



Powys Teaching Health Board Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Section 6 Biodiversity Report 2022

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Foreword

As we deliver our Health Board's strategy for a Healthy Caring Powys, it is important as ever to measure, analyse and minimise the impact of our business on the biodiversity within our operating areas.

We have seen the largest change to our daily lives in working memory from the Covid-19 pandemic, yet the Health Board have successfully delivered continuous improvements to our biodiversity and approach to environmental guardianship. Since the first nation-wide 'lockdown' in March 2020, the Health Board, along with its partners, government and communities, responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. This required a different approach to governance, planning and performance, with all teams changing the way they are working and delivering services. Nonetheless, the team's flexibility and dedicated hard work has managed to respond to the pandemic but also give thought to our impact on biodiversity. Indeed, our grass meadows and bee-friendly areas have never flourished so well.

This report focuses on our progress since 2019 towards meeting the goals in our Biodiversity Action Plan and details a number of initiatives that will make a positive contribution to biodiversity. These are providing biodiversity benefits in the short-term, and more importantly will provide a legacy of healthier habitats and greater diversity alongside our healthcare.

As we await completion of our largest capital investment into the health infrastructure within Powys through the Bro Ddyfi Community Hospital Refurbishment project, it is a credit to the organisation that biodiversity has such a prominent position with the plan for the redevelopment. The project has features to enhance and preserve the biodiversity which have been suitably managed before, during and following the project delivery. This was particularly important as Machynlleth was the first town in Wales to declare a 'climate emergency'. Engagement sessions with key personnel from the local community have helped shape the additional benefits from the project and align the provision of healthcare along with serving the ideas and initiatives to enhance habitat conservation.

Similarly, with the help of substantial charitable and Welsh Government funding, we have created a new staff car park facility at Breconshire War Memorial Hospital, which has several biodiversity safeguards and enhancements included as part of the benefits of the scheme.

Powys Teaching Health Board continues to support sustainability as a central organising principle. The importance of the environment agenda is reflected as a golden thread across the Integrated Medium-Term Plan (IMTP) for 2022-25. The IMTP also supports the Health Board's endeavours to embed the principals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and

the five ways of working. During 2022 the organisation was successful in gaining re-certification to ISO14001 (2015) environmental management system standard and has successfully demonstrated its continued methods and approach to environment management.

In Powys, we are blessed by our natural surroundings and green spaces. The Health Board is committed to preserving these green spaces as much as possible through careful planning, consideration and by implementing a biodiversity plan. Hard

work, but exciting times are ahead for us to continue the hard effort performed by all members and citizens to recognise and minimise our impact on our biodiversity. I hope you will join the effort.

Jamie Marchant

Director of
Environment



Introduction and Context

Under section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, public authorities that exercise their functions in relation to Wales have a duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems. In compliance with the Act, Powys Teaching Health Board (PTHB) maintains a Biodiversity Action Plan which is part of PTHB's environment management system accredited to ISO14001 (2015), which received successful re-certification in 2022 and puts robust environmental management at the core of our business.

The Health Board is responsible for improving the health and well-being of approximately 133,000 people living in Powys. Powys covers a quarter of the landmass of Wales, but with only 5% of the country's population making it the most sparsely populated county in England and Wales. Powys' rural nature and demographic trends present a significant challenge to PTHB in delivering a sustainable health care system.

Powys Teaching Health Board provides health and care services through nine community hospitals and ten clinic sites. The estate covers a land area of 36 hectares and whilst some locations have little green space to enhance biodiversity, some, Bronllys Community Hospital for example, are predominantly green spaces with substantial room to support biodiversity protection and enhancement. Nonetheless, it is important to give effort to both small and large-scale biodiversity schemes as the aggregation of the marginal gains will contribute to the overall biodiversity enrichment across Wales.

At Powys Teaching Health Board, we are committed to protecting and enhancing the environment. The Health Board incorporate the environment as part of our daily business thought process and positively welcome improving our impact on biodiversity. The Health Board recognises the value of sustainability as a central organising principle within the Welsh Government and public sector bodies in Wales. It also recognises that there is an immediate need to tackle climate change by reducing its CO₂e emissions, whilst at the same time ensuring measures are implemented to adapt to the changing environment. The imperative for change was reinforced by the Welsh Government's declaration of a 'climate emergency' in 2019.

The Health Board has continued to tackle biodiversity taking further steps in 2022 through biodiversity enhancement from grounds maintenance and biodiversity improvements within the scope of all major capital projects. Action against biodiversity is captured within the Health Board's Integrated Medium-Term Plan (IMTP), with strategic priorities given to biodiversity enhancement delivery by the newly created Environment Directorate.

In September 2021 a revised Environment Policy Statement was approved and published by the Board. The publication of the Environment Policy Statement forms a core part of articulating publicly the Board's commitment to act to promote the environment and sustainability. It seeks to enable an action-focused approach with openness and transparency on progress.

Biodiversity is well-supported throughout the Health Board and has enthusiastic community groups wishing to help with gardening, tree planting and flower planting projects, plus a staff-led 'Green Bees' group striving to effect change to support the resilience and sustainability of our surroundings.

PTHB is a statutory member of the Public Service Board under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and reports annually on our Well-being objectives. The Health Board are committed to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and have embraced our duties. You can read more about the organisation, including its actions and response to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 from our Annual Report, Annual Accounts and Annual Quality Statements at <https://pthb.nhs.wales/about-us/key-documents/annual-reports-annual-accounts-and-annual-quality-statements/>



Powys

Powys has an agreed model of care and principles outlined in the Health and Care Strategy. The agreed model and principles / outcomes form the foundation of the strategy.

The population base and rurality of Powys means that the Health Board does not directly provide secondary care services via a District General Hospital. Powys Teaching Health Board is responsible for commissioning secondary health care and hospital services and co-ordinating the delivery of primary care services. The greatest volume of patient flows for acute care are to the neighbouring District General Hospitals around the county's borders. The rural geography of Powys and the complex commissioning arrangements are key factors in bringing care closer to home.



There are, however, wider factors including the cost of the estate and backlog maintenance. It is necessary that health bodies to seek to invest in the management of the estate and managing the challenges and risks associated with maintenance. It is also necessary to continue to strive to reduce costs associated with buildings whilst maximising the benefits to patients.



Carbon reduction and biodiversity is a key driver, in line with the climate emergency declared by Welsh Government. There will need to be a consideration of reducing carbon and expanding the potential for any green spaces on premises to support the biodiversity agenda.

Consideration on car parking and potential for electric vehicle use is being made across the estate, with our first public-facing electric vehicle charge points installed at Bro Ddyfi Community Hospital and Brecon War Memorial Hospital.

Duty and Responsibilities

Under section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 public authorities (including all Health Boards and Trusts) must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity consistent with the proper exercise of their functions and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems. A public authority must take account of the resilience of ecosystems, in particular the following aspects: (a) diversity between and within ecosystems; (b) the connections between and within ecosystems; (c) the scale of ecosystems; (d) the condition of ecosystems (including their structure and functioning); (e) the adaptability of ecosystems.

Under section 6(7) of the Act all public authorities must, before the end of 2019 and before the end of every third year after 2019, publish a report on what they have done to comply with the s6 duty. This report is the Health Board's update report on progress of our actions to lessen the impact and improve biodiversity across our estate.

The Health Board is aware of its section 6 commitments and strives to include biodiversity matters into all parts of its operations, especially as early as possible in its capital expenditure programme. This allows us to maximise the impact of change in order to enhance biodiversity habitat growth. Additionally, the organisation seeks to limit the impact on ecosystems from its operations through:

- Buildings management
- Procurement
- Sustainability
- Awareness raising, education and training
- Grounds and land management to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and promote the resilience of ecosystems

Despite the many benefits biodiversity provides to people and its own intrinsic value, human activity is currently the cause for a vast ongoing loss of biodiversity. In developing a Biodiversity Action Plan, the Health Board is seeking to protect and enhance biodiversity value across Powys for the benefit of all those that live and work within it, and in doing so support regional, national and global efforts to halt the decline in biodiversity. The Health Board shall accomplish this by collaborating with local residents and other partners to ensure that green areas and biodiversity are preserved, maintained, and increased via enhanced maintenance, accessibility, and sustainable practises.

Our Biodiversity Action Plan has been developed to protect and enhance the biodiversity of environments that they have control over. At the heart of the biodiversity action plan is the recognition that an organisation can have both a positive and negative impact on biodiversity but demonstrates our ambition to tip the balance in nature's favour. At a time when much of our attention is focused on climate change and the need to cut carbon emissions, it would be a grave error to overlook the role that biodiversity plays in climate management.

A biodiversity action plan also needs to evolve. While certain measures may however have immediate results, biodiversity by definition, will take time to respond, therefore, timescales must be considered. As a result, in addition to an annual report, broad biodiversity action plans and outcome-based objectives are likely to necessitate a considerably longer 5–10-year reporting cycle.






The Health Board's Environment and Sustainability Group (ESG) is accountable to the executive Innovative Environments Group and provides strategic direction to implement a structured approach to sustainability. The ESG presides over areas where the Health Board has a major impact on the environment and promotes consistency and transparency in management of environmental issues across the Health Board and day-to-day management. By ensuring continual improvement and certification of the Health Board's Environmental Management System (EMS), and implementation of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, Powys Teaching Health Board is delivering the three key principles of Sustainable Development:

- 1) Environment
- 2) Economic
- 3) Social

The Environment and Sustainability Group continues to support initiatives to reduce CO₂e emissions from scope 1, 2 and 3, including an increased diversion of waste from landfill, an improvement in the estate's biodiversity, and the development of procurement procedures. This will help meet national targets whilst ensuring compliance with legal obligations, improving staff and patient experience, and helping to drive through efficiency changes.

Highlights, Key Outcomes and Issues

The Health Board has been acting to reduce its impacts on the environment and has already made a number of significant steps towards a more sustainable future. The focus moving forward is to accelerate the pace of change through continuing this critical work. Carbon reduction and biodiversity enhancements will be made throughout the organisation, utilising our certified ISO14001 (2015) environment management system, for the benefit of patients, staff and the environment. This will continue through five work areas:

				
<p>Waste We aim to reduce or eliminate waste streams from our processes as far as practicable. Generating less waste, promoting reuse and recycling, recovering as much as possible from waste products.</p>	<p>Energy & Water Our electricity shall be REGO-backed to ensure we maximise our renewable energy use and all new major projects will lead on renewable generation. All buildings will be assessed for energy savings.</p>	<p>Travel We are committed to reducing our travel-related emissions through remote working and digital triage and consultations. e-miles will be promoted above grey miles.</p>	<p>Procurement We shall embed life-cycle processes into our purchasing decisions and develop suitable weighting to sustainable procurement services.</p>	<p>Buildings & Biodiversity All new buildings and refurbishments shall meet or exceed BREEAM standards and maximise decarbonisation benefits. Biodiversity will be protected and enhanced across the estate and surrounding areas.</p>



Tree Planting

In March 2022 the Environment Team meet up with members of the Green Bees group, staff and service users from our mental health Felindre Ward, Bronllys, to plant over 500 native tree saplings. Many of the trees had been donated by the Woodland Trust but a good number had been grown in our new Tree Nursery. Over the coming years the trees will grow, forming a thicket for local wildlife to prosper and a double row hedge line will be laid as a traditional stockproof agricultural hedge, restoring some of the cultural value to the site as well as improving habitat. The Health Board have committed to planting two trees for every tree felled under our biodiversity plans. The trees will help meet this target following tree removal at Brecon hospital to make way for a new carpark.

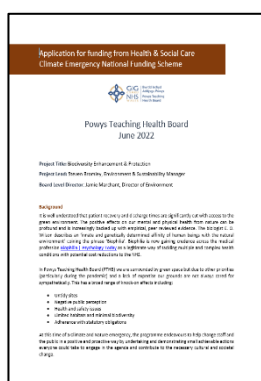
As an anchor organisation we have a moral imperative to support our local wildlife. The hedge we planted will support insects including bees, birds and mammals including a healthy population of bats on site, which we are also working hard to see flourish. The Health Board are now working on plans to expand its tree nursery and to partner with organisations to plant trees outside our grounds helping to create a legacy.



As well as the trees, we have been digging, raking and sowing native wildflowers to improve the look of the grounds at Bronllys as well as making space for nature.



Biodiversity Enhancement



A funding bid was successfully awarded by the Health & Social Care Climate Emergency National Funding Scheme, which provides £25k to engage ecology and biodiversity consultants to review and identify biodiversity net gains, develop biodiversity action plans and best utilisation of grounds maintenance to maximise the biodiversity protection and enhancement across our estate. Additionally, the work will permit the creation of biodiversity action plans for our grassland areas, grounds maintenance plan development and to support bespoke signage. The work will also inform the purchase of recommended planting and specialist resources, such as wildflower seeds, bird-

friendly hedge screening, robotic mowers, seasonal interest, low-maintenance planting and non-invasive species. The scheme will see expert advice to direct our estates managers and local community group liaison personnel to confirm that projects will ensure that biodiversity protection and enhancement sits as the prime motive for making the changes to our green spaces.

Challenges

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a major impact on our resource availability and ability to develop grounds maintenance plans and gardening schemes with community groups. As a result, a number of requests are being received which are having to be deferred until support provisions or priority can be given to the plans. Nonetheless, the professional assistance from our Health & Social Care Climate Emergency Programme Board-funded biodiversity programme will see a comprehensive suite of drawings and specifications for each hospital site

and will steer the teams to progress schemes and ideas which will have the most impact on biodiversity, whilst having the necessary due consideration of the healthcare environment in which the Health Board operates. It may not be prudent, for example, to plant insect-attracting species at areas within the immediate vicinity of windows, as our buildings predominantly employ natural ventilation to regulate air temperature and quality. Habitats known to be attractive to vermin should be avoided at key areas across the estate.

Japanese knotweed

During 2022, Invasive non-native species (INNS) were reported by neighbour at Llanwrtyd Wells Health Centre. Specialist consultants were engaged and surveyed the site. Subsequently, a 3-year management plan has been created for the Health Board to follow to eradicate the invasive species.



Action Report

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

The understanding and awareness of our impact on biodiversity continues to grow with biodiversity a component within our Annual Plan and Integrated Medium-Term Plan (IMTP). Our Biodiversity Action Plan has seen many protection and improvement ideas implemented, including our promise to “2for1” trees. This is a commitment from PTHB to replace any felled tree with two other trees from the tree nursery which has been developed at Bronllys Hospital.



NRAP Objective 2: Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management.

Our major redevelopment of Bro Ddyfi Community Hospital has seen several biodiversity enhancements agreed prior to gaining planning approval, including: 3 bat boxes on adjacent buildings for undisturbed roosting sites; A number of compensatory (and permanent) artificial nest boxes situated on non-development buildings; 8 additional bird boxes (3 swift, 5 House Sparrow) boxes will be installed on completion; New nesting boxes for House Martins to be installed along finished building; 2 deadwood habitat piles will be added, to enhance invertebrate provisions and conform to Great Crested Newt guidelines; Bug Hotels will be situated on site; Hedgehogs will have protected nesting boxes installed, following recommendation of British Hedgehog Preservation Society and; Habitat pile will be created in full or partial sunlight to encourage basking animals



NRAP Objective 3: Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation

During all stages of the major redevelopment of Bro Ddyfi Community Hospital in Machynlleth the Health Board have been following a Construction Environment Management Plan. This has agreed plans to protect the biodiversity and key species on the site whilst the redevelopment is being undertaken and afterwards for future generations. Landscaping plans for the site have been carefully considered to support biodiversity and create safe habitats for local species including bats, swifts, house martins, hedgehogs, newts and insects. Waxcap turves have been delicately lifted and transferred to storage location on site (following recommendations). They will be re-laid within the hospital grounds as in situ conservation of the species, following Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) advice.



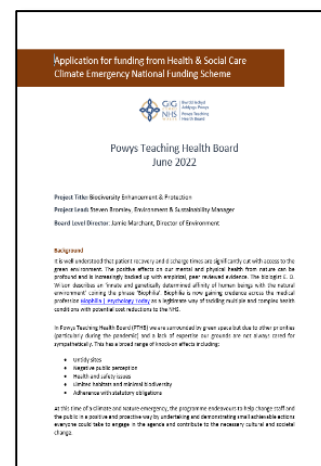
NRAP Objective 4: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

Following a report from a neighbour, the Health Board became aware of invasive non-native species – Japanese knotweed. A specialist consultant has been engaged and a bespoke management plan produced, which is being followed by the Health Board's certified contractor to manage the eradication of the species.



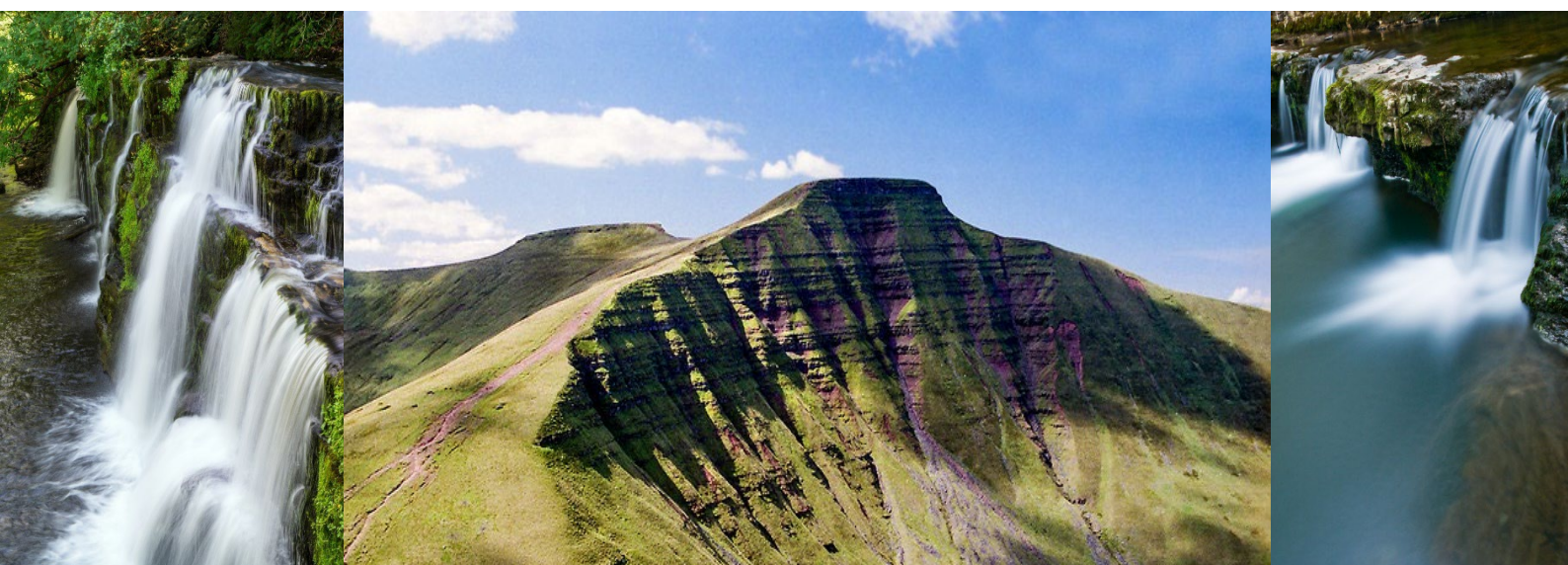
NRAP Objective 5: Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring

The Health Board's initiative to have a specialist consultant to evaluate each hospital site for maximising the protection and enhancement at each location will see a definitive Baseline provided for the Health Board which will provide evidence to measure effectiveness and progress on targets within our Biodiversity Action Plan. The work will see development and grounds maintenance plans to be finalised, which will illustrate our environment and help to provide a picture of where improvements can be made and where special attention may be required to safeguard an area. It is expected that the results will form the basis of assessing proposals made to the department from community groups.



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

In 2021, the Health Board created a new Environment Directorate led by the Board level Director of Environment, which has direct lead for climate change, carbon and importantly biodiversity actions. The directorate oversees the implementation and management of our Biodiversity Action Plan and has successfully received funding to support local collaborative working for schemes such as tree planting at Bronllys hospital between the Team, mental health and Woodland Trust. Most recently, our Health & Social Care Climate Emergency Programme Board-funded biodiversity project will see pan-Powys review of biodiversity across all hospitals sites to fully analyse the current status and recommend ways to protect and enhance in a sustainable manner for each location.



Review of section 6 duty

Powys Teaching Health Board did not develop a section 6 biodiversity report in previous years but wish to highlight some biodiversity improvements and protection schemes that were instigated by the Health Board.

A number of positive actions have taken place over the last 3 years partly forced by Covid-19 and the need to prioritise works, but also as a result of a maturing Environment Management System (EMS) and understanding from stakeholders for the need to deliver against targets.

Grounds maintenance: At the start of 2022 it was agreed grass cutting would be limited to twice a year in line with 'meadow management' to increase floral diversity. This, and information around wildflowers and meadows management, was communicated to staff and the public during 'World Environment' day.

The project has been a huge success, considerably increasing provision for biodiversity, increasing open green space to support patients and staff and acting as a communications tool to raise the profile of the environment agenda.

Staff have requested wildflower diversity be increased at a number of sites so wildflower seeds will be purchased ready for sowing spring 2023.

To support the conservation of grounds, grounds maintenance documentation is being developed, including toolbox talks and working around bats and basic tree inspections.

Tree management: Tree safety works have been undertaken on a number of sites to manage risks. Logs arising from works have been made into bug hotels to be given out to staff to help improve habitats outside the footprint of the hospitals and act as an education tool.

Construction mitigation actions at Brecon War Memorial Hospital will see around 100m of hedge being laid using traditional methods and a local hedge laying style with a further 100m to be planted up ready for future laying.

A tree nursery has been set up to meet objective 16 of our Biodiversity Action Plan and to help offset carbon emission from activities. Seeds and nuts from around the estate were gathered at the start of 2020 and are now growing-on ready for planting out.

EU protected species: Capital projects developed since 2020 have resulted in the need for ecological reports. As a result, bats have been found on one new location. Two other sites are now being positively managed to accommodate bats present on site. Construction measures at one site has now been shown to have worked with brown long-eared bats now actively using roof spaces.

Future Project Enhancement



The Health Board shall be shortly completing the major refurbishment project at Bro Ddyfi Hospital, Machynlleth. Biodiversity has had a place within discussions throughout the project planning and will be an equal consideration after project delivery.

Part of the planning process for the refurbishment and enhancement programme was the commissioning of a Construction, Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which outlined how works to refurbish the hospital must be completed to avoid, minimise or mitigate effects on biodiversity within the grounds of Bro Ddyfi Hospital. Biodiversity enhancements from the project include:

- Project has no long-term impact on bats.
- Changes to external lighting within the grounds are reported the Construction Environmental Management Plan to represent a net gain for nocturnal wildlife and benefit roosting and foraging bats. 3 bat boxes on adjacent buildings for undisturbed roosting sites
- A number of compensatory (and permanent) artificial nest boxes situated on non-development buildings. 8 additional bird boxes (3 swift, 5 House Sparrow) boxes will be installed on completion. New nesting boxes for House Martins to be installed along finished building
- 2 deadwood habitat piles will be added, to enhance invertebrate provisions and conform to Great Crested Newt guidelines
- Bug Hotels will be situated on site
- Hedgehogs will have protected nesting boxes installed, following recommendation of British Hedgehog Preservation Society
- Habitat pile will be created in full or partial sunlight to encourage basking animals
- Waxcap mushrooms identified during our ecology survey have been delicately lifted and transferred to storage location on site (following recommendations). They will be re-laid within the hospital grounds as in-situ conservation of the species, following CIEEM advice.

The Health Board have performed several community engagement sessions with a selection of representatives of local environment and community groups, who expressed strong desires to have spaces and design which incorporates many innovative community schemes and facilities.

The next period in our biodiversity protection and enhancement stems from the Welsh Government's Health & Social Care Climate Emergency Programme Board-funded biodiversity project, which will see the Health Board work in collaboration with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to have all hospital sites surveyed for current biodiversity and how the Health Board can maximise the protection and enhancement at each location, whilst being mindful of the healthcare environment and minimising grounds maintenance. The work also aims to identify areas of the estate which are most suited for further collaborative works with community groups. The project will look to: improve the aesthetic value of the grounds; improve the public's perception of PTHB; increase access to safe and quality green environment for the public, patients and staff; help delivery against PTHB biodiversity targets; improve habitats and increase species numbers; and build partnerships within PTHB groups and external organisations. The Health Board is conscious of the decision 'to mow, or not to mow' our grassland areas, but this programme is expected to provide objective expert advice for the best match of enhancing biodiversity and green environment for patients and staff whilst maintaining safe habitats for wildlife and not negatively impacting operational duties within a healthcare environment.

Local Development Plans will be drawn up following conclusion of our biodiversity assessments and will lead the teams to apportion the appropriate resources to maximise the impact. Additionally, our next three major capital investment programmes at Llanfair Caereinion Medical Practice, Llandrindod Wells Memorial Hospital Phase 2 redevelopment and North Powys Wellbeing Programme multi-agency campus, have biodiversity protection and enhancement within the programme scope.

Our positive impact on biodiversity during 2019-2022 shall be used as a springboard for future projects and our day-to-day operations within the organisation. The Health Board shall endeavour to continue to deliver key biodiversity protection schemes and enhancements to our environment.