



Companies House

Biodiversity plan

December 2019



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Introduction

Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth, encompassing vast varieties of plants and animals. We are an essential part of the biodiversity of our planet and play a key role in enhancing the prosperity of its species and habitats. Conversely, our environment has an important influence on us, and is critical for our survival.

Biodiversity provides us with food, fuel, fibres, medicines, whilst also helping to improve the quality of our water, the air we breathe and the land we live on. Biodiversity helps to regulate air quality, climate, flooding, erosion and pollination.

Biodiversity is also a key element of our culture, providing a better living environment with benefits to health and wellbeing, and for many people it is simply something to enjoy.

Companies House understands that whatever the size of your site, and wherever the site is located, there are always opportunities to enhance biodiversity in keeping with surroundings.



Section 6 Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience duty to the Environment (Wales) Act 2016

The Environment (Wales) Act was introduced in March 2016, which is a statutory duty that Companies House must comply with. Part 1 of the Act sets out Wales' approach to planning and managing natural resources at a national, regional and local level.

Section 6 of Part 1 places a duty on Companies House to:

- Maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions; and
- Promote the resilience of ecosystems.

To assist in implementing the duty, Companies House is required to publish a plan on how it intends to comply with the above and to report on progress.

Context of Biodiversity for Companies House

The reporting duty is not designed to be burdensome but should reflect the size and type of organisation regarding the action for biodiversity they can carry out.

Companies House is categorised a Category 2 organisation under Part 1 Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Category 2 means the following Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales (NRAP) objectives are relevant:

NRAP Objective 1 — Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels.

NRAP Objective 2 — Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management.

NRAP Objective 3 — Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation.

NRAP Objective 4 — Tackle key pressures on species and habitats.

NRAP Objective 5 — Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring.

NRAP Objective 6 — Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery.

Companies House ISO14001 System

Companies House have had a certified ISO14001 Environmental Management System (EMS) in place since 2002. The EMS enables Companies House to identify and control its environmental impacts and monitor and measure its environmental performance.

The ISO14001 accreditation covers those activities based at our headquarters building at Crown Way, Cardiff, ensuring that over 95% of Companies House employees are covered by a certified EMS.

As part of the EMS, Companies House have developed several objectives to reduce its environmental impact and enhance environmental performance, these include:

Objective 1	Reduce greenhouse gasses associated with Companies House operations	Includes greenhouse gases associated with electricity, gas and business-related transport.
Objective 2	Reduce the amount of waste produced	Includes reducing the amount of waste to landfill, reducing paper usage and increase the recycling rate associated with total waste produced.
Objective 3	Reduce the amount of water consumed	Reduce water usage onsite.
Objective 4	Sustainable procurement	Ensure measures are in place to buy more sustainable products and services with the aim of achieving the best long-term overall value for money for society.
Objective 5	To maintain and enhance biodiversity onsite	Promote the resilience of ecosystems.

To achieve Objective 5 Companies House will ensure that following tasks are implemented:

<p>Task 1 Embed a framework of governance and support to ensure biodiversity is addressed throughout decision making at all levels</p>	<p>This will be achieved by embedding biodiversity into the business planning process and the EMS, making sure that biodiversity is considered in the way Companies House operates, delivers services and makes decisions. This will ensure that all understand the potential impacts that Companies House operations can have on the environment, including biodiversity.</p>	<p>Relevant NRAP Objective 1&6</p>
<p>Task 2 Provide environmental education to raise awareness and encourage action</p>	<p>Internal environmental awareness and communication is a key part of the Companies House EMS. We will ensure that biodiversity themes are included to ensure this objective is met.</p>	<p>Relevant NRAP Objective 1</p>
<p>Task 3 Promote ecosystem resilience through management of land</p>	<p>Part 1, Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 only requires Companies House to think about this task in relation to its own grounds. However, Companies House's EMS encourages integration with interested parties. As such Companies House will seek to collaborate with relevant organisations to improve the local environment and utilise this collaborative approach to help enhance the natural capital of Companies House grounds.</p>	<p>Relevant NRAP Objective 2&3</p>
<p>Task 4 Tackle key pressures on species and habitats</p>	<p>Air/land and water pollution, land use intensification, spread of invasive species, wildlife disease, disconnection with nature and climate change are all key pressures on species and Habitats. Companies House EMS ensures that measures are implemented to control and reduce the environmental impacts associated with our activities and services. We will ensure that the EMS is also designed to encourage collaborative working with key stakeholders, thus widening Companies House ability to help control environmental impacts and reducing pressures on species and habitats within the neighbouring community.</p>	<p>Relevant NRAP Objective 4</p>
<p>Task 5 Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and review</p>	<p>Companies House will monitor all activities undertaken to encourage increased biodiversity onsite and within the local community, including the following: Monitor and report the number of employees actively involved in biodiversity activities; Report on the number of community hours spent improving the external environment to Companies House; Increase area of land dedicated to enhancing biodiversity onsite; Monitor biodiversity by using indicators such as species presence/absence.</p>	<p>Relevant NRAP Objective 5</p>

Biodiversity report — progress to date

Task 1: Embed a framework of governance to ensure biodiversity is addressed throughout decision making at all levels

Companies House have had certification to ISO14001 since 2002. ISO14001 enables Companies House to identify and control its environmental impacts (including the impact Companies House has on biodiversity), whilst also providing the mechanisms to monitor and measure its environmental performance. The ISO14001 accreditation covers those activities based at Crown Way, ensuring that over 95% of Companies House employees are covered by a certified EMS.

Having a certified EMS enables Companies House to:

- Increased prominence of environmental management (including biodiversity) within the Companies House strategic planning processes, including an emphasis on stakeholder requirements;
- Engage leadership with regards to environmental management;
- Be proactive with initiatives to protect the environment from harm and degradation,
- Improve environmental performance;
- Integrate lifecycle thinking;
- Implement a strong environmental communication platform to communicate environmental issues associated with Companies House activities and services.



In addition to the above, Companies House have also implemented the following measures to ensure environmental issues (including biodiversity) are discussed throughout the organisation, including:

Management Review & Management Reporting

The purpose of the management review is to provide an overview of the organisation's performance against its environmental, biodiversity objectives, and key performance indicators. During a reporting year, there is an established process that is followed:

- Formal management reviews are undertaken bi-annually with the CEO, Director of People Transformation and Head of Commercial;
- Monthly dashboard reporting to the Companies House Business Board highlighting progress against our targets, providing full transparency and discussions with Board members;
- An update from the Environmental Working Group is also presented to the Business Board alongside the monthly dashboard data;
- Two senior members of staff, Director of Digital and Head of Commercial, who is also the Chair of the Environmental Working Group, are members of the Corporate Leadership Group and champion environmental issues at leadership level;
- Environmental issues are discussed and disseminated at the monthly Culture Change Champions Sessions, which is attended by over 120 staff members (the majority of which are senior). This information is cascaded to the remainder of the business following the session.

Environmental Working Group

The Environmental Working Group (EWG) was established in 2017 and meet on a quarterly basis to discuss progress and agree priorities for the next quarter. An update from the meeting is also presented to the Business Board alongside the monthly dashboard data.

The group consists of key personnel from across the business, who have an influence and can make decisions on environmental issues. The key purpose of the group is to:

- Encourage a culture of environmental stewardship within Companies House;
- Provide the resource infrastructure to enable Companies House to meet its environmental objectives and targets, set by Government;
- To deliver and embed the objectives of ISO 14001 BSI Environmental Standard across the organisation.

On a quarterly basis, the EWG:

- Review and track the organisation's environmental performance and monitor progress against its targets;
- Track risks and issues, opportunities and achievements, and identify further efficiencies that may be explored/implemented;
- Communicate environmental issues to ensure continuous improvement and identify areas where staff can make a difference.

Annual Reporting

As part of the organisation's annual reporting disclosure requirements, there is a requirement for Companies House to include a comprehensive Sustainability Report. The report highlights our environmental performance, year on year, for energy, business travel, including the associated greenhouse gas emissions, waste, water and paper usage within each reporting year.

Looking ahead to the 2019/20 Sustainability Report, a section on Biodiversity will also be included which will highlight what Companies House has done, during the reporting year, to protect biodiversity and ecosystems.

Task 2: Provide environmental education to raise awareness and encourage action

An improved understanding and awareness of biodiversity and ecosystems leads to behavioural change and encourages everyone to act in a more positive way reducing any negative impact on the environment. In addition, the connection between benefits to the environment and well-being benefits to staff, also need to be considered. As well as encouraging action, this work shall contribute to the physical and mental health and wellbeing of those involved.

Companies House has been pro-active in its approach and is keen to promote a culture where environmental issues remain high on the organisation's agenda.

As testimony to this, regular communication campaigns are run to highlight the importance of being environmentally aware and what staff can do to contribute. Over the past year, Companies House has promoted the following campaigns:

- Water reduction, and ideas on how staff can use less;
- Waste segregation, highlighting what waste needs to be placed in the which bin;
- General reduction of waste and single use plastic items from site;
- Reduction in electricity, by turning off desk fans, unplugging equipment, turning off appliances that are not required;
- Paper reduction, implementing a paperless office and supporting World Paper Free Day initiatives;
- Promotion of the Bicycle Salary Sacrifice Scheme;
- Implementation of a bike maintenance scheme for staff, whereby all staff, had the option of having their bike serviced at a cost to Companies House;
- Business and general travelling, by promoting alternative, more sustainable transport options;
- Promotion of World Environmental Day;
- Ideas Hub, a platform where all staff are able to submit/suggest ideas for improvements, including environment.

Task 3: Promote ecosystem resilience through management of land

Companies House have implemented several measures to improve the management and diversity of species and habitats onsite. These measures include:

- Installation of bat/bird boxes on many of the trees onsite;
- Commissioning annual survey of trees/shrubs onsite via a qualified arboriculturist; Recommendations for improvement are then implemented by Companies House;
- Planted three native hedgerows;
- Planting flower beds and flowerpots across the site;
- Daily grounds checks to keep litter at bay;
- Reduced reliance on herbicides and pesticides;
- Investigating the use of potash (residue from our biomass boiler) to enrich soil in the flower beds and flowerpots.

Next year we are looking to implement a sensory garden, within our grounds, which will include pollinating flowers to attract different species of animals/insects. This area will be tended to by staff who have a keen interest in gardening and biodiversity.

In addition to the above, Companies House are also committed to improving biodiversity within the local community. Schemes to-date include community hours to staff whereby staff are given time to spend helping in the community. To date 860 staff hours have been spent on the following community activities:

- Litter picking in the Cardiff area;
- Gardening and litter picking at Bargoed Visitor Centre
- Beach cleaning at Barry Island;
- Gardening and seed planting at City Hospice, Whitchurch;
- Riverbanks clean for the Cardiff Rivers Group at Howardian Nature Reserve and Hendre Park & Lake.

The above has resulted in 1.25 tonnes of rubbish being removed from the local environment, thus helping biodiversity to flourish.

Task 4: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

Companies House recognise the following as key pressures on the environment, and are committed to implement measures to help relieve these pressures:

Pesticides and Herbicides

Companies House recognise the negative impact pesticides and herbicides have on species and habitats and have committed to reducing its reliance on pesticides and herbicides to maintain our grounds at Crown Way, Cardiff.

Resource Use

Companies House also recognise the negative impact resource use has on the environment. As such Companies House is committed to reducing, reusing and recycling resources, and has recently introduced a scheme to eradicate single use plastic from our site at Crown Way. To date we have been successful in removing over 152,000 single use plastic items from its Cardiff premises.

Emissions to air, land and water

To reduce our emissions to air, land and water, Companies House have implemented several measures via our EMS to control our environmental impact. Measures include:

1. Working in partnership with Cardiff Council to install several Next Bike Docking Stations close to Companies House for staff and the residents in the area to use, thus helping to reduce local air pollution;
2. Operational control procedures, including:
 - Processes to manage and reduce waste;
 - Spill processes to ensure spillages are dealt with swiftly and do not damage the environment;
 - Process to manage emissions associated with combustion equipment;
 - Processes to ensure only domestic water is disposed to the foul water drainage system and only rainwater is disposed to the surface water drainage system;
 - Process to avoid fugitive refrigerant gas emissions.



Task 5: Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and review

Companies House actions to promote ecosystem resilience and help tackle key pressures on species and habitats is managed via our EMS Environmental Objectives and Targets Register.



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