



**REPORT TO:** Conwy and Denbighshire Public Services Board  
**DATE:** 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020  
**LEAD OFFICER & ORGANISATION:** Justin Hanson Natural Resources Wales (NRW)  
**CONTACT OFFICER & ORGANISATION:** Helen Millband NRW  
**SUBJECT:** Supporting environmental resilience update and review

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## **1. What is the report about?**

- 1.1 The work of the sub-group to review the existing 5 work areas in this priority in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, to provide an update for members as requested at July PSB meeting, and to outline how and why two projects have been submitted to the NRW Strategic Allocated Funding grant process

## **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

- 2.1 An update on progress and a review of the Supporting Environmental Resilience priority from the Supporting Environmental Resilience sub-group

## **3. What are the recommendations?**

- 3.1 The review of existing work areas in relation to Covid 19 recommends that –
- a) three current priorities are paused;
  - b) a new priority is developed recognising the importance of local green and blue space for communities and;
  - c) that 2 additional sub-work actions about PSB partners' staff working practices and establishing links with the transport and regional energy strategy are relevant
  - d) the suggested shared responsibility for reporting and monitoring actions is agreed across the PSB partners

## **4. Report details**

- 4.1 NRW chair this sub-group. We have met twice this year, 31 January and 16th September, other meetings were shelved due to capacity during lockdown.
- 4.2 The September meeting was called specifically to:
- a) Meet the main PSB ask to review priorities in light of the Covid 19 pandemic.
  - b) Allow the sub-group dedicated space to reflect on the PSB ask and to discuss and review the priorities in light of covid and the potential for a green recovery.
  - c) The lockdown, and our working response to the pandemic has made it clear that we can no longer do what we were doing before and nor can the people and

communities of Conwy and Denbighshire. We therefore recognised that it was the right time to review, reflect and re-prioritise. With an understanding that it may be necessary to focus on fewer things.

- d) Consider sharing responsibility for administration, reporting and monitoring in relation to the work areas
- e) Explore the potential for small projects, to kickstart or pilot or develop existing approaches across the PSB that could take advantage of the £25k pot of NRW funding

4.3 NRW reminded the group of the links between the Wellbeing & FG Act and the Environment Act and that online engagement sessions are happening for NW (Conwy) and NE (Denbighshire) Wales during October and November which will complement the PSB work by prioritising opportunities related to the environment– attendance from as wide a range of partners is encouraged.

4.4 The meeting systematically reviewed the current five work areas in this priority. Although all were still considered relevant, it was agreed that some needed to be paused due to capacity or just simply during a pandemic being the wrong time.

4.5 It was agreed to develop one new work area about green and blue spaces for communities building on the renewed enthusiasm for the local environment during the first lockdown experience and their potential to help recovery. It was recognised that there are important links to develop in relation to “Supporting Good Mental Well-being for all ages” priority as there’s a significant evidence base around benefits of green space.

4.6 Discussion around working from home and travel identified an important new sub action under the reduction of carbon action – developing joint approaches, good practice and replicable quick wins to conducting business virtually and home working, travel reduction and increased equality within the work practices. It was agreed that the subgroup would encourage learning and sharing under work area 1

4.7 Under the same work area 1 the low carbon economy around transport and regional energy strategy was highlighted. The group recognised that conversations at PSB level could facilitate better join up with regional and national work/initiatives. It is recommended this is included in work area 1 (see 4.9 below)

4.8 Summary of revised work areas under Supporting Environmental Resilience priority and lead organisations where confirmed:

Work Area	Detail	Review outcome	New Agreed lead
1	Work with our PSB partners to develop a framework for our environment work, so that we’re all working to the same goals.	Still RELEVANT but - expand biodiversity measurement indicator 44;  - include working from home	Denbighshire County Council

		benefits; - regional energy strategy; and _ health board ISO14401 and PSB links	
2	Work with communities to develop environmental pledges and green changes we could make to reduce our impact on the environment.	Still relevant but PAUSED	Conwy County Borough Council on return of relevant officer
3	Look at environmental issues affecting the region that we can't fix by ourselves, like climate change resilience and reducing the amount of packaging in or shopping.	Still RELEVANT but minor change to the wording, to demonstrate we were looking at climate change resilience in a wider context, not just at Old Colwyn coastal defences.	To be discussed at next meeting
4	Look at our procurement process and identify how we can maximise community benefits from building developments (eg through Section 106 agreements – there are legal agreements between local authorities and developers for times when measures may be needed to reduce a developments impact on the community).	Still relevant but PAUSED	To be discussed at next meeting
5	Work with our planning teams to make sure environmental issues are looked at when planning new developments	Still relevant but PAUSED	NRW
6	Green and Blue spaces linked to Covid recovery for communities and staff	NEW	NRW

- 4.9 Initial project ideas for spending NRW £25K grant were discussed. Fran Lewis (CCBC) and Howard Sutcliffe (DCC) subsequently developed ideas after the meeting and two projects were submitted. NRW aim to notify the PSB of the decision by Friday, 13th November:

**Project 1 – Coastal electric bike empowerment programme.**

**£12k which will be used to purchase 6 electric bikes (existing staff and technical resources already in place).**

- Building on existing experience in Conwy County Borough Council of running specific electric bike activities to hard to reach individuals. Including those with mental health difficulties, obesity or weight management challenges and homeless participants; supporting communities to engage more with the outdoors.
- Develop a coastal sector scheme (based from Colwyn Bay/Porth Eirias area) utilising the paths from Conwy – Mostyn, to support people from many communities and encourage cycling as a tool for both health & wellbeing and as a mode of transport.
- Deliver weekly sessions and target hard to reach people and work with organisations such as North Wales Housing and Cartrefi Conwy. This will complement the ongoing programme of work with partners in Rural Conwy.
- CCBC staff will raise awareness about the local coastal environment and rural Conwy and encourage further connection with nature via material from NRW.

**Project 2 – Glan Morfa Community Woodland.**

**£13k which will be spent on securing the physical boundaries to the site, improving 3 access points, installing 6 way markers.**

- The aim is to provide ‘access for all’ whilst making it difficult for off road motorbikes to gain access to the site.
- Encourage increased usage of the site by people who live in West Rhyl - although the site is situated the other side of the railway line, it is seen as a physical barrier.
- Provide a number of attractive / inviting access points to encourage usage by young families with prams, wheelchairs/disabled buggies and cyclists who once at the site are safe in the knowledge that they can enjoy the flat and surfaced paths without the danger and annoyance of off road motorbikes.
- A Rhyl West/South West walking group will be established.

**5. How does the decision contribute to the priorities?**

- 5.1 This paper is about the Supporting Environmental Resilience priority for the PSB

**6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

- 6.1 This report is for information purposes only at this stage and any costs or affects will be identified once the PSB makes a decision upon the recommendations

**7. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them**

- 7.1 Risk in relation to the capacity of the group to administer and report on the work areas, addressed by sharing responsibility and pausing some actions.