

## **HRLN 06 - Evidence from: National Trust Cymru**

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Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

**Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith | Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee**

**Atal a gwrthdroi colli natur erbyn 2030 | Halting and reversing the loss of nature by 2030**

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### **1. Your views on the effectiveness of current policies / funds / statutory duties in halting and reversing the loss of nature by 2030.**

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

Given the gap in environmental governance since the UK has left the European Union, National Trust Cymru welcomes the Welsh Government's White Paper which aims to enshrine biodiversity targets into law and establish an independent commission to oversee the nation's progress. The Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) sets out a vision to halt and reverse the loss of nature by 2030, and by 2050, to see a world where we are living in harmony with nature.

While we welcome Welsh Government's support of these targets, it is essential that we see an ambitious and robust statutory framework in Wales in order to meet these targets, and therefore share our view on four specific points outlined below.

#### The proposed commission

We are pleased to see Welsh Government commit to establishing an independent commission to provide oversight of implementation, and compliance with, environmental law in Wales. However, we are concerned that the commission could lack the resources and capacity to hold relevant parties to account and enable people to make the positive changes needed. To understand whether the proposed remit of the commission is achievable, Welsh Government must provide more information around the resources and capacity of the commission, including clarity on its budget.

#### Biodiversity targets

National Trust Cymru supports the biodiversity targets included in the White Paper; however, we are concerned about the limited time Wales has to reach the

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targets. We would like to see assurances from Welsh Government that the secondary legislation will be delivered in time to meet the 2030 target, and given the short timescale, actions for the coming years need to be explicitly outlined and sufficiently resourced.

Therefore, National Trust Cymru urges Welsh Government to publish the final Nature Positive legislation by 2025 to allow sufficient time to meet the 2030 biodiversity targets. The legislation must also be explicit in outlining the actions needed in the following years and include sufficient budget to support delivery.

National Trust Cymru welcomes the proposal of local authorities producing local nature recovery plans to support in meeting nationwide targets. However, we have concerns around limited resource and capacity at a local level.

We believe that there needs to be more robust monitoring on whether targets are on track to being met, and a stricter timeline for reporting. National Trust Cymru proposes that Welsh Government should publish a reporting framework which includes interim targets between larger milestone years and provides the opportunity to monitor progress thoroughly.

## **2. Your views on the progress towards implementing the Biodiversity Deep Dive recommendations.**

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

No comment.

## **3. Your views on current arrangements for monitoring biodiversity.**

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

No comment.

## **4. Your views on new approaches needed to halt and reverse the loss of nature by 2030.**

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

### Nature-friendly farming

Circa 90% of land in Wales is used for agricultural purposes. With the future of the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) currently out for consultation, we are concerned with the lack of information in the White Paper around how the

Nature Positive Bill and SFS will work together. We have the opportunity to ensure that both policy areas are aligned and work towards a nature-rich Wales which simultaneously supports resilient farming and protects Welsh communities; if these policies do not work hand in hand, Wales will simply not reach its biodiversity targets.

In order to achieve a Nature Positive Wales, Welsh Government must publish incentivising SFS payment rates to encourage farmers to enter the Sustainable Farming Scheme as soon as possible, and not as a last resort when the transitional period ceases in 2029 (one year before the 2030 targets deadline). To enable progress to be made before 2030, the optional and collaborative layers of the SFS must be open to application within 12 months of the scheme launching, and the actions must reflect the ambitions of the Nature Positive Bill.

National Trust Cymru would like Welsh Government to commission a modelling exercise to determine if and how Wales can meet its 2030 targets, considering both the outputs from the biodiversity targets and the SFS scheme. It should include detail around what resourcing should look like and recommend actions to accelerate progress towards the milestone.

#### Green Space

Welsh Government needs to consider how the Nature Positive Bill can be used as a legislative mechanism to enhance and invest in people's access to green spaces, in a way which protects, promotes, and enhances nature and biodiversity. The physical and mental health benefits of accessing nature are clear, and we must enable more people to feel comfortable and confident in being out in green spaces, and in a way which protects biodiversity too. We believe the proposed Nature Recovery Strategy and Local Nature Recovery Plans should include measures to address inequalities in access to nature and provide certainty of budget across an extended period to deliver necessary actions.

#### **5. Do you have any other points you wish to raise within the scope of this inquiry?**

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

Since our response to the Committee's inquiry, Welsh Government have published their response to the consultation. Whilst National Trust Cymru remain supportive of the bill, and are encouraged that WG have committed to working with stakeholders to further develop key areas.

We are concerned that Welsh Government is now signalling it may back away from including a headline 'nature positive' target: to reverse the decline in biodiversity through an improvement in the status of species and ecosystems by 2030 and their clear recovery by 2050, and that it might be replaced by a purpose or mission statement. We fear dropping the headline target, with its key 2030 and 2050 dates, risks undermining the pace of delivery. With 2030 dauntingly close, it is vital that urgent action is taken to secure meaningful and measurable positive change by then in line with Wales' global biodiversity commitments. The fact that this legislation will be passed right at the end of this Senedd term, and its delivery (including the creation of targets in secondary legislation) will start in the next term, makes it doubly important that the Bill upholds the ambition of the current Senedd to address the nature emergency. It must not leave room for further delay or be open to interpretation of a new Government.



Ymddiriedolaeth  
Genedlaethol  
National Trust

# Policy Briefing

## Securing a Sustainable Future: Environmental Principles, Governance and Biodiversity targets for a Greener Wales



**National Trust Cymru is committed to taking action for nature and climate across the land in our care and through partnerships, for the benefit of Wales. We know we can't do this alone and with one in six species at risk of extinction in Wales, there is an urgent need to introduce legislation to enable nature's recovery. If we want to see a nature-rich nation for future generations, we must act now.**

Given the gap in environmental governance since the UK has left the European Union, we welcome the Welsh Government's Nature Positive White Paper which aims to enshrine biodiversity targets into law and establish an independent commission to oversee the nation's progress. The Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) sets out a vision to halt and reverse the loss of nature by 2030, and by 2050, to see a world where we are living in harmony with nature. While we welcome Welsh Government's support of these targets, it is essential that we see an ambitious and robust statutory framework in Wales in order to meet these targets.



**One in six species are at risk of extinction in Wales**

**Wales is one of the most nature depleted countries on earth**



### The Proposed Commission

We are pleased to see Welsh Government commit to establishing an independent commission to provide oversight of implementation, and compliance with, environmental law in Wales. However, we are concerned that the commission could lack the resources and capacity to hold relevant parties to account and enable people to make the positive changes needed. We must see more detail from Welsh Government around the finances of the commission to understand whether their proposed remit is realistic and achievable.

### Policy asks:

- To understand whether the proposed remit of the commission is achievable, Welsh Government must provide more information around the resources and capacity of the commission, including clarity on its budget.



## Biodiversity Targets

Although we support the biodiversity targets included in the White Paper, we are concerned around the limited time we now have to reach the targets. We want assurances from Welsh Government that the secondary legislation will be delivered in time to meet the 2030 target, and given the short timescale, we need actions for the coming years to be explicitly outlined and sufficiently resourced. We also welcome the proposal around local authorities producing local nature recovery plans to support in meeting nationwide targets, but echo concerns around limited resource and capacity at a local level.

With regards to monitoring whether the targets are on track to being met, we need more clarification around the timelines for reporting. We are calling for an accessible framework which includes interim reporting between bigger milestone years.

### Policy asks:

- Welsh Government need to publish the final Nature Positive legislation by 2025 to allow sufficient time to meet the 2030 biodiversity targets. It must be explicit in outlining the actions needed in the following years and include sufficient budget to support delivery.
- A reporting framework should be published which includes interim targets between larger milestone years and provides the opportunity to monitor progress thoroughly.

## Nature-friendly farming

Circa 90% of land in Wales is used for agricultural purposes. With the future of the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) currently out for consultation, we are concerned with the lack of information in the White Paper around how the Nature Positive Bill and SFS will work together. We have the opportunity to ensure that they are both aligned and work towards a nature-rich Wales which simultaneously supports resilient farming and protects Welsh communities; if these policies do not work hand in hand, Wales will not reach its biodiversity targets.

- We must see incentivising SFS payment rates to encourage farmers to enter the scheme as soon as possible, and not as a last resort when the transitional period ceases in 2029 (one year before the 2030 targets deadline).
- To enable progress to be made before 2030, the optional and collaborative layers of the SFS must be open to application within 12 months of the scheme launching in 2025, and the actions must reflect the ambitions of the Nature Positive Bill.
- We would like Welsh Government to commission a modelling exercise to determine if and how Wales can meet its 2030 targets, considering both the outputs from the biodiversity targets and the SFS scheme. It should include detail around what resourcing should look like and recommend actions to accelerate progress towards the milestone.

## Green spaces

For current and future generations, Welsh Government must use every opportunity to improve people's access to existing green spaces and create new ones. The physical and mental health benefits of accessing nature are clear, and we must enable more people to feel comfortable and confident in being out in green spaces, and in a way which protects biodiversity too. We believe the proposed Nature Recovery Strategy and Local Nature Recovery Plans should include measures to address inequalities in access to nature and provide certainty of budget across an extended period of time to deliver actions.

### Policy asks:

- Welsh Government needs to consider how the Nature Positive Bill can be used as a legislative mechanism to enhance and invest in people's access to green spaces, in a way which protects, promotes and enhances nature and biodiversity.

For more information, please get in touch with [externalaffairswales@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:externalaffairswales@nationaltrust.org.uk)

