

# The Greater Gwent Nature Recovery Action Plan



A Nature Recovery Action Plan for the Greater Gwent Area



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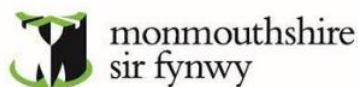
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## Gwent Fywaf Hydwyth



## A Resilient Greater Gwent



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## Foreword

On World Environment Day, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2021, the United Nations declared 2021-2030 the decade of ecosystem restoration, directly following the decade of Biodiversity (2011-2020).<sup>1</sup> Biodiversity is overall in decline throughout the UK evidenced in the most recent State of Nature Report in 2019, where 15% of species were identified at risk of extinction.<sup>2</sup> In February 2021 the Dasgupta Review concluded that “Our economies, livelihoods and well-being all depend on our most precious asset: Nature”.<sup>3</sup> Later, on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021, the Welsh Parliament declared a nature emergency and called for statutory targets to be set to halt and reverse the decline in biodiversity.

Greater Gwent is a diverse landscape and mosaic of urban and wilder habitats, boasting a diversity of flora and fauna. A negative trend in biodiversity provides the very real threat that much of this flora and fauna may disappear altogether. The Greater Gwent State of Nature report, produced in 2021, further looks at the status and trend of 100 species found within Greater Gwent, providing a snapshot of biodiversity trends in the wider area.<sup>4</sup> It is these identified trends that have helped inform the actions in this Greater Gwent Nature Recovery Action Plan.

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The Greater Gwent Nature Recovery Action Plan is a strategic document, set in the context of national and regional legislation and policy drivers, aiming to halt and reverse negative biodiversity trends identified in both the State of Natural Resources Report and the Greater Gwent State of Nature Report.

It provides guidance for public bodies and organisations, as well as helping guide the Local Nature Recovery Action Plans which focus more on local action to promote biodiversity in each Local Nature Partnership area.

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Ecosystem restoration and nature recovery work hand in hand. Nature recovery requires more than tinkering around the edges of the human environment. It requires the cessation of exploiting natural resources for unequal human gain, the reconnection of people with nature, and the restoration of ecosystems and ecosystem function to provide ecosystem resilience. It requires us all to work better together in a more integrated and involved way, to take collaborative preventative action to tackle the main drivers of biodiversity loss and build ecosystem resilience for well-being benefits long term.

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<sup>1</sup> [New UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration offers unparalleled opportunity for job creation, food security and addressing climate change \(unep.org\)](https://www.unep.org/news-story/2021-06-05-un-decades-on-ecosystem-restoration-offers-unparalleled-opportunity-for-job-creation-food-security-and-addressing-climate-change)

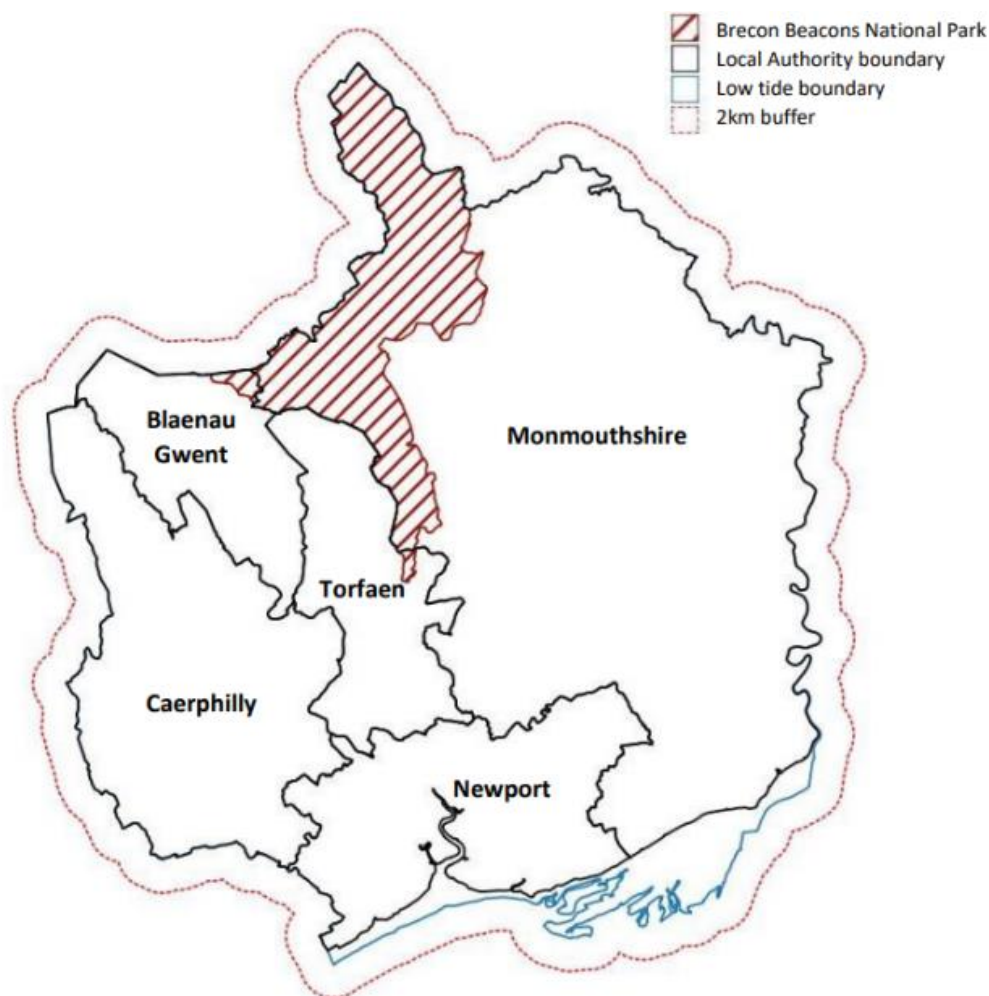
<sup>2</sup> [State-of-Nature-2019-UK-full-report.pdf \(nbn.org.uk\)](https://www.nbn.org.uk/state-of-nature-2019-uk-full-report.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [The Economics of Biodiversity The Dasgupta Review: Headline Messages \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/92444/the-economics-of-biodiversity-the-dasgupta-review-headline-messages)

<sup>4</sup> [Greater-Gwent-State-of-Nature-4-002.pdf \(monlife.co.uk\)](https://monlife.co.uk/greater-gwent-state-of-nature-4-002.pdf)

## Defining Greater Gwent

Throughout this document we use the term Greater Gwent to refer to the five local authorities in the area, to the low tide mark. The area largely corresponds with the former administrative county of Gwent.



*Figure 1: Map of the Greater Gwent area to the extent of the low tide boundary.*

The Local Government Act of 1888 formed the historic county of Monmouthshire, which encompasses much of the Gwent area today. Monmouthshire was superseded in 1974 by the new administrative county of Gwent, named after the former Kingdom of Gwent.

After dissolution as an administrative authority in 1996, Gwent was separated into the five local authority areas we have today: Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, and Torfaen. The borough of Caerphilly was formed by the merging of the districts of Islwyn (formerly part of Gwent) and Rhymney valley (formerly part of Mid Glamorgan).

The Greater Gwent area is home to part of the Brecon Beacons National Park. The park authority has produced its own nature recovery plan and strategy,<sup>5</sup> and the parts of Greater Gwent that fall within the park's boundaries are subject to the Park Authority's plans.

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<sup>5</sup> [Nature Recovery Action Plan | Brecon Beacons National Park Authority \(beacons-npa.gov.uk\)](#)

## Purpose and aims

### What is it and who is it for?

The Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) for Wales is broad, designed to be a guide for all public bodies in Wales that sets out the objectives to support Welsh Government's ambition "to reverse the decline in biodiversity, for its intrinsic value, and to ensure benefits to society".<sup>6</sup> The purpose of the Greater Gwent Nature Recovery Action Plan (GGNRAP) is to provide a framework of Nature Recovery Actions, which will drive change at the regional scale, and to support organisations to work better together. It looks to tackle the main drivers of biodiversity loss, build ecosystem resilience for the region, and facilitate nature recovery action at the landscape and regional scales. In addition, it has also been developed to both inform and support the integration between the national and local NRAPs, which are being developed for each Local Nature Partnership (LNP), to support cohesive joined up approaches when developing and delivering strategies plans and actions.

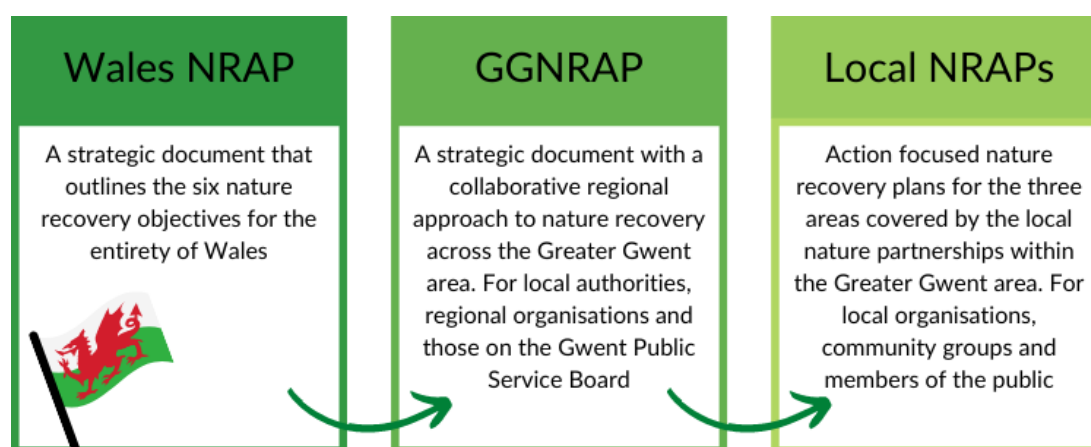


Figure 2: Hierarchy of nature recovery action plans in the Greater Gwent area

The GGNRAP is a strategic framework, aiming to align national policy and legislation, such as the Well-being of Future Generations (WoFG) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, informed by evidence including the Greater Gwent State of Nature Report 2020, the South East Wales Area Statement and Gwent Well-being Assessments. It is intended to be used by all organisations which operate at a regional level across the Greater Gwent area, including those on the Gwent Public Service Board (PSB), to support better involvement that drives positive change and collaborative action together long term.

The GGNRAP has been produced as part of the 'A Resilient Greater Gwent' (RGG) work programme. The Gwent Green Grid Partnership (GGGP) is a sister project to RGG and will continue its legacy, to work on a regional scale to deliver a landscape approach to create healthy resources that are resilient to pressures and threats. The GGGP will be critical in delivering the GGNRAP.

The GGNRAP acts as a framework for the local NRAPs in the Blaenau Gwent & Torfaen, Caerphilly, and Monmouthshire & Newport LNPs. Each LNP within Greater Gwent has a more specific NRAP for their local area, consistent with the themes presented in the GGNRAP.

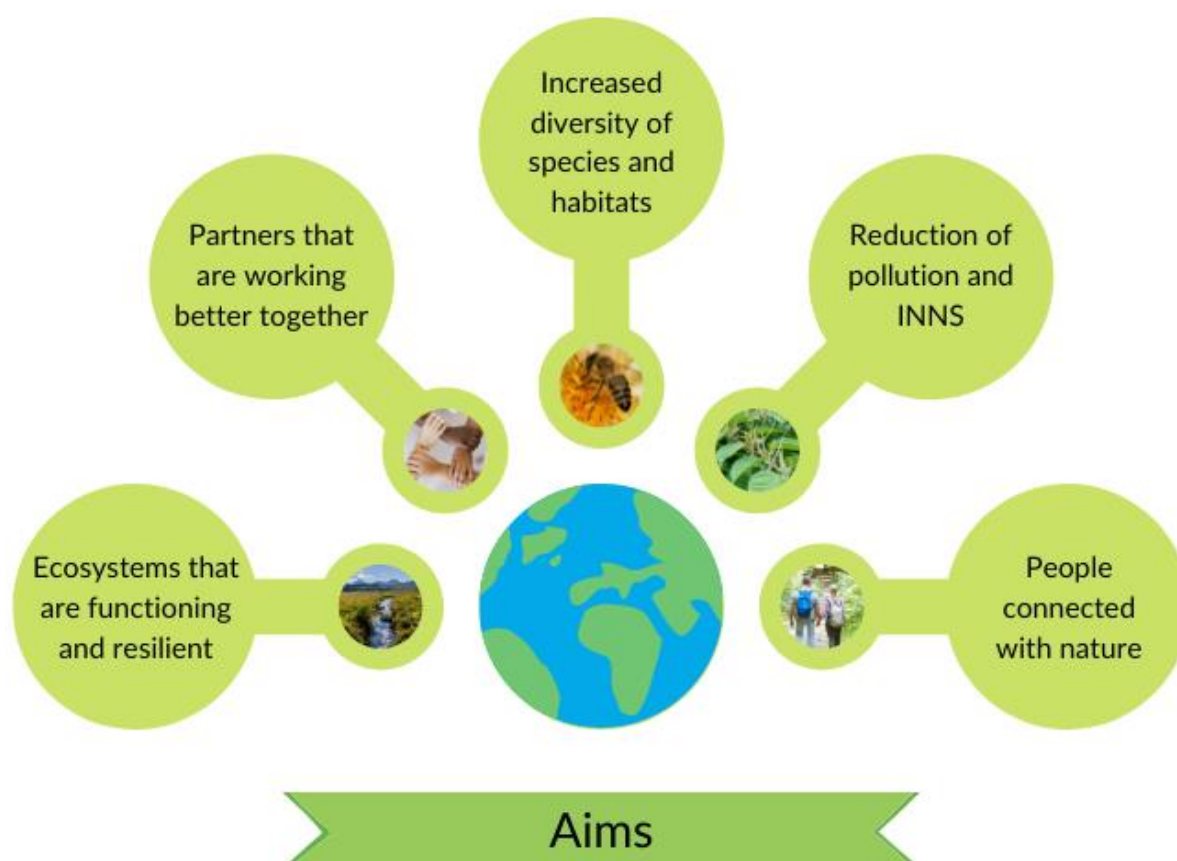
<sup>6</sup> [The Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales 2020 to 2021 \(gov.wales\)](#)

## Aims of the Greater Gwent Nature Recovery Action Plan

The GGNRAP provides guidance and recommendations on nature recovery actions within the Greater Gwent Area, allowing all stakeholders to work collaboratively to halt biodiversity decline and promote the recovery of nature across Greater Gwent. The GGNRAP encourages partnership working between all public bodies and organisations within Greater Gwent and promotes a regional approach to nature recovery at all levels, aligned to national and local priorities.

The GGNRAP has five primary aims and is a strategic ten-year document that is subject to reviews and amendments over its ten-year timeframe. GGNRAP will respond to future evidence, pressures, and policy changes, with reviews and updates as necessary

The five aims of the GGNRAP are aligned with the strategic themes laid out in the South East Wales Area Statement and compliment the seven well-being goals established in the WoFG Act 2015.



*Figure 3: The five aims of the Greater Gwent Nature Recovery Action Plan*

The aims of the GGNRAP are effectively desired outcomes from the nature recovery actions set out in Part 2: The Nature Recovery Action Plan. Further detailed descriptions for each aim of the GGNRAP are as follows:



## 1 Ecosystems that are functioning and resilient

Habitats are healthy and resilient, able to provide sustainable ecosystem services whilst being adaptable to system stressors such as land use and management changes. Ecosystems show resilience in the face of climate change, with decarbonisation and nature-based solutions at the forefront of decision making.

## 2 Partners that are working better together

Partners follow the established ways of working set out in the WoFG Act 2015: Long term; Prevention; Integration; Collaboration; Involvement. Partners work to address the five drivers of biodiversity loss at the regional scale (habitat loss and degradation, climate change, excessive nutrient load and other forms of pollution, Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) and over-exploitation and unsustainable use of resources) by identifying the root cause of issues and taking collaborative, preventative approaches towards reducing their impact on species, habitats, and people. Partners share skills, tools, knowledge, and other resources across the region.

## 3 Increased diversity of species and habitats

The extent, condition and connectivity of the habitats are being supported and managed appropriately and at an appropriate scale. Core habitats are safeguarded and enhanced, connected through a larger interconnected network of protected and non-protected sites, managed for biodiversity.

## 4 Reduction of pollution and INNS

Reduction and removal of pollution and Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) where currently present across the Greater Gwent area, continuing and building upon the success of existing partnerships and work programmes. People are working collaboratively together, taking preventative action to reduce future pollution and INNS risk.

## 5 People connected with nature

Both people and places that are increasingly connected with nature, promoting healthier lifestyles, and providing well-being benefits. A developed a sustained public knowledge, understanding and interaction with nature that realises the multiple benefits that nature can provide. The value of nature for society and economy is reflected in decision-making and public spend. There is an increased onus on the role of nature in delivering well-being outcomes across Greater Gwent.



## Part 1: The importance of nature and ecosystem resilience in Greater Gwent

Nature is important, it matters to us as a species. The natural world is the source of all our natural resources necessary for survival, whether that is the air we breathe, water, food, materials, energy, or medicines. Industries such as agriculture, fishing, forestry, energy production and tourism are dependent on nature. The natural environment can help us reduce flooding, store carbon and tackle climate change. Nature is the foundation of our livelihoods, our well-being, our economy, and our society.

The GGNRAP is underpinned by the findings of Greater Gwent State of Nature (GGSoN) report, which showed the need for nature recovery across Greater Gwent to safeguard some of our most vulnerable species. Nature recovery actions go hand in hand with safeguarding and enhancing ecosystem services and resilience for social, economic, cultural and environmental wellbeing adapted to future change

### 1.1: Nature and Biodiversity

Nature and biodiversity are often used interchangeably but have slightly different meanings. When we discuss biodiversity, we are referring to the diversity of living species in an area and so refers solely to living organisms, from the smallest microorganism to the largest species of plant or animal in an area. Biodiversity includes not only plants and animals but fungi, bacteria, and protists. The definition of biodiversity used by the Convention on Biological Diversity is:

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*“the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.”<sup>7</sup>*

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Nature, however, is all life on Earth (Earth’s biodiversity) as well as all the physical processes and systems that exist on Earth at the same time. This includes the climate, water cycle and geology.

Colloquially we use the term nature to refer to the natural landscape, with a bias towards focussing on living species. When we discuss nature recovery, we are considering how we can improve the natural landscape, such as restoring or creating specific habitat types. This then can lead to a positive effect on the biodiversity of the local area or region. Sometimes nature recovery actions may be seen to focus on an individual species, but the effects are often far more far reaching. An insect that seems insignificant could be crucial to a food web or be important in the lifecycle of another organism. Ecosystems are connected in the natural world and are connected to us humans more so than we may at first realise.

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<sup>7</sup> [Convention Text \(cbd.int\)](https://www.cbd.int/text/)

## 1.2: The Greater Gwent State of Nature<sup>8</sup>

The GGNRAP is informed by the Greater Gwent State of Nature Report (GGSoN). The GGSoN was produced by the Resilient Greater Gwent (RGG) partnership and looked to answer the question ‘What do we know about the wildlife within Greater Gwent?’

The GGSoN compiled existing records and data, used to analyse the status and trends of different species and species groups found within the Greater Gwent area. Both individual species and groups of species were analysed in the report. Due to the grouping of some species into a species group the report represents over 500 individual species, represented as 100 different stories of these species and species groups.

The species and species groups looked at in the report were chosen by the partners within the RGG partnership, Local Nature Partnerships, and local experts, selected based on their local conservation interest. Many of the species and species groups looked are Section 7 Species from the Environment Act (Wales) or were included on the Wales/UK as Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species lists.

The GGSoN report compiled national and local data into a regional record of the trends in biodiversity throughout the Greater Gwent area, in the hopes that this data would reveal threats in the wider ecosystem.

The findings of the GGSoN were influenced by the availability of data records for each of the 100 species and species group. The report highlights the variability of data availability between species and species groups and points out the need for further biological recording throughout the Greater Gwent area to improve and strengthen the data.

### Stories told:



Figure 4: The 100 species stories told in the Greater Gwent State of Nature Report

### GGSoN key findings:

- Of all the species and species groups analysed, 21% did not have enough data to describe the population trends.
- 34% of species showed a decline in their numbers or are predicted to continue to decline, raising to 50% of species when those with insufficient data and managed INNS are removed.
- Only 12% of species showed stable populations.
- 21% of species show a welcomed increase in their numbers.

A more extensive summary of the findings of the GGSoN can be found in Appendix 1.

<sup>8</sup> [Greater-Gwent-State-of-Nature-4-002.pdf \(monlife.co.uk\)](#)

### 1.3: Ecosystem Resilience

Ecosystem resilience is a core principle in the sustainable management of natural resources and in nature recovery. It is defined as ‘the capacity of ecosystems to deal with disturbances, either by resisting them, recovering from them, or adapting to them, while retaining their ability to deliver services and benefits now and in the future’.<sup>9</sup> This resilience is difficult to measure due to the complexity of ecosystems and their dynamic nature. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) produced a framework to assess ecosystem resilience; the DECCA considers Diversity, Extent, Condition and Connectivity and other Aspects of ecosystem resilience (See Appendix 2).

The State of Natural Resources Report 2020 (SoNaRR) reported that all ecosystems in Wales had low to moderate resilience. Climate change, pollution, invasive non-native species, habitat loss and deterioration, over-exploitation, pests, and disease were all described to be significant pressures and demands affecting the resilience of ecosystems. (see Figure 5).

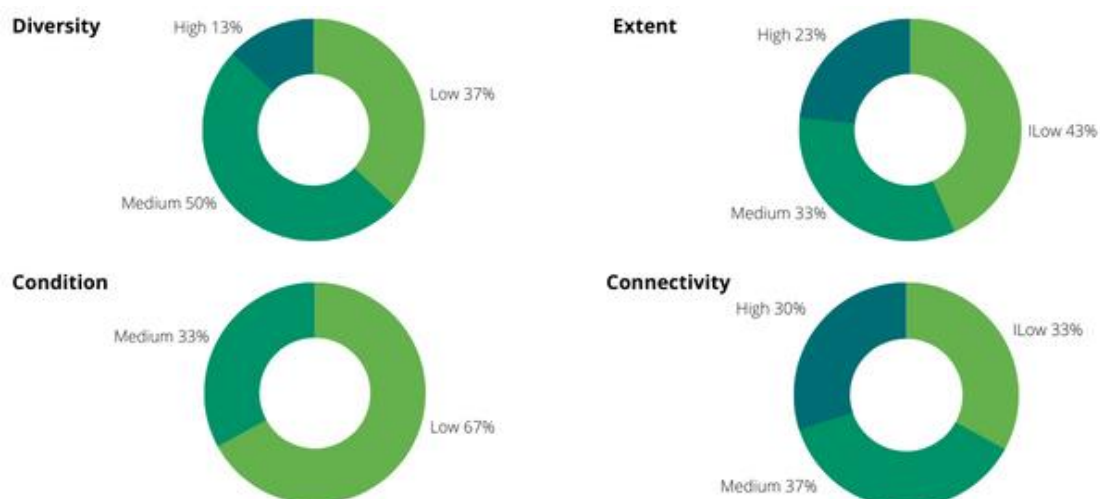


Figure 5: DECCA Assessment of ecosystems within Wales. Produced and published by NRW as part of their assessment. Available online

### 1.4 Ecosystem Services

For many, the intrinsic value of nature is clear, whilst for others it can be unclear as to what exactly the environment does for us.

Ecosystem services is a term used to describe the variety of services the environment provides to us. These services are critically dependent on the processes that occur within ecosystems which are underpinned by biodiversity.<sup>10</sup>

Ecosystem services are grouped into one of four categories:

- Provisioning
- Regulating
- Cultural
- Supporting

<sup>9</sup> [Ecosystem Resilience in a Nutshell 1: what is ecosystem resilience? \(cyfoethnaturiol.cymru\)](https://www.naturalresources.wales/what-is-ecosystem-resilience/)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/2011-2020/about/biodiversity>



Figure 6: Examples of the four ecosystem services categories

Resilient ecosystems underpin our social, environmental, economic and cultural wellbeing in Wales and link the natural world and its resources to peoples well-being.<sup>11</sup> Resilient functioning ecosystems ensures ecosystem services are sustainably maintained and adapted to future change. Our environment and well-being are intrinsically linked, meaning that management of our ecosystems is essential for our quality of life.

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*Natural resources fuel our production and consumption, and create wealth and jobs, contributing to our quality of life and well-being. But our level of resource consumption is undermining our ecosystems' capacity to provide for us in the future.*<sup>12</sup>

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For more detail on Ecosystem Resilience and Ecosystem Services see Appendix 2.

<sup>11</sup> [chapter 5: Ecosystem Services and Well-Being \(naturalresources.wales\)](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Essentials Guide: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and our Well-being \(gov.wales\)](#)

## Part 2: The Greater Gwent Nature Recovery Action Plan

### 2.1: Legislative and policy background

The GGNRAP is subject to the same legislation and guidance that influenced the creation of the NRAP for Wales.

The NRAP for Wales was launched in 2015 by the Wales Biodiversity Strategy Board.<sup>13</sup> It sets out how Wales will deliver the commitments of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the associated Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The NRAP for Wales was reviewed in 2019 to refocus the document in light of rapidly changing policy and environmental change, including the declaration of a climate emergency by the Welsh Government in April 2019.<sup>14</sup> Two main articles of legislation influence the NRAP for Wales, the WoFG Act 2015, and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Since the review of the Wales NRAP, the Welsh Government also declared a nature emergency in Wales, in June 2021.<sup>15</sup>

Below are summaries of some key pieces of legislation, key policies and strategic frameworks that have collectively influenced both the aims and the outcomes across the NRAP for Wales and the GGNRAP. For a more detailed summary of some key pieces of legislation please refer to Appendix 3.

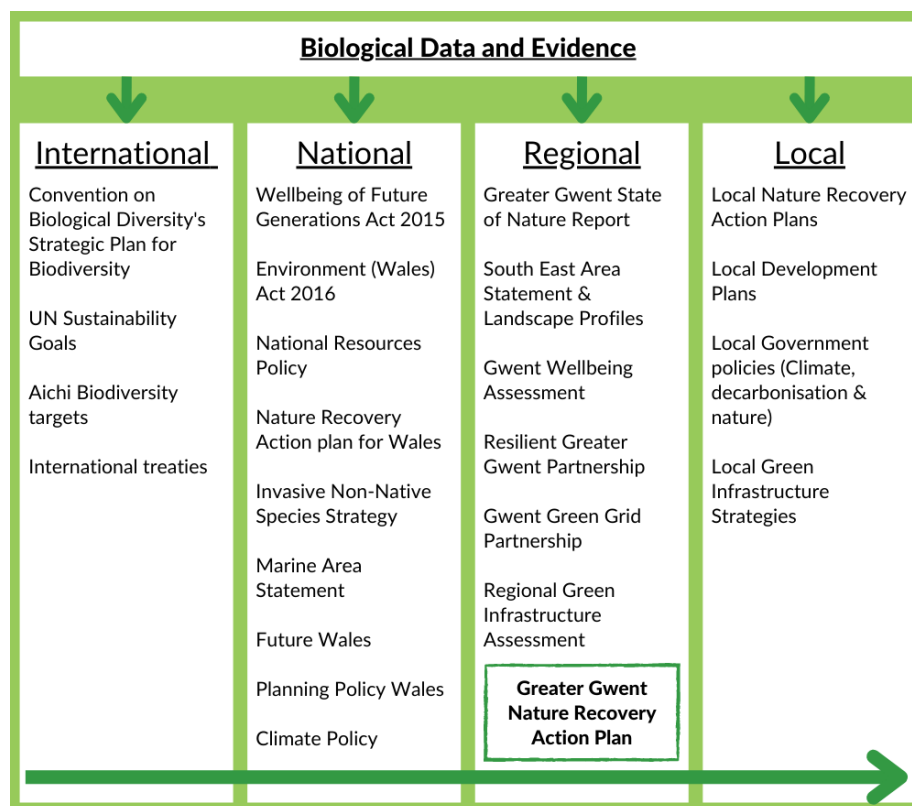


Figure 7: Summary of policy drivers for the GGNRAP. Design inspired by the Brecon Beacons National Park NRAP <sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> [Nature recovery action plan | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales/nature-recovery-action-plan)

<sup>14</sup> [Welsh Government makes climate emergency declaration | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales/welsh-government-makes-climate-emergency-declaration)

<sup>15</sup> [Senedd Live: As it happened on 30 June - BBC News](https://www.bbc.com/news/welsh-58014444)

<sup>16</sup> [BBNPA-Nature-Recovery-A4-ENG-WEB.pdf \(beacons-npa.gov.uk\)](https://beacons-npa.gov.uk/BBNPA-Nature-Recovery-A4-ENG-WEB.pdf)

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

The WoFG Act 2015 is a key piece of legislation which sets out the requirement for public bodies to carry out sustainable development. Public bodies have a duty to set well-being objectives to contribute towards achieving the seven well-being goals set out in the Act. These objectives must be in line with the sustainable development principle, ensuring that:

*“the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”<sup>17</sup>*



Figure 8: The seven well-being goals set out in the WoFG Act 2015

The act established the Public Services Boards covering all local authority in Wales, which in turn are responsible for improving the economic, social, cultural, and environmental well-being in their areas. It is these public bodies and partner organisations that shoulder the responsibility for promoting nature recovery, and therefore environmental resilience, in their area. The Gwent PSB, at the time of writing, is producing a Well-being Assessment of Gwent in adherence with the WoFG Act 2015. The Well-being Assessment is due to be published in May 2022<sup>18</sup> and will be followed by a Well-being Plan setting out local objectives and the steps the PSB proposes to meet them.

The WoFG Act 2015 also establishes five ways of working as part of the sustainable development principle to help organisations meet the well-being goals (see figure 9).

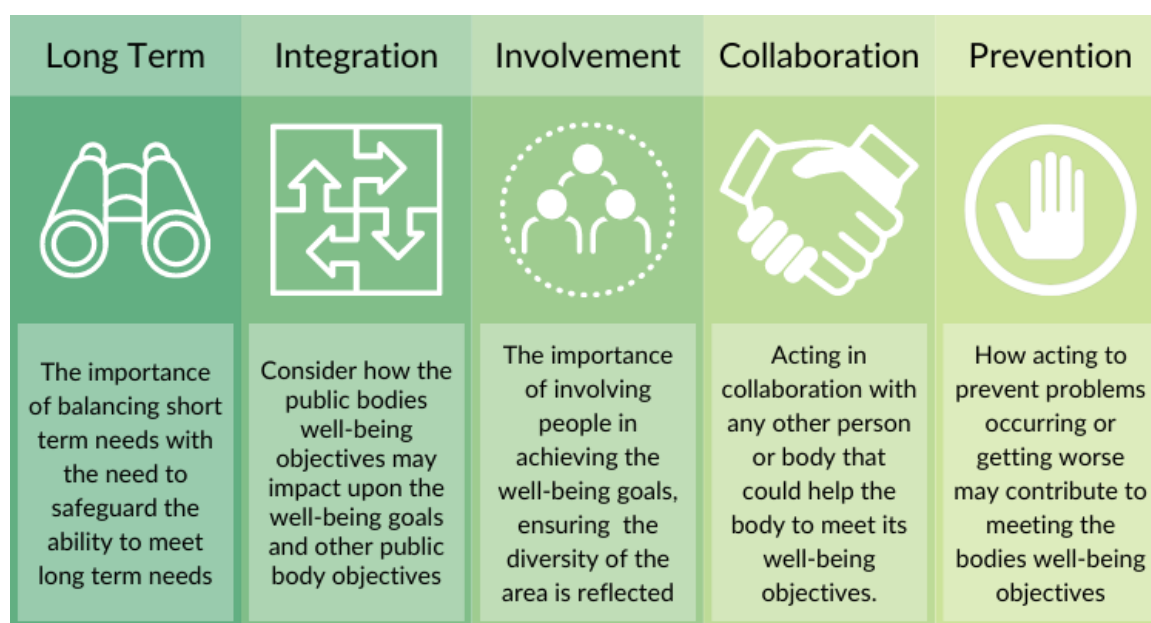


Figure 9: The five ways of working established in the WoFG Act 2015

<sup>17</sup> [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/5/section/10)

<sup>18</sup> [Gwent Well-being Assessment - Gwent Public Services Board Gwent Public Services Board \(gwentpsb.org\)](https://www.gwentpsb.org/)



## The Environment (Wales) Act 2016

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 became law in 2016 and put in place legislation on how we manage our natural resources in Wales. Part 1 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 provides the framework for the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR).

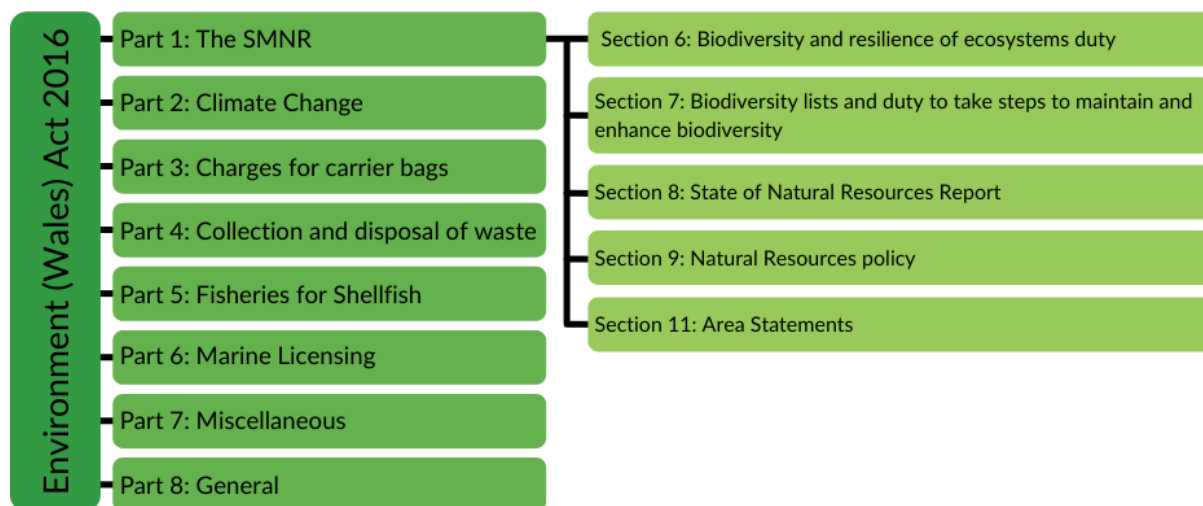


Figure 10: The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 showing the principal parts and sections most relevant to the GGNRAP

### *Section 6: Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty*

Within the Act, Section 6 under Part 1: SMNR placed a biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty (commonly referred to as the Section 6 duty) on public bodies that exercise their functions in relation to Wales, stating that:

*“A public authority must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.”<sup>19</sup>*

The duty applies not just to the existing network of protected sites, but to the wider landscape, including urbanised areas such as towns and cities. Public bodies must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in line with the principle of sustainable development and with proper exercise of their functions, promoting the resilience of ecosystems.<sup>20</sup> To comply with the duty all public bodies must publish a plan outlining how the body will comply with the duty.<sup>21</sup>

### *Biodiversity lists and duty to take steps to maintain and enhance biodiversity*

Section 7 of the Act concerns the production and publication of a list of living organisms and habitat types within Wales, which are of principle importance for enhancing the biodiversity of Wales, by Welsh ministers in consultation with NRW.

Section 7 replaces the duty in Section 42 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. The NERC Act drew up initial biodiversity lists and actioned, used as the basis for the newer Section 7 biodiversity lists.

<sup>19</sup> [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/6/section/6)

<sup>20</sup> [Wales Biodiversity Partnership - Environment \(Wales\) Act \(biodiversitywales.org.uk\)](https://biodiversitywales.org.uk/)

<sup>21</sup> [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/6/section/6)



### *The State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR)*

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 brought about the duty for NRW to produce the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) as part of the SMNR. The report assesses the extent to which sustainable management of resources in Wales is being achieved, including an assessment of biodiversity. The first SoNaRR was produced in 2016 and recognised the challenge climate change poses to sustainable management of natural resources within Wales.<sup>22</sup> The second State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR2020) builds upon the findings of the 2016 SoNaRR and builds on assessments of the status and trends of natural resources within Wales, the UK and beyond.

SoNaRR2020 assesses progress made against four aims of the SMNR:

- Stocks of natural resources are safeguarded and enhanced
- Resilient ecosystems
- Healthy places for people
- A regenerative economy

SoNaRR2020 also provides opportunities for action to achieve the aims of the SMNR.

### *Natural Resources Policy (NRP)*

The Natural Resources Policy (NRP) set out by the Welsh Government considers the findings of the State of Natural Resources Report produced by NRW. The focus of the NRP is on improving the way we manage our natural resources within Wales.<sup>23</sup> It lays out the key priorities, risks, and opportunities for managing natural resources in a sustainable manner including consideration towards climate change and biodiversity.<sup>24</sup> Managing Wales' natural resources sustainably works towards achieving the goals established in the WoFG Act 2015.<sup>25</sup> National priorities established within the NRP include:

- Delivering nature based solutions
- Increasing renewable energy and resource efficiency
- Taking a place-based approach

### *Area Statements*

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 set out the requirement for NRW to prepare, publish and review area statements. The area statements are designed to support place-based approaches linked to the national priorities in the NRP and turn the national challenges and priorities in the NRP into measurable actions. Natural Resources Wales have produced the Area Statements in collaboration with public bodies and other stakeholders in Wales to set out local evidence bases for the sustainable management of natural resources in that place.<sup>26</sup> Wales is split into seven areas and statements, each identifying the opportunities to work collaboratively to deliver the national priorities and to build ecosystem resilience for social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing.

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<sup>22</sup> [A summary of the State of Natural Resources Report \(cyfoethnaturiol.cymru\)](#)

<sup>23</sup> [natural-resources-policy.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

<sup>24</sup> [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>25</sup> [natural-resources-policy.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

<sup>26</sup> [Natural Resources Wales / South East Wales Area Statement](#)

The South East Area Statement<sup>27</sup> took a landscape approach to help identify where we need to build ecosystem resilience and why. This led to the production of the landscape profiles<sup>28</sup> which are aligned to the six distinct National Character Landscape Areas (NCLA) and Gwent boundary, covering the Local Authority areas of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, and Torfaen comprising the area.

These landscape areas profiles informed the coproduced priorities and overall vision for a healthy and resilient Gwent. It is important to consider the landscape profile approach along with the South East Area Statement priorities when looking to work collaboratively both within and across landscapes to deliver Gwent's vision through nature recovery action at the appropriate scale.

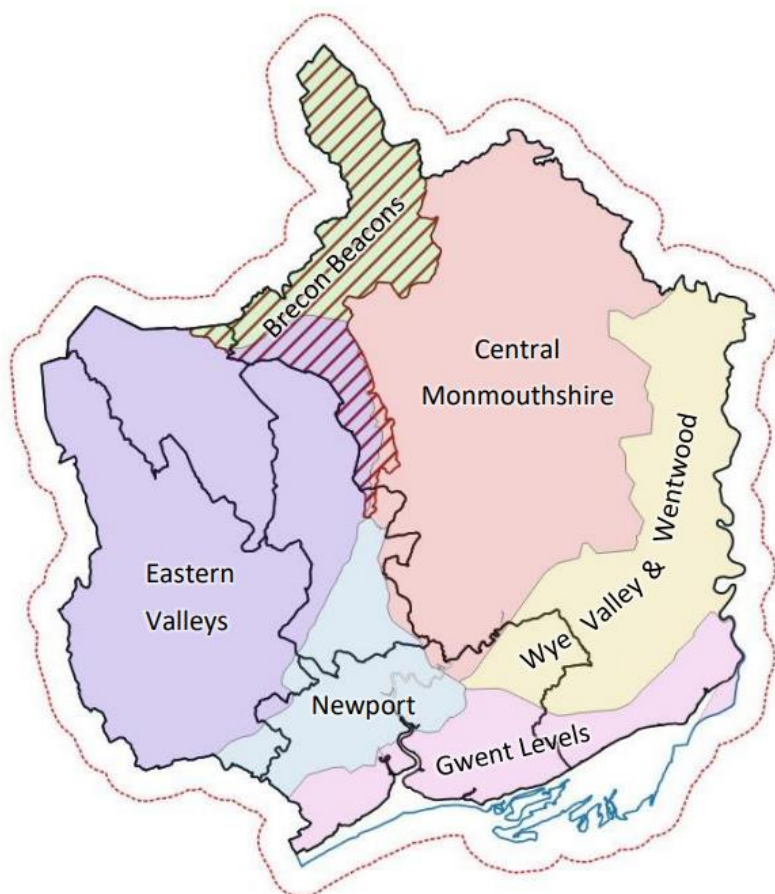


Figure 11: Map of Greater Gwent showing the six distinct landscape profiles described in the SE Area Statement. Map sourced from the GGSon

The Marine Area Statement<sup>29</sup> also applies to the GGNRAP, as the southern extent of Greater Gwent is coastal, bordering the Severn Estuary. The main themes of the Marine Area Statement are:

- Building resilience of marine ecosystems
- Nature-based solutions and adaptation at the coast
- Making the most of marine planning

<sup>27</sup> [Natural Resources Wales / Introduction to South East Wales Area Statement](#)

<sup>28</sup> [Landscape Profiles | Gwent Wildlife Trust](#)

<sup>29</sup> [Natural Resources Wales / Introduction to Wales' Marine Area Statement](#)

## Development and Planning Policies

Both the WoFG Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 are important policy drivers for the GGNRAP. Alongside these key policies there are further planning and development policies which must also be considered. Planning in Wales is divided into three tiers: National (the Future Wales framework), Regional (regional Strategic Development Plans) and Local (Local Development Plans).

### Development plans are prepared at different scales:



Figure 12: Tiers of development in Wales. Sourced from the Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 document

### Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

Future Wales – The National Plan 2040<sup>30</sup> is the Welsh Government’s framework that sets the direction for development in Wales until 2040. The purpose of the document is to ensure the planning system is consistent with Welsh Government strategic aims and policies. There are 11 Future Wales Outcomes which create a statement of where Welsh Government want Wales to be in 20 years’ time. Three outcomes are linked to nature recovery:

- Wales sustainably manages natural resources and reduce pollution
- Wales has biodiverse, resilient, and connected ecosystems
- Wales is decarbonised and climate resilient.

As part of the Future Wales framework three tier system, Wales is divided into four regions:

- The North
- Mid Wales
- The South West
- The South East

The South East region is comprised of all the constituent local authorities that make up the Greater Gwent area, alongside Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff and the Vale of Glamorgan. This means that the South East region identified within the Future Wales framework is different from the area covered by the South East area statement, the latter of which being a smaller area. Care not to confuse the two areas should be taken.



Figure 13: The South East Region for planning, highlighting the Greater Gwent Area

<sup>30</sup> [Update to Future Wales - The National Plan 2040 \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/future-wales-the-national-plan-2040)

### *Strategic Development Plans*

As part of the Future Wales framework each region is required to produce a Strategic Development Plan (SDP) that will conform with the aims of Future Wales and deliver the same outcomes for nature recovery. The South East SDP should recognise the strengths and challenges within the South East region and compliment the plans and work happening in the three other regions within Wales.<sup>31</sup>

At the time of writing the Future Wales framework has only recently been published, and so the South East SDP is yet to be written. Currently, all five local authorities in the Greater Gwent Area have commenced their reviews of their individual Local Development Plan (LDP) in preparation for the formation of the regional SDP.<sup>32</sup>

### *Planning Policy Wales*

Planning Policy Wales (2021)<sup>33</sup> is the principal statement of national planning policy which ensures that “the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales”.

National planning policy is emphatic in stating that the planning system can contribute to:

- Improving the resilience of ecosystems and ecological networks
- Halting and reversing the loss of biodiversity
- Maintaining and enhancing green infrastructure based on seeking multiple ecosystem benefits and solutions
- Delivering a net benefit for biodiversity.

The GGNRAP will be central to ensure development and planning in Greater Gwent delivers biodiversity and nature benefits that is informed, targeted and relevant.

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<sup>31</sup> [Update to Future Wales - The National Plan 2040 \(gov.wales\)](#)

<sup>32</sup> [Barton Willmore - Barton Willmore News & Knowledge](#)

<sup>33</sup> [Planning Policy Wales - Edition 11 \(gov.wales\)](#)

## 2.2: NRAP Themes & Objectives

The 2015 NRAP for Wales set out six objectives for nature recovery. In 2019 the document was reviewed in light of changing policy and the worsening climate crisis. The NRAP for Wales was refreshed and now included five overarching themes for action.<sup>34</sup>

The themes are as follows:

- Maintaining and Enhancing Resilient Ecological Networks
- Increasing Knowledge and Knowledge Transfer
- Realising new Investment and Funding
- Upskilling and Capacity for Delivery
- Governance, Mainstreaming and Reporting our Progress

The five newly agreed themes meet multiple NRAP objectives. There are six objectives in total:



Figure 14: The nature recovery objectives established in the NRAP for Wales

<sup>34</sup> [The Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales 2020 to 2021 \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/nature-recovery-action-plan)

The GGNRAP looks to integrate the priorities identified across different policies, legislation, strategies, and plans into a strategic plan for nature recovery actions that can be delivered collaboratively across the region long term (See figure 15).

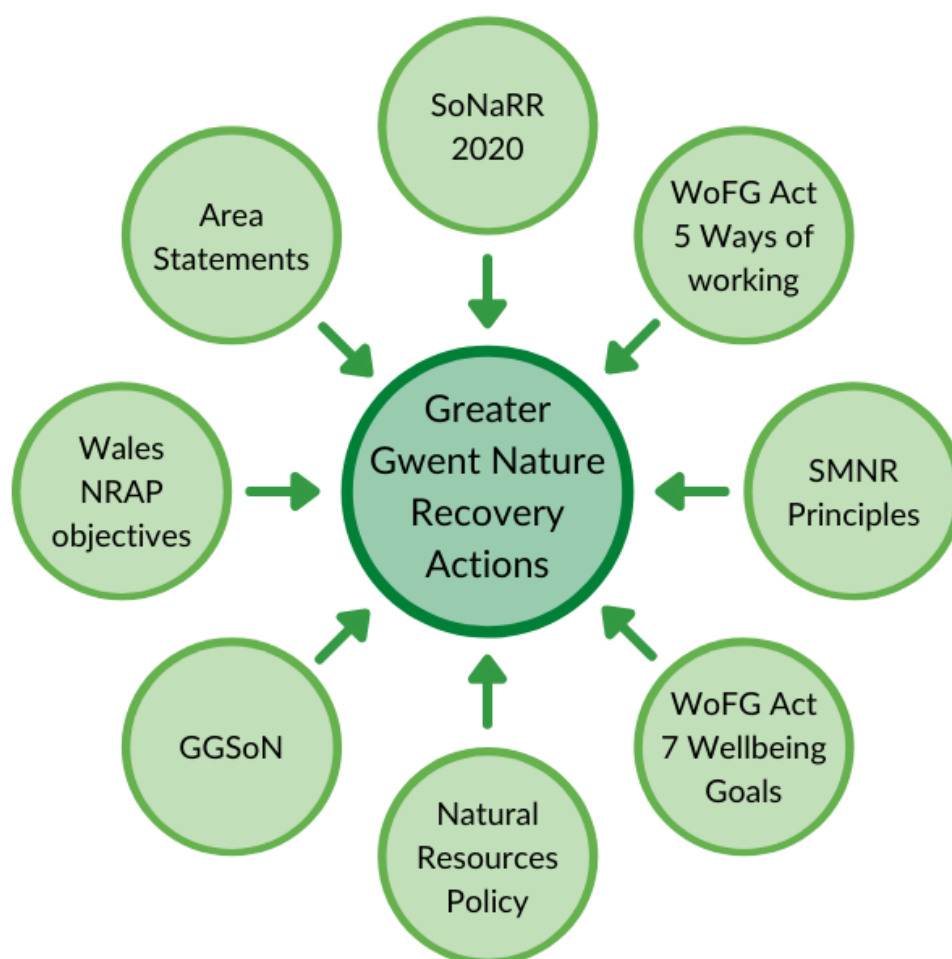


Figure 15: Multiple policy drivers guidance and reports feed into the actions in the GGNRAP

The initial GGNRAP actions need to consider existing policies and guidance, be underpinned by data and evidence, and be suitable for implementation across an appropriate scale. At the regional level actions need to be achievable, covering the varied interconnected landscapes and habitats of Greater Gwent. These strategic actions are also then used to inform the Local NRAPs.

The GGNRAP is foremost a regional document, with regionally focused actions carried out through primarily regional mechanisms and partnerships. For a more locally focused set of actions, the local NRAPs will contain relevant actions based on the actions listed here in the GGNRAP. The priorities and outcomes of the GGNRAP actions are closely aligned with the outcomes of the South East Wales Area Statement, supporting joined up integrated nature recovery action that contributes to the statement's vision, Wellbeing Goals and Natural Resources Policy priorities.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> [Natural Resources Wales / South East Wales Area Statement](#)

### Objective 1:

#### Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels

Promotion of biodiversity should be embedded at all levels in management plans and other decision-making policies. This objective can be linked to an organisations Section 6 duty<sup>36</sup> as well as its duties under the WoFG Act 2015.<sup>37</sup> Reviews of plans and procedures should ensure any effects on biodiversity are recognised and accounted for in updated plans and policies. Opportunities to link with individuals, community groups and partners in relation to the promotion of biodiversity for well-being should be taken, in turn working towards the goals set by the WoFG Act 2015.

Table 1: Nature Recovery Actions for objective 1

Outcomes		Actions		Suggested mechanisms for delivery
1.1	Nature is valued, with biodiversity enhancements embedded in decision-making. Our habitats and species are thriving, biodiversity is maximised, and wildlife is abundant.	1.1.1	Biodiversity considerations are clearly integrated into long term plans and guidance documents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Local development plans and planning guidance</li><li>• LA Service Business Plans</li><li>• Section 6 Plans</li><li>• Gwent Public Service Boards (</li><li>• Gwent Green Grid Partnership</li><li>• LNPs</li></ul>
		1.1.2	Partners work collaboratively to develop a regional approach to assess the biodiversity value of land/sites in both public and private ownership.	
		1.1.3	Collaboratively scope opportunities to develop an ecosystem services assessment of the Greater Gwent area, exploring mechanisms for private and public investment in nature including green markets payment for ecosystem services type systems.	
		1.1.4	Explore methods of involving individuals, communities, and sectors in improving the health of our natural environment and its resources to maximise the well-being benefits they provide.	
		1.1.5	Provide opportunities for all relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries to be involved in nature based decision making.	
1.2	People, communities, and services are connected with nature, having a clear understanding of the value of biodiversity and nature for society, economy, and well-being.	1.2.1	Public sector partners and organisations to work together to embed Nature Literacy across the region, enhancing education and skills development and building capacity for nature recovery for well-being benefits long term.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gwent Public Service Boards</li><li>• Gwent Green Grid Partnership</li><li>• Local Nature Partnerships</li></ul>
		1.2.2	Work collaboratively to develop and deliver a green infrastructure strategy for Gwent, informing other strategies, plans and assessments on where, what, why and how to deliver green infrastructure across the region, enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem resilience for well-being benefits.	

<sup>36</sup> [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/12/section/6)

<sup>37</sup> [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/12/section/6)



## Objective 2:

### Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management

Greater Gwent contains two protected landscapes. Part of the Brecon Beacons National Park can be found within parts of Monmouthshire, Torfaen, and Blaenau Gwent, whilst the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) has part of its boundary within Monmouthshire, along the English border.

For Nature Recovery Actions within the boundary of the National Park please refer to the Brecon Beacons Nature Recovery Action plan produced by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.<sup>38</sup> The Wye Valley AONB has a management plan which includes six Biodiversity Strategic Objectives, which aim to conserve, enhance and restore the biodiversity of the AONB, and actions within the AONB need to make reference to these as well as the GGNRAP. An additional landscape designation area for the Gwent Levels is being considered by the Welsh Government and will be included within future reviews of this document.

Around a quarter of land within Gwent has designated protection for biodiversity. The greater Gwent area is home to:<sup>39</sup>

- 13 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)\*
- 1 Special Protection Area (SPA)\*
- 1 Ramsar Site\*
- 5 National Nature Reserves
- 94 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
- 25 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs),
- >1,600 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)

\*The Severn estuary has three separate designations: SAC, SPA and Ramsar

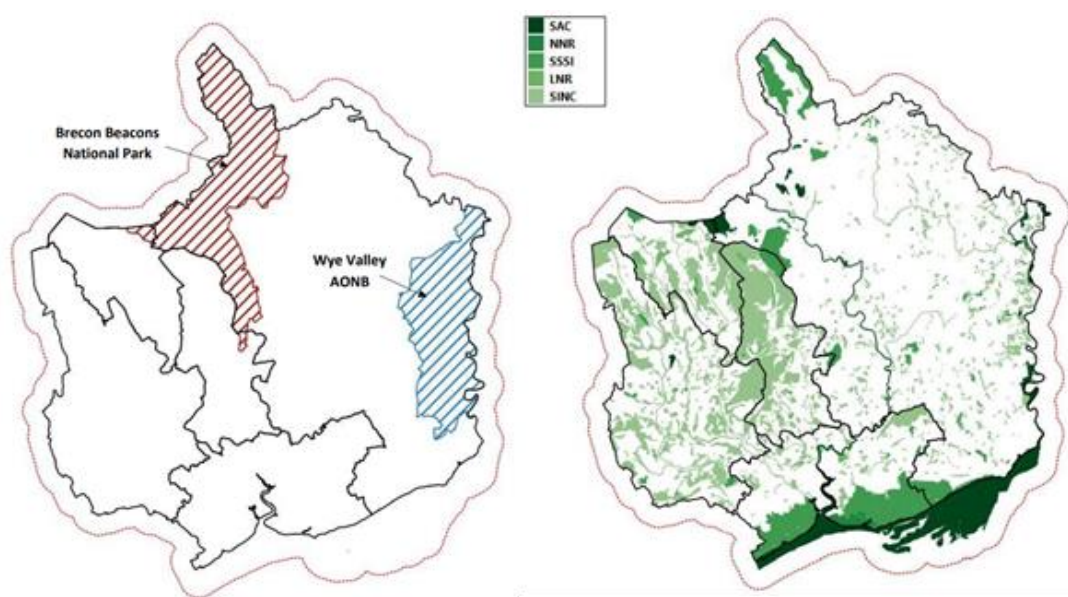


Figure 16: Maps from the GGSon showing the extent of protected areas within Greater Gwent

<sup>38</sup> [Nature Recovery Action Plan | Brecon Beacons National Park Authority \(beacons-npa.gov.uk\)](https://www.brecon-beacons-npa.gov.uk/nature-recovery-action-plan)

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.monlife.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Greater-Gwent-State-of-Nature-4-002.pdf>

Table 2: Nature Recovery Actions for objective 2

Outcomes		Actions		Suggested mechanisms for delivery
2.1	Priority species and habitats are at the forefront of nature recovery actions	2.1.1	Review the GGSoN to identify species for which a regional, coordinated approach to recovery action would be beneficial.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gwent Green Grid Partnership</li> <li>• SEWBRcC</li> <li>• Local Authorities</li> <li>• Section 6 Plans</li> <li>• LNPs</li> </ul>
		2.1.2	Management plans identify Section 7 species and habitats, as well as those protected by both domestic and international legislation.	
2.1	Our most important sites are safeguarded, enhanced, and connected. Species and habitats are healthy, functioning, and resilient.	2.2.1	Develop a regional approach, including landscape scale and regional conservation projects, on how to enhance, connect and build a network of priority habitats and ecosystems for the Greater Gwent area, building on the work to review Gwent's SINC's to help safeguard our most important sites and enhancing ecological networks across the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gwent Public service board</li> <li>• Gwent Green Grid Partnership</li> <li>• Natural Resources Wales</li> <li>• Partnership</li> <li>• Local Authorities</li> <li>• Section 6 Plans</li> </ul>
		2.2.2	Develop a consistent, regional framework and methodology to identify where to safeguard and enhance our priority habitats and species.	
		2.2.3	Work collaboratively to identify sustainable long term resources and funding to enable organisations to build capacity for safeguarding and enhancing our most important habitats and ecosystems across the region.	
		2.2.4	Work together to understand and develop a consistent approach that accounts for future risks to safeguarding and enhancing our most important sites long term, adapting, and developing management plans in response.	

### Objective 3:

#### **Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degrading habitats and habitat creation**

Partners continue to look for opportunities to improve ecosystem resilience throughout the Greater Gwent area through direct action, or through identifying opportunities for action. Restoring or creating habitats is important in enhancing the capacity of our ecosystems to support and provide essential ecosystem services, essential for well-being in Wales.

Table 3: Nature Recovery Actions for objective 3

Outcomes		Actions		Suggested mechanisms for delivery
3.1	Priorities for habitat restoration are identified outside of the protected site network.	3.1.1	To develop a regional approach for developing and delivering Resilient Ecological Networks, building on current approaches and guidance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gwent Public Service Board</li> <li>• Gwent Green Grid Partnership</li> <li>• Local Authorities</li> <li>• Section 6 Plans</li> <li>• LNPs</li> </ul>
		3.1.2	Work together to develop a consistent framework, using innovative technological solutions to inform where we need to safeguard and enhance biodiversity and ecosystem resilience for the region, e.g. opportunity mapping	
3.2	Our broad habitats and ecosystems are safeguarded, restored and are resilient.	3.2.1	To develop a strategic approach to a nature recovery and restoration programme for Gwent, building on and learning from current ways of working and approaches (Living Levels, RGG, GGG etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gwent Public Service Board</li> <li>• Gwent Green Grid Partnership</li> <li>• Local Authorities</li> <li>• Local Development plans</li> <li>• Section 6 Plans</li> <li>• LNPs</li> <li>• Private sector/ landowners</li> </ul>
		3.2.2	To identify and put in place the appropriate level of governance at the regional scale to address root cause impacts to biodiversity and to identify collaborative preventative solutions to restore and enhance biodiversity and ecosystem resilience across the region and at the landscape scale.	
		3.2.3	Refer to the Gwent Well-being Assessment, along with Area Statement Evidence, when identifying opportunities to build resilience, enhance and connect our broad habitats.	
		3.2.4	Build capacity, share learning and best practice that enables organisations to work better together to restore our habitats and build ecosystem resilience for future well-being benefits.	
		3.2.5	The Gwent Public Service Board and other Public Sector Organisations to work collaboratively to develop a consistent regional framework and methodology to review and maximise the nature and biodiversity value of the collective asset estate, including well-being benefits and	

			economies of scale opportunities.	
3.3	Nature based solutions are at the forefront of habitat restoration and creation, reducing effectively and efficiently the pressures impacting the natural environment and well-being.	3.3.1	Bodies will seek to enhance the capacity of natural resources to provide essential ecosystem services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gwent Public Service Board</li> <li>• Gwent Green Grid Partnership</li> <li>• Local Authorities</li> </ul>
		3.3.2	Coproduce and implement a regional Green Infrastructure strategy (as well as a regional tree strategy, embedded into other strategies, plans and local delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gwent Public Service Board</li> <li>• Gwent Green Grid Partnership</li> <li>• Local Authorities</li> <li>• Local Development plans</li> <li>• Section 6 Plans</li> <li>• South East Wales Resilient Uplands</li> <li>• Private sector/ landowners</li> </ul>
		3.3.3	Work together to develop a regional catchment-based approach to natural flood management, considering long-term consequences of climate change to embed nature-based solutions to restore natural processes, ecosystem function and condition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gwent Public Service Board</li> <li>• Gwent Green Grid Partnership</li> <li>• Local Authorities</li> <li>• South East Wales Resilient Uplands</li> <li>• Private sector/ landowners</li> </ul>
		3.3.4	Work together to develop resilient ecological networks for our broad habitats across the region and at the landscape scale, delivering nature-based solutions to reverse biodiversity decline and enhances habitat connectivity, diversity, extent, and condition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gwent Public Service Board</li> <li>• Gwent Green Grid Partnership</li> <li>• Local Authorities</li> <li>• Section 6 Plans</li> </ul>

#### Objective 4:

##### Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

Key pressures on both species and habitats are becoming more prevalent in light of the growing nature and climate emergencies. There are five recognised drivers of biodiversity loss:

- Habitat loss and degradation
- Climate change
- Excessive nutrient load and other forms of pollution
- Invasive non-native species
- Over-exploitation and unsustainable use of resources

These pressures affect all work carried out in the environment all over Greater Gwent. Whether the impacts are to specific species or wider habitats they must be recorded, managed, and monitored if we wish to achieve our other objectives such as ensuring our ecosystems are resilient to change.

Table 4: Nature Recovery Actions for objective 4

Outcomes		Actions		Suggested mechanisms for delivery
4.1	Increased capacity of habitats and ecosystems to respond, resist and recover from climate change risk.	4.1.1 (A) (M)	Improve the condition, extent, and connectivity of habitats to provide pathways for habitats and species to adapt to, and mitigate the effects of, climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Development Plan</li> <li>• Gwent Public Service Board</li> <li>• Gwent Green Grid Partnership</li> <li>• Local Authorities</li> <li>• Local Development plans</li> <li>• Section 6 Plans</li> <li>• South East Wales Resilient Uplands</li> <li>• Private sector/ landowners</li> </ul>
	- - - - -	4.1.1 (A)	4.1.1 (A)	
	(A) Adaptation		Increase canopy cover and well-located woodland for greatest ecosystem service value, including climate change adaptation.	
	(M) Mitigation		Work together to develop resilient ecological networks and other biodiversity hotspots and stepping-stones within and across landscapes, providing a range of ecosystem services as well as movement of species as an adaptive response to climate change.	
	- - - - -		Develop a regional climate adaptation strategy and action plan, informed by existing and emerging plans, embedding UKCP18 Climate Change (high emissions) Scenario or other similar model scenarios to ensure actions and solutions are resilient and adapted for the long term.	
			Develop a consistent regional approach that delivers preventative nature-based solutions to flood risk in the urban environment, restoring floodplains and freshwater systems across Greater Gwent at catchment scales	
			Identify where we need to safeguard and enhance our carbon stores and sinks across the region.	
			Work together to identify sustainable funding streams and mechanisms that promote climate adaptation action, including opportunities to	

			embed standards and guidance e.g., Woodland Carbon Code.	
		4.1.1 (M)	Decarbonisation plans will consider nature-based solutions towards climate change, including the value of various habitats in relation to carbon sequestration, which will inform nature recovery actions.	
			Work with existing networks (e.g., Climate Ready Gwent, Blaenau Gwent Assembly) across the public, private and voluntary sectors, along with academia and research institutions, to develop innovative technological low carbon solutions, processes, services, and products to achieving towards net zero targets and nature recovery.	
			Develop a low carbon delivery plan for the region, outlining pathways to delivery including new woodland planting, increasing soil carbon, bringing peatlands into favourable conditions, renewable energy, and emissions reduction.	
4.2	Natural resources are managed and used more sustainably and equitably, supporting more resilient services that maximises well-being.	4.2.1	Develop a shared understanding of the transformative changes across the food, transport, and energy systems needed to reverse biodiversity loss and build social, cultural, environmental and economic resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gwent Public Service Board</li> <li>• Gwent Green Grid Partnership</li> <li>• Local Authorities</li> </ul>
		4.2.2	Explore regional approaches that embed social value in procurement and planning systems, working together to embed sustainable development and brand values across businesses and sectors – taking the learning and adopting approaches from frameworks, e.g. the National (Wales) TOMs Framework <sup>40</sup> , to identify how collective procurement and planning approaches can contribute to the sustainability of natural resources for well-being benefits.	
		4.2.3	Develop pathways to using our resources more efficiently and effectively, reducing the pressures on our natural resources caused by issues such as waste disposal impacting soil, water, and air, working towards sustainable management, and contributing to a more regenerative circular economy.	
		4.2.4	Take a regional approach to embed nature-based solutions to pressures from over-use impacting our natural resources, broad habitats, and landscapes.	
4.3	The pressures of pollution driving	4.3.1	Encourage the use of nature-based solutions to diffuse pollutants in water and soil e.g., reedbed planting and constructed wetlands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gwent Public Service Board</li> <li>• Gwent Green</li> </ul>
		4.3.2	Work together to identify root causes of pollution	

<sup>40</sup> [National TOMs: Wales — National Social Value Taskforce](#)

	biodiversity loss is reduced and prevented.		and take collaborative preventative approaches to reduce their impacts on species, habitats, and people.	Grid Partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Authorities</li> <li>Rivers and Catchment Partnerships</li> <li>Nutrient management Boards</li> </ul>
		4.3.3	Work across sectors, business, academia, and research institutions to develop novel and innovative technological solutions to pollution impacting our natural resources and broad habitats.	
		4.3.4	Raise awareness of the damage pollution and litter has on the environment with the public and organisations that have the capacity to introduce pollution into the natural environment.	
		4.3.5	Work collaboratively to identify underlying causes of fly-tipping and work towards sustainable preventative solutions that reduce waste-generated pollution, re-use and recycle waste that benefits the environment and people including contribution to a more circular economy	
4.4	Land-use and land-use change is incrementally maximising biodiversity and other ecosystem services for well-being, whilst maintaining or enhancing productivity.	4.4.1	Consideration of land use in relation to biodiversity and ecosystem services is evidenced in plans and nature recovery actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gwent Public Service Board</li> <li>Gwent Green Grid Partnership</li> <li>Local Authorities</li> <li>Future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) replacement</li> <li>Local Development Plans</li> <li>Private Sector and landowners</li> <li>Regional and Local Green Infrastructure strategies</li> <li>Regional sustainable food groups</li> </ul>
		4.4.2	Work with land owners to advise on land use and to encourage participation in land-use strategies that promote biodiversity.	
		4.4.3	Take a landscape approach, working with landowners and managers in collaboration with others across the public, private and voluntary sectors to identify collective sustainable land management approaches that maximises biodiversity and associated well-being benefits.	
		4.4.4	Identify incentive mechanisms for sustainable land management practices that optimise public goods for well-being. Take the learning from PES models, Global Farm Metric and Green Finance initiatives to test and trial landscape approaches that can benefit across Greater Gwent.	
		4.4.5	Develop collaboration across the public, private and voluntary sectors to drive forward transformative change in the food system, leveraging approaches that maximise biodiversity-supporting sustainable green production systems and socio-economic benefits.	
		4.4.6	Nature based solutions towards the management and treatment of agricultural crops and pests are considered in management plans and guidance.	
4.5	INNS is actively being prevented, frequency and distribution	4.5.1	Creation and continuation of collaborative INNS projects and plans to minimise and eliminate the presence of INNS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gwent Public Service Board</li> <li>Gwent Green Grid Partnership</li> </ul>
		4.5.2	Work together to develop a strategy and action plan that prevents INNS spread across our landscapes and region, learning from best	



	is declining.		practice, and working in collaboration to taking action on pathways of introduction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Authorities</li> <li>• Local Nature Partnerships</li> <li>• SEWBRcC</li> <li>• Rivers and Catchment Partnerships</li> </ul>
		4.5.3	Consider the establishment of Non-native Species Information Portal, providing a central repository for non-native species information and distribution data, maintained to support involvement and collaborative targeted action for the region, acting too as a knowledge transfer and learning platform and central hub for information and guidance.	
		4.5.4	Develop and promote citizen science recording and survey schemes that contributes to our understanding of INNS spread, risk, and help prioritise targeted preventative collaborative action.	

### Objective 5:

#### Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring

Whether for individual species or a habitat, it is important to have accurate, reliable, and up to date data to best inform nature recovery actions and habitat management. By monitoring the results of action, successes can be measured and analysed, with the aim of informing the next round of nature recovery actions. It is a cyclical process, and a crucial process. Crucial in aiding decision making and allocating often limited resources, to best maximise outcomes of nature recovery actions. For this objective to be met a functioning local record centre is needed. Covering the Greater Gwent area, and beyond, is SEWBRc, who aim to:

*“make appropriate local biodiversity information available to all those who need it, to help ensure that decisions which affect local biodiversity are made using best available data.”<sup>41</sup>*

Table 5: Nature Recovery Actions for objective 5

Outcomes		Actions		Suggested mechanisms for delivery
5.1	Regular monitoring and data collection is used to evidence future nature recovery actions	5.1.1	Establish a regional collaborative approach to monitoring, storing, and sharing data, one that compliments and contributes to existing monitoring strategies, to inform decision making and nature recovery action long term at the appropriate scales.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Local Authorities</li><li>• Gwent Green Grid Partnership</li><li>• SEWBRc</li></ul>
		5.1.2	Monitoring will need to consider drivers of change including in policy, legislation and those key pressures driving biodiversity loss. Collaboration is needed to develop integrated SMART monitoring technologies and methods that is both scalable and resource-efficient.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gwent Public Service Board</li><li>• Local Authorities</li><li>• Gwent Green Grid Partnership</li></ul>
		5.1.3	Linking with action 1.1.3, consideration should be given to the establishment of an ecosystem services assessment approach to facilitate the understanding of the value of our natural environment, to help monitor and adapt actions and management over time.	
		5.1.4	Sharing of data between public bodies within the Greater Gwent area using a combination of established and new data sharing systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gwent Green Grid Partnership</li><li>• SEWBRc</li></ul>
		5.1.5	Public sector organisations work better together to identify the available environmental and socio-economic data that can be centralised, used, and made publicly available to facilitate our understanding of where we need to take	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gwent Green Grid Partnership</li><li>• Gwent Public Service Board</li></ul>

<sup>41</sup> [Welcome to the South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre | SEWBRc](#)

			preventative collaborative action to tackle the main drivers of biodiversity loss, including driving towards transformative systemic change to deliver sustainable natural resources and ecosystem resilience for well-being benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Authorities</li> </ul>
		5.1.6	Support and develop citizen science initiatives to encourage involvement, data collection and monitoring of our broad habitats and ecosystems across landscapes and for the region. Developing opportunities for connecting people with the natural environment, enhancing knowledge, and training opportunities and enhancing social and economic benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gwent Green Grid Partnership</li> <li>• Local Authorities</li> <li>• Local Nature Partnerships</li> <li>• Gwent Public Service Board</li> <li>• Local wildlife charities</li> <li>• Community Groups</li> </ul>

### Objective 6:

#### Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery

The GGNRAP is a ten-year document which at the time of writing does not have a pre-established review cycle or a specific governing body. This objective looks to establish the appropriate governance and a subsequent review cycle, so that the GGNRAP can be monitored, reviewed and managed adaptively in accordance with changing policy drivers. It is important to note that the Local NRAP's will be aligned to the same governance and review cycles, ensuring an integrated and joined up approach from the local to landscape, and regional to national scales.

The Gwent green Grid Partnership (GGGP) is a sister project to RGG and will continue its legacy, to work on a regional scale to deliver a landscape approach to create healthy resources that are resilient to pressures and threats. The GGGP will be critical in delivering the GGNRAP and will likely become the governance behind future reviews of the GGNRAP.

Table 6: Nature Recovery Actions for objective 6

Outcomes		Actions		Suggested mechanisms for delivery
6.1	The Greater Gwent Nature Recovery Plan is reviewed and updated over a suitable timescale, outlining the intended legacy of the GGNRAP.	6.1.1	Establishment of a GGNRAP governance Group responsible for the review of the GGNRAP within the timeframes of an established review cycle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gwent Green Grid Partnership</li><li>• Gwent Public Service Board</li></ul>
		6.1.2	Review cycles include opportunities for involvement from all stakeholders and partners across Greater Gwent, to encourage and enable citizens to challenge progress and be part of the decision making for nature recovery in Greater Gwent.	
		6.1.3	The GGNRAP review process aligns with the review cycles of regional policy drivers: Well-being Assessment, Area Statement, SoNaRR and NRP cycles.	
		6.1.4	To ensure the review process incorporates iterative evidence produced by Area Statements, Well-being Assessments and SoNaRR, including changes in policy and priorities within the national Natural Resource Policy.	
		6.1.5	To ensure the review process includes the monitoring of progress in the previous cycle, reviewing the challenges and risks to its delivery and adapt accordingly to ensure successful delivery of nature recovery action long term.	
6.2	The GGSON is updated over a suitable timescale.	6.2.1	Coordinate a suitable cycle for the production of future GGSoNs, aiming to provide up to date data to underpin the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gwent Green Grid Partnership</li></ul>

			nature recovery actions in future iterations of the GGNRAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gwent Public Service Board</li> </ul>
6.3	Creation and use of Local Nature Recovery Action Plans at a local level within Greater Gwent.	6.3.1	Creation of local NRAPs for each Local Nature Partnership within Greater Gwent, containing focused nature recovery aims for the areas and landscapes covered by the relevant local NRAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LNPs</li> </ul>
		6.3.2	Establish a mechanism in which Local NRAPs are reviewed in line with the review cycle of the GGNRAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gwent Public Service Board</li> <li>• LNPs</li> </ul>

## Part 3: Appendices & References

### Appendix 1: GGSoN Summary Data

All data is taken and compiled from the 100 species stories found within the GGSoN report. Further details regarding the status and trends can be found in the full report available online.

Table 7: Status of selected mammal species in Greater Gwent

Group	Species		Conservation Status			No. Records	Data Availability	Outcome / Trend
	Common Name	Binomial Name	BAP	S7	IUCN			
Terrestrial Mammals	Eurasian Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>			LC	857	Moderate	Stable
	European Beaver	<i>Castor fiber</i>	✓			0	Poor	Increasing
	Brown Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	✓	✓		294	Moderate	Stable
	Dormouse	<i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>	✓	✓	VU	2044	Good	Stable
	Harvest Mouse	<i>Micromys minutus</i>	✓	✓	VU	45	Poor	Declining
	West European Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	✓	✓	VU	1824	Good	Declining
	European Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	✓	✓	VU	1004	Good	Increasing
	Pine Marten	<i>Martes martes</i>	✓	✓	CR	14	Poor	Increasing
	Polecat	<i>Mustela putoris</i>	✓	✓	LC	292	Moderate	Increasing
	Eurasian Water Shrew	<i>Neomys fodiens</i>			LC	44	Poor	Declining
	European Water Vole	<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>	✓	✓	EN	3004	Good	Declining
Bats	Bechstein's Bat	<i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>	✓	✓	EN	13	Poor	Unclear
	Greater Horseshoe Bat	<i>Rhinolophus ferrumquinum</i>			NT	7	Poor	Increasing
	Lesser Horseshoe Bat	<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	✓	✓	LC	3168	Good	Increasing
	Western Barbastelle Bat	<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>	✓	✓	VU	32	Poor	Unclear

The IUCN status<sup>42</sup> reported by the GGSoN for terrestrial mammals were taken from 'A Review of the Population and Conservation Status of British Mammals'.<sup>42</sup>

Table 8: Status of selected bird species in Greater Gwent

Group	Species		Conservation Status			No. Records	Data Availability	Outcome / Trend
	Common Name	Binomial Name	BAP	S7	BCC			
Birds	Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>			G	598	Moderate	Stable
	Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>			A	2169	Good	Stable
	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	✓	✓	R	2083	Good	Declining
	Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	✓	✓	R	219	Poor	Declining
	Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	✓	✓	R	163	Poor	Declining
	Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	✓	✓	A	73	Moderate	Increasing
	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>			G	2228	Good	Increasing
	Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>			A	1705	Good	Declining
	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>			G	4494	Good	Increasing
	Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>			R	1474	Good	Declining
	Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>			G	1493	Good	Increasing
	Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>			A	2407	Good	Increasing
	Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>			A	2095	Good	Increasing
	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>			G	554	Poor	Stable
	Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>			G	33	Poor	Increasing
	Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>			A	3141	Good	Increasing
	Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>		✓	R	245	Poor	Increasing
	Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	✓	✓	A	344	Poor	Increasing

<sup>42</sup> [A Review of the Population and Conservation Status of British Mammals - JP025 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](#)



Red Grouse	<i>Lagopus lagopus</i>	✓	✓	R	429	Moderate	Increasing
Ring Ouzel	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>	✓	✓	R	201	Poor	Declining
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	A	7785	Moderate	Increasing
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>			G	1419	Good	Stable
Black-Tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>			A	1431	Good	Increasing
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>			G	1354	Good	Declining
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>			R	2792	Good	Stable
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>			G	775	Good	Stable
Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>			R	3693	Good	Declining
Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>		✓	R	1268	Good	Declining
Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>			A	791	Good	Stable
Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	✓	✓	A	362	Poor	Declining
Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>	✓	✓	R	750	Moderate	Declining
Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>		✓	R	366	Poor	Declining
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	✓	✓	R	434	Poor	Declining
Willow Tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>	✓	✓	R	190	Poor	Declining
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>			R	2911	Good	Increasing
Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	✓	✓	R	1317	Good	Declining

In line with the way in which bird species are monitored, the GGSoN reported the status of the bird species using the UK Red List for birds, where those species designated red are shown to have the highest need for conservation efforts.

Table 9: Status of all native reptile and amphibian species in Greater Gwent

Group	Species		Conservation Status			No. Records	Data Availability	Outcome / Trend
	Common Name	Binomial Name	BAP	S7	IUCN			
Reptiles and Amphibians	Adder	<i>Vipera berus</i>	✓	✓	LC	181	Poor	Declining
	Common (Viviparous) Lizard	<i>Zootoca vivipara</i>	✓	✓	LC	417	Moderate	Unclear
	Common Toad	<i>Bufo bufo</i>	✓	✓	LC	417	Moderate	Unclear
	Grass Snake	<i>Natrix helvetica</i>	✓	✓	LC	372	Moderate	Declining
	Great Crested Newt	<i>Triturus cristatus</i>	✓	✓	LC	522	Poor	Stable
	Slow-Worm	<i>Anguis fragilis</i>	✓	✓	LC	713	Good	Unclear

IUCN records for the reptiles and amphibians discussed in the report are taken from the European Red List.<sup>43</sup>

Table 10: Status of selected fish species in Greater Gwent

Group	Species		Conservation Status			No. Records	Data Availability	Outcome / Trend
	Common Name	Binomial Name	BAP	S7	IUCN			
Fish	European Eel	<i>Anguilla anguilla</i>	✓	✓	CR	1079	Moderate	Declining
	Atlantic Salmon	<i>Salmo salar</i>	✓	✓		611	Moderate	Declining

<sup>43</sup> [European Red Lists of species — European Environment Agency \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu/european-union/en/european-red-list-species)

Table 11: Status of selected butterfly and moth species in Greater Gwent

Group	Species		Conservation Status			No. Records	Data Availability	Outcome / Trend
	Common Name	Binomial Name	BAP	S7	IUCN			
Butterflies and Moths	Forester	<i>Adscita statice</i>	✓	✓		39	Poor	Unclear
	White-Spotted Sable	<i>Anania funebris</i>	✓	✓		11	Poor	Unclear
	Small Pearl-Bordered Fritillary	<i>Boloria selene</i>	✓	✓	NT	489	Moderate	Unclear
	Small Blue	<i>Cupido minimus</i>	✓	✓	NT	16	Poor	Declining
	Silurian	<i>Eriopygodes imbecilla</i>		✓	VU	266	Moderate	Unclear
	Dingy Skipper	<i>Erynnis tages</i>	✓	✓	VU	580	Moderate	Unclear
	Marsh Fritillary	<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>	✓	✓	VU	257	Moderate	Declining
	Grayling	<i>Hipparchia semele</i>	✓	✓	VU	335	Moderate	Unclear
	Wood White	<i>Leptidea sinapis</i>	✓	✓	EN	115	Poor	Declining
	White Admiral	<i>Limenitis camilla</i>	✓	✓	VU	131	Poor	Declining
	Grizzled Skipper	<i>Pyrgus malvae</i>	✓	✓	VU	335	Moderate	Declining

Status data for the butterfly and moths species have been compiled primarily from A New Red List of British Butterflies.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> [The Butterfly Red List for Great Britain \(butterfly-conservation.org\)](https://butterfly-conservation.org/)

Table 12: Status of selected Odonata species in Greater Gwent

Group	Species		Conservation Status			No. Records	Data Availability	Outcome / Trend
	Common Name	Binomial Name	BAP	S7	IUCN			
Odonata	Small Red Damselfly	<i>Ceriagrion tenellum</i>			LC	12	Poor	Unclear
	Variable Damselfly	<i>Coenagrion pulchellum</i>			NT	37	Poor	Unclear
	Common Clubtail Dragonfly	<i>Gomphus vulgatissimus</i>			NT	94	Poor	Unclear
	Scarce Blue-Tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura pumilio</i>			NT	80	Poor	Unclear

Table 13: Status of selected invertebrate species and species groups in Greater Gwent

Group	Species		Conservation Status			No. Records	Data Availability	Outcome / Trend
	Common Name	Binomial Name	BAP	S7	IUCN			
Other Invertebrates	Brown-Banded Carder Bee	<i>Bombus humilis</i>		✓		618	Moderate	Unclear
	Coal spoil invertebrates		VAR*	VAR*		3064	Moderate	Unclear
	Gwent Levels aquatic invertebrates						Poor	Unclear
	Pollinators			✓		30706	Moderate	Unclear
	Shrill Carder Bee	<i>Bombus Sylvarum</i>	✓	✓		1012	Good	Unclear

Species groups containing a variety of different statuses have been noted in the tables by the use of Var\*

This abbreviation is seen commonly where species groups were considered in the GGSon.

Table 14: Status of selected vascular plant species and species groups in Greater Gwent

Group	Species		Conservation Status			No. Records	Data Availability	Outcome / Trend
	Common Name	Binomial Name	BAP	S7	IUCN			
Vascular Plants	Arable Wildflowers		VAR*	VAR*	VAR*	303	Poor	Declining
	Green-Winged Orchid	<i>Anacamptis morio</i>			NT	162	Poor	Stable
	Lesser Butterfly Orchid	<i>Platanthera bifolia</i>	✓	✓	VU	18	Poor	Declining
	Spreading Bellflower	<i>Campanula patula</i>	✓	✓	CR	20	Poor	Declining

Table 15: Status of selected fungi species groups in Greater Gwent

Group	Species		Conservation Status			No. Records	Data Availability	Outcome / Trend
	Common Name	Binomial Name	BAP	S7	IUCN			
Fungi	Beech Deadwood Fungi		VAR*		VAR*	45	Poor	Unclear
	Oak Deadwood Fungi		VAR*	VAR*	VAR*	211	Moderate	Unclear
	Grassland Waxcap Fungi		VAR*	VAR*	VAR*	3242	Good	Unclear

Table 16: Status of selected lichen and bryophyte species and species groups in Greater Gwent

Group	Species		Conservation Status			No. Records	Data Availability	Outcome / Trend
	Common Name	Binomial Name	BAP	S7	IUCN			
Lichens and Bryophytes	Arable Bryophytes		VAR*	VAR*	VAR*	112	Good	Unclear
	Irish Earth-Moss	<i>Ephemerum hibernicum</i>				1	Poor	Unclear
	Epiphytic Bryophytes		VAR*	VAR*		881	Good	Increasing
	Flood Moss	<i>Myrinia pulvinata</i>				7	Poor	Declining
	Limestone Bryophytes		VAR*	VAR*		264	Moderate	Unclear
	Stone Roof Tile Mosses				VAR*	55	Good	Declining
	N-Sensitive Lichens		VAR*	VAR*		459	Moderate	Unclear

Table 17: Status of selected invasive non-native species and plant diseases in Greater Gwent

Group	Species		Conservation Status			No. Records	Data Availability	Outcome / Trend
	Common Name	Binomial Name	BAP	S7	IUCN			
INNS and Plant diseases	Ash Dieback	<i>Hymenoscyphus fraxineus</i>				8	Poor	Managed
	Giant Hogweed	<i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i>				206	Moderate	Managed
	Himalayan Balsam	<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>				1034	Moderate	Managed
	Japanese Knotweed	<i>Fallopia japonica</i>				2617	Good	Managed
	Signal Crayfish	<i>Pacifastacus leniusculus</i>				12	Poor	Managed

All of the INNS and plant diseases mentioned in the GGSoN are subject to extensive management programmes across the Greater Gwent area. As a result, they have been described as ‘managed’ for the purposes of the GGNRAP.

#### Data analysis:

The GGSon analysed numerous records and existing data to assess the status and trends of 100 species found across Greater Gwent. Due to the grouping of some species into a species group the report represents over 500 individual species, represented as 100 different stories of these species and species groups.

The total number of records can be seen in Table 18 and Figure 17, whilst the availability of the data can be seen in table 19.

Table 18: Number of records analysed in the GGSon

Group	Number of records	Percentage of total records (%)
Terrestrial Mammals & Bats	12642	10.66
Birds	53786	45.35
Reptiles and Amphibians	2622	2.21
Fish	1690	1.43
Butterflies and Moths	2574	2.17
Odonata	223	0.19
Other Invertebrates	35400	29.85
Vascular Plants	503	0.42
Fungi	3498	2.95
Lichens and Bryophytes	1779	1.50
INNS and Plant diseases	3877	3.27
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>118594</b>	

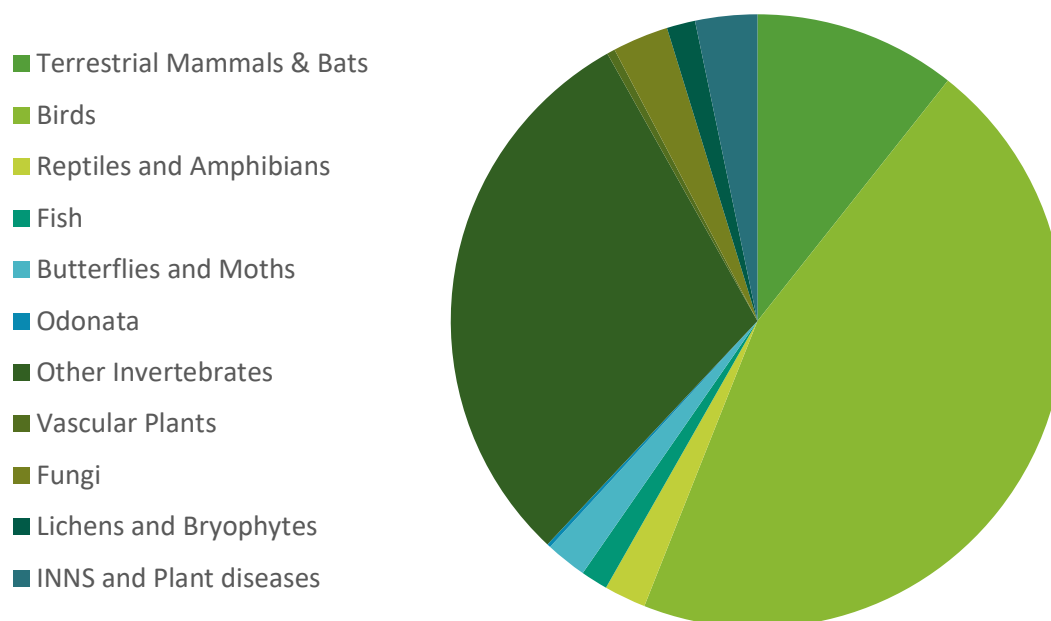


Figure 17: Percentage of total records by taxa



Table 19: Data availability for records of species and species groups analysed in the GGSoN

Data Availability	Number of species / species groups	Percentage of species / species groups (%)
Poor	39	39.8
Moderate	27	27.6
Good	32	32.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>98</b>	

When looking at the overall trends species were described to be declining, stable or increasing. Where data was inconclusive the designation 'Unclear' was used when summarising the findings of the GGSoN. For INNS and plant diseases, the designation 'Managed' was used. Overall, 33.7% of the species analysed was found to be declining in their populations, 12.2% were considered stable and 21.4% showed an increase in numbers. It is worth noting that 27% of species and species group had inconclusive data, resulting in the population trends and outcomes being categorised as unclear.

Table 20: Overall trends in population of species and species groups in the GGSoN

Trends / Outcomes	Number of species / species groups	Percentage of species / species groups (%)
Declining	33	33.7
Stable	12	12.2
Increasing	21	21.4
Unclear	27	27.6
Managed	5	5.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>98</b>	

If the species and species groups showing both unclear and managed trends and outcomes are excluded from the data analyses, we see that of the species with sufficient data 50% show a decline in population, 18.2% are stable and 31.8% have shown an increasing trend (see figure 18).

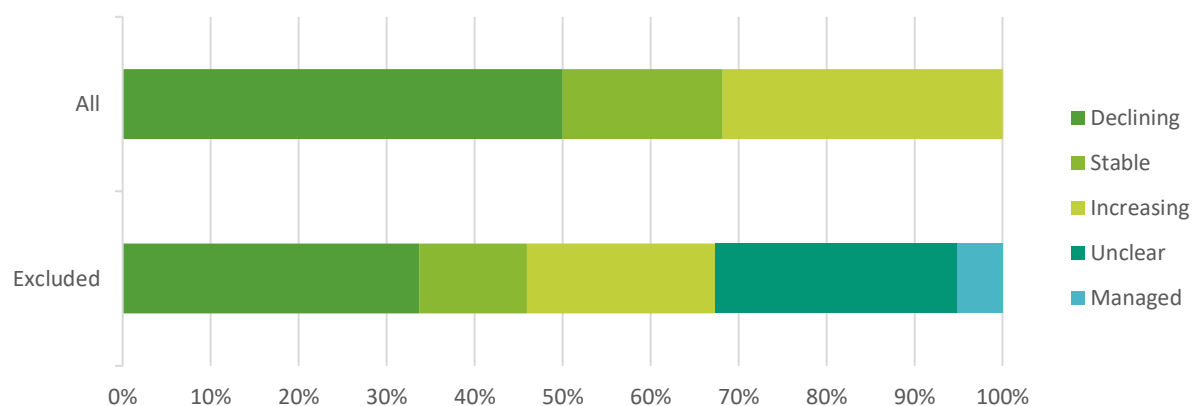


Figure 18: Population trends of the 100 species and species groups analysed in the GGSoN

## Appendix 2: Ecosystem Resilience and Ecosystem Services

### Ecosystem resilience:

In line with policy cycles in Wales, NRW published the second state of natural resources report building upon assessments of natural resources within Wales, the UK, and the wider world. SoNaRR2020 assessed ecosystem resilience in Wales using the DECCA framework:

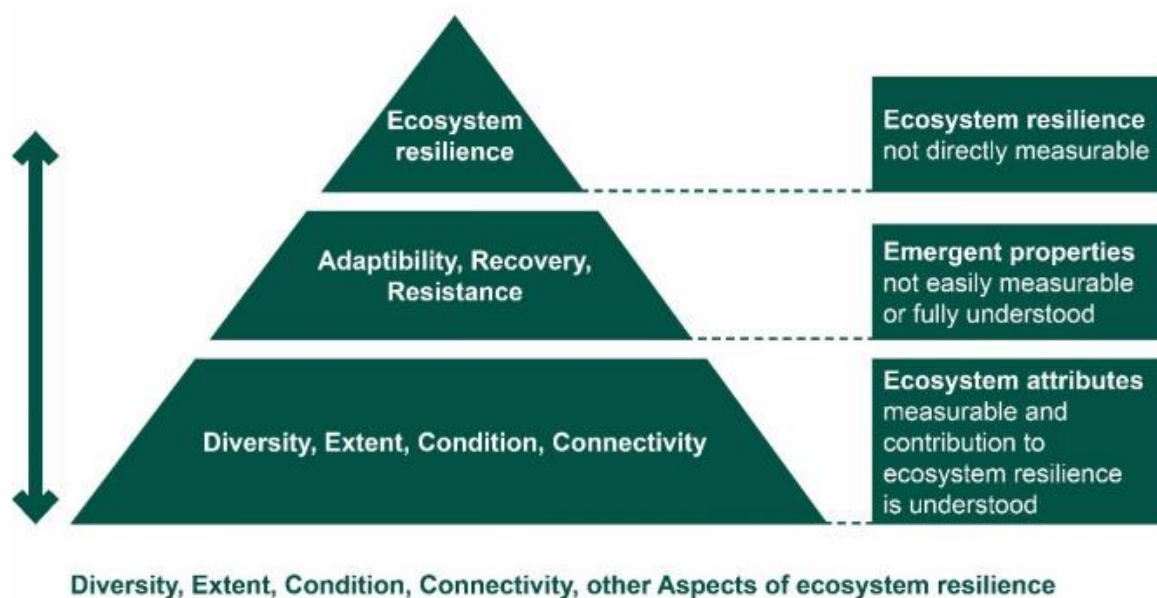


Figure 19: The DECCA Framework

DECCA stands for Diversity, Extent, Condition and Connectivity and other Aspects of ecosystem resilience. Each of the four ecosystem attributes were assessed in SoNaRR2020 and summarised below,<sup>45</sup> with the findings making for concerning reading. Many of our ecosystems show little resilience by way of the four ecosystem attributes:

### Diversity

Diversity is important at every level and scale, from the genetic level to landscapes. Diversity is critical in supporting complex ecosystem functions and processes and allows for organisms and ecosystems to adapt to change.

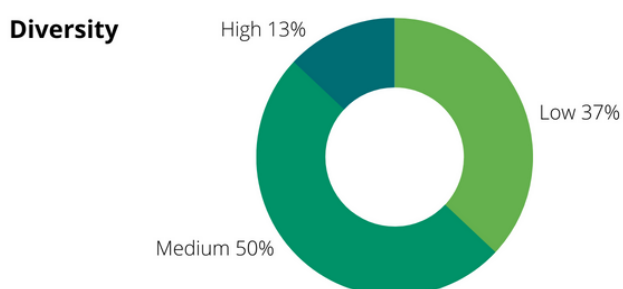


Figure 20: Status of diversity in Welsh habitats from which resilience can be inferred (from SoNaRR2020)

The SoNaRR2020 summarises that most habitats in Wales have seen a reduction in their diversity during the last century, indicating that they are not resilient to change.

A continued decline in diversity is thought to result in the collapse of any of the ecosystem services these habitats and provide.

<sup>45</sup> [Assessment of the achievement of SMNR Aim 2: Resilient ecosystems \(cyfoethnaturiol.cymru\)](#)

### Extent

The extent, or size, of an ecosystem directly affects its capacity to adapt to change, recover from disturbance, and to resist a range of future pressures. The smaller a habitat, the fewer number of species and individuals within a species it can support, leading to a loss in biodiversity.

#### Extent

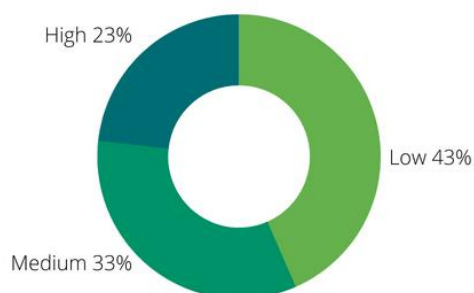


Figure 21: Status of extent in Welsh habitats from which resilience can be inferred (from SoNaRR2020)

Habitat degradation and loss has resulted in a large proportion of habitats to be assessed as having a low extent. SoNaRR2020 concludes the need for habitat creation and restoration to mitigate for the effects of these historic losses, and notes that the rate of loss has slowed for some habitat types.

### Condition

The condition of an ecosystem is determined by the biotic (biological) and abiotic (environmental) factors associated with a habitat or species. The condition of ecosystems and habitats is affected by multiple and complex pressures acting both as short term and longer-term disturbances.

#### Condition

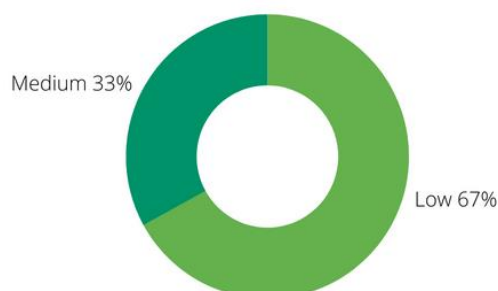


Figure 22: Status of condition in Welsh habitats from which resilience can be inferred (from SoNaRR2020)

Habitat condition continues to be affected by current and historic land-use changes. The assessment of the condition of habitats in SoNaRR2020 considered biological and environmental factors linked to the habitats and species assessed. It was concluded that no habitat could be categorised as 'high' in status, implying low resilience.

### Connectivity

Connectivity describes the links between and within different species, habitats, or ecosystems. Environmental factors also influence connectivity. In relation to different species, connectivity refers to the relative distance that species can move to feed, breed, and complete lifecycles.

#### Connectivity

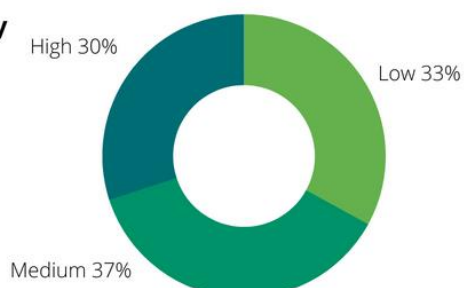


Figure 23: Status of connectivity in Welsh habitats from which resilience can be inferred (from SoNaRR2020)

SoNaRR2020 concluded that land and water management practices have reduced the connectivity between habitats. This connectivity is seen to be the lowest in lowland habitats, due to the prevalence of intensively managed land and the loss of semi-natural habitats.

The findings of the SoNaRR shows that our ecosystems in Wales are not resilient, implied by low values of diversity, extent, condition, and connectivity.<sup>46</sup> Further to this NRW have identified five opportunities for action to improve ecosystem resilience within Wales:

*Table 21: Five opportunities for action to improve ecosystem resilience identified by NRW in SoNaRR2020<sup>47</sup>*

Develop an assessment of ecosystem resilience	Assessing ecosystem resilience is complex, and there are few relevant published tools or methods available to measure ecosystem resilience at a national scale.
Effective ecosystem management	Ecological resilience can be improved by maintaining and enhancing habitats and species to aid the recovery of biodiversity and restore functionality to ecosystems.
Build on Wales' policy framework	Wales already has the policy framework to promote a healthy and resilient place for people and nature. In implementing the Future Generations, Environment and Planning Acts there are many opportunities to pursue Wales' ambition for sustainable development.
Optimising Regulation	The resilience of ecosystems relies upon the regulation of activities that act as pressures on the environment. Controls are in place to regulate these activities, but there is a need to ensure that they are implemented consistently with the objective of sustainable management of natural resources.
Building wider engagement	A commitment to transformative change is needed from all parts of society. This can be achieved by wider engagement and working together on the importance of nature-based solutions, promotion and adoption of good practice, and more integrated policy interventions.

### Ecosystem Services

Ecosystem services is a term used to describe the variety of services the environment provides to us. Ecosystems provide us with a wide range of ecosystem services, which create benefits that link with our natural resources and with our well-being.<sup>48</sup> By ensuring we manage our ecosystems natural resources effectively, we can make progress towards the well-being goals in the WoFG Act 2015.<sup>49</sup>

These services are critically dependent on the processes that occur within ecosystems which are underpinned by biodiversity. They are defined as “the benefits provided by ecosystems that contribute to making human life both possible and worth living” by the UK National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA)<sup>50</sup> and are sometimes referred to as “Natural Capital”<sup>51</sup> The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA) and NEA set out four categories of ecosystem services, described in Table 22:

<sup>46</sup> [Natural Resources Wales / SoNaRR2020: Ecosystems are resilient to expected and unforeseen change](#)

<sup>47</sup> [Natural Resources Wales / SoNaRR2020: Ecosystems are resilient to expected and unforeseen change](#)

<sup>48</sup> [CHAPTER 5: ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AND WELL-BEING \(naturalresources.wales\)](#)

<sup>49</sup> [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>50</sup> [UK NEA \(unep-wcmc.org\)](#)

<sup>51</sup> [Ecosystem services - nature's benefits | NatureScot](#)

Table 22: Summary of ecosystem services as described by Katy Orford, National Assembly for Wales Research Service<sup>52</sup>

Supporting services:	ecosystem services "that are necessary for the production of all other ecosystem services" including soil formation, nutrient cycling, primary production
Provisioning services:	"products obtained from ecosystems" including food, fresh water, fuel wood, fibres, biochemicals, genetic resources
Regulating services:	"benefits obtained from the regulation of ecosystem processes" including climate regulation, disease regulation, water regulation, water purification, pollination
Cultural services:	"nonmaterial benefits obtained from ecosystems" including spiritual and religious, recreation and ecotourism, aesthetic, inspirational, educational, sense of place, cultural heritage

It should be noted that 'supporting services' are often regarded as the basis for the services of the other three categories.<sup>53</sup> Ecosystem services are defined in terms of their benefits to people, therefore it should be recognised that ecosystem services are context dependent.<sup>54</sup>

In recent years, more attention has been spent calculating the monetary value of ecosystem services within Wales. Of the four categories, Cultural services are the most straight forward to assess. This is due to the direct income received from tourism and recreational activities. The UK NEA Technical Report stated an average of £753 million per year is brought to Wales through the tourism industry, with its wider impact estimated at around £4.2 billion in 2007. Furthermore, indirect evaluations can be made, such as pollination of food crops calculated to be with £125 billion globally per annum.<sup>55</sup>

Ecosystems and their resultant ecosystem services have changed in the past 60 years, driven by changes in society, environmental land-use and climate change.<sup>56</sup> To ensure our ecosystems are resilient and able to contribute ecosystem services, both land and natural resources must be appropriately managed. Where priority habitats and viable land is not owned by public bodies, there is the opportunity for Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES).

A PES is a voluntary agreement or transaction between a buyer and a provider. The buyer, often a public body, pays a provider for a defined ecosystem service, on the condition that the service is provided. The Welsh government has produced guidance regarding the implementation of a PES system,<sup>57</sup> including a presentation on how PES schemes work in action, their challenges and the opportunities they provide.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>52</sup> [What are 'ecosystem services'? \(senedd.wales\)](https://senedd.wales)

<sup>53</sup> [What are 'ecosystem services'? \(senedd.wales\)](https://senedd.wales)

<sup>54</sup> [UK NEA \(unep-wcmc.org\)](https://www.unep-wcmc.org)

<sup>55</sup> [What are 'ecosystem services'? \(senedd.wales\)](https://senedd.wales)

<sup>56</sup> [Wales Biodiversity Partnership - Natural Resource Management \(biodiversitywales.org.uk\)](https://biodiversitywales.org.uk)

<sup>57</sup> [Payment for ecosystem services \(PES\) | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales)

<sup>58</sup> [Payments for Ecosystem Services \(PES\): introductory presentation | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales)

## Appendix 3: Summary of legislation

### *Well-being of Future Generations Act<sup>59</sup>*

The Well-being of Future Generations act (2015) looks at improving the economic, social, cultural, and environmental well-being of Wales. It established the Public Services Boards for each local authority in Wales, which in turn are responsible for sustainable development, in line with the goals of the act, in their areas. The act focuses on promoting sustainable development.

The Act is separated into five parts:

- Introduction
- Improving well-being
- The future generations commissioner for Wales
- Public Services Boards
- Final Provisions

Of the five parts, Part 2 is the most relevant in terms of nature recovery across Greater Gwent.

### *Part 2: Improving well-being*

This part of the WoFG Act 2015 is comprised of six areas. The first area comprises sections 2-6 and focuses on the sustainable development principle and the well-being duty placed on public bodies. Section 2 defines sustainable development as:

*The process of improving the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals.<sup>60</sup>*

Section 3 describes the well-being duty on public bodies. As part of the well-being duty each public body is required to carry out sustainable development. This must include setting well-being objectives that contribute towards achieving the well-being goals and take reasonable steps to ensure those objectives are met. This applies to all public bodies in Wales, whether they work nationwide, regionally, or locally.

Section 4 of the Act establishes the seven well-being goals:

*Table 23: The seven well-being goals set out in the WoFG Act 2015*

Goal	Description
A prosperous Wales	An innovative, productive, and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

<sup>59</sup> [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/5/contents)

<sup>60</sup> [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/5/contents)

A resilient Wales	A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic, and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).
A healthier Wales	A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.
A more equal Wales	A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic background and circumstances).
A Wales of cohesive communities	Attractive, viable, safe, and well-connected communities.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage, and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.
A globally responsible Wales	A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

Section 5 further details the sustainable development principle:

*“in accordance with the sustainable development principle” means that the body must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.<sup>61</sup>*

The act establishes the five ways of working designed to help public bodies act accordingly with the sustainable development principle.

Section 6 defines what is meant by a public body within Wales:

- *The Welsh Ministers*
- *A local authority*
- *A corporate joint committee*
- *A Local Health Board*
- *The following NHS Trusts—*
  - *Public Health Wales*
  - *Velindre.*
- *A National Park authority for a National Park in Wales*
- *A Welsh fire and rescue authority*
- *The Natural Resources Body for Wales*
- *The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales*
- *The Arts Council of Wales*
- *The Sports Council for Wales*
- *The National Library of Wales*
- *the National Museum of Wales.*

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<sup>61</sup> [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/5/section/6)





Figure 24: The five ways of working established in the WoFG Act 2015

Whilst sections 2-6 are most relevant to the GGNRAP other sections are of importance.

Section 7 provides guidance on the setting and publishing of well-being objectives by public bodies in Wales in accordance with the sustainable development principle.

When setting the objectives public bodies must provide and publish a statement explaining:

- How the different well-being objectives contribute towards achieving the well-being goals.
- Why the public body has set the objectives, including how it proposes to involve persons of interest which reflect the diversity of the population.
- The steps the public body proposes to take in order to meet the objectives.
- The timeframe in which the body aims to meet its objective.
- Any further information that may be appropriate about the objective.<sup>62</sup>

Section 10 summaries the need for national indicators to measure the progress towards the seven well-being goals. The 50 national indicators were laid out before the Senedd in 2021.<sup>63</sup> These indicators can be used to measure progress across more than one of the seven well-being goals. Milestones are also set in relation to the national indicators which assist in measuring the progress made against the goals. At the time of writing the national milestones are measured against national indicators 5, 8, 14, 17, 21, 22, 37 & 41 (See Tables 24 & 25).

In 2021 the annual Well-being of Wales report provided an update on progress made towards achieving the well-being goals in Wales.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>62</sup> [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/12/section/10)

<sup>63</sup> [National wellbeing indicators | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales/national-wellbeing-indicators)













<sup>64</sup> [Wellbeing of Wales: 2021 | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales/wellbeing-of-wales-2021)

Table 24: Summary of the national indicators from the well-being of Wales report 2021. Adapted from online data published by the Welsh Government <sup>65</sup>

National Well-being Indicators		Well-being Goals							National Milestone
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
01	Percentage of live single births with a birth weight of under 2,500g.	.	.	■	■	.	.	.	
02	Healthy life expectancy at birth including the gap between the least and most deprived.	.	.	■	■	.	.	.	
03	Percentage of adults with two or more healthy lifestyle behaviours.	.	.	■	■	■	■	.	
04	Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) pollution in the air.	■	■	■	.	.	.	■	
05	Percentage of children with two or more healthy lifestyle behaviours.	.	.	■	■	■	.	.	✓
06	Measurement of development of young children.	■	.	.	■	■	■	.	
07	Average capped 9 points score of pupils, including the gap between those who are eligible and are not eligible for free school meals.	■	.	.	■	.	■	.	
08	Percentage of adults with qualifications at the different levels of the National Qualifications Framework.	■	.	■	■	.	.	.	✓
09	Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked (relative to UK average).	■	.	.	.	.	.	.	
10	Gross Disposable Household Income per head.	■	.	■	■	.	.	.	
11	Percentage of businesses which are innovation-active.	■	■	.	.	.	.	■	
12	Capacity (in MW) of renewable energy equipment installed.	■	■	.	.	■	.	■	
13	Concentration of carbon and organic matter in soil.	■	■	.	.	.	.	■	
14	The global footprint of Wales.	■	■	.	.	.	.	■	✓
15	Amount of waste generated that is not recycled, per person.	■	■	.	.	■	.	■	
16	Percentage of people in employment, who are on permanent contracts (or on temporary contracts, and not seeking permanent employment) and who earn at least the real Living Wage.	■	.	■	■	.	.	■	
17	Pay difference for gender, disability, and ethnicity.	■	.	.	■	.	.	.	✓
18	Percentage of people living in households in income poverty relative to the UK median: measured for children, working age and those of pension age.	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
19	Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation.	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
20	Proportion of employees whose pay is set by collective bargaining.	■	.	■	■	.	.	.	
21	Percentage of people in employment.	■	.	■	■	.	.	.	✓
22	Percentage of people in education, employment,	■	.	■	■	■	.	.	✓

<sup>65</sup> [Wellbeing of Wales: national indicators | GOV.WALES](#)

	or training, measured for different age groups.								
23	Percentage who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area.	.	.	.	■	■	.	■	
24	Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/ access the facilities and services they need.	.	.	■	■	■	.	.	
25	Percentage of people feeling safe at home, walking in the local area, and when travelling.	.	.	■	■	■	.	.	
26	Percentage of people satisfied with local area as a place to live.	.	■	■	.	■	■	.	
27	Percentage of people agreeing that they belong to the area; that people from different backgrounds get on well together; and that people treat each other with respect.	.	■	■	■	■	■	■	
28	Percentage of people who volunteer.	.	.	.	.	■	■	■	
29	Mean mental well-being score for people.	.	.	■	■	.	.	.	
30	Percentage of people who are lonely.	.	.	■	■	■	.	.	
31	Percentage of dwellings which are free from hazards.	.	■	■	■	■	.	.	
32	Number of properties (homes and businesses) at medium or high risk of flooding from rivers and the sea.	.	■	■	■	■	.	.	
33	Percentage of dwellings with adequate energy performance.	■	■	■	.	.	.	■	
34	Number of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless per 10,000 households.	■	.	■	■	■	.	.	
35	Percentage of people attending or participating in arts, culture, or heritage activities at least three times a year.	.	.	■	■	■	■	.	
36	Percentage of people who speak Welsh daily and can speak more than just a few words of Welsh.	.	.	.	.	■	■	■	
37	Number of people who can speak Welsh.	.	.	.	.	■	■	■	✓
38	Percentage of people participating in sporting activities three or more times a week.	.	■	■	■	■	■	.	
39	Percentage of museums and archives holding archival/heritage collections meeting UK accreditation standards.	.	.	.	.	.	■	■	
40	Percentage of designated historic environment assets that are in stable or improved conditions.	.	■	.	.	.	■	■	
41	Emissions of greenhouse gases within Wales.	■	■	■	.	.	.	■	✓
42	Emissions of greenhouse gases attributed to the consumption of global goods and services in Wales.	■	■	■	.	.	.	■	
43	Areas of healthy ecosystems in Wales.	■	■	■	.	■	■	■	
44	Status of biological diversity in Wales.	■	■	.	.	■	■	■	
45	Percentage of surface water bodies, and groundwater bodies, achieving good or high overall status.	.	■	■	.	■	■	■	
46	Active global citizenship in Wales.	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
47	Percentage of people who have confidence in the justice system.	.	.	.	■	■	.	■	

48	Percentage of journeys by walking, cycling or public transport.					.	.		
49	Percentage of households spending 30% or more of their income on housing costs.		.	.				.	
50	Status of digital inclusion.		.	.			.	.	

A full technical document is available online which includes definitions and a description of data sources.<sup>66</sup>

*Table 25: Description of the national milestones taken from the National Indicators and National Milestones for Wales Document<sup>67</sup>*

National indicator	National milestone
5. Percentage of children with two or more healthy lifestyle behaviours.	To increase the percentage of children with two or more healthy behaviours to 94% by 2035 and more than 99% by 2050.
8. Percentage of adults with qualifications at the different levels of the National Qualifications Framework.	75% of working age adults in Wales will be qualified to level 3 or higher by 2050. The percentage of working age adults with no qualifications will be 5% or below in every local authority in Wales by 2050.
14. The global footprint of Wales.	Wales will use only its fair share of the world's resources by 2050.
17. Pay difference for gender, disability, and ethnicity.	An elimination of the pay gap for gender, disability, and ethnicity by 2050.
21. Percentage of people in employment.	Eradicate the gap between the employment rate in Wales and the UK by 2050, with a focus on fair work and raising labour market participation of under-represented groups.
22. Percentage of people in education, employment, or training, measured for different age groups.	At least 90% of 16-24 year olds will be in education, employment, or training by 2050.
37. Number of people who can speak Welsh.	A million Welsh speakers by 2050.
41. Emissions of greenhouse gases within Wales.	Wales will achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

<sup>66</sup> [well-being-wales-national-indicators-technical-descriptions-data-links.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

<sup>67</sup> [national-indicators-and-milestones-for-wales-2021.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

### *The Environment (Wales) Act 2016*

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 is an Act of the former National Assembly for Wales, now the Welsh Parliament. The Act became law in 2016 and put in place legislation regarding how we manage our natural resources in Wales. The Act is split into 8 key parts:

- Sustainable management of natural resources
- Climate change
- Charges for carrier bags
- Collection and disposal of waste
- Fisheries for shellfish
- Marine Licensing
- Miscellaneous
- General

Of these 8 parts, Part 1 is the most relevant to the GGNRAP. Part 1 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 provides the framework for the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR). Within Part 1 there are sections 1 through 27 of the Act, grouped according to the content they refer too. Below is a summary of key sections relating to the GGNRAP and the wider area of work. <sup>68</sup>

### *Section 6: Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty*

Section 6 of the SMNR placed a biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems on public bodies that exercise their functions in relation to Wales. Subsection 1 states that:

*A public authority must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.* <sup>69</sup>

The act specifies that public authorities must take into account the resilience of ecosystems, with particular attention drawn to the following aspects: <sup>70</sup>

1. Diversity between and within ecosystems
2. The connections between and within ecosystems
3. The scale of ecosystems
4. The condition of ecosystems (including their structure and functioning)
5. The adaptability of ecosystems.

Section 6 also describes the duty public bodies have to act in regard to the biodiversity lists published in Section 7 of the Act, the SoNaRR and any relevant area statements (see below). Public bodies have a responsibility to publish a plan setting out what it proposes to do to comply with subsection 1. All public bodies were to produce this first plan by the end of 2019 to comply with subsection 1. The Act specifies the requirement of public bodies to produce an updated Section 6 plan every three years. The first reports were due in 2019, with updated reports due by the end of the current calendar year, 2022. The updated report must include what a public body has done to comply with subsection 1.

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<sup>68</sup> [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/5/contents/enacted)

<sup>69</sup> [Wales Biodiversity Partnership - Section 6 \(biodiversitywales.org.uk\)](https://biodiversitywales.org.uk/wales-biodiversity-partnership-section-6)

<sup>70</sup> [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/5/contents/enacted)

### *Section 7: Biodiversity lists and duty to take steps to maintain and enhance biodiversity*

Section 7 of the SMNR concerns the production and publication of a list of living organisms and habitat types within Wales, which are of principle importance for enhancing the biodiversity of Wales. Before publishing the lists, it is a requirement that the Welsh Government consults NRW as to which organisms and principal habitats are listed. Section 7 describes how ministers must take all reasonable steps when drafting these lists to maintain and enhance the organisms and habitat types included.

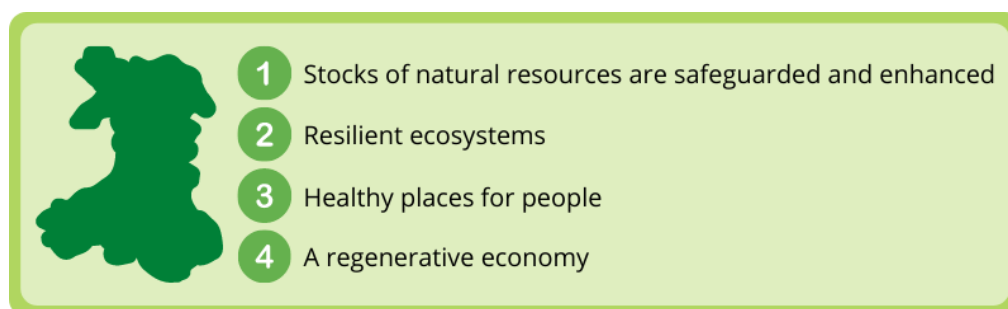
Section 7 replaces the duty in Section 42 of the older Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. The NERC act drew up initial biodiversity lists and actions, used as the basis for the section 7 biodiversity lists. The Section 7 priority species and priority habitats lists can be found online, easily accessible on the Wales Biodiversity Partnership's website.<sup>71</sup>

### *The State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR)*

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 brought about the duty for Natural Resources Wales to produce the State of Natural Resources Report as part of the SMNR. The report assesses the extent to which sustainable management of resources in Wales is being achieved, including an assessment of biodiversity.<sup>72</sup>

The first SoNaRR was produced in 2016 and recognised the challenge climate change poses to sustainable management of natural resources within Wales. As part of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, Natural Resources Wales must publish a report before the end of the calendar year preceding a year in which an ordinary general election is due to be held. This meant a second report was due in 2020, however, due to difficulties caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic it was agreed that the report would be released as a phased publication between December 2020 and March 2021.<sup>73</sup>

The second State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR2020) builds upon the findings of the 2016 SoNaRR and builds on assessments of the status and trends of natural resources within Wales, the UK and beyond. SoNaRR2020 also assesses progress made against four aims of the SMNR.



*Figure 25: The four aims of the SMNR against which progress was assessed in the SoNaRR2020 report*

The report also includes an assessment of biodiversity to support the section 6 duty placed on public bodies and looks at the main trends and factors affecting the state of natural resources in Wales. Overall SoNaRR2020 is an evidence base used to inform revisions to the Natural Resources Policy, Area Statements, local development plans and the GGNRAP.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>71</sup> [Wales Biodiversity Partnership - Environment \(Wales\) Act \(biodiversitywales.org.uk\)](https://biodiversitywales.org.uk)

<sup>72</sup> [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

<sup>73</sup> [Natural Resources Wales / SoNaRR2020: Introduction](#)

<sup>74</sup> [SoNaRR2020 Executive Summary \(cyfoethnaturiol.cymru\)](#)

### *Natural Resources Policy (NRP)*

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 set out the requirement for the formation of the NRP. The NRP considers the findings of the State of Natural Resources Report produced by NRW. It lays out the key priorities, risks, and opportunities for managing natural resources in a sustainable manner including consideration towards climate change and biodiversity. The NRP also sets out the challenges our natural resources and ecosystems face and the opportunities they can provide.<sup>75</sup> By managing Wales' natural resources sustainably, the NRP works towards achieving the goals established in the WoFG Act 2015.<sup>76</sup> National priorities established within the NRP support the delivery of a 'Prosperity for All' national strategy.<sup>77</sup> The NRP outlines the opportunities Wales' natural resources provide as four headline opportunities:

*Table 26: Condensed description of the NRP's headline opportunities<sup>78</sup>*

<b>Supporting successful, sustainable communities</b>
Wales' natural resources are vital resources and benefits to our economy and society. They are the basis of our production industries, provide opportunities for employment and secure the long term economic sustainability of our communities across all parts of Wales. By managing our resources sustainably, we can improve their long term resilience, exploit opportunities, and reduce current vulnerabilities and risks.
<b>Promoting green growth and innovation to create sustainable jobs</b>
The opportunities for green growth in Wales have already seen the green economy expand considerably. Wales' natural resources provide an abundance of renewable energy resources, contributing to significant growth in the sector in the last 10 years, with potential for further growth both on land and at sea. Opportunities arise through diversification into emerging markets in areas such as carbon, water, and biodiversity. Our environmental standards underpin our reputation for high quality produce, allowing Wales to be competitive across both domestic and international markets.
<b>Supporting a more resource efficient economy</b>
If managed wisely, Wales' natural resources can provide a wide range of opportunities to support a low carbon, more resource efficient economy. Moving towards a more circular economy provides Wales with a strategic opportunity for new jobs and innovation, cost savings for businesses and the ability to strengthen our supply chain. Using our resources more efficiently also reduces the pressures on our natural resources.
<b>Maintaining healthy, active, and connected communities</b>
Natural resources are essential for human life and affects both our physical and mental well-being. High quality natural resources and ecosystems play a key role in supporting health outcomes. Wales' green spaces provide a focus for community action and volunteering, increasing social capital, improving community cohesion, and reducing antisocial behaviour. They can also be a key component of regeneration and investment and provide vital services to our towns and cities. Low-income areas also often have less access to good quality green space. As health inequalities are significantly reduced in greener areas, this illustrates the close link with poor health, whereas improving this provision can improve health and reconnect people with the natural assets nearby.

<sup>75</sup> [natural-resources-policy.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

<sup>76</sup> [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>77</sup> [natural-resources-policy.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

<sup>78</sup> [natural-resources-policy.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)



The NRP states that for actions to be effective it is important to have a realistic outlook on the challenges that could be faced. Three challenges were identified:

1) Improving ecosystem resilience:

The SoNaRR showed that none of Wales' ecosystems are resilient<sup>79</sup>, and that overall biodiversity is declining.<sup>80</sup> To build ecosystem resilience we need to Proactively develop resilient ecological networks to maintain and enhance the wider resilience of Wales' ecosystems, Improve the conditions of our ecosystems, and reduce/better manage the pressures and demands on ecosystems and natural resources<sup>81</sup>

2) Climate change and the decline in biological diversity

Climate change is already driving change in our ecosystems. Healthy and resilient ecosystems are important in tackling climate risk. It is through careful management of our ecosystems we can help build ecosystem resilience to the impacts of a changing climate. Climate change threatens to impact how our ecosystems function which would contribute to the decline in biodiversity.<sup>82</sup> Further action on biodiversity is guided by the NRAP for Wales.<sup>83</sup> The objectives stated in the NRAP for Wales form part of our delivery against the Convention on Biological Diversity and the associated Aichi targets<sup>84</sup>

3) The UK's Withdrawal from the EU

Welsh environmental policy is intrinsically linked to the European Union's operating framework. For the NRP to be successful it must be able to operate in the context of the United Kingdoms (and therefore Wales') withdrawal from the European Union. Whilst operating in a landscape of policy change, the importance of working towards the headline opportunities is not understated. The NRP is important in the delivery of Welsh legislation that will continue furthermore.

The NRP sets out three national priorities developed to support the delivery of the national strategy 'Prosperity for all'. These are as follows:<sup>85</sup>

- Delivering nature-based solutions
- Increasing renewable energy and resource efficiency
- Taking a place-based approach.

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<sup>79</sup> [Assessment of the achievement of SMNR Aim 2: Resilient ecosystems \(cyfoethnaturiol.cymru\)](#)

<sup>80</sup> [SoNaRR Theme Chapter Biodiversity \(cyfoethnaturiol.cymru\)](#)

<sup>81</sup> [natural-resources-policy.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

<sup>82</sup> [natural-resources-policy.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

<sup>83</sup> [The Nature Recovery Plan for Wales - Part 1: Our Strategy for Nature \(gov.wales\)](#)

<sup>84</sup> [Aichi Biodiversity Targets \(cbd.int\)](#)

<sup>85</sup> [natural-resources-policy.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

### Area Statements

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 set out the requirement for Natural Resources Wales to collate the Area Statements. The area statements are designed to support place-based approaches linked to the national priorities in the Natural Resources Policy and turn the national priorities into measurable actions.<sup>86</sup>

Natural Resources Wales have produced the Area Statements in collaboration with all public bodies in Wales to set out a local evidence base for the sustainable management of natural resources. Wales is split into seven areas: South East Wales; South central Wales; South West Wales; Mid Wales; North East Wales; North West Wales; Marine Wales. The Area Statements identify the opportunities to work collaboratively to deliver the national priorities and to build ecosystem resilience.

The South East Area Statement corresponds with the area we know as Greater Gwent, with the Local Authorities of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, and Torfaen comprising the area. The Area Statements further categorise areas of South East Wales but by their characteristics and landscapes into six distinct landscape areas. These landscape areas are important to refer to as part of the landscape approach proposed in the South East Area Statement. The boundaries of each landscape profile do not directly follow local authority boundaries.

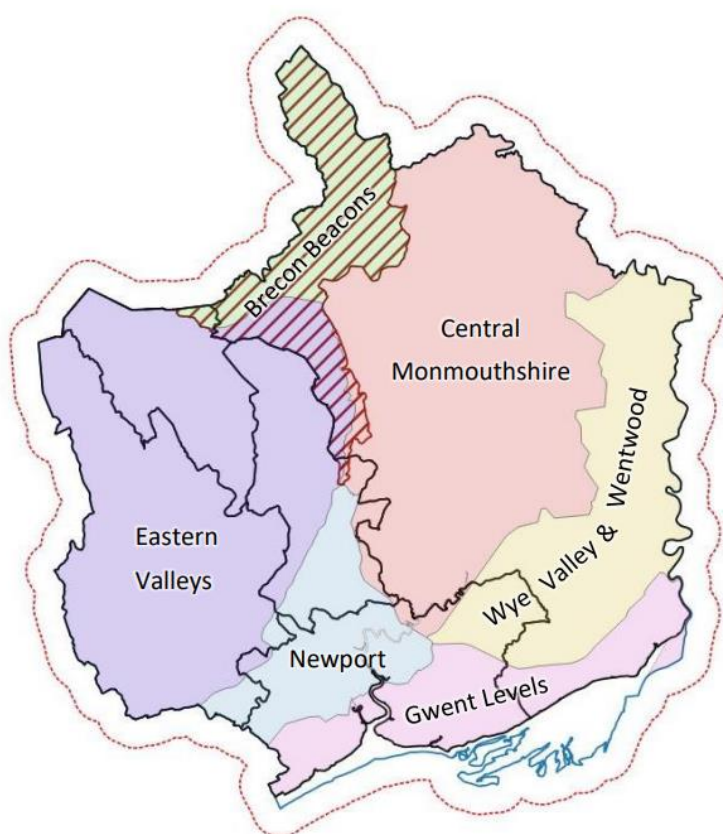


Figure 26: The landscape areas set out in the SE Wales Area Statement. Sourced from the GGSoN<sup>87</sup>

<sup>86</sup> [Natural Resources Wales / Area Statements](#)

<sup>87</sup> [Greater-Gwent-State-of-Nature-4-002.pdf \(monlife.co.uk\)](#)

Table 27: The descriptions of each landscape profile in the SE Area Statement provided by NRW<sup>88</sup>

Landscape area	Description
The Gwent levels	The distinctive Gwent Levels form an extensive, low-lying, coastal reclaimed landscape along the Severn Estuary. This is an area of international historical and archaeological importance; a reclaimed agricultural landscape where parcels of fertile grazing and arable land are framed by a network of drainage ditches known as reens. These distinctive habitats pattern the landscape and provide a rich, biodiverse environment for plants, mammals, and invertebrates. The landscape is protected by a sea wall from the Severn Estuary, with its mud flats and salt marshes and is bounded by the River Wye.
Central Monmouthshire	This tranquil, sheltered landscape with its gentle rolling hills and intervening valleys provides notable views towards the uplands. The River Usk flows south from Abergavenny, the Monnow and Trothy flow east into the River Wye. Monmouthshire's undulating lowlands are pasture-rich with hedgerows and arable on the fertile flood plain, isolated small parcels of woodland with broadleaved and mixed plantations on hills and slopes.
Newport	The most heavily urbanised of all the landscapes in South East is the City of Newport, with its historic core. The M4, main roads and railways are prominent in the landscape. The tidal River Usk flows through the city with its iconic transporter bridge and industrial port. Urban greenspace is located at Gaer Hillfort, Ridgeway, and Tredegar Park with some sections of the Rivers Ebbw, Lwyd and Usk lowland river corridors providing tranquil and biodiverse sections. The Roman town of Caerleon lies to the east of the city, and to its north are the nearby former industrial towns of Cwmbran and Pontypool.
Brecon beacons and Black Mountains	The South East Area Statement area includes a small part of the Brecon Beacons, which is big on scenic quality and part of the Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP). It includes the Vale of Ewyas and surrounding upland in the Black Mountains, and the distinctive peaks of the Skirrid and Sugar Loaf framing the Usk Valley at Abergavenny. With exposed upland moorland with extensive views, this is a landscape noted for tranquillity, dark skies and limited development. Conifer and broad-leafed woodland are present. Pastures are often enclosed by thick hedgerows, often with narrow lanes, scattered small settlements are located in the valleys with prehistoric archaeology and Medieval sites including Llanthony Priory and historic parkland.
Wye Valley and Wentwood	This picturesque landscape is part of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The landscape is rural and tranquil in character, except along the A40, A48 and M4 corridors. It contains the largest and longest river gorge in Wales, with dramatic limestone cliffs above Chepstow and spectacular scenery of the gorge and meandering River Wye. The landscape reflects a rich archaeological, cultural and industrial heritage and many of its iconic destinations such as Tintern Abbey are popular with visitors. This predominantly wooded and riverine environment is renowned as a refuge of rare species and forms one of the largest remaining areas of ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland in the country. Wentwood Forest, which may appear to be largely coniferous, is part of the largest block of ancient woodland in Wales.

<sup>88</sup> [Natural Resources Wales / Introduction to South East Wales Area Statement](#)

South Wales Valleys (Eastern valleys)	An extensive wild and wind-swept plateau with intervening deep valleys characterises this landscape. The Eastern Valleys of the Ebbw, Sirhowy, Rhymney, Lwyd and surrounding uplands make up part of the wider South Wales Valleys landscape. This landscape is well known for its extensive industrial coal and ironworking heritage. The landscape has upland moorland with heather, grass, bracken and stone walls, much of which is common land. Moorland, bog, ffridd and rhos pasture are notable.
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The SE Area Statement consists of four main themes with associated next steps/actions:

1) Linking Our Landscapes:

The 'Linking Our Landscapes' theme explores two interconnected strands of work: reversing the decline in biodiversity by developing ecological networks and considering how and where our natural assets can be used to deliver nature-based solutions. The theme identifies the five drivers of biodiversity loss, key risks to ecosystem resilience. The drivers of biodiversity loss are climate change, habitat loss and degradation, excessive nutrient load and other forms of pollution, Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS), over exploitation and unsustainable use.<sup>89</sup>

Next steps/actions?

- Improved resilience of our ecosystems across Gwent
- Increased understanding of the need to safeguard and enhance core habitat networks and support ecological connectivity on and between our 'best sites' across Gwent
- Increased capacity of organisations and individuals, ensuring that they have the tools, skills and guidance necessary to safeguard and enhance our core habitat networks across Gwent

2) Climate Ready Gwent:

Climate change is one of our greatest challenges. A changing climate affects many aspects of our daily lives, affecting our communities, services, assets and infrastructure. Climate change has the potential to affect all biodiversity. The 'Climate Ready Gwent' theme focuses on taking opportunities to address the root cause of issues collaboratively amongst partners, shifting the focus from risk to opportunity and putting communities at the centre, and focusing on how we can work better together to combat climate change.<sup>90</sup>

Next steps/actions?

- Adaptation: Improved health and resilience of our ecosystems to maximise their ability to protect, prevent and reduce climate impact across Gwent
- Mitigation: Improved resource efficiency, with necessary steps taken towards decarbonisation across Gwent
- Adaptation: Increased understanding of the climate change risks and opportunities across Gwent
- Mitigation: Increased understanding of the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across Gwent

<sup>89</sup> [Natural Resources Wales / Linking Our Landscapes](#)

<sup>90</sup> [Natural Resources Wales / Climate Ready Gwent](#)

- Adaptation: Increased capacity of organisations and individuals, ensuring that they have the tools, skills and guidance necessary to allow them to adapt to the impacts of climate change across Gwent
- Mitigation: Improved resource efficiency, with necessary steps taken towards decarbonisation across Gwent

### 3) Healthy Active Connected:

Our surroundings have a direct effect on our health and well-being, influencing our behaviours, our actions and both our physical and mental health. Our surroundings are a factor in health outcomes for individuals and can perpetuate health inequalities. Green spaces bring communities together, enable people to be more physically active and encourage healthy behaviours. A growing body of evidence has suggested access to green spaces and natural settings can benefit those living with ADHD, depression and dementia.<sup>91</sup>

#### Next steps/actions?

- Nature-based solutions to health inequalities delivered across Gwent
- Increased understanding of how nature-based solutions can deliver better health and well-being outcomes across Gwent
- Increased capacity of organisations and individuals, ensuring that they have the skills, tools and knowledge necessary to deliver nature-based solutions for health and well-being for people across Gwent

### 4) Ways of Working:

The Area Statement process has been designed with the ways of working established in the WoFG Act 2015 and the principles of SMNR at its core. Throughout each phase of the process, we have sought to understand more about the ways in which we work together, learn from what we have done and use this learning to inform the next phase. This approach has been well-received by stakeholders who appreciate and share a commitment to doing things together differently. During each phase of the Area Statement process we focused on a different aspect of practice and developed ways of working which allowed us to explore doing things differently.<sup>92</sup>

#### Next steps/actions?

- Outcomes across all strategic themes underpinned by ways of working differently together across Gwent
- Increased understanding of ways of working differently together and improve collaboration and integration between partners across Gwent
- Increased capacity of organisations and individuals, ensuring that they have the skills, tools and knowledge necessary to work in different ways together across Gwent

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<sup>91</sup> [Natural Resources Wales / Healthy Active Connected](#)

<sup>92</sup> [Natural Resources Wales / Ways of Working](#)

## Appendix 4: List of abbreviations

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
DECCA	Diversity, extent, condition and connectivity and other Aspects of ecosystem resilience
GGNRAP	Greater Gwent Nature Recovery Action Plan
GGSoN	The Greater Gwent State of Nature
INNS	Invasive Non-Native Species
LDP	Local Development Plan
LNP	Local Nature Partnership
MEA	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment
NCLA	National Character Landscape Areas
NEA	National Ecosystem Assessment
NRAP	Nature Recovery Action Plan
NRP	Natural Resources Policy
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PSB	Public Service Board
SDP	Strategic Development Plan
SoNaRR	State of Natural Resources Report
SoNaRR2020	State of Natural Resources Report 2020
WoFG	Well-being of Future Generations

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