

SUBJECT: Climate & Nature Area of Focus Proposal

23.06.2026 – Gwent PSB Scrutiny Committee

02.07.2026 – Gwent Public Services Board

Report written and submitted by:

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Contributions from Gwent Climate Change Risk Assessment Steering Group and Gwent Resilient Ecological Networks Steering Group

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To present recommendations for delivery of the Climate & Nature Area of Focus: <i>That everyone lives in a climate ready community where their environment is valued and protected</i> , based on the evidence from the Gwent Climate Change Risk Assessment (GCCRA) and Gwent Resilient Ecological Networks (RENs) Programme.
2	Background
2.1	The PSB has supported two collaborative programmes of work to undertake a GCCRA and to build Gwent RENs. The evidence shows that organisations and communities all have a role in preparing Gwent for the effects of climate change and supporting nature recovery, now and in the future. The PSB can add value by providing regional coordination, supporting integration of evidence across the public sector, facilitating the sharing of best practice and key messages, reducing duplication and maximising benefits from limited resources.

2.2	Gwent PSB Well-being Plan commitment: <i>Take action to reduce our carbon emissions, help Gwent adapt to climate change, and protect and restore our natural environment</i> The eighth Marmot principle in the Building a Fairer Gwent report is: <i>Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together. Tackling climate change and health inequalities in unison is vital so that efforts to reduce health inequalities do not damage the environment and efforts to improve the environment do not damage health equity</i> There are clear messages at both a global, UK, Wales and Gwent level that climate adaptation & nature recovery must be considered in unison.ⁱ Both the Gwent CCRA and RENsⁱⁱ programmes have been supported by the Gwent PSB. With input and collaboration from all PSB organisations (and wider partners and stakeholders) we have developed and integrated national and local evidence to identify the risks faced by climate change and biodiversity loss in Gwent. This work has enabled identification of the key priorities needed to support the next steps for integrated climate adaptation and nature recovery for the region.	
2.3	Gwent Climate Change Risk Assessment (GCCRA) The GCCRA has been produced on behalf of the PSB, and funded by NRW, through support from the Climate & Nature AoF Lead, Steve Morgan. GCCRA focuses on the risks that are both lived and likely to emerge from predicted changes to Gwent's climate. The GCCRA will inform regional climate adaptation planning and local delivery, to ensure Gwent's infrastructure, transport systems, service delivery and community health and well-being are resilient to Gwent's changing climate.	Gwent Resilient Ecological Networks (RENs) The Gwent RENs programme has been developed in response to emerging national policy and evidence, funded by the National Lottery and supported by the PSB and Climate & Nature AoF. Gwent RENs focuses on the drivers, pressures, state and impact on ecosystems services evidence at the landscape to regional scale. The Gwent RENs will inform where we need to build ecosystem resilience and why, maximising the wellbeing benefits nature provides for future generations.

2.3 (a)	GCCRA 2025-2026 Consultants were appointed in October 2025 and delivered the GCCRA report at the end of March 2026. Input and participation by over 300 individuals across 45 organisations at 18 workshops, alongside research and analysis from the consultants, has provided a wealth of valuable evidence, insights, information and recommendations for next steps towards a 'Climate Ready Gwent'. We have undertaken the following: - Assessment of climate risk based on data from the Met Office, Gwent PSB organisations and community representatives. - Gathered data held within our organisations on climate risk. - Gathered insights from communities on local risks. - 'Deep dives' with local experts on the impact of climate change on highways and bridge management; asset management; post-industrial landscape; communities at risk; and building resilience. - Worked with leaders from our organisations to explore emerging data and what effective leadership and interventions might look like. The next steps for GCCRA is for stakeholders to review and apply the evidence for risk assessments in local service areas.	RENs 2025-2027 Over the next 18 months we'll continue working with Welsh Government, partners and stakeholders on developing RENs. To date, over 40 organisations and 400 individuals have been involved in a series of workshops, targeted discussions and consultations across Gwent. Together we have shaped and informed RENs across landscapes, understanding how we deliver, prioritise and maximise nature recovery and wellbeing spatially and over time We have undertaken the following: - Assessment of the drivers, pressures, state (including e.g. condition) and impact on our ecosystems and natural resources. - Assessment of the benefits of natural resources across environmental wellbeing. - Designed and developed RENs, mapped across our distinct landscapes in Gwent. - Baselined contribution to the Welsh Government 30by30 Framework. - Worked collaboratively with Welsh Government and PSB members to explore and inform national policy frameworks (30by30) and regional evidence, including the Gwent Joint Strategic Assessment (JSA) & SE Area Statement. Next steps: Gwent RENs strategic visioning and delivery planning (to 2030 and 2050) with stakeholders, including outcome and performance indicators to 2030 and 2050 targets.
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2.3 (b)	GCCRA Collaborative working Officers from across our organisations formed a Contract Steering Group to oversee the delivery of the GCCRA contract. Our officers have worked collaboratively to support the contractors with local intelligence, expertise and insights and are now working together to present the evidence back to their own organisations.	RENs Collaborative working The Gwent RENs programme has been led by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council in partnership with NRW, and in collaboration with Welsh Government, the Gwent Green Grid Partnership and wider non-public sector regional and local partners and stakeholders. Officers across PSB organisations have been integral in developing Gwent RENs – from evidence to design, and nature recovery and resilience prioritisation and planning.
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2.3 (c)	GCCRA Technical and Summary Report – Key Messagesⁱⁱⁱ Gwent's climate is already changing. Hotter drier summers, warmer wetter winters and more frequent storms are already being experienced. Intense heatwaves, flooding, droughts and wildfires will become more frequent and severe. These changes in our climate will especially affect our most vulnerable communities. Organisations and communities in Gwent are not adequately planning and preparing for the risks likely to occur due to climate change. Lack of action to adapt services, infrastructure, ways of working etc. will exacerbate climate risk. Institutional integration to address climate change risk is insufficient. More work is needed to understand the granular details as outlined in the 9 priorities within the report. The PSB should take a convening role in supporting the activities of individual organisations^{iv}	Gwent RENs programme - Key Messages Nature is declining and degrading in Gwent. Nature's ability to recover from the impacts of climate change and other pressures is reducing and it is less able to cope with change. This is leading to the loss of the benefits that nature provides, and is increasing problems and costs related to, for example, flooding, poor water quality and soil health, heat stress, health and wellbeing. Nature recovery efforts are not currently responding to the biodiversity crisis at the pace and scale needed, Our revised evidence identifies the need for preventative, climate adaptive and long-term, interventions where public service planning and delivery can significantly contribute to Gwent's wellbeing for future generations. More work is needed to develop RENs through communications, strategy development and planning across the PSB organisations, wider partnerships and stakeholders, to respond to nature recovery and build ecosystem resilience in the face of climate change.
3	Current Funding	
3.1	£25k from Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) to develop regional communication assets to share key messaging and increase understanding of climate risks.	
3.2	£5k from the PSB Support Fund as match funding for the WLGA grant, resourcing communication and engagement workshops.	

3.3	£700k from National Lottery Nature Networks 5 for the Gwent Green Grid Partnership to deliver “Resilient Connections” Project (2026–2029). The project will contribute to monitoring, evaluation and evidence through REN-focused pilots, including citizen science and community engagement, with a particular focus on freshwater and connected habitats. The project will also deliver RENs and wider nature recovery in Gwent, contributing to the Gwent PSB wellbeing priorities and supporting the integrated partnership approach of the PSB’s Climate & Nature Area of Focus.
4	Summary
4.1	The climate and nature emergencies are integral , but are being viewed separately.
4.2	Awareness and understanding of the joint emergencies are not widespread across organisations and communities.
4.3	There isn’t a shared understanding or consensus on how to respond to the joint emergencies. Strategic planning and budget setting isn’t fully focused on the future resources needed to tackle the emergencies. The necessary structures for integrating, collaborating, sharing and supporting across organisations and with communities aren’t fully embedded.
4.4	Gwent PSB needs to maximise use of public sector resources through regional collaboration , where appropriate.
5	Recommendation To endorse the following approaches:
5.1	An integrated approach to the Climate & Nature Area of Focus Integration of the evidence from GCCRA and Gwent RENs programme to inform the next Gwent Well-being Assessment and Plan, as well as establish ways of working that equally prioritise the climate and nature emergency.
5.2	Climate & Nature Communications and Engagement Programme Sharing key messages across multiple audiences with a focus on climate leadership and vulnerable communities, ensuring full and equitable representation.
5.3	A programme to build consensus across policy/decision makers and operational teams on how to respond to the climate and nature emergency in a collaborative and equitable way.

5.4	Strengthening regional collaboration e.g. with Cardiff Capital Region/CJC and Gwent Green Grid around shared climate risks and nature recovery, maximising the strategic opportunities in terms of shared investment, planning and delivery, where the PSB can add value.
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Endnotes

i *The twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss are deeply interconnected. Climate change accelerates biodiversity loss, while the loss and degradation of nature releases greenhouse gases and simultaneously undermines our ability to adapt to a changing climate.* [Unlocking benefits for people, nature and climate: Actions to jointly address climate change and bi...](#) UK Government 2025

Over 200 health journals call on the United Nations (UN), political leaders and health professionals to recognise that climate change and biodiversity loss are one indivisible crisis ... that is now so severe as to be a global health emergency. [Time to treat the climate and nature crisis as one indivisible global health emergency - PMC](#) Centre of Global Health UK (2023)

The drivers and pressures on our natural environment from Climate change, land and sea use change, pollution, non-native invasive species (INNS), pests, diseases and direct exploitation are having a cumulative impact on ecosystems services which we depend on for health and wellbeing as well as the ability to adapt and be resilient for future generations in the face of climate change. [JSA 25/26 \(E\)](#) Gwent Joint Strategic Assessment (2026)

While public bodies across Wales are taking steps to address the climate emergency, action is not consistent across all service areas. We will champion forward-looking actions that deliver multiple benefits, such as decarbonisation that lowers energy bills, and nature restoration that supports good health. [Future-Generations-Report-2025.pdf](#) Wellbeing of Future Generations Report (2025)

The public sector will need to fund adaptation actions which have large public benefits (such as flood protection and nature management), support low-income households who cannot meet the costs of adaptation, and adapt public services to protect their functioning. [A Well-Adapted UK - Climate Change Committee](#) Climate Change Committee (2026)

ii **The PSB provided a letter of support** in contribution to the RENs project funding application to National Lottery in 2025, recognising both the challenges and priorities for nature's recovery.

iii **GCCRA full technical report and summary** are available here [Gwent Climate Change Risk Assessment report - Gwent Public Services Board Gwent Public Services Board](#)

iv **The CCRA identified 12 activities that the PSB** could take a convening role in supporting the activities of individual organisations, these include a

- Convening role for specialist discussions on the priority areas.
- Taking a lead role in GIS spatial mapping to support spatial analysis of climate risk.
- Enabling discourse with key national and regional partners on climate risk, including the Cardiff Capital Region.
- Supporting corporate approaches to integrate climate risk into communications material that can be adapted for different organisations.
- Support delivery of a targeted communications programme.