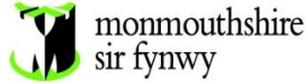


Public Document Pack



Neuadd y Sir
Y Rhadyr
Brynbuga
NP15 1GA

County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Tuesday, 17 February 2026

Dear Councillor

INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

Notice is hereby given that the following decisions made by a member of the cabinet will be made on Wednesday, 25 February 2026.

1. **BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE (ENVIRONMENT WALES ACT 2016, SECTION 6) REPORT** 1 - 82

Division/Wards Affected: All Wards
CABINET MEMBER: County Councillor Catrin Maby

AUTHOR: Kate Stinchcombe – Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery Manager

CONTACT DETAILS: Tel: 01633 644684
E-mail: katestinchcombe@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

CABINET PORTFOLIOS

County Councillor	Area of Responsibility	Ward
Mary Ann Brocklesby	<p>Leader Lead Officers – Paul Matthews, Matthew Gatehouse, Peter Davies, Will Mclean</p> <p>Whole Authority Strategy and Direction Whole authority performance review and evaluation, including DDAT Relationships with Welsh Government, UK Government and local government associations Regional Relationships including CJsCs. PSBs and cross boarder Emergency Planning</p>	Llanelly
Paul Griffiths	<p>Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development Deputy Leader Lead Officers – Will McLean, Craig O'Connor</p> <p>Economic Strategy Skills and Employment Replacement Local Development Plan Placemaking and the development of market and affordable housing Placemaking and Transforming Towns Car parking and civil parking enforcement Development Management Building Control</p>	Chepstow Castle & Larkfield
Ben Callard	<p>Cabinet Member for Resources Lead Officers – Peter Davies, Matt Gatehouse</p> <p>Finance including MTFP and annual budget cycle Revenue and Benefits Human resources, payroll, health and safety Land and buildings Property maintenance and management Strategic procurement</p>	Llanfoist & Govilon
Laura Wright	<p>Cabinet Member for Education Lead Officers – Will McLean, Deb Hill-Howells</p> <p>Early Years Education All age statutory education Additional learning needs/inclusion Post 16 and adult education</p>	Grofield

	<p>School standards and improvement Community learning Sustainable communities for learning Programme Youth service School transport</p>	
Ian Chandler	<p>Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services Lead Officer – Jane Rodgers</p> <p>Children’s services Fostering & adoption Youth Offending service Adult services Whole authority safeguarding (children and adults) Disabilities Mental health Wellbeing Relationships with health providers and access to health provision</p>	Llantilio Crossenny
Catrin Maby	<p>Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment Lead Officers – Deb Hill-Howells, Craig O’Connor,</p> <p>Decarbonisation Transport Planning Highways and MCC Fleet Waste management, street care, litter, public spaces and parks Pavements and Back lanes Flood Alleviation Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and River health</p>	Drybridge
Angela Sandles	<p>Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement Lead Officers – Matthew Gatehouse, Paul Matthews, Jane Rodgers, James Williams</p> <p>Community development, inequality and poverty (health, income, nutrition, disadvantage, discrimination, isolation and cost of living crisis) Citizen engagement and democracy promotion including working with voluntary organisations Citizen experience - community hubs, contact centre, and customer service and registrars, communications, public relations and marketing Leisure centres, play and sport Public conveniences Electoral Services and constitution review Ethics and standards Welsh Language Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Public</p>	Town

	Protection, and Licencing	
Sara Burch	<p>Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Housing & Tourism</p> <p>Lead Officers – Craig O'Connor, Jane Rodgers</p> <p>Local Food production and consumption, including agroforestry and local horticulture</p> <p>Homelessness, Temporary accommodation, private sector housing, (empty homes leasing schemes, home improvement loans, disabled facilities grants and adaptive technology),</p> <p>Allocation of social housing</p> <p>Broadband connectivity</p> <p>Active Travel</p> <p>Countryside Access and Rights of Way</p> <p>Tourism Development and Cultural Services</p>	Cantref

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our Purpose

- to become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life.

Objectives we are working towards

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

Our Values

Openness. We are open and honest. People have the chance to get involved in decisions that affect them, tell us what matters and do things for themselves/their communities. If we cannot do something to help, we'll say so; if it will take a while to get the answer we'll explain why; if we can't answer immediately we'll try to connect you to the people who can help – building trust and engagement is a key foundation.

Fairness. We provide fair chances, to help people and communities thrive. If something does not seem fair, we will listen and help explain why. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently. We cannot always make everyone happy, but will commit to listening and explaining why we did what we did.

Flexibility. We will continue to change and be flexible to enable delivery of the most effective and efficient services. This means a genuine commitment to working with everyone to embrace new ways of working.

Teamwork. We will work with you and our partners to support and inspire everyone to get involved so we can achieve great things together. We don't see ourselves as the 'fixers' or problem-solvers, but we will make the best of the ideas, assets and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.

Kindness: We will show kindness to all those we work with putting the importance of relationships and the connections we have with one another at the heart of all interactions.



SUBJECT: BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE (ENVIRONMENT WALES ACT 2016, SECTION 6) REPORT

MEETING: INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISION

DATE: 25TH FEBRUARY 2026

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To endorse the review of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Report (Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Section 6) known as the 'Section 6 Report' which sets out the council's delivery against statutory duties and responsibilities as detailed in the adopted Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience (Section 6) Forward Plan 2024-28 which forms part of the Nature Recovery pillar of the Monmouthshire County Council Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.2 To endorse the publication and submission of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience (Section 6) Report 2024 to 2025 for the council to comply with the Section 6 Biodiversity Duty. The review was presented to scrutiny on 29th January 2026 (See Appendix 3 Place Scrutiny Committee Feedback on Biodiversity and Resilience).

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 As a local authority we now have a duty (via the Environment (Wales) Act 2016) to maintain and enhance biodiversity in all our functions, with the responsibility for delivery sitting across all council services. In 2021 the Senedd declared a 'Nature Emergency' promoted by the State of Nature Report (2019) highlighting the extinction of 17 % of species across Wales. In Gwent the State of Nature Report (2021) showed a 34% decline of assessed species. More recently the updated 2023 the State of Nature report makes the stark statement that Wales is now one of the most nature depleted countries on Earth and along with the rest of the world is facing a biodiversity crisis, with one in six species in Wales at risk of extinction
- 3.2 The Section 6 Report presented summarises the work undertaken by Monmouthshire County Council during the calendar years of 2024 and 2025 against the eight Section 6 Forward Plan objectives (See Table 1) which were established during the preparation of the adopted Plan in 2024. As part of its statutory obligations, the Council is required to report every three years on actions taken to deliver its

biodiversity duties; a report for 2020-2023 (due in 2022) was submitted to Welsh Government in 2023 and subsequently published to the MonLife website.

Table 1

The Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience (Section 6) Forward Plan key objectives:

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

- 3.3 The 2024-5 reporting includes a cover report detailing the strong corporate commitment via the Community and Corporate Plan, Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy, Motion for Rivers & Ocean, Local Nature Recovery Action Plan and Green Infrastructure Strategy, with acknowledgment of our established governance and delivery mechanisms.
- 3.4 The report identifies how action undertaken by the Local Authority has contributed to the Section 6 objectives that were refreshed and adopted in 2024. The detailed action plan summarises progress towards Milestones and Measures and reviews each of our commitments with an up-to-date description of progress.
- 3.5 We are pleased to be able to complete a report demonstrating significant work across the local authority area towards the Biodiversity Duty. Highlights have been covered by a series of case studies including:
- Replacement Local Development Plan
 - The Healthy Rivers Project
 - Monmouthshire Nature Recovery Action Plan
 - Mill Common Project
 - Gwent Green Grid: Biotapestry
- 3.6 In accordance with the Welsh Government Guidance on reporting, we have also considered any key issues that the authority continues to face in delivering the Biodiversity Duty including incompatible and contradictory legislation e.g. event licensing, challenges to our Nature Isn't Neat approach to grassland management e.g. public perception, and approaching resource issues e.g. where statutory duties are being directly and indirectly funded by external competitive grants.

3.7 A review of existing actions, measures and milestones is included with recommendation for actions to take us to the next reporting round in 2028. Minimal updates are recommended including two new milestones

- Ecologist (Highways and Operations) new post,
- Management Strategy implementation for Neddern Brook

3.8 New measures are identified for the Area (Ha) of Nature isn't Neat managed land, Number of Sites Managed in accordance with a Green Infrastructure management plan, Number of new Green Infrastructure Management Plans for MCC sites, Number of county farms taking part in activity as exemplars for nature friendly, sustainable, and regenerative agriculture.

3.3 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT, (includes equality, future generations, social justice, safeguarding and corporate parenting).

4.1 The Section 6 Report demonstrates significant positive contributions to the Wellbeing Goals. A Healthier Wales is supported through health and wellbeing opportunities through projects and partnerships, well connected multifunctional green spaces and community growing initiatives. There are also benefits for a Resilient Wales, based on supporting nature-based solutions for land management, raised awareness through training and teaching of the nature crisis and working in partnership to deliver landscape scale projects to support resilient ecological networks. There is also significant potential to contribute to Cohesive Communities, by working collaboratively and in partnership with our communities. Finally contributing to a Globally Responsible Wales through sustainable use of natural resources to support Monmouthshire's local green economy and develop skills and learning. There are no negative impacts on the Well-being Goals.

4.2 There are no significant positive or negative impacts on the protected characteristics, safeguarding or corporate parenting. The principles of Long term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration and Involvement were used throughout the development of the Section 6 Forward Plan against which the Section 6 Report has been prepared.

4.3 An Integrated Impact Assessment is attached.

4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 An options appraisal is provided in the table below.

Options	Benefits	Risks	Comments/Mitigation
Do Nothing	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Failure to comply with statutory S6 Legal Duty to maintain and enhance Biodiversity. -Potential Regulatory scrutiny or intervention - Weakened defence against legal challenge - Poor alignment with Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) - Reduced eligibility for grant funding (e.g. Local - Places for Nature which supports statutory delivery) - Inconsistent decision making - Reputational risks &lack of credibility - Failure to demonstrate progress in climate adaption and resilience. 	Not recommended
Approve Publication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -MCC meets is required Statutory Legal S6 Duty - Good governance - Strengthens transparency and public trust. - Aligns with NRAP and - Green Infrastructure Strategy - Strengthens funding and grant opportunities to help deliver Statutory functions. - Supports compliance with corporate aims and objectives and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requirements to deliver on actions 	Recommended

	plans such as Community and Corporate Plan and Climate and Nature Emergency Action Plan.		
--	--	--	--

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1 Updates on progress will be reported upon in line with statutory requirements as set out in the Section 6 duty. Reporting also aligns with the Climate and Nature Emergency corporate reporting.

6. REASONS:

7.1 To ensure that the Council delivers upon its statutory Biodiversity Section 6 duty, supporting the Gwent Well Being Plan and South East Wales Area Statement and addressing its commitments to climate and nature emergencies through the council’s Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy and the Communities and Corporate Plan.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 Actions will be funded in different ways, some are zero cost or will require core funded officer time alone, others will involve Project and Partnership funding delivered through current grant programmes. It is anticipated that where additional funds are needed these will be subject to subsequent decision-making processes.

8. CONSULTEES:

9.1 All relevant areas of the Local Authority are responsible for the implementation of the Section 6 duty. The following areas were consulted and contributed to the reporting on the actions:

- Highways including Active travel, Highways Projects, Flooding
- Countryside, Destination and Environment including Countryside Access,

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- Appendix 1a:– Integrated Impact Assessment
- Appendix 2: Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience (Environment Wales Act 2016, Section 6) Report
- Appendix 3 Place Scrutiny Committee Feedback on Biodiversity and Resilience

**9.2 AUTHOR: Kate Stinchcombe – Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery
Manager**

10. CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 01633 644684

E-mail: katestinchcombe@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Appendix 1 Action Plan Report

Milestones and Measures achieved during the reporting period 2024 / 2025					
Milestone		2024 Progress	2025 Progress	Status	
Milestone: RLDP adopted with relevant policies and planning guidance in place		Policies developed. Public Consultation Underway until 16 th December 2024.	Severn Estuary Recreation Strategy developed. Submission to Welsh Government.	Underway on track	
Milestone: Asset Management Strategy adopted with relevant policies in place		Adopted January 2024 inclusive of consideration for asset management as good role models for climate and nature practices.		Complete	
Milestone: Nature Recovery Action Plan Adopted		Public Consultation for Part 1 Strategy complete.	Adopted June 2025	Complete	
Milestone: Green Infrastructure Action Plan Adopted		Public Consultation complete.	Adopted June 2025	Complete	
Milestone: Nature Networks mapping portal goes live		Final development of mapping portal underway.	Website launched in 5 th February 2025 with supporting introduction training workshop undertaken on 11 th Feb.	Complete	
Milestone: Access to Food Growing process in place		Task and Finish Group established. Template to be produced.	Template produced and process established.	Complete	
Milestone: Pilot Tree Warden Scheme launched		Funding for pilot secured via TWIG	Project commenced with training for MCC Staff and first session in Magor with Undy community.	Underway on track	
Measure	2024 Actual	2024 Progress	2025 Progress	2025 Target	2025 Actual
Number of MCC officers completed Nature Recovery training via Thinqi	N/A	eLearn Module under development. To be available from April 2025.	Launched July 2025. Promoted via staff e-newsletter The Compass and twice via the Thinqi training newsletter. Needs further promotion with Planning, Highways and operational services in 2026	50	14
Number of MCC officers receiving bespoke operational training	20	Planning training 2024 on Planning Policy Wales 12.	Aderyn (biological records) training given to eight Development Management Officers.	0	8
Number of young people / teachers / support staff engaged	771	Gwent Green Grid Shared Prosperity Fund & Nature Networks Pollinator workshops	Gwent Green Grid Shared Prosperity Fund & Nature Networks Biotapestry Work	700	752
Number of MCC sites with National Forest Accreditation	1	Friends of Castle Meadows achieved accreditation Mill Common to be included on completion of TWIG works	Application underway for Mill Common, Undy. TWIG funding secured for Goytre Hall Wood which will be the second site.	2	Underway
Service Level Agreement with SEWBReC	1	Continued by Development Management for 2024/5	Continued by Development Management for 2025/6 plus SLA for Biodiversity work	1	2

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS RESILIENCE (SECTION 6) FORWARD PLAN REPORTING 2025

Number of Natural Flood Management schemes supported by MCC	3	MCC Flooding team supported 3 schemes in Dingestow, Llantilio Crossenny and Mitchel Troy.	No funding this financial year. Preparing for 2026/7	0	Planned for 2026/7
Number of Town & Community Councils engaged	12	Green Infrastructure Projects, Local Nature Partnership	Green Infrastructure Projects, Local Nature Partnership and Nature Isn't Neat initiatives	10	10

Objective 1 Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels

Action	Responsible Service Area(s)	Timescale	Funding	Also cited in	How to measure progress	Progress	Progress (red, amber, green)
1.1 Ensure RLDP allocations where delivery of Net Benefit for biodiversity will be possible. Ensure RLDP Development Management policies are robust and associated Supplementary Planning Guidance for Nature Recovery is developed.	Planning Policy Green Infrastructure	2024/25 Ongoing	Part, Core	Replacement Local Development Plan	RLDP adopted with relevant policies and planning guidance in place	Site allocation & Development Management policies developed with Green Infrastructure Team. Topics for SPG have been developed through policy drafting including Dark Skies, Nature Recovery and Severn Estuary Recreation Mitigation Strategy. The latter has been developed with expert consultants through a workshop. Deposit Plan submitted to Welsh Government for consideration by PEDW. Process paused during further information gathering relating to SAC rivers. See case study for more information.	Amber
1.2 Continue to identify services & operations that have potential to deliver a net benefit for biodiversity and incorporate action into business plans including Highways & Flooding and Landlord Services.	Highways Landlord Services Green Infrastructure	2024/5 Ongoing	Full, Core, Local Places for Nature Revenue	-	Audits undertaken and further actions identified New: Ecologist (Highways & Operations) in post.	Reactive support to highways projects continues with limited resource to proactively plan work programmes with net benefit for biodiversity. No resource available to explore property services work and provide the required support. Ecologist (Highways & Operations) role approved and will be advertised in early 2026.	Amber
1.3 Ensure that the review and implementation of the Council's Asset Management Strategy considers Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience through consultation.	Landlord Services	2024/5 Ongoing	Full, Core, Local Places for Nature Revenue	Asset Management Strategy	Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience considered during asset management strategy implementation	Landlord services acknowledge ecological value as a consideration in adopted Asset Management Strategy 2023-27. Alternative use of a former development site in Abergavenny (adjacent to Morrisons) was secured and enhancements funded through Local Places for Nature.	Green

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS RESILIENCE (SECTION 6) FORWARD PLAN REPORTING 2025

						Continuing dialogue on plans and projects e.g. Food growing initiatives and County Farms.	
1.4 Improve the consideration of biodiversity through Highways Operations and Suds Approving Body (SAB) process through use of checklists and consultation.	Highways Flooding Risk Management	2024/5 Ongoing	Full, Core	-	All schemes minimising conflicts and delivering biodiversity net benefit.	SAB team attending GI DM meetings to ensure ecology has early consideration. No formal process in place yet. Ecologist (Highways & Operations) role approved and will be advertised in early 2026.	
1.5 Rollout the use of the new procurement guidelines to limit effects on climate and nature	Procurement All Procuring Services	2024/5 Ongoing	Full, Core	Carbon Emissions plan	More procurement considers climate & nature	Ardal guidelines available for use. <i>Action to be updated to Continue to promote the Ardal procurement guidance.</i>	
1.6 Seek ongoing adherence to the PROW Biodiversity Action Plan	Countryside Access	2024/5 Ongoing	Full, Core	Countryside Access Improvement Plan	All schemes minimising conflicts and delivering biodiversity net benefit.	Consultation undertaken and advice sought where restricted byways need re-opening or new paths being made e.g. protected species. Ongoing use of the PROW BAP - sent several out to landowners and user groups and all volunteer groups receive training on it and are aware of it. (20 Volunteer groups presently)	

Objective 2 Provide nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being and encourage action for nature

Action	Responsible Service Area(s)	Timescale	Funding	Also cited in	How to measure progress	Progress 2024 - 2025	Progress (red, amber, green)
2.1 Continue to deliver nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being and encourage action for nature through the Gwent Green Grid	Green Infrastructure	2024/25 Ongoing	Full, Nature Networks, SPF CURRENT FUNDING ENDS March 2026 Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).	-	Grant relevant Key Performance Indicators	Development of the Bio Tapestry project. GGGP attended Usk Show, Nature & Food event and Greener Abergavenny with Bio Tapestry activities. 79 sessions delivered across Gwent (27 of those in Monmouthshire) reaching 752 participants (261 of those in Monmouthshire). See case study for more information.	
2.2 Work with young people to enable them to take positive action on nature recovery and climate change	Green Infrastructure Grounds and Cleansing Leisure Services Heritage Attractions Sustainable Food Outdoor Education	2024/25 Ongoing	Full, Core, Nature Networks, SPF, Food Partnership CURRENT FUNDING ENDS March 2026. Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).	Community Climate Action Plan	Number of individuals engaged through nature-based activity New meals on primary school menu. Number of high schools engaged.	GGGP - 31 Climate and Nature Awareness Sessions delivered in schools to 771 children/teachers/support staff across Monmouthshire. Sustainable Food - Ongoing work with Size Of Wales, to promote deforestation champions, and support for the creation of deforestation free meal, for the primary school menu. Work within schools to promote cooking and growing skills, comprehensives to be included for 2025/2026. Began to look at plate waste in primary schools, to reduce and begin to minimise.	

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS RESILIENCE (SECTION 6) FORWARD PLAN REPORTING 2025

<p>2.3 Continue with work on the E Learning module and seek to make it compulsory corporate training.</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure</p>	<p>2024</p>	<p>Full, SPF/Local Places for Nature</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Completion of learning module. Number of officers completed training.</p>	<p>Co production of E-Learn module with Cynnal Cymru, Tantrwm, Comms and Corporate Training. Training available on Thinqi platform which is available to all staff and elected members however, training is not compulsory. Uptake has been slow despite advertisement in the all-staff e-newsletter and promotion through the corporate training e-newsletter. Number completed training between July and end December 2025: 14. Further promotion to planning and highways needed in 2026. Action to be updated to Continue to promote the Nature Recovery eLearning module.</p>	
<p>2.4 Work collaboratively to seek alternative funding models including Green Finance to ensure long term sustainable delivery of awareness raising and encouraging action.</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure</p>	<p>2024/25 Ongoing</p>	<p>Part, Nature Networks CURRENT FUNDING ENDS March 2026 Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Opportunities identified.</p>	<p>Partnership working e.g. with Usk Catchment Partnership and Marches Partnership seeking to identify opportunities. Gwent Green Grid Green Finance Commission to be awarded in early 2026. This is an opportunity for a consultant to provide Support the Gwent Green Grid Partnership (GGGP) in co-designing Green Finance Plan that delivers a legacy for nature, communities, and partner organisations across Gwent.</p>	
<p>2.5 Explore opportunities for Duke of Edinburgh Award voluntary work to aid nature recovery.</p>	<p>Outdoor Education Green Infrastructure</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Opportunities identified.</p>	<p>No update currently.</p>	

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS RESILIENCE (SECTION 6) FORWARD PLAN REPORTING 2025

<p>2.6 Explore funding to update interpretation and materials at the One Planet Centre, strengthen links with partners and increase the use of the centre.</p>	<p>Grounds and Cleansing</p>	<p>End of April 2025</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Static display updated Touch Screen content updated</p>	<p>Interactive Globe - 11 questions on interactive consoles updated to reflect current data.</p>	
<p>2.7 Support schools to utilise the opportunity provided by the new curriculum to ensure nature recovery & climate change education is embedded into young people's learning</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure Grounds and Cleansing Heritage Attractions Leisure Services Sustainable Food</p>	<p>2024/25 Ongoing</p>	<p>Part, Nature Networks, SPF Food Partnership MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2026 Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).</p>	<p>- Local Food Strategy.</p>	<p>Number of schools engaged. Work on school meals promoting pulses, and vegetables.</p>	<p>GGGP - in school delivery of workshops. Production and promotion of the GGGP Digital Resource. Pollinator Packs produced and distributed. Production of <i>Helping Nature to Help Us</i> Interactive Board Resource. Sustainable Food - Continued to work with primary schools supporting access to the curriculum through growing and cooking skills. Ensuring delivery of pollinators/soil health/soil regeneration. Working across departments for complete delivery.</p>	
<p>2.8 Encourage public understanding of food systems – including production, processing, cooking, nutrition, and waste – to encourage planet-friendly food choices and informed decision-making</p>	<p>Sustainable Food</p>	<p>2024/25 Ongoing</p>	<p>Part, Food Partnership, SPF Funding MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2026 Partnerships to continue (additional funding</p>	<p>Local Food Strategy</p>	<p>Businesses signed up to green growth pledge. Amount of local vegetables on primary school plates. Tender contracts with climate, sustainability and nutrition.</p>	<p>Apple pilot project with Welsh Veg in Schools which will include a curriculum Apple Resource Kit. We have continued to promote regenerative farming, networking and communications with the residents of Monmouthshire and its borders. We have strengthened partnerships with farmers continuing to support their vision of collaborative working through consortia level provision. We have continued to work including mentoring schools supported by Size of Wales to help to improve knowledge and understanding of planet friendly food choices and helping to create positive change within embedded practices.</p>	

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS RESILIENCE (SECTION 6) FORWARD PLAN REPORTING 2025

			grants being pursued).		<p>Events booked and engaged with partners.</p> <p>Community projects supported through grant funding.</p> <p>Marches Partnership work.</p>	<p>Bokashi project led by young people supported by the Monmouthshire Food Partnership with the intention of reducing cooked food waste and creating living compost.</p> <p>We sit on the Steering group for the Healthy Weight Healthy Wales ABUHB. This provides support to the community with projects and events which promote the above, working with NHS and other health care professionals to begin preventative health care education.</p> <p>We are working cross border with The Marches Project, working with partners on Food Resilience, access to food and climate.</p>	
<p>Page 4</p> <p>2.9 Deliver Nature & Climate awareness raising to groups</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure</p> <p>Grounds and Cleansing</p> <p>Heritage Attractions</p>	<p>2024/5</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Core, Local Places for Nature</p> <p>MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2026</p> <p>Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).</p>	-	<p>Final M&E report for the NLHF GGGP project (March 2026) will include an analysis of this work.</p>	<p>GGGP Nature & Climate presentation to Community Climate Champions.</p> <p>Focus has been on Schools in 2024/5 financial year.</p> <p>The development of the BioTapestry has been our focus for nature & climate awareness. Community groups and public events have used art of various mediums as a mechanism for learning about nature & climate and understanding the special value of our local environments.</p> <p>See case study for more information.</p>	
<p>2.10 Assess the need and aspirations for schools in Monmouthshire to have an environmental charter and improve sharing of best practice on projects such as school grounds improvements to enhance ecosystem services.</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure</p> <p>Grounds and Cleansing</p> <p>Active Travel</p> <p>Sustainable Food</p>	<p>2024/5</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Core, Local Places for Nature, Food Partnership</p> <p>MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March</p>	-	<p>Support required by schools in place</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure - Survey sent to all schools with 12 responses received. Loss of resource to take this forward as Biodiversity and Ecology Officer left. MCC and Keep Wales Tidy <i>Eco schools</i> network established to improve information sharing. Challenge to maintain this with current staffing resource levels.</p> <p>MCC Road Safety School Travel Plan - Officer working with schools to think about sustainable travel to school. MCC AT</p>	

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS RESILIENCE (SECTION 6) FORWARD PLAN REPORTING 2025

	Children and Young People		2026 and 2027 Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).			using ATF and SRiC funding to improve sustainable transport connections to schools. Scheme development and construction include routes to Caldicot School/ Durand School, King Henry VIII School Abergavenny and Monmouth Overmonnow school.	
2.11 Continue with a programme of training for site managers, operatives & development management officers as need arises e.g. protected species, construction, and management of GI assets e.g. Rain Gardens.	Highways	2024/5	Part, SPF	-	Number of members/ officers/ operatives trained	20 officers from Development Management and Heritage teams trained on PPW 12 updates: Net Benefit for Biodiversity, Green Infrastructure and Trees during February 2024.	
	Grounds and Cleansing MonLife Attractions Green Infrastructure Heritage Attractions	Ongoing				Total of seven elected members taken on a Climate and Nature Steering Group best practice field trip to Abergavenny sites in 2024 and Magor with Undy in 2025. One Grounds officer attended a training session on Leaky Dams.	
2.12 Nature & Climate Comms campaign	Communications	2024/5	Part, Core, Nature Networks, Local Places for Nature	-	TBC alongside LNP comms plan.	Ongoing Nature & Climate Comms work including Local Places for Nature project delivery, Mill Common Restoration, Nature and Food Celebration, River Gavenny Project.	
	Green Infrastructure Grounds and Cleansing	Ongoing	MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2026 Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).			Presentation on Nature Actions to UK Climate Action Scorecard group.	

Objective 3 Undertake land management for biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience

Action	Responsible Service Area(s)	Timescale	Funding	Also cited in	How to measure progress	Progress	Progress (red, amber, green)
3.1 Develop the management of green infrastructure to improve climate & ecosystem resilience	Grounds and Cleansing Countryside Access Heritage Attractions MonLife Attractions	2024/5 Ongoing	Part, Local Places for Nature, Brilliant Basics, Nature Networks, SPF MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2026 Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).	-	Area of NiN land maintained at 38Ha NEW: Sites Managed in accordance with a GI Management Plan	Ongoing management using Nature isn't Neat (NiN) principles across approx. 38Ha of Grounds managed estate with a further 9Ha on Countryside / attractions sites. Local Places for Nature funding utilised to procure appropriate machinery / kit for management of grassland areas. Correct machinery in place for use at Caldicot Castle and Country Park and Old Station Tintern. PROW Tracks and Trails – ensure all projects improving /maintaining highways take account of our duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity. PROW Projects – Including assessing ecology and biodiversity in road surveys and communicating to User Groups, Locals etc what needs to be protected and improved.	
3.2 Continue to deliver green infrastructure improvements and changes to management practices through the Gwent Green Grid Partnership	Green Infrastructure	2024/5 End March 2026	Full, Nature Networks, SPF MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS	-	Grant relevant Key Performance Indicators	River Gavenny Community Action Plan and Healthy Rivers Project. See Relevant Case Study. Green Infrastructure designs for 20 Green Corridors sites, delivery of GI enhancements at 'Morrisons' site, Abergavenny and grassland enhancement at Goytre Playing Field.	

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS RESILIENCE (SECTION 6) FORWARD PLAN REPORTING 2025

			March 2026 Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).			Continued support and development of Nature Isn't Neat including specific projects at Gilwern Common.
3.3 Maintain Nature Isn't Neat Management at 38Ha and increase sustainable disposal / utilisation of grass cutting arisings	Grounds and Cleansing Highways	2024/5 Ongoing	Full, Core, Local Places for Nature	-	Management Maintained at 38Ha	38Ha Maintained through a NiN approach.
3.4 Implement the River Gavenny project via the Local Nature Partnership	Green Infrastructure	2024/5 End March 2026	Part, Section 106, Nature Networks MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2026 Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).	-	Project Underway	Public Consultation workshop July 2024 with key partnership organisations. Community Engagement Plan developed by Groundwork Wales. Litter picking event with Groundwork Wales, Keep Wales Tidy, Abergavenny Town Council. During 2025 the GI Team worked with Ground Work Wales using Nature Networks funding to deliver a Healthy Rivers Project. See Case study.

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS RESILIENCE (SECTION 6) FORWARD PLAN REPORTING 2025

<p>3.5 Develop Green Infrastructure Management Plans for Mill Common, Breezy Bank and the new Countryside Park at Nant y Castell.</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Full, Section 106, TWIG</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Plans completed</p>	<p>TWIG Funding secured to be used to develop the GI Management Plan for Mill Common to UK Forestry Standards.</p> <p>S106 funds received for Nant y Castell Green Infrastructure Plan.</p>	
<p>3.6 Continue with the development and implementation of the Neddern Brook Strategy and monitor effectiveness</p>	<p>MonLife Attractions Green Infrastructure Flood Risk Management</p>	<p>2024/5 Ongoing</p>	<p>Part, Local Places for Nature 2025-7</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Strategy in place. Management undertaken.</p>	<p>Strategy complete and scope of works discussed with NRW through FRAP pre-app process.</p> <p>Restoration works to include vegetation cutting to be undertaken in early 2026 with new machinery being funded through Local Places for Nature.</p>	
<p>3.7 Seek TWIG funding for woodland management plans and nature woodland management</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure Grounds and Cleansing</p>	<p>2024/5</p>	<p>Full, TWIG</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Funding secured.</p>	<p>£250,000 awarded by NHLF for implementation of capital project and awareness raising 2024-26 at Mill Common.</p> <p>See Case study.</p> <p>£117,000 awarded by NHLF for implementation of capital project and community engagement for 2025-2027 at Goytre Hall Wood.</p>	
<p>3.8 Secure National Forest Accreditation for priority woodland sites</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure Countryside Access Grounds and Cleansing</p>	<p>2024/5 Ongoing</p>	<p>Full, TWIG</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Number of MCC sites with National Forest Accreditation</p>	<p>Castle Meadows Copse accredited National Forest status following an application by the Friends of Castle Meadows.</p> <p>Development of the Forest Management Plan and National Forest application are underway for Mill Common as part of the associated TWIG funding.</p>	

2025-18

Objective 4 Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience

Action	Responsible Service Area(s)	Timescale	Funding	Also cited in	How to measure progress	Progress	Progress (red, amber, green)
4.1 Promote and, as opportunities arise, use our county farms as exemplars for nature friendly, sustainable, and regenerative agriculture	Sustainable Food Landlord Services Flood Risk Management	Ongoing	Part, Food Partnership SPF funding.	Food Strategy	Number of farmers/farms taking part.	Regen Ben project complete, with County farmers having finished their mentoring programme on regenerative farming. As well as other individually owned farms. The cluster farming project is still ongoing with a regenerative farming event planned for January 2026. Work within this area will potentially be shared through The Marches Project.	
4.2 Promote sustainable land management and agricultural practices, including nutrient/soil management and natural flood management	Flood Risk Management Sustainable Food	Ongoing	Part, Food Partnership SPF Funding	Food Strategy.	Number of Events and People attending	Regen Ben project promoted learning and education with agricultural practices, The farming cluster have been looking at cover crops for soil retention and to minimise water run-off. The Marches Real Food and Farming Convergence was held in October 2025. The event showcased best practice and new and innovative ideas such as regenerative farming. Peer support and future workstream development were key to the event’s success which reached 190 people over the two-day event.	
4.3 Work with partners to understand potential for and implement natural flood management for climate adaption	Flood Risk Management	Ongoing	Part, NFM, SPF, Food Partnership	-	Number of schemes underway	A NFM Opportunity Assessment for Monmouthshire has been completed and several potential schemes identified. Three of those schemes have been delivered in 2023/24 funded through Welsh Government’s NFM Accelerator Grant. Delivery of future schemes will be dependent on further WG grant funding. Through this work we continue to liaise with partners such as Wye & Usk Foundation, Welsh Water, Wye Valley National Landscape Team & Natural Resources Wales on NFM matters. Two further NFM schemes are currently being considered for 2026/27, including the installation of NFM features near	

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS RESILIENCE (SECTION 6) FORWARD PLAN REPORTING 2025

						Dingestow and landowner engagement/feasibility work in the River Monnow catchment in collaboration with the Wye & Usk Foundation.	
4.4 Work with Landlord Services to develop an access to growing template to include requirement of no pesticides / harmful chemicals.	Sustainable Food Landlord Services	2025	Full, Food Partnership	-	Process in Plane	Task and Finish group has been established; a process is now in place to ensure all relevant parts of the authority are involved at the correct stage in project development. Action Complete.	
4.5 Work with Town and Community Councils to deliver Section 6	Green Infrastructure Grounds and Cleansing	2024/5 Ongoing	Part, Local Places for Nature	-	Number of Community Councils engaged	Close working on GI and Local Places for Nature projects design and consultation. Attendance of cc at LNP meetings and promotion of NRAP consultation on a CC website. Extensive work with Llanelly Hill CC on Gilwern Common grass cutting. Town and Community Council councils were invited to the Nature & Food Celebration event in October 2024.	
4.6 Continue to work with Gwent Wildlife Trust, Monmouthshire Meadows Group and Natural Resources Wales to identify sites that meet the Local Wildlife Sites / Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation criteria.	Green Infrastructure	2024/5 Ongoing	Full, Core	-	Number of Local Wildlife Sites / Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation	LWS Panel attended by MCC in March 2024. 18 sites approved for inclusion as Local Wildlife Sites. 2025 LWS panel attended by MCC in January 2025. 24 sites approved for inclusion as Site of Importance for nature Conservation / Local Wildlife Site in 2025. Total number of Site of Importance for nature Conservation / Local Wildlife Site = 833 total	
4.7 Protect and enhance green infrastructure through new and existing development	Planning Policy and Development Management Green Infrastructure	2024/5 Ongoing	Part, Core	-	TBC	Ongoing work in this area with additional guidance prepared for householder applicants in the preparation of Green Infrastructure Statements. Ongoing fortnightly team roundtable to discuss applications with relevant MCC GI stakeholders and ensure GI approach undertaken. Landscape officer post is vacant with resultant lack of resource.	
4.8 Promote community access to land for growing food	Sustainable Food	2024/5 Ongoing	Part, SPF, Food Partnership	-Food strategy, planned	Number of individuals/groups accessing land to grow on.	Attendance to a working group looking at securing land to grow on, working with Abergavenny town council.	

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS RESILIENCE (SECTION 6) FORWARD PLAN REPORTING 2025

	Planning Policy and Development Management			LDP document.		Attendance on a planning group looking forward at new developments and potential areas for new projects.	
<p>4.9 Signpost businesses to support, advice and information to help them to contribute to Nature Recovery</p>	<p>Enterprise and Community Animation Destination Management Green Infrastructure</p>	Ongoing	Part, Core	Destination Management Plan	Number of businesses engaged.	<p>Monmouthshire's Destination Management Plan is the plan which guides tourism development, management and marketing of the county. The revised Plan for the period 2025-30 aims to drive sustainable tourism growth through a more regenerative approach which balances social, economic and environmental interests for the benefit of everyone in Monmouthshire. Environmental protection is a key objective within the Plan, with sustainable practices encouraged, including boosting visitor awareness of environmental issues, and inspiring positive behavioural changes such as increased use of public and active transport and responsible access to nature. While the development of the Plan has been led by MCC, it's been designed to provide a common direction for all public, private and third sector organisations with an interest in nurturing tourism in the county. The Plan promotes guided walks and quiet enjoyment of the seasonal nature spectacles in Monmouthshire.</p> <p>We encourage all those involved in the visitor economy in Monmouthshire to embed responsible, sustainable and environmentally friendly practices into their businesses (and organisations) and to evidence their commitment to sustainability through initiatives such as Green Tourism certification. As well as improving biodiversity, eliminating single-use items, supporting your local community, embracing the circular economy and implementing measures to reduce your carbon footprint, environmental accreditation will also give your business competitive advantage.</p>	

Page 21

Objective 5 Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

Action	Responsible Service Area(s)	Timescale	Funding	Also cited in	How to measure progress	Progress	Progress (red, amber, green)
5.1 Continue to develop the Nature Recovery Action Plan and support and encourage delivery	Green Infrastructure	Ongoing	Part, Local Places for Nature	NRAP	NRAP published.	NRAP Part 1 adopted June 2025 and published during Wales Nature Week July 2025 following public consultation, MCC Scrutiny and Cabinet approval. Subsequent delay with the development Habitat and Species action plans but development expected 2026-7. See NRAP Case Study.	Amber
5.2 Continue to identify and promote new Green Infrastructure projects through the Green Infrastructure Strategy	Green Infrastructure Grounds and Cleansing Sustainable Food Flood Risk Management	Ongoing	Part, Nature Networks, SPF, Local Places for Nature MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2026 and 2027. Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).	GI STRATEGY	No of green infrastructure projects delivered.	GI strategy refreshed with public consultation alongside the NRAP as above. GI projects currently being developed are guided by the GI Strategy via the Community Nature Spaces and Green Corridors project and River Gavenny Healthy Rivers project. See case studies.	Green

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS RESILIENCE (SECTION 6) FORWARD PLAN REPORTING 2025

<p>5.3 Develop a Dark skies policy and explore a street lighting charter which consider reducing and limiting impacts on nature</p>	<p>Street Lighting Green Infrastructure Planning Policy and Development Management</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Part, Local Places for Nature</p>	<p>RLDP</p>	<p>Policy and charter formulated.</p>	<p>Policy included in Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan. See RLDP Case Study.</p>	
<p>5.4 Delivery of Net Benefit for biodiversity through Active Travel and other sustainable travel infrastructure projects</p>	<p>Active Travel Green Infrastructure</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Full, Active Travel Fund</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>Through all Active Travel (AT) schemes where planning is required, net benefit of biodiversity is delivered through the planning system and a guarantee of a net benefit from any interventions. Where opportunities allow in other schemes, the integration of green space, including planting, rain gardens and planters is included for the benefit of all.</p> <p>MCC AT discusses planning applications and scheme plans with MCC GI colleagues. MCC Ecology Officers are consultees on AT scheme details such as specified planting for swales within AT schemes.</p> <p>Sustainable transport choices - modal shift, behaviour change and trip reduction can have significant impact on the reduction of carbon emissions and the biodiversity benefits this provides. The use of active travel can give people a more personal connection to their local green infrastructure and environment, encouraging protection of vital green spaces.</p>	
<p>5.5 Work with partners to support and promote actions to improve river water quality</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure Planning Policy and Development Management Flood Risk Management</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Part, Core, SPF, Food Partnership</p>	<p>Rivers & Ocean</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>Gavenny Catchment Partnership refreshed using S106 and SPF. Working with Groundwork Wales to produce a community engagement plan. Workshop in July with stakeholders including NRW, WUF, KWT, Abergavenny Town Council, Civic Society, GWT. Litter pick coordinated in November 2024.</p> <p>During 2025 the project delivered engagement days including actions to consider water quality.</p>	

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS RESILIENCE (SECTION 6) FORWARD PLAN REPORTING 2025

	Sustainable Food					See Healthy Rivers Case study	
5.6 Development of a voluntary Tree Warden scheme to encourage residents to monitor and maintain existing and new tree planting.	Grounds and Cleansing Green Infrastructure Countryside Access	TBC	TWIG Funding Application Underway	-	Pilot scheme in place.	Funding in place to deliver a pilot project in 2025/6 at Mill Common Magor with Undy. See Mill Common Case Study.	
5.7 Work in partnership to plant more trees, increase area of woodland, improve woodland management, and retain and protect existing woodland and trees	Green Infrastructure Grounds and Cleansing	Ongoing	Part, Nature Networks, SPF, Section 106 MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2026 Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).	-	TBC	GGGP facilitated the TWIG applications in Newport and Monmouthshire through the GGG Regional Woodland Priority Plan. Continued TWIG Steering Group support by GGG Collaboration Lead and NiN project officer. As per Monmouthshire Housing Association contract, every tree felled is replaced with two trees. 38 trees to be planted this planting season.	
5.8 Explore and establish a target for an increase in the percentage of urban and rural tree cover	TBC	TBC	Part, Core	-	TBC	Loss of key officer in Grounds & Cleansing has impacted this area of work.	
5.9 Provide information to encourage new tree planting	Grounds and Cleansing	TBC	Part, Core, Nature Networks	-	TBC	To be progressed.	

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS RESILIENCE (SECTION 6) FORWARD PLAN REPORTING 2025

and protect existing trees in private gardens	Green Infrastructure						
5.10 Work with Stump Up for Trees and other similar local organisations to evaluate benefits of biochar for tree plant health and locking up carbon	Grounds and Cleansing	TBC	No	-	TBC	Stump Up for Trees have been supported by providing waste wood chip for mulching their tree nursery. Biochar not currently feasible due to lack of kiln resource	
5.11 Eliminate the use of peat-based compost from our supply chain	Procurement Grounds and Cleansing Green Infrastructure Highways Active Travel	Ongoing	No	Council Emissions	Peat use eliminated from supply chain	MCC do not purchase peat compost but there is uncertainty that all suppliers are using peat free sources e.g. in pollinator plant stock. Further work needed in this area to be stimulated by the new procurement guidelines.	
5.12 Increase urban tree canopy including new street trees and in car parks to increase carbon capture, water storage, ecosystem resilience, and provide a cooling effect	Green Infrastructure Planning Policy and Development Management Highways	Ongoing	Local Places for Nature, SPF, Nature Networks MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2026 and 2027	-	TBC	Total tree planting winter 24/25 – 4527 whips, 126 trees and 39 orchard/fruit trees. This includes non-MCC planting for Monmouthshire Housing Association.	
5.13 Work with partners to ensure Wales Coast Path improvements deliver net benefit for biodiversity	Countryside Access	2025	Potential Shared Outcomes funding		TBC	Funding application made for two schemes 1. Links and Loops -Consultant to undertake feasibility study of connecting Caldicot Links to WCP at Caldicot, WT site at Magor to WCP and Magor Pill to WCP.	

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS RESILIENCE (SECTION 6) FORWARD PLAN REPORTING 2025

	Green Infrastructure					<p>2. Access Improvements for All from Rogiet CP to Black Rock – this is looking at improving access for disabled but will include biodiversity improvements as well. There will be public consultation so opportunity to advise LAF and public about the environment. The feasibility studies are to gather all evidence and information, so we are in the position to bid for further implementation funding in next financial year.</p>	
--	----------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

Objective 6 Support landscape scale projects and partnerships to maximise delivery

Action	Responsible Service Area(s)	Timescale	Funding	Also cited in	How to measure progress	Progress	Progress (red, amber, green)
6.1 Continue to lead on the Gwent Green Grid through Nature Networks and SPF funding Page 27	Green Infrastructure	Ongoing	Nature Networks, SPF CURRENT FUNDING ENDS March 2026 Partnerships to continue (additional funding grants being pursued).	-	Continued leadership of GGGP	Nature Networks in place until March 2026. Additional funding bid submitted to continue the partnership and its work to deliver Resilient Ecological Networks through the Nature Networks funding programme. Grant Awards to be announced in March 2026.	Amber
6.2 Continue to take active roles in the Usk Catchment Partnership and Wye Catchment Partnership	Elected Members Chief Officer Communities and Place Green Infrastructure Head of Planning	Ongoing	Full, Core	Rivers & Ocean Action Plan	Continued involvement with partnerships	Continued involvement in Partnerships at all levels. Usk Catchment partnership – Agreement of priorities For Draft Integrated Catchment Plan, Appointment of Nature Guardian, Task and finish groups to establish shared outcomes for catchment. Usk Knowledge Hub – Review of State of the Usk Wye Nutrient Management Board/ Commission/ Senior Officers Group – Attendance by Elected Member, Chief Officer and Head of Planning. Wye Catchment partnership – Attendance at all possible meetings Systems mapping undertaken, NRW’s Upper Wye project welcomed.	Green

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS RESILIENCE (SECTION 6) FORWARD PLAN REPORTING 2025

<p>6.3 Continue to support Living Levels Landscape Partnership</p>	<p>Elected Members Green Infrastructure</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Full, Core</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Continued involvement with partnership</p>	<p>Development funding secured and preparation for submission for Living Levels 2 to the National Heritage Lottery Fund. Two new officers have been recruited with MCC Countryside providing support for the interview process. Welsh Government Coastal Capacity Funding has supported Living Levels delivery during 2024/25 FY to deliver the Beyond the Seawall citizen science project.</p>	
<p>6.4 Continue to work on the coast and the wider estuary through Coastal Capacity, ASERA, Severn Estuary Partnership and Severn Estuary Coastal Group.</p>	<p>Elected Members Chief officer Communities and Place Green Infrastructure Sustainability Planning, Placemaking and Flooding</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Part, Core and WG Challenge Fund</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Continued involvement with partnerships</p>	<p>Continued Severn Estuary Partnership, Severn Estuary Group and ASERA membership. Coastal Capacity grant coordination for Delivery of the Vision for Mor Hafren Severn Estuary in partnership with SEP, GWT, RSPB Cymru, Beccy MacDonald Lofts. Seascape Assessment developed for Marine Character Area 29. Sustainable Food – involvement in group to identify priorities for food systems on the Gwent Levels.</p>	
<p>6.5 Continue to host and maintain the Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure</p>	<p>2024/25 Ongoing</p>	<p>Part, Local Places for Nature MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2027 Partnerships to continue</p>	<p>Nature Recovery Action Plan</p>	<p>Continued hosting of Local Nature Partnership</p>	<p>Independently Chaired Local Nature Partnership Maintained with two meetings in 2024 and 2025, Nature & Food Celebration event, Spring and autumn Newsletters.</p>	

Objective 7 Use improved evidence, understanding and monitoring to inform action

Action	Responsible Service Area(s)	Timescale	Funding	Also cited in	How to measure progress	Progress	Progress (red, amber, green)
7.1 Continue to monitor grassland diversity and pollinators (through POMS) to provide evidence to our Nature isn't Neat management	Green Infrastructure Grounds and Cleansing	Ongoing	Full, Nature Networks, Core	-	TBC	<p>Surveying of Nature isn't Neat grasslands was established in 2023 and will continue rotation to monitor grassland diversity. An average of 17 grassland species were found across MCC grassland sites. Surveys will be undertaken in 2026.</p> <p>UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (POMS) monitoring will continue to be promoted through Nature isn't Neat. In July 2024 a POMS FIT count workshop was held with expert entomologist Richard Dawson and King Henry School pupils (25 pupils).</p>	
7.2 Continue to secure the Service Level Agreement with the South East Wales Biodiversity Record Centre (SEWBRc)	Planning Policy and Development Management	Ongoing	Full, Core	-	Continuation of SLA.	<p>2024/5 SLA secured for planning.</p> <p>2025/6 secured for planning. A new SLA secured for work relating to the Local Nature Partnership was also secured.</p>	
7.3 Development of Nature Networks Mapping and continue to work with NRW to develop Resilient Ecological Networks	Green Infrastructure	Ongoing	Part, Nature Networks MAJORITY OF FUNDING ENDS March 2026 AND 2027. Partnerships to continue	-	Nature Networks and Resilient Ecological Networks complete.	<p>The Gwent Green Grid and Monmouthshire CC are collaborating with NRW to develop Resilient Ecological Networks across Gwent's six Landscape Profile areas.</p> <p>The Gwent Levels is the first part of Wales to have fully published RENs maps which were published in April 2025. This followed three workshops in 2024 with a wide array of stakeholders which explored ecological networks, ecosystem services, and nature recovery priorities. The spatial maps developed by GGGP and MCC are directly contributing to Welsh Government's Future Wales Planning Policy 9 Guidance.</p>	

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS RESILIENCE (SECTION 6) FORWARD PLAN REPORTING 2025

			(additional funding grants being pursued).			<p>Work has begun on the remaining Landscape Profile areas, including Central Monmouthshire, Wye Valley and Wentwood and Bannau Brycheiniog. The first workshops were held in late 2025 and will continue into 2026.</p> <p>This work is supported by the Nature Networks Gwent Green Grid's Resilient Ecological Network Mapper a new open access ecological network and opportunity mapper, developed with Environment Systems. The mapper is designed for a range of users including professionals and community groups. The mapper went live in February 2025 and was accompanied by an online training webinar. The mapper has already been successfully used across Gwent to develop projects and secure funding.</p>	
7.4 Use of Nature Networks mapping in project design and to inform delivery of Net Benefit for Biodiversity through development using Supplementary Planning Guidance	<p>Planning Policy and Development Management</p> <p>Green Infrastructure</p>	TBC	Part, Core	-	TBC	<p>The Nature Networks funded Gwent Green Grid mapper is now live and available to be used by ecologists and developers for project design and inform Net Benefit for Biodiversity.</p> <p>The development of Resilient Ecological Networks is part of a Wales wide strategy and provides further refinement of Nature Networks mapping through the development of core and nature recovery zones, where proposed nature recovery projects will have the greatest benefit, this can be used to guide development design and target resources effectively. The Gwent Levels RENs maps are being used by Welsh Government's Future Wales Planning Policy 9 Guidance which is due to be published in 2026.</p>	
7.5 Seek funding to explore opportunities / methods for monitoring carbon and water storage on Council land and in Green Infrastructure assets	<p>Green Infrastructure</p> <p>Grounds and Cleansing</p> <p>Landlord Services</p>	Ongoing	No	-	TBC	<p>Enquiries made into a soil bioacoustics project with Warwick University. Funding to be sought.</p> <p>Nature Networks 5 Application submitted to include Nature Based activity on Council owned land. Funding to be confirmed early 2026.</p>	

Objective 8 Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and review

Action	Responsible Service Area(s)	Timescale	Funding	Also cited in	How to measure progress	Progress	Progress (red, amber, green)
8.1 Review the plan in 2025 in line with the Section 6 reporting requirement	Green Infrastructure	2025	Full, Core	-	Plan Reviewed.	Actions identified to be updated. See Review section of Section 6 report.	
8.2 Assess the need to review the refreshed forward plan in 2026	Green Infrastructure	2026	Full, Core		Assessment undertaken.	This will be undertaken in line with the Climate and Nature Strategy Reporting. See Review section of Section 6 report.	



Integrated Impact Assessment Template

(incorporating Equalities, Socio-economic Duty, Future Generations, Welsh Language Measures, Corporate Parenting)

<p>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation Kate Stinchcombe</p> <p>Phone no: 01633644684 E-mail: katestinchcombe@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>To endorse the review of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Report (Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Section 6) known as the 'Section 6 Report' which sets out the council's delivery against statutory duties and responsibilities as detailed in the adopted Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience (Section 6) Forward Plan 2024-28 which forms part of the Nature Recovery pillar of the Monmouthshire County Council Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy.</p>
<p>Name of Service area Countryside, Destination, Environment</p>	<p>Date: 25/02/2026</p>

Page 33

1. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics? Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Age <i>Consider the impact on our community in relation to age, e.g. how do we engage with older and younger people about our services, access issues etc. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.</i></p>	<p>The outcomes of Green Infrastructure creation and enhancement include benefits to people of all ages including the older and younger members of our community who are most vulnerable to the detrimental effects of climate change. Elements of the NRAP and GI strategy to be implemented by MCC are predominantly grant funded. Positive impacts on protected characteristics are typically requirements of this funding delivery.</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan on protected characteristics.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Disability <i>Consider the impact and what issues there are around each of the disability needs groups e.g. access to buildings/services, how we provide services and the way we do this; producing information in alternative formats, employment issues etc.</i></p>	<p>The outcomes of Green Infrastructure creation and enhancement are disability inclusive.</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan on protected characteristics.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Gender reassignment <i>Consider the provision of inclusive services for transgender people and groups. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.</i></p>	<p>Underserved groups, as identified in our HIA, are target for involvement and engagement in GI delivery.</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan on protected characteristics.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Marriage or civil partnership <i>Same-sex couples registered as civil partners have the same rights as married couples and must be provided with the same benefits, such as survivor pensions, flexible working, maternity/paternity pay and healthcare insurance. Consider the impact of your proposal on these rights.</i></p>	<p>Underserved groups, as identified in our HIA, are targeted for involvement and engagement in GI delivery.</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan on protected characteristics.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Pregnancy or maternity <i>A woman is protected from discrimination during her pregnancy, maternity leave and 26 weeks from the day she gives birth. Including the provision of services, goods and facilities and recreational or training facilities. Consider the impact of your proposal on these protections.</i></p>	<p>Underserved groups, as identified in our HIA, are target for involvement and engagement in GI delivery.</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan on protected characteristics.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Race <i>What will the proposal do to promote race equality with the aim of eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between different racial groups. Think about the potential to affect racial groups differently. Possible issues include providing translation/interpreting services, cultural issues and customs, access to services, issues relating to Asylum Seeker, Refugee, Gypsy & Traveler, migrant communities and recording of racist incidents etc.</i></p>	<p>Underserved groups, as identified in our HIA, are targeted for involvement and engagement in GI delivery.</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan on protected characteristics.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Religion or Belief <i>Consider the impact e.g. dietary issues, religious holidays or days associated with religious observance, cultural issues and customs. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.</i></p>	<p>Underserved groups, as identified in our HIA, are targeted for involvement and engagement in GI delivery.</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan on protected characteristics.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Sex <i>Consider what issues there are for men and women. Will this impact disproportionately on one group more than another e.g. equal pay, responsibilities for dependents, issues for carers, access to training, employment issues.</i></p>	<p>Underserved groups, as identified in our HIA, are target for involvement and engagement in GI delivery.</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan on protected characteristics.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Sexual Orientation <i>Consider the provision of inclusive services for e.g. older and younger people from the Lesbia, Gay and Bi-sexual communities. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.</i>	Underserved groups, as identified in our HIA, are targeted for involvement and engagement in GI delivery.	There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan on protected characteristics.	N/A

2. The Socio-economic Duty

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions.

Socio-economic disadvantage can be defined as living in less favorable social and economic circumstances than others in society. It also includes social justice, which is about reducing inequalities by working towards more equal distribution of wealth and opportunities so everyone can achieve their full potential.

Consider how the proposal could affect the following vulnerable groups:

Armed Forces Community (including veterans)

Single parents

Vulnerable families

Single adult households

Carers

Students

People living in the most deprived areas

Pensioners

Homeless People

People misusing substances

People who have experienced the asylum system

People involved in the criminal justice system

<u>Socio-economic Duty</u>	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering from socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts in relation to the Socio-economic disadvantage?

<p><i>Think of what evidence you have about socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in relation to this proposal. Will it impact disproportionately on certain groups? Can the proposals be improved to reduce inequalities of outcome?</i></p>	<p>This decision will not have any adverse impact on those at socio-economic disadvantage. Social inclusion is an outcome of GI delivery. The GI approach promotes free access to green spaces and nature meaning health and wellbeing benefits are available to everyone regardless of their income. Underserved groups are target for involvement and engagement in Green Infrastructure delivery</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan on socio-economic duty and social justice.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
---	---	---	------------

3.5 Policy making and the Welsh language

What are the effects that the proposals would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated? Explain how you believe the proposals could be improved so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
<p>Policy Making: <i>Consider what impact this policy decision will have on the Welsh Language. This includes opportunities for people to use the language, opportunities to promote the language and treating the language no less favourably than the English language. Include any data and evidence e.g. WESP, Census Data, Cymraeg 2050, Welsh Language Strategy.</i></p>	<p>All communications and project materials including signage and interpretation are prepared bilingually. Promotion of species and habitat names in Welsh through communications increases the vocabulary of English speakers, Welsh learners and Welsh speakers.</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Operational: Recruitment & Training of workforce <i>Carefully consider whether vacant posts require Welsh language skills as a desirable or essential skill. This is especially pertinent with front line roles as more than 10 % of the population of Monmouthshire speak Welsh. Also, when assessing the need for Welsh language skills keep in mind the existing Welsh language skills within the workforce. In service areas where there is a current lack of Welsh language skills, posts should be advertised as Welsh language essential. Additionally, consider where further training may be needed to increase the number of staff who can speak Welsh and to enhance the skills of current Welsh speakers.</i></p>	<p>Welsh language skills are identified as desirable on relevant post adverts. Training is available and encouraged.</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Service Delivery: Use of Welsh language in service delivery</p>	<p>All communications and project materials including signage and interpretation are prepared bilingually.</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts of the Strategy or Plan</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>When advertising our services you must promote the fact that people can deal with the council in Welsh by phone, email, twitter, Facebook, letters, forms, website transactions etc.</p>	<p>Promotion of species and habitat names in Welsh through communications increases the vocabulary of English speakers, Welsh learners and Welsh speakers.</p>		
---	--	--	--

4. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!

<p><u>Well Being Goals</u></p>	<p>Describe the positive impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.</p>	<p>Describe the negative impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.</p>	<p>What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</p>
<p>A prosperous Wales <i>An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises global limits and uses resources efficiently (including acting on climate change); a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides jobs.</i></p>	<p>The report demonstrates how the work to implement the Section 6 plan directly contributes to the Prosperous Wales vision of a low carbon society and action on climate change. There is the potential for green skills to be developed.</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>A resilient Wales <i>Maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).</i></p>	<p>The report demonstrates how the work to implement the Section 6 plan directly contributes to more sustainable management of green spaces and includes measures which will build resilience of ecosystems and assist nature recovery.</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>

<u>Well Being Goals</u>	Describe the positive impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	Describe the negative impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A healthier Wales <i>People's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.</i>	Green Infrastructure delivered will improve air quality and increasing walking and cycling will improve physical and mental health.	None	None
A Wales of cohesive communities <i>Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</i>	Many of the actions implemented have involved working closely with local communities to produce local community benefits. Green Infrastructure including cycling and walking routes should increase connectivity between communities, particularly for those without a car.	None	None
A globally responsible Wales <i>Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</i>	Activities to raise awareness of the climate and nature emergency in a local setting can contribute to community behaviour change and wider impacts on lifestyle and consumer choices i.e. think global act local.	None	None
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language <i>Promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and participation in the arts, and sports and recreation</i>	Welsh language has been used for all Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery communications in line with the Welsh Language measure. The final report will also be published in Welsh. The GI approach promotes connectedness to nature through nature-based solutions as part of the Welsh culture and heritage.	None	None

<u>Well Being Goals</u>	Describe the positive impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	Describe the negative impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>A more equal Wales <i>People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances. (This includes the protected characteristics listed in Section 1 above. You can add more detail there. Don't forget to think about the impacts on poverty)</i></p>	<p>Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery delivery involves work with stakeholders, community groups, individuals of all ages and all backgrounds, to help us achieve our ambitions.</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>

5. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

<p>Page 42</p> <p><u>Sustainable Development Principles</u></p>	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Long Term</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p> <p><i>We are required to look beyond the usual short term timescales for financial planning and political cycles and instead plan with the longer term in mind (guidance says at least 10 years, but preferably 25)</i></p>	<p>The nature of green infrastructure delivery reported e.g. walking and cycling routes, tree planting and nature-based solutions, have a legacy following initial delivery including supporting wellbeing, storing carbon and water, providing habitats for species. Whilst the plans have long term benefits, we are reliant on short term grant funding. However, alternative funding mechanisms e.g. green finance are being explored.</p>	<p>None</p>

<p><u>Sustainable Development Principles</u></p>	<p>Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.</p>	<p>Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</p>
 <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p> <p>Collaboration</p>	<p>Many of the Section 6 actions have been delivered through collaboration, across the council, with community groups, and other regional stakeholders e.g. Natural Resources Wales.</p>	<p>None</p>
 <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p> <p><i>Who are the stakeholders who will be affected by your proposal? Have they been involved? Do those people reflect the diversity of the area which is served?</i></p> <p>Involvement</p>	<p>The report will be considered at Place Scrutiny on 29th January 2026. We will continue to involve stakeholders through ongoing delivery of the Section 6 plan for example Local Nature Partnership, town and community councils, community groups and individuals.</p>	<p>None</p>
 <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p> <p>Prevention</p>	<p>Prevention is at the core of Section 6 delivery. Identifying our Green Infrastructure, habitats and species and establishing ways to maintain and promote ecosystem resilience to prevent further loss and reverse decline.</p>	<p>None</p>

<p><u>Sustainable Development Principles</u></p>	<p>Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.</p>	<p>Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</p>
 <p>Integration</p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p> <p><i>Focus here on how you will better integrate the Wellbeing Goals impacts on people, economy and environment described above and balance any competing impacts. Think about impacts the proposal may have on other organisations</i></p>	<p>There is great benefit from working in a collaborative, integrated and joined-up way to deliver the Biodiversity Duty through a multi-disciplinary approach. The Strategy sets out Monmouthshire County Council’s approach to the planning, management and delivery of Green Infrastructure (GI) focussed on the following strategic objectives and priorities:• Improve Health & Wellbeing• Enhance Biodiversity & Increase Ecosystem Resilience• Support Climate & Nature Resilience• Strengthen Landscape Character & Distinctiveness• Support Sustainable Economic Development. In doing so, the GI Strategy will help contribute to the delivery of:• Replacement Local Development Plan• MCC Community and Corporate Plan • MCC Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy and Action Plans• MCC Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan and Action Plan• MCC Nature Recovery Action Plan• Public Service Board Wellbeing Plans.</p>	<p>None</p>

6. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Corporate Parenting, Care Leavers, Care Experienced People and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p><u>Safeguarding</u> <i>Safeguarding in this context applies to children (not yet reached 18th birthday) and adult at risk (identified as a person over the age of 18 and who (a) is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, (b) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), and (c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.) Safeguarding is about ensuring that everything is in place to promote the well-being of children and adults at risk, preventing them from being harmed and protecting those who are at risk of abuse and neglect.</i></p>	<p>There are no safeguarding implications.</p>	<p>There are no safeguarding implications</p>	<p>There are no safeguarding implications .</p>

<p><u>Corporate Parenting, Care Leavers and Care Experienced People</u></p> <p><i>This relates to those children who are 'looked after' by the Local Authority either through voluntary arrangements with their parents or through a Court Order. The Council has a corporate duty to consider 'children who are looked after especially and to promote their welfare (in a way, as though those children were their own). It also relates to care experienced people (people who have spent time in care when they were under 18 years old). The Council must consider how to help overcome the disadvantages and discrimination they experience.</i></p>	<p>There are no corporate safeguarding implications.</p>	<p>There are no corporate safeguarding implications.</p>	<p>There are no corporate safeguarding implications.</p>
---	--	--	--

7. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

This will include your baseline position, measures and studies that have informed your thinking and the recommendation you are making. It should allow you to identify whether any changes resulting from the implementation of the recommendation have had a positive or negative effect. Key strategies and documents that may help you include: Community and Corporate Plan, Asset Management Strategy, Digital and Data Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, People Strategy, Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy: [Enabling Strategies](#) See Guidance for more examples.

<p>Evidence for the urgency to take action to tackle climate change has come from numerous IPCC reports, such as: https://www.ipcc.ch/2018/10/08/summary-for-policymakers-of-ipcc-special-report-on-global-warming-of-1-5c-approved-by-governments/</p> <p>Local information about nature and wellbeing has come from reports such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Wellbeing Assessment, 3rd UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, -Wales State of Nature Report, 2023, -Greater Gwent State of Nature report 2021 -Greater Gwent Nature Recovery Action Plan 2022 -Environment (Wales) Act 2016, Section 6 Habitats and Species of Principle Importance for Nature Conservation in Wales -Results of the 2024 public consultation for GI Strategy and Nature Recovery Action Plan -Monmouthshire's Countryside Access Improvement Plan -Monmouthshire Draft Landscape character Supplementary Planning Guidance 2017 -Monmouthshire Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance 2015

8. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?

This section should summarise the key issues arising from the evaluation. This summary must be included in the Committee Report Template

The activity that the authority undertakes to comply with the Section 6 duty has significant positive contributions to make to the Wellbeing Goals. In particular a Healthier Wales through health and wellbeing opportunities through projects and partnerships, well connected multifunctional green spaces and community growing initiatives. There are also benefits for a Resilient Wales, based on supporting nature-based solutions for land management, raised awareness through training and education of the nature crisis and working in partnership to deliver landscape scale projects to support resilient ecological networks. There is also significant potential to contribute to Cohesive Communities, by working collaboratively and in partnership with our communities. Finally contributing to a Globally Responsible Wales through sustainable use of natural resources to support Monmouthshire's local green economy and develop skills and learning. There are no negative impacts on the Well-being Goals. There are no significant positive or negative impacts on protected characteristics, safeguarding or corporate parenting. The principles of Long term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration and Involvement have been used throughout the development of the Action Plans.

9. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do?	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?
N/A		

10. VERSION CONTROL: The Integrated Impact Assessment should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision-making process. It is important to keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.

Version No.	Decision making stage <i>e.g. budget mandate, DMT, SLT, Scrutiny, Cabinet etc</i>	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration

1	Business Cabinet	20/01/2026	
2	Scrutiny	29/01/26	



Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience (Environment Wales Act 2016, Section 6) Report

Monmouthshire County Council

December 2025



Title	Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience (Section 6) Report 2026
Purpose	Statutory Requirement: Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016
Owner	Monmouthshire County Council
Approved by	(Single Cabinet Member Decision: Biodiversity Champion)
Date	31/12/2025
Version Number	1.1
Status	Post Place Scrutiny
Review Frequency	Every 3 years following 2025
Next review date	December 2028
Consultation	Officers and Elected Members

Contents

Introduction.....	3
A Corporate commitment to Deliver	4
Delivery: Objectives and Actions	8
Key challenges	9
Review: Measures and Milestones	12
Conclusion	13
Appendix 1 Action Plan.....	14
Appendix 2 Case studies.....	15
Appendix 3 Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience, Monmouthshire	16

INTRODUCTION

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

The legislation also requires Public Bodies to prepare a ‘Forward Plan’ to outline how they shall meet the duty and report on that plan every three years from the first reporting round in 2019. A revised ‘**Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan**’ was adopted by MCC in 2024.

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

This report considers how the Biodiversity Duty applies to Monmouthshire County Council, how other plans, policies, and interrelated commitments have been met, and how we have performed against the objectives of Monmouthshire County Council’s Forward Plan for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, with the use of case studies.

The legislation establishes a requirement to report on the plan in 2019, 2022 (submission included 2023 progress), 2025 and every three years thereafter.

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

Monmouthshire County Council is approximately 850 km² and has a population of approximately 94,142 (2018 census). It is a rural county with agriculture and forestry shaping the rich biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems in the landscape. Monmouthshire’s

¹ <https://www.gov.wales/section-6-biodiversity-and-resilience-ecosystems-duty-reporting-guidance>

Section 6 duty applies to the whole of the Unitary Authority area including the Monmouthshire part of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park (BBNP) where Monmouthshire County Council has functions such as community infrastructure, waste, grounds maintenance and highways.

Further information on the Biodiversity & Ecosystems Resilience of Monmouthshire is included in Appendix 3.

A CORPORATE COMMITMENT TO DELIVER

Monmouthshire County Council first declared a **Climate Emergency** in 2019. This declaration focused on the decarbonisation of Monmouthshire County Council but also identified the importance of managing green spaces to reduce energy use, absorb carbon and be resilient. The plan was updated in 2021, the emphasis on nature recovery was strengthened and action addressing water quality was added to improve protection of our rivers and coasts.

In March 2022, the **Motion for Rivers and Ocean** passed by MCC elected members, took the *Motion for the Ocean* model developed by the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group, and adapted it to recognise the importance of taking a catchment to coast approach to protecting water quality. MCC produced a report containing recommendations for how the council should act to realise clean, healthy, and productive rivers and oceans, alongside the commitment to tackle the climate emergency.

In October 2022, Welsh government published the Recommendations of the '**Biodiversity Deep Dive**'² as part of the two-part UN biodiversity summit COP15. The main aim of this work is to protect 30% of land and seas by 2030. Of relevance for Local Government is the action to Embed Nature Recovery in Policy and Strategy in Public Bodies in Wales.

In 2023 Monmouthshire County Council adopted the **2023-28 Community and Corporate Plan**³. This Plan sets the Council's ambition for the council and county of Monmouthshire as summarised in Figure 1 below.

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

² [Biodiversity deep dive: recommendations \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

³

https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/documents/s34696/Community%20and%20Corporate%20Plan%20-%20Version%203.0_Council.pdf

flooding, and promote the circular economy. The plan sets out three areas of achievement:

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

Our Community and Corporate Plan – at a glance

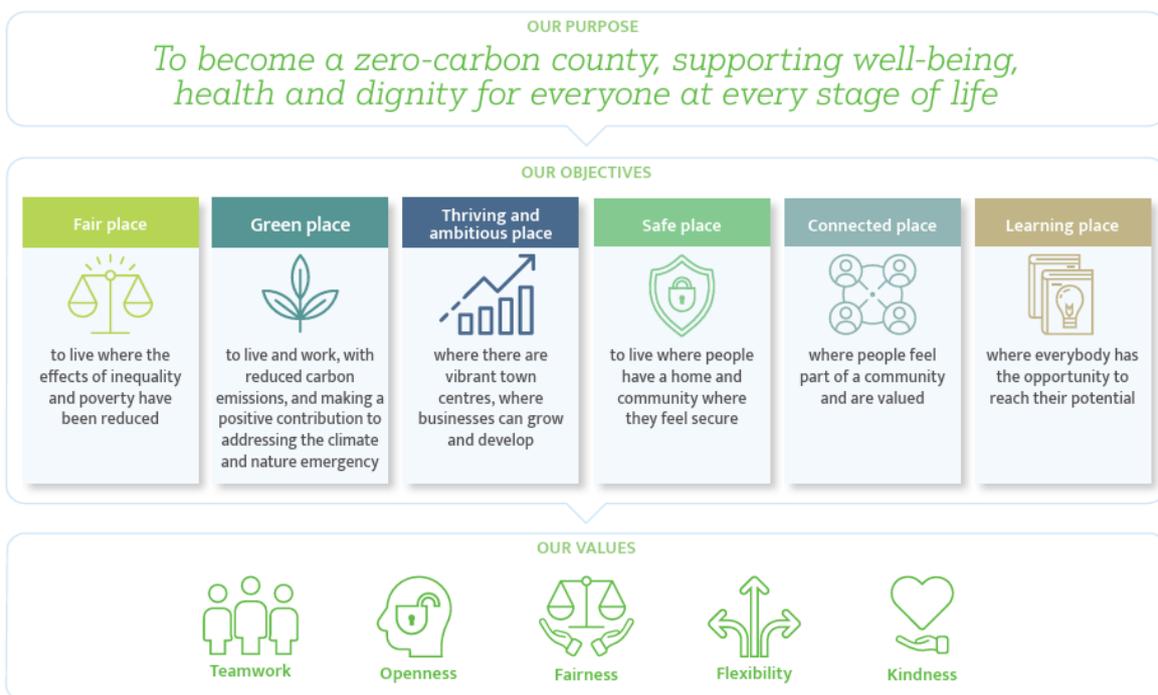


Figure 1 Community and Corporate Plan

The Community and Corporate Plan recognises that we are a partner in the Public Service Board, which is responsible for setting well-being objectives for the county of Gwent. The local authority's own **Well-being Objectives** are set by Council and form the backbone of the Community and Corporate Plan.

These significant changes in Wales, Gwent and Monmouthshire have triggered a need for a change in the governance structure around Climate and Nature. In 2024 this led to the declaration of a **Climate and Nature Emergency** with a revised approach based on four key pillars, as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2 Climate & Nature Strategy planning

The Nature Recovery pillar includes 3 key and interconnected plans for delivery:

- ✦ Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2024-2028),
- ✦ Monmouthshire Local Nature Recovery Action Plan (2024), and
- ✦ Monmouthshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2024).

The **Local Nature Recovery Action Plan for Monmouthshire**⁴ is a key element to effective delivery of Nature Recovery by providing practical actions that meet the objectives of strategic plans, as well as promoting collaborative working with communities and other stakeholders to achieve common goals. Prepared by MCC in partnership with the Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership (LNP), the Monmouthshire Local NRAP will comprise four parts and will focus on habitats and species that are national priorities for conservation and are locally important. It takes the big ideas from the national and regional nature recovery plans and turns them into simple, local actions. These are things communities can do to help nature recover. A **Community Action plan**⁵ forms an important part of this and was prepared in response to the public consultation. Part 1 of the Strategy: **Our strategy for nature recovery in Monmouthshire** identifies actions and targets for promoting ecosystem resilience, raising awareness and other actions not related to any specific habitat or species. These will follow during the next reporting period.

The **Green Infrastructure Strategy**⁶ has been updated to reflect the statutory and guidance requirement of Planning Policy Wales edition 13. Setting out Monmouthshire's approach to the delivery of GI; it identifies a clear vision, aims, strategic objectives and associated principles to inform and contribute to a range of national, regional and local goals plans and

⁴ <https://www.monlife.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Local-NRAP-Part-1-v1.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.monlife.co.uk/outdoor/green-infrastructure/monmouthshire-local-nature-partnership/monmouthshire-local-nrap-action-plan/community-action-plan/>

⁶ <https://www.monlife.co.uk/outdoor/green-infrastructure/strategy-and-guidance/>

objectives. It forms a delivery mechanism for Nature Recovery, supports ways of addressing health and well-being outcomes, identifies solutions for tackling climate change, supports active travel, public rights of way and provides the framework for partnership working through a GI approach.

Governance and Delivery of the Section 6 duty is ultimately the responsibility of the Chief Executive of Monmouthshire County Council; however, it is acknowledged that compliance with the Section 6 duty is relevant to all parts of the Council including Elected Members and the Biodiversity Champion who sits on the Council's Cabinet. A major enabler of action is the Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery team who prepared the Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan, have taken a lead on reporting, review and updating the Forward Plan. However, as this report will show, the delivery of the biodiversity duty is far reaching with large scale delivery from services that may have in the past seemed to not fully be aware of the need to consider biodiversity in their decision making and operations. Some of the most significant delivery areas including Grounds & Cleansing, Development Management & Planning Policy and Highways including Flooding. Volunteers and partnership organisations are recognised as key enablers to biodiversity action including the Wye Valley National Landscape, key roles being directly employed by Monmouthshire County Council. Policy and governance teams support local community groups in grassroots project delivery e.g., community food growing and tree planting.

DELIVERY: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

During the 2020-23 report preparation, a review of each of the Forward Plan objectives was undertaken which resulted in an updated Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan. The Objectives broadly align with the [Welsh Government Nature Recovery Action Plan](#); however, they also identify matters that are relevant to Monmouthshire such as the importance of partnership working.

Objective 1: Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Corporate Policy, Well-being Policy and Planning, Strategic Plans e.g. RLDP, Consents, Operational decisions,
Objective 2: Provide nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being and encourage action for nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Environmental Education, Health & Wellbeing activities in nature, providing interpretation and guidance, supporting local groups and citizens to act for nature.
Objective 3: Undertake land management for biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Management of Council estate for nature recovery.
Objective 4: Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Supporting other landowners and stakeholders to make positive changes e.g. Regenerative Farming and Natural Flood Management.
Objective 5: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Addressing drivers through project and procedure e.g. Delivering net benefit through Development Management, Invasive non-native species control, impacts of lighting.
Objective 6: Support landscape scale projects and partnerships to maximise delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Collaboration, co-design and co-production through Catchment Partnerships, landscape partnerships, project partnerships.
Objective 7: Use improved evidence, understanding and monitoring to inform action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Nature Networks, undertaking and encouraging others to undertake monitoring and biological recording.
Objective 8: Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Undertake statutory reporting and assess the need to update the plan.

The attached [Action Plan \(Appendix 1\)](#) details the progress towards Milestones and Measures and reviews each of our commitments with an up-to-date description of progress.

The table also identifies the current funding status of the action and where available the source(s) of that funding. The actions make up the 'living' element of the Section 6 plan. These will evolve as additional legislation, policy, funding come into place.

Key Achievements include adoption of the Nature Recovery and Green Infrastructure Action Plans, launch of the Nature Networks mapping portal, and delivery of capital projects through the Gwent Green Grid Partnership. Training initiatives, school engagement, and community awareness campaigns were implemented, including the incredibly impressive Biotapestry. Woodland management and National Forest accreditation has been progressed with securing of TWIG funding.

KEY CHALLENGES

Delivery of the Section 6 duty is challenging, particularly for service areas that do not have experience of previously considering this kind of legislation. There are three significant **key challenges** to discuss in this review

1 Incompatible Legislation: Event Licensing. This has been a significant area of work during the 2024/5 period. In England and Wales, the primary legislation for events involving alcohol, entertainment (e.g., live music, dance, film), and late-night refreshment is the Licensing Act 2003. The four core licensing objectives are strictly limited to: The prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, The prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

Applications are made to the local council (licensing authority), which consults with "responsible authorities" such as the Police, Fire Authority, and Environmental Health. If an event attracts "relevant representations" (objections) related to these objectives, a hearing must be held. However, biodiversity loss – even where it could lead to a wildlife crime - is not considered to be a relevant representation.

Conflicts with the Section 6 duty arise because the standard licensing objectives do not explicitly cover environmental protection or biodiversity, which fall under separate legislation like the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Licensing legislation makes a presumption in favour of permission whereas the Conservation Regulations, for example, take a precautionary approach.

Recent examples have included festival sites in Monmouthshire where critically endangered curlew pairs are known to breed at the very time of year the event will take place. There are no mechanisms to seek ecological information for the events and no way of securing any avoidance, mitigation or compensation measures. Critically, there is no way that a licence cannot be granted on this basis.

Other than relying on the voluntary cooperation of site owners, solutions to this problem are not forthcoming and go beyond the powers of Monmouthshire County Council and Welsh Government. Changes to the Westminster established legislation, clear guidance

on implementation of the two pieces of legislation, or case law are necessary to resolve this issue.

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

It continues to be our adopted and established approach to grassland management in Monmouthshire County. It has been widely supported by residents and referenced as best practice across Wales and beyond. However, during the last reporting period there has been some concern raised by residents to our approach with concerns raised around associated, yet often unrelated issues such as “pernicious weeds” in the street scene, and other challenges such as highways management. Concerns relating to lack of flowers, grasslands looking “scruffy”, dog waste, rodents and wildfires are also sometimes raised. These complaints are not significant in number but require resources to address and alleviate concerns.

Substantial publicly available information has been prepared in relation to the benefits of this type of management including pollinators, water and carbon storage on the MonLife website⁷. In response to concerns we are preparing a new Nature Isn't Neat campaign for 2026 including refresher training for Grounds operatives (mowers), an information sharing session with elected members, and a wider public campaign during the summer months.

- 3 **Future Resource Implications:** Many of the activities that help Monmouthshire County Council to meet its Environment (Wales) Act Section 6 duties are either directly or indirectly funded by external grants, often competitive in nature. ENRaW, Rural Development Programme, Nature Networks, Local Places for Nature, Coastal Capacity, Active Travel, Shared Prosperity Fund and The Woodland Investment Grant have all enabled significant delivery and capacity building at Monmouthshire over the last 5 years, and more generally in the sector to support partnership delivery. However, by its nature, much of this funding is linked to Welsh Government's Programme for Government with much of the current funding comes to an end in March 2026 and most significantly during March 2027.

The Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill, currently progressing through the Senedd (Stage 3 as of December 2025), introduces legally binding biodiversity targets, strengthened environmental governance, and new statutory duties across the Welsh public sector. For local authorities, this translates into increased

⁷ <https://www.monlife.co.uk/outdoor/green-infrastructure/nature-isnt-neat/>

responsibilities, reporting duties, scrutiny, and operational obligations which will require additional capacity, skills, funding, and long-term strategic planning.

Through the Gwent Green Grid Nature Networks fund legacy, a Green Finance plan is being developed to identify opportunities to generate income from ecosystem services and nature-based solutions across the region, however it is not clear at this time that the markets will be significant enough to deliver a meaningful level of financial and nature benefits.

REVIEW: MEASURES AND MILESTONES

As the Forward Plan was refreshed in 2024, detailed review and update will not be undertaken during this reporting period. Review will instead include updated set of Measures and Milestones against which the next round of reporting will be set.

Milestone 2024-5	Recommendation for 2026-28
RLDP adopted with relevant policies and planning guidance in place	Retain as work is ongoing through Examination, Adoption and beyond
Asset Management Strategy adopted with relevant policies in place	Complete, Remove
Nature Recovery Action Plan Adopted	Retain as work is ongoing in relation to Habitat and Species considerations
Green Infrastructure Action Plan Adopted	Complete, Remove
Nature Networks mapping portal goes live	Complete, Remove
Access to Food Growing process in place	Complete, Remove
Pilot Tree Warden Scheme launched	Retain as launch is not complete
	NEW: Ecologist (Highways and Operations) in post
	NEW: New: Management Strategy implementation for Neddern Brook

Measures 2024-5	Recommendation for 2026-28	Target
Number of MCC officers completed Nature Recovery training via Thingi	Retain and add Elected Members to the target audience.	50 total
Number of MCC officers receiving bespoke operational training	Retain	10 per year
Number of young people / teachers / support staff engaged	Retain	TBC following funding confirmation for 2026-2029
Number of MCC sites with National Forest Accreditation	Retain	4 total
Service Level Agreement with SEWBRc	Retain	2 per year

Number of Natural Flood Management schemes supported by MCC	Retain	TBC following funding confirmation for 2026/7
Number of Town & Community Councils engaged	Retain	5 per year
	New: Number of members/ officers/ operatives trained with bespoke operational training	25 per year
	New: Area of Nature isn't Neat land maintained at 38Ha	38Ha
	New: Number of Sites Managed in accordance with a GI management plan	5
	New: Number of new Green Infrastructure Management Plans for MCC sites	3
	New: Number of county farms taking part in activity as exemplars for nature friendly, sustainable, and regenerative agriculture	TBC following funding confirmation for 2026/7

CONCLUSION

Monmouthshire County Council has strengthened its approach to nature recovery by embedding biodiversity considerations across services, improving land management, and working closely with partners and communities. Key achievements include the adoption of major strategic plans, enhanced training, and delivery of practical nature-based projects.

Significant challenges remain including legislative gaps, public perception issues, and uncertainty around future funding but the Council is committed to continued progress. The next reporting period will focus on maintaining momentum, improving evidence and monitoring, and supporting ecosystem resilience across the county as part of our wider Climate and Nature Emergency response.

APPENDIX 3 BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE, MONMOUTHSHIRE

Monmouthshire is a large and varied county, with the estuarine coast at the southern limits and the uplands of Bannau Brycheiniog to the north west. The landscape takes us from the wooded Wye Valley to our boundary with the eastern valleys of Gwent.

Monmouthshire has major biodiversity and ecosystem resources, many of which are internationally or nationally recognised. The Monmouthshire Unitary Authority area contains the following resources:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> † The Severn Estuary European Marine Site (EMS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> † The Severn Estuary is designated as a Special Area for Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Ramsar Site (Wetland of international importance).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> † Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> † There are seven other SACs in Monmouthshire: Cwm Clydach woodlands*, River Wye, River Usk, Sugar Loaf woodlands*, Usk Bat Sites*, Wye Valley woodlands and the Wye Valley (and Forest of Dean) bat sites.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> † Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> † There are 68 SSSIs in Monmouthshire, 16 of which are within BBNP area. Most are woodland or grassland sites with others designated for their wetland or geological interest.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> † National Nature Reserves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> † Cwm Clydach*, Coed y Cerrig*, Fiddler's Elbow and Lady Park Wood.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> † Local Nature Reserve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> † Cleddon Bog
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> † Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> † There are approximately 833 non-statutory SINC sites predominantly in relation to grassland and ancient and semi-natural woodland areas within the Monmouthshire planning area and eight SINCs within the BBNP part of the County.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> † Priority habitat and protected species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> † Priority habitats and species are those recognised as being of principle importance for nature conservation in Wales listed on Section 42 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

*Sites within the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park

The South East Wales Area Statement published by Natural Resources Wales in 2019 identified five landscape profiles in Monmouthshire which are useful to illustrate the differences across the county: Bannau Brycheiniog and Black Mountains, South Wales Valleys, Central Monmouthshire, Wye Valley and Wentwood, and the Gwent Levels (see map below).

The landscape profiles primarily share the same natural habitats but with clear differences which give them their distinctive character.



Landscape Profile Areas in Monmouthshire

Central Monmouthshire is noted for its undulating lowlands comprising pasture and arable farmland with isolated pockets of woodland. It is a valuable farming area with agriculturally improved pasture and arable fields. Hedgerows provide important links between small, isolated, ancient woodlands, often on hilltops and steep valley sides where farming is difficult. Parcels of unimproved grassland remain and considered in the context of massive historical decline are of significant ecological importance.

Wye Valley and Wentwood is predominantly a wooded and riverine landscape. The steep sides of the Wye Valley are clothed in extensive blocks of internationally important woodlands, designated as the Wye Valley Woodlands Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Wye Valley is home to internationally important bat species including Greater Horseshoe Bats and Lesser Horseshoe Bats with many of their roosts included in the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC. Parts of the Wye Valley are known to be used by at least 15 species of bats including the rare Barbastelle Bat and Bechstein's Bat. The area is also important for species such as dormouse, nightjar, and woodland invertebrates.

In the south, the unique Gwent Levels form an extensive coastal habitat along the Severn Estuary comprising reclaimed agricultural land drained by a network of ditches known as reens. The reens support a particularly diverse community of insects and other invertebrates (for example water beetles) and are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Following a successful reintroduction program at Magor Marsh SSSI in 2012, water voles have spread across the Gwent Levels with the furthest record 16km from the original release site.

Outside of the Monmouthshire Planning and Nature Recovery Action Plan area but within the administrative area of the MCC Unitary Authority, are areas of the Bannau Brycheiniog and Black Mountains and South Wales Valleys (Eastern Valleys) landscapes. The Bannau Brycheiniog landscape profile includes the Vale of Ewyas and surrounding upland in the Black Mountains, and the distinctive peaks of the Skirrid and Sugar Loaf framing the Usk Valley at Abergavenny. With exposed upland moorland with extensive views, this is a landscape noted for tranquillity, dark skies, and limited development. Conifer and broad-leafed woodland are present. Pastures are often enclosed by thick hedgerows, often with narrow lanes, scattered small settlements are in the valleys with prehistoric archaeology and Medieval sites including Llanthony Priory and historic parkland.

The Eastern Valleys includes the Bloreng mountain and eastern slopes of Mynydd Garn-wen, some areas are included in the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site. Common land is a large and important component of the Eastern Valleys and there are extensive areas of beech woodland. Cave systems across the area are important to internationally important bat roosts protected by the Usk Valley Bat Sites SAC. The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal on the National Park border is a perfect example of how this once industrial landscape can provide for wildlife today.

The two major rivers in Monmouthshire are the River Usk and River Wye. Both are designated as Special Areas of Conservation and together with their tributaries provide important wildlife corridors and migratory routes for key species such as otters, shad and white clawed crayfish. Another important freshwater habitat in Monmouthshire is the Llandegfedd Reservoir, designated as a SSSI for supporting overwintering wildfowl.

Despite having a wealth of protected and priority species, Monmouthshire's ecosystems are currently facing significant challenges. Grassland sites are at risk from poor management, air pollution and development pressures. The Wye Valley is our most ecologically rich area, but quality of the woodland is under threat from lack of management and the spread of ash dieback and invasive species. A considerable proportion of reens and ditches on the Gwent Levels are degraded and at risk from unsuitable development. Freshwater habitats are under threat from water abstraction, pollution, and siltation. Monmouthshire, like the rest of the world, is facing a Nature Emergency.

Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act says that the Welsh Ministers will publish, review and revise lists of living organisms and types of habitats in Wales, which they consider are of key significance to sustain and improve biodiversity in relation to Wales. An updated list is expected in 2024 however, in its absence, the list compiled in response to section 42 of the NERC Act 2006 is referenced.

An audit of the Section 7 species and habitats that occur in Monmouthshire undertaken in 2022 are included in the Nature Recovery Action Plan that will be published for consultation alongside this document. These are our 'Priority' habitats & species for nature recovery in Monmouthshire. Additional habitats and or species may be identified as local priorities continue to be developed through the Local Nature Recovery Action Plan.

The Greater Gwent State of Nature was published in 2021 and used existing data to analyse the status and trends of species within the Greater Gwent area. The report analysed individual species and groups of species representing over 500 individual species, presented as 100 different stories of these species and species groups. Of all the species and species groups analysed, 34% of species showed a decline in their numbers or are predicted to continue to decline. Only 12% showed stable populations. Twenty-one percent showed a welcome increase in their numbers, but the remaining 21% did not have enough data to describe the population trends.

This page is intentionally left blank

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

Place Scrutiny Committee ~ Feedback to Cabinet of Meeting held on 29th January 2026

Report Item 8: Scrutiny of Bio-diversity and Resilience ~ Section 6 Report to Welsh Government

The Committee undertook thorough scrutiny of the report, highlighting the following important issues for the Cabinet Member's consideration:

- Concerns were raised about unresolved planning applications related to soil imports and water quality sampling not meeting NRW requirements, the council's process for addressing such issues being queried, especially when adopting sites with ongoing problems. The Committee requested a follow-up from officers on these planning concerns and welcomed further discussion to resolve ongoing issues.
- Members asked about net biodiversity gains in planning applications and difficulty of identifying the biodiversity officer for planning.
- Issues were raised where sites start work, but become overgrown, affecting biodiversity, and questioned how these are monitored and managed.
- Cases were highlighted where green infrastructure plans (e.g., trees, hedges) are not implemented, and subsequent applications conflict with original biodiversity commitments, asking how these are enforced and monitored.
- Members welcomed the reference to the Nedern Brook and suggested inviting relevant people to discuss it at the Severnside Area Forum.
- Members expressed support for "nature isn't neat" but raised concerns about neglected weeds on roads and pavements, highlighting resident complaints about maintenance and potential damage to infrastructure.
- It was suggested to create walkways through areas managed under the "nature isn't neat" scheme, proposing non-linear paths wide enough for two people, and the use of information boards to enhance public experience and understanding.
- Members acknowledged the challenge of changing public perceptions about "nature isn't neat" and the need for better communication and engagement on the balance between biodiversity and community expectations. They recommended education and training for both Members and residents on eco-friendly practices.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

- Members emphasised the need to strive for regenerative farming, highlighting the shift to monoculture and the environmental impact of large poultry units, and called for more engagement with farmers on sustainable practices.
- It was noted that there is a lack of large country parks in Monmouthshire compared to urban authorities and suggested more free-access parkland for lower-income residents.
- Members welcomed seeing otters return to Abergavenny, expressing concern about river health and the sustainability of wildlife populations.
- It was suggested more could be done to engage young people in environmental and biological studies, using local sites like the old cemetery in Abergavenny as educational resources under the Welsh curriculum.
- Members commented on the richness of local grassland habitats, mentioning a personal flower study identifying about 30 species in a small area, and encouraged making more of such sites for education.
- Members praised the Mill Common Project, expressing pride in the community's involvement, the planting of trees, and the educational value, and called for greater recognition of these efforts.
- There were some concerns that current engagement activities for biodiversity tend to attract those already supportive, questioning how to reach disengaged or unaware residents and broaden community engagement.
- Members asked about specific plans and indicators to measure whether communication and outreach efforts are increasing understanding and participation across a wider cross-section of residents, and how to assess shifts in attitudes and behaviours. It was suggested that councillors may need training to better address residents' concerns about biodiversity and resilience.
- Members requested more information about the tree warden scheme pilot project and its progress, expressing interest in seeing it expanded across Monmouthshire.
- Members questioned whether there will be new roles (ecologist roles) and queried the cost savings from internal hires versus consultants.
- Members welcomed the use of new machinery for the Neddern Brook, seeking clarity on operational impacts and community engagement.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

- Members queried if there was ongoing work with farmers to dig trenches and make ponds to help prevent downstream flooding, referencing news reports about such initiatives.
- Local flooding issues were raised, specifically in Mathern Village, mentioning regular flooding under a bridge and near Mountain Brook Lodge, and concerns about sewage seepage into the brook due to a nearby pumping station.
- Concerns were voiced about NRW's (Natural Resources Wales) enforcement approach, stating that smaller pollution incidents are not being monitored or enforced, and highlighted issues with unlicensed soil imports in the area.
- Phosphate and poultry farming issues were raised, in terms of the RLDP (Replacement Local Development Plan) phosphate delay, members requesting an update on when the Planning Inspectorate would review it and how the timetable might be affected.

Chair's Conclusion:

The Chair thanked the officers for the report and their responses to the committee's questions. The Committee requested that officers consider the points raised by the Place Scrutiny Committee and make any amendments to the report as appropriate. The feedback would be provided to the Cabinet Member to take into account prior to approving the report for submission to Welsh Government.

This page is intentionally left blank

APPENDIX 2: CASE STUDIES

2.1 BIOTAPESTRY: CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT BRINGING BIODIVERSITY AWARENESS TO COMMUNITIES

The Biotapestry is an innovative engagement initiative delivered through the Gwent Green Grid Partnership (GGGP). Its purpose is to inspire communities, schools, and interest groups by raising awareness of biodiversity, climate resilience, and green skills through interactive and creative experiences.

The project set out with a clear ambition: to increase understanding of climate and nature across the five counties of Gwent. Biotapestry has been brought to life through a series of engaging events and collaborations. As well as sessions in libraries across the county, it connected with local groups such as Maindiff Court Health & Wellbeing workshop, Wyesham WI, and Usk Embroiders. It also featured during Alfred Russel Wallace Day in Usk, weaving together heritage and biodiversity themes to spark interest and participation.

Funding for Biotapestry has come through the Shared Prosperity Fund and Heritage Lottery Nature Networks, ensuring its integration within GGGP's broader programme of work. One of the key lessons learned is that creative, visual tools like Biotapestry are highly effective for community engagement and raising awareness. Linking biodiversity projects with cultural and heritage events, has proven to enhance participation and impact. Above all, ongoing collaboration with local groups and schools remains essential for sustaining engagement and building momentum for climate and nature action.

OBJECTIVES MET:

Objective 2: Provide nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being and encourage action for nature.

Biotapestry delivers interactive experiences for communities and schools, raises awareness of biodiversity and climate resilience, and supports health and wellbeing through creative engagement and workshops.

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

The initiative is part of the Gwent Green Grid Partnership (GGGP), which operates at a regional scale and involves collaboration with multiple local groups, schools, and heritage events.



2.2 HEALTHY RIVERS PROJECT: RESTORING RIVER GAVENNY AND ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

The Healthy Rivers Project, part of the Nature Networks Programme under the Gwent Green Grid Partnership, is working to restore the River Gavenny in Monmouthshire while strengthening biodiversity and community involvement. This initiative blends practical conservation with education and citizen science, aiming to build resilience against climate and nature emergencies. Its purpose is clear: improve river ecosystems and water quality, engage local communities in nature-based activities.

Community engagements events included an otter talk organised in partnership with Abergavenny Civic Society talk attended by 40 people and a River Health Day. Volunteers removed 100 Himalayan balsam stalks, collected 4 kilograms of litter, tested water quality, insect safaris, kick sampling, microplastics and water testing, and litter picks. A family engagement day included river dipping, a nature trail, games and story telling.

The impact has been tangible. More than 120 people have taken part in river health activities, contributing to the removal of invasive species, better litter management, and ongoing water quality monitoring. There is an ongoing commitment from an active interest group to removing litter promptly. Educational efforts have deepened understanding of river ecology and climate resilience, while partnerships with Groundwork Wales and local interest groups have strengthened regional nature recovery work.

Funding for the project comes from the Heritage Lottery Fund's Nature Networks Programme, which allocated £1 million regionally to support 200 sessions across Gwent. Among the lessons learned is the power of combining citizen science with hands-on conservation to foster community ownership. Targeted engagement—such as talks and family days—has proven effective in boosting participation and awareness, and collaboration with local organizations remains essential for long-term success.

OBJECTIVES MET:

Objective 2: Provide nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being and encourage action for nature

The project actively engages communities through talks, family days, river dipping, insect safaris, and citizen science activities like water testing and litter picks. These initiatives raise awareness, promote well-being, and encourage hands-on action for nature.

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

Volunteers removed invasive Himalayan balsam and managed litter, which directly supports biodiversity and strengthens river ecosystem resilience.

Objective 5: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

The removal of invasive species and litter management addresses significant pressures on river habitats and native species.

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

The project is part of the Gwent Green Grid Partnership and collaborates with Groundwork Wales and local interest groups, contributing to regional nature recovery efforts.

Objective 7: Use improved evidence, understanding and monitoring to inform action

Citizen science activities such as water quality testing, kick sampling, and microplastics monitoring provide valuable data to inform ongoing conservation actions.



2.3 MILL COMMON RESTORATION PROJECT: REVIVING HERITAGE, RESTORING NATURE, INSPIRING COMMUNITY.



Mill Common, located in Magor and Undy in Monmouthshire, is a historic woodland that serves as a vital green corridor for the local communities. Despite its ecological and social significance, the site had been facing serious challenges in recent years. The spread of ash dieback disease posed a threat to tree safety and biodiversity, while overcrowded veteran trees limited sunlight

penetration, affecting the health of ground flora. In addition, degraded paths and steps reduced accessibility, and the loss of historic viewpoints combined with heavy footfall put veteran trees at risk.

To address these issues, Monmouthshire County Council, supported by the Woodland Investment Grant through the National Heritage Lottery Fund on behalf of the Welsh Government, launched the Mill Common Restoration Project. The project set out with clear objectives: to restore ecological health through woodland management and replanting, improve accessibility for walkers and school routes, enhance community engagement, and protect veteran trees and ground flora through sensitive management techniques.

The restoration began with extensive tree management. Diseased ash trees were removed, and dense stands were thinned to allow more sunlight to reach the woodland floor. Plans were made to replant with a diverse mix of native broadleaf species, ensuring long-term resilience. Dead hedging was introduced around veteran trees to prevent soil compaction and create wildlife refuges. Alongside ecological work, infrastructure improvements were prioritized. Main pathways and steps were resurfaced to provide safer access, benches and signage were installed, and a community-designed sculpture trail was planned. Historic viewpoints overlooking the Gwent Levels and Severn Estuary were also restored.

Community engagement played a central role throughout the project. Public consultations were carried out through surveys and in-person sessions, and events such as guided walks, litter picks, and festive workshops helped foster local involvement. A Community Engagement Officer was recruited to lead these efforts and launch volunteering opportunities.



By winter 2024 through spring 2025, extensive felling had been completed, opening up the woodland to sunlight and encouraging regrowth and biodiversity—bees and butterflies were already being observed. In autumn 2025, additional tree works were carried out at Dancing Hill, and dead hedging was implemented. The community responded positively, with strong public support and concerns about dog access addressed by keeping the site dog-friendly. Social benefits were evident as participation in events grew, fostering local pride and stewardship.

Looking ahead, the project plans to begin replanting with native species in autumn and winter, complete pathway resurfacing, and expand volunteer programs. The woodland will be part of the National Forest for Wales scheme. Monitoring and adaptive management will ensure the woodland's long-term ecological resilience. Key lessons learned include the importance of transparent communication and consultation in building trust, the value of combining ecological restoration with cultural and recreational enhancements, and the need for sensitive management of veteran trees and ground flora to protect biodiversity.

OBJECTIVES MET

Objective 2: Provide nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being and encourage action for nature

Community engagement was a core component, with public consultations, guided walks, litter picks, and festive workshops. These activities not only raised awareness but also promoted well-being and encouraged local stewardship of nature.

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

The project undertook proactive woodland management, including felling diseased trees, thinning overcrowded stands, and implementing dead hedging to protect veteran trees and create wildlife refuges. These measures enhance biodiversity and strengthen ecosystem resilience.

Objective 4: Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience

By positioning Mill Common as a flagship site for the National Forest for Wales, the project sets an example for best practice in woodland restoration and sensitive management, influencing wider land management approaches in the region.

Objective 5: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

The removal of ash trees affected by dieback directly addresses a major pressure on woodland ecosystems. Thinning and replanting with native species further mitigate habitat degradation and promote species recovery.

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

The project will serve as a flagship site within the National Forest for Wales initiative, contributing to a nationwide effort to create a connected network of woodlands that are managed for biodiversity and designed to provide accessible green spaces for communities.

Objective 7: Use improved evidence, understanding and monitoring to inform action

Monitoring is embedded in the project's future plans, with adaptive management strategies to ensure long-term ecological resilience. Observations of biodiversity recovery (e.g., bees and butterflies) already inform ongoing actions.

2.4 MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL NRAP: DRIVING NATURE RECOVERY ACROSS MONMOUTHSHIRE

The Local NRAP is a strategic guide for reversing biodiversity decline and building ecosystem resilience in Monmouthshire. It replaces the 2005 Local Biodiversity Action Plan and aligns with national and regional plans such as the NRAP for Wales and Greater Gwent NRAP. The document explains why nature recovery is critical, outlines local biodiversity and ecosystem services, and addresses the nature emergency and its drivers (e.g., climate change, pollution, invasive species). It sets out a collaborative delivery framework through the Local Nature Partnership, identifies priority habitats and species, and includes a General Action Plan focused on policy integration, education, evidence gathering, and promoting ecosystem resilience. The plan is designed as a living document with annual reviews and signposts to partner action plans for specific habitats and species.

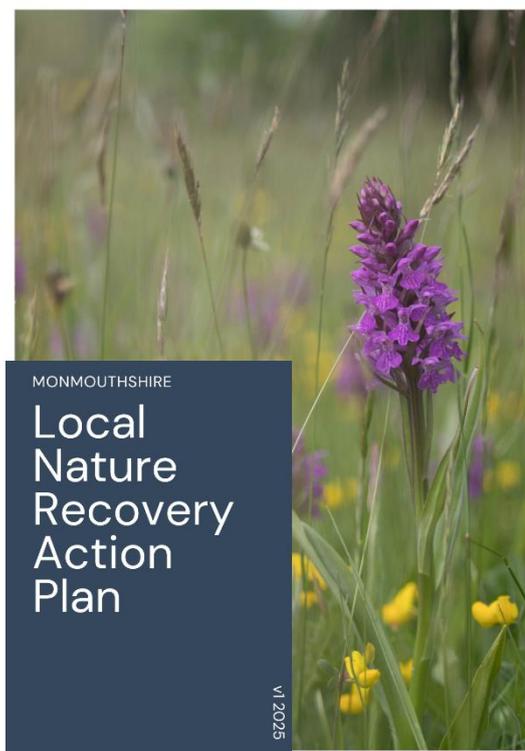
The NRAP was aligned with MCC's Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy alongside the Green Infrastructure Strategy, which together form four pillars: Council Emissions, Nature Recovery, Rivers and Ocean, and Communities and Climate. Both the NRAP and Green Infrastructure Strategy were approved by MCC Cabinet in July 2025 and officially launched during Wales Nature Week to raise awareness and encourage participation

Feedback from Local Nature Partnership members and public consultation was incorporated into the final strategy. Public engagement was also important with a public consultation launched at Usk Show September 2024 and promoted online and in libraries.

OBJECTIVES MET

Objective 1: Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels

The NRAP integrates biodiversity into MCC's Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy and Green Infrastructure Strategy, ensuring nature recovery principles are embedded in council policies and planning frameworks. Actions include influencing partner plans and policies to adopt nature-positive approaches.



Objective 4: Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience

Through partnerships and advocacy, the NRAP encourages nature-based solutions and sustainable land management approaches that strengthen ecosystem resilience.

Objective 5: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

The plan identifies major drivers of biodiversity loss, including climate change, pollution, and invasive species. Future development of the Local NRAP will include action plans to support habitat restoration and species recovery

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

Delivery principles emphasize collaboration between Local Nature Partnership members and neighbouring partnerships to achieve landscape-scale impact.

Objective 7: Use improved evidence, understanding, and monitoring to inform action

The plan provides an evidence base to support nature recovery and aims to increase understanding of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

2.5 PLANNING ADVICE: EMBEDDING BIODIVERSITY AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Monmouthshire County Council's Green Infrastructure (GI) team plays a critical role in shaping sustainable development by providing planning advice that ensures biodiversity and GI principles are integrated into development proposals and the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). This work supports MCC's statutory duties and strategic objectives under the Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy.

The team aims to influence the RLDP so that nature recovery and GI principles are embedded into future planning policy, while also providing timely advice on development proposals to meet the Section 6 Biodiversity Duty. These efforts contribute to MCC's broader objectives of creating a Green Place and a Connected Place.

The team handled a substantial volume of consultations and responses over the past two years. In 2024, 556 formal consultations were received, and 654 formal responses were issued. This trend continued in 2025, with 624 consultations and 641 responses processed. These figures highlight the ongoing demand for ecological and GI planning advice and reinforce the importance of maintaining adequate resources to meet statutory obligations and service targets.

In addition to planning applications, the biodiversity team provided advice to Active Travel schemes, Highways projects, Ordinary Water Consents and SAB applications. Significant time was also dedicated to providing advice on the Replacement Local Development Plan including:

- Compiling nature recovery based policies and contributing nature recovery elements to strategic policies
- Providing appropriate advice on responding to representations, redacting sensitive information, and liaising with consultants on the HRA
- Procuring and workshopping a Recreation Mitigation Strategy for the Severn Estuary SPA.

Resource constraints are a particular challenge, as limited officer time (1.5 FTE) affects the ability to meet 21-day response targets. Balancing RLDP policy development with statutory consultations and national planning requirements also presents competing priorities. Dedicated resources are essential to maintain statutory compliance and deliver strategic objectives.

OBJECTIVES MET:

Objective 1: Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels

The service ensures biodiversity and Green Infrastructure principles are integrated into development proposals and the RLDP, influencing planning policy and statutory consultations.

Objective 4: Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience

By shaping RLDP policies and providing advice on Active Travel, Highways, and water-related projects, the service indirectly influences land management practices to support ecosystem resilience.

Objective 7: Use improved evidence, understanding and monitoring to inform action

Activities such as contributing to Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA), responding to representations, and developing the Recreation Mitigation Strategy demonstrate evidence-based planning and monitoring.

