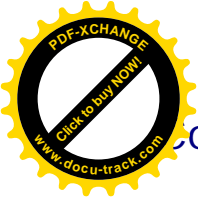


# Neath Port Talbot

## Environment Strategy

**Working together  
for a greener Neath Port Talbot  
2008-2026**

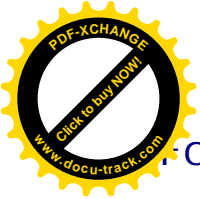


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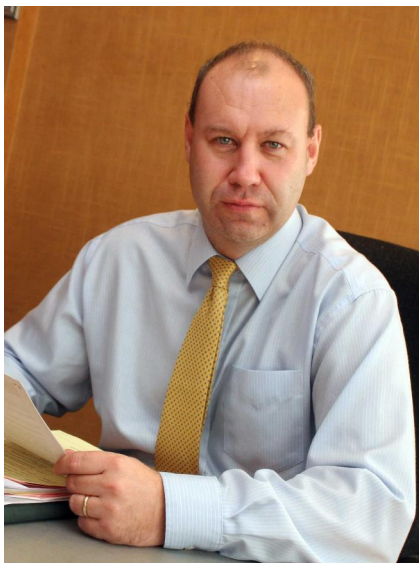
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## Foreword



Our environment is the most important asset we have and is essential to our daily lives. However, we are now beginning to understand the impact that is being created as a result of increasing environmental pressures.

To assist in tackling these issues and to help to reduce the impact that we as a Borough have, I am very pleased to present the first Environment Strategy for Neath Port Talbot.

This strategy has been developed to provide longer-term protection for our environment. It recognises that as a community leader, the Council has a responsibility to make a real difference through its own operations and by adopting a collaborative approach to working in partnership with a wide range of organisations, businesses and individuals.

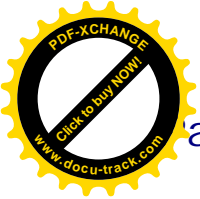
The strategy highlights key actions that the Council in partnership with the Environment Forum will be tackling and further performance measures are outlined in an accompanying Action Plan, which will be reported upon annually. This Provides ongoing commitment and renewal - as the environmental challenges change so too will the actions listed in the Action Plan.

The strategy recognises that the commitment of individuals, both residents and visitors to the Borough, can make a huge difference and there are actions set out in this document that the public can take onboard.

This document highlights important interactive links between the Environment and Health and Well-being, Community Safety, Transport, Economic Prosperity, Education, Confident Communities and Economic Development.

We look forward to working with you to deliver a cleaner and healthier environment for Neath Port Talbot.

Councillor Derek Vaughan, Leader of the Council.



## Partnership Working

There is a great deal of partnership working within Neath Port Talbot.

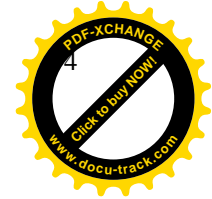
The Environment Forum, was set up in 2004 to assist in setting and meeting targets in the Neath Port Talbot Community Plan 2005-2015. The Environment Forum is made up of around 80 partner organisations they meet on a quarterly basis to update on environmental projects and to create project ideas and source funding for these projects. The Environment Forum shares responsibility for this document and the Action Plan with the Council.

The most recent achievement of the Environment Forum has been the permanent environmental display at the Gnoll Visitor Centre. The Environment Forum organise an annual environment festival and a website is available so that residents and visitors can see what the Environment Forum is doing and how they can be involved.

The Neath Port Talbot Biodiversity Forum is a group of organisations, local wildlife experts and volunteer groups that work to conserve the special plants and animals of our county (to view a list of members please see appendix 1). Their Local Biodiversity Action Plan is available on the Council's website and in local libraries.

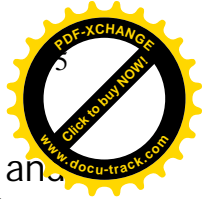
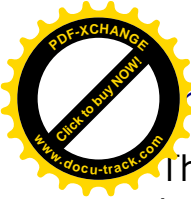
The Neath Port Talbot Local Access Forum is a statutory body set up to advise the Council on countryside access matters. It has a balanced membership of user and landowner interests, and was set up under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act.

The Council also works together with other agencies, Local Authorities, and private industry on collaborative initiatives aimed at improving the quality of our environment.



## Neath Port Talbot Environment Forum Membership

ARENA Network, Brecon Beacons National Park, Countryside Council for Wales, Eco-Schools, Energy Savings Trust, Communities First, Enfy's Foundation, Environment Agency, Farmers Union of Wales, Field Studies Council, Forestry Commission Wales, Friends of the Earth, Gnoll Visitor Centre, Groundwork Trust, Keep Wales Tidy, National Trust, NPTCVS, Pryce Consultant Ecologist, RSPB, South and West Wales Wildlife Trust, South Wales Transport, Sustainable Wales, Swansea Institute of Higher Education, Swansea Environment Centre, The Prince's Trust, Cylch, Waste Awareness Wales, Welsh Assembly Government.



## Introduction

This is Neath Port Talbot County Borough's first Environment Strategy. It is supported by annually updated targets and key actions that will be taken to deliver the outcomes of the strategy. The purpose of the Environment Strategy is to provide the framework within which to achieve an environment that is clean, healthy and thriving, has improving economic prosperity and is valued by the residents, businesses and visitors of the County Borough.

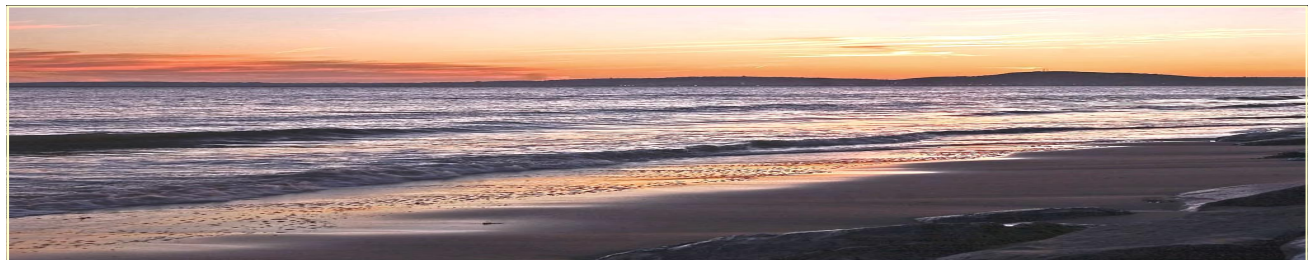
This Strategy has been developed following a two year programme of partnership working, which included identification of priorities following consultations with key stakeholders. The Strategy has been championed by the Neath Port Talbot Environment Forum working in partnership with Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. It also reflects the views of our 12 week public consultation process launched in March 2008.

The consultation process helped to define targets, identify actions and the key issues to address. It also helped to raise awareness of the many and varied issues facing us all, particularly those relevant to the County Borough.

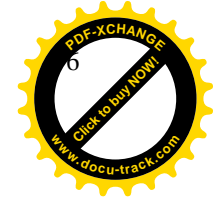
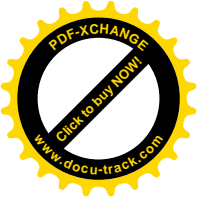
This document together with the Action Plan is intended as a local Environment Strategy developed by local people for local people. It brings a local perspective to the Welsh Assembly Government document—Environment Strategy Wales and takes guidance from that.

This Strategy is delivered in five sections, recognising their importance to our local Environment. These are

1. Natural Environment
2. Built Environment
3. Transport and Travel
4. Environmental Responsibility
5. Environmental Quality



We are grateful to those many contributors who gave their time and shared their knowledge and expertise in the development of this strategy, also to the many members of the public and representatives of partner agencies who responded during the consultation process. We are happy to be taking this Strategy forward in our Borough and look forward to continuing strong relationships with our partners and with the public.



## Further Information:

This Strategy is supported by an Action Plan, which details specific actions aimed at delivering the intended outcomes of this strategy.

The Action Plan alone will not deliver the intended outcomes. Current and future national and local policies and strategic programmes will also contribute towards delivery and will need to ensure that they reflect the priorities set out in this strategy. How this document relates to other policies and strategies is identified in Appendix 2.

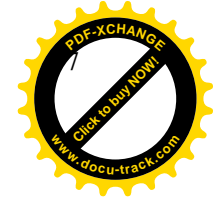
The Action Plan will be updated annually and the targets revised as necessary to meet the ever changing needs of the environment in which we live.

The main Strategy will be reviewed in full every five years.



A glossary of terms is available in Appendix 5

For an electronic version of this document and for more information visit [www.npt.gov.uk/environment](http://www.npt.gov.uk/environment)



## How to read this document

The objectives that are listed in this strategy are not exhaustive. They are a selection taken from the actions listed in the Action Plan. The Action Plan that accompanies this document will contain all actions necessary to ensure that Neath Port Talbot is moving towards a thriving and healthy environment by 2026.

There are also tips and improvements that you can undertake to help make Neath Port Talbot a cleaner, safer and healthier place to live.

Within the document further useful information is highlighted in a blue box like this one

Within the Document actions that Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and its partners will work towards are highlighted in a pink box like this one

Within the document suggested actions that everyone can undertake are highlighted in a yellow box like this one

The Strategy is written to be understood by all ages and we hope it makes a useful learning aid as well as informing of the environmental issues facing Neath Port Talbot.

For an electronic version of this document and for more information visit [www.npt.gov.uk/environment](http://www.npt.gov.uk/environment)





# Fundamentals

## Our Environment

Has fundamental value: it;

- Supports all life
- Is a limited source of raw materials
- Is central to our quality of life
- Underpins our economic growth

## Overarching Objectives of this Strategy

Adapt to climate change

Minimise pollution

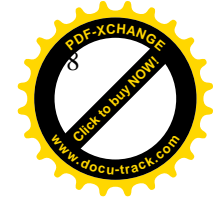
Conserve and enhance biodiversity and landscape quality

Monitor and regulate impacts

Increase energy and resource efficiency

Tackle waste production and disposal

Develop in a sustainable way to create a long term benefit for the people of our county



## Strategic Principles

Recognise and live within our limits

Consider the environment as a theme in everything that we do

Work in partnership to minimise impacts

Encourage and educate visitors, businesses and residents to understand their impacts and the changes they can make

Act now







## Our Environment

Our environment is important to us, it affects the way in which we live, develop and work. It supplies our basic needs; food, air, water and a place to live and work; the raw materials we use and provides a place for us to undertake recreational activities.

Neath Port Talbot has a very diverse environment. It is coastal, rural, industrial and urban. It is internationally recognised for its waterfalls, sand dunes, forestry and industry.

The economy and the environment are closely linked. A healthy, clean environment will attract and retain people who want to work and live in the area. The ideal future for Neath Port Talbot would be one of a diverse, competitive and strong economy, with high quality skills and education, and where our overall actions positively affect our environment.

The environment also has a connection with our health and well-being. Environmental hazards such as air pollution impact negatively on our health, while attractive open green spaces can make us feel good and help improve our health through providing areas that promote recreational activities.

### The Challenges we face and seek to address in this document

Wales and Neath Port Talbot have some of the most spectacular environments in the world. However we are all, to some extent, faced with the issues of:

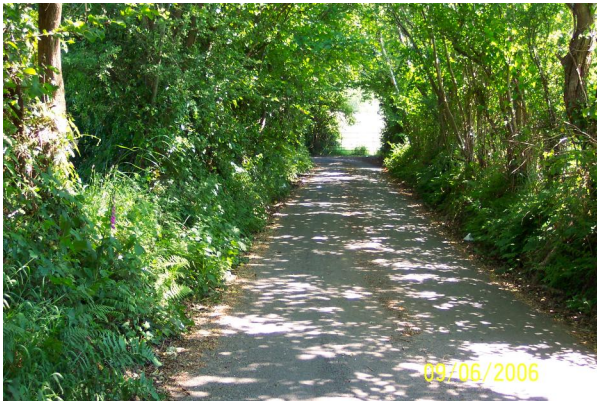
- Climate change
- Degraded ecosystems
- Unsustainable resource use
- Loss of biodiversity
- Loss of landscape, heritage quality and distinctiveness
- Poor quality living environments
- Environmental hazards

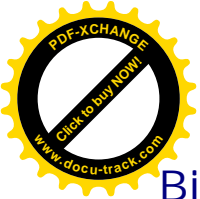




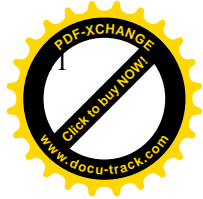
# The Natural Environment

Biodiversity  
Countryside  
Coast  
Greenspaces  
Community Involvement  
Physical Improvement





## Biodiversity



Neath Port Talbot's natural environment is often hidden behind the County's industrial façade. In reality there is an incredible variety of wild creatures that occupy a diverse range of habitats; from woodland to wetland, the coast to uplands.

Biodiversity, which is short for biological diversity, is the term used to describe the whole variety of life on earth. It doesn't just mean rare or impressive species, like giant pandas or lions; areas of high species diversity, such as rainforests; or economically important species, like cod. Biodiversity encompasses the diversity of all living things, from human beings to micro-organisms, the diversity of all the habitats in which they live and the genetic diversity of individuals within a species.

Biodiversity is a fundamental part of the earth's life support system. It supports many basic natural services for humans, such as fresh water, fertile soil and clean air. Associated processes help pollinate our flowers and crops, clean up our waste, put food on the table and contribute significantly to our sense of well being in our local environment. Without it we would not be able to survive. The world's biodiversity is under threat from various dangers, the majority of which have been caused by humans.

In addition to important biodiversity Neath Port Talbot also has important landscape and seascape features, geological and heritage sites. These are valuable to the Borough and provide further refuges for the County Borough's biodiversity.





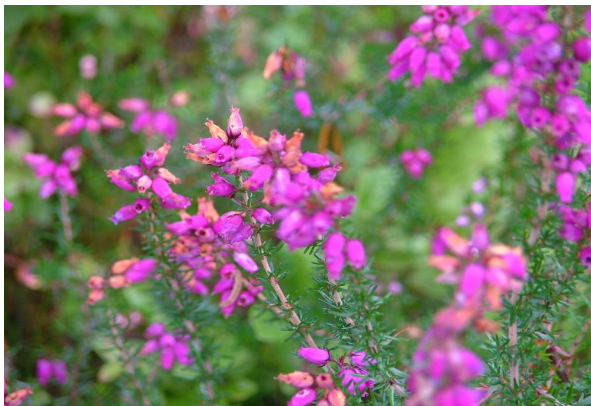
## The Local Biodiversity Action Plan

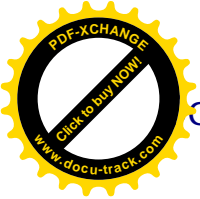
It is our responsibility to protect and conserve these natural assets which enhance our quality of life and contribute to our economy. The management of areas and species needs to be carefully planned and supported by residents and the wider population.

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) sets out how to manage these sites and species and is part of an international agreement and commitment to protect biodiversity. There are also European Directives and UK Legislation which provide clear protection for our biodiversity.

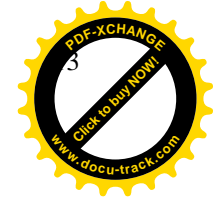
It is essential that as a Borough we all understand the biological diversity of the area in order that we can set objectives and comply with legislation. Data is always being collected on the content and condition of our local area. Surveying and managing our natural environment offers opportunities for training, volunteering, learning and employment.

Within Neath Port Talbot, 20 sites are afforded protection through local, national, European and even international designations. All of our green areas and open spaces have the potential to become richer in wildlife by appropriate habitat creation or management, appropriate landscaping and better use of current legislation. Parks, gardens, school grounds, highway verges, and other open spaces can be managed to increase biodiversity and help reduce the effects of habitat fragmentation whilst maintaining their value as leisure facilities.





## Common threats to Biodiversity



Habitat loss and fragmentation is considered by ecologists to be the primary cause of biodiversity loss. Clearance of native vegetation for agriculture, housing, timber and industry, as well as draining wetlands and flooding valleys to form reservoirs, can either partially or completely destroy these habitats and their associated organisms. In addition, this destruction can cause remaining habitats to become fragmented. These may therefore be too small for some organisms to persist and/or too far apart for other organisms to move between them, resulting in a loss of genetic diversity.

Pollution, as well as contributing to climate change is currently affecting many forms of life, both on land and in the water. Pollution, includes chemicals or harmful substance and also includes the effect of light, noise or heat (thermal). Whilst pollution can occur naturally, it is the effects of man made pollution that is often so harmful to our biodiversity. These impacts on our biodiversity can range from direct decline of species through poisoning or loss of food, Declining reproduction or even an increase in certain species as the natural balance is lost from the ecosystem.

Over exploitation by humans causes destruction to natural ecosystems. Exploitation of biodiversity occurs for food, construction, industrial products the pet trade, fashion and traditional medicines. Selective removal of an individual species can unbalance ecosystems and all other organisms within them. In addition, the physical removal of one species often harms others.

Climate change growing scientific evidence continually strengthens the argument that the changing climate we are experiencing is as a result of man made activities. There is no doubt that we are seeing effects of climate change across the world. Whilst the outcome of climate change is still unknown, its clear that biodiversity will need to be able to adapt or move quickly enough to deal with the changing temperatures and conditions. The combined effects of habitat fragmentation and climate change is likely to be greatest challenge for biodiversity so far.

Invasive alien species Whether introduced on purpose or accidentally, non-native species can cause severe problems in the ecosystems they invade, from affecting individuals to causing huge changes in ecosystem functioning and the extinction of many species. Virtually all ecosystems have suffered invasion of some sort. This problem is likely to get worse during the next century driven by climate change, and an increase in global trade and tourism. As well as the risks to human health, alien species can inflict costs to agriculture, forestry, fisheries and other human activities.

## What we will do:

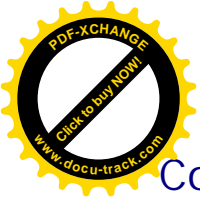
- Use the powers and influences available to the Council to assist in achieving the national target to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010
- By complying with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, the Council will have regard for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in all its activities
- Maintain, achieve condition, restore and expand habitats as identified by the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)
- Maintain and expand range and population size of species as identified by the LBAP
- Encourage and promote sustainable land management
- Establish and maintain data on the natural environment and monitor change
- Raise awareness to the public and visitors on the issues facing biodiversity in Neath Port Talbot
- Promote awareness, access and enjoyment of natural areas

## What you can do:

- Be a greener gardener: use less chemicals, make your own compost, use a water butt
- Support wildlife: plant native species and leave a patch of your garden grow wild, get some lady bird boxes and bird tables
- Join a local volunteer or community group
- Enjoy and respect your local natural areas: don't pick flowers or disturb wild animals







## Countryside, Coast and Green Spaces

The natural environment of Neath Port Talbot is enjoyed by thousands of residents and visitors every year. Neath Port Talbot has a diverse natural environment ranging from waterways and mountains to large open spaces and coastline.

More people than ever are now visiting the countryside, due to increased leisure and mobility opportunities. People are taking part in environmental activities and outdoor activities which benefit their health and well-being.

There is potential to improve our local economy through developing tourism activities that are environmentally sensitive. Neath Port Talbot's natural environment can often be taken for granted and resources for its protection and enhancement need to be increased. There is potential for investment such as through businesses that directly benefit from the quality or use of the countryside.

All communities should have access to the natural environment within walking distance of where they live, as promoted by CCW's Green Space Toolkit and WAG's Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity 'Climbing Higher' (2005) and Neath Port Talbot's Community Plan 2005-15.

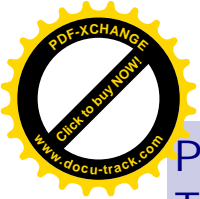
Green urban spaces improve the image of the area as well as having the potential to contribute to biodiversity. Care is taken when redeveloping Brownfield sites as these can possess significant value and support some of our rarest species.

More can be done to improve access to and within wildlife sites, the countryside, coastal areas and urban green spaces, to enable people of all abilities to enjoy Neath Port Talbot's natural environment.

### The Countryside Code:

#### Respect - Protect - Enjoy

- Be Safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people



## Protected Areas in Neath Port Talbot

### Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's):

Crymlyn Burrows, Earlswood Road Cutting and Ferryboat Inn Quarries, Eglwys Nunydd Reservoir, Gors Llwyn, Onllwyn, Gwrhyd Meadows, Cefn Gwrhyd, Hafod Wennol Grasslands, Pant-y-Sais, Coed Cwm Du, Cilmaengwyn, Crymlyn Bog, Cwm Gwrelych and Nant Llyn Fach Streams, Craig y Llyn, Frondeg, Cilybebyll, Caeau Ton-y-Fildre, Kenfig, Tairgwaith, Margam Moors, Blaenau Nedd and Mellte

### Local Nature Reserves:

Swansea Canal  
Eaglesbush Valley  
Pant-y-Sais

### Special Areas of Conservation (SACs):

Crymlyn Bog  
Kenfig  
Bleanau Nedd and Mellte

### Ramsar site: (Wetland of International Importance).

Crymlyn Bog

## The Coastline

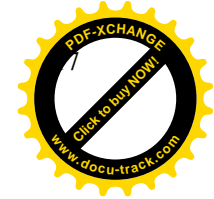
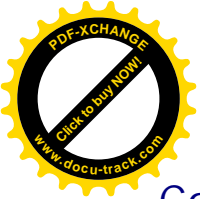
The coastal area of Neath Port Talbot is not only an important Habitat but is also the location of important settlements and industrial sites, as well as key transport routes. The management of the coastline is different to the more general management of land. The marine environment is more dynamic and our knowledge of its processes is more limited.

The coastline is at risk from climate change, which will affect sea levels and marine species, and there are potential contamination problems, especially from industries close to the coast. In addition, as temperatures rise due to global warming more people may want to live near the coast, increasing the demand for housing in this area and impacting on the landscape.

## Farming

Farming can support conservation of the land and creates habitats for animals to thrive in. Farming is constantly changing and schemes such as the Tir Gofal Agri-environment scheme can help farmers to improve their methods to include increased nature conservation and biodiversity.





## Community Involvement

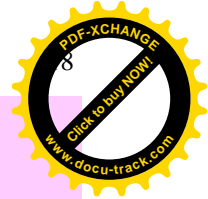
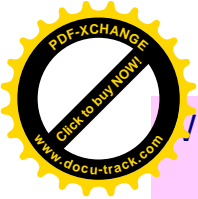
In Neath Port Talbot there is a great deal of work that takes place within the Community. The Council encourages and engages the community to participate in the improvement and protection of the natural environment.

Conservation projects taking place in the Borough show good levels of community participation. These opportunities give the community the chance to gain skills whilst volunteering, and undertaking job experience. They help the community gain confidence, as well as helping those who have offended to be rehabilitated and find new employment. National and local groups run voluntary projects in the community that residents can take part in.

The natural environment in Neath Port Talbot is also used as a tool for learning. It is important that we teach our children about the Natural Environment and Enjoyment of the Countryside. The Children's Environment and Health Action Plan UK (CEHAP) reports that young people feel the need for information and education about the countryside. The park spaces at the Gnoll, Afan Forest Park and Margam are used frequently by schools as a teaching aid. The Council's Biodiversity Team use the landscape to teach local communities about biodiversity, for example undertaking bat walks. There is a purpose built Field Study Discovery Centre in the grounds of Margam Park to raise the level of environmental education within Neath Port Talbot.

The new Margam Discovery Centre will operate as a partnership between the local authority and the UK-wide Educational Charity the Field Studies Council. The Centre will build on the excellent reputation already established at Margam Park Education Centre for work in education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship. The new centre will continue to provide residential and day education courses for school-children of all ages from local schools as well as having the capacity to welcome visitors from a much wider area. It will also provide courses for adult skills training in areas such as biodiversity, conservation and heritage building repair. Furthermore there will be public catering facilities and a visitor interpretation centre raising public awareness of sustainability issues as well as informing visitors about the special qualities of the area. Overall the centre will continue to develop as an exciting learning resource for the local community.



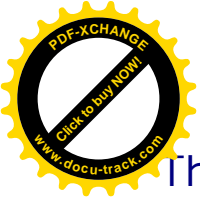


## What we will do:

- Promote access to the countryside for recreational activity as a means of improving the health and wellbeing of the local population
- Work in partnership to create the All Wales Coastal Path
- Develop family friendly cycle links along the coast and green corridors and to our valley communities to promote healthy activity
- Improve access to the countryside, coast and green spaces through proactive management plans
- Complete the Neath Port Talbot Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)
- Survey access to natural green space for planning policy purposes
- Ensure that our policies and programmes relating to land use planning, agriculture, forestry and fisheries have a strong focus on delivering environmental benefits
- Find ways to deliver connectivity and environmental improvement at landscape scale, particularly relating to biodiversity
- Protect the coastline
- Develop our understanding of the pressures on our landscape, seascape and biodiversity and work to deliver effective improvement

## What you can do:

- Follow the Countryside Code wherever you go. You will get the best out of the countryside and help to maintain it now and for the future.
- Report any obstruction of Rights of Way to the Council
- Report fly-tipping to the Council
- Get involved in countryside/Rights of Way improvement (contact Sustrans or BTCV Cymru)
- Join a walking club
- Utilise your local green spaces for leisure
- Get involved with local community projects which enhance the natural environment
- Enjoy the local environment
- When in the Countryside remember to wash your hands especially if you have touched animals—this prevents transfer of disease, pregnant women should be particularly careful not to touch sheep and lambs



## The Environment Improvement Programme

Within Neath Port Talbot more than 30 landscape schemes have been implemented under the Environment Programme. The programme is managed by the Property and Regeneration Team and is funded under a partnership arrangement between the Council and Welsh Assembly Government. Certain schemes have also had the benefit of European funding.

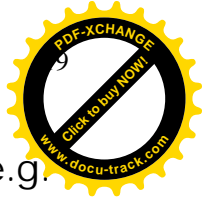
The aim of this programme is to improve the physical environment at strategic locations so as to enhance the area's economic prospects and promote pride in Neath Port Talbot. Schemes implemented to date have concentrated on:

Strategic road corridors e.g.

- The A483 Jersey Marine dual carriageway between Neath and Swansea
- Baglan section of the A48

Major road interchanges e.g.

- A465/A474 Neath Saltings Roundabout at the gateway to the town centre



A series of entry points into the County Borough e.g.

- War Memorial site at Lower Brynamman
- Focal points within settlements:
- Cwmdu Glen entrance in Pontardawe town centre
- Village centre at Blaengwnfi, Afan Valley
- Major routes through the Sandfields Estate, Aberafan

Industrial Estates: e.g.

- Neath Abbey

Village Enhancement Schemes e.g.

- Village enhancement schemes in the Upper Afan Valley at Glyncorrwg, Cymmer and Blaengwynfi as part of the Upper Afan Valley Community Cohesion Strategy. The Upper Afan Valley has been formally designated as a Tourism Growth Area (TGA) by the Wales Tourist Board, in recognition of its potential for tourism development.
- See link to tourism development for further information on the TGA and other scheme developments.

As part of wider Strategic Development Sites e.g.

- Aberafan Seafront - landscaped car park



# The Built Environment

Planning  
Buildings  
Neighbourhoods  
Environmental Health  
Housing  
Energy  
Climate Change  
Renewable Energy  
Economic Development  
Tourism





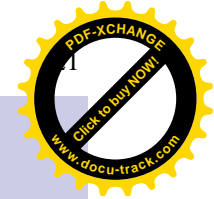


Addressing sustainable development is a key duty of the town and country planning system: this means that environmental objectives must be integrated with social and economic ones in the planning of new development.

Through the development plan and development control process, local government controls the location and design of development. It must provide for homes, infrastructure, investment and jobs in a way which is consistent with sustainable development principles. Over time this should have major and cumulative influences on behaviour patterns, the use and conservation of finite and non-finite resources, pollution and adapting to climate change.

The current development plan, the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), provides a comprehensive vision and steer for new development to avoid adverse environmental impacts, and where possible to achieve environmental enhancements. The plan has undergone Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) throughout its production to ensure that negative environmental impacts of policies have been taken into account.

To support the UDP policies, Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on sustainable development has been produced alongside more specialised versions concerned with landscape, biodiversity and wind energy. It provides detailed information on designing-in resource efficiency, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, climate change adaptation, landscape and biodiversity conservation and enhancement and minimising overall negative environmental impacts.



Work has now commenced on the Local Development Plan (LDP). This not only has a different title to the UDP but is subject to new statutory requirements and guidance. As a result there will be more of a focus on stakeholder and community involvement in its preparation and there will be a more open and public debate concerning how much development is needed and where it should be located. Information on our LDPs is available from [www.npt.gov.uk/planning](http://www.npt.gov.uk/planning)

The planning process can produce sustainable, environmentally-aware development through:

- the location of development
- the layout and design of the development site and buildings

This means ensuring:

- the protection and conservation of biodiversity and landscape
- that consequences of flooding and other hazards are addressed, together with the impacts on people, (e.g. noise) and community facilities and services
- that developments are accessible on foot, by bike and by public transport to reduce reliance on the car and
- that the potential to maximise energy efficiency has been addressed through building design

## Environmentally Friendly Buildings

The Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) is a method used to assess the environmental performance of new and existing buildings. There is also a version specifically tailored to new housing called Ecohomes.

Baglan Energy Park includes two major award winning buildings - Gateway 1 and Astral Court both designed to meet the BREEAM excellent standard.

On-site power generation at the Energy Park means that businesses locating on site have reduced energy costs. This encourages businesses to the site and benefits the local economy.

Modern looking, environmentally friendly buildings, can improve the lives of residents through providing business and job opportunities and improvements to the places near to where they live.



The BREEAM assessment process was created in 1990 with the first two versions covering offices and homes. Versions are updated regularly in line with UK Building Regulations and different building versions have been created since its launch to assess various building types.

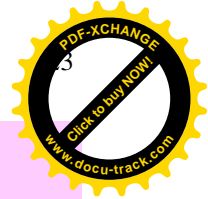
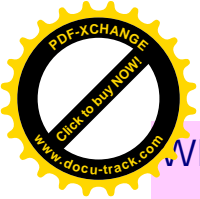
These versions essentially look at the same broad range of environmental impacts:

- Management
- Health and Wellbeing
- Energy
- Transport
- Water
- Material and Waste
- Land use and Ecology
- Pollution



Credits are awarded in each of the above areas according to performance. A set of environmental weightings then enables the credits to be added together to produce a single overall score. The building is then rated on a scale of: PASS, GOOD, VERY GOOD or EXCELLENT and a certificate awarded to the development.

The Council in partnership with WAG and BP have achieved buildings of EXCELLENT rating on Baglan Energy Park.

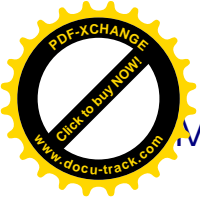


## What we will do:

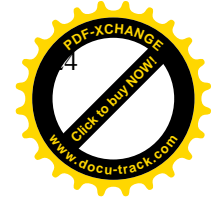
- Survey the environmental assets of the County Borough to inform the development of strategy and detailed policies that impact on them.
- Produce up-to-date development plans based on the latest environmental legislation and best practice principles.
- Apply development plan policy through development control and enforcement to ensure that new development accords with sustainable development principles, where appropriate requiring detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and AA.
- Undertake detailed technical studies to help best locate renewable energy infrastructure (minimising environmental and social impact) to contribute to national renewable energy targets.

## What you can do:

- If you are planning any work that will require planning permission, refer to SPG to help design it in a way that accords with sustainable development principles; planning officers in the Council can advise on this.
- Get involved in the LDP process to have a say on how we balance environmental impacts against the need for development and to tell us about where there are important environmental assets.
- Report any unauthorised development to us so that proper processes can be applied to ensure that it doesn't create unacceptable impacts.
- When considering materials used in the construction industry it is important not only to consider the raw materials used but also the embodied energy used to create each element in a building.
- Think carefully about the location you are building on: there are a number of environmental effects of pollution ranging from acid rain, depletion of the ozone, to waste water flooding.



## Managing our Neighbourhoods



The quality and attractiveness of our neighbourhoods can have a direct impact on our health and social well-being, community safety and the economy. Every community is entitled to high-quality vibrant, well-planned and well-maintained built environment, which has pedestrian-friendly streets, integrated transport, attractive and convenient green spaces and distinctiveness.

Identifying areas for improvement and regeneration can assist in focusing resources, to address poor quality public areas and poorly maintained buildings. Many older buildings in Neath Port Talbot are now being refurbished to high standards.

Improving the quality of our neighbourhoods includes making our communities safer, cleaner and more pleasant to live and work in. Litter, fly-tipping, noise, graffiti and dog fouling are problems that many people experience everyday, costing significant amounts of money to rectify. Council enforcement through penalty notices helps to combat such problems and community groups have also been involved in successful neighbourhood clean-ups.

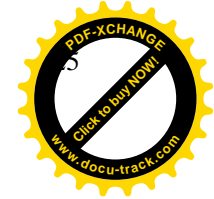
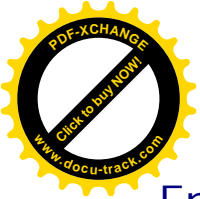
Together with poor building maintenance and low quality housing, environmental problems can be of particular significance in deprived communities such as the Western Valleys where it can be part of a cycle of economic and social decline and poor health.

In order to turn around this problem the Western Valleys Strategy has been developed and the Council's Valleys team has been put in place to support neighbourhood renewal, where local people are encouraged to become actively involved in improving their community. There is also a great deal of supporting other deprived areas from Communities First and Tenants and Residents Associations.

One of the aims of the Western Valleys Strategy is that of targeting empty and dilapidated domestic and commercial property. A team has been set up to create a register of such properties, to engage with owners and where necessary to take robust action to bring them back into use or to demolish them.

Further information can be found in the Western Valleys Strategy.





## Environmental Health

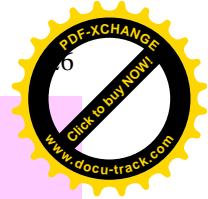
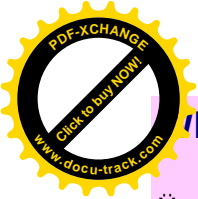
Within the Council, the Environmental Health Section aims to protect and improve public health and the natural and built environment. This is achieved through a balanced mix of education initiatives, guidance and regulation. The remit of the service is very wide ranging covering the regulation of standards of hygiene in food premises and health and safety in businesses as well as standards of housing in the private sector. The service also addresses specific environmental issues such as industrial, commercial and domestic air pollution and noise, drainage, derelict property and premises open to access, insect and mammal pests, public and private water supply quality and other nuisances.

Empty and derelict properties cause an increased sense of neglect and decay in an area; they reduce the values of surrounding property and attract vandalism, arson attacks and other forms of anti-social behavior, fly tipping and pest infestations. The Council has powers to take action to secure a property against unauthorized access and to bring it back up to a standard that does not have a negative visual impact on the locality.

The service seeks to work with businesses in developing best practice. This is achieved through awareness raising exercises in line with national and local strategies, by providing targeted campaigns, publicity, projects and educational initiatives. Examples of such initiatives include the Neath Port Talbot Private Rented Sector Accreditation Scheme that seeks to improve housing standards in partnership with landlords. This has resulted in many hundreds of properties for rent being maintained at standards that are much higher than the legal minimum.

The service seeks to improve standards of hygiene and safety by providing training in food hygiene and health and safety for employers and employees within the borough.

The service also engages in chemical and bacteriological quality monitoring exercises to ensure that foods meet good standards of quality, that private water supplies are safe to drink and to confirm that bacteriological and water quality of swimming and paddling pools. The service investigates notifications of infectious disease received by the authority, including food poisoning to ascertain their cause, prevent their spread and if possible prevent their recurrence.

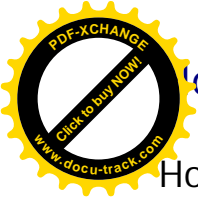


## What we will do:

- ÿ Ensure that food premises operate with good standards of hygiene
- ÿ Ensure that cases of infectious disease are thoroughly investigated and where possible the cause is identified and remedial action taken
- ÿ Ensure that businesses comply with their legal duties to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees and others
- ÿ Ensure that the public and businesses comply with the requirements of the smoke free legislation
- ÿ Ensure that landlords provide and maintain good quality housing for their tenants
- ÿ Where appropriate take action to deal with privately owned domestic property that fall below current standards
- ÿ Ensure that ruinous and dilapidated properties are repaired or demolished
- ÿ Ensure that overgrown land that forms a harborage for rodents is cleared and vermin destroyed
- ÿ Take rapid action to deal with empty properties that are open to access that can become foci for arson and anti-social behavior
- ÿ Act quickly in response to complaints about statutory nuisance such as domestic and commercial drainage problems, noise, odour, smoke or air pollution
- ÿ Ensure that pests are destroyed as humanely as possible whilst at the same time minimizing the impact on the environment and non-target species
- ÿ Engage with the business community in the promotion of healthy lifestyles particularly in relation to tobacco, nutrition and reduction of infection
- ÿ Work with all relevant partners

## What you can do:

- Report establishments that you feel do not meet good standards of food hygiene or health and safety
- Report accidents in the workplace
- Report problems of pests of any type together with overgrown land that may be a harborage for rodents
- Report noise, odours and air pollution that you think are a nuisance
- Report cases of harassment and illegal eviction
- Report cases of poor quality private housing
- Report instances of dilapidated buildings and premises open to access
- Report drainage problems



## Housing



Housing needs are constantly changing. Single person occupancy is rising and people coming to Neath Port Talbot are looking for more affordable housing with good links to the motorway and other access routes. The development plan and development control processes will seek to manage the environmental impact of housing demand by identifying suitable locations for new housing, requiring it to meet certain standards and managing regeneration.

In Neath Port Talbot there are over 62,000 properties. Most of the population of Neath Port Talbot resides in Neath, Port Talbot or Pontardawe. The rest of the population is scattered in small rural communities. The Council manages 9,700 council properties to standards set by the Welsh Assembly Government. The Council has a Housing Strategy to look at the issues and challenges facing the Council and residents, including improving their energy efficiency.

The quality of the built environment across Wales varies. The Living Wales survey 2004, found that 4.8% of dwellings were unfit, the main reasons being disrepair, dampness or poor facilities for food preparation. These have major impacts on people, health and the quality of life. Given the deprivation levels; health and economic difficulties experienced in this area together with fuel poverty and energy efficiency are issues for Neath Port Talbot.

In order to combat these problems the Council works with partner organisations and the private sector to ensure that standards are met, these include, registered social landlords, private landlords, statutory bodies such as the health service and the police, the voluntary sector who deal with homelessness and the local community. The Council are leading the way with The Home Inspection Services, which give details of a home's energy performance and recommend actions to improve. The Council has also been involved in the successful implementation of the Warm Wales Project.

The Warm Wales Project has been very successful in the Borough with over 45,000 homes visited and assessed, 17,940 insulation surveys carried out, 26,000 homes have received free insulation and 510 new or improved gas heating systems have been installed. Over 400 homes have received new gas connections, 134,000 free low energy light bulbs have been handed out and all homes have been given energy efficiency advice.

'Bringing Warm Homes to Neath Port Talbot' was the first Welsh county focused, fuel poverty programme. The 3 year scheme aimed to reduce the number of people in fuel poverty in the county borough by providing energy efficiency measures and benefits advice.

## What we will do:

- Work to ensure the supply of high quality affordable housing which meets the standards required by WAG
- Promote and increase the supply of good quality private rented accommodation through enforcement and the landlord's accreditation scheme.
- Devise and implement planning policy to ensure that new housing has a minimal environmental impact

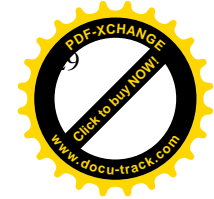
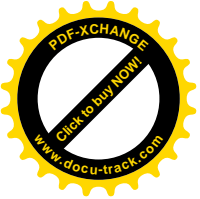
For further housing targets please see the Housing Strategy which is available on the website:  
[www.npt.gov.uk/living](http://www.npt.gov.uk/living)

## What you can do:

- Ensure your property and the area you live in is kept clean, tidy and safe
- If you are a tenant living in unfit accommodation report your landlord to the Council
- If you are a landlord keep your property up to the required standard







## Energy Use and Conservation

Improved insulation, efficient heating, energy efficient lighting and more efficient electrical equipment mean that there are now plenty of opportunities to reduce your energy use. Gas and Electricity prices have increased by up to 30% this year along with steep rises to the cost of heating oil and LPG.

The most effective way to improve the heating of your home is to improve insulation this not only conserves energy but means great cost savings for home owners. Many companies now offer grants for insulation you can find details in Appendix 4.

The Energy Savings Trust states that half of a homes heat is lost through the walls and roof. Cavity wall insulation is a fantastic way to significantly reduce the amount of energy you need to heat your home. The average house could reduce heating costs by 15% the same saving can be made through improved loft insulation. Other draft proofing measures and double glazing can also help you make great savings on your energy. Improving the efficiency of homes means less need for energy generation - energy generation is the main cause of climate change - clean technology that generates energy such as wind turbines and solar panels can also be installed in homes - these can be costly but reduce the need for large power stations that burn fossil fuels.

Neath Port Talbot has a number of energy projects which are assisting businesses and residents. The Materials Recovery and Energy Centre in Crymlyn Burrows not only sorts all the Borough's waste but uses un-recyclable waste to generate energy to operate the building. Surplus energy is fed back into the national grid.

The Council is signed up to an All Wales Consortium to purchase energy. At present energy purchased is standard energy but the Council is currently investigating the purchase of Green Energy. Some of the schools in the area have already signed up to Green Energy along with some of the Council's other buildings.



## Renewable energy

Renewable energy is obtained from natural sources, the sun, wind, tides and natural heat from the earth.

Examples of renewable energy include: Solar, Wind Power, Geothermal Heat Generation, Biomass, Biofuels and Hydroelectricity. These forms of energy are clean, safe and will not run out.

Renewable energy is flexible and can be used on a large scale or for small local projects and for individual homes.

The rise of fuel prices coupled with the increasing concern about climate change are increasing climate change legislation, incentives and commercialisation. You can get grants for switching to renewable energy and for putting renewable energy in new building plans.

## Green Tariff Energy

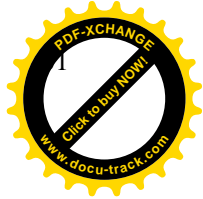
When you use electricity on a green energy tariff, the supplying company will put energy from renewable sources back into the National Grid.

Green energy currently costs more to produce - however some suppliers do not charge a premium.

The more people who sign up to green energy the cheaper it will become in the future, and remember, many suppliers are already selling it as cheap or even cheaper than you may currently be paying for your electricity.



## Climate Change



The climate of the Earth constantly changes. The term climate change is generally used when referring to changes in our climate which have been identified since the Industrial Revolution. The concern that presently exists is due to the increased rate of climate change said to be caused by human activity. The term greenhouse effect is often used to describe the warming of the earth.

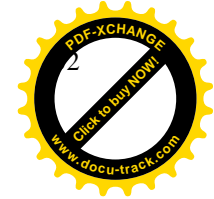
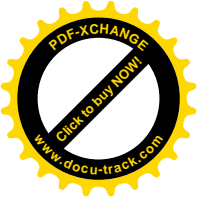
There are a number of possible outcomes of climate change - increased flooding, increased rainfall, higher sea-levels. Agriculture could be affected - lower crop production, more animal disease due to an increase in insects. There would be a great effect of humans - increased seasonal illnesses for example skin cancer and pneumonia. Changes to habitats mean that wildlife would need to adapt.

Climate change however is not all negative - positive outcomes have also been identified we could spend more time outdoors due to better summer weather. Tourism could improve in Southern areas. New crops could be introduced - sunflowers, sweetcorn and vineyards could bring new lucrative business for farmers.

To stabilise climate change altogether, emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> would have to be reduced by around 70% globally. Even if we stopped CO<sub>2</sub> emissions immediately, the effects of what we've already done would still influence our weather for years to come.

By reducing the number of greenhouse gases we produce, the rate of change should be less and will reduce the impact on our planet and our lives. A gradual change to our climate is easier to adapt too. We should have more time to prepare our houses and other buildings for changes to the weather, wildlife should have more time to migrate, and the changes to our agricultural practices should be less sudden.

It isn't too late to do something about it. We all need to work together to do our bit to reduce emissions and reduce the damage we are currently doing to our local environment. We are already seeing change and will continue to do so we can safely predict that our climate will be very different in 20 years.



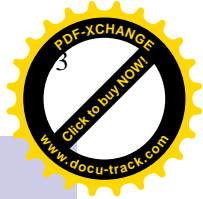
## What we will do:

- Improve access to energy efficiency best practice information and support for local businesses and organisations
- Assist existing businesses and organisations to increase energy efficiency in their operations
- Encourage new businesses to have energy efficiency built into their design
- Provide support, advice and information on grant funding availability and efficiency and how it can reduce household costs
- Ensure energy efficient information forms part of housing improvement programmes
- Require developers to meet energy efficient standards should be followed by through development control and building regulations, supported by appropriate guidance
- Develop and promote community energy schemes
- Carry out renewable energy awareness initiatives
- Carry out awareness training for planners and decision makers
- Promote the use of Green Tariff Energy to large users, schools and community groups

## What you can do:

- Investigate the cost and consider switching to Green Tariff Energy and use only energy efficient light bulbs
- When building or updating property explore the use of cavity wall insulation, renewable energy and other energy efficient technologies
- Ensure your loft is properly insulated and drafts are minimised
- Gaps and draughts around skirting boards and floors are simple to fix yourself with a tube of sealant bought from most DIY stores—you can save £40 a year on your heating bills.
- Switch appliances off at the wall when not in use





## Economic Development and Tourism

An increase in tourism is vital to the future of Neath Port Talbot, a shift from heavy industry would mean a cleaner, greener County Borough.

The Valleys Strategy shows the importance of this kind of economic development and how it will improve life for those living in the valleys of Neath Port Talbot.

Tourism businesses are keen on the protection of their local environment and they can use tools such as Environmental Management Systems to improve their environmental impacts and access funding to improve the way they run their businesses.

Tourism is not only for visitors, holidaying at home can make great savings and benefit the environment. In Neath Port Talbot we have a wealth of activities that can be enjoyed by everyone for example: boating, cycling, fishing, horse-riding, golf, surfing and walking.

There are also heritage sites, parks and gardens, forestry, the seafront, art galleries and museums.

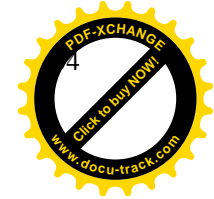
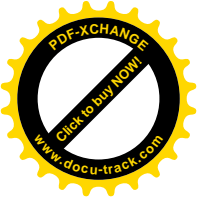
There is a great deal of information on the internet [www.npt.gov.uk](http://www.npt.gov.uk) and [www.visitwales.co.uk](http://www.visitwales.co.uk)

The canal owners, with support from the council, are implementing restoration works on the Neath Canal.

Aberafan Seafront provides 2 miles of safe, sandy beach with a promenade for walking and cycling and superb views over Swansea Bay and to the north Devon coast. The Council is committed to the regeneration of the seafront to turn it into a visitor destination with economic and social benefits for the local community and wider area. The Blue Flag for Aberafan Seafront was first achieved in 2008.

Baglan Energy Park is the first phase development at Baglan Bay, a major development site covering some 500 hectares of Brownfield land adjacent to the M4. The site has become available with the withdrawal of the old BP Chemicals plant. Substantial reclamation of contaminated and derelict land on this major site has enabled extensive development and inward investment to take place.





## What we will do:

- Support key environmental projects
- Regenerate industrial estates
- Contribute to rural development
- Assist businesses to meet environmental standards through Environmental Management Systems
- Support Community Transport Links
- Require that those applying for funding have an understanding of the environmental impacts affecting their business
- Attract inward investment
- Improve tourism in the Borough especially Green Tourism
- Guide new economic development and tourism projects to more sustainable locations through the planning system
- Provide assistance to businesses who wish to provide healthier foods.

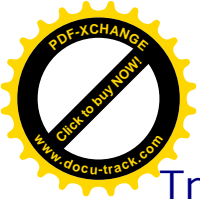
## What you can do:

- Support your local economy by shopping and visiting attractions which are local to you
- Set up businesses which increase the economy of your local area and meet environmental standards
- Ensure that your business is not impacting badly on the environment by undertaking work towards an Environmental Management System

# Transport

Cars  
Motorbikes  
Walking  
Public Transport  
Cycling  
Freight  
Alternative Fuels  
Initiatives





## Transport



Transport, in some form, affects every aspect of daily life. It is the means by which people access jobs, services, education, health, leisure and social activities, and by which businesses and their products are connected to markets. Thus, improving transport provision is an important way of delivering economic, social and environmental objectives and enhancing quality of life.

Today we rely on cars for 69% of all journeys, up from 58% fifteen years ago. While the increase in car use has brought real benefits, it has also caused many well documented detrimental impacts such as congestion and pollution. In Neath Port Talbot there are major east-west road and rail corridors near the coast as well as key routes in the valley communities. Heavy usage affects our air quality and the access to our schools and workplaces.

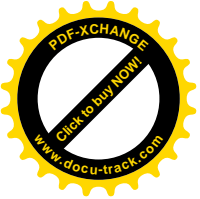
Neath Port Talbot has an extensive public transport service and has popular mountain biking and cycle paths. The next few pages give some information on different types of Transport and their environmental impacts.

### Cars

A range of eco-friendly cars have been developed over recent years, driven by various forms of energy including fuel cells, solar power and electricity. Mass produced cars driven by hydrogen fuel cells, which emit only water, are still some years away, the use of these vehicles will significantly reduce air pollution in terms of particles but will not reduce global warming as the energy used to produce hydrogen comes from fossil fuels. Until then, electric cars are already here, but as they require recharging from the mains electricity supply and are therefore not entirely "green".

If you are not in the market for a new car, then you could always consider converting your current one to a less environmentally damaging fuel. LPG is an option however it is still a fossil fuel. Diesel cars release less carbon dioxide than petrol cars but diesel cars release a lot of particulates which cause air pollution. In the short term it seems that reducing our mileage and using our cars less may be the only solution to the issue of transport pollution.





## Motorbikes

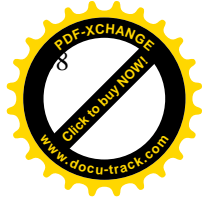
In terms of environmental impact here seems to be a clear argument both for and against the use of motorbikes. Motorbikes are easy to park, they reduce congestion, 50 miles to the gallon is not uncommon, they cause little or no road wear and in urban centres they take half the time to commute than a car. However despite the fact that they have carbon dioxide emissions half that of a car motorbikes are generally much more polluting - especially at ground level.

It is possible that the pollution issue may ultimately be solved. Major manufacturers are increasingly developing machines designed to be more friendly to the environment and the future may lie with alternative two-wheelers, such as the electric scooters, mopeds and powered bicycles.

## Public Transport

Neath Port Talbot has an extensive network of bus services such that almost all communities have a minimum hourly service linking them to the main towns from early morning to early evening on Monday to Saturdays, although in some cases evening and Sunday/Bank Holiday services are less frequent. In addition there are train services along the south Wales main line.

These services are complemented by a number of community transport schemes which cover most of the County Borough and cater for people who are unable to use conventional public transport either because of personal mobility difficulties or because it does not run close enough to their homes. Per person carried public transport is generally less harmful to the environment than use of private cars.



## BayTrans

BayTrans is a Partnership dedicated to supporting greater use of public transport and is financially supported by City & County of Swansea, Neath Port Talbot County Borough, Countryside Council for Wales, Veolia Transport Cymru and First Cymru. Its principal objectives are to encourage greater use of public transport associated with healthy outdoor activities; aimed at visitors and local people alike, it concentrates its activities primarily in the rural and tourist areas of Swansea Bay.

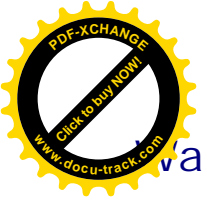


## SWWITCH

SWWITCH promotes integrated and sustainable transport, carries out transport related research and sets regional transport policy for the South West Wales region. SWWITCH is involved in a wide range of projects and aim to become a centre of expertise and best practice in sustainable and integrated transport solutions.

CONSORTIWM CLUDIANT INTEGREDIG DE-ORLLEWIN CYMRU  
SOUTH-WEST WALES INTEGRATED TRANSPORT CONSORTIUM





## walking

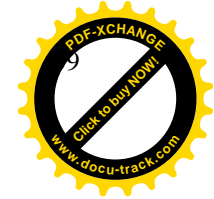
Walking is a very important it plays a great part in health, transport, environment, schools, sport & recreation and urban design.

Regular, brisk cycling or walking can improve confidence, stamina, energy, weight control, life expectancy and reduce stress. It can also reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, strokes, diabetes, high blood pressure, bowel cancer and osteoporosis. Besides its physical benefits, is also beneficial for the mind - improving memory skills, learning ability, concentration and abstract reasoning, besides reducing stress and uplifting spirits.

Walking can lead to a greener planet: You can breathe in more pollution inside your car than from walking the same route and of course walking is the most sustainable form of transport.

There are many initiatives in NPT that can help you and your family to walk more - local walking groups, walk to school and safe routes to school, improved countryside access, waymarked paths and guides - such as NPT's Top Ten Walks [www.npt.gov.uk/leisure](http://www.npt.gov.uk/leisure).

The Ramblers' Association is the biggest organisation that looks after the interests of walkers. They will be able to help you with further information on walking see [www.ramblers.org.uk/wales](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/wales)



Walking is an activity that - in the appropriate clothing - can be enjoyed in every season.

Spring is a great time to visit one of the many waterfalls in NPT Take a trip to the Vale of Neath, Melincourt, Aberdulais Falls, Cwm Du Glen or Nedd Fechan

In summer enjoy a leisurely stroll along the promenade at Aberavon Beach There are dedicated walking and cycling lanes offering spectacular views over Swansea Bay coastline.

Afan Forest Park is a beautiful place whatever the season. But in the autumn it becomes one of the most dramatic landscapes in Wales. The Forest Park offers incredible views over the Gower Peninsula, Lundy Island and the Brecon Beacons. There are a range of fully waymarked walks of different lengths to suit all fitness levels. For more walks in Afan Forest Park contact the Visitor Centre on 01639 850564.

The seasons have a dramatic effect on our landscapes here in Neath Port Talbot. For a straightforward, scenic, crisp winter walk, follow the towpath from Pontardawe Town Centre.



## Cycling

Around three-quarters of all the journeys made in the UK are short enough to be made on foot or using a bicycle – the ultimate in clean, green and healthy transport.

A variety of Bikes are available now traditional and racing bikes are fairly lightweight and designed for use on tarmac, whilst folding bikes are ideal for commuters, since they are easier to carry and can help overcome some of the problems with taking a bicycle on public transport.

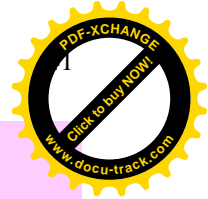
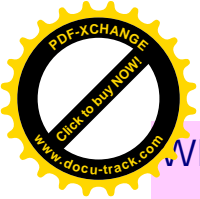
Mountain bikes were originally designed to be ridden off-road, but have also found great popularity for street use, largely due to their range of rider-friendly features, including multiple gears, wider wheels and comfortable suspension.

Abandoning motorised transport altogether in favour of cycling is not an option for everyone and even the most passionate advocate would be hard pressed to make a case for the bike in the depths of a British winter.

However, even being a fair-weather cyclist and going down the cardio-vascular exercise, carbon neutral and petrol-free route make a real difference to your health as well as the environment and your bank balance.

The picture above shows a map of cycleways in Neath Port Talbot. The Council are committed to improving walking and cycling facilities in the county borough.





## What we will do:

- Provide better and more focused information about travel options within the Borough through an improvement in information displayed on the Council's website. This will include links to travel information from other sites
- Market sustainable travel options more effectively, to encourage their use, including cycling and walking
- Provide transport advice and services to everyone
- Improve walkability in urban areas
- Harness technology and facilities that reduce the need to travel including video and teleconferencing
- Provide support to schools, organisations and businesses to assist them in developing green travel plans and safe routes within their communities
- Complete the Celtic Trail as funding becomes available
- Implement a Council Green Travel Plan
- Improve our cycleways and extend the cycleways network
- Promote local distribution and procurement to reduce mileage.
- Ensure that transport and access issues are addressed both when preparing the LDP and when considering planning applications; travel plans will be required to cover relevant planning applications

## What you can do:

- Reduce your day to day mileage, walk to the shops instead of driving or cycle when possible, try to cut out unnecessary short journeys
- Walk your children to school instead of taking the car. The school run accounts for a lot of congestion and air pollution
- Try using the bus to get to town or the supermarket for your weekly shop or buy your shopping online instead – this reduces congestion and your carbon footprint
- Car share where possible including to school and work.



## Freight

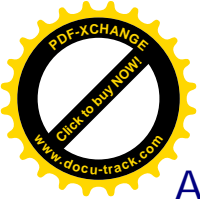
Freight is the lifeblood of the economy. Every home, business and other organisation needs freight services of one form or another simply to function. Everything we buy, from toothpaste and margarine to electrical goods and building materials, has to be moved from its point of origin or manufacture to the point of sale and then to the point of use.

Most freight is moved by road and even where other modes are used for the trunk haul road haulage is often needed for the local delivery to the final destination. Lorries are often considered intrusive because of their size and they do emit pollutants. However, they make up only a small proportion of total road traffic.

Nonetheless, hauliers need to continue to improve the efficiency of their operations by, for example, minimising empty running, because this is both good business practice and reduces the adverse impact on the environment. The quality of the freight fleet also needs to be continuously improved to take advantage of technological advances which reduce harmful emissions.

Shipping is an important element of freight movements in Neath Port Talbot and is one of the least environmentally damaging forms of freight transport per tonne kilometre. The deep water harbour at Port Talbot is one of only three in the UK which can handle "Cape" sized bulk carriers of up to 170,000 dead weight tonnes and is rail connected for onward movement of the mainly iron ore and coal/coke to steel plants.

Movement of freight by rail is also less harmful to the environment than road freight and the Council wants to encourage its use where possible.



## Alternative fuels

Travel comes at a cost – and not just in terms of money; most of the common forms of transport are energy heavy and use traditional fossil fuels which harm the environment. However, there is a steady rise of a variety of alternative fuels designed with the environment in mind.

### Gas Power (LPG)

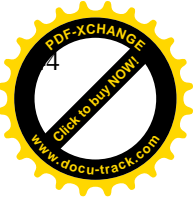
Although the current upsurge in interest in gas-conversion makes it seem a very recent innovation, the idea is not a new one; cars and other vehicles were converted to use town gas during the petrol rationing days of World War II.

### Biodiesel

Produced from vegetable oils or recycled cooking oil, biodiesel is renewable fuel which burns up to 75 per cent more cleanly than its petroleum counterpart, with significantly reduced carbon monoxide and particulates being released. Capable of being used in any diesel engine – in most cases without modification – it can be mixed with ordinary diesel fuel and is claimed to give significantly better lubrication, which means less wear and extended engine life though there is a loss of around 10% of mpg.

### Hydrogen

Many companies are currently researching the feasibility of building hydrogen cars and most car manufacturers have begun developing hydrogen cars. Most of these vehicles are currently only available in demonstration models and are not yet ready for general public use. These cars will be powered by hydrogen fuel cells. A fuel cell combines hydrogen from a tank with oxygen from the air to produce electricity, which powers an electric motor. The only byproduct is water and the whole process can be totally without carbon dioxide emissions.

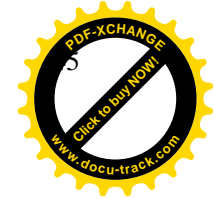
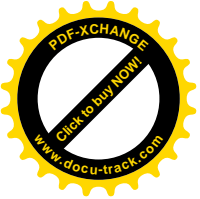


# Environmental Responsibility

Sustainable Purchasing  
Social Enterprises  
Buying Decisions  
Food Marks  
Waste  
Recycling  
Eco-schools  
ESDGC





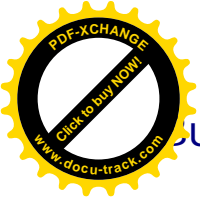


## Sustainable Purchasing

The environmental impacts from consumption and production patterns are severe, and inefficient use of resources affects the UK's economy and business. The UK government has made a commitment on sustainable procurement in the Public Sector to make the UK the leader within the EU by 2009. This will partly be achieved by encouraging sustainable procurement throughout local government. There is growing pressure on local governments to work together to make better use of their purchasing power in this way to deliver their policy goals, for example in areas such as environmental technologies and ethical purchasing/Fairtrade.

In Neath Port Talbot the biggest impacts through procurement come from food, fuel, construction and energy. Many of these purchasing choices negatively affect the environment—whether it is fuel for your car, food that you waste or energy used unnecessarily, it all creates huge cost for the environment and huge cost for the consumer.

By carefully selecting the products bought and consumed it is possible to significantly reduce the source of many environmental problems. A lot of environmental management deals with problems once they have happened. Waste management for example, deals with waste that has already been generated. By taking a long-term approach and using whole life costing as a tool for analysing the true impacts of products and services it is possible to select environmentally preferable and sustainable goods.



## Buying Decisions

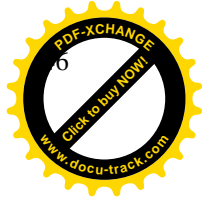
When buying products, whether it's a box of biros or a new car, there are general criteria you can consider. By doing so, you can reduce the social and environmental impact of your purchasing decision.

**Biodegradability** - some products may be suitable for composting. Where that is the case, ensure that the materials can break down speedily and safely.

**Minimum use of virgin and non-renewable materials** - wherever possible, the use of recycled or re-used materials should be encouraged, as these generally have a much lower impact on the environment. Examples include computer cases or road aggregate.

**Fault controls to prevent unnecessary waste** - when specifying plant equipment, such as boilers, ensure that you specify metering and monitoring equipment. Whilst it might increase acquisition costs it will alert you to inefficient use and enable you to reduce running costs, spills or waste problems.

**Health and safety standards** - these should never be overlooked and it is sensible to evaluate many products with a qualified health and safety officer. Examples include electrical equipment, vehicles, cleaning chemicals and furniture.

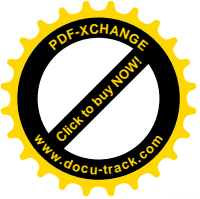


**Fit for the purpose and value for money** - ensure that the product you are considering does the job you want it to for all potential users, including groups with specialist needs where appropriate.

**Design for disassembly** - when products are made up of thousands of different types of materials, particularly plastics and metals, it helps if they are designed to be easily taken apart or disassembled so that the materials can be recycled. This is particularly relevant to electronic and electrical products such as fridges, televisions, personal computers and printers.

**Resource Efficiency** - running costs are often overlooked when procuring products. Seek equipment that is energy efficient, such as Energy Star rated products. Check that your product does not have a 'knock-on' effect of using more resources, e.g. specifying paper towels over hand-driers may increase the volume of paper you dispose of which also has a cost.

**Local production** - sourcing your purchases from local suppliers means that the economic benefits can be felt in the communities in which you live and work. This inward investment can help ensure the ongoing economic sustainability of your local area through job creation. It also reduces the number of miles food has travelled.



# Understanding Environmental Food Marks



British Farm Standard is about ensuring that farmers and growers are producing food to meet a set of agreed standards of good agricultural practice that are checked regularly by trained inspectors and are trusted by the public.



The Soil Association organic symbol is the UK's largest, most recognisable trademark for organic produce. Wherever you see it you can be sure that the food has been produced to strict animal welfare and environmental standards. The Soil Association has probably the highest and most comprehensive standards for organic production and processing in the world.



The Freedom Food mark seen on eggs, dairy, meat, poultry and salmon products means the animals involved have been reared, handled, transported and slaughtered to high standards monitored by the RSPCA. The standards apply to both indoor and outdoor farming methods.



Eating more vegetarian food is good for the environment. Cattle require large areas of land for grazing which is usually provided by the deforestation of large areas. The loss of forestry worldwide contributes significantly to climate change.



The Lion Quality mark seen on egg shells and egg boxes means that the eggs come from farms assessed to standards predominantly concerned with food safety.



Food that has been air-freighted to Britain only accounts for around 3-4% of produce from abroad. The rest is usually shipped. Air-freighting produce causes serious environmental damage through air pollution.



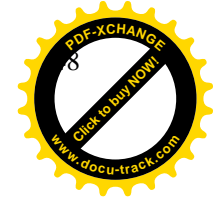
The Fairtrade Mark ensures that the product that you have bought has been purchased for a fair price from farmers and farming co-operatives in third world Countries.



Rainforest Alliance certification is a comprehensive process that promotes and guarantees improvements in agriculture, forestry and travel and ensures that goods and services are produced in compliance with strict guidelines protecting the environment, wildlife, workers and local communities.



## Social Enterprises



Social enterprises are profit-making businesses set up to tackle a social or environmental need. Many commercial businesses would consider themselves to have social objectives, but social enterprises are distinctive because their social or environmental purpose is central to what they do. Their main aim is to generate profit to further their social and environmental goals.

The DTI's definition of social enterprise is: 'A social enterprise is a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners'.

The social enterprise movement is inclusive and extremely diverse, encompassing organisations such as development trusts, community enterprises, co-operatives, housing associations, 'social firms' and leisure trusts, among others. These businesses are operating across an incredibly wide range of industries and sectors from health and social care, to renewable energy, recycling and Fairtrade.

The results of a questionnaire\* carried out by Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Services showed that there are 9 identified social enterprises currently in business in NPT there are 27 organisations identified as emerging social enterprises and 31 potential social enterprises were identified.

\*A total of 155 questionnaires were sent, with 109 to members and 46 to non-members. A total of 65 members (60%) returned the questionnaire, while non-members gave a minimal response (2 – 4%).



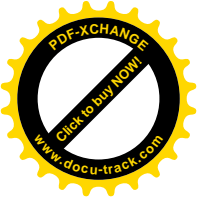
## What we will do:

- Develop a sustainable procurement Policy and Strategy
- Undertake sustainable procurement training with staff who procure large cost items within the Council
- Work in partnership to deliver the Neath Port Talbot Social Enterprise Strategy
- To lead in partnership with Council for Voluntary Services on the coordination of the Social Enterprise Advisory Group
- To work with partners to develop a one-stop shop for Social Enterprise support
- To secure funding under the Convergence programme for the Collaborative Communities project to develop 6-10 flagship Social Enterprises across the region
- To identify service gaps, particularly in Valleys communities, where Social Enterprise can be used as a model to address those gaps
- Consider the further extension of food Co-ops and Farmers Markets in support of the Rural Development Plan

## What you can do:

- Buy more environmentally friendly products
- Buy at least one Fairtrade product per month
- Switch to energy saving bulbs
- Try Freecycle, eBay and charity shops instead of buying new products
- Buy more local and organic produce
- Buy goods that have minimal packaging





## Waste Minimisation and Management

In Neath Port Talbot we throw away about 3/4 tonne of domestic waste per household every year.

But, it need not be waste and need not be such a huge problem. We can all help and participate in protecting and improving the environment by preventing and reducing waste as much as possible, re-using goods we buy as much as possible and recycling waste materials.

Waste not only adds to the costs of organisations and households which produce it, it also uses up valuable, scarce, non-renewable natural resources and raw materials used to make most of the products and packaging we throw away.

The Three Rs represents the 'Waste Hierarchy', which lists the best ways of managing waste from the most to the least desirable.

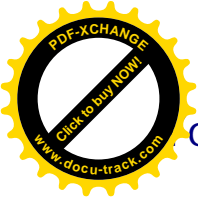
Once all of us have done our best to reduce, reuse and recycle there will always be some materials left over and these have to be disposed of. Most of the waste goes to landfills where it is buried and decomposes slowly releasing gases and liquids. In Neath Port Talbot our surplus waste is treated at the MREC.

## The Materials Recovery and Energy Centre (MREC)

Prior to 2003 all municipal waste produced and collected in Neath Port Talbot was disposed of by burying it in the ground at landfill sites. Landfill sites take up valuable land space and decomposing waste produces methane gas, the main greenhouse gas contributing to global warming and climate change.

Since 2003 The Materials Recovery and Energy Centre at Crymlyn Burrows processes the municipal waste of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and Bridgend County Borough Council.

At this facility residual waste materials are separated for further recycling and processing. The remaining waste material is processed to produce refuse derived fuel that generates energy for use by the facility. This makes the facility self-sufficient in energy (electricity) requirement and reduces the need for and use of energy from non-renewable natural resources such as fossil fuels (coal, oil and natural gas). Any surplus energy is exported to the National Grid.



## Our Kerbside Recycling Service



You can use the containers provided by the Council for:

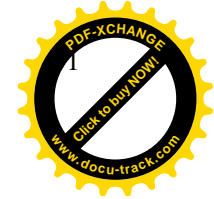
Cans and glass – use the Green box - to put out cans and glass - all these should be rinsed out and tops removed.

The clear bags have 3 uses; one for newspaper and magazines, junk mail, catalogues phone books; one for, textiles and one for cardboard and card.

The green bag is for green waste - grass clippings and small tree and shrub clippings.

The blue bag is provided for plastic bottles only.

Please make sure the bags are tied and not overloaded. Put your recycling out with your general waste (black bags/ wheeled bins) and ensure that they are put out before 6am on the day your refuse is collected. If you run out of bags please use the white tag supplied to order more.



## Household Waste and Recycling Centres

Certain other household waste that is not collected as part of the kerbside recycling service can be sorted and taken to Household Waste and Recycling Centres.

To better manage waste for recycling, recovery or final disposal, these sites have been improved. Facilities are now provided for the deposit of fluorescent light tubes, bonded asbestos sheeting, oils, paints and batteries, Tetra Pak cartons, small electrical items such as toasters and microwaves and also for garden waste.



### Bulky household waste

Bulky household waste - such as furniture - can be collected by calling 01639 686868 or contact Enfys for bulky items that can be reused on 0845 009 4646



## Reuse

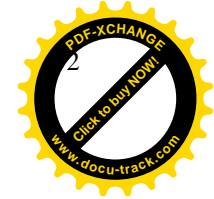
Reuse is using an item more than once. This includes using an item again for the same function, and reuse where it is used for a new function for example using yogurt tubs to grow seedlings.

Reuse can have financial and environmental benefits. Regulations such as the packaging regulations, are ensuring that manufacturers are taking responsibility for the reuse of their packaging waste and consumers are ultimately responsible for the packaging they purchase, although Supermarkets now actively discourage the use of plastic carrier bags and promote bag for life reuse through the points schemes.

Reuse advantages:

- Energy and raw materials savings as replacing many single use products with one reusable one reduces the number that need to be manufactured
- Reduced disposal needs and costs
- Refurbishment can bring sophisticated, sustainable, well paid jobs to underdeveloped economies
- Cost savings for business and consumers as a reusable product is often cheaper than the many single use products it replaces.

In Neath Port Talbot we have a number of reuse operations.



## Composting

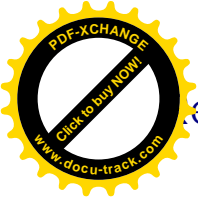
Compost is a rich, dark, crumbly, soil-like material that gives beneficial effects when added to soil. Compost can be made at home from most kitchen and garden waste.

Composting is a natural process that converts biodegradable waste materials into a valuable material for the garden.

Natural products that were once part of a living organism are not only food for a host of insects and other creatures but will slowly rot if the conditions are right and the bacteria, fungi and countless other micro- and macro-organisms responsible for composting will thrive.

Studies show that up to 60% of household waste is biodegradable and the majority is suitable for composting. Composting plays an important role in reducing the amount of waste that is sent to landfill.

Reduced cost compost bins are available to buy from the Council please call Service First on 01639 686868



## Real Nappies

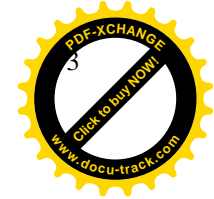
There is a perception that real nappies are 'hard work', but they needn't be. With today's modern designs, washing machines and the use of flushable liners, using real nappies couldn't be easier. Many fasten with poppers, or Velcro, and can be washed along with your baby's clothes, or if kept separate washed at 60c (on average twice a week). There is no need to soak, or boil wash.

### Did You Know?....

- Each baby produces approximately 5,000 nappies in a 2½ year period. This is the equivalent of 156 black bags and weighs the same as an average family car – and costs parents between £700-£1,300.
- An estimated 200 million disposable nappies are thrown away in Wales each year. This is 38,000 tonnes of unnecessary waste going to landfill – costing the Welsh tax payers around £2 million to dispose of – and set to rise.
- The initial cost of real nappies (around £200) will save you between £400 - £1000 over the 2½ year period. Plus you can use the nappies for subsequent children saving you even more money.

For general information and advice about using real nappies please visit

[www.realnappies-wales.org.uk](http://www.realnappies-wales.org.uk) or call 0845 4562477.



## Junk Mail

Although much of the direct mail you receive is useful, a lot is unwanted junk mail and will probably end up unread in the bin

The Mailing Preference Service (MPS) is a non-profit organisation whose aim is to encourage good relations between the Direct Mail industry and the general public.

Registering with the MPS is free and you can do so online <http://www.mpsonline.org.uk/mpsr/> by calling 0845 7034599 or you can write to:

the Mailing Preference Service, FREEPOST 29 LON20771, London W1E 0ZT.

Registering with the MPS will remove your name from up to 95% of direct mail lists and this will help to stop most unsolicited consumer advertising material addressed personally to your home address. The process takes approximately 4 months to take effect.

For un-addressed (to 'occupier') junk mail, you can write to the Royal Mail Door to Door Opt Out Services, Beaumont House, Sandy Lane West, Oxford, OX4 6ZZ, Tel: 08457 950 950.



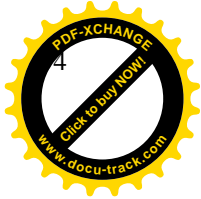


## Trade Waste

Any business has a Duty of Care. This is detailed in the Environmental Protection Act 1990 Section 34. They are responsible for storing and containing their waste to ensure it does not cause a nuisance to anyone or anything.

They also have a responsibility to ensure that their waste is disposed of by an appropriate person or company who will provide documents to show this. This document is known as a waste transfer note. It is the recording of waste 'transferring' from the person producing the waste to the carrier who will then collect and dispose the waste correctly.

Although businesses are free to choose any licensed waste carrier to remove their waste Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council do offer a service and have 4 wheeled bin sizes available. For more information contact Service First on 01639 686868



## Clinical Waste - Household

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council offers a free collection of clinical waste from householders. This waste should not be mixed with normal domestic waste.

The two services offered are:

### Sharps box

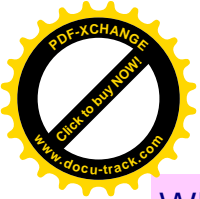
- change for diabetes patients
- Yellow bags for wound dressings and Stoma products - your health professional will refer you to this service

## Waste Legislation and Guidance

Over the last few years legislation governing the management of waste has been increasing significantly.

For more information on Environmental Legislation including waste legislation please visit: [www.netregs.gov.uk](http://www.netregs.gov.uk)

Further guidance can be found in the Wales Waste Strategy and the Regional Waste Strategy.

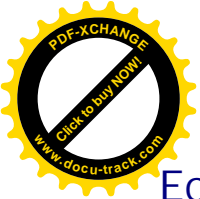


## What we will do:

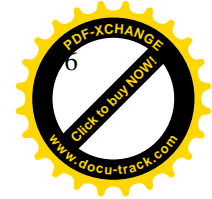
- Undertake improved procurement to reduce the goods purchased and therefore requiring disposal in the County Borough
- Continue to develop and improve the kerbside collection of recyclable items
- Improve recycling options available to businesses
- Provide good quality information on waste and waste regulations via our website and in partnership with other organisations
- Reduce waste sent to landfill and strive for zero waste
- Introduce a kitchen waste collection scheme
- Increase the level of participation in recycling in the Borough
- Promote the reuse and recycling of demolition and construction waste through the planning system

## What you can do:

- Participate in recycling by utilising your recycling bin and bags
- Work to reduce the amount of waste you purchase by buying items that are not heavily packaged
- Take your own bags to the supermarket - 150 million carrier bags are used in the UK every week
- Don't flytip! There are plenty of ways to dispose of your waste legally - If you are caught fly-tipping you will be given a fine and could be sent to prison
- Utilise charity shops, civic amenity sites, doorstep charity collections online auction sites and Freecycle to avoid land-filling usable items
- Investigate the possibility of incorporating potential demolition waste into your construction project and ensure that as much other construction waste is recycled or reused



## Eco-Schools



The Eco-Schools programme is an initiative run internationally by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) that encourages pupils to engage with environmental and sustainable development issues. It provides a highly structured system for the environmental management of schools in Wales Eco-schools is administered by Keep Wales Tidy.

The programme is a learning resource and topic areas include Litter, Waste Minimisation, Transport, Healthy Living, Energy, Water, School Grounds and Global Citizenship. Pupils take key roles in decision making and participation in order to reduce the environmental impact of their school.

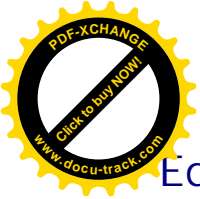
Eco-Schools across the world can get in touch and explore ways of working together on environmental issues. Visit [www.eco-schools.net](http://www.eco-schools.net) where you will find instructions on how to register your school and carry out a search. After finding an Eco-School that matches your criteria, you can then contact the 'match' school by post, telephone or email.

The Eco-Schools International Green Flag, awarded to schools with high achievement in their programme, is a recognised and respected eco-label for performance in Education for Sustainable Development. Joining the Eco-Schools programme is free and it makes tackling sustainable issues manageable and easy for all schools, whether they are children's centres, nurseries, primary schools, secondary schools or schools with special status.

The Eco-Schools Programme is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, the Countryside Council for Wales and Waste Awareness Wales. The Scheme has provided very popular in Neath Port Talbot and most schools are now registered to take part.

<http://www.eco-schools.org.uk/>





## Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC)

Children and young adults deserve to know that their fate is inextricably linked to, and affected by, the lives and decisions of others across the world. They have a right to understand the crucial issues facing the planet and know how they can personally play a part in helping shape the future.

Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship is about the links between society, economy and environment and between our own lives and those of people throughout the world and the needs and rights of both present and future generations

**Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC)** is an approach which involves the whole curriculum and management of the school, not merely an 'add on' subject. It has its roots in environmental education and development education. As a result, many of the building blocks of education for sustainable development and global citizenship are already present in every school.

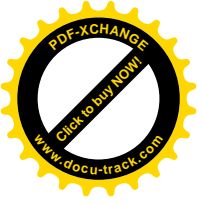
### Education for Sustainable Development

Enables people to develop the knowledge, values and skills to participate in decisions about the way we do things individually and collectively, both locally and globally, that will improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet for the future.

### Education for Global Citizenship

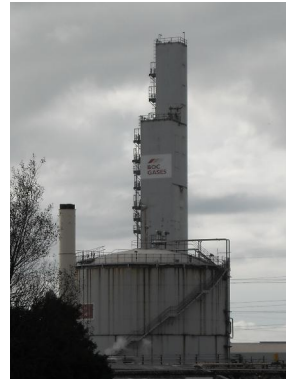
Enables people to understand the global forces which shape their lives and to acquire the knowledge, skills and values that will equip them to participate in decision making, both locally and globally, which promotes a more equitable and sustainable world.

Information taken from: [www.esdgc-wales.org.uk](http://www.esdgc-wales.org.uk)



# Environmental Quality

Air  
Land  
Water





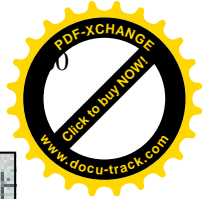
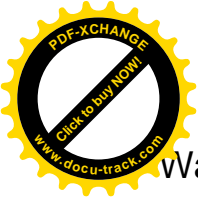
## Water Quality

Many human activities and their by-products have the potential to pollute water. Large and small industrial businesses and operations, the water industry, the urban infrastructure, agriculture, horticulture, transport, discharges from abandoned mines, and deliberate or accidental pollution incidents all affect water quality. Pollution may arise as point sources, such as discharges through pipes, or may be more diffuse, such as from run off from streets and buildings, or agricultural nutrients lost from farms.

In Wales the Environment Agency is responsible for maintaining or improving the quality of fresh, marine, surface and underground water. The Environment Agency aim to prevent or reduce the risk of water pollution wherever possible, and to ensure that it gets cleaned up if pollution occurs that might lead to effects on biodiversity or people. The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) has overall interests for the quality of water in our taps, and local responsibility rests with the Council's environmental health department.

When we think about river pollution, we might assume it comes from places like factories, farms and industry. Yet, in some cases the pollution in our rivers comes from a much less obvious source – our homes. Incorrect plumbing could mean that waste water from dishwashers, washing machines, sinks, baths and even toilets is flushed directly into a local river, poorly maintained septic tanks can be a significant source of faecal pollution of water courses. Environmental Health has the power to take action to require owners to repair defective septic tanks. These 'misconnected' pipes are a common cause of pollution to rivers and streams, especially in towns and cities.





Water is an increasingly expensive resource with mains, sewerage and trade effluent charges all rising. Reducing your water consumption is one of the easiest and most inexpensive ways to achieve cost savings - just taking simple measures can cut your water use by 50%.

On average we use 160 litres of water a day at home, for cooking, drinking and washing. Modern appliances such as washing machines and dishwashers help with chores but use large amounts of water, small changes can make a big difference.

## Flood Risk and Defences

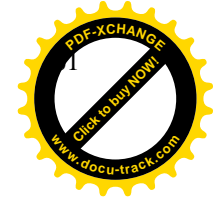
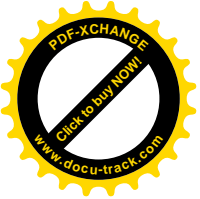
The Environment Agency has an important role in reducing the likelihood of flooding from rivers and the sea. Flooding cannot be prevented entirely, but can be *managed*, which means the likelihood of flooding occurrences can be reduced.

The Environment Agency works to reduce the damage floods can do through effective land use planning, implementing flood alleviation and management schemes, flood defences, flood warning and emergency responses.



On the map the areas that are at most risk of flooding appear in blue. This include most of the areas immediate to the River Neath, and Swansea Bay. There are flood defences in place at Resolven, Melin Court, Clyne, Tonna and Port Talbot.

Remember, you can call Floodline on [0845 988 1188](tel:08459881188) any time night or day for real-time flood warnings and advice.

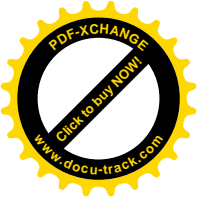


### What we will do:

- Prevent pollution of any kind from council owned buildings and vehicles that may harm water and water supply
- Investigate any complaints regarding water or water supply to do with housing through our environmental health team
- Work in partnership with the Environment Agency to improve water quality in the Borough
- Work to improve bathing water quality and monitor water quality as required
- Implement planning policy to ensure that new development is not exposed to an inappropriate level of flood risk and does not increase flood risk
- Maintain blue flag status for Aberafan Beach

### What you can do:

- Check the external drainage on your property to see if it functions correctly
- Repair dripping taps
- Only boil as much water as you need, this saves energy and water
- Use the quick wash setting on your washing machine and dishwasher
- Take a shower rather than a bath
- When washing your car use a bucket and sponge rather than a hosepipe
- Don't tarmac your garden - this causes run-off to occur which can add to the likelihood of flooding, use materials such as chippings through which water can permeate



## Soils, Land and Mineral Resources

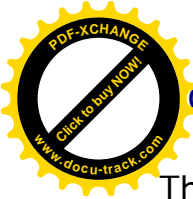
Land is a vital habitat for plants and animals. We use land for leisure and recreation as well as simply to enjoy it. We depend on the good quality of our land. We need land to generate energy, to grow our crops, for mineral resources, to bury our wastes, to support our homes, industries, schools and hospitals, transport networks and for a great deal more.

Soil is central to the environment. It stores and recycles nutrients and water, and provides the medium for crop growth; but it also acts a buffer between the atmosphere and aquatic ecosystems. This can only be maintained if we do not damage soil; once damaged or contaminated soil can be extremely difficult, if not impossible to repair and, soils can themselves become sources of pollutants.

Soil plays a vital role in maintaining the balance of gases in the air that we breathe. We are also beginning to understand soil's role in storing and releasing carbon and the potential impact this may have in tackling climate change.

As our understanding of soil increases, we are seeing signs that contamination and poor soil management are causing problems in Wales. Over the years there has been a steady loss of soil because of development and there are increasing signs of damage, degradation and erosion.

Pollutants from our activities that have damaged land and soil may enter surface or groundwater, affecting our ability to meet water quality standards, or it may affect air quality. Such pollutants may be directly toxic to individual species or may have more subtle longer-term effects on ecosystems. Good management of soils is fundamental to meeting the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.



## Contaminated Land

The industrial revolution in Neath Port Talbot saw the expansion of the steel, coal, chemical and other industries and with this expansion came huge economic and social growth. At the time no-one was aware of the serious environmental impacts that this growth was having.

Industrial waste was disposed of to landfill and fuel and raw materials were not contained properly resulting in frequent spillage contaminating the land. Today there is a much greater appreciation of the environmental impacts of industry which is heavily regulated to guard against environmental damage. Now land contamination may result from unintentional leaks and spillages and waste disposal. Contaminants can range from solvents, oil, petrol's and heavy metals to radioactive substances. The source of contaminants are not just restricted to industrial processes: other sources may include agricultural activities, inadequate waste disposal, petrol distribution and dry cleaning.

Since 2001 all Local Authorities have had a duty to inspect, locate and ensure the remediation of all statutory designated Contaminated Land in their locality. Neath Port Talbot has a Contaminated Land Strategy which outlines a programme for identifying and inspecting contaminated land. Whilst the Council leads on contaminated land, it works with other partners, notably the Environment Agency and the Welsh Assembly Government.

The Contaminated Land Officers based within the Local Authority have software that enables them to carry out risk based approach to contaminated land identification. This ensures that the most important sites are dealt with first. Council owned and privately owned land are always treated in the same manner. Land identified outside the general approach to inspection is sometimes identified and are dealt with as they arise.

### Polluter Pays Principle

The Polluter Pays Principle is a principle in environmental law where the polluting party pays for the damage done to the natural environment.

### Coal and Mining

Neath Port Talbot has a long history of coal mining and there is still a great dependency on mining in the valleys. There are 5 opencast mining sites in the Borough (as of Nov 2007) and around 3,587,406 tonnes of coal remaining in these operational opencast mines. In other opencast sites that are not yet working NPT has 2,130,000 reserve tonnes of coal (Information from Minerals UK).





## What we will do:

Land contamination has significant impacts on both the Environment and the Economy. As a regulator, land owner and planning authority Neath Port Talbot Council is presented with a number of responsibilities as a result of legislation and government guidance. The overall aims with regards to contaminated land are:

- To identify, remove and prevent significant harm occurring from contaminated land to people, property, animals and the environment
- To promote the re-development of Brownfield sites
- Manage and/or reduce the councils liabilities as a landowner or occupier with regards to contaminated land issues

Neath Port Talbot maintains a public register of regulatory actions in relation to contaminated land. In addition development control procedures are in place to deal with contaminated land effectively throughout the planning process.

Further information of contaminated land can be found in the Council's Contaminated Land Strategy October 2005.

## What you can do:

- If you own a site you think may be contaminated contact the Council's Contaminated Land Team
- When buying a home ensure that the solicitor has carried out the appropriate searches
- Report any incidence where you feel contamination of the land may be taking place





## Air Pollution



Good air quality is important for our environment. Substances we put into the air can affect the health of plants, animals and people, and can contribute to global warming.

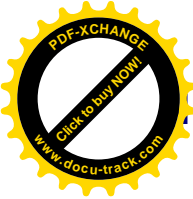
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council carries out a range of pollution monitoring work in order to establish the current state of the air in our environment. Some studies involve the use of high-tech pollution analysers that automatically generate readings on an hourly basis. Other methods rely upon semi-automatic or manual sample collection on a daily, weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis.

Some monitoring is carried out as part of national monitoring networks, whilst other in-house pollution monitoring is also carried out. Data is reported to the Council and is shared with the Welsh Air Quality Forum and the Environment Agency. The Council website provides real time information on air quality levels.

Human activities and natural processes release chemicals into the atmosphere and can result in air pollution. Once in the atmosphere the chemicals are subjected to various atmospheric processes that control their transport, and can alter their chemical and physical form. The eventual environmental impact of chemicals released to the atmosphere is therefore mostly influenced by these processes.

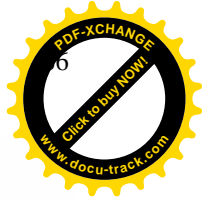
Some of the impacts of Air Pollution are:

- Reduction of local air quality
- Acid deposition
- Impacts on human health
- Enhanced greenhouse effect—increasing climate change
- Increased UV radiation



## NPT Air Quality Strategy

Neath Port Talbot's Local Air Quality Strategy, "Air Wise - the Way Forward to Cleaner Air", sets out the Council's strategic policy for achieving cleaner air in partnership with the whole community. It also links in with the Council's aims and values and in particular with those relating to "Regenerating Communities and Sustaining the Environment", which includes improving air quality and regenerating the area's physical and industrial environment. Originally developed in 2000 the strategy was reviewed and updated in 2007.

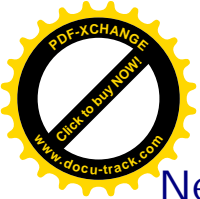


## NPT Clean Air Charter

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and its partner agencies are dedicated to bring and maintain all areas of the County Borough within national standards for air quality. To help provide a focus for achieving this we have developed a Clean Air Charter. The charter is supported by political leaders at national, regional and local level, by partner organisations and by businesses within the area. The charter explains what NPT will do to protect the health and well being of citizens, residents, businesses and visitors to Neath Port Talbot.

## Who to contact about Air Quality

- If you are concerned about domestic nuisance dust and smoke, then call Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Environmental Health Team on 01639 686868 or visit our website on [www.npt.gov.uk](http://www.npt.gov.uk)
- If you are concerned about smoke, gases or fumes from traffic or small industrial processes e.g. small incinerators, foundries, small power plants, gas producers and oil burners, then call Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Pollution Control Team on 01639 686868 or visit our website on [www.npt.gov.uk](http://www.npt.gov.uk)
- If you are concerned about large and complex industrial processes e.g. large power plants, large incinerators and steelworks then contact the Environment Agency Wales on 08708 506506 or visit their website [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/airquality](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/airquality)



## Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

### Clean Air Charter

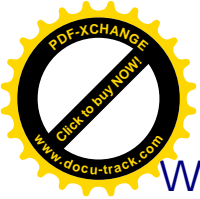
We are determined to bring and maintain all areas of the County Borough within the national standards for air quality. Air pollution includes grit, dust, steam, gases, dark smoke and fumes from domestic, industrial and commercial premises, agricultural land and from traffic.

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and its partner agencies are dedicated to provide a high quality, cost effective service that protects and benefits all citizens, residents, businesses and visitors of Neath Port Talbot County Borough.

### What the Clean Air Charter means to you:

#### We will respond to:

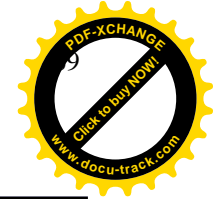
- Enquiries and requests for advice, information or guidance on air quality
- Complaints relating to domestic, commercial and industrial premises or agricultural land and traffic
- General Public Health issues or nuisances. Examples are fumes, dust and odours and any matter deemed a statutory nuisance
- Instances of air pollution from burning of trade waste, smoke, domestic bonfires, industrial emissions and vehicle fumes where these are deemed a nuisance or thought to contravene regulations.



## We will improve air quality by:

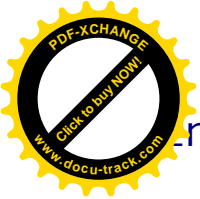
- Investigating complaints and enquiries from members of the public
- Improving our data gathering techniques through investment in more accurate equipment aimed at improving our knowledge of and response times to issues of air quality
- Continuous monitoring of relevant aspects of air quality at more than 50 sites across the county borough
- Proactive inspection of all authorised industries and permitted processes
- Helping to minimise or reduce air pollution from vehicle exhaust emissions on main routes and residential streets by traffic control measures
- Taking enforcement action vigorously and fairly against companies or persons found to be operating outside of their permitted processes
- Providing up to date air quality monitoring data and results continuously through on our website and through publication of an annual monitoring report
- Keeping a public register of applications and authorisations for all Council regulated statutory processes carried out within the borough
- Commenting on the siting of new factories, buildings or processes on matters relating to air quality
- Maintaining our expertise in all aspects of air quality
- Following our air quality strategy "Airwise", including reviewing and updating the strategy every five years
- Working to influence others to achieve positive environmental outcomes by changing attitudes and behaviour
- Working with industry to provide advice and expertise on the regulation of industrial and commercial premises and processes to ensure pollution should not occur
- Working together with other agencies, local authorities and private organisations to ensure that county boundaries and/or differing regulatory responsibilities are dealt with in a positive and proactive way to the benefit of the residents, businesses and visitors of Neath Port Talbot
- Entering into collaborative initiatives with private industry and partner agencies aimed at reducing air pollution and dealing with the concerns of the public.





## Pollutants

- Fine particulates (PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub>). Combustion activities from industry and traffic are the principal sources of fine particulates. But they can also arise from reactions in the atmosphere. The smaller the particle, the greater their potential to penetrate deep into the lung and cause harm. PM<sub>10</sub> refers to particles of less than 10 microns in size.
- Oxides of nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub>). Nitric oxide (NO) is formed during combustion processes but it is not harmful to health. But it is converted to nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) in the atmosphere, which can irritate the lungs. Traffic and industry are the main sources.
- Ozone and volatile organic compounds. Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) include a very wide range of substances, such as hydrocarbons which may or may not be harmful to people. VOCs can interact with sunlight and NO<sub>x</sub> to produce ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) in the lower atmosphere, where it can irritate the lungs. Ozone can sometimes be at higher levels in the countryside, many miles from the source of the pollution due to the time taken for the photochemical reactions. Benzene and dioxins are examples of a harmful VOCs.
- Sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) is formed when sulphur-containing fuels such as coal and oil are burned. High concentrations can affect the lungs of asthmatics. In the UK industry is now the main source, but in previous years domestic heating was significant. In global terms natural sources predominate.
- Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colourless, odourless poisonous gas than is produced by inefficient or incomplete combustion of fuel from traffic, industrial and even some domestic combustion activities.
- Heavy metals such as lead can be harmful and now arise primarily from industrial smelting processes.



## Environmental Management

Environmental Management is the management of the people's interaction with and impact upon the environment. It is not the conservation of the environment for the environment's sake, but rather the conservation of the environment for our sake and those of future generations.

An environmental management standard or system attempts to reduce environmental impact. The ISO14001 standard is the most widely used standard for environmental risk management and is closely aligned to the European Eco Management & Audit Scheme (EMAS).

The ISO 14000 environmental management standards exist to help organisations minimize how their operations negatively affect the environment, comply with applicable laws, regulations, and other environmentally oriented requirements, and continually improve on the above.

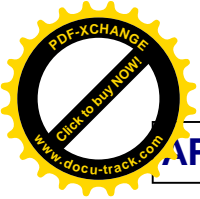
The overall idea of ISO14000 is to establish an organised approach to systematically reduce the impact of the environmental aspects which an organisation can control.

### The Green Dragon Award

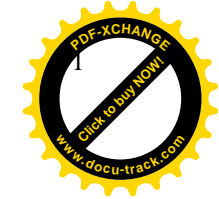
In Wales there is also the opportunity of using the Green Dragon Environmental Standard. This is a stepped approach to Environmental Management and can be used by any type of business or organisation large or small and can be progressed to the level that the particular business of organisation feel comfortable with.

There are many organisations of all shapes and sizes that have already made the commitment in Neath Port Talbot and many more working on improving their impacts.

Organisations achieving Green Dragon feature on a register of certified companies. The register is a valuable resource that can be used by customers to verify the environmental credentials of their suppliers and by participating organisations to network and share knowledge and experiences. You can view the register at [www.greendragonems.com](http://www.greendragonems.com)



## APPENDIX 1



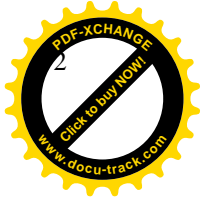
### Neath Port Talbot Biodiversity Forum Membership

ASRA, Barn Owl Recorder, BP Oil UK Ltd., British Dragonfly Society, Butterfly Conservation Society, Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW), British Trust for Ornithology, Bryncoch environment group, Celtic Energy, Clean Rivers Project, Coed Cymru, Corus, Countryside Land and Business Association, Countryside Council for Wales, Cymdeithas Edward Llwyd, Dyffryn Clydach Volunteers, Entomologist, Environment Agency (EA), Farmers Union of Wales (FUW), Farming Wildlife Advisory Group, Field Studies Council, Forest Commission Wales, Friends of Cwm Du Glen, Friends of Mynydd Dinas, Friends of the Earth, Glamorgan Moth Group, Glynneath and District Angling Association, Gower Ornithological Trust, Gower Marine Mammals Project, Glamorgan Biodiversity Advisory Group, Glamorgan Fungus Group, Mammal Society, Margam Park, National Farmers Union (NFU), Neath and Tenant Canal Pres. Soc., Neath Bat Group, Neath Port Talbot Badger Group, Neath Port Talbot CBC, Network Rail, Otters and Rivers Project, Pencoed College, Pryce Consultant Ecologist, Plantlife, RSPB, South Wales Police – Wildlife Liaison, Swan Rescue, Swansea Canal Society, Swansea Institute of Higher Education, Swansea University, TirCoed, Vale of Neath Red Squirrel Project, Vincent Wildlife Trust, Welsh Water, Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales, Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales – Neath Group, Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales – Cwmtawe Group, Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales – Port Talbot Group, Woodland Trust, Young Farmers' Group.

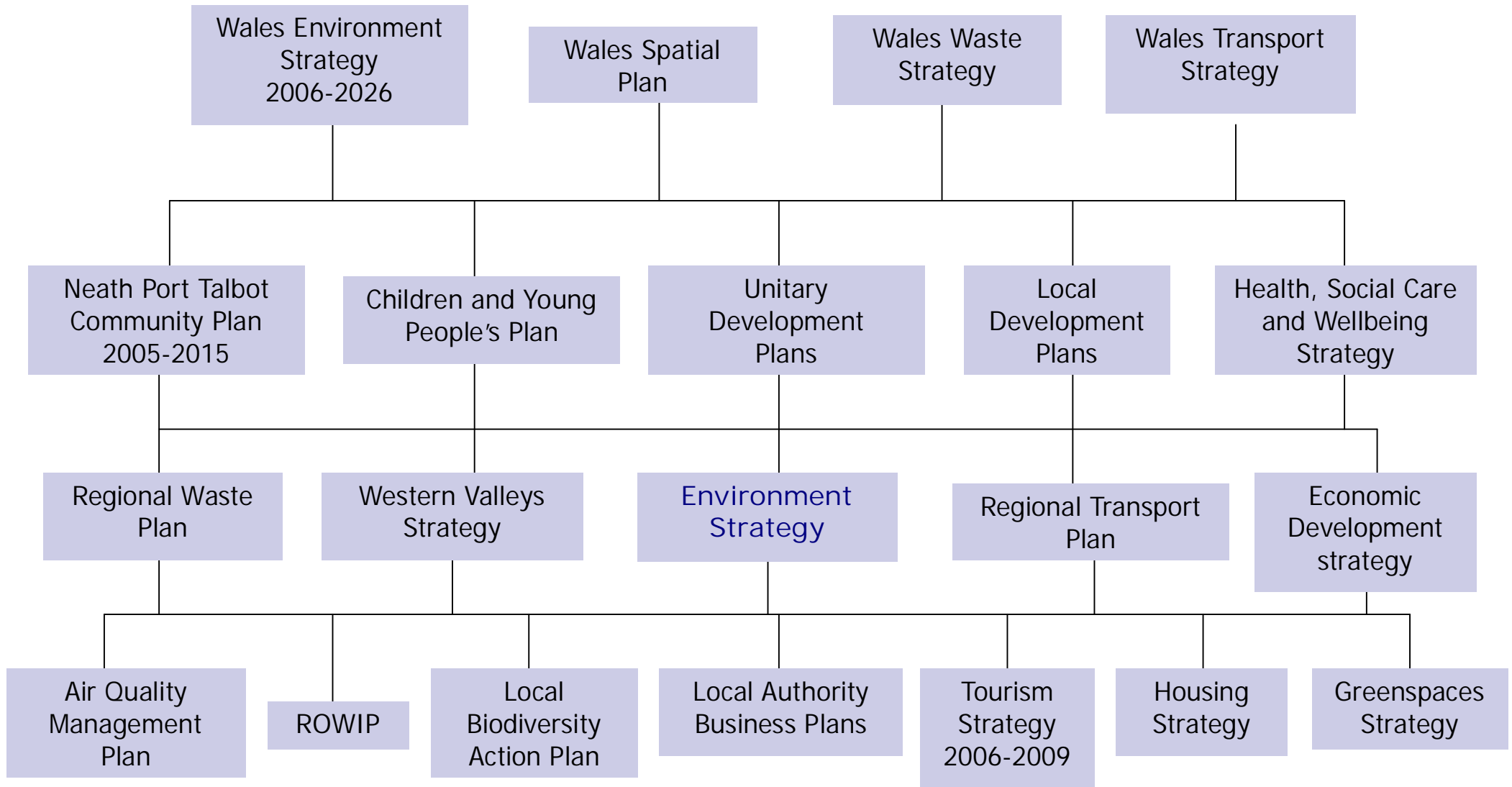
### Neath Port Talbot Environment Forum Membership

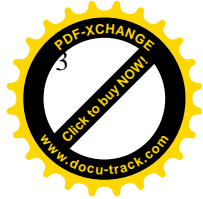
ARENA Network, Brecon Beacons National Park, Countryside Council for Wales, Eco-Schools, Energy Savings Trust, Communities First, Enfy Foundation, Environment Agency, Farmers Union of Wales, Field Studies Council, Forestry Commission Wales, Friends of the Earth, Gnoll Visitor Centre, Groundwork Trust, Keep Wales Tidy, National Trust, NPTCVS, Pryce Consultant Ecologist, RSPB, South and West Wales Wildlife Trust, South Wales Transport, Sustainable Wales, Swansea Institute of Higher Education, Swansea Environment Centre, The Prince's Trust, Cylch, Waste Awareness Wales, Welsh Assembly Government.





## APPENDIX 2 Links to other Strategies and Documents





## APPENDIX 3 Waste

### List of Household Waste and Recycling Centres

#### Household waste & recycling centres

Rhyd-y-fro, Pontardawe, SA84RX

Briton Ferry Industrial Estate, Briton Ferry, Neath

Margam Street - Cymmer, Port Talbot

#### Recycling points

Neath, Millands Road

Neath, Rosser Street

Port Talbot, St Mary's car park, bus station

Resolven, canal car park

Herbert Street, Pontardawe

Tesco car park, Gwyn's Drift, Pontardawe

Tesco overspill car park access road - Port Talbot

Tesco, Neath Abbey, recycling point (A474 - Dyffryn)

Ystalyfera, Darren Road

### Compost Do's and Don'ts

#### Do Compost:

Uncooked fruit and vegetable peelings

Hedge trimmings and leaves

Grass clippings

Leaves

Scrunched up paper and cardboard

Tea bags

Coffee grounds

Egg shells and Egg boxes

#### Don't Compost:

Meat, Fish and Bones,

Dairy products

Cooked foods

Coal ash

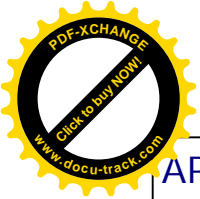
Cat/Dog litter or waste

Nappies

Perennial weeds such as dandelions, knotweed and ragwort

Diseased plants





## APPENDIX 4

### Grants for Environmental Improvements

Grants for Environmental Improvements and Projects can be obtained from:

Environment Wales  
Sustainable Development Fund  
Princes Trust  
Countryside Council for Wales  
Groundwork  
Ethnic Minorities Award Scheme for Environment Projects  
Keep Wales Tidy  
Forestry Commission  
Lottery Fund  
WEFO  
Wales Environment Trust

### Other Energy Savings Grants

[www.scottishpower.co.uk/energyefficiency](http://www.scottishpower.co.uk/energyefficiency)  
[www.instagroup.co.uk](http://www.instagroup.co.uk)  
[www.focusdiy.co.uk](http://www.focusdiy.co.uk)  
[www.sewenergy.org.uk](http://www.sewenergy.org.uk)  
Swalec £300 off loft insulation Tel: 0845 777 6633

### Low Carbon Buildings Programme

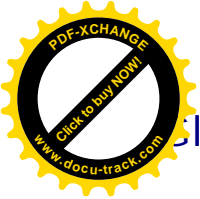
Individual property owners including private householders can apply for grants from the Low Carbon Buildings Programme.

Grants are provided for: Solar Photovoltaic's, Solar Thermal Water Heating, Wind Turbines, Small Hydro, Ground Source Heat Pumps, Automated wood pellet fed room heaters/stoves, Wood fuelled boiler systems.

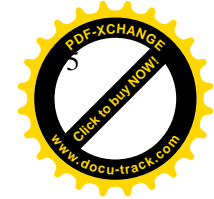
Contacts: If you are a householder and would like advice on how to make your home more energy efficient before applying for a low carbon buildings grant call your local energy efficiency advice centre on 0800 512 012.

If you are a community organisation and would like support with community based sustainable energy projects please call the Energy Saving Trust's Community Action for Energy team on 08701 261 444.

<http://www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk/home/>



## Glossary of terms



Appropriate Assessment (AA) - requirement of the European Habitats Directive. Its purpose is to assess the impacts of the plans and projects on internationally-designated (Natura 2000) nature conservation sites (Ramsar Site, SAC or SPA). Where a plan or development is likely to have a significant impact upon such a site an Appropriate Assessment will be required under Regulation 48 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats. & c.) Regulations 1994. The County Borough contains 3 such sites: Crymlyn Bog (SAC and Ramsar wetland of international importance), Kenfig Burrows (SAC) and Coedydd Nedd a Hepste (SAC).

Brownfield Sites - these sites have been previously developed

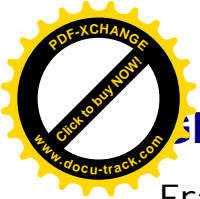
CCW - Countryside Council for Wales

Carbon Footprint - is a calculation of the carbon that you as an individual as a family or organisation produce by using energy or travelling - this carbon footprint is your impact on the environment in terms of global warming

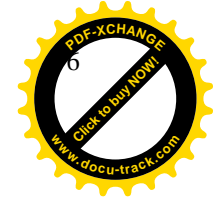
Ecosystem - An ecosystem is a natural system consisting of all plants, animals and micro-organisms in an area functioning together with all the non-living physical factors of the Environment

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) - Under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999, certain proposed developments require particular assessment to identify their likely effects (positive and negative) on the environment. EIA is required for all projects listed under Schedule 1 of the Regulations whilst those listed under Schedule 2 need to be 'screened' to establish whether they require EIA according to particular thresholds or locations. If developers are unsure about whether a development will require an EIA they should seek a 'screening opinion' from the local planning authority.

Freecycle - is an organisation that has been set up online to enable the residents of each county to donate or gather unwanted items to be reused



## Glossary of terms



Fragmentation - occurs when humans clear land for development separating habitats that were once joined, creating isolated islands where the creatures and plants who live there can become isolated and lose access to what they need for life. Fragmentation is one of the main causes of extinction.

Genetic diversity - the similarities or differences that occur between species

Green Dragon Environmental Management System - A stepped approach to managing a business or organisations environmental impacts

Green Tariff Energy - if you switch to green tariff energy your energy provider will match the energy you use with renewable energy purchased from renewable sources rather than power generation from coal, oil or gas

Horticulture - looking after gardens

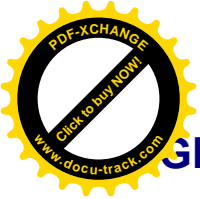
The Kyoto Protocol is an international agreement on fighting climate change. It became law on Feb 16th 2005. Scientists believe we have to cut the amounts of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) being released from now on. The Kyoto Protocol sets targets for the maximum amount of CO<sub>2</sub> pollution rich countries can produce. The world's biggest polluter - the United States - hasn't signed the agreement.

Mitigation measures - are preventative measures

NERC Act - The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act is designed to help achieve a rich and diverse natural environment and thriving rural communities through modernised and simplified arrangements for delivering Government policy.

Ramsar sites - wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar convention.

SAC - Special Area of Conservation – site designated under Article 3 of the European Habitats Directive and afforded high level protection.



## Glossary of terms



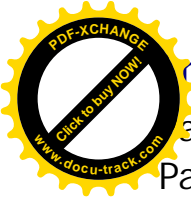
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – requirement of EU Directive 2001/42/EC. Its purpose is to assess the overall strategic environmental impacts of development plans and programmes to ensure that where possible negative environmental affects are avoided and if not, mitigated, with the plan altered accordingly. As a process it involves establishing the current baseline of the state of the environment, determining likely significant environmental impacts, informing and consulting the public and statutory agencies, demonstrating the decisions on the plan's policies have been influenced, and monitoring their effects after implementation.

SPA - Special Protection Area – protected site classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Directive on the conservation of wild birds (79/409/EEC) April 1979.

SWWITCH - South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium

VOCs - Volatile Organic Compounds

WAG - Welsh Assembly Government



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