

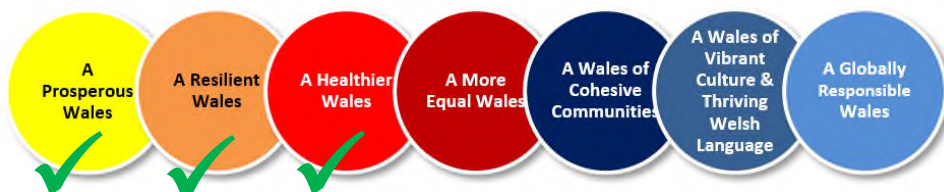


Well-being Objective 12

Healthy & Safe Environment - Look after the environment now and in the future

Why is this important?

- The *Natural Environment* is a core component of sustainable development. The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 expands the duty placed on public bodies, requiring them to *maintain & enhance biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience*.
- A biodiverse natural environment, with healthy functioning ecosystems, supports social, economic and ecological resilience. Carmarthenshire's natural environment is the natural resource on which much of our economy is based – tourism, farming, forestry, and renewable energy. It is a major factor that attracts people, both young and older to live, work and visit the county, bringing inward investment with them.
- The conservation and enhancement of biodiversity is vital in our response to climate change and key ecosystem services such as food, flood management, pollination, clean air and water.
- 60% of the County's people live in rural areas and the remaining 40% live within 400m of natural or semi-natural green space.
- The Well-being Needs Assessment survey identified a strong relationship between residents' well-being and their surrounding environment from providing recreational opportunities, to psychological positivity, health benefits and a connection to heritage and culture.
- The '*Resilient Wales*' goal set out in the Well-being Future Generations Act requires public bodies to set objectives to achieve a 'biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems'



Why this should concern us?

- The environment contributes £8.8 billion of goods and services annually to the Welsh economy, 9% of Welsh GDP and 1 in 6 Welsh jobs; with the environment being relatively more important to the Welsh economy than is the case for the other UK nations.
- A biodiverse natural environment, with healthy functioning ecosystems, supports social, economic and ecological resilience, as well as our health and well-being.
- Responses from the Well-being Assessment survey showed that a clean environment is important to well-being and that residents are concerned with preserving and enhancing the local environment with repeated references to tipping, littering and recycling.
- Rising sea levels are likely to impact not only the 5,587 properties in Carmarthenshire already at risk of tidal and rising river level flooding, but additional properties along the coastal & river communities. A biodiverse natural environment will be more resilient to both climate change, and changes in sea level.

What do we need to do?

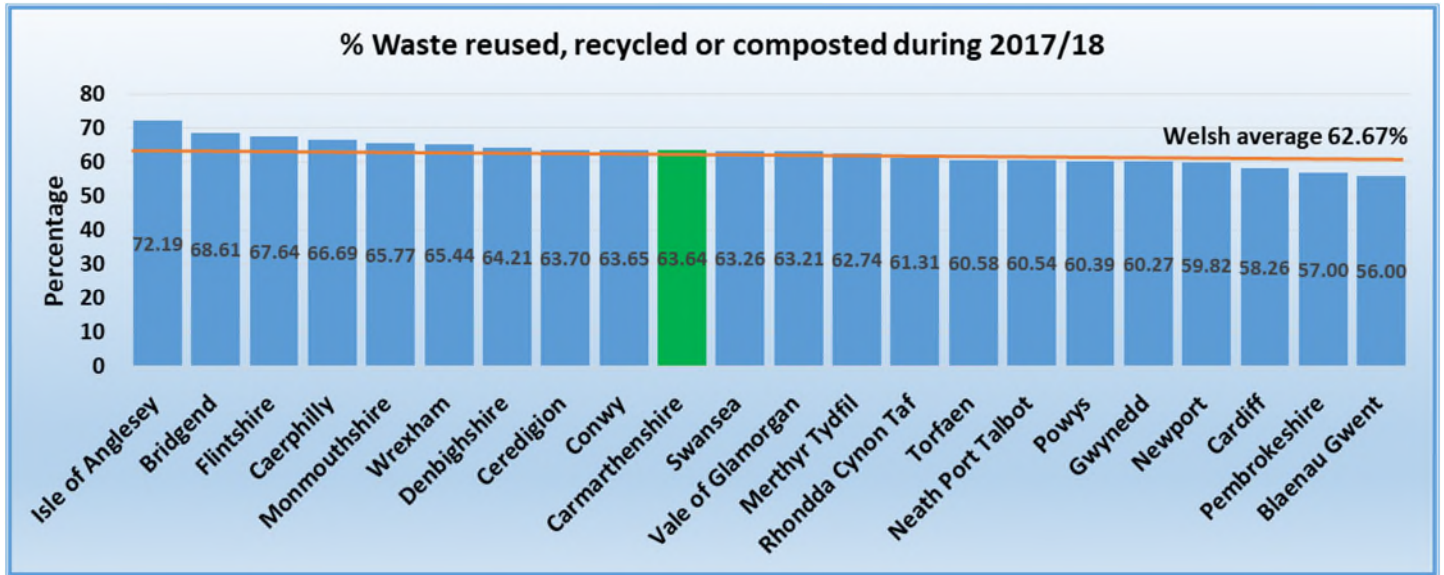
- We need to ensure that in delivering all our strategies, plans, projects and programmes for development, economic growth and the attraction of inward investment, we deliver our S6 Environment (Wales) Act duties and actively maintain and protect biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience.
- We need to sustain and enhance natural & built spaces to encourage healthy living for residents & visitors.
- We need to support resilience within our rural and urban communities.

How will we do this?

- A. We will advise the whole Authority and partners on our need to address the requirements of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and monitor delivery of CCC's Environment Act Forward Plan, so demonstrating its compliance with the Biodiversity & Resilience of Ecosystems Duty within the Act.
- B. Ensure that in delivering planning services across the County, and in particular the various aspects of Planning (Wales) Act 2015, we demonstrate compliance with the Biodiversity & Resilience of Ecosystems Duty within the Act
- C. We will continue to implement and promote the increased use of renewable energy and become carbon neutral by 2030.
- D. We will protect our environment and properties through delivering our *Flood & Waste Management Plan*; and protect and manage our coast by delivering the *Shoreline Management Plan*.
- E. We will deliver actions from the '*Towards Zero Waste strategy*', to become a high recycling nation by 2025 and a zero waste nation by 2050.

Key Measure of Success

Rates of recycling (PAM/030)



Recycling declined in 2017/18 to 63.64% from 66.23% the previous year, moving down from 5th to 10th place but just above the Welsh average. The slight decline is predominantly as a result of the difficulties with the refuse derived fuel (RDF) outlets.

An example of what we are doing

Managing our wetland habitats

Managing our wetland habitats appropriately and recreating them in the right places can bring great benefits for wildlife *and* people. The flat coastal land south-east of Llanelli was once an area of coastal grazing marsh forming part of the distinctive coastal landscape of the county. Although much was lost/degraded as Llanelli developed into an important industrial town, areas have been recreated/restored over recent years and are now flourishing with wildlife. Over the past few years the Council, the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT), Natural Resources Wales and local contractors have worked together to create/restore

wetland features in degraded areas of former coastal grazing marsh that the Council owns close to the WWT. This year over 400 m of ditch was restored/created to help water voles in an area of land that was scrubbing over. It will hopefully become home to a range of wetland species and improve local flood storage. As the land is linked to the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, where a significant amount of habitat creation has been undertaken and which is very important for wildlife (and is also a wonderful place for people to learn about and enjoy the natural environment), it should improve the ecological resilience of the local landscape to support water voles.



Lead Executive Board Member
Cllr Phillip Hughes



View our **detailed delivery plan** against this objective