

Impact Assessment

1. Proposal Information

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Portfolio holder	Heulwen Hulme, portfolio holder for Portfolio Holder for Environment
Proposal title	Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems duty, Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016
Description of proposal	<p>The purpose of the report is to put forward an approach to the Council meeting its duties under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 for consideration. It is proposed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The contents of the Section 6 report, as drafted in 2019, be accepted as reflecting the position at that time in terms of the actions taken to maintain or enhance biodiversity.• Rather than producing a separate document, the Section 6 plan be incorporated into the Council's Corporate Improvement Plan. This would be achieved by compiling a list of the activities being carried out by individual Services to maintain or enhance biodiversity. These would be captured as measures for 2022-23 and onwards, linked to an overarching biodiversity objective in the Corporate reporting programme.

2. Savings and Consultation requirements

Profile of savings delivery

No savings profile

Consultation requirements

Consultation
required? No

Justification The proposal sets out the way in which other Service areas will be consulted, to develop the measures that will reflect the activities that they are taking to maintain or enhance biodiversity. As such, consultation is integral to implementation of the proposal and will be carried out if the approach set out in the report is approved.

3. Impact on other service areas, geographical areas and data protection

3a. Impact on other service areas

- Economy & Digital Services
- Transformation and Communications Service
- Property Planning and Public Protection
- Commissioning (Children & Adults)
- Childrens Services
- Highways Transport & Recycling
- Adult Services
- Finance (Section 151)
- Housing and Community Development
- Workforce & Organisation Development
- Legal & Democratic Services

3b. Impact on geographical locations

The entire county

3c. Data protection impact assessment

Will the
proposal
involve
processing
the personal
details of
individuals? No

Is Powys
County
Council the
data
controller? Yes

Further information The Section 6 plan, report and the measures and objectives in the Corporate Improvement Plan reflect the activities carried out by Services to enhance the quality of the environment. No information about individuals is included; as such, the proposal does not require the processing of personal data in itself.

4. Impact on Vision 2025

4a. The economy

Impact None

4b. Health and care

Impact By ensuring that its actions to maintain and enhance biodiversity are implemented and monitored, the Council will be ensuring that a high quality natural environment is sustained in Powys. Access to high quality greenspace is very important for the mental and physical wellbeing of residents of all ages; this has been strongly demonstrated during the COVID 19 outbreak. Volunteering to support biodiversity initiatives can make a significant contribution to the sense of fulfilment of residents.

Impact rating GOOD

Mitigation By ensuring that there is active promotion of the activities and outcomes of work to enhance biodiversity through the Council's activities and through collaborative initiatives, residents will become more aware of the opportunities available to them for access to high quality greenspace and biodiversity. Progressing the Powys Local Nature Recovery Action Plan will provide further opportunities to promote this work through a range of partner and stakeholder organisations.

Mitigated impact rating VGOOD

4c. Learning and skills

Impact Activities to maintain and enhance biodiversity may contribute directly to learning opportunities for children and young people, with an example being the development of sensory gardens at schools. These activities may also support skills development for the whole community; for example, development of a reading garden at a library this year will provide a space that is enhanced from an environmental and sensory perspective, which is outdoor based and that will encourage and support use of the library as a space for learning by residents of all ages.

Impact rating VGOOD

Mitigation Not specified

4d. Residents and communities

Impact The duties under section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 are focussed on safeguarding and enhancing the natural environment for residents and communities. By developing and monitoring activities that it is carrying out to maintain and enhance biodiversity, the Council will be making a direct and positive contribution to this priority.

Impact rating VGOOD

Mitigation Not specified

4e. Evidence

The sources of evidence to support the proposed approach are:

- The Welsh Government's 'Guidance for Section 6 – The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty - Reporting guidance'
- The Wales Nature Recovery Action Plan 2020-21;
- The Section 6 report drafted in 2019 for Powys, which was based on engagement with other Council Services;
- 'Towards 2040', the Public Service Board plan
- Media articles during the COVID 19 outbreak, including the call for increased access to greenspace for all homes in Wales (see <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-56320917>)

5. Impact on well-being goals including Welsh language and equalities

5a. A prosperous Wales

Impact The proposal will bring a greater focus on delivering the Council's Services in ways that have a more positive impact on biodiversity, including those Services that deliver economic benefits. For example, road verge nature reserve activity already allows for core highway maintenance that supports economic activity to be carried out in a way that also delivers benefits for biodiversity. Increasing the quality of greenspace through biodiversity enhancements will also deliver benefits in tackling climate change, for example by increasing tree cover that is sustained and managed.

Impact rating VGOOD

Mitigation Not specified

5b. A resilient Wales

Impact The proposal will directly contribute to this priority, as maintaining and enhancing a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems the is the focus of the duties under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Impact rating VGOOD

Mitigation Not specified

5c. A healthier Wales

Impact By maintaining and enhancing the quality of greenspaces, the proposal will contribute positively to the opportunities for residents to access and engage with biodiversity for mental and physical wellbeing. Voluntary activity linked to this will also contribute to residents opportunities to be involved with activities in their local area that bring benefits for the whole community.

Impact rating VGOOD

Mitigation Not specified

5d. A Wales of cohesive communities

Impact By increasing the quality of greenspace and opportunities to engage with biodiversity, the proposal will maintain and increase the attractiveness of local communities. Voluntary work to implement local biodiversity projects alongside Council Services will support a sense of people within a community being connected with each other and with the place in which they live.

Impact rating VGOOD

Mitigation Not specified

5e. A globally responsible Wales

Impact Maintaining and enhancing the biodiversity of Powys will contribute positively to the quality of global ecosystems, as local and global ecosystems are interconnected.

Impact rating GOOD

Mitigation Not specified

5f. A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Using Welsh

Impact None

Promoting Welsh

Impact The activities to maintain or enhance biodiversity will be carried out through business as usual service delivery, dedicate projects and collaborative working with other organisations. There will be ongoing promotion of these activities and that will be through the medium of English and Welsh.

Impact rating GOOD

Mitigation Some activities e.g. if they involve elements of interpretation of the biodiversity of a site may present pro-active opportunities to promote the Welsh language.

Mitigated impact rating GOOD

Sports, Art & Recreation

Impact Enhancing biodiversity will increase the quality and enjoyment of greenspace, which will encourage residents and visitors to make use of it for physical activity and other recreation. Sensory gardens associated with community centres and libraries may encourage greater use of the associated facilities and therefore engagement in cultural activities.

Impact rating GOOD

Mitigation Not specified

5g. A more equal Wales

Age

Impact Enhancing biodiversity engages and provide opportunities for all age groups. Children may be able to take advantage of biodiverse greenspace; adults may contribute to the enhancements through voluntary activity and will also be able to use the greenspace.

Impact rating GOOD

Mitigation Not specified

Disability

Impact By including elements of accessibility and sensory enhancement in biodiversity projects, the proposals will contribute positively to this goal. Grant funding to support biodiversity may also support accessibility and sensory enhancements, for example through assets developed under Local Places for Nature funding.

Impact rating GOOD

Mitigation Not specified

Gender Reassignment

Impact None

Marriage or Civil Partnership

Impact None

Race

Impact None

Religion or Belief

Impact None

Sex

Impact None

Sexual Orientation

Impact None

Pregnancy and Maternity

Impact None

Socio-economic Duty

Impact Some grant funding streams to enhance biodiversity support schemes targetted at areas of deprivation e.g. the Local Places for Nature funding. In doing so, the enhancements make a pro-active contribution to the opportunities for access to and enjoyment of greenspace for those living on a low income. Across the county, biodiversity enhancements in greenspace will benefit the whole community, irrespective of income. There is generally no charge for access to these areas and many are within a short distance of residential areas.

Impact rating GOOD

Mitigation Not specified

5h. Evidence

The sources of evidence to support the proposed approach are:

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- The Wales Nature Recovery Action Plan 2020-21;
- The Section 6 report drafted in 2019 for Powys, which was based on engagement with other Council Services;
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6. Impact on key guiding principles & workforce

6a. Sustainable development principles

Long-term

Impact The proposal will contribute proactively to addressing the decline of biodiversity and increasing the resilience of ecosystems with benefits for future generations. Activities to maintain and enhance biodiversity will have both short term and long term outcomes and interventions will need to continue in the long term i.e. they will need to become part of business as usual Service delivery and community activity.

Impact rating VGOOD

Mitigation Not specified

Collaboration

Impact Many activities to maintain or enhance biodiversity are already or will be delivered through collaborative activities e.g. through the Local Nature Partnership and with communities. The proposal will encourage and contribute positively to this outcome.

Impact rating GOOD

Mitigation Active promotion of the work that is being carried out will encourage the community to remain engaged and collaborate in activities. The work of the Local Nature Partnership will support ongoing collaboration.

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Mitigated impact rating VGOOD

Prevention

Impact Strategic actions to maintain and enhance biodiversity across Wales are identified in the Wales Nature Recovery Action Plan; local actions will form part of the Powys Nature Recovery Action plan, which is being progressed. The proposal subject of this report is to implement and monitor the Council's activities to maintain and enhance biodiversity, which will contribute to the wider Powys Nature Recovery Action plan. As such, the proposal will result in pro-active actions being taken by the Council, through core service delivery and collaborative projects, to address the decline in biodiversity.

Impact rating VGOOD

Mitigation Not specified

Integration

Impact The proposal contributes positively to wellbeing through pro-actively enhancing the natural environment of Powys. The COVID 19 outbreak has highlighted the importance of access to high quality greenspace and the opportunity to engage with biodiversity, to maintain physical and mental wellbeing.

Impact rating VGOOD

Mitigation Not specified

6b. Impact on the workforce

Individual projects or changes made to business as usual Service delivery to maintain or enhance biodiversity may have an impact on the

Impact

physical and mental wellbeing. The Council's activities will contribute to the wider Powys Nature Recovery Action Plan.

It is expected that individual Services will consider the resource implications of each activity that they propose to carry out to maintain or enhance biodiversity, to ensure that the activity and its benefits are sustainable in the light of current and likely future resource levels. It is proposed that the activities be monitored via the existing reporting mechanisms for the Corporate Improvement Plan, so this should not impact significantly in terms of staff time.

Cabinet reference:

9. Additional evidence

Powys wellbeing information bank - data for health of adults, understanding our communities and economy

10. Ongoing monitoring arrangements and governance

Monitoring arrangements

The proposal is an arrangement for monitoring in itself and will form part of the reporting process for the Corporate Improvement Plan. As such the objectives and measures against which Services report will be subject to annual review as part of the integrated business planning process. There will be quarterly reviews of progress against measures with the Portfolio Holder; the information will be used to update the Section 6 report every 3 years, with the next update due in 2022.

Review date: 19/04/2022

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