

Action for Nature:
The Local Nature Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf
<https://rctlnp.wixsite.com/rct-actionfornature>



Introduction

The original 'Action for Nature' was produced in 2000 by the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) Partnership, set up in 1998. The Partnership has met, roughly quarterly, since that date to implement and monitor the Plan. The membership has varied from year to year but has continued to include statutory and voluntary conservation organisations, enthusiastic individuals, vastly experienced local naturalists and a diversity of community groups, local organisations and other public bodies. The Plan was refreshed in 2008 by the Partnership.

In 2018 a further review was proposed, and this coincided with a three-year funding bid by the Wales Biodiversity Partnership to Welsh Government for financial support for LBAP partnerships (The Local Nature Partnership Cymru project, funded by the Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being Grant, April 2019 to March 2022). The project funded the LNP co-ordinator (1.5 days per week) and supported the Partnership's review of the Action for Nature plan. The review also provided an opportunity to reflect the Welsh Government's Nature Recovery Action Plan (Welsh Government 2015) and guidance from the Wales Biodiversity Partnership.

The Action for Nature Review began in 2019. The partnership meetings (Jan, April, Jul and Oct 2019) discussed the process and looked specifically at progress against actions, factors affecting outcomes and began collating 'success stories' from partner organisations. Pre-covid, the proposal was for a series of events, to be held across two summer seasons to engage a wider audience with the content and priorities for the new plan.

The involvement of Welsh Government funding led to a 'rebranding' as the RCT Local Nature Partnership and whilst the 'Action for Nature' title was retained, it became the Local Nature Recovery Plan for RCT.

This short report summarises the process and the evidence gathering that has informed the new 'Action for Nature' <https://rctlnp.wixsite.com/rct-actionfornature>

Summary of the preparation process 2018-2022

2019

- LBAP meetings: Jan, April, Jul and Oct
- Schedule of events attended by partners in summer 2019 (23 in total)
- Progress against actions since 2008
- Success Stories since 2000
- Changes to legislation and organisations in Wales and the impacts of austerity relevant to the review, note re Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act in relation to the review
- Appointment of funded co-ordinator (Rose Revera) for 1.5 days per week to March 2022

2020

- LBAP meetings: Jan agreed a timetable for the year based around events, April meeting was cancelled.
- Timetable linked to the Review of the Local Development Plan
- Post floods arising from Storms Dennis etc. and COVID, the timetable was revised and a programme of online consultations planned via TEAMS.
- The quarterly partnership meetings were resumed via TEAMS from October. A series of monthly meetings were set up, initially to gather evidence relating to species groups. The Oct partnership and looked at a possible web-based format for the Plan drawing on the information from the species groups and the 2019 events etc.
- 9/7/20 – Butterflies and Moths
- 06/08/20 – Mammals
- 8/10/20- Fungi
- 12/11/20 – Terrestrial Inverts
- 10/12/20 – Birds

2021

- Partnership TEAMS meetings were held in April (14/4/21), July (15/7/21), and October (14/10/21).
- The April meeting viewed the first iteration of the website which was structured around actions. The initial section 'How can I help?' focussed on actions for specific groups of people (such as novice naturalists, families with children through to public bodies, wildlife enthusiasts and research students). The 'technical' section was proposed to cover specific habitat and species actions. A further series of monthly habitat meetings was set up to focus on actions for each habitat group.
- The July and October Partnership meetings reviewed the progress via the 'under construction' website and looked at contributors for case studies, sites to visit, species, supporting information etc. as well as the actions.
- 14/1/21- Freshwater Inverts and Fish
- 11/2/21- Plants
- 9/3/21 – Reptiles and Amphibians
- 7/4/21 – Lower Plants
- 19/5/21- Structure of the Plan and Grasslands
- 9/6/21- Colliery Spoil, heathland, crags and scree, ffridd
- 14/7/21- Urban
- 11/8/21- Woodlands
- 8/9/21 – Freshwater
- 13/10/21- Actions for groups

2022

- Partnership TEAMS meetings were held in January (20/01/22) April (28/04/22) and July (07/07/22).
- The January meeting agreed the website as the basis for formal consultation which ran from 28th Jan to 11th March. Members were asked to review specific pages. The formal consultation was sent to:

- all members of the Local Nature Partnership and
- the mailing list for Communities in Action meetings
- organisations included in the Local Development Plan consultation list.
- It was also promoted through the Council's website,
- the CwmTaf Morganwg PSB website,
- the Wales Biodiversity Partnership,
- within NRW,
- within the Council (Senior Leadership Team and to staff generally) and
- through the LNP social media.
- The format used is given in the appendix.
- Changes suggested in meetings were made at the time.
- Observations received in writing were recorded and most changes made as requested (see appendix).
- Comments were generally supportive and the changes proposed typically related to correcting errors of fact, typing, linked sites, better examples etc.
- Some suggestions for specific habitats or species were not included as they would duplicate actions included for all habitats/species.
- A request for more support for community organisations to get involved was acknowledged as valid but a mechanism to do this is not currently available to the LNP. This matter will require further investigation, potentially a funding bid for a dedicated staff resource with long term sustainability.

The July meeting of the LNP considered this report and agreed to remove the 'under construction' banner from 29th July if there were no objections. RCT council would then be advised of the Plan' completion and the Welsh translation progressed.