

**CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.**

**CABINET EXECUTIVE**

**1<sup>st</sup> March 2022**

**REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Heulwen Hulme  
Portfolio Holder for Environment**

**REPORT TITLE: Powys Nature Recovery Action Plan**

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**REPORT FOR: Decision**

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**1. Purpose**

The purpose of the report is to:

- 1.1 Present the Powys Nature Recovery Action Plan to the Council for adoption;
- 1.2 Seek the Council's continued commitment to the Powys Nature Partnership, thereby assisting the delivery of the Plan's actions; and
- 1.3 Highlight the role of the above in helping the Council to meet its duties under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Biodiversity continues to decline internationally, and Wales is not exempt from this trend<sup>12</sup>. Biodiversity provides the life support systems enabling all organisms, including humans, to survive. It is essential to economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being. Each organism has a role to play and contributes to the health, productivity, and resilience of our ecosystems.
- 2.2 Ecosystems provide a multiplicity of benefits and services to people, from the provision of food and products that support our economies, water purification and regulation, pollination, and erosion control. It also provides cultural services by providing recreational experiences, helping to improve our physical and mental health and well-being and it gives us a sense of place.
- 2.3 A decline in biodiversity will impact on the provision of food, the changing climate, and our own resilience as a species so immediate action is

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<sup>1</sup> State of Nature Report 2019: <https://nbn.org.uk/stateofnature2019/reports/>

<sup>2</sup> State of our Natural Resources Report 2020: <https://naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/research-and-reports/state-of-natural-resources-report-sonarr-for-wales-2020/?lang=en>

required to halt and reverse biodiversity loss.

- 2.4 The Powys Nature Recovery Action Plan (PNRAP) builds on the Powys Local Biodiversity Action Plan<sup>3</sup>, updating actions to reflect the current situation. It is primarily intended to guide the work of the Powys Nature Partnership, a group of organisations and individuals committed to reversing the declines in biodiversity across Powys (excluding the Brecon Beacons National Park, the National Park benefits from its own Local Nature Partnership and Nature Recovery Action Plan) and of which Powys County Council is a part.
- 2.5 The PNRAP has been prepared by an Ecological Consultancy and Powys County Council in consultation with the Powys Nature Partnership and is the product of various discussions over the past five years. Discussions have been facilitated through the Powys Nature Partnership to agree a set of actions for nature recovery within Powys.
- 2.6 At the heart of the PNRAP is the ambition to reverse the declines in biodiversity in Powys by focussing on developing resilient ecological networks (also known as 'nature recovery networks'). The PNRAP takes an ecosystem approach, meaning that it is designed to deliver biodiversity action at a larger scale than a single species or habitat and takes account of the needs of people at the same time.
- 2.7 The PNRAP is an aspirational 10-year plan. The intention is that the actions included within the plan will be regularly reviewed and updated within the 10-year life of the plan, in response to circumstances.
- 2.8 The PNRAP is a key mechanism for helping prioritise, deliver, and monitor nature recovery in Powys. It provides a local delivery framework for compliance with Wales' environmental legal and policy drivers and the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales<sup>4</sup>. The adoption of the Nature Recovery Action Plan provides a demonstrable way of assisting the Council to deliver its obligations to the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

### **3. Advice**

It is proposed that:

- 3.1 The Council adopts the PNRAP as at appendix A and continues its commitment to the Powys Nature Partnership to help the Council meet its duties under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- 3.2 The actions within the plan (appendix B) be reviewed annually by the Powys Nature Partnership. This will allow the plan to evolve in response

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<sup>3</sup> Powys Local Biodiversity Action Plan: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/2553/Local-Biodiversity-Action-Plan>

<sup>4</sup> Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales: <https://gov.wales/nature-recovery-action-plan>

to changes in policies and legislation, resource availability and data.

3.3 Progress towards delivering the plan be monitored through the production of an annual high-level report by the Partnership. More detailed reporting on individual grant funded actions will be provided to grant funding bodies.

#### **4. Resource Implications**

4.1 This PNRAP is intended to help the Powys Nature Partnership to target resources to develop and deliver projects at the appropriate scale. It can also help to inform and support funding applications. It is a Partnership plan, so many of the actions will be externally funded by partner organisations, either through their core funding or through external grant funded projects.

4.2 During the consultations to develop the PNRAP, it was ensured that any Council related actions included within the plan reflect either:

- Core activities, including those which are ongoing or planned as part of the Council's duties under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and so are already supported by service budgets;
- Activities which are intended to be delivered through grant funded programmes, such as the Local Places for Nature funding, so any up-front costs will be met without placing additional demands on core Council budgets.

4.3 The long-term management of any grant funded activities delivered by the Council will be considered before these are implemented, ensuring that either partner organisations, volunteers or community groups are able to support this.

4.4 The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) notes the content of the report and that the actions that fall upon the Council can be accommodated within existing service budgets.

#### **5. Legal implications**

5.1 The PNRAP is aligned with Welsh Government's Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales, taking the six all Wales objectives and setting them in the context of local priorities.

5.2 Adopting the proposed plan, as set out in points 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 above, would assist the Council to meet its duty under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, which places a statutory duty on the Council to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of its functions.

5.3 Adopting the proposed plan, as set out in points 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3, will also assist the Council to deliver its obligations to the Wellbeing of Future

Generations (Wales) Act 2015, particularly the 'Resilient Wales' goal.

- 5.4 The Deputy Monitoring Officer notes the content of the Report and supports the proposals contained within the plan for adoption by the Council.

## **6. Data Protection**

- 6.1 The PNRAP reflects the activities carried out by the Powys Nature Partnership to reverse biodiversity declines in Powys. No information about individuals is included; as such, the proposal as set out in points 3.1 and 3.2 above does not require the processing of personal data.

## **7. Comment from local member(s)**

- 7.1 Not applicable - this plan reflects an approach to carrying out and reporting on activities across all areas of Powys, except the Brecon Beacons National Park for which there is a separate Nature Recovery Action Plan. It is expected that Local Members would have opportunity to comment on individual schemes to enhance biodiversity in their Ward, as they arise.

## **8. Impact Assessment**

The full impact assessment is at appendix C; in summary:

- 8.1 The proposals will have a positive impact if implemented, as the Council will be able to demonstrate and monitor the way in which it is meeting its responsibility to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of its duties. Taking pro-active steps to enhance biodiversity and greenspaces will have a positive effect on the natural environment of Powys, it will address the decline in biodiversity and help to create healthy, resilient ecosystems. Through increasing the quality of the natural environment, the proposals will enhance the opportunities for access to greenspace for physical and mental wellbeing. The Council's activities will contribute to the Powys Nature Recovery Action Plan and adopting the plan will assist the Council to meet its duties under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- 8.2 It is expected that individual Services will consider the resource implications of each activity that they propose to carry out to enhance biodiversity and greenspaces 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 annually by the Powys Nature Partnership. The Biodiversity Officer will collate this information as coordinating the partnership and Powys Nature Recovery Action Plan is part of this role.

## **9. Recommendation**

It is recommended that:

9.1 The Council adopts the PNRAP as at appendix A and continues its commitment to the Powys Nature Partnership, to help the Council to meet its duties under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

9.2 The actions within the plan (appendix B) are reviewed annually by the Powys Nature Partnership.

9.3 Progress towards delivering the plan should be monitored through the production of an annual report by the Partnership.

**Appendices:**

[Appendix A – Powys Nature Recovery Action Plan](#)

[Appendix B – Action lists \(general and for specific habitats / species\)](#)

Appendix C – Impact assessment

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