

Report to	North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
Date	20 July 2026
Lead Officer	Helen MacArthur, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Contact Officer	Tim Christensen, Environment and Climate Change Manager
Subject	Biodiversity Action Plan Progress Update



PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To update Members on progress towards achieving the Authority's goals set out in the Biodiversity Action Plan (2025-2028) (the Plan).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 The 2025-2028 Biodiversity Action Plan set ambitious targets for the Service to improve protect and enhance biodiversity within its own estate, and to help do so across the wider Service area. Flagship initiatives include a "Greening Our Stations" programme to convert at least 15% of suitable mown grassland to wildflower meadows, a robust two for one tree replacement policy, and the adoption of the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) principle for all new capital projects.
- 3 Significant progress has been achieved during the initial reporting period, with 50% of the core objectives now successfully completed and the remaining five actions currently ongoing. Key milestones include the formal implementation of the Biodiversity Net Gain principle for capital projects, the total phase-out of long-chain fluorosurfactant firefighting foams, and the rollout of service leadership training alongside a staff-led "Biodiversity Champions" network.
- 4 Practical estate enhancements are also underway, demonstrated by the conversion of mown grass areas to wildflower meadows at Rhyl and Llanfairfechan, and the installation of initial nesting features across several stations.

OBSERVATIONS FROM EXECUTIVE PANEL/AUDIT COMMITTEE

- 5 This progress report has not previously been considered at Executive Panel or Audit Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

6 It is recommended that Members:

- i) **Note the progress made towards the Authority's biodiversity goals**

BACKGROUND

- 7 The Authority approved the Biodiversity Action Plan (2025-28) on 20 October 2025.
- 8 The Authority has a statutory duty under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to "maintain and enhance biodiversity" and promote ecosystem resilience. This is reinforced by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, with the Plan directly contributing to the "A Resilient Wales" national goal. The legislative landscape is intensifying following the Senedd's declaration of a nature emergency, and recent legislation expanding the duty of public authorities in Wales to protect and enhance the nation's natural habitats.

INFORMATION

- 9 The Service has made significant progress towards the goals approved by the Authority, with five of the ten goals complete and the remainder ongoing:

Action	Status	Notes
Develop and roll out a mandatory environmental awareness e-learning module for senior staff.	Complete	Biodiversity training session delivered to Service Leadership Team by Environment and Climate Change Manager on 5 th May 2026.
Launch a staff-led "Biodiversity Champions" network.	Complete	Station Biodiversity champions appointed and have been actively involved in the 'Greening our Stations' programme.
Implement the Ash Die-back Management Plan. –	Complete	Management Plan is active and in-force. No trees found on the estate with ash die back since current Plan adopted.
Formalise policy for ecological surveys at sensitive sites.	Ongoing	Policy under active development

Action	Status	Notes
Launch a "Greening Our Stations" programme	Ongoing	Llangollen, Colwyn Bay and Bala all currently undertaking Biodiversity enhancement projects. Former mown-grass areas at Rhyl and Llanfairfechan converted to wildflower meadows.
Install new biodiversity features across the estate.	Ongoing	48 Swift nesting spaces installed at HQ, Llanfairfechan, Colwyn Bay and Rhyl, Owl box installed at Bala
Complete the phase-out of long-chain fluorosurfactant firefighting foams.	Complete	Long-chain fluorosurfactant firefighting foams no longer in use.
Enhance partnership work on wildfire prevention.	Ongoing	Local authority collaboration with our education team. Actively engaging with landowners to educate on controlled burns and land management.
Conduct an estate-wide survey for Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS).	Ongoing	Invasive, non-native species being recorded at all sites.
Adopt a "Biodiversity Net Gain" (BNG) principle for all new capital projects.	Complete	Implemented as policy for all new capital projects. For example: each new HVO tank will have BNG aspect -: bird box, bee hotel, wildflower planting etc.

IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	The plan directly supports the national goal of "A Resilient Wales" by maintaining and enhancing a biodiverse natural environment with healthy, functioning ecosystems. It embodies the five ways of working (long-term, prevention, integration, collaboration, involvement) outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
Budget	Cost of planned biodiversity enhancements to the Service estate is £10,000 over three years. The adoption of Biodiversity Net Gain for future capital projects will be integrated into project planning and costing from the outset, representing an efficient, preventative approach to managing environmental impact rather than a retrospective cost
Legal	Implementation of the published Plan is a legal necessity to fulfil the Service's statutory duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The plan's proactive stance ensures the Service is well-prepared for the heightened requirements of the forthcoming Environment Bill, mitigating the risk of future non-compliance and scrutiny from the new Office of Environmental Governance Wales (OEGW).
Staffing	None
Equalities / Human Rights / Welsh Language	None
Risks	• Legal non-compliance • The plan actively manages physical and financial risks. The Ash Dieback plan mitigates the health and safety risk of falling trees on Service property. Similarly, phasing out "forever chemical" foams prevents future land contamination, avoiding potentially significant remediation costs and liabilities.