



Bridgend County Borough Council

# Biodiversity and Ecosystems Resilience Forward Plan 2018-22

March 2018

## INTRODUCTION

1.1 Like all public authorities in Wales, Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) is subject to an enhanced **biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty** (the Section 6 duty) – a legal requirement from the Environment Act (Wales) Act 2016<sup>1</sup>. This duty requires that public authorities must seek to

***maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as consistent with the proper exercise of their functions and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems.***

1.2 To comply with the duty BCBC is tasked to do a number of things:

- **embed the consideration of biodiversity and ecosystems** in business planning, including any policies, plans, programmes and projects, as well as their day to day activities.
- **prepare and publish a plan** setting out what they propose to do to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and promote ecosystems resilience.
- have regard to a wide range of **evidence and policy** produced by Welsh Government, the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR)<sup>2</sup> the Nature Recovery Plan for Wales<sup>3</sup>, Natural Resources Policy<sup>4</sup>, Section 7 list of important habitats<sup>5</sup> and species and the forthcoming Area Statements being produced by NRW.
- **report** on what the public authority has done to comply with the duty by the end of **2019** and then every three years after this date.

1.3 This document constitutes a **Biodiversity and Ecosystems Resilience Forward Plan for BCBC** to comply with this Duty and is intended to meet all of the above requirements. As such, this document provides an enhanced *organisational approach* to Biodiversity and Ecosystems Resilience (BER) within the context of a wider delivery system for BER outcomes in the Borough.

1.4 Part of this wider delivery system includes the **Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2014)** produced in conjunction with Bridgend Biodiversity Partnership and Environment Systems Ltd. This provides a detailed overview and assessment of Bridgend's biodiversity and ecosystems services including detail on:

- why biodiversity and ecosystems matter to environmental, social and cultural well-being
- an overview of key habitats and species in the Borough and the services they provide to support well-being
- detailed ecosystems service maps and plans for 15 areas and 5 towns across the Borough including risks and recommendations for enhanced approaches to BER

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<sup>1</sup> <http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/natural-resources-management/environment-act/?lang=en>

<sup>2</sup> <https://naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/research-and-reports/the-state-of-natural-resources-report-assessment-of-the-sustainable-management-of-natural-resources/?lang=en>

<sup>3</sup> <http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/conservationbiodiversity/?lang=en>

<sup>4</sup> <http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/natural-resources-management/natural-resources-policy/?lang=en>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Environment-Wales-Act>

- 1.5 This previous work provides an excellent basis and **evidence base** for organisations in the Borough, including BCBC, to identify key actions at a local level which will support BER.
- 1.6 It is recommended therefore that this document is read in conjunction with the Bridgend County Borough Local Biodiversity and Action Plan<sup>6</sup> to provide detail and background on key pressures, risks and opportunities related to BER. This focus of this document is on BCBCs organisational response to this agenda.
- 1.7. The legislation requires the Council to promote the **resilience of ecosystems** through its work. This means improving the **diversity** between and within ecosystems; the **connections** between and within ecosystems; the **scale** of ecosystems; the **condition** of ecosystems (including their structure and functioning); and **adaptability** – the ability of ecosystems to adapt over time.
- 1.8 BCBC is committed to delivering actions to develop an enhanced approach to BER. This Plan will help to initiate and manage collaboration, development and delivery across Council Services and with partners to deliver BER outcomes between 2018 and 2022. It has been developed to establish and deliver an integrated and coherent approach to BER with both strategic and operational outcomes for community benefit. As a result of implementing this Plan capacity will also be built within Council deliver BER and the Council will be able to maximise funding opportunities to deliver this activity.
- 1.9 This Plan needs to be delivered in an ongoing climate of reduced public funding, stretched budgets, potential Council re-organisation and uncertainty over funding leading for BER up to and beyond Brexit. Welsh public services and partnerships are undergoing major change, and BCBC is committed to new ways of working, collaboration and delivery to address the BER agenda within this challenging context.
- 1.10 BCBC has a number of key 'traditional' roles to deliver BER for the Borough, these include: management of physical assets within our property portfolio; management of designated sites such as national and local nature reserves; through development control and local development planning; through infrastructural investment; in our approach to delivering services such as parks, schools or highways maintenance; through partnership work with the Public Services Board and other partners; through regional collaboration; and in working directly with communities to enhance local environmental assets and volunteering.
- 1.11 It is important to note that this plan is not a list of what the Council is already doing to deliver on BER through the above activity. It is a plan to build on existing work to develop an enhanced and coherent corporate response to the BER challenge between 2018 and 2022.
- 1.12 The **METHODOLOGY** for producing this Plan has involved
  - a compliance review of BCBC in relation to the Environment Act in late 2017. This focused on corporate approaches, including detailed discussions with key service areas and corporate staff resulting in recommendations on BCBCs strategic approach to the Act<sup>7</sup> and a set of actions for corporate adaptation.

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<sup>6</sup> [http://naturalneighbourhoods.co.uk/media/132949/bridgendlbapandes\\_v2.pdf](http://naturalneighbourhoods.co.uk/media/132949/bridgendlbapandes_v2.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> The following services were involved in discussions: BCBC Biodiversity 'function'; Corporate Landlord/Asset Management; Corporate Planning; Democratic Services; Development Control; Finance; Flood Risk

- engagement with Natural Resources Wales and Bridgend Biodiversity Partnership on the role of the BCBC Biodiversity Forward Plan and delivery of BER outcomes
- detailed discussions with the BCBC Local Development Plan team on pending changes to Planning Policy Wales, the LDP process in Bridgend up to 2021 and regional spatial planning.
- discussions with the Bridgend Public Service Board support team and material from a separately commissioned workshop with the PSB run by NSF in February 2018 focusing on delivery of PSB objectives.
- discussions with REACH – the Rural Development Plan team for the Borough on their plans for utilising EU funding on BER outputs between 2018 and 2020.

1.13 This Draft Plan contributes to BCBCs approach to the Well-being of Future Generations Act (WBFGA) (Wales) 2015, specifically the goal for a Resilient Wales<sup>8</sup>,

***Wales' Resilience Well-being Goal***

*A nation which 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)*

Once implemented the actions are likely to have multiple benefits for other well-being goals<sup>9</sup> in the Act: Appendix A provides more detail on the potential contribution of actions to each goal.

1.14 The production of this draft plan has also utilised the WBFGAs **sustainable development principle** to inform its development and structure. The aim of the actions in the plan is to build a coherent, integrated approach by BCBC to Biodiversity and Ecosystems Resilience. The focus of the actions are to develop the capacity of the organisation to take long term BER outcomes into account in the way that it plans, implements and makes decisions about its activities. The actions have been identified in a collaborative process with BCBC officers with partners informed and engaged on the Plan. Many of the actions will ensure that BCBC builds its understanding of this issue preventing further negative impacts on BER.<sup>10</sup>

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Management ; Green Space & Bereavement; Local Development Planning; Regeneration; Risk Management; RDP team; Schools Programme; Transport ; Waste Management; Well-being Planning

<sup>8</sup> <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/?lang=en>

<sup>9</sup> WBFGA *Well-being Goals*: A prosperous Wales; A resilient Wales; A healthier Wales; A more equal Wales; A Wales of cohesive communities; A Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh language; A globally responsible Wales

<sup>10</sup> WBFGA *sustainable development principle*: 1.Looking to the long term so that we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs; 2. Taking an integrated approach so that public bodies look at all the well-being goals in deciding on their well-being objectives; 3. Involving a diversity of the population in the decisions that affect them; 4. Working with others in a collaborative way to find shared sustainable solutions; Understanding the root causes of issues to prevent them from occurring.

## 2 DELIVERY FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 This Plan contains a wide range of actions which seek to deliver an enhanced approach to BER in the following categories:<sup>11</sup>

Section 2 - **EMBED** – BCBC activities which will ensure BER is considered in the way that it operates, delivers services and makes decisions.

Section 3 - **SAFEGUARD & IMPROVE** – BCBC activities which will safeguard and improve management of important species and habitats

Section 4 - **RESTORE & CREATE** – BCBC activities which will restore degraded habitats or habitat creation.

Section 5 - **TACKLE KEY PRESSURES** – BCBC activities which will tackle key pressures on habitats and species.

Section 6 - **EVIDENCE BASE** - activities which will improve BCBCs evidence base on BER

Section 7 - **GOVERNANCE** – BCBC activities which contribute to the way in which BER is managed at the highest level in the Council and its partnerships and the systems for doing this.

Section 8 - **COMMUNITY** - activities which will inform the communities understanding of BER and /or engage them in management which supports it.

- 2.2 The following will support Plan implementation as outlined in section 3.

- i. implementation of the Biodiversity Forward Plan will be overseen by BCBCs **Corporate Management Board** and be part of the **Corporate Planning approach** and its future revisions.
- ii. a **lead member** from the Cabinet as Biodiversity Champion will act as an advocate for Plan implementation
- iii. implementation may be reviewed by **Scrutiny Committee** as considered appropriate
- iv. a **Corporate Director (Communities)** will be responsible for corporate working to facilitate Plan implementation
- v. **Service Managers** will be responsible for incorporating the Plan's commitments into their business plans to ensure they are acted upon and sufficiently resourced. Support will be provided by the Economy and Natural Resources team.
- vi. **Actions** as outlined in the following sections will be dependent core resources in the Economy and Natural Resources team being retained at current levels and external grants being secured.
- vii. **Performance Management** will focus on whether each of the commitments made in this Plan has been progressed in 2019 and in 2022 and produce monitoring reports at these stage.

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<sup>11</sup> This structure is guided by the 6 objectives of the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales which aims to reverse the decline of biodiversity in Wales.

viii. BCBC will share **emerging practice with PSB** and other partners on delivery of the Section 6 Duty

2.3 Bridgend Public Services Board (PSB) is made up of public authorities and other partners working together on a **Well-being Plan**<sup>12</sup> for the Borough. BCBC is a core partner of the PSB. The Wellbeing Plan contains 7 key objectives including “*a ten year aim ...that people have improved mental and physical wellbeing through improving the way we use our local resources*”. The PSB is committed to:

*work together to maximise the benefit from cultural, built and natural assets [by] Implementing the Bridgend Nature Recovery Plan. (the Local Biodiversity Action Plan mentioned in 1.4)*

2.4 To help in this, the PSB is setting up a **PSB Assets Board** in Spring 2018 which “will develop work to advance environmental sustainability, local economic sustainability (circular economy) and the use of assets to advance wellbeing” This will also be a key delivery mechanism for BCBC activity within this Plan, and provide an opportunity for the Council and partners to share emerging practice on BER.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.bridgend.gov.uk/services/public-services-board.aspx>

### 3. Action Plan

3.1 The action plan below is split into the following sections:

- Embed
- Safeguard and Improve
- Restore and Create
- Tackle key pressures
- Evidence Base
- Governance
- Community

3.2 The action plan identifies the timeframe over which it is intended actions will be delivered. It also highlights the resourcing requirements and indicates whether these are dependent on core resources or external grants. Where there is indication of a role of core and external resources it highlights that whilst a level of delivery will occur it will be enhanced if external resources are available.

3.3 **EMBED** – BCBC activities which aim to ensure BER is considered in the way that it operates, delivers services and makes decisions.

Area	Action	Timescale	Resources
<b>Capacity Development</b>	Develop communications approach on BER outcomes to staff, members, communities and partners.	2018-22	Core/ External
	Support awareness raising and capacity building In relation to BER through community ambassadors, knowledge exchange sessions, training events and BER web based material.	2018-22	Core/ External
<b>Corporate landlord and Community Asset Transfer</b>	Investigate options to include BER outcomes as part of Community Asset Appraisal	2018-19	Core
	Support BER through the delivery of the 2021 Asset Plan	2018-22	Core
	Research options to develop an integrated plan for managing BCBC land holdings through the Corporate Landlord approach which includes objectives and actions for BER outcomes.	2018-22	Core
<b>Corporate functions</b>	Provide evidence to assist with considerations of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial and well-being implications of loss/enhancement of biodiversity</li> <li>• External challenge on risk register</li> </ul>	2018-22	Core

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole life costing approaches</li> <li>• Incorporating BER into programme and project management approaches</li> </ul>		
<b>Ecological advice and expertise</b>	Continue to deliver advice on ecological matters to services and establish expert call off contract list for in depth advice on BER	2018-22	Core
<b>Flood Risk</b>	Provide support to: Include BER in flood options appraisals Include detail of BER options in Flood Risk works	2018-19	Core
<b>Planning</b>	Provide observations through the planning system as considered appropriate Report content reflects BCBC commitment to BER outcomes and specific opportunities and impacts.	2018-22	Core
	Local Development Plan - to be adopted by 2021 - to support the inclusion of BER through whole LDP adoption process, reflecting requirements of Environment Act, PPW 10 and Strategic Regional Planning and Well-being of Future Generations Act	2018-21	Core/ External
<b>Local Transport Plan</b>	To support consideration of BER outcomes through planned investment and maintenance of transport infrastructure	2018-22	Core
<b>Transport Options Appraisals</b>	To support included as part of transport options appraisal and evidenced.	2018-22	Core/ External
<b>Parks and Highways</b>	Support the development of a Parks and Highways Biodiversity Enhancement Plan	2018-19	External
<b>Schools Developments</b>	To support BER considerations in: Development of options appraisals Development of business plans	2018-22	Core/ External



**3.5 SAFEGUARD AND IMPROVE** – BCBC activities which aim to safeguard and improve management of important species and habitats

Area	Action	Timescale	Resources
<b>Development Control: Advice to Developers</b>	Support use of the SPG in discussion with developers, and work on Masterplans and Area Development Plans and land allocation.	2018-22	Core
<b>Digital Shepherd - Managed Grazing Project</b>	Deliver the RDP partnership managed grazing project to develop use of GPS as a management tool	2018-20	External
<b>Local Nature Reserve: Craig Y Parcau</b>	Delivery of Local Nature Reserve Management Plan actions including stabilisation of river bank.	2018-21	Core/ External
<b>Local Nature Reserve: Frog Wood Pond</b>	Delivery of Local Nature Reserve Management plan including achieving 90% open water.	2018-21	Core/ External
<b>Local Nature Reserve: Lock's Common</b>	Delivery of Local Nature Reserve Management Plan, including grassland mowing regime.	2018-21	Core/ External
<b>Local Nature Reserve: Tremains Wood</b>	Delivery of Local Nature Reserve Management Plan, including circular walk.	2018-21	Core/ External
<b>Kenfig National Nature Reserve</b>	Delivery the KNNR Management Plan	2018-20	Core/ External

**3.6 RESTORE AND CREATE** – BCBC activities which aim to restore degraded habitats or habitat creation.

Area	Action	Timescale	Resources
<b>Biodiversity Enhancement Schemes: Ward Level</b>	Deliver ward level biodiversity enhancement schemes involving town and community councils and schools.	2018-19	External
<b>Dunes2 Dunes - Green Infrastructure Project</b>	Deliver RDP partnership project to re-instate biodiverse corridors between the two sand dune areas either side of Porthcawl. Kenfig Burrows and Merthyr Mawr Warren. Funding Application Pending.	2018-20	External
<b>Tree Management Plan and Actions</b>	Produce a county wide holistic approach to management of trees.	2018-21	Core

**3.7 TACKLE KEY PRESSURES** – BCBC activities which aim to tackle key pressures which lead to habitat and species loss and fragmentation.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Resource</b>
<b>Biodiversity &amp; Ecosystems Resilience: Demonstration projects</b>	Develop externally funded, multi partner demonstrator projects for BER which support place based working.	2018-22	External
<b>Public Services Board: opportunities and risks from BER.</b>	Support the development of a shared approach to BER across the PSB	2018-22	Core
<b>Rural Development Plan: Regional Working</b>	Continue to input into opportunities for regional working on South East Wales regional projects involving local authorities and businesses up to 2020.	2018-20	Core
<b>Single Revenue Grant</b>	SRG funding proposals incorporate enhanced BER outcomes which demonstrate compliance with enhanced Biodiversity Duty and support BCBC approach to Green Infrastructure.	2018 - 22	External

3.8 **EVIDENCE BASE** - activities which aim to improve BCBCs evidence base

<b>Area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Resources</b>
<b>Flood Risk management: Historic contamination</b>	Undertake research risk of historic contamination and flooding to biodiversity and well-being and plan for managing risk	2018-22	Core/ External
<b>Flood Risk Management: Invasive Species</b>	Undertake research of biodiversity and well-being risk associated with invasive species and plan for managing risk	2018-22	Core/ External
<b>Green Infrastructure Project: Bridgend; Swansea, Neath &amp; Port Talbot</b>	Development and delivery of partnership project with Swansea and Neath & Port Talbot on evidence base and Green Infrastructure actions	2018-19	External
<b>Highways Maintenance</b>	Initiate research and planning on role of biodiversity in managing risks on highway infrastructure (drainage, tree maintenance and land management regimes)	2018-22	External
<b>Natural Resources Wales: Area Statements</b>	Support NRW on development of Area Statement in order for it to contribute to BER outcomes for BCBC including the LDP evidence base and Well Being Plan.	2018-21	Core/ External
<b>Public Services Board: Well-being Assessment</b>	Work to ensure Biodiversity Forward Plans of PSB members inform the PSB's well-being assessment and well-being planning process.	2018-22	Core/ External

**3.9 GOVERNANCE** – BCBC activities which contribute to the way in which BER is managed at the highest level in the Council and its partnerships and the systems for doing this.

Area	Action	Timescale	Resources
<b>Member Leadership</b>	Support the Biodiversity Champion to act as an advocate for BER	2018-22	Core
<b>Decision Making: Judicial Review of BCBC Decisions</b>	Support BCBC to manage risk of external challenge on decisions via Judicial Review	2018-22	Core
<b>Development Control: Challenge to Decisions</b>	Deliver coherent approach to BER through Section 6 Duty, LDP and approach to PPW (10)	2018-22	Core
<b>Local Development Plan: SE Wales Strategic Development Plan</b>	Support the integration of BER in the South East Wales Strategic Development Plan	2018-22	Core/ External
<b>Public Services Board: Bridgend Assets Board</b>	Contribute to a new board under the PSB which will develop work to advance environmental sustainability, local economic sustainability (circular economy) and the use of assets to advance wellbeing .	2018-22	Core
<b>Public Services Board: Bridgend Nature Recovery Plan</b>	Support the delivery of Bridgend Nature Recovery Plan through PSB activity.	2018-22	Core/ External

**3.9 COMMUNITY** - activities which aim to inform the communities' understanding of BER and /or engage them in management which supports it.

Area	Action	Timescale	Resources
<b>Biodiversity Opportunity Maps: Ward Level</b>	Production of ward maps on what to explore, what can be seen and opportunities to enhance biodiversity.	2018-19	External
<b>Parks: Mental Health</b>	Develop opportunities for social prescribing through PSB and RDP work with partners.	2018-22	Core/ External
<b>Parks: Maintenance Regimes</b>	Support an approach to informing the public view of proactive approach to biodiversity through maintenance.	2018-22	Core

APPENDIX A – BIODIVERSITY FORWARD PLAN AND WALES’ WELL-BEING GOALS

Wales’ Well- being Goals	How the Plan contributes
<p><b>A prosperous Wales</b> An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work</p>	<p>BER is an integral part of the Borough’s economic prosperity, providing ecosystems services to communities, the local agricultural economy and tourism. All of commitments are designed to support these services. All sections are of relevance to this goal.</p>
<p><b>A resilient Wales</b> A nation which 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).</p>	<p>All of the actions within the Plan are designed to support this goal</p>
<p><b>A healthier Wales</b> A society in which people’s physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.</p>	<p>A healthy environment for the Boroughs’ communities is supported through all of the commitments in this Plan providing opportunities for activities which support physical and mental well-being. Of particular relevance are actions outlined in relation to evidence base and governance.</p>
<p><b>A more equal Wales</b> A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).</p>	<p>The commitments in this Plan for volunteering and community engagement in BER management are opportunities to contribute to this goal. This includes the actions in the safeguard and improve section of the action plan.</p>
<p><b>A Wales of cohesive communities</b> Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.</p>	<p>The commitments in the Plan to developing the Borough’s Green Infrastructure for recreation and leisure and commitments that build on the BER assets which contribute to attractive local environments support this goal. Specific actions which are of relevance are in the safeguard and create and governance sections.</p>
<p><b>A Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh language</b> A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.</p>	<p>BCBCs commitment to bilingual interpretation and web based material help to communicate the value of BER to the Boroughs social, cultural, economic and environmental well-being. Of particular are actions in the governance section.</p>
<p><b>A globally responsible Wales</b> A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being</p>	<p>BCBCs commitments to enhanced approaches to habitat and species management and ecosystems resilience are contributions to slowing down global biodiversity loss. BCBC contributes through its work on this agenda to the management of local, national, and internationally designated sites. Sections relating to safeguard and improve and restore and create are of particular relevance.</p>

