

Huw Irranca-Davies MS  
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs  
Welsh Government  
Pierhead Street  
Cardiff CF99 1NA

12 December 2025

Dear Huw,

### **Section 6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty**

Under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, I must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as consistent with the proper exercise of my statutory functions and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems.

To comply with the Section 6 duty, I am required to embed the consideration of biodiversity and ecosystems into my day-to-day business activities including planning, policies, programmes and projects.

I am also required to report on what I have done to comply with this duty every third year after 2019. This report is therefore my office's third report on biodiversity.

From the guidance I note that the activities of my office fall under the minimum reporting category and I am required to report on Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) objectives 1, 4, and 6. Therefore I am pleased to provide you with this report on my actions and activities under these three objectives.

Mindful of Audit Wales' report that nearly half of public authorities have not complied with the requirement to both prepare and publish a biodiversity plan in the eight years since the duty came into force, I will continue to support and challenge public bodies to embed the Section 6 Duty in all relevant activities.

**Derek Walker**

**Future Generations Commissioner for Wales**

# Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

## Section 6 Biodiversity Report, under the Environment (Wales) Act (2025)

### Introduction and Context

As Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, my role is to advise and support Welsh public bodies to make decisions to meet the needs of people today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This includes the decisions we make to improve our environmental well-being in Wales, alongside improving our cultural, social and economic well-being.

In my strategy, [Cymru Can](#), I have recognised the role I have in supporting and challenging public bodies and Public Services Boards on their contribution to improving biodiversity and promoting the resilience of ecosystems. I have made Climate and Nature one of my mission areas to ensure that public bodies go further and faster to achieve their net zero and nature positive goals by 2030.

I also lead by example by promoting a culture and by embedding working practices in my office that meet the requirements of the Environment (Wales) Act.

We are a small team of 23 people. We work mainly from home with a small office located in Tramshed Tech Cardiff where we have no access or responsibility for land or outside space.

### My role, duties and approach

As [Future Generations Commissioner for Wales](#), my general duty, functions and powers are listed in sections 18 to 22 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (WFG Act) – see [Annex 1](#). They include promoting the sustainable development principle, in particular by acting as a guardian of the ability of future generations to meet their needs and encouraging public bodies to take greater account of the long-term impact of the things they do. I can also provide advice and assistance to public bodies, Public Services Boards, the Auditor General Wales and other parties on various areas and duties.

I took up my post in March 2023 and, early on, conducted an involvement exercise to develop a new seven-year strategy, [Cymru Can](#). This is centred around a set of core values and five missions which are:

- **Implementation and Impact:** to ensure the Well-being of Future Generations Act is applied effectively and with ambition in a way that improves the lives of the people of Wales now and in the future

- **Climate and Nature:** to support public bodies on their journey to achieve their net zero and nature positive goals by 2030.
- **Health and Well-being:** to facilitate a transformation in the way we keep people healthy, with a greater focus on prevention and the long term.
- **Culture and Welsh language:** to reinforce the positive impact of cultural well-being.
- **Well-being Economy:** help transition Wales to an economy that puts people and planet first.

Biodiversity and nature relate to my whole work programme – not just on climate change but also on health, culture, food and well-being economy. Nature provides essential resources for survival, such as clean air, water, and food, and is crucial for human health and well-being by improving physical and mental health, providing spaces for recreation, and offering psychological benefits. It also underpins our economy through industries like farming and tourism, provides essential services like pollination and flood control, and supports the planet's overall stability.

### **Key policies and objectives, performance indicators and monitoring arrangements**

The focus of my office and related business activities means that most of the suggested reporting guidelines are not applicable to our circumstances, and as such I am recognised as a 'group one' organisation. That is, a public authority that primarily owns or occupies an office building only and whose functions are not directly connected to biodiversity or land management.

### **Governance arrangements around the delivery of the s.6 duty in your organisation**

My Director for Strategic Planning, Climate and Nature is the lead for internal biodiversity action and for monitoring the section 6 duty.

### **Highlights, Key Outcomes and Issues**

As a nation, Wales has a lot of ground to make up to meet its National Milestone to '*reverse the decline in biodiversity with an improvement in the status of species and ecosystems by 2030 and their recovery by 2050*', and to meet its target of 30% of land protected for nature by 2030. To date, at best only 10% of land and 4% seas fit this criterion in Wales.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 10COP 16: Biodiversity from Cali to Cymru, Senedd Research, 2024

Nature is also an essential ally in the fight against climate change. Woodlands, seas, wetlands, grasslands and peat act as carbon sinks, absorbing and storing carbon from the atmosphere. When they are lost, climate change speeds up.

From my recent engagement with public bodies, I have found that biodiversity and nature recovery are not a financial priority. Whilst there are many good projects, opportunities are being lost to systematically embed nature recovery and biodiversity into corporate decision-making and to realise the contribution that nature makes to other areas of well-being, such as mental and physical health, job creation, flood alleviation and pollution control.

I have made recommendations in my [Future Generations Report](#) (Table 1) which frame my approach to helping public bodies meet their nature targets.

And I'm continuing to challenge myself and my team to embed an understanding of nature, and to consider always how our actions as an organisation (and as individuals) can help reverse the decline.

## **Action Report**

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

Through my office, we embed biodiversity considerations in our internal and external work.

#### **Internal activities**

In 2023-4, the whole team completed advanced, accredited eco-literacy training through [One Earth Education](#) to implement our Carbon Emissions Reduction Plan and Section 6 Biodiversity Duties.

In 2023, the team spent two days at the Centre for Alternative Technology, Machynlleth as part of our eco-literacy training. This was an opportunity to engage with locally based stakeholders including the [UNESCO Dyfi Biosphere Reserve](#).

And over the last three years (2022 – 2025), we have made several visits to the Carbon Community project in Llandovery to learn about their research and [plant 100 trees](#) as part of the Changemaker 100.



My team planting trees at the Carbon Community project, March 2023



My team at the Centre for Alternative Technology, September 2023

We have evolved the following internal policies to incorporate biodiversity considerations:

- Procurement Strategy
- [Carbon Emission Reduction Strategy](#) 2023 – 2026
- New air travel policy

### External activities

Since the last report, I have made restoring biodiversity part of my new Climate and Nature mission. To inform my work in this area, my team and I met with climate and nature leads across more than 30 public bodies and worked with experts such as Wales Wildlife Trusts, WWF-Cymru, RSPB, the Woodland Trust and Natural Resources Wales to shape recommendations in my Future Generations Report, identifying where to push for faster action. These included recommendations that support the embedding of biodiversity in decision making (Table 1).

**Table 1 Recommendations from the Future Generations Report 2025**

#	Relevant recommendation in my Future Generations Report	My actions to support change
6	Welsh Government should introduce a headline statutory target for nature's recovery by 2050 in primary legislation by 2026, with further targets reflecting the Global Biodiversity Framework in secondary legislation, a clear plan of action and long-term funding arrangements.	<p>Follow progress of the Environmental Governance Bill through the Senedd into 2026, and through to establishment of the new Office of Environmental Governance.</p> <p>Advocacy and advice to Welsh Government.</p> <p>Advocate to public bodies for nature recovery to take a higher financial and strategic priority, and its value to wider well-being.</p> <p>Stakeholder engagement to understand issues and amplify voices.</p>
7	Using our land wisely matters more than ever. Following its next 5-year review of A Future Wales, Welsh Government should develop an integrated land and marine use framework that balances commitments to restore nature, support food production, improve climate resilience and deliver new housing and infrastructure. The framework should be accompanied by guidance and toolkits to support local decision-making.	<p>Identify arrangements for the next planned Welsh Government review of 'A Future Wales'.</p> <p>Advocate via policy groups and engagements.</p> <p>Identify potential partners and allies.</p> <p>Respond as a statutory consultee to the Sustainable Land Management Indicators Agriculture Act (Wales).</p>



8	Building on the investment in nutrient management boards and existing coastal and river forums, Welsh Government should expand their catchment remit as trusted decision-makers in river restoration. These partnerships should bring together a diverse range of stakeholders to co-create shared action plans, while enabling regulators such as Natural Resources Wales to work more collaboratively and drive positive, long-term change.	<p>Follow progress on the implementation of the Cunliffe Review's recommendations in Wales.</p> <p>Engage with Government, water companies, regulators.</p> <p>Set out/ publish the Commissioner's expectations.</p> <p>Stakeholder engagement with nutrient management boards-catchment partnerships, key influencers and leaders in this space.</p> <p>Contribute into the Government's quarterly Water Summits.</p> <p>Advocate for water to be a greater priority, with resourcing for catchment scale, preventative action such as nature-based solutions that improves water quality. Link to role of NRW as regulator and enabler.</p>
10	Welsh Government should establish an expert and cross-sector team, to support public bodies in preparing investment-ready proposals that can attract private sector finance for nature recovery and net zero, ensuring alignment with sustainable investment principles	Partner in the first <a href="#">all-Wales nature finance conference</a> in October to help push things forward, and support action in a way that expands sustainable investment in biodiversity and nature recovery.
12	From 2025, public bodies must prioritise climate resilience, net benefit for biodiversity, and decarbonisation in how they manage their estates, including their buildings, tenant farms, parks, roadside verges and other land assets.	<p>Asset management is a corporate area for change under the Act's <a href="#">statutory guidance</a>.</p> <p>Analyse the asset strategies of 56 public bodies covered by the Act from a biodiversity and nature recovery perspective.</p> <p>Look at green infrastructure plans and research/ engagement on how towns and cities have put nature at their heart. Showcase good practice.</p>

15	The public sector must become deforestation-free by 2028, ensuring supply chains do not contribute to global deforestation, habitat loss or human rights violations, including child labour and the abuse of Indigenous Peoples' rights.	Host a workshop in October with Size of Wales and Monmouthshire Council. Focus on this recommendation during COP30. Walking the Talk - FGC to become deforestation free organisation.
5	Public bodies must increase engagement with the public to build trust, strengthen consensus, and bridge the gap between policymaking and citizens.	Not climate and nature specific but strong community connections in climate and nature decision-making. Wales needs to enable community involvement in decision-making on climate and nature, to power-up citizens who want to act and reach out to those who don't feel listened to.

I asked the public bodies covered by the WFG Act to respond to these recommendations by 31 October 2025. Preliminary analysis of these submissions (from 36 public bodies and PSBs) indicate a high level of acceptance of the 4 recommendations applicable to all public bodies, with none of the recommendations rejected (see Figure 1). Supporting the implementation of these recommendations will be the focus of the work of my climate and nature team over the next 4 years.

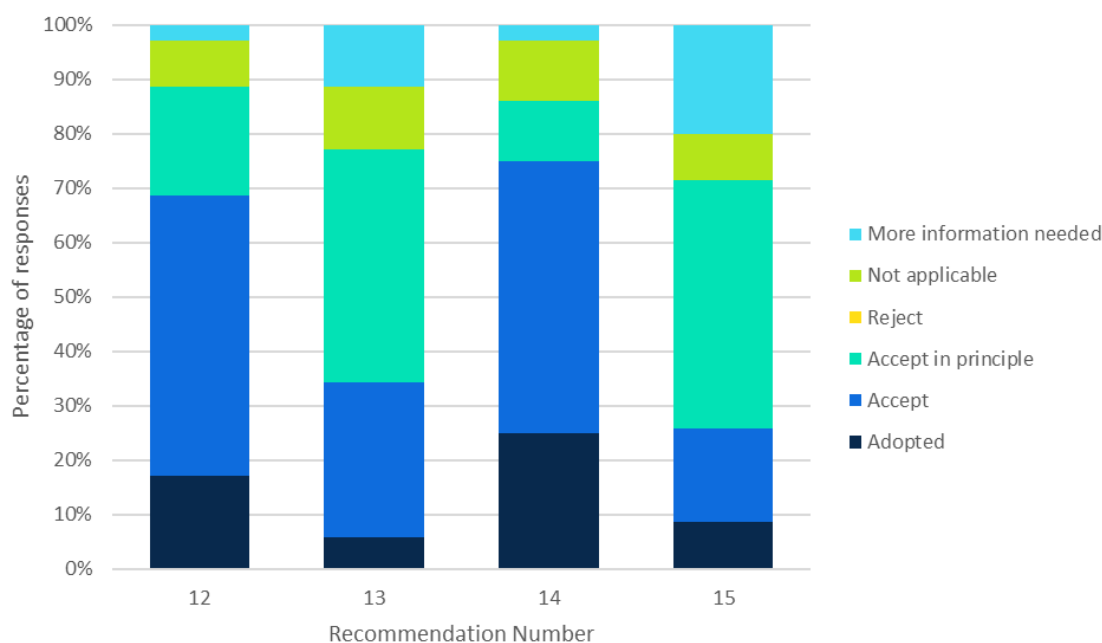


Figure 1. Preliminary analysis of public body responses to Climate and Nature recommendations (n=36)



- In 2025, I advised Welsh Government on the Environmental Governance Bill. This has included responding to the consultation on its White Paper on environmental principles, governance and biodiversity targets, backing the case for strong legal protections and binding nature recovery targets while emphasising the need for a clear delivery plan and sustained investment. I presented evidence to the Senedd and was pleased that many of my points have been accepted as the legislation moves to the next phase.
- The scale of investment available to meet climate and nature goals is inadequate. I have advised Welsh Government on its Sustainable Investment Principles and supported efforts to unlock private finance for nature recovery and net zero. My team have joined study tours and site visits with organisations such as the Wales Wildlife Trusts and partnered with Natural Resources Wales and the Ecosystems Knowledge Network on a national conference. Welsh Government have accepted and are moving ahead with my recommendation (Table 1) to establish an expert and cross-sector team to support public bodies in preparing investment-ready proposals that can attract private sector finance for nature recovery.

I have also:

- Attended many events and conferences, convened groups and raised awareness to the need to protect and enhance biodiversity – for example speaking at the launch of [Torfaen's Nature Towns and Cities initiative in November 2025](#).
- Raised awareness in the [media](#), for example calling for a headline nature recovery target in new legislation and giving evidence in the Senedd to correspond with Wales Nature Week (July 2025).
- Showcased good examples to inspire others – for example the Gwent Green Grid, peatland restoration in Rhondda Cynon Taf and nature-based solutions across the Usk catchment.
- Supported the development of [The Nature Service for Wales](#) to link up those looking for decent work with opportunities to act on the nature emergency. I have spotlighted their work in my publications, and team members contributed as a speaker at their launch event at the Pierhead in Cardiff in 2024.



Convening Climate and Nature Leads in Cardiff, November 2024



Speaking at a climate and nature emergency event hosted by Torfaen Council, November 2025. Credit: Alydia Rose Jarman

#### **NRAP Objective 4: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats**

As my office does not own land or buildings, we have limited opportunity to directly impact on biodiversity through changing our use of pesticide, clearing invasive non-native species or implementing nature-based solutions.

However, we do still contribute where we can internally and externally.

#### **Internal activities**

- Whilst we have limited influence over building maintenance and the supply of water and electricity as tenants, I am in regular conversations with the landlord and have supported their planning application to install solar panels on the building's roof. We are a paperless organisation to reduce, reuse and compost waste. All of our team use the waste separation and recycling facilities that are available at the premises.
- We are taking a different approach to our monthly team meetings, doing fewer meetings online and instead visiting public bodies and other inspirational organisations, to listen and learn, often about species and habitats. For instance, last year my team visited Porthkerry Country Park in the Vale of Glamorgan and met with Restore the Thaw project to learn about their activities to improve biodiversity and alleviate key pressures on species and habitats in the River Thaw catchment area. We spent time with the rangers, creating habitats for biodiversity in the park, and featured the project as part of our Cymru Can launch video.

- In 2025, my team joined a field trip with WWF-Cymru, Gwynedd County Council, and [Project Seagrass](#) to collect one million seeds off north Wales coast as part of a pioneering project to improve these rare marine habitats. The seagrass beds become biodiversity hotspots for a wide range of marine wildlife such as anemones, hydroids, sea-squirts, seahorses and crabs. [The visit was featured in the Western Mail](#).
- My Director of Strategic Planning, Climate and Nature joined a study tour with the UK Wildlife Trusts to Paris to learn about how the city has integrated nature into its urban fabric by transforming paved areas into green spaces, planting thousands of trees, and promoting urban agriculture. These initiatives are part of comprehensive strategies to combat the urban heat island effect, improve air quality, and enhance biodiversity. As a result of the visit, we are liaising with a small number of public bodies to support a Cymru Can learning exchange to Paris and Vienna in 2026.

## External activities

I have:

- Advised Welsh Government on its SAC River Summits and how to reduce water pollution in rivers such as the Teifi, Cleddau, Usk and Wye. I worked alongside the Interim Environmental Protection Assessor for Wales on the Call for Evidence to assess whether the existing legal framework is functioning correctly. This included holding events at the Royal Welsh Show and Grangetown Pavilion where my team connected with landowners, inner city communities, campaign groups, nutrient management boards and catchment partnerships. My advice has led to a new approach for the Water Summits that now focus on all rivers and all sources of pollution — reflecting the concerns people across Wales have raised.
- Fed into the 12-month process to develop the Crown Estate's [new strategy and ambition for nature](#). This seeks to deliver increased biodiversity by 2030, protect and restore freshwater, marine and coastal systems, and increase social and wellbeing benefits from nature.
- Co-hosted a seaweed summit with The Earthshot Prize and WWF Cymru attended by HRH The Prince of Wales, spotlighting seaweed enterprises including [Notpla](#), [Car y Mor](#) and '[Project Madoc](#)' — a study showing half of Wales' marine area is suitable for kelp farming, with potential to create nearly 1,000 jobs and build a £105 million industry.
- Worked more closely with Natural Resources Wales, meeting their CEO quarterly and attending some board meetings.

## **Personal, voluntary actions**

I have also encouraged my team to take personal actions where they are able to. My volunteer policy enables my staff to participate in volunteering for biodiversity. These are some of the actions they have taken:

- Planting trees, native plants including flowers in our gardens and shared spaces
- Planting spring bulbs and native wildflowers with volunteers
- Helping to pilot an initiative to reduce pesticide use in across a local authority ward and connecting other communities and councils doing the same with the Welsh Government pesticide lead.
- Participating in No-mow May
- Creating wildlife areas in our gardens
- Buying fruit and vegetables from local organic farms
- Small-scale food growing in our gardens, allotments and window ledges.

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

### **Internal activities**

I have reorganised my team to give more focus to climate and nature as policy priorities. My Director for Strategic Planning, Climate and Nature is the lead for this work, along with overseeing internal biodiversity action and monitoring the s.6 duty.

I am exploring the potential for delivering an annual nature-based volunteering opportunity for my staff team. I am also in initial discussions with Nature Service Wales on how I can support its ambition that all young learners in Wales have a meaningful opportunity to connect with and act for nature, to help make Wales one of the most eco-literate countries in the World.

### **External activities**

Determined effort is required across the public sector to ensure that corporate centres like financial and workforce planning, procurement and asset management, enable progress around nature recovery and decarbonisation, instead of acting as a barrier due to conflicting processes and requirements.

In 2025, I undertook analysis on how public body asset strategies were contributing to climate and nature targets. My initial findings (to be finalised in 2026) are that biodiversity and nature recovery are not always a core part of asset management; and

not as much as decarbonisation is. I partnered with Ystadau Cymru on its annual conference and awards to connect with this important sector. We need to increase the strategic capacity of leaders across all public body departments to achieve a joined-up approach, where they are making the contribution that they need to make on nature recovery and climate change at scale and pace.

## **Review of s.6 duty**

Since our report in December 2022, my team and I have increased our work to support and increase biodiversity in Wales, especially through the impact of our new mission focused on climate and nature.

We have also worked to train our staff and to regularly capture our personal actions to improve biodiversity – as described above. We want to do more to upskill them, building on the carbon literacy training that was previously delivered. We also want to provide more support to staff volunteering in this space or who want to do more.

I'll be in this role until 2030, by then we must have achieved the ambition for the Welsh public sector to be carbon neutral by 2030, and the 30x30 biodiversity commitments, including 30% of our land and seas to be protected for nature.

We must continue to act and make change happen; after all, we are the first generation to fully understand the devastating impact of the nature and climate crisis, and the last generation to be able to do anything significant about it.

**Derek Walker**

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D. Walker', written in a cursive style.

**Future Generations Commissioner for Wales**

**December 2025**

## Annex 1

### What does my duty include?

My general duty includes “Promoting the sustainable development principle (including the five ways of working), in particular to act as a guardian of the ability of future generations to meet their needs; and encourage public bodies to take greater account of the long-term impact of the things they do. For that purpose, monitoring and assessing the extent to which well-being objectives set by public bodies are being met.”

To carry out my general duty, I have a range of specific functions and powers:

- **Section 18 (a)** General duty – Promote the sustainable development principle
- **Section 18 (b)** General duty – Monitor and assess the extent to which well-being objectives set by public bodies are being met
- **Section 19 (a)** Power - Provide advice or assistance to public bodies (which includes providing advice on climate change)
- **Section 19 (b)** Power - Provide advice to the Auditor General Wales on the Sustainable Development principle
- **Section 19 (c)** Power - Provide advice to a public services board in relation to the preparation of its local well-being plan
- **Section 19 (d)** Power - Provide any other advice or assistance to any other person who the Commissioner considers is taking steps that may contribute to the achievement of the Well-being Goals
- **Section 19 (e)** Power - Encourage best practice in public bodies in taking steps to meet their well-being objectives in accordance with the Sustainable Development principle
- **Section 19 (f)** Power - Promote awareness amongst public bodies of the need to take steps to meet their well-being objectives in accordance with the Sustainable Development principle
- **Section 19 (g)** Power - Encourage public bodies to work with each other and with other persons if this could assist them to meet their well-being objectives
- **Section 19 (h)** Power - Seek the advice of an advisory panel in relation to the exercise of the Commissioner’s functions
- **Section 20 to 22** - Power to conduct reviews and to make recommendations

I also have a duty to provide advice to public services boards on their well-being assessments and draft plans and powers to receive copies of reports and to be consulted on different occasions.