

Section 6

Biodiversity Action Plans

Suggested Actions for Councils for each Nature Recover Action Plan (NRAP) Objective.

Supplementary background reading:

[*State of Nature Report*](#)

[*Biodiversity Deep Dive Recommendations*](#)

[*COP Goals & Targets*](#)

[*Section 7 Priority Species and Habitats*](#)

All public bodies have a legal duty to incorporate biodiversity into every aspect of their work.

This must be planned and reported on under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

NRAP Objective 1

Protect, restore and effectively manage ecosystems to build their resilience.

Suggested Action	How? (General examples)
Recognise the importance of ecosystem resilience, what it means, and how to improve it.	<i>Training; advice; “ability to adapt & absorb pressures”; biodiversity & bio-abundance are key; if you have to intensively manage it, its not resilient.</i>
Habitat restoration of degraded habitats	<i>e.g. increased water retention, less intensive management, re-wiggle rivers, re-connect rivers to floodplain, increased dead wood left in woodlands, reduce soil compaction, reduce soil run-off</i>
Improve habitat connectivity	<i>e.g. healthy hedgerows between woodlands, standard trees left to grow, scrub allowed to grow, grass allowed to grow, flowers blooming all year</i>
Structural diversity of habitats promoted where suitable	<i>e.g. mixture of short and long grass, areas of scrub, areas of grass left to thatch, dead wood left on the floor, dead wood left standing</i>
Buffer zones around habitats left free from development so they have room to grow	<i>Work with landowners / residents to not develop/harvest/plant/cut etc. right up to an existing habitat – give them space</i>
Use green infrastructure to reduce the impact from urban areas	<i>e.g. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, wetlands/floodplains to manage storm water & filter pollution before it reaches rivers, green roofs & walls to hold water/reduce temperature/provide habitat</i>
New habitats created within C&TC jurisdiction area.	<i>e.g. OVW biodiversity packages</i>



NRAP Objective 2

Safeguard species and improve their management.

Suggested Action	How? (General examples)
Refer to the Section 7 (EVW Act) list of priority species when any species is seen on council owned / managed land.	<i>OVW simplified version; Welsh Gov Website; regularly attend sites; volunteers who submit sightings</i>
Updated all habitat management plans with a focus on preserving and enhancing biodiversity. Priority is given to S7 species & habitats.	<i>e.g. Organise site visit from OVW who produce management suggestions</i>
Maintain sites with a focus on biodiversity – sticking to the management plans. Review all management plans periodically to ensure they are having a beneficial effect on biodiversity.	<i>Once new management plans are made, you must carry out the new management and monitor the changes over time. Review – is it working and why.</i>
Connectivity improved within the area, connecting existing and new habitats.	<i>e.g. OVW biodiversity packages; new hedgerows, un-mown verges, more trees planted</i>
Create buffer zones around existing habitats to minimise disturbance.	<i>Work with landowners / residents to not develop/harvest/plant/cut etc. right up to an existing habitat – give them space</i>
Install stepping stone habitats through urban areas to connect habitats outside the urban areas.	<i>e.g. new planters along pavements; grass within village left un-mown; wildflowers encouraged to grow through village; new trees planted within village; hanging baskets added.</i>
Bioblitzes / Survey / Recording events organised regularly to monitor progress	<i>Seek expert advice e.g. OVW; charities; NGOs; Local Authority etc.</i>
Clean-ups organised to litter pick a particular area or river	
Invasive species removed	<i>e.g. pay contractors; recruit volunteers; Wildlife Trust INNS</i>
Public awareness campaigns in the area about priority species	<i>e.g. posters, events, social media, signage</i>
Habitat & nest boxes added to urban areas to replace lost habitats	<i>e.g. hedgehog houses, swift boxes, house martin cups, owl boxes, insect hotels</i>



Consider the impact on all species – especially S7 species – under any planning application

Know your area/have a record of what S7 are in your area – when planning applications are submitted, check what S7 species are present



NRAP Objective 3

Tackle key pressures on species, habitats, and ecosystems

Suggested Action	How? (General examples)
Surveys commissioned / undertaken to identify priority species & the threats to them in the area	<i>OVW site visit & report; Local Authority Ecologist; Volunteers; Charities; NGOs</i>
New nesting habitats created for declining bird populations	<i>e.g. OVW biodiversity packages; Wildlife Trust schemes; KWT; schools; local businesses; private & public buildings; private land</i>
New habitats created for invertebrates	<i>e.g. OVW biodiversity packages; volunteers; schools; local businesses; KWT</i>
Change mowing regime of all grasslands	<i>Less frequent; leave areas uncut; cut & collect – remove arisings; change contracts; compost material</i>
Evaluate use of all pesticide. Stop use of all pesticide where not absolutely necessary. Switch to mechanical methods of weed removal if necessary, or stop removing 'weeds'	<i>Japanese knotweed needs pesticide, dandelions do not; INNS can often be controlled by regular pulling; non-woody plants don't cause damage – leave them; if woody plants cause damage to infrastructure (e.g. concrete/walls) then remove the substrate</i>
Remove invasive species	<i>Stem injections; spot spray; pulling & cutting; dispose of carefully – contact LA</i>
Address land-use / farming practices / vigilante residents in the area that are having a detrimental effect	<i>e.g. pollution, water run-off, hedgerow management, cutting verges, cutting green spaces, tree removal, litter/fly-tipping</i>
Engage residents who own any land to better manage their land for biodiversity – from acres of fields to gardens	<i>Everyone can help biodiversity – some people just don't know how/have never thought about it. Approach private residents about particular features (hedges, trees, verges, fields, etc.) and suggest improvements for biodiversity; host events to share info; publish info on website etc.</i>
De-carbonise the council, and encourage residents to do the same	<i>Work from home; remote meetings; car sharing; electric pool vehicle / taxi; clear emails once no longer needed; share information on website (e.g. CO2 saved)</i>
Use green infrastructure to reduce the impact from urban areas	<i>e.g. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, wetlands/floodplains to manage storm water & filter pollution before it reaches rivers, green roofs & walls to hold water/reduce temperature/provide habitat</i>



Create dedicated feeding zones for specific species	<i>i.e. normally creating habitats for invertebrates that form the basis of all food chains -> wildflower meadows / bug hotels / dead material / fruit tables / refugia / ponds & wet areas</i>
Introduce biosecurity measures on council owned or managed sites to control for the spread of disease	<i>e.g. boot cleaning stations, kayak cleaning stations</i>



NRAP Objective 4

Establish effective governance and capacity to deliver

Suggested Action	How? (General examples)
Ensure there is a dedicated council member who oversees that biodiversity actions are taken	<i>Normally the board as a whole or the chief executive.</i>
Instate a biodiversity committee and embed their finding into council operation	<i>e.g. ensure the committee meets; organise training; feedback from committee meetings to the council</i>
Make your Section 6 plan, review it, and report on it	<i>Seek OVW guidance</i>
Have a system in place for accessing ecological expertise / advice	<i>e.g. know your LNP representative, know your local county recorder, invite wildlife charities and organisations regularly, use OVW Biodiversity Team regularly</i>
Create or access specific biodiversity funding opportunities, for the council itself, or for the community	<i>e.g. OVW can help look for extra funding, OVW provides free biodiversity packages, Keep Wales Tidy packages; designate grants for biodiversity enhancements within your area – create a guidance policy for what is or isn't beneficial</i>
Make use of OVW biodiversity packages	<i>Contact OVW biodiversity team</i>
Have regular contact with your LNP	<i>Ask OVW if unsure who this is or how to reach them.</i>
Create a volunteer group who help with all biodiversity related issues in the community	<i>e.g. recording, surveys, habitat management, public engagement</i>
Employ dedicated staff to manage council property / land for biodiversity	<i>Has this helped? What are they doing? Who is managing / overseeing them? Have you created a work programme?</i>

NRAP Objective 5

Embed biodiversity through engagement and awareness raising to support effective decision making at every level.

Suggested Action	How? (General examples)
Host or support biodiversity related events in your community.	<i>Contact local environment groups / charities / NGOs / National Parks / National Landscapes etc. Or host it yourself.</i>
Change management policies of your land, buildings, planters – any asset – to be more sympathetic to nature.	<i>Council/committee meeting to discuss and change policies and management plans – seek advice. E.g. change mowing policy, change pesticide policy, change heating policy etc.</i>
Engage with the community about why you are making changes, and what changes they can be making.	<i>Make signs, write articles and newsletters, publish information on websites and social media, host events or consultations.</i>
Mandatory climate and ecological training for all councillors and staff.	<i>OVW Training courses, UN CC e-Learn website, FSC Training courses, Species Recovery Trust courses.</i>
Review all contracts, policies, procurement methods, products, travel arrangements, building maintenance, etc. under the lens of biodiversity and climate impact.	<i>Likely involve training courses first. Buy local; buy recycled and recyclable materials; no single-use plastics; remote working where possible to save travel; lights off; heating off; prioritise companies that have sympathy for nature while working; change maintenance contracts to specify nature protection.</i>
Actively look for biodiversity-themed solutions to problems when they occur.	<i>Don't choose the easiest or first option every time; look for eco-friendly alternatives.</i>
Have a biodiversity calendar of events that your community follows through the year.	<i>OVW; online; make your own</i>
New policy that any event using Council / Public spaces must comply with a new sustainability policy	<i>e.g, no single use plastics, no pesticides, cars are not to be left running, local products where possible, no pollution / litter left, no balloon releases, etc.</i>
Learn from best practice in your area and apply to your council.	<i>Local Authority ecologist; National Park management plans; National Landscape management plans, charity.</i>



NRAP Objective 6	
Improve our evidence and monitoring	
Suggested Action	How? (General examples)
Regular monitoring of council owned sites, council managed sites, or areas of interest within the community	<i>e.g. volunteer group; develop or adopt consistent methods for recording; share information</i>
Use all data gathered to analyse and evaluate management plans, planning decisions, or any council resolutions.	<i>e.g. What went well? What went badly? What needs to be changed? Did you reject any planning applications?</i>
Consulting Local Environment Record Centres (LERC) when there are gaps in your knowledge. Also sharing your survey results with LERCs to fill gaps in knowledge.	<i>e.g. LERC app for recording species; contact LERCs for non-sensitive species recordings in your area</i>
Keeping up to date with national reports & events	<i>e.g. State of Nature Reports; Bio deep dives; Wildlife charity publications</i>
Always trying to improve council understanding of ecological and climate topics, and how these impact our daily lives	<i>e.g. training courses; reading; research</i>
Bring in experts regularly – before, during, and after changes are made	<i>e.g. OVW – site visit & report; LA ecologists; Wildlife charities; NGOs</i>
Share your survey results & decisions with the community	<i>e.g. create new section of website – or new website entirely; include biodiversity & nature in your newsletters – running list of species / sighting of the week etc.</i>
Create your own database of biodiversity topics	<i>e.g. species recorded in your local park, what changes you have been making – what were the results? Maps</i>
What are your knowledge gaps? How can you fill them?	<i>Do you not know how to ID birds? Do you not know what habitats your priority species need? Do you know what food sources are important? Do you not understand why certain species that used to be common in your village have now gone?</i>
What are your evidence gaps? How can you fill them?	<i>If you cannot explain why, with evidence and data, that is a gap. What needs to be recorded more/better? More species surveys? More up-to-date habitat maps? Water quality sampling?</i>