

Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 – Section 6
The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty

**Reporting on Section 6 - Frequently Asked Questions for Town and
Community Councils**



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Reporting on Section 6 - The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty - Frequently Asked Questions for Town and Community Councils

Why do we have to report on the section 6 biodiversity duty?

Town and Community Councils are subject to the biodiversity and ecosystems resilience duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, see Overview, and further information¹. Under section 6(7) of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 all public authorities must, before the end of 2019 and before the end of every third year after 2019, publish a report on what they have done to comply with the section 6 duty.

The section 6 report will provide transparency and accountability for the public authority's response to its section 6 duty, and could also act as a useful communication tool for stakeholders, the community and business groups. It will also provide the basis for each public authority to review their section 6 action, and the collective reports across Wales will form the basis for a Wales wide evaluation of the operation of the section 6 duty.

What form should the report take?

The reporting duty should not be burdensome, and should be proportionate to the size and type of each organisation, with regard to the types of action for biodiversity they can carry out.

Organisations are encouraged to identify their own ways of reporting, ideally as part of their usual reporting mechanisms. For example, the report can be embedded into an annual report, or as an annex to it, or an annex or update to the section 6 plan, or in a standalone format. The only requirement for the purposes of the Act is that it must be published.

When and where should the report be published?

Subsection (7) required that the first report should have been published before the end of 2019. Each subsequent report should then be published by the end of each third year from 2019 and therefore the second report is due by the end of 2022.

The report should be published accessibly, preferably online. Please send a link to the mailbox below once published.

What should be in the report?

While organisations are encouraged to identify their own ways of reporting as above, [reporting guidance](#) has been published which can be used to guide its content. The guidance is designed to be flexible but also provide some consistency to strengthen the basis for a future Wales wide evaluation of the section 6 duty. A short reporting

¹Further guidance on the section 6 duty is available [here](#)

template has been produced to assist Town and Community Councils and this can be accessed [here](#) and an example completed template can be viewed [here](#).

Suggested content includes an introduction to the public authority, its functions, and governance in relation to biodiversity; a report on the actions taken, which could be aligned with the six objectives in the [Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales](#); and highlights, key outcomes for biodiversity, issues and barriers encountered.

To note, every organisation can contribute positively to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity. This is not just through land management, but can also be through procurement, sustainability policies, awareness raising, training, cascading funding criteria to, or acting in partnership with, others.

A public authority that has published a section 6 plan must review the plan in the light of each section 6 report that it publishes. If the review has been carried out before the section 6 report is published then the result of that review can also be included in the report. If you have already produced your report in your preferred format, that is fine.

Who is responsible for producing the report?

Responsibility for compliance with the duty lies with the final decision-making body, or head of the organisation, e.g. the Clerk or all members of the full community or town council committee.

Will the report be evaluated?

Under section 6(8) public authorities that have published a section 6 plan must review that plan in the light of their section 6 report. It is for each public authority to review their actions and report in order to ascertain what has been achieved, what needs to be improved, and to make any revisions and improvements to their section 6 plans and future biodiversity action.

Overtime there will be an evaluation of the operation of the section 6 duty, to support consistency, enabling exchange of learning between public authorities, pooling efforts and sharing good practice for future action.

There is no responsibility for Welsh Government to scrutinise individual section 6 plans or reports under the Act.

What will happen if we do not publish a report?

There are no penalties for non-compliance on the face of the Act. However, each public authority is open to challenge from anybody as to how they are complying with the duty.

Nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history and the rate of species extinctions is accelerating, with grave impacts on people around the world

now likely. Investment in maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and resilient ecosystems, directly supports our economy and the people of Wales's long term health and well-being.

Publication of your report will contribute to the evidence base of the actions that are being taken and section 6 will facilitate future action for biodiversity.

What if we haven't produced a section 6 plan yet?

Public authorities can still report on any actions they have taken to maintain and enhance biodiversity. If you haven't produced a plan yet, you can now do this following the report, when you have identified opportunities and further actions you can take.

Where can we get help with our section 6 report?

Producing your section 6 report should be straightforward, however queries can be sent to S6BiodiversityDuty@gov.wales, or can be made through Wales Biodiversity Partnership's website [here](#). One Voice Wales or the Society for Local Council Clerks may also be able to assist with general queries.

Further advice and guidance

Section 6 reporting requirement: reporting template for town and community councils

[The Section 6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty: reporting template | GOV.WALES](#)

Section 6 reporting requirement: example reporting template for town and community councils

[The Section 6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty: example reporting template | GOV.WALES](#)

Section 6 duty reporting guidance

[Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016: biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty: reporting guidance | GOV.WALES](#)

Section 6 duty reporting requirement: frequently asked questions

[Reporting on Section 6 - The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty: frequently asked questions | GOV.WALES](#)

Section 6 duty frequently asked questions

[Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016: biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty: frequently asked questions | GOV.WALES](#)

Good practice guide – examples of biodiversity actions from public authorities across Wales

[Wales Biodiversity Partnership - Biodiversity Duty good practice \(biodiversitywales.org.uk\)](#)

Wales Biodiversity Partnership – website for general information about biodiversity and what we can do to help, together with a dedicated section for the section 6 duty.

[Wales Biodiversity Partnership - Section 6 \(biodiversitywales.org.uk\)](#)



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