

Environment (Wales) Act 2016

Section 6 (Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty)

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

Signposting document

Background

1. The Section 6 duty requires that public authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as consistent with the proper exercise of their functions, and in so doing, promote the resilience of ecosystems.
2. This report outlines the approach taken by PCNPA to embedding the duty within its corporate planning framework.
3. National Park purposes include conservation and enhancement of wildlife (Environment Act 1995). The Authority's responsibility to pursue this purpose, and the Sandford Principle (which give priority to conservation over the second purpose in cases of irreconcilable conflict) means that biodiversity and ecosystem resilience have long featured prominently in National Park policy, the Authority's corporate planning framework and operationally.
4. The S6 requirement provides a formal opportunity to review existing biodiversity and resilience planning and reporting processes against Welsh Government guidance (2017). This suggests that best practice would be to integrate S6 planning with corporate planning and that the preparation and publication of a separate S6 plan to fulfil the S6 duty, while this may be useful operationally, is not necessary.
5. In the case of PCNPA, it is considered that a separate plan would run counter to the principle of integrated planning and delivery which the Authority already operates. This signposting document has been prepared in order to demonstrate how the Authority considers that the requirements of S6 are met and monitored, and to identify any areas which might be strengthened.

WG Guidance on S6	PCNPA – how met	PCNPA – how monitored
<p>A high level statement that demonstrates commitment to and responsibility for complying with the duty at a corporate level.</p>	<p>The Corporate and Resources Plan 2021-22 states the following PCNPA WB objective: Resilience: To improve the health of the National Park’s ecosystems.</p> <p>The contribution is made through nature based approaches that encourage biodiversity and connectivity and planning policies promoted by the Authority support the healthy functioning of ecosystems in the Park contributing to a ‘Resilient Wales’.</p> <p>The Authority supports a ‘Wales of Cohesive Communities’ through promoting a place based approach through working with landowners, volunteers and communities on conserving the Park.</p> <p>The Corporate and Resources Plan 2021-22 outlines the S6 duty and the Authority’s responsibility in respect of it.</p>	<p>The Corporate and Resources Plan sets out the actions to be taken by the Authority in the plan period in pursuit of the objectives. Milestones are specified which are reported on a monthly and/or quarterly basis and regularly presented to Authority Members for scrutiny and approval. Yearly performance is reported through the Authority’s Annual Report on Meeting Well-being Objectives (Improvement Plan Part 2) which is submitted to the Wales Audit Office after gaining approval from the National Park Authority.</p>
<p>The steps that will be taken to fulfil this commitment across the functions of the organisation. These steps can be aligned to the objectives of the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales as these aim to</p>	<p>1 and 6 met by: Corporate planning – see row 1 above.</p> <p>The relevant work streams within the corporate plan are:</p>	<p>a) Work towards achieving Resilience Objective and Work Streams in Corporate and Resources Plan monitored through performance reports to Members through Audit and Corporate Services Committee and</p>

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<p>reverse the decline of biodiversity in Wales.</p> <p>The objectives are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels. 2. Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management. 3. Increase the resilience* of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation. 4. Tackle key pressures on species and habitats. 5. Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring. 6. Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Land Management Service: Conservation (e.g. Conserving the Park, Stitch in Time, Naturally Connected). b) Planning Service (e.g. Protected Trees, biodiversity and sustainability policy, supplementary planning guidance). c) Biodiversity and Connectivity Projects d) Looking after the Park’s Ecosystem: Engagement & Volunteering e) Strategic & Partnerships: Conservation. f) Planning Policy and Service: SMNR/ Conservation. g) Operational programmes, policies and procedures (e.g. Environmental policy, Greening our Buildings). <p>2,3,4,5 met by: Authority and partner action in support of the National Park Management Plan 2015-19, 2020-2024, which itself supports the Pembrokeshire Nature Recovery Plan, Welsh Government agri-environment / sustainable farming programmes, relevant Welsh Government initiatives (e.g. pollinator action plan) and three European Marine Site management schemes). The</p>	<p>Operational Review Committee. Yearly performance is reported through the Authority’s Annual Report on Meeting Well-being Objectives (Improvement Plan Part 2) which is submitted to the Wales Audit Office after gaining approval from the National Park Authority.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> b) Conservation land management report. c) Annual monitoring reports of LDP d) Sustainability / biodiversity appraisal of NPA reports. e) Third party plans monitored by the relevant organisations.

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	<p>Management Plan draws on evidence from NRW's State of Natural Resources reporting and NRW's South West and Marine Area Statements. The Management Plan is subject to sustainability appraisal (including strategic environmental assessment), Habitats Regulations Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment. It provides a context for Local Development Planning policy and supplementary planning guidance.</p>	
<p>Before the end of 2019, and before the end of every third year after 2019, all public authorities must publish a report on what they have done to comply with the S6 duty. Organisations are encouraged to identify their own ways of reporting - this could again be part of their ordinary reporting systems and/or process, such as their annual report, or as a specific document.</p>	<p>a) Yearly performance is reported through the Authority's Annual Report on Meeting Well-being Objectives (Improvement Plan Part 2). Future annual reports and Corporate and Resources plans will refer to this signposting document and identify activities that relate to the S6 duty.</p> <p>b) Conservation land management report.</p> <p>c) Annual monitoring reports of LDP.</p>	<p>a) Authority's Annual Report on Meeting Well-being Objectives and Annual monitoring reports of LDP go to National Park Authority Committee.</p> <p>b) Conservation land management report is presented to Operational Review Committee.</p> <p>c) Copies of all of these documents are published on the Authority's website.</p>
<p>Public authorities who are required to publish a plan must review that plan in the light of their report. This could include an evaluation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well corporate planning systems have considered and committed to • maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem resilience 	<p>Authority scrutiny via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational review committee • NPA • WAO • Members' Workshops <p>Priorities within the National Park Management Plan and Corporate and</p>	<p>a) Conservation land management report is presented to Operational Review.</p> <p>b) Authority's Annual Report on Meeting Well-being Objectives and Annual monitoring reports of LDP go to National Park Authority Committee.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well the Nature Recovery Action Plan objectives are being met, including • the use of best available evidence • how the aspects of ecosystem resilience have been used pro-actively • any measures of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience that can be applied (for example, contributing to the National Indicators for the WFG Act) • notable achievements for habitats or species. 	<p>Resources Plan are evaluated through the review cycle process this will include looking at relevant evidence, risks, opportunities, achievements and evaluating measures used.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Workshop opportunities to explore areas in more detail. d) Review processes for National Park Management Plan and Corporate and Resources plan