

***Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 - Section 6***  
***The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty***  
***Report 2019***

**Pembrokeshire County Council**

**Introduction and Context**

- Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) is an organisation:
  - that own/occupy an office building and whose functions are not directly connected to biodiversity and/or land management.
  - that own, occupy or manage land and own their own buildings and grounds, whose functions are connected with biodiversity and/or land management, or that can influence those who own or manage land.
  - that own or manage land beyond their own grounds, whether their functions are connected with biodiversity and/or land management or not.
    - Vice County VC 45 although does not have Planning Function for the area within Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority;
    - PCC is subject to the Well-being of Future Generations (WFG) Act, is a statutory member of the Public Service Board and has a published well-being plan:  
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/public-services-board/well-being-plan>
- Enhancing biodiversity contributes to and is affected by PCC's commitment to supporting Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership, Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation, Cardigan Bay Special Area of Conservation, Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries European Marine Site, Milford Haven Waterway Environmental Surveillance Group and as WLGA Representative on the Welsh Government Marine Protected Area Management Steering Group.
- PCC Conservation Team consists of Common Land Officer, Definitive Map Officer, Landscape Officer, Historic Buildings Conservation Officer, Specialist Advisor Ecologist (post provides planning ecology function for PCNPA), Biodiversity Officer and hosts the Biodiversity Implementation Officer (Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership).
- Relevant corporate policies, objectives, performance indicators and monitoring arrangements are embedded across departments, each area will likely be developing an approach for reporting S6 activities with reference to the PCC S6 plan. This is co-ordinated by the Biodiversity Officer.
- Enhancing biodiversity support other policies and plans across the authority and there are specific objectives and actions within these plans:
- Well-being Plan 2018-19
  - Protect our environment (Priority 4, and Objective 5)
- Well-being Plan Projects – Environmental and Climate Change Risk Assessment.

- Corporate Plan and Programme for Administration 2019-20
  - We will promote pride in Pembrokeshire seeking to enhance its reputation as a place for exceptional environmental quality (Objective 5, monitored quarterly).Action - to maintain and enhance the quality of all aspects of the environment in Pembrokeshire and its natural biodiversity (monitored quarterly).
- Planning Service Plan 2019-20
  - Objective - Looking at how we manage our land to enhance green infrastructure including for example creating wildlife corridors making it easier for species to move from one area to another and help existing populations of key species to be more resilient (PL1901-5.2, monitored quarterly).

## Highlights, Key Outcomes and Issues

- Across Authority enablers for biodiversity action through awareness raising and encouraging early/full consultation with Conservation Team for PCC projects and services, which also supports cost savings and avoids delays to the project.
- Notable or continuing negative impacts, Resources (staffing/funding) are considered barriers to fulfilling actions. The 3 year ENRaW funding for the Nature Partnership has provided some security. PCC, along with other local authorities continue with budget pressures and are seeking to make cost savings across the authority. A lack of funds for projects/biodiversity actions and the staff resources required to manage and carry these projects and actions out is also an issue.
- PCC have operated roadside verge cutting policy since 2013 to benefit spring flowering/seeding species similar to the current PLANTLIFE proposals. Specific cutting regimes are implemented for verge reserves and with ongoing discussions with community/environment groups.

## Action Report

**NRAP<sup>1</sup> Objective 1: Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels.**

**Actions have been taken to:**

- Embed biodiversity action across the organisation's functions:
  - Publication of the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Pembrokeshire in June 2018:  
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/biodiversity/pembrokeshire-nature-partnership-plans-and-guidance>
  - State of Wildlife report published 2016:  
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/biodiversity/pembrokeshire-nature-partnership-projects-and-reports>
  - PCC Corporate Plan;  
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/improvement-planning/corporate-plan>
  - Making commitments in LDP & LDP2 policies and;  
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/local-development-plan>
  - Relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance;  
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/adopted-local-development-plan/ldp-supplementary-planning-guidance>
  - Biodiversity SPG currently under review to include Lighting;
  - Incorporating biodiversity and the s6 duty into performance management, through Local Well-being Plans;

---

<sup>1</sup> Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales

<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/public-services-board/well-being-plan>

- Green Infrastructure Assessments;  
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/conservation/green-infrastructure>
- Raise awareness across the organisation:
  - Conservation Team provided Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Seminar for Officers and Members in 2017.
  - Ongoing early consultation and engagement with relevant officers in relation to plans/projects/strategies
  - Running seminars or providing information to highlight the importance and value of biodiversity and how we are contributing to action as an organisation;
  - Contribute to annual PNP Gathering and including invitations to Cabinet Member and Councillors;
  - Face to face engagement with officers.
- Iterative process with incremental changes make it difficult often to quantify.

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

### **Actions taken to:**

- Safeguard special species and habitats listed on [the section 7 biodiversity lists](#), for example by:
  - Providing suitable and appropriately managed habitats for protected species where appropriate – management for Willow Blister, Hazel Gloves, Grassland Fungi Assemblage
  - Improving habitat management, for example, for pollinators through Area Maintenance planting schemes
  - Using the planning system to maintain and enhance species and habitats – e.g. Bat Mitigation in situ enhancement and stand-alone bat houses provided
  - Maps developed for Ash Die Back management where high risk for Horseshoe bat road crossing and also Lobarion (lichens) Communities (annex 1 S7).
  - Land Use Planning web-tool derived from WWBIC Data.
- Contribute to the management of protected sites and species:
  - Member of 3 Marine SACRAG (chair of one group); fully engaged in this process, ensuring these sites are valued in decision making and contributing to their management where possible
  - Managing land around these sites to buffer and join them up as part of resilient ecological networks e.g. Somerton SSSI, Old Mill Grounds Haverfordwest.

**Measures and/or indicators monitored or collected:**

- Numbers of site, species and/or habitat action plans - see PNP website;  
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/biodiversity/pembrokeshire-nature-partnership-plans-and-guidance>
- Site, species and habitats status and trends, State of Wildlife report published 2016:  
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/biodiversity/pembrokeshire-nature-partnership-projects-and-reports>  
Data from Planning from Annual Monitoring Reports<sup>2</sup> for the local development plan;  
[https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/objview.asp?object\\_id=7208&language](https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/objview.asp?object_id=7208&language)
- Significant changes to local NRW Teams/Personnel have impacted local biodiversity knowledge and expertise

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

- Create or contribute to Resilient Ecological Networks<sup>3</sup> for example by:
  - Restoring and/or creating habitats through draft County Farm policy to consider S6 Duty
  - Connecting or enlarging areas of habitat through PLANT Project with NHS/Tir Coed providing land for tree planting
  - Improving the management and/or diversity of areas of habitat managed by PCC
  - Contributing evidence to the area statement process - attended several local seminars by Conservation Team Staff

**Measures and/or indicators monitored or collected:**

- Green Infrastructure Assessments<sup>4</sup>;  
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/conservation/green-infrastructure>
- Additional information: Collaboration with PCNPA “Stitch in Time” Invasive Non-Native Species Project.

<sup>2</sup> Information regarding Annual Monitoring Reports can be found in paragraph 6.2.12 of Planning Policy Wales (edition 10) <https://gov.wales/planning-policy-wales>

<sup>3</sup> Networks of habitat in good ecological condition joining up designated sites and other biodiversity hotspots to provide maximum benefit for biodiversity and our well-being.

<sup>4</sup> Information about Green Infrastructure Assessments can be found in section 6.2 of [Planning Policy Wales \(edition 10\)](https://gov.wales/planning-policy-wales).

## **NRAP Objective 4: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats**

### **Actions to:**

- Address key pressures:
  - Reducing or where possible stopping the use of pesticides and herbicides by working with area maintenance managers
  - Reducing the area of invasive non-native species through treatment of infested PCC land and working in Partnership through PCNPA Project
  - Reducing, reusing and recycling resources – new procedures now in place to recycle more household waste.
  - Climate change emergency declared;
  - NOTICE OF MOTION RELATING TO CLIMATE CHANGE 6 June 2019.
- Use biodiverse and native nature based solutions wherever possible, for example by:
  - Encouraging sustainable urban drainage systems - PCC is a SuDs Approving Body (SAB).
  - Conservation Team consulted on Ordinary Watercourse Consents applications
  - Using native biodiverse urban green and blue infrastructure to manage temperature, water flow, soil erosion – including planting trees, grasslands and wetlands – Cleddau Reaches Project that includes installing green walls within Haverfordwest Town Centre
  - Using natural flood prevention measures, such as swales and wetlands on Afon Solva in partnership with NRW
  - Providing local green spaces for communities and visitors to improve health and well-being outcomes through;
    - a) Cleddau Reaches Project – Old Mill Grounds & The Saltings
    - b) Goodwick Moor in partnership with WTSWW
    - c) Supporting Councillors and Community Environment Groups (e.g. St Dogmaels)

### **Measures and/or indicators monitored or collected, for example:**

- Encouraging departments to reduce the use of pesticides, herbicides and other products/practices that carry risk to biodiversity
- Policies introduced to promote sustainability – Zero Carbon Working Group details available in NOTICE OF MOTION RELATING TO CLIMATE CHANGE 6 June 2019
- Use of nature based solutions where appropriate
- Area of Invasive Non-Native Species reduced or managed

## **NRAP Objective 5: Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring**

**Actions to:**

- Improve the use of evidence in decision making, for example by:
  - Gathering and sharing evidence through discussions with neighbouring local authority officers e.g. Ash Dieback Working Group
  - Using the best available evidence for decision making, for example using WWBIC live data in planning decisions through the development of a web based Land Use Planning Tool
  - Having regard to the [section 7 lists of species and habitats](#), the [State of Natural Resources Report](#), and Area Statements (Conservation Team Members have contributed to several NRW Area Statement workshops and seminars)
  - Consulting relevant stakeholders/using expert input
  - Review of Biodiversity SPG to include Lighting
  - Identifying evidence gaps
  - Undertaking research through;
    - a) SACRAGs
    - b) MHWESG
    - c) Partnership development of DNA Fungi Projects with PFRN/Kew/Aberystwyth University.
    - d) PCC Biodiversity Officer/Ecologist is a member of WG Marine Protected Area Management Steering Group representing WLGA.
- Share evidence accessibly, for example by
  - Making data available through Local Environment Records Centres
  - Ensuring environmental evidence is accessible to local communities through discussions with local groups and relevant Councillors.

**Measures and/or indicators monitored or collected, for example:**

- A Service Level Agreement in place with West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre
- Planning decisions made using biodiversity evidence assessed through consultation/scrutiny with PCC Specialist Advisor Ecologist and development within Biodiversity SPG of “enhancement” element for the S6 Duty.

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

- Ensure governance for biodiversity within your organisation, for example by:
  - Cabinet Member with responsibility for Biodiversity ensuring the S6 duty is relevant throughout the authority

- Provide capacity for biodiversity, for example by:
  - Ensuring that where needed ecological expertise can be drawn upon, either internally or externally through provision of the PCC Conservation Team and close liaison with NRW Teams and relevant Welsh Government Officers.
  - Encouraging and supporting volunteer participation in action for biodiversity by staff through Employee Volunteering Scheme - This scheme allows employees to take up to three days or equivalent (pro-rata) paid time off to volunteer.
  - Encouraging and supporting volunteer participation in action for biodiversity by local communities through Community Regeneration Projects.
  - Ensuring the S6 Duty is monitored and reviewed with support of WG and NRW
- Support biodiversity action through funding and/or partnerships, for example by:
  - funding and administrative support to Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership to facilitate cross sector working.
  - in previous years, PCC cash contribution to PNP has been used to support local conservation projects and draw down additional funding. Ecological resilience is the core theme of these projects.
  - Working with Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership and adjoining area LNPs to coordinate Action Plans.
  - Supporting other environmental organisations and projects outside of the PNP – Working with other PSB members to deliver best practice in S6 duty action. An example is the provision of conservation data to fire service to inform decisions on scene by incident commanders – Pilot Trail in NW Pembs area being rolled out to additional divisions.
  - Supporting community environmental groups to survey and manage local biodiversity in a sustainable manner through WWBIC Recording Days and Community Biodiversity projects in conjunction with PNP.

**Measures and/or indicators monitored or collected, for example:**

- Relevant volunteer days undertaken.
- Grant and investment schemes supported through PNP Grants
- Relevant Capacity - current staff continue to be employed despite the economic recession.
- local/national environmental groups actively or substantially engaged/supported e.g. Pembs Fungus Recording Network, BUGLIFE, PLANTLIFE, Bumblebee Conservation, ARC & ARG.
- Continued liaison with Wales Biodiversity Partnership Groups, NRW and Welsh Government Departments

**Review of s6 duty**



The review is not taking place at this point in time, however this will be incorporated for the full report in April 2020. The S6 plan is a living document and will be updated accordingly as and when the need arises