

# Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan

## Denbighshire County Council

As a local authority we now have a statutory duty to function sustainably and lead by example when it comes to protecting and enhancing our natural environment. To meet the challenge of reversing the decline in biodiversity it is essential that we act now. As a local authority we must ensure that we meet the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

This document is Denbighshire County Council's biodiversity duty delivery plan which outlines how, as an organisation, we plan to address the biodiversity duty under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and consequently help achieve the Well-being and Nature Recovery Plan objectives over the period 2016-19.

## Introduction

Biodiversity is the diversity of all living things. A biodiverse environment is more resilient to change and is of vital importance to the maintenance of healthy ecosystems and the subsequent availability of sustainable natural resources. Humans rely on biodiverse ecosystems in our natural world to provide us with a variety of resources essential to life, such as our food, water, air, building materials, and medicines. Biodiversity also has an intrinsic value, and where we are responsible for reductions in biodiversity, we must seek to protect it and reverse these declines.

Biodiversity loss continues as a direct result of human impacts, through habitat loss and degradation, over exploitation of the natural world, pollution, climate change and the introduction and spread of invasive non-native species. In the 2016 State Of Nature (Wales) Report, Over 5,000 of the species that are known to occur in Wales have been assessed using modern Red List criteria. 354 (7%) of these are at risk of extinction from Great Britain.

The Welsh Assembly Government recognise all the benefits that are provided by plants, animals, microorganisms and the places where they live. The Welsh Assembly Government are aiming to reverse the decline of biodiversity in Wales with a ground breaking new framework of legislation.

## Strategic context

### Environment (Wales) Act 2016

Under the Environment (Wales) Act (2016) all public bodies in Wales are required to;

- Maintain and enhance biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities and in doing so promote the resilience of ecosystems
- Demonstrate an ecosystem approach by applying the principles set out in the Act
- Prepare and publish a plan outlining how they intend to fulfil the duty
- Publish a report, every three years, on the actions which they have taken to meet this duty. (The first report is due to be published by 2019 covering the period 2016-2019)

### Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015) all public bodies in Wales are required to;

- Carry out sustainable development by demonstrating the 5 ways of working
- Publish well-being objectives which maximise its contribution to the 7 well-being goals set out in the Act

## **The Nature Recovery Plan for Wales**

The Welsh Government published the national biodiversity strategy “The Nature Recovery Plan for Wales” in 2015 with the ambition to “halt the decline in biodiversity by 2020 and then reverse the decline, for its intrinsic value, and to ensure lasting benefits to society” The Nature Recovery Plan for Wales builds on the new legislative framework and sets out how Wales will deliver the commitments of the UN convention on biological diversity and associated Aichi targets as well as the EU biodiversity strategy to “halt the decline in our biodiversity by 2020 and then reverse that decline”.

The nature recovery plan focusses on six objectives for nature recovery in Wales. Actions are set out under each objective to reverse the decline of biodiversity.

Objective 1: Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels.

Objective 2: Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management

Objective 3: Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation

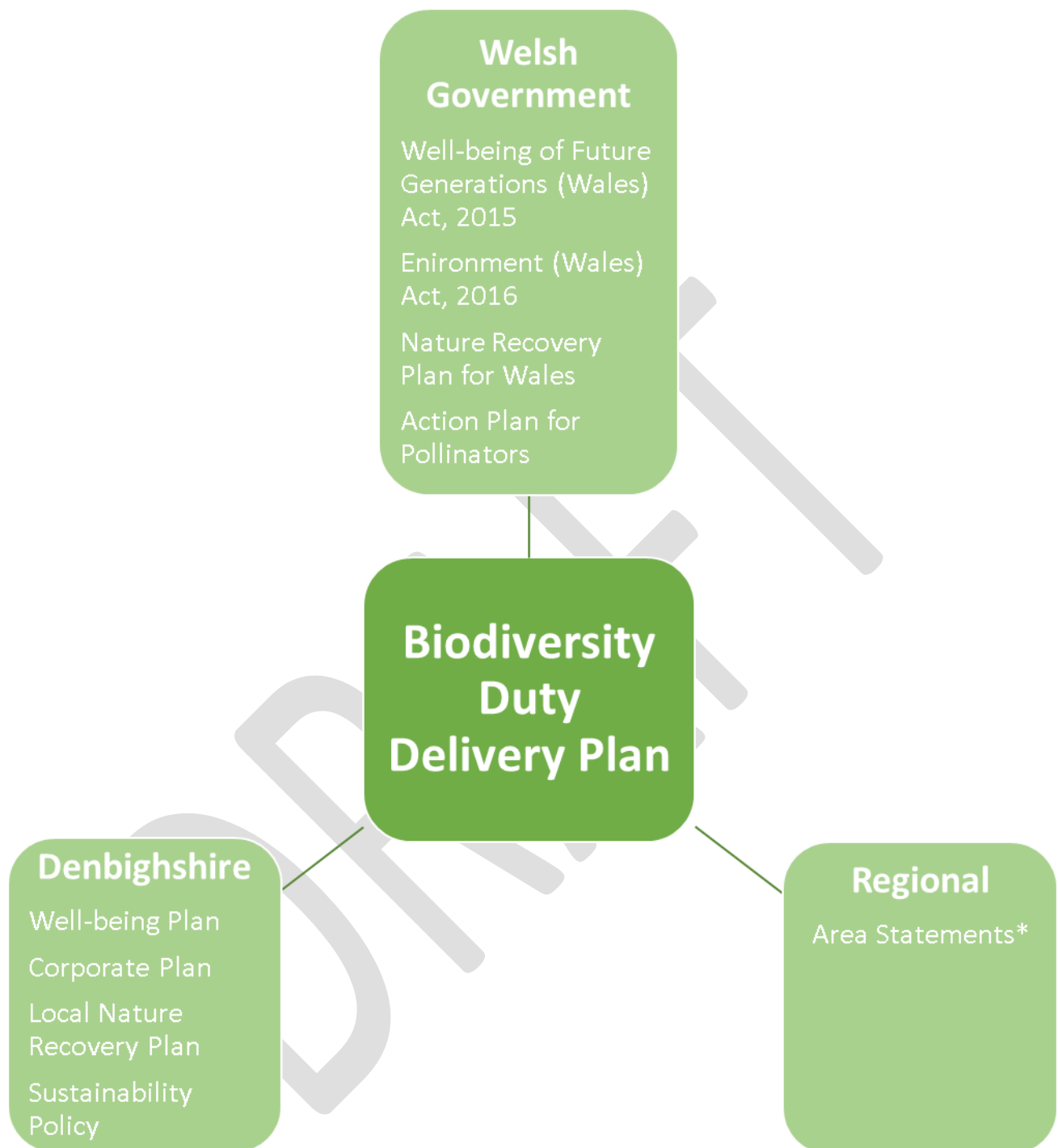
Objective 4: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

Objective 5: Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring

Objective 6: Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery

The actions are allocated to specific partners including public bodies and local nature partnerships who are considered key partners for delivery. Welsh Government guidance states that public bodies should consider using the Nature Recovery Plan on which to base a duty forward plan. A biodiversity duty plan required by the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, and based on the nature recovery plan objectives, will also help public bodies to achieve their Well-being objectives.

**Figure 1:** The legislative and policy architecture surrounding the Biodiversity Duty delivery plan



\* The areas for Area Statements have not been finalised by NRW so at this stage it is unknown whether it will be at a local authority or regional scale of working.

## Reporting/Monitoring

Action under the plan will be monitored and reported on through a number of ways due to the integrated nature of the plan. Regular updates on plan progress will be received by the environment working group. Relevant actions will be reported on quarterly in line with the Single Revenue Grant reporting requirements. Action will also contribute to the annual output report for the well-being objectives and report for the environment act duty every 3 years.

Area	Format	Deadline	Monitoring body
Environment Act Duty	Forward plan/Biodiversity duty delivery plan  Report	Guidance recommends it should be in place by 21 <sup>st</sup> May 2017  Every 3 years from 2019	Welsh Government
Well-being of Future Generations	Objectives  Output report	Published by May 2017 Annually	WFG Commissioner
SRG/ESD Funding	Reporting	Every 12 months	Welsh Government
Denbighshire County Council Corporate Plan: Environment	Progress Report	Annually 2017 – 2022.	Denbighshire County Council

## Biodiversity duty delivery actions

In accordance with Welsh Assembly Government guidance, actions in our duty delivery plan are set out under the most relevant nature recovery plan objective. The action information is provided along with an action lead, the year the action will be undertaken and how it meets the Well-being of Future Generations five ways of working.



Nature recovery plan objective 1	Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels
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Code	Outcome	Action	Lead	Year				Performance measure	Strategic links
				2016	2017	2018	2019		
1.1	Achieve the resilient Wales goal: Ensure biodiversity integration with council Well-being work-streams	<p>1.1.1 Embed the consideration of biodiversity and ecosystems throughout decision making</p> <p>1.1.2 Ensure there are strong links between staff and the local nature partnership to ensure input into the Public Service Boards, well-being assessment objectives and auditing process.</p>	<p><b>Democratic Services</b>, and Strategic Planning and Performance</p> <p><b>Strategic Planning and Performance</b> and Countryside Services</p>		•	•	•	<p>Legislative and policy requirements included in council plans where appropriate</p> <p>Biodiversity targets within the corporate plan</p> <p>Clear lines of communication established (create an organogram of people with relevant roles)</p>	<p>Nature Recovery Plan objective 1</p> <p>Nature Recovery Plan objective 1.1.1</p>
1.2	Implement the new biodiversity and ecosystems resilience duty:	1.2.1 Undertake a biodiversity audit of council services, identify key departments and opportunities to improve biodiversity.	<b>Countryside Services</b> and Strategic Planning and Performance			•	•	<p>Biodiversity audit report complete</p> <p>Measures included in departmental service plans</p>	<p>Nature Recovery Plan objective 1</p> <p>Nature Recovery Plan objective 1.1.2/1.1.2a</p>

Code	Outcome	Action	Lead	Year				Performance measure	Strategic links
				2016	2017	2018	2019		
		1.2.2 Produce a biodiversity and ecosystems resilience duty delivery plan for the council	Countryside Services			•	•	Duty delivery plan in place	
		1.2.3 Undertake meetings with key services identified in the biodiversity audit, and ensure that biodiversity is incorporated in their service plans	<b>Strategic Planning and Performance</b> and Countryside Services			•	•	Log of meetings kept  Updated service plans	
1.3	Legislative and policy requirements are reflected in council plans, reports and processes, programmes and projects	1.3.1 Identify and assess council plans and policies for biodiversity impact and provide recommendations for amendments  1.3.2 Ensure that the biodiversity and sustainability duty are considered within committee reports by including a standard consideration of the biodiversity and ecosystem resilience duty on all reports.	<b>Strategic Planning and Performance</b> and Countryside Services  <b>Democratic Services</b> and All Services			•	•	Report identifying relevant documents, with recommendations for changes complete  New amended report format created  All reports consider Well-being Impact Assessment and where appropriate complete WIA to support reports.	Nature Recovery Plan objective 1  Well-being of Future Generations  Corporate Plan 2017-22 Priorities



Code	Outcome	Action	Lead	Year				Performance measure	Strategic links
				2016	2017	2018	2019		
		<p>1.3.3 Review the sustainability test which is currently undertaken within council procurement rules</p> <p>1.3.4 Ensure that all new projects complete a WIA including an assessment of project impacts on the environment and biodiversity, outlining measures to enhance biodiversity and increase the resilience of ecosystems</p>	<p><b>Procurement</b></p> <p><b>Project Managers</b></p>			•	•	<p>Report/Review of current document with recommendations for changes</p> <p>Projects supported by completed Well-Being Impact Assessment</p>	<p>Corporate Plan 2017-22 – Priorities</p> <p>Project Register</p> <p>Programme Boards</p>
1.4	Improved understanding and awareness leads to behavioural change	1.4.1 Undertake an ambitious internal communication strategy to improve understanding of the duty:	<b>Customers, Communications and Marketing, and Countryside Services</b>			•	•	<p>Complete an initial Staff &amp; Member survey. “Is Biodiversity your business?”</p> <p>a) Produce a staff advice note on the legislation</p> <p>b) Hold Staff and Member training</p> <p>c) Produce an e learning module/sustainability and biodiversity staff and member pack.</p>	<p>Nature Recovery Plan objective 1</p> <p>Nature Recovery Plan objective 1.3</p>

Code	Outcome	Action	Lead	Year				Performance measure	Strategic links
				2016	2017	2018	2019		
		1.4.2. Continue and improve our outreach education and awareness programme to ensure staff and residents understand what biodiversity is, and its importance in their day to day lives.	<b>Countryside services</b> , Local Nature Partnership, Marketing & communication Team		•	•	•	Number of related activities undertaken (countryside events, school group visits etc.).	Proposed sustainability policy
		1.4.3. Establish links between biodiversity projects and carbon and waste reduction initiatives	<b>Housing</b> , Waste, Countryside Services,			•	•	Meet with relevant departmental staff to discuss opportunities – Meeting minutes published online.	
		1.4.4 Encourage the development of corporate volunteering activities for Denbighshire County Council staff to promote environmental awareness and responsibility amongst staff and to enable individuals to develop values, skills and knowledge to contribute to sustainable development.	<b>Countryside Services</b>			•	•	Record the number of corporate volunteer hours	



Nature recovery plan objective 2	Safeguard species and habitats of principle importance and improve their management
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Code	Outcome	Action	Lead	Year				Performance measure	Strategic links
				2016	2017	2018	2019		
2.1	Implement the suite of environmental legislation through our in house Ecological advisory service	2.1.1 Continue to provide ecological advice with regard to protected habitats and species, development control, licencing applications and protected site impact assessments, monitoring and enforcement action.	<b>Ecologist - Countryside Services</b>	•	•	•	•	No. of planning applications responded to (currently kept on spreadsheet)  Training given to planners and members, with attendance recorded.	Nature Recovery Plan objective 2.1  Nature Recovery Plan objective 2.1
2.2	Ensure best evidence to underpin development control and planning policy decision making and safeguard species and habitats	2.2.1 Seek funding to access Cofnod/LERC data.	<b>Planning, and Countryside Services</b>		•	•	•	Access to Cofnod database	Nature Recovery Plan objective 2
2.3	Increased resilience of our ecosystems by improving their diversity, extent, condition and connectivity.	2.3.1 Production of a local nature recovery plan which focusses on diversity, extent, condition and connectivity of Environment (Wales) Act, Section 7 habitats and species.	<b>Local Nature Partnership and Countryside Services</b>				•	Production of a Local nature recovery plan	Nature Recovery Plan objective 2  Nature Recovery Plan objective 2.2

Code	Outcome	Action	Lead	Year				Performance measure	Strategic links
				2016	2017	2018	2019		
		2.3.2 Incorporate local priorities into area statements and vice versa				•	•	Local priorities included in area statements	





Nature recovery plan objective 3	Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation
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	Outcome	Action	Lead	Year				Performance measure	Strategic links
				2016	2017	2018	2019		
3.1	Habitat creation for pollinators with wider environmental benefits.	<p>3.1.1 Denbighshire County Council to achieve national accreditation under the Bee friendly Wales scheme.</p> <p>3.1.2 Produce a pollinator policy for Denbighshire County Council</p>	<b>Countryside Services</b> , Facilities, Assets & Housing, and other services which manage land			●	●	<p>Bee friendly accreditation</p> <p>Pollinator policy adopted throughout the authority</p>	<p>Nature Recovery Plan objective 3</p> <p>Action Plan for Pollinators</p> <p>DCC Corporate Plan 2017-22 Environment Priority</p>
3.2	Restoring degraded habitat and improving wider landscape connectivity.	3.2.1 Maintain and enhance our road verges for biodiversity	<b>Highways and Countryside Services</b>	●	●	●	●	<p>Increased extent of biodiversity cut (single annual cut). Annual report to show progress.</p> <p>Increase the number of Roadside Nature Reserves designated for rare species, important habitats or valuable plant communities.</p>	<p>Nature Recovery Plan objective 3</p> <p>Action Plan for Pollinators</p>

	Outcome	Action	Lead	Year				Performance measure	Strategic links
				2016	2017	2018	2019		
3.3	Habitat creation	3.3.1 Produce and implement a tree planting strategy to increase the tree cover in urban wards with currently low levels (e.g. Rhyl and Denbigh)	<b>Countryside Services,</b> Facilities, Assets & Housing		•	•	•	Strategy in place  PR004410 PLANT Project: Urban Tree Planting  Annual report and monitoring on progress	Nature Recovery Plan objective 3  DCC Corporate Plan 2017-22 Environment Priority
3.4	Restore areas of degraded habitat and increase resilience of protected sites	3.4.1 Create individual site management plans to enhance the council estate for the benefit of biodiversity.	<b>Countryside Services,</b> Facilities, Assets & Housing, and services which manage land				•	Site management plans for each site, with works to improve at least 1 site per annum.  Devise a system for monitoring progress.	Nature Recovery Plan objective 3  Nature Recovery Plan objective 3.1





Nature recovery plan objective 4	Tackle key pressures on species and habitats
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Code	Outcome	Action	Lead	Year				Performance measure	Strategic links
				2016	2017	2018	2019		
4.1	Climate change	4.1.1 Further Carbon reduction and energy efficient initiatives	<b>Facilities, Assets &amp; Housing</b>		•	•	•	Report from Energy Conservation Project Officer  PR004701 – Project: Reducing carbon emissions from council assets	Nature Recovery Plan objective 4  Proposed Sustainability policy  Corporate Plan 2017-22 – Environment Priority
		4.1.2 Reducing waste production and promoting resource efficiency	<b>Waste</b>			•	•	Log of total waste arising for Denbighshire detailing the proportion which is recycled or reused. Summary of activities to promote resource efficiency  PR004703 – Project: Remodelling Waste Service Operations	

Code	Outcome	Action	Lead	Year				Performance measure	Strategic links
				2016	2017	2018	2019		
4.2	Combat invasive species	4.2.1 Support projects which control Invasive Non Native species including Living landscapes/Alyn valley Himalayan balsam project/Dee INNs project	<b>Countryside Services</b>	●	●	●	●	Project reports	Nature Recovery Plan objective 4
4.3	Reduce key pressures on habitats and species of principle importance for conservation	4.3.1 Coordinate and support Environment (Wales) Act section 7 species/habitat specific project work	<b>Countryside Services</b>		●	●	●	Project reports/data records	Nature Recovery Plan objective 4
		4.3.2 Undertake practical management to benefit Environment (Wales) Act section 7 species or habitats	<b>Countryside Services</b> , and services which manage land			●	●	Project reports/data records	
4.4	Reduce pressures on habitats and species related to reduced habitat options in new builds and building maintenance.	4.4.1 Review processes and consider opportunities for improvements for wildlife in our new homes/buildings schemes and when maintaining our local authority housing and produce best practice guidance	Countryside Services, <b>Planning, Facilities, Assets &amp; Housing</b> and services which manage land			●	●	Process reviewed and best practice guidance produced	Nature Recovery Plan objective 4

Code	Outcome	Action	Lead	Year				Performance measure	Strategic links
				2016	2017	2018	2019		
4.5	Reduce development pressures through continued ecologist advice and guidance notes	4.5.1 Improve process to enhance biodiversity by producing local Environment (Wales) Act section 7 guidance note.	Planning and Countryside Services				•	Complete advice note	Nature Recovery Plan objective 4
		4.5.2 Improve the quality of applications by providing applicants with appropriate guidance	Planning and Countryside Services				•	Produce SPGs and guidance notes to be used on planning website	Nature Recovery Plan objective 4





Nature recovery plan objective 5	Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring
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Code	Outcome	Action	Lead	Year				Performance measures	Strategic links
				2016	2017	2018	2019		
5.1	Collect evidence	5.2.1 Support and undertake Surveys of Environment (Wales) Act 2016, Section 7 habitat and species	<b>Countryside Services,</b> Local Nature Partnership	•	•	•	•	Survey results	Nature Recovery Plan objective 5
5.2	Develop opportunities to raise understanding of Denbighshire's Biodiversity	5.4.1 Maximise use of volunteers particularly in survey and monitoring roles	<b>Countryside Services,</b> Council Employees		•	•	•	Volunteer groups established and maintained	Nature Recovery Plan objective 5
5.3	Standardise data capture and action reporting	5.4.1 Use of LERC for evidence and data gathering.  5.4.2 Review survey sheets and staff and volunteer training.  5.4.3 Report biodiversity action through agreed national database/process	<b>Countryside Services</b>	•	•	•  •	•  •	Use of Cofnod database  Standardised data collection system developed.  To be confirmed (BARRS shut with no current replacement).	Nature Recovery Plan objective 5







Nature recovery plan objective 6	Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery
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Code	Outcome	Action	Lead	Year				Performance measures	Strategic links
				2016	2017	2018	2019		
6.1	A council who is fully compliant with legislative and policy requirements and proactive in biodiversity conservation.	6.1.1 Ensure there is sufficient capacity to comply with legislative requirements and enable proactive action for biodiversity conservation.	<b>Senior Leadership Team (SLT)</b>	•	•	•	•	Sufficient staff and resources in place  Adopt and endorse Section 6 Duty Delivery Plan	Nature Recovery Plan objective 6
6.2	Resources are provided for local biodiversity action delivery	6.2.1 Staff funding is secured to support and deliver biodiversity projects.	<b>Countryside Services,</b> Local Nature Partnership	•	•	•	•	Funding bids and reports  PR004418: Project: Improving biodiversity in Denbighshire	Nature Recovery Plan objective 6  Corporate Plan 2017-22 – Environment Priority
6.3	A framework is in place to support and govern local biodiversity action	6.3.1 Participate in the Local Nature Partnership/North East Wales Biodiversity Network meetings.	<b>Countryside Services,</b> Local Nature Partnership	•	•	•	•	Attend Local Nature Partnership Meetings and report back appropriate information	Nature Recovery Plan objective 6



Code	Outcome	Action	Lead	Year				Performance measures	Strategic links
				2016	2017	2018	2019		
6.4	Establish a framework of governance internally for council projects which focus on biodiversity or sustainability	6.4.1 Create a cross departmental biodiversity and sustainability working group to implement the policy	<b>Strategic Planning and Performance, Biodiversity Champion, and Countryside Services</b>			•	•	Working group formed and Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan endorsed.	Nature Recovery Plan objective 6
6.5	Review and update Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan in line with timings set out in Environment (Wales) Act guidance	6.5.1 Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan reviewed and updated	<b>Countryside Services</b>				•	Updated Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan is in Place and endorsed in line with legislation	Nature Recovery Plan objective 6