A Journey to

A Resilient Wales

1: Biodiversity and Soil: Maintain and enhance the natural environment through managing land appropriately to create healthy functioning ecosystems

2: Natural Green Space: Support social resilience and community well-being

3: Knowledge of Nature: Increase awareness of the importance of a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems

4: Water and Air Quality: Support ecological resilience, making the environment healthier for wildlife and people

5: Using Natural Resources: Be adaptive to a changing environment where there is a need to use resources efficiently

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Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

In the Well-being of Future Generations Act, this goal is defined as

"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".

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Defining the goal

Here in Wales, we are now among the most nature-depleted countries in the world, with 1 in 14 wildlife species facing extinction.

Wales also has some of the worst air quality in the UK, still emits high numbers of greenhouse gas emissions and is now at greater risk of flooding, soil erosion and poorer water quality. Without healthy functioning ecosystems, we cannot resist, recover from or adapt to the changes facing our planet.
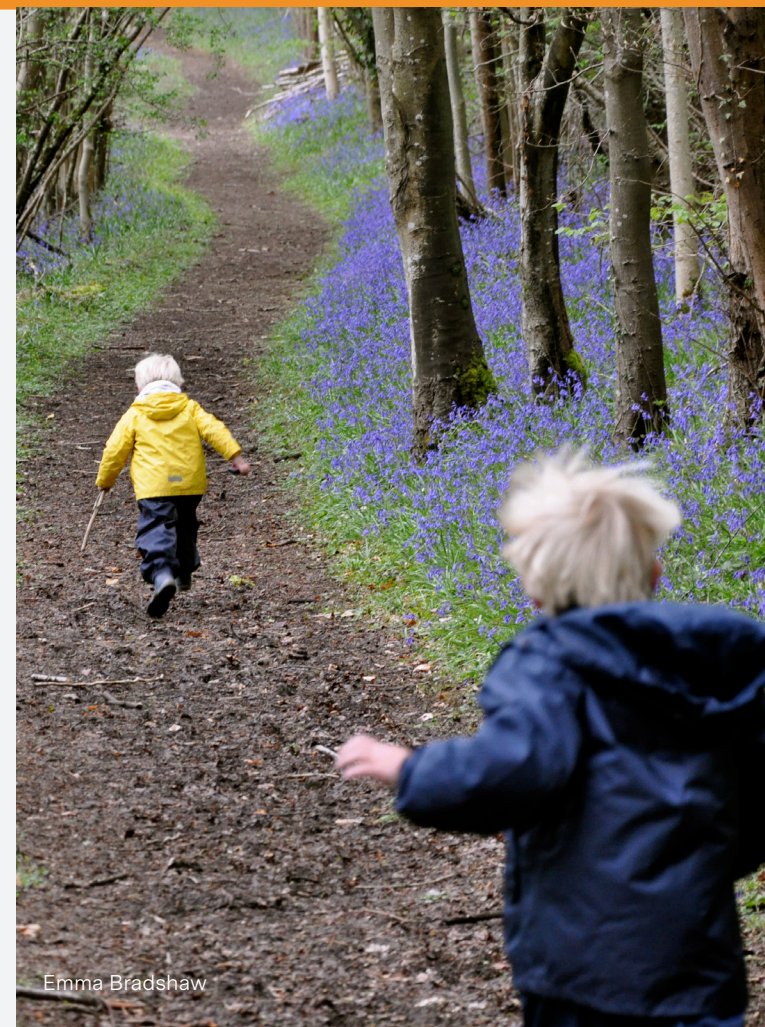
Our natural environment here in Wales is vital for our well-being; it provides the air we breathe, our food, 951 million litres of drinking water per day, our clothes, medicine, materials such as timber, as well as green spaces to enjoy. However, we are living in an area of unprecedented change when it comes to our planet. Biodiversity, 'the variety of all life on earth', has seen an overall 60% decline in species across the globe since 1970.

The goal of a resilient Wales is to reverse the decline of our biodiverse natural environment, to develop better awareness of our impacts as individuals and organisations, to ensure we are ecologically resilient, with healthy ecosystems, and to support community well-being.

Eg

Case studies
Throughout the document you will find a number of reports relating to the topic subject. Please read the link If you see this symbol.

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Other statutory requirements in relation to this goal

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 introduces the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) and sets out an approach to planning and managing natural resources to ensure that the benefits they provide for our social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being are available now and for future generations.

The Natural Resources Policy sets out national priorities for the sustainable management of natural resources, for us all to contribute towards. The priorities are about mainstreaming action for biodiversity across our urban and rural areas and reducing the pressures on our natural resources.

Natural Resources Wales' area statements will be developed by 2020. They help deliver the priorities in the Natural Resources Policy in a place, and will be a valuable tool to support public bodies and others delivering local actions.

Section 6 under Part 1 introduced an enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty (the S6 duty) for public authorities (which includes public bodies in the WFG Act) in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales.
More details can be found in the Welsh Government Essentials Guide.

The State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) sets out the national evidence base on the resilience of ecosystems in Wales so that we can understand the extent to which sustainable management of natural resources is being achieved. The building blocks of ecosystem resilience are – Diversity, Extent, Condition, Connectivity and Adaptability.

Planning Policy Wales plays a significant contribution to the improvement of well-being in all its aspects and embeds the spirit of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, through moving us towards a low carbon, resilient society with well-connected environments for everyone in Wales. 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, ensuring resilient choices for infrastructure and built development, moving towards a more circular economy in Wales; and facilitating decarbonisation.

https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-12/planning-policy-wales-edition-10.pdf

St Some of the suggested steps and actions in this document complement the policies set out in legislation - specific steps and actions that adhere to these are highlighted in orange and with an 'St' symbol.

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Enablers

Achieving this goal is **more likely to happen** when…

- **There is urgent action at a pace and scale needed to combat the loss of biodiversity.**

- **Events and campaigns raise public awareness (e.g. Blue Planet 2 series) that can 'bring the topic to the political table'.**

- **It is recognised that Green Infrastructure (GI) is an achievable and effective way to alleviate multiple social, economic and environmental challenges.**

- **Organisations, including businesses, understand and work to Environment (Wales) Act, SMNR, SoNaRR report, Natural Resources Policy and Planning Policy Wales.**

- **Community organisations are enabled to drive change in their area, to ensure nature is something that can be accessed and appreciated by all.**

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Disablers

Achieving this goal is **less likely to happen** when…

- **Environmental grants are reduced and restrictive and short-term.**

- **Economic growth, including jobs and business, are prioritised over the natural environment, with environmental damage trade-off for short-term growth.**

- **Failure to plan, design and manage green infrastructure from the start of programmes and projects.**

- **A focus on waste, transport and energy, away from the natural environment.**

- **Lack of knowledge – Green Infrastructure is seen as the role of environment department.**

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2: Natural Green Space

Nurturing natural ecosystems
which support social resilience and
community well-being

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2: Natural Green Space

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Defining the issue

Improving access to green infrastructure and spaces contributes to increased physical activity (especially in children), improved mental well-being, reduced exposure to environmental hazards and air pollution, improved air quality, and increased social participation among older adults, whilst reducing the impact of climate change, giving protection against flooding and erosion. Examples have shown that people who live within 500 metres of accessible green space are 24% more likely to meet 30 minutes of exercise levels of physical activity.

The **diversity** of street trees, gardens, green roofs, community forests, parks, rivers, canals and wetlands deliver a wide range of proven, tangible and cost-effective economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits and provide an enormous range of products and services worth many £bn to economies. In addition, the greater the **extent** of a habitat or species, the more able it will be to support larger populations of species and therefore be more resilient to change.

Synergies and connections to other journeys

Journey to involvement
Topic 1: Organisational culture of involvement

Journey to a Wales of cohesive communities
Topic 1: People active in their communities

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Making **Simple** Changes

Map land you own or work with to identify and publicise land that is accessible for use by all community groups, to create connectivity of habitats. Be open to start conversations with community members and organisations about how to use these spaces.

Eg

E.g. **Hywel Dda University Health Board** have begun working with Natural Resources Wales (NRW), looking at the improvement of green spaces on hospital grounds, mapping public land assets close to Hywel Dda infrastructure and maximising the use of green spaces.

Provide and enhance growing spaces in communities for residents to grow food (in a way that also supports wildlife and the natural environment), especially spaces in new developments.

Eg

E.g. **Swansea** has a number of Community Urban Growing initiatives, which are detailed here;
https://www.swansea.gov.uk/media/7129/Introductory-Note-Urban-Growing-Edible-Land-in-Swansea-September-2014/pdf/Introductory_Note_Urban_Growing_Edible_Land_in_Swansea_September_2014_1.pdf

Create or publicise green spaces for your staff or people you work with to sit outside whilst on lunch, waiting for appointments, holding meetings etc. to improve their well-being through being in nature.

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Making **Simple** Changes

Facilitate and promote walking meetings with your staff in local green spaces to support physical activity and well-being.

Support and promote outdoor Walking/Activity Groups in your areas.

If you work with groups who offer play areas, ensure they consider food growing opportunities that support areas for wildlife and are accessible to all.

When you work with schools, support them to develop a Wildlife Action Plan.

Set up a "Friends Group" for your local nature area.

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Being More **Adventurous**

Work with your local community, especially under-represented groups, to develop a community growing strategy, to ensure that local people have access to good quality local vegetables and fruit.

Eg

E.g. **Food Growing Strategies** identify land in the Local Authority area that could be used by the community for allotments or for the cultivation of vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers, especially in areas of poverty.
http://www.growyourown scotland.info/food-growing-strategies/

Proactively support the creation of new habitats, such as local orchards, native hedges, wildflower meadows or other areas of wildlife-friendly green space that are accessible to local communities.

Involve people and local community groups at the earliest opportunity, so that they can have a voice in deciding how their local green space should be looked after.

Create partnerships with organisations representing diverse communities to help them to use the natural environment.

Create green networks or connected green spaces across an urban area through native tree planting, pollinator friendly planters and community gardens.

Engage proactively in alternative models of promoting health and well-being that can create calm, green havens for both people and wildlife in healthcare grounds and provide social, environmental and cultural benefits.

Eg

E.g. NHS Forest projects in **Gwynedd**
https://nhsforest.org/list

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Being More **Adventurous**

Eg

E.g. Ein Berllan – Our Orchard at **University Hospital Llandough** to established an ecological community health park benefitting wildlife, plants and people
http://www.cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk/ein-berllan-our-orchard

https://youtu.be/eM7okk_IXDs

Where you work with natural green spaces that are open to the public, ensure that all people are able to enjoy them, by providing adequate accessibility infrastructure.

Play your part in providing opportunities for active and informal play within residential areas, with natural play spaces where possible.

Eg

E.g. **Cartrefi Conwy Housing Association** redesigned their Tre Cwm estate by creating communal areas which families can enjoy, with the aim of reconnecting young people who live there with the natural environment.
https://wales247.co.uk/inspirational-estate-makeover-is-an-example-to-rest-of-wales/

When working with young people, promote and create Edible Playgrounds to teach children how to grow food and enjoy the benefits of nature and their health.

Eg

E.g. **Hitherfield School in London** created an Edible Playground; 89% of teachers have observed that pupils now have a better understanding of where food comes from
https://www.treesforcities.org/our-work/edible-playgrounds

During refurbishments of your buildings identify opportunities for biodiversity improvements, renewable energy sources and recycled materials.

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Owning your **Ambition**

Collaborative or national actions

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Involve individuals, groups and communities in designing and delivering interventions that encourage access to and sustainable use of the available spaces through the life course, ensuring representation from the diversity of people affected by the decisions.

Eg

E.g. **Project Skyline** is a feasibility study that is looking at the possibility of communities managing the landscape that surrounds their town or village
https://skyline.wales/about

St

Through planning policy, Local Development Plans, Supplementary Planning Guidance and development plans (housing, retail, commercial and public sector) require the provision of green infrastructure and sufficient accessible green/blue spaces (as prescribed by NRW's Green Space Standards).

Eg

E.g. **Rhondda Cynon Taf** Nature Conservation Supplementary Planning Guidance e.g.
https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/PlanningandBuildingControlLocalDevelopmentPlans/RelateddocumentsSupplimentaryplanningGuidanc/NatureConservationSPG.pdf

St

Green infrastructure elements are retained, retrofitted, and designed within new and regenerated developments of housing, transport routes and healthcare and education establishments.

Eg

E.g. **Kidbrooke Housing Development,** London: 4,800 new homes and 35 hectares of varied, semi-natural open space for the people who live there.
https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/housing-and-wildlife-examples Organisational actions

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Owning your **Ambition**

Organisational actions

Your organisation has dedicated resources/staff member to support effective involvement of people and communities in decisions about natural spaces.

Adhere to Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) and encourage everyone you collaborate with to do the same.

Establish shared outcomes with health organisations including through exploring preventative options and pooling budgets to invest in expansion of outdoor activities.

Integrate environmental considerations into all land-use decisions from the start.

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Other examples and resources

Merthyr Tydfil Open Spaces Strategy

https://www.merthyr.gov.uk/media/4039/20-mtcbc-open-space-strategy-june-2016.pdf

Children living around green spaces get mental health boost later in life

https://newstartmag.co.uk/articles/children-living-around-green-spaces-get-mental-health-boost-later-in-life/

New study highlights the positive effect of allotments and gardens on city pollinators

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jan/14/city-bees-allotments-gardens-help-arrest-decline-study

Natural Resources Wales Come Outside Project. Outdoor activity is proven to benefit mental and physical health, confidence, self-esteem and employability.

https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/our-projects/recreation-and-community-projects/come-outside/?lang=en

Swansea City Council Mountain View Children's Centre; parents growing vegetables in the garden

Improving Children's Access to Nature in addressing inequality in BAME low income backgrounds

https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2018/mar/01/improving-childrens-access-nature-addressing-inequality-bame-low-income-backgrounds

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Other examples and resources

NRW Green Space Standards
https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/what-we-do/green-spaces/local-green-spaces/?lang=en

Fields in Trust - Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces: measuring the economic and wellbeing value to individuals.

http://www.fieldsintrust.org/Upload/file/research/Revaluing-Parks-and-Green-Spaces-Report.pdf