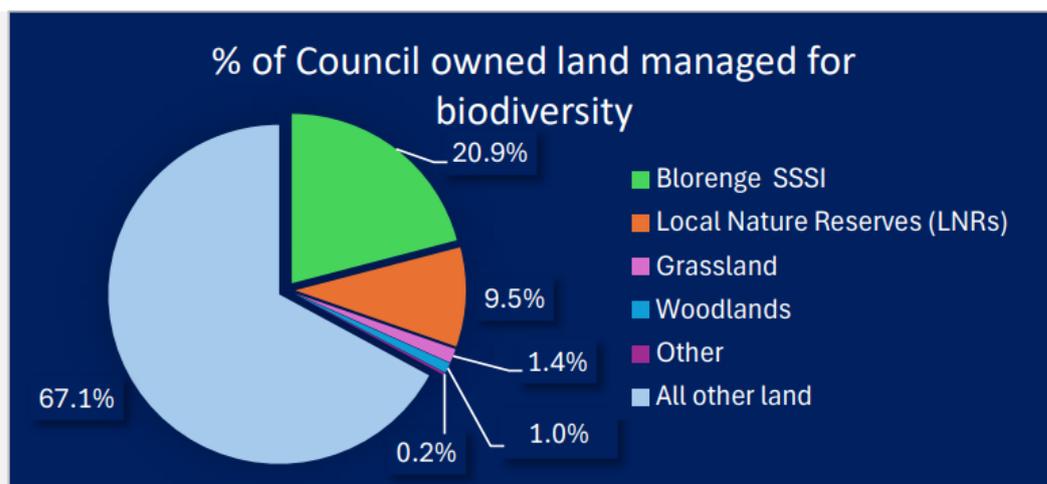
To help co-ordinate the implementation of the S6 duty across Council service areas, a Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Plan was prepared in 2019 and has been reviewed and updated in 2025. This includes a plan of action set against the Wales Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) objectives. The delivery of this plan and the actions within it, now forms part of the Council's response to the Climate Emergency declared in Torfaen June 2019 and the subsequent Nature Emergency declared in September 2021.

Preparation of this report has involved engagement and consultation with a broad range of council officers and departments, generating a range of detailed responses.

2.0 Highlights, key outcomes and issues

Through guidance set out in Planning Policy Wales ed. 12, Torfaen's Development Management and Planning Policy and Implementation Teams continue to engage proactively with the S6 duty, and ensure all planning applications seek to include biodiversity positive (net gain) enhancement measures and a GI Statement.

The Natural Environment Policy and Streetscene Operations Group is responsible for managing the majority of the Council's soft estate, demonstrated through its coordinated programme of urban grassland management and its consideration of tree-related health and safety requirements. Through revised working practices, the team has successfully implemented a nature-friendly cut-and-collect regime. Currently, 33% of Council-owned urban grassland is managed for biodiversity through a single annual cut, with ambitions to increase this proportion in future years. These improvements have been enabled by the acquisition of new equipment funded through the Welsh Government's Local Places for Nature programme, alongside the strong commitment of Streetscene operational staff.



The estimated total area of Council owned land managed for biodiversity is 33% or 767 Hectares (an increase from 31% in 2023/24). During 2024/25 the designation of a new LNR at Blaenserchan was completed increasing the total area of local nature reserves to 9.5% or 220 Hectares. Grassland sites contribute 1.4% or 32 Hectares; woodland sites contribute 1% or 23 Hectares and the Blorenge SSSI contributes 20.9% or 487 Hectares. Other sites (Llantarnam SINC & Coed Meyric Moel) contribute 5.2 Hectares of 0.2%.

Policy development and integration of the Section 6 duty within Council plans, projects and programmes have progressed significantly. This is evidenced by a review of the BERP, a review of the SINC Criteria and an impact assessment produced for use by the PMO team to ensure biodiversity is appropriately considered at the very beginning of new projects/work. Recognising that climate change and biodiversity decline are

intrinsically linked, the decision to align the Section 6 duty with the Council’s net zero targets and the Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy has further supported the mainstreaming of biodiversity across policy areas. Delivery of the Section 6 duty within waste and resource management services has strengthened the integration of biodiversity considerations into procurement, contract management, service design and community-focused initiatives. While statutory waste obligations can limit the scope for nature-positive actions, the service continues to identify opportunities to embed biodiversity through social value commitments, monitoring processes and collaborative working. Future work will involve ongoing review of these mechanisms, with learning incorporated into the next iteration of the Section 6 Action Plan.

While awareness and understanding of the Section 6 duty have improved across service areas, some compliance gaps remain. Continued engagement with key operational teams—including Asset Management, Property Management, Highways and Engineering, and Drainage and Flood Management—will be essential to minimise compliance risks and ensure that opportunities to deliver biodiversity benefits are fully realised. **Overall, there has been a positive cultural shift in the way the natural environment is valued and considered within day-to-day decision-making and operational activities across the Council.**

3.0 Evidence base and policy framework

The following local and regional plans, policies and strategies form the broad evidence base and policy framework for the implementation the S6 duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, obligations under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and Future Wales 2040, from national to local.

Policy & Evidence Framework Summary Table

Level	Document / Strategy
National (Wales)	State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR)
	The Nature Recovery Plan for Wales (NRAP)
	Future Wales: The National Plan 2040
	Planning Policy Wales Edition 11
	Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning
Regional (South East Wales)	South Wales Area Statement
	Gwent State of Nature Report
	Green Infrastructure Action Plan for Pollinators in South-East Wales
	Natural Resource Management Plan for South-East Wales
	South-East Wales Uplands Natural Resource Management Plan
	Gwent Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP)
	Gwent Public Service Board Well-being Plan
Local (Torfaen)	County Plan
	Green Infrastructure Strategy
	Draft Green Infrastructure Assessment
	Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance

Level	Document / Strategy
	Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Plan (BERP) 2025–2030
	Revised Planning Obligations SPG – Annex 5 ‘Biodiversity, Geodiversity & Ecological Resilience’
	Site Design, Masterplanning and Development Brief SPG
	House Extension and Alterations SPG
	Sustainable Locations SPG
	Planning and biodiversity guidance for householder and other minor applications
	Torfaen RLDP: Habitats Regulation Assessment Scoping Report (inc. NRW comments)
	Tree Strategy
	Well-being Plan
	Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)
	Local Development Plan
	Climate and Nature Emergency Action Plan
	Draft Open Space Report and Assessment

3.1 Review of the Criteria for the Selection of SINC sites

Updated criteria for the selection of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation are undergoing the approval process through cabinet in Torfaen.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) represent a key category of non-statutory nature conservation designations, commonly referred to across the UK as ‘local wildlife sites’. These sites encompass a diverse range of semi-natural habitats that hold significant ecological value at a regional, county, or district level. The identification, protection, and enhancement of SINCs are fundamental to sustaining the biodiversity of Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent, ensuring that valuable habitats—ranging from small ponds to expansive ancient woodlands and species-rich grasslands—are preserved for their ecological importance. Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) are located on both public and private land, and range widely in size and form. Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) serve as an early alert mechanism for prospective developers, indicating that a location holds significant biodiversity value. Any proposed development within such sites must undergo comprehensive ecological assessment and incorporate robust mitigation measures to safeguard the site's ecological integrity. As Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) are non-statutory designations, their protection is delivered through planning policy. In Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent CC, this is primarily achieved via Local Development Plan.

The identification of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) is led by local authorities and wildlife organisations, using scientific guidelines to assess the most significant, distinctive, and threatened species and habitats at national, regional, and local levels. Historically, SINCs in South Wales have been designated based on the *Guidelines for the Selection of Wildlife Sites in South Wales* and the *Mid-Valleys Criteria for the Selection of SINCs* (Gwent Wildlife Trust, 2004 and 2008).

While these guidelines have provided a robust foundation, they are now over two decades old and do not fully reflect recent legislative and policy developments, nor the specific ecological context of Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen. To address this, updated criteria have been developed to incorporate contemporary biodiversity priorities and the principles of ecosystem resilience, as defined by the DECCA framework in the Environment (Wales) Act. This framework emphasizes:

- **Diversity** within and between ecosystems
- **Extent** or scale of ecosystems
- **Connectivity** across ecological networks
- **Condition** of ecosystems, including structure and function
- **Adaptability** to environmental change

These updated criteria ensure that SINC's continue to play a vital role in safeguarding biodiversity and supporting resilient ecological networks.

3.2 PMO Impact Assessment

Following collaboration between the PMO Team and the Natural Environment Team, it was recognised that an early-stage mechanism for identifying potential ecological constraints would strengthen the integration of biodiversity considerations across all projects. In response, the Council's Ecologist developed a dedicated ecological impact assessment tool for use by the PMO Team at project initiation. This tool enhances the Council's ability to demonstrate robust and consistent compliance with the Section 6 Duty, supporting improved awareness and delivery of biodiversity requirements across wider service areas, in addition to the specialist work undertaken by the Natural Environment Team. This document can be found in the appendix of this report.

4.0 Section 6 Duty Action Report

The Welsh Government's Natural Resources Policy (NRP) establishes the national strategic direction for the sustainable management of natural resources in Wales, identifying the key environmental challenges and the opportunities required to address them. These national priorities are translated into regional risks, opportunities and place-based actions through the development of Area Statements. Torfaen, alongside Blaenau Gwent, falls within the South-East Wales Area Statement, which emphasises the need for collaborative, landscape-scale working, strengthened community engagement with the natural environment, and effective approaches to climate adaptation and mitigation.

Complementing this, the **Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) for Wales** sets out the Welsh Government's overarching framework for halting and reversing the decline in biodiversity. It identifies the priority actions required across sectors and provides six

strategic objectives through which public bodies, including local authorities, are expected to deliver meaningful and sustained contributions to nature recovery.

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

This objective strengthens biodiversity by ensuring that *all* decision-makers—from local authorities to community groups—understand the value of nature and incorporate it early in planning processes. Increasing awareness helps prevent actions that unintentionally damage ecosystems and promotes choices that support ecological resilience. By embedding biodiversity into everyday governance, Wales reduces the risk of long-term ecosystem degradation.

2. Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management

Protecting the species and habitats identified as priorities under Welsh legislation is fundamental to preventing further biodiversity decline. Effective management of key habitats—including designated sites—helps maintain genetic diversity, stabilises ecosystems, and ensures the survival of species that underpin ecological functions. This objective ensures that vital ecosystems remain intact and resilient to pressures.

3. Increase the resilience of the natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and creating new habitats

By restoring degraded ecosystems and expanding habitat networks, this objective directly strengthens ecosystem resilience. Healthy, connected ecosystems are better able to withstand disturbances such as climate change, pollution, and invasive species. Habitat creation also increases ecological connectivity, enabling species to move, adapt, and thrive.

4. Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

Addressing the root causes of biodiversity decline—such as pollution, habitat fragmentation, land-use change, and invasive species—helps prevent further damage and enables ecosystems to recover. This objective ensures that Wales targets the most significant threats that compromise ecosystem health and long-term sustainability.

5. Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring

Strong evidence and robust monitoring are essential for directing conservation efforts effectively. Improving ecological data helps authorities detect trends, identify emerging risks, and adapt management strategies based on real-time information. Better evidence ensures that actions taken genuinely support nature recovery and maximise positive outcomes.

6. Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery

A strong governance framework—supported by clear roles, responsibilities, and reporting—ensures coordinated action across sectors. This objective provides the structure needed to deliver nature recovery consistently and accountably. Effective governance helps maintain momentum, secure long-term investment, and mainstream biodiversity across all public functions.

The six objectives of the Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) align closely with Welsh Government priorities and national climate-change goals by embedding biodiversity considerations across decision-making, strengthening the protection of habitats and species, and supporting ecosystem resilience—key principles of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and the Well-being of Future Generations Act. By promoting habitat restoration, tackling environmental pressures, improving evidence, and establishing strong governance, the NRAP framework directly supports Wales’s commitments to halt biodiversity loss, enhance ecosystem functioning, and contribute to climate adaptation and mitigation. The objectives reinforce the Welsh Government’s integrated approach linking nature recovery with climate action, particularly through resilient ecological networks, carbon-rich habitat management, and nature-based solutions that underpin the Climate and Nature Emergency Action Plan and national targets such as protecting 30% of land for nature by 2030 (30x30).

Actions taken:

NRAP Objective	What it covers	Actions & achievements
<p>1. Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision-making at all levels.</p>	<p>Awareness, engagement, training, communication, and embedding biodiversity thinking across the organisation and communities.</p>	<p>Community Engagement & Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued employment of Local Nature Partnership coordinator and biodiversity assistants, and appointment of a Canal Coordinator. • Delivery of 2 Go Wild events, one in BG, one in Torfaen. • Development of in-house e-learning modules on climate change and nature emergency. • Bespoke staff training: Bats in the Built Environment (2024/25). • Awareness films: Love Trees; Torfaen Wetlands (Welsh subtitles); Wildflower Spaces. • Biodiversity enhancement guidance for householder and small development planning applications – adoption of the version produced by Monmouthshire CBC (All Wales Guidance) <p>Service-level Engagement & Behaviour Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste prevention and reuse principles embedded within core service planning, ensuring environmental considerations are integrated into day-to-day operational decisions. • Introduction of kerbside small WEEE collections, reducing hazardous materials entering residual waste streams and improving resource recovery. • Delivery of community-focused behaviour-change campaigns—“Raise the Rate” and “Keeping Up with the Joneses”—promoting reuse, recycling and citizen awareness of responsible resource use. <p>Embedding Biodiversity in Corporate Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PMO project-initiation checklist now explicitly requires all new projects to confirm how proposals may impact biodiversity and whether they contribute to its maintenance and enhancement. • Democratic Services continue to support integration of the S6 duty through the use of the Council’s Integrated Impact Assessment, ensuring biodiversity considerations are referenced within committee and decision-making reports.

NRAP Objective	What it covers	Actions & achievements
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff volunteering opportunities are being explored and promoted to encourage involvement in activities that support the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity across the county. <p>Education - Embedding Biodiversity Into School-site Design and Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Design Team and project managers increasingly incorporate biodiversity requirements into school-site refurbishment and new-build designs, ensuring opportunities for habitat creation, SuDS planting and species-specific features (e.g., bat and bird boxes) are considered at concept stage. • Greater cross-departmental awareness has resulted in routine identification of biodiversity gains on both major projects and smaller-scale site improvements. <p>Strategic Reporting & Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG): on Biodiversity, Ecosystem Resilience & Development (Feb 2024); Green Infrastructure (Feb 2024); Sustainable Locations (June 2023); Site Design, Master-planning & Development Brief (Feb 2023); Revised Planning Obligations Annex 5 ‘Biodiversity, Geodiversity & Ecological Resilience’ (Feb 2023); House Extensions and Alterations (Dec 2022) plus the following supporting documents: ‘Planning and biodiversity guidance for householder and other minor applications’ and the ‘Torfaen Replacement Local Development Plan: Habitats Regulation Assessment Scoping Report’ (including NRW comments) 2023. used to embed biodiversity in decisions. In addition, GI and Ecology constraints have been published online using OpusMap. <p>Ongoing & Future Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates to biodiversity and natural environment webpages. Looking to update the Torfaen Open Space Assessment in 2026.

NRAP Objective	What it covers	Actions & achievements
<p>2. Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management.</p>	<p>S7 species/habitats, designated sites, site management, positive management for priority features.</p>	<p>Habitat & Site Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New management plans commissioned for all LNRs; designation of a new LNR. • Woodland Management Plans (incl. Blorenges SSSI); purchase of Coed Meyric Moel Woodland near Henllys LNR. New LNR designation at Blaenserchan. • Creation of a new pond network at Garn Lakes LNR. • Conservation grazing programme initiated. <p>Species & Habitat Conservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of SINC criteria completed. • Roadside verges/grasslands management enhanced for biodiversity, ongoing. • “Hedgehog Highways” motion passed (Mar 2022) to support Section 7 species, ongoing. • INNS mapping system; azolla weevils to control invasive water fern, ongoing. <p>Education</p> <p>Biodiversity Enhancements Delivered Through School Redevelopment Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A programme of new 3G pitch developments has incorporated significant biodiversity enhancements, including bug hotels, extended hedgerows and native wildflower planting at Ysgol Gymraeg Gwynllyw (2025). • At Crownbridge (2024), varied structural planting—including trees, grasses, shrubs and wildflower areas—has replaced previously uniform grassland, with additional bug hotels and shrub planting introduced the year prior. • Maendy Primary’s Net Zero School (opened 2024) includes bat and bird boxes/bricks, rain gardens and diversified planting across a site that was formerly dominated by hard surfaces and short amenity grass. • Continued implementation of biodiversity features on smaller capital and maintenance

NRAP Objective	What it covers	Actions & achievements
		<p>projects, with site designers increasingly incorporating ecological opportunities within early design stages.</p> <p>Biodiversity Outcomes Delivered Through Waste-Service Social Value Commitments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of biodiversity-positive social value requirements within waste contracts, resulting in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – construction of two bug hotels per year; – installation of five bird boxes annually; – native wildflower planting along site boundaries; – donation of 20 fruit trees per year to local schools and allotments. <p>These measures collectively support pollinators, enhance local habitat provision and encourage community-led food growing initiatives.</p>
<p>3. Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation.</p>	<p>Habitat restoration/creation, connectivity, climate resilience, peatlands, ponds, orchards, trees.</p>	<p>Habitat & Site Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pond network at Garn Lakes LNR (new aquatic habitat). • Pilot to assess council-owned grazing sites for biodiversity, carbon storage & climate resilience. <p>New LNR designation at Blaenserchan.</p> <p>Education: Integration of SuDS and Climate-Resilient Green Infrastructure Across School Sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive SuDS rain gardens and planted swales incorporated into Llantarnam (2025), Abersychan School (2025) and Ysgol Gymraeg Gwynllyw Primary (2022) developments, supporting natural drainage, pollinator habitat creation and improved site resilience. • School-site upgrades now routinely incorporate mixed structural planting—including trees,

NRAP Objective	What it covers	Actions & achievements
		<p>shrubs, grasses and wildflower meadows—to replace previously uniform grassed areas and enhance ecological connectivity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net Zero school projects at Crownbridge and Maendy Primary prioritise nature-based solutions, embedding swales, rain gardens and diverse planting schemes as core components of low-carbon design. • Education capital projects increasingly apply ecosystem-resilient design principles at early stages, with designers proactively identifying opportunities for habitat creation and ecological enhancement. <p>Enhancing Ecosystem Resilience Through Sustainable Service Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat creation and enhancement delivered through contractor social value actions, including wildflower meadow establishment, bird-box installation and provision of bug hotels. • Environmental sustainability embedded in service design and procurement processes—for example, the Waste Transfer Station business case now requires prospective suppliers to evidence biodiversity and sustainability credentials. <p>Green Infrastructure & Trees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torfaen Tree Strategy & Action Plan (2021–2031); Green Infrastructure Strategy & Action Plan (Dec 2019), both ongoing. • Internal GIS updated with GI layers & ecological corridors. • 21,875 trees planted since 2022/23 (incl. 9,700 in 2024/25). • New orchards at multiple sites (e.g., Brooklands Park, Cwmbran Boating Lake, Pontnewydd, Oakfield Flower Garden, Llantarnam, Holy Trinity Church).

NRAP Objective	What it covers	Actions & achievements
		<p>Project Delivery & Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peatland Restoration Fund secured for upland restoration 2025/26. • ENRaW projects: Resilient Greater Gwent & Gwent Green Grid (restoration/connectivity outcomes). • ~£1.3m through Local Places for Nature to support creation/restoration. <p>Ongoing & Future Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canal management planning to enhance strategic ecological corridor. • Participation in SE Wales Resilient Uplands (peatland restoration).
<p>4. Tackle key pressures on species and habitats.</p>	<p>Address threats such as INNS, habitat fragmentation, pollution, inappropriate management; integrate biodiversity into policy and design.</p>	<p>Species & Habitat Conservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INNS mapping and biological control (azolla weevils) for water fern. • Improved verge/grassland management to reduce pressure and support species. <p>Strategic Reporting & Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPG suite (e.g., Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience; Green Infrastructure; Sustainable Locations; Planning Obligations) to avoid/minimise residual impacts via the step-wise approach. • Integration of the S6 Duty into the draft Asset Management Strategy. <p>Reducing Waste-related Pressures</p> <p>Reducing Environmental Pressures Through Waste Prevention and Circularity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions across the waste service reduce pollution, carbon emissions and resource loss by prioritising reuse, recycling and circular resource flows. • Contractor-led resource-recovery initiatives include the annual interception and

NRAP Objective	What it covers	Actions & achievements
		<p>redistribution of over 500 plant pots (valued at approximately £750 over the contract term), supporting community growing projects and reducing plastic waste.</p> <p>Ongoing & Future Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising GI and biodiversity in town centres (Nature Towns & Cities).
<p>5. Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring.</p>	<p>Data, monitoring, mapping, training to use evidence (e.g., GI layers, SINC review, Section 6 reporting).</p>	<p>Strategic Reporting & Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of Section 6 Duty Reports (2019 & 2022); next due end 2025. • Preparation of the Local Nature Recovery Action Plan (2023–2030). <p>Improving Evidence and Monitoring in Waste & Resource Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste performance monitored through Waste Dataflow, providing transparent and publicly accessible performance reporting. • Contractor delivery monitored quarterly through the Social Value TOMS framework and structured contract-review processes, ensuring accountability for biodiversity-related actions. <p>Species & Habitat Conservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of SINC criteria (updated evidence base). <p>Green Infrastructure & Trees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal GIS updated with GI layers & corridors (evidence for decisions). In addition, GI and Ecology constraints have been published online for planning purposes using OpusMap. • Tree planting totals tracked (21,875 since 2022/23, incl. 9,700 in 2024/25).

NRAP Objective	What it covers	Actions & achievements
		<p>Community Engagement & Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bespoke staff training & e-learning (building internal evidence literacy).
<p>6. Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery.</p>	<p>Governance, capacity, partnerships, funding to enable delivery of the duty and the plan.</p>	<p>Strategic Reporting & Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of the S6 Duty into the draft Asset Management Strategy (governance hook). • SPG publications providing a governance framework for consistent decisions. <p>Project Delivery & Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two ENRaW projects delivered (Resilient Greater Gwent; Gwent Green Grid). • £808,000 HLF Nature Towns & Cities award for “Healthy Planet, Healthy People”. • Peatland Restoration Fund secured (2025/26). • ~£1.3m Local Places for Nature funding to 2025/26 FY. <p>Strengthening Governance, Capacity and Partnership Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity considerations embedded into waste-service management, procurement processes and contract oversight. • Access to ecological expertise secured internally or externally to support compliance and project development. • Strong partnership working with Circulate, Wastesavers, Repair Café Wales and local councils enhances delivery through volunteering, skills development and community-based environmental action. <p>Enhancing Governance and Cross-Council Support for the S6 Duty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity responsibilities are being strengthened across corporate governance processes, including PMO project assurance, committee reporting structures and staff engagement mechanisms. • The integrated impact assessment process used in Democratic Services ensures biodiversity duties are explicitly considered and evidenced in policy development and formal decision-making.

NRAP Objective	What it covers	Actions & achievements
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of staff volunteering linked to habitat management and biodiversity enhancement supports organisational culture change and provides additional capacity for nature-positive community activity. <p>Recognition & Awards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic Award (25 years of LNP in Torfaen) and multiple Green Flag awards—demonstrating governance credibility and delivery standards. <p>Ongoing & Future Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity as a key theme in placemaking plans; canal management planning; participation in SE Wales Resilient Uplands—structured, partnership-based delivery.

5.0 S6 Duty Review – Performance management and improvement recommendations.

In line with Welsh Government reporting guidance, this section identifies key issues relating to the implementation of the Section 6 duty within the Council and outlines the measures required to strengthen and further embed the duty across all service areas. It also recognises the substantial progress made since the previous reporting period, particularly in advancing organisational culture and supporting behaviour change. The recommendations presented in Table 1 incorporated into the forthcoming update of the Torfaen Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Action Plan (BERP) to ensure continued compliance and effective delivery of the Section 6 duty.

Issue Identified (2023–2025)	Improvement Action (Updated for 2025 WG Report)	Lead Department	Timescale (Proposed)
Continued variability in staff awareness and understanding of the S6 duty across service areas.	Deliver a rolling programme of cross-service biodiversity and S6 Duty training, integrating: • updated Climate & Nature Emergency e-learning modules • bespoke training (e.g., protected species, GI, biodiversity net benefit) • targeted induction content for new staff and managers.	Environment (Natural Environment Team) with HR/Organisational Development	2025–27
Lack of a consistent procedure to monitor biodiversity enhancements secured through planning.	Establish a structured monitoring system for biodiversity enhancement conditions and planning obligations, producing annual summary data to inform performance management and future policy review. This is subject to resources and capacity within Planning and Development Team – at this current time discussions have concluded it is not possible or realistic to achieve. Further discussion to be had if circumstances alter within the Planning and Development Team.	Planning (Development Management & Planning Policy)	2025 onwards
Need to sustain external funding to deliver core biodiversity and GI projects.	Maintain proactive funding horizon-scanning and collaborative bidding (e.g., NLHF, WG programmes, ENRaW), prioritising actions supporting the Climate & Nature Emergency and BERP delivery.	Environment Policy; Finance; Regeneration	2025–28
Inconsistent consideration of S6 Duty within corporate decision-making processes (e.g., committee reports, strategy development).	Implement an annual audit of committee reports and corporate templates to ensure S6 compliance, followed by feedback to report authors and refinement of guidance.	Public Service Support Unit (PSSU) with Natural Environment Team	Annual (starting 2025)

Issue Identified (2023–2025)	Improvement Action (Updated for 2025 WG Report)	Lead Department	Timescale (Proposed)
Under-utilisation of ecological evidence, GI data layers and SINC/S7 information across service areas.	Expand officer access and training on natural environment GIS layers, GI Assessment data, and evidence maps; introduce mandatory use of these layers during early project scoping through PMO processes.	Natural Environment Team; PMO; Digital/ICT	2025–26
Opportunities to expand nature-friendly management of the Council’s soft estate, improving biodiversity, carbon storage and public amenity.	Deliver a phased expansion of biodiversity-led grassland management and associated habitat creation (cut-and-collect, meadow creation, conservation grazing), supported by annual monitoring and public communications.	Streetscene Operations with Natural Environment Team	2025–30
Difficulty obtaining consistent, timely cross-departmental information for S6 reporting due to limited understanding of the report’s importance, time constraints, and workload pressures across service areas.	Develop a more efficient information-gathering process by: • raising departmental awareness of the purpose and statutory importance of the S6 report through targeted communications and manager briefings; • identifying S6 ‘Environment Champions’ within each department to act as report coordinators; • exploring the development of an annual internal biodiversity/S6 report template to collect key actions and evidence each year (reducing pressure at the 3-year reporting point); and • piloting a system whereby annual summaries	Natural Environment Team with Departmental Leads / Corporate Performance	2026-2028 – prior to next S6 report being due

Issue Identified (2023–2025)	Improvement Action (Updated for 2025 WG Report)	Lead Department	Timescale (Proposed)
	can be automatically compiled into the statutory 3-year report.		

Conclusion

The issues and corresponding improvement actions identified through the 2023–2025 reporting period demonstrate Torfaen Council’s continued progress in embedding the Section 6 duty across its functions, while also highlighting the areas where additional focus is required to strengthen organisational compliance and delivery. Feedback from service areas shows a growing cultural shift in recognising the value of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, supported by new strategies, improved evidence, landscape-scale partnerships and enhanced land-management practices. However, it is equally clear that sustained effort is needed to ensure that biodiversity considerations become fully routine within all decision-making, operational processes and project planning activities.

The updated improvement actions set out in the table provide a strengthened and more targeted framework for the next three years. Priorities include building consistent staff understanding of the S6 duty, forming a team of environment champions across the wider teams and departments in the council, expanding use of natural environment evidence, improving governance processes, and enhancing the monitoring of biodiversity outcomes secured through planning. These actions also reflect the need to maintain momentum in nature-friendly land management, respond to the nature and climate emergency to meet 30x30 targets, and secure ongoing funding to deliver habitat creation, restoration and wider nature recovery initiatives.

Collectively, the actions establish a more robust foundation for implementation of the S6 duty across the local authority. They reinforce the Council’s commitment to delivering measurable improvements for biodiversity, enhancing ecosystem resilience and contributing to national ambitions, including the Welsh Government’s target to protect and restore nature by 2030. Continued partnership working, strengthened governance arrangements and a focus on organisational learning will be essential to realising these objectives and ensuring that the Council continues to play a leading role in nature recovery within Torfaen.

Appendix 1. Gallery & Links to news/stories



**EWCH YN WYLLT
GO WILD**

**PARC PONT-Y-PŴL
PONTYPOOL PARK**

**Dydd Sadwrn Mehefin 29
Saturday 29 June**

Ymunwch â ni rhwng 10 a 4 i ddathlu'r digwyddiad **EWCH YN WYLLT**
Join us between 10 and 4 to **GO WILD**

Dathliad **RHAD AC AM DDIM** o fyd natur lleol a'n hymdrechion i'w adfer!
A **FREE** celebration of local nature and our efforts for it's recovery!

**PAENTIO WYNEBAU
FACEPAINTING**
**ADRODD STRAEON
STORYTELLING**

**GWNEWCH FLWCH ADAR
MAKE A BIRD BOX**
**SYNAU BYD NATUR
SOUNDS OF NATURE!**



Torfaen Climate and Nature Gathering:



Hedgelaying on TCBC LNR's



Butterfly Garden Art Installation at Pontnewynydd Park:



Wildflower Bulb Planting:

Join us at
Woodland Road Sports & Social Club,
Cwmbran at 10:00 AM today for
**Community Wildflower
Bulb Planting!**
Help us make our local spaces bloom with
colour and life.
Tools and bulbs provided
No experience needed-just
bring your enthusiasm!
Bring friends and family and be part of
something beautiful!



**WILDFLOWER
PLANTING EVENT
IS BACK!**

Rescheduled & Ready to Go!

Cwmbran Park
(Henllys Way, St Dials/Old Cwmbran)

Saturday 27th September
11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

**Get Your Hands Dirty –
For a Great Cause!**
Join us as we dig, plant, and bloom
together to make our community
a more beautiful, bee-friendly place.

**SUNNY
WEATHER?
BRING A PICNIC!**
Stick around for food,
laughs, and all the
feel-good vibes.

Questions? Contact
Cllr Catherine Bonera



Nature Towns & Cities Healthy Planet Healthy People Project

Veronika Brannovic · Follow
Admin · Top contributor · 17 January at 20:13 · 🌐

Fancy getting your hands dirty helping to develop a new wetland area in Blaenavon? Staff from the TCBC Healthy Planet, Healthy People project will be hosting a volunteer morning at Elgam Ravine on Friday 30th January, starting at 10 am. First task is to reduce the amount of scrub and do some coppicing of willows with hand tools. Come along and do as much or as little as you want - 'every little helps'. Contact veronika.brannovic@torfaen.gov.uk for more information. [Torfaen](#)




Torfaen
30 January at 15:30 · 🌐

Work to create a new wetland to help tackle flooding in the north of the borough is underway. Today, local MP Nick Thomas-Symmonds visited the Elgam Ravine, in Blaenavon, to find out more about the project as part of the council's new Healthy Planet, Healthy People programme. Read more: <https://orlo.uk/5xHJd>

Appendix 2

Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Checklist for the PMO process

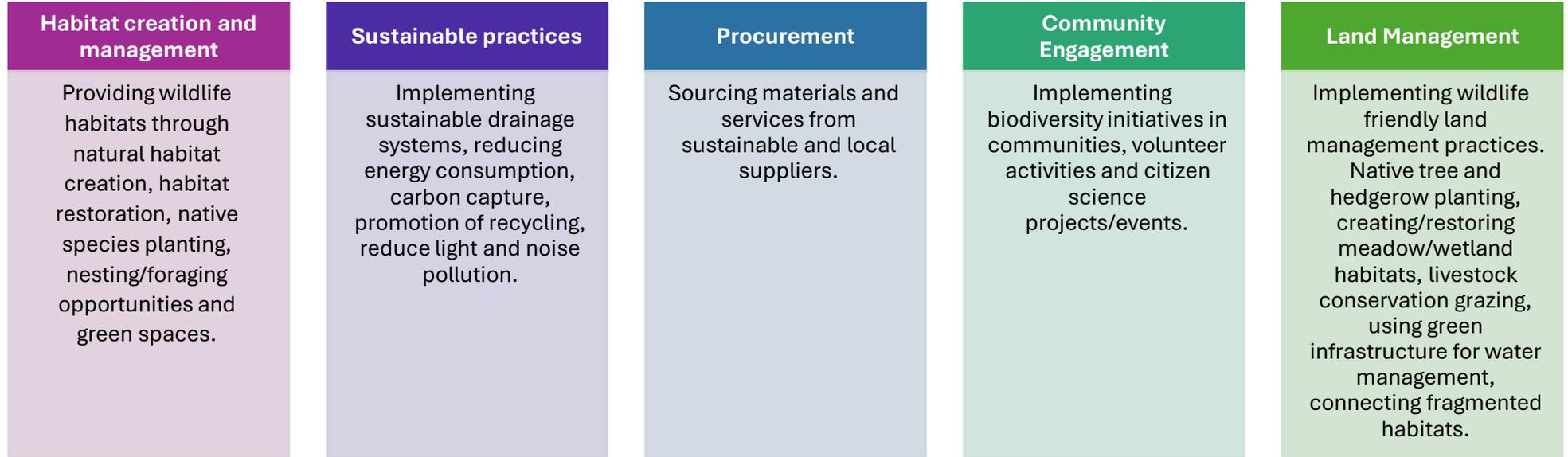
Background

- All Local Authorities have a **legal duty** to consider biodiversity in the exercise of their functions.
- In **Wales**, Local Authorities are **legally obligated** to consider biodiversity and ecosystem resilience in their functions. This is referred to as the Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty, established under **Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (referred to from here on as our Section 6 (S6) Duty)**.
- This Duty requires public authorities to actively seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience within their day-to-day activities, plans, projects and policies.

Key aspects of the Section 6 Duty:

Integration	Public authorities must embed biodiversity considerations into their core functions and decision-making processes.
Proportionality	The actions taken to fulfil the duty should be proportionate to the authority's specific function and size.
Ecosystem Resilience	The Duty emphasises promoting the resilience of ecosystems alongside biodiversity enhancement.
Action Planning	Public authorities are required to create and publish plans outlining how they will comply with the Duty (In Torfaen this is our Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Plan, or BERP).
Monitoring and Reporting	Public authorities must regularly monitor their progress and report on their actions to fulfil the S6 Duty. This progress is reported in the form of a Section 6 Report, submitted to Welsh Government on a 3 yearly basis.

Examples of Actions:



All protected habitats and species are afforded varying levels of protection under the following legislation:	Other relevant local legislative policy:
The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)	Torfaen Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Plan – currently under review.
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)	Torfaen Climate and Nature Emergency Action Plan
The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2016/3/contents https://www.gov.wales/environment-wales-act-2016-factsheets	Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent Local Nature Recovery Action Plan
Future Wales: the National Plan 2040	Torfaen Green Infrastructure Strategy
The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	Torfaen Tree Strategy and Action Plan
Planning policy Wales 12 (particularly Chapter 6)	

Biodiversity Checklist for Species and Habitats

Purpose of checklist: To determine if protected habitats and/or species are within/in close proximity to the proposed area of development/project activity.

By completing the checklist: it provides the following benefits within the PMO process:

Early Identification	Completing the checklist at the point of inception of a project will minimise the potential for projects/developments to impact biodiversity.
Pro-active Mitigation	If planning consent is required, the checklist will allow project managers to identify any potential ecological constraints, in order to save time and resources.
Information Gathering	Provides a structured way to assess potential impacts and determine if further specialist surveys are required – such as for protected species (bats, otter, Great Crested Newts etc.) or a preliminary ecological appraisal.
Reduce Delays	By identifying potential issues early on, the checklist helps avoid delays during the project timescale/planning process.
To ensure compliance	Contributes towards meeting LA regulations and statutory requirements for biodiversity protection – Section 6 Duty.
Promotes sustainable development	By encouraging responsible planning and development/project management practices, the checklist contributes to a more sustainable future.

Please complete Table 1 on the next page:

Table 1: Sites and Habitats checklist

Question	Please tick as appropriate	
	Yes	No
Is your proposed activity within 10km of a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special protection Area (SPA)?		
Is your proposed activity on or within 5km of a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)?		
Is your proposed activity on or within 1km of a Local Nature Reserve (LNR)?		
Is your proposed activity on or within 1km of a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)?		

** If you have answered **yes to any of the above**, please proceed to **Table 2: Sites and Habitats Evaluation** and then proceed to Table 3 as appropriate. ** If you answered **no to all of the above**, proceed directly to Table 3.

Table 2: Site and Habitats Evaluation

Site or habitat	Is there a reasonable likelihood that the development will affect (either directly or indirectly) a site or habitat in the site or habitat column prior to applying mitigation?		Where you have answered ‘yes’, name the site (s) and/or habitat (s) and summarise any possible direct or indirect effects that may occur during works. Where you have answered ‘no’ please provide a concise statement to support your answer.
	Yes	No	
SAC/SPA			
SSSI			
Section 7: Priority Habitats (see appendix)			
Woodland and/or ancient woodland			
Local Nature Reserve			
SINC			

Table 3: Protected and Priority Species of Principal Importance

Please review the questions below, where ‘Yes’ is answered, the corresponding row in the table below will indicate the reasonable likelihood of a particular species being present, and for which further surveys may be required.

Reference	Site or habitat	Yes	No
Structures	<p>Does the project/activity involve modification/ conversion/ demolition/removal of any of the following features or types of building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loft space - Roof gaps or cracks - Weather boarding - Hanging tiles - Gable ends - Slate roof - Clay-tiled pitched roof - Wooden cladding - Dense climbing vegetation - Underground structures including but not limited to cellars, tunnels, mines, kilns, icehouses, air-raid shelters, bridge structures, aqueducts and viaducts - Agricultural buildings particularly, but not exclusively those of traditional brick, stone or timber construction. - Buildings of pre or early 20th century construction 		
Water	Will the project or activity take place within or adjacent to an area with a lake, river, canal, stream, ditch, marsh or reedbed?		
Lighting	Does the project or activity involve new lighting of a building/structure with features suitable for bats or barn owl; or lighting of a green space, within 50m of an existing dark corridor, woodland, water, hedgerow or treeline?		
Woodland	Will the project or activity take place within 200m of woodland or scrub, or is bounded by or adjacent to predominantly native hedgerow?		
Tree	Will the project or activity take place within or adjacent to a tree/woodland plantation including conifers?		

Reference	Site or habitat	Yes	No
Ancient	Will the project or activity take place in an area that contains trees older than 100 years, with obvious holes, cracks, cavities, rot, loose bark, woodpecker holes, or trees with a girth greater than 1m at chest height?		
Rock	Will the project or activity involve disturbance, modification, demolition or construction on/in gravel pits/quarries/natural cliff faces/rock outcrops?		
Pond	Will the project/activity take place within 100m of a pond or other water body, either permanent or ephemeral (dries out seasonally)?		
Grassland	Will the project or activity take place in an area within or adjacent to grassland, such as meadows, parkland or pasture?		
Brownfield	Will the project or activity be taking place on a previously developed, brownfield, derelict or railway land?		
Garden	Will the project/activity involve modification, disturbance or removal of mature/overgrown garden areas, rough grassland, scrubland or allotments?		
Compost	Will the project or activity involve the removal of a compost heap?		
Arable	Will the project or activity involve the modification, disturbance or removal of arable field(s) with hedgerow(s) and/or grass margin?		
Heathland	Will the project/activity take place within or adjacent to heathland habitat?		

Table 4: Reasonable likelihood of a particular species being present, and for which further surveys may be required.

Reference	European Protected Species				Nationally Protected Species										Priority species of Principal Importance in Wales under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016				
	Bats	Dormouse	Great Crested Newt	Otter	Badger	Barn Owl	Breeding Birds	Invertebrates	Native Crayfish	Other Protected Birds	Plants (Inc. Fungi, Ferns And Bryophytes)	Reptiles/amp -hibians	Water Vole	Birds	Fungi	Invertebrates	Mammals	Plants (Inc. Ferns And Bryophytes)	
Structures																			
Water																			
Lighting																			
Woodland																			
Tree																			
Ancient																			
Rock																			
Pond																			
Grassland																			
Brownfield																			
Garden																			
Compost																			
Arable																			
Heathland																			

Table 5: Species Evaluation

Species (identified following completion of the checklists in the above tables)	Is there a 'reasonable likelihood' that the development will affect a species listed above, prior to applying mitigation?		Where you have answered yes, name the species and summarise any possible direct or indirect effects that may occur during construction or operation. Appropriate species surveys will then need to be completed and these must be undertaken in accordance with all relevant Welsh biodiversity legislation and CIEEM Good Practice Guidelines, by an appropriately qualified consultant ecologist. Where you have answered no, please provide a concise statement to support your answer.
	Yes	No	
European Protected Species			
Nationally Protected Species			
Priority Species under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016			

What's next?

If you have answered 'yes' to any questions in the **Sites and Habitats table** or **Species Evaluation table above**, then you must produce a **Biodiversity Statement and Mitigation Plan** which incorporates the findings of a **Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and/or any other specialist ecological surveys undertaken such as for protected species.**

The Biodiversity Statement and Mitigation Plan must include the following information:

- A map showing the location of any protected species on the site or within 2km of the site boundary.
- An extended Phase One Habitat Survey (part of the PEA) carried out at the correct time of year, showing the location and extent of habitats that could be affected by the proposals together with the features associated with protected or priority species.
- Relevant protected and/or priority species surveys, carried out at the correct time of year, including results and methods in accordance with CIEEM Good Practice Guidelines.
- An evaluation of the likely impacts/effects upon biodiversity features present.
- For each biodiversity feature that will likely be adversely affected by the project/activity, the Mitigation Plan must detail:
 - How impacts will be avoided/reduced and/or mitigated.
 - How mitigation measures will be managed, resourced and monitored post-completion.

Proposals for biodiversity enhancements. Under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, as a public authority we have a duty to not only maintain but to enhance biodiversity in the exercise of our functions, providing a net gain for biodiversity. All proposed habitat creation or restoration measures must be in accordance with local conservation priorities and objectives and actions in the following documents:

- BG and Torfaen Local Nature Recovery Action Plan
- Torfaen Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Plan 2025-2030
- Torfaen Climate and Nature Emergency Action Plan.

If you answered 'no' to any questions in the **Sites and Habitats table** or **Species Evaluation table above**, then you should complete the final checklist and declaration below:

Step	Item	Yes	No	
1	Is a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Including data search) required/been completed?	Required?		If a PEA is not required have you provided a statement of justification in column 3 of tables 2 & 4 above? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
		Completed?		
2	Have you completed the sites and habitats checklist and evaluation in the above tables?			
3	Have you completed the species checklist and evaluation tables above?			
4	Have you completed a Biodiversity Statement and Mitigation Plan?			

Signed:

Team/Department:

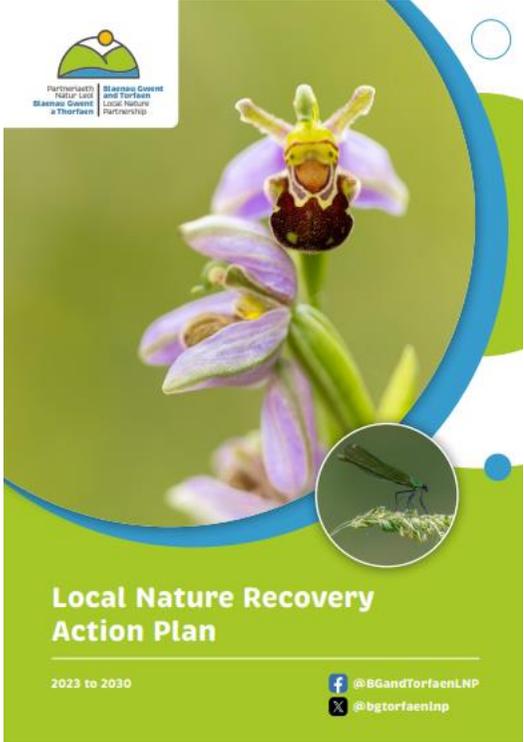
Date:

PMO Impact Assessment Appendix

Appendix 1

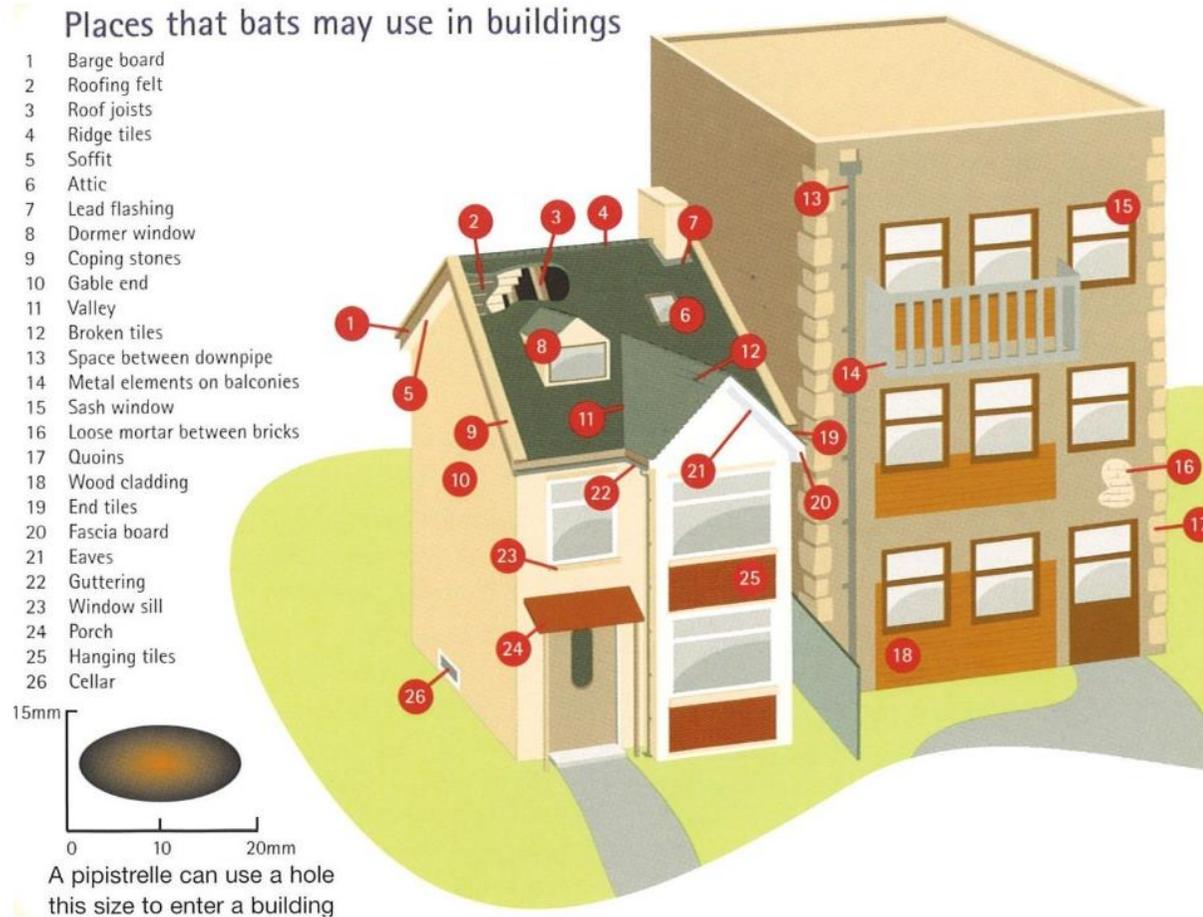
Useful Documents

Click on the images below to access the relevant documents



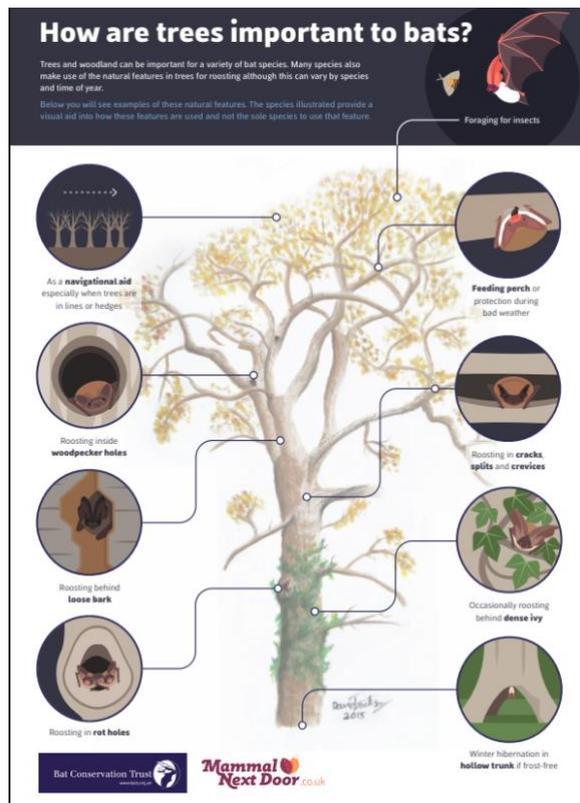
Appendix 2 Bats and Buildings

Useful Information – a list of features on buildings that could support bats (click on image for further info)



Appendix 3

Bats and Trees (click on image for more detail)



Appendix 4

Impacts of Light Pollution on Biodiversity (click on images for further info)



GUIDANCE NOTE 08/23

BATS AND ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING AT NIGHT



Brown long-eared bat. Image credit Hugh Clark / BCT

This is a vertical guidance note cover. It has a dark purple header with the text "GUIDANCE NOTE 08/23". Below the header, the title "BATS AND ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING AT NIGHT" is written in white. The main image shows a brown long-eared bat in flight against a black background. At the bottom, there is a small line of text: "Brown long-eared bat. Image credit Hugh Clark / BCT".

NIGHT SKY BLOTTED OUT BY LIGHT POLLUTION

VISIBLE NIGHT SKY

VERY BAD BAD BETTER BEST

Bad, better, best

Use outdoor lighting responsibly by only using it where it's needed, when it's needed, and in the amount required. Use the lowest light level required, limit blue-violet light, utilize timers or motion sensors, and use shielding.

This diagram illustrates four levels of outdoor lighting. From left to right: 1. "VERY BAD": A single lamp with a wide, unshielded beam that illuminates a large area of the sky, labeled "NIGHT SKY BLOTTED OUT BY LIGHT POLLUTION". 2. "BAD": A lamp with a slightly narrower beam, still showing significant sky blotting. 3. "BETTER": A lamp with a shielded beam that is directed downwards, with some sky visible. 4. "BEST": A lamp with a fully shielded beam that is directed only at the ground, labeled "VISIBLE NIGHT SKY". Below the diagram, the text "Bad, better, best" is written in bold, followed by a paragraph of advice on responsible outdoor lighting use.



Bug-Friendly Lighting



Appendix 5

Ecology Survey Calendar Guidelines

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bats – Summer Roost				Sub-optimal	Key	Key	Key	Key	Key	Sub-optimal		
Bats – winter Survey	Key	Key	Sub-optimal									Sub-optimal
Breeding Bird Survey			Sub-optimal	Key	Key	Key	Key	Sub-optimal				
Migratory Bird Survey			Sub-optimal	Key	Key	Sub-optimal		Sub-optimal	Key	Key	Sub-optimal	
GCN - Breeding Pond Survey			Sub-optimal	Key	Key	Sub-optimal						
Dormice – Breeding Survey (nest tubes)				Sub-optimal	Key	Key	Sub-optimal	Key	Key	Sub-optimal		
Invertebrates			Sub-optimal	Key	Key	Key	Key	Key	Sub-optimal			
Phase 1 Habitat Survey	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Key	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal						
Reptiles			Sub-optimal	Key	Key	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Key	Sub-optimal			
Badger	Key	Key	Key	Key	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Key	Key	Key
Water Vole			Sub-optimal	Key	Key	Key	Key	Key	Key	Sub-optimal		
Otter	Key											
White-clawed Crayfish				Sub-optimal			Sub-optimal	Key	Key	Key	Sub-optimal	

Key:

Key Survey Periods	Sub-optimal survey periods	Surveys not recommended
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For more information on the Section 6 Duty and priority species and habitats for Wales, see here:

<https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/en/legislation-guidance/section-6/>