



Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru
Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Report and Forward Plan

2019-2022

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales protects and promotes the rights of older people throughout Wales, scrutinising and influencing a wide range of policy and practice to improve their lives. She provides help and support directly to older people through her casework team and works to empower older people and ensure that their voices are heard and acted upon. The Commissioner's role is underpinned by a set of unique legal powers to support her in reviewing the work of public bodies and holding them to account when necessary.

How to Contact the Commissioner:

Older People's Commissioner for Wales
Cambrian Buildings
Mount Stuart Square
Cardiff
CF10 5FL

Phone: 03442 640 670

Email: ask@olderpeoplewales.com

Website: www.olderpeoplewales.com

Twitter: [@talkolderpeople](https://twitter.com/talkolderpeople)

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Introduction

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales protects and promotes the rights of older people throughout Wales, scrutinising and influencing a wide range of policy and practice to improve their lives. She provides help and support directly to older people through her casework team and works to empower older people and ensure that their voices are heard and acted upon. The Commissioner's role is underpinned by a set of unique legal powers to support her in reviewing the work of public bodies and holding them to account when necessary.

The Commissioner employs 20 members of staff. The office is situated on a single floor (third floor) of a leased building in Cambrian Buildings, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff. The lease has run from 2009 to date.

As tenants, there is very little influence over the building maintenance and no influence over the supply and provision of water. Electricity is the only energy supply used and this provides lighting and heating, as well as powering normal office equipment.

Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 introduced an enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty (the section 6 duty) for public authorities in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales.

The section 6 duty requires that public authorities 'seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as consistent with the proper exercise of their functions and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems'.

To comply with the duty public authorities should embed the consideration of biodiversity and ecosystems into their early thinking and business planning, including any policies, plans, programmes and projects, as well as their day to day activities.

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales falls within the definition of public authority under the terms of the Act and is required to publish a report on how she complied with the section 6 duty.

The Commissioner is classed as a 'Group One' organisation, as set out in the S6 reporting guidance document, as we rent an office building and our functions are not directly connected to biodiversity and/or land management.

Action Report

Our reporting duty has been developed to be proportionate to our size and function, having due regard to the actions for biodiversity we are able to take. We have chosen to produce a standalone S6 report for 2019, as it is our first report. In future years, the S6 report will be included within the sustainability section of the Commissioner's Annual Report and Accounts, linked to the Commissioner's Sustainability Policy.

In developing this environment annual report, we have aligned our response to the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales (NRAP) objectives 1, 4 and 6, as required for a 'Group One' organisation.

These are:

- Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels.

- Tackle key pressures on species and habitats
- Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery

Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels.

The Commissioner's Sustainability Policy 2017-19 was developed through engagement with staff. It is based on the following principles:

- To comply with, and exceed where practicable, all applicable legislation, regulations and codes of practice.
- To integrate, where possible, sustainability considerations into our business decisions.
- To ensure that all staff are fully aware of our Sustainability Policy and are committed to implementing and improving it.
- To minimise the impact on sustainability of all office and transportation activities.
- To make suppliers aware of our Sustainability Policy and encourage them to adopt sound sustainable management practices.

The Commissioner has obtained the Gold level Small Workplace Health Award since 2015 (retained in May 2018), which provides a structure for the continuous improvement of our sustainability performance.

The Commissioner is committed to running educational training sessions for members of staff on issues relating to sustainability and biodiversity. This includes how employees can contribute both during work hours and through their lives outside of the workplace.

All employees receive information on induction in relation to the organisation's cycle to work scheme. The organisation also has a dedicated 'cycling champion' who completed a course in July 2018 to be able to provide advice and support to all employees on cycling related issues. Social cycling events were organised for 2018 onwards, led by the cycling champion.

Team meetings throughout the year are dedicated to promoting the different elements of the Sustainability Policy. Team meetings have been held on the energy usage in the office, the benefits of cycling, and how to live sustainably by limiting waste (zero waste and the use of plastic) and recycling.

The Commissioner's procurement policy includes purchasing principles that states when ordering goods and services, individuals must:

- consider Value for Money as the optimum combination of whole-of-life costs in terms of not only generating efficiency savings and good quality outcomes for the organisation, but also a benefit to society, the economy, and the environment, both now and in the future.
- use resources efficiently, economically and effectively, avoiding waste and extravagance.

The cleaning contract for the office was changed in January 2017 to use only environmentally friendly cleaning products.

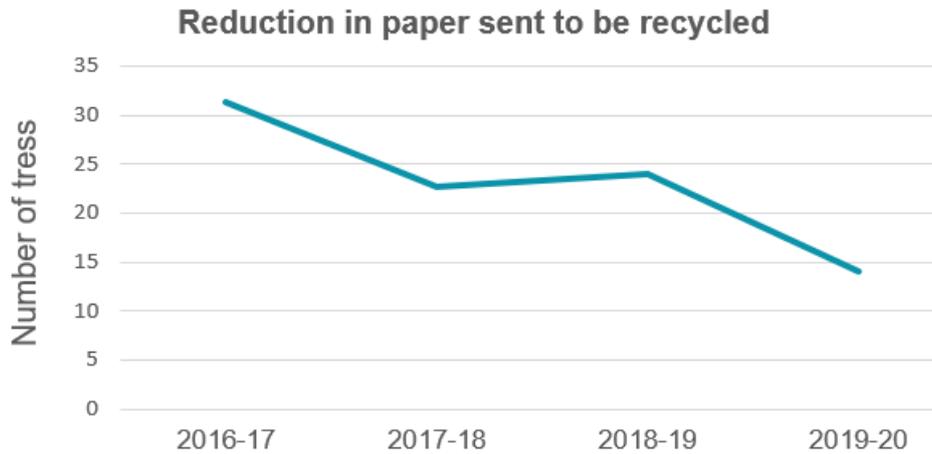
- Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

As the office of the Commissioner is leased, this limits the ability to contribute to this objective. The Commissioner does have some ability to make efficiencies to the energy of the building, such as reducing waste, energy use and emissions.

- Waste

In 2015, the Commissioner removed all waste bins from the office to encourage more recycling. There are eight recycling bins throughout the office to enable paper and glass to be recycled. All recycling is collected weekly by Cardiff Council

We have a contract with a company to collect confidential paper waste bi-monthly, which is then recycled. The below table details the environmental report received for each year, detailing the number of saved trees from destruction:



There has been a steady decrease in the volume of paper that is sent to be recycled, which is as a direct result of encouraging staff to move to a more paperless way of working and only print when absolutely necessary, as well as the default setting for all printers being set to double sided.

Food waste caddies are available in the kitchen areas, with Cardiff Council collecting food waste on a weekly cycle. A team meeting entitled 'Love Food, Hate Waste' held in 2017 upskilled staff in how to minimise food waste.

Any general waste is collected by Cardiff Council. The Council incinerates any waste that is not recyclable, which generates enough energy to power around 50,000 households per year. All fumes and smoke are cleaned in the chimney stack before releasing into the atmosphere, so no harmful pollutants are released. Any bottom ash which is left over is used as aggregate for road surfaces, making this facility fully sustainable with zero waste.

The organisation does not use disposal plastic cups. Visitors have access to reusable cups and glasses. Staff are encouraged to avoid plastic in the office, a message which was reiterated in a team meeting in 2019 about zero waste and the reusable and eco-friendly products available to reduce the amount of plastic you use.

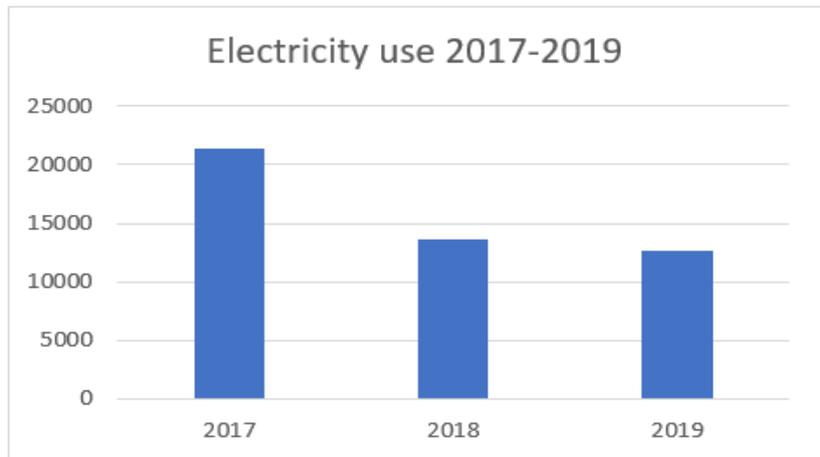
- Energy use

Staff are regularly educated and reminded about reducing energy usage and therefore not leaving computers on standby, turning off lights in meeting rooms when not in use, and only printing material that is needed.

In 2019, all lights in the office were replaced with energy efficient LED lighting. This will reduce future energy bills and emissions. Light sensors are also used in meeting areas and entrance areas, in order to minimise use when not required.

The below table and graph show electricity usage over the past three years, demonstrating a year on year decrease, with a 41% reduction from 2017 to 2019.

Year	Total usage (KwH)
2017	21,331
2018	13,595
2019	12,679



In 2018, we changed our electricity supply to secure a green energy tariff. Our contract with British Gas is for electricity that is 56% renewables, compared to the UK Average of 33%.

- Emissions

The Commissioner’s office has excellent public transport links, with the nearest train station less than a 5 minute walk and 19 bus stops close by.

The Commissioner has a Travel Plan, developed in 2015 and updated in 2018, that is aimed at reducing the impact of travel at the Commissioner’s office, in line with the Commissioner’s Sustainable Policy and Cycle to Work Scheme.

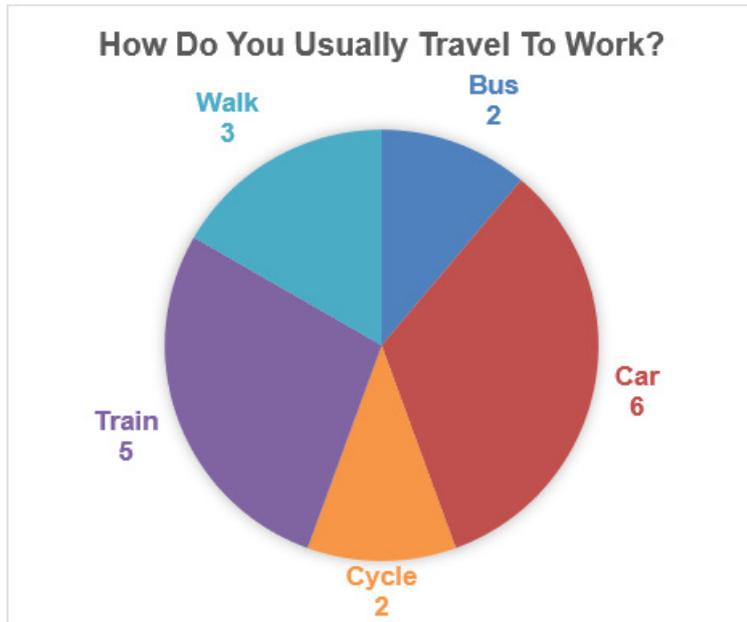
This plan looks at cycling, walking, public transport, motorbike and car as modes of travel.

The objectives of the plan are to:

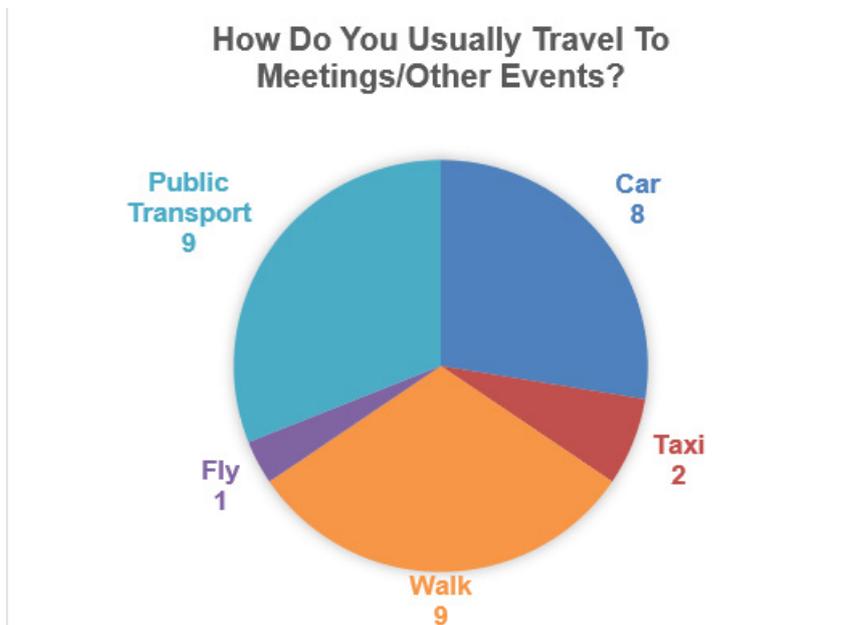
- achieve a year on year increase in the number of employees walking to work.
- achieve a year on year increase in the number of employees using public transport to travel to work.
- achieve a year on year increase in the number of employees cycling to work.
- achieve a year on year increase in the number of employees using public transport to attend meetings.
- achieve a year on year increase in the number of employees, where possible, walking to meetings.
- aiming to reduce, on a year on year basis, the amount of money spent on taxis for staff to attend meetings.
- aiming to increase, on a year on year basis, the amount of staff who car share to attend meetings and engagement events.

In 2018, the main findings of the survey were:

The majority of staff use public transport to travel to work:



The majority of staff use public transport to walk to meetings and other events:



Staff are required to use the most environmentally friendly form of transport when travelling to and from meetings. Cardiff IFF cards are available when travelling around Cardiff to meetings. If staff require to use a taxi or drive for meetings and events, authorisation must be received from the line manager and evidence is provided as to why this mode of transport is necessary.

Staff are encouraged to avoid physically travelling to meetings where alternatives are available and practical, such as using teleconferencing or video conferencing, and to plan efficient timings of meetings to avoid multiple trips.

The organisations carbon footprint is offset using high quality carbon offset projects. A certificate

received acknowledges that we offset 11.239 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions for 2018-19 and 6 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions for 2017-18. The money is used to support projects around the world that reduce carbon emissions through avoidance measures and clean/renewable energy generation.

Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery

The Chief Operating Officer is responsible for the organisation's performance on sustainability.

A quarterly discussion about meeting the objectives of the Environment (Wales) Act will be held at Business Management Team meetings from 2020 onwards.

Environmental sustainability forms part of our governance reporting system via our annual report and accounts. Progress against the objectives in the Act will be reported in our annual accounts from 2020 onwards, under the sustainability section.

Forward Plan

To further improve performance on sustainability, the Commissioner will update her Sustainability Policy and Action Plan for 2020-2022. This update will reflect the learning from the experiences over time to continue to improve our practice.

- The action plan will consider targets, such as:
- further educating employees about the importance of environmental awareness and biodiversity via regular campaigns and promotion of activities.
- further reducing the consumption of electricity year on year
- further reducing confidential and paper waste
- reducing the organisations carbon footprint

Progress against the plan will be reported on in the annual accounts from 2020 onwards.