

Section 6 biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty

Planning template

Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016¹ places a duty (section 6 duty) on public authorities so they ‘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’. To comply with the section 6 duty public authorities should embed the consideration of biodiversity and ecosystems into their early thinking and business planning, including any policies, plans, programmes and projects, as well as their day-to-day activities.

As part of the section 6 duty a public authority other than a Minister of the Crown or government department must prepare and publish a plan setting out what it proposes to do to comply with duty.

This planning template is not mandatory but is designed to assist public authorities in producing their section 6 plan and help them consider what actions they can take. Given the wide range of public authorities subject to the Section 6 duty, not every organisation will be able to undertake every action listed in the template. The list is not exhaustive, and authorities may identify additional, relevant actions that are not included. These can also be incorporated into their plans.

This template is structured around the six aims that will form part of the refreshed Nature Recovery Action for Wales which will replace the six objectives from the current Plan².

Every organisation can contribute positively to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity as actions do not have to be solely based on green space management. For example, adopting sustainable procurement and travel policies, recycling, and reducing energy consumption, will all benefit biodiversity and can be included in the section 6 plan.

To help guide actions Table 1 below divides public authorities into three groups based on their functions.

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

¹ [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016](#)

² [Nature recovery action plan | GOV.WALES](#)

Further information on what actions public authorities can take to help biodiversity and other section 6 guidance is available on the [Welsh Government](#) and [Wales Biodiversity Partnership](#) websites.

Table 1: Types of organisations and possible s6 actions relative to their functions

| Group | Description of organisation relative to biodiversity. | Minimum Actions | Examples | NRAP aim for Planning |
|----------|--|---|---|---|
| | Organisations: | | | |
| 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that own or occupy an office building only and whose functions are not directly connected to biodiversity and/or land management. | Actions related to buildings management, procurement, sustainability, awareness raising, training, or in partnership with other organisations | Commissions, DVLA, Health Boards | NRAP aims: 3, 4, 5 |
| 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that own, occupy or manage land their own buildings and grounds, whose functions are connected with biodiversity and/or land management, or that can influence those who own or manage land. | As per Group 1 above PLUS grounds management, cascading funding criteria, providing education and training | Public Health Wales, Universities, Sport Wales, | NRAP aims: 3, 4, 5 as above NRAP aims: 1, 2, 6 relating to own grounds |
| 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that own or manage land beyond their own grounds, whether their functions are connected with biodiversity and/or land management or not. | As per Groups 1 and 2 above PLUS land management to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems. | Dŵr Cymru, Local Authorities, NRW, Welsh Government | All NRAP aims |

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| <p align="center"><i>Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 - Section 6</i></p> <p align="center"><i>The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty</i></p> <p align="center"><i>Plan 20--</i></p> |
| Name of Public Authority |
| <p align="center">Introduction and Context</p> <p>Should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short description of PA, its functions and context in relation to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - biodiversity (see Table 1 above) – <i>group classification</i> - spatial scale and place and - public service delivery (for example, if the organisation is subject to the Well-being of Future Generations (WFG) Act, how it is linked to Public Service Boards, well-being plans, the sustainable management of natural resources (SMNR) and area statements). • How enhancing biodiversity contributes to and is affected by your organisation's functions and strategic objectives. For public bodies subject to the WFG Act, how is the duty linked to delivery of the goals, particularly for a Resilient Wales, and the 5 ways of working. • Key policies, objectives, performance indicators and monitoring arrangements. • Governance arrangements around the delivery of the section 6 duty in your organisation. |
| Action Plan |
| <p>NRAP Aim 1: Protect, restore and effectively manage ecosystems to build their resilience.</p> <p>Include actions that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create or contribute to Resilient Ecological Networks³ for example by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restoring and/or creating habitats - Connecting or enlarging areas of habitat - Improving the management and/or diversity of areas of habitat such as through changes to mowing regimes - Contributing evidence to, and having regard to the opportunities shown in area statements |

³ Networks of habitat in good ecological condition joining up designated sites and other biodiversity hotspots to provide maximum benefit for biodiversity and our well-being.

- Safeguard species listed on [the section 7 biodiversity lists](#)

Suggested other factors to consider for potential measuring and/or indicators, monitored or collected, for example:

- Green Infrastructure Assessments⁴ completed where applicable
- Area of habitat created, restored or brought into improved management
- Area of habitat lost
- Projects to join areas of habitat together
- **Additional information:** Include here additional information such as costs, benefits, impacts and outcomes for action relevant to this NRAP aim.
- **Narrative/graphics:** Include here a brief narrative and any graphics which describe the information you have included under this objective.

NRAP Aim 2: Safeguard species and improve their management.

Include actions that will:

- Safeguard species, for example by:
 - Providing suitable and appropriately managed habitats for protected species where able
 - Improve habitat management, for example, for pollinators such as through changes to mowing regimes
 - Use the planning system to maintain and enhance species and habitats
 - Safeguard species listed on [the section 7 biodiversity lists](#)
 - Contribute to the management of protected sites and species, including

Local Wildlife Sites/Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), for example by:
 - Ensuring these sites are valued in decision making
 - Contributing to their management where possible
 - Managing land around them to buffer and join them up as part of resilient ecological networks.

Suggested other factors to consider for potential measuring and/or indicators, monitored or collected, for example:

- Numbers of sites, species and/or habitat action plans
- Site, species and habitats status and trends, including any known losses in your area of influence
- Data from Planning from Annual Monitoring Reports⁵ where applicable
- Condition surveys

⁴ Information about Green Infrastructure Assessments can be found in section 6.2 of [Planning Policy Wales](#).

⁵ Information regarding Annual Monitoring Reports can be found in paragraph 6.2.12 of [Planning Policy Wales](#)

- **Additional information:** Include here additional information such as potential costs, benefits, impacts and outcomes for action relevant to this NRAP aim.
- **Narrative/graphics:** Include here a brief narrative and any graphics which describe the information you have included under this aim.

NRAP Aim 3: Tackle key pressures on species, habitats and ecosystems.

Include actions that will:

- Address key pressures, for example by:
 - Reducing or where possible stopping the use of pesticides and herbicides
 - Reducing the area of invasive non-native species
 - Reducing, reusing and recycling resources
 - Climate change mitigation/decarbonisation
- Consider using biodiverse and native nature based solutions wherever possible, for example by:
 - Installing sustainable urban drainage systems
 - Using native biodiverse urban green and blue infrastructure to manage temperature, water flow, soil erosion – including planting trees, grasslands and wetlands
 - Installing green roofs and walls
 - Using natural flood prevention measures, such as swales and wetlands
 - Providing local green spaces for communities and visitors to improve health and well-being outcomes

Suggested other factors to consider for potential measuring and/or indicators, monitored or collected, for example:

- Air/soil/water quality improvements
- Reductions in the use of pesticides, herbicides and other products/practices that carry risk to biodiversity
- Policies introduced to reduce pressure on species e.g. palm oil sustainability
- Use of nature based solutions
- Areas of Invasive Non-Native Species that could be reduced or managed

Additional information: Include here additional information such as potential impact on costs, benefits, and outcomes for action relevant to this NRAP aim.

- **Narrative/graphics:** Include here a brief narrative and any graphics which describe the information you have included under this aim.

NRAP Aim 4: Establish effective governance and capacity to deliver.

Include actions that will:

- Ensure governance for biodiversity within your organisation, for example by:
 - Ensuring someone is responsible for biodiversity action – ultimately this should be the board or chief executive of the organisation
 - Ensuring the section 6 duty is monitored and reviewed
- Provide capacity for biodiversity, for example by:
 - Ensuring that where needed ecological expertise can be drawn upon, either internally or externally
 - Encouraging and supporting volunteer participation in action for biodiversity by staff or local communities
- Support biodiversity action through funding and/or partnerships, for example by:
 - Grant aiding or funding biodiversity projects
 - Working with Local Nature Partnerships and Action Plans with other organisations
 - Supporting other environmental organisations and projects

Suggested other factors to consider for potential measuring and/or indicators, monitored or collected, for example:

- Relevant nature volunteer days undertaken.
 - Grant and investment schemes that could be funded to encourage biodiversity actions.
 - Relevant capacity improvements – new staff employed whether full or part time who can contribute to biodiversity actions
 - List of funding sources directed towards biodiversity
 - List of local/national environmental groups actively or substantially engaged and/or supported
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- **Additional information:** Include here additional information such as potential impact on costs, benefits, and outcomes for action relevant to this NRAP aim.
 - **Narrative/graphics:** Include here a brief narrative and any graphics which describe the information you have included under this aim.

NRAP Aim 5: Embed biodiversity through engagement and awareness raising to support effective decision making at every level.

Consider actions that can be taken to:

- Embed biodiversity action across your organisation's functions, for example by:
 - Making commitments in corporate plans
 - Incorporating biodiversity and the section 6 duty into performance management, through Environmental Statements, Local Well-being Plans, Well-being Statements, impact assessments, business planning and budget monitoring, performance management systems, internal consultations or audits
 - Valuing biodiversity more effectively and for the longer term in decision making
 - Ensuring functions across your organisation deliver biodiversity action as business as usual
- Raise awareness across your organisation, for example by:
 - Providing mandatory or voluntary training modules
 - Running seminars or providing information to highlight the importance and value of biodiversity and how you are contributing to action as an organisation
 - Incorporating training as part of the induction process

Consider any measures and indicators that could be used for monitoring, for example:

- policies that could be changed to incorporate biodiversity
 - Biodiversity valuation methods or techniques trialled
 - List of biodiversity training/awareness raising initiatives and further details
 - Number of staff receiving training
- **Additional information:** Include here additional information such as costs, benefits, impacts and outcomes for action relevant to this NRAP aim.
 - **Narrative/graphics:** Include here a brief narrative and any graphics which describe the information you have included under this aim.

NRAP Aim 6: Improve our evidence and monitoring.

Consider actions that can be taken to:

- Improve the use of evidence in decision making, for example by:
 - Gathering and sharing evidence
 - Using the best available evidence for decision making, for example using [Local Environment Record Centre](#) data in planning decisions

- Having regard to the [section 7 lists of species and habitats](#), the [State of Natural Resources Report](#) and [Area Statements](#)
 - Consulting relevant stakeholders/using expert input
 - Monitoring of outcomes
 - Identifying evidence gaps
 - Undertaking research
- Look to share evidence accessibly, for example by
 - Making data available through [Local Environment Records Centres](#)
 - Ensuring your environmental evidence is accessible to local communities

Consider any measures and indicators that could be used for monitoring, for example:

- A Service Level Agreement with the appropriate Local Environmental Records Centre
 - Data sources created or enhanced in relation to safeguarding species/habitats of principal importance (section 7 lists)
 - Data sources created or enhanced in relation to resilient ecological networks
 - Planning decisions made using biodiversity evidence e.g. Number of planning applications which impacted local or national designated sites, European Protected Species (EPS) or S7 species, numbers rejected because of local or national designated sites, EPS or S7 habitats or species
- **Additional information:** Include here details such as costs, benefits, impacts and outcomes for action relevant to this NRAP aim.
 - **Narrative/graphics:** Include here a brief narrative and any graphics which describe the information you have included under this aim.