



Comisiwn  
Democratiaeth a  
Ffiniau Cymru

Democracy  
and Boundary  
Commission Cymru

# Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Report 2026

Environment (Wales) Act 2016

Part 1 – Section 6

[dbcc.gov.wales](http://dbcc.gov.wales)

[enquiries@dbcc.gov.wales](mailto:enquiries@dbcc.gov.wales)

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# Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 – Section 6: Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Report 2026

## **Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru**

### **1. Introduction**

This report sets out the actions taken by Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru to comply with the Section 6 biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The duty requires public authorities exercising functions in relation to Wales to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of their functions, and in doing so promote the resilience of ecosystems.

The Commission's functions are strategic, advisory and administrative in nature and are not directly connected to biodiversity, land management or the management of green spaces. The Commission therefore continues to fall within the category of public authorities whose principal contribution to biodiversity is through the way it conducts its day-to-day business, manages its internal policies, reduces its environmental footprint and embeds biodiversity considerations into governance and decision-making.

### **2. About the Commission**

Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru is a Welsh Government Sponsored Body. The Commission's purpose is to support effective and convenient local democracy in Wales through its statutory responsibilities for electoral arrangements, boundary reviews and related democratic functions.

In carrying out its work, the Commission engages with local authorities, community and town councils, Welsh Government, Members of the Senedd, partner bodies and the public. The Commission recognises that, while its statutory functions do not involve direct land or habitat management, its decisions, procurement choices, travel arrangements, use of resources and approach to organisational planning can contribute positively to Wales's wider biodiversity and climate objectives.

### **3. Organisational Context in 2026**

Since the previous report, the Commission has moved into Welsh Government buildings. This represents an important change in the Commission's operating environment. The move provides opportunities to align more closely with Welsh Government estate arrangements, shared facilities, energy management systems, waste management arrangements and wider sustainability practices.

As a tenant within Welsh Government buildings, the Commission does not directly control all aspects of building management. However, it remains responsible for the environmental impact of its own operations, including staff behaviours, procurement decisions, digital working practices, travel choices, use of office space, waste

reduction and the integration of biodiversity considerations into planning and governance.

#### **4. Governance and Decision-Making**

The Commission seeks to embed biodiversity and environmental sustainability into its governance, planning and operational decision-making in a way that is proportionate to its size, remit and level of direct environmental influence. The Chief Executive has overall accountability for ensuring that the Commission meets its responsibilities under the Section 6 duty, supported by corporate planning, operational planning, procurement processes and staff engagement.

Environmental considerations are reflected through routine business planning, project delivery, procurement activity, staff communications and the Commission's approach to meetings, consultations and stakeholder engagement. This ensures that biodiversity and sustainability are considered at an early stage when decisions are being developed, rather than as a separate or retrospective exercise.

In practice, this includes reducing unnecessary travel, making effective use of digital technologies, minimising resource consumption, applying sustainable procurement principles and encouraging staff to consider the environmental impact of their work. These arrangements also support the wider sustainable development principles established under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

#### **5. Actions Taken to Maintain and Enhance Biodiversity**

##### **Digital working and resource efficiency**

The Commission continues to operate as a digital-first organisation. Digital document management, electronic consultation processes and virtual collaboration reduce paper use, printing requirements, physical document storage and the movement of hard-copy materials.

Where printing is necessary, staff are encouraged to keep volumes to a minimum and use recycled or environmentally preferable materials where available. This approach supports efficient resource use and reduces avoidable waste.

##### **Sustainable procurement**

The Commission applies sustainable procurement principles when purchasing goods and services. Where relevant and proportionate, procurement activity takes account of environmental impact, whole-life value, waste reduction, opportunities to reduce carbon emissions, social value, responsible supply chains and Welsh Government procurement expectations.

This helps ensure that purchasing decisions support the Commission's operational needs while also contributing to wider environmental and sustainable development objectives.

The Commission will continue to review procurement arrangements to ensure sustainability considerations remain embedded in commissioning and contract management activity.

### **Sustainable travel and hybrid working**

The Commission promotes hybrid working and makes extensive use of virtual and hybrid meeting technology to reduce unnecessary business travel. This is particularly important given the Commission's Wales-wide remit and its engagement with local authorities, partners and stakeholders across the country.

Where travel is required, staff are encouraged to consider public transport, active travel, shared travel and lower-carbon options where practicable. Reducing unnecessary travel contributes to lower emissions and supports more sustainable ways of working.

### **Waste reduction and use of shared facilities**

Following the move into Welsh Government buildings, the Commission uses shared estate facilities for waste, recycling, security, maintenance and office management. While these arrangements are coordinated through Welsh Government, the Commission remains responsible for staff behaviours and for reducing avoidable waste within its own operations.

Staff are encouraged to make effective use of available recycling facilities, avoid unnecessary purchasing and use office resources efficiently. The Commission will also seek opportunities to engage with Welsh Government estate teams where shared sustainability initiatives are relevant to its work.

### **Staff awareness**

The Commission promotes awareness of environmental responsibilities through internal communications, routine management discussions and staff engagement. Staff are encouraged to consider environmental impacts when planning their work and to contribute to the Commission's wider sustainability objectives.

## **6. Promoting the Resilience of Ecosystems**

The Section 6 duty requires public authorities not only to maintain and enhance biodiversity, but also to promote the resilience of ecosystems. Although the Commission does not directly manage land, habitats or species, its operational choices can support the resilience principles identified in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The Commission's contribution is therefore indirect but meaningful: reducing pressure on natural resources, lowering emissions associated with business activity, supporting responsible supply chains and aligning with wider public sector sustainability practice.

The Commission supports ecosystem resilience by applying sustainable procurement principles, reducing resource use, minimising waste, encouraging lower-carbon travel and participating in shared estate arrangements where opportunities arise.

## **7. Monitoring, Review and Continuous Improvement**

Progress against the Section 6 duty is monitored through the Commission's corporate governance and operational planning arrangements. This allows biodiversity and sustainability considerations to be reviewed alongside wider business priorities, risks and resource decisions.

The Commission will continue to review opportunities to improve environmental performance by monitoring resource use, reviewing procurement practices, encouraging sustainable travel, strengthening staff engagement and identifying opportunities to participate in relevant Welsh Government sustainability initiatives.

Section 6 reporting will continue to form part of the Commission's wider accountability framework and will be reviewed in line with statutory reporting requirements.

## **8. Future Priorities for 2026–2029**

During the next reporting period, the Commission will continue to take a practical and proportionate approach to meeting the Section 6 duty. Its priorities will be to maintain digital-first working, reduce unnecessary printing, encourage sustainable travel and hybrid working, strengthen sustainability considerations in procurement, engage with Welsh Government estate initiatives where appropriate, maintain staff awareness and review progress annually through corporate governance arrangements.

## **9. Contribution to Welsh Government Priorities**

The Commission's approach supports the ambitions set out in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales, Net Zero Wales and Towards Zero Waste. Although the Commission's direct environmental impacts are limited, the actions described in this report demonstrate its commitment to contributing proportionately to Wales's national biodiversity, climate and resource efficiency objectives.

## **10. Conclusion**

Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru remains committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. While its statutory functions do not include land management or biodiversity conservation, the Commission recognises that all public authorities have a role in supporting Wales's environmental objectives.

By embedding biodiversity and sustainability considerations into governance, procurement, travel, resource management, staff awareness and everyday decision-

making, the Commission is making a positive and proportionate contribution to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and promoting ecosystem resilience.

The Commission will continue to review its performance, identify opportunities for improvement and ensure biodiversity remains an integral consideration within corporate governance and operational planning.