

Meeting of:	Place Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday, 20 January 2026
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Place Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Petition Submission – Declare a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) at Barry’s Old Harbour.
Purpose of Report:	To allow the Scrutiny Committee to consider a public petition submitted relating to a proposed declaration for a local nature reserve, to be located at Barry’s Old Harbour.
Report Owner:	Director of Corporate Resources.
Responsible Officer:	Mark Thomas, Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	As the report is Council wide, no Elected Members were consulted. Democratic Services. Director of Place. Head of Service - Neighbourhood Services. County Ecologist - Regeneration Section.
Policy Framework:	This is a matter outside of the Policy Framework and Budget and is a matter for Council.
Executive Summary: - The Council's petition scheme was agreed on 7th March, 2022, and implemented on 5th May, 2022. This sets out how members of the public may submit a petition (including e-petitions) and how the Council would respond to any submissions. - On 6th May 2025 a petition from R. Curtis was submitted, on behalf of Barry Action for Nature calling on the Council to “Declare a local nature reserve at Barry’s Old Harbour to help protect local wildlife’. As Lead Petitioner, R. Curtis, will be invited to present the petition at the meeting of the Place Scrutiny Committee on 20th January, and in line with the Council’s petition scheme, will be afforded 3 minutes speaking time in which to address the Committee. - The Place Scrutiny Committee is therefore requested to debate and scrutinise the petition and the issues surrounding it, and to refer any recommendations on to Cabinet. - The report also sets out information from the relevant Council officers outlining the Council’s current position and proposals.	

Recommendation

1. That the Committee considers the petition submitted concerning the declaration of a local nature reserve, located at Barry's Old Harbour and refer any recommendations to Cabinet.

Reason for Recommendation

1. To allow the Scrutiny Committee to consider the petition and for any recommendations to be referred to Cabinet.

1. Background

- 1.1 Section 42 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, placed a legal duty on principal Councils in Wales to make and publish a petition scheme setting out how the Council would handle and respond to petitions, including electronic petitions (e-petitions).
- 1.2 There was a duty for the petition scheme to set out: (a) how a petition may be submitted to the Council; (b) how and by when the Council would acknowledge receipt of a petition; (c) the steps the Council may take in response to a petition received by it; (d) the circumstances (if any) in which the Council may take no further action in response to a petition; and (e) how and by when the Council would make available its response to a petition to the person who submitted the petition and to the public.
- 1.3 The Council's new petition scheme was agreed by Full Council on 7th March, 2022, and the scheme was implemented on 5th May, 2022.
- 1.4 Following review, a revised scheme was agreed by Council on 1st December, 2025. A copy of the current scheme can be viewed via the following link:
[25-12-01 – Petition Scheme revised 2025](#)
- 1.5 The Scheme sets out: 1) That all petitions will be managed through Democratic Services. 2) The specific information and details that the petition and e-petition should contain. 3) Details of the process for the creation of an e-petition and information required from the Lead Petitioner. 4) The issues that a petition can or cannot relate to. 5) That Democratic and Legal Services will carry out an initial check to ensure that a petition is admissible and respond within 7 working days to all petitions submitted and requests to create an e-petition. 6) If a petition or e-petition meets the threshold of 100 signatories, then depending on the subject matter and advice from the Monitoring Officer/Deputy Monitoring Officer, this will be presented to a meeting of the Council, the Cabinet or a Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.6 On 6th May 2025 a petition from R. Curtis was submitted, on behalf of Barry Action for Nature calling on the Council to "Declare a local nature reserve at Barry's Old Harbour to help protect local wildlife".

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** The petition states: “Saltwater marsh is one of the rarest habitats in the UK. The Old Harbour’s saltwater marsh supports wintering red listed species such as Curlew and Whimbrel. It also supports other waders and seabirds such as Shelduck, Grey Heron, little Egret, Knot and Redshank. We call on the Vale of Glamorgan Council to declare this area a Local Nature Reserve which can contribute to the Welsh Government’s aim of protecting 30% of Wales for nature by 2030. We are concerned that jet ski users and some irresponsible dog walkers are disturbing resting and feeding birds. We are also concerned at the sewage pollution currently being discharged into this harbour. Please help us protect our local wildlife.”
- 2.2** The reason given within the petition as to why this was important, was due to wildlife throughout the UK facing the destruction of much of their habitat, and therefore a desperate need for more LNRs to reverse this trend.
- 2.3** In terms of the supporting petition, there had been 604 signatures received for the hard copy version distributed, plus 3 signatures for a previous e-petition on this topic (hosted by the Vale of Glamorgan Council), meaning a total of 607 signatures had been received in support of the petition.
- 2.4** As Lead Petitioner, R. Curtis, will be invited to present the petition at the meeting of the Place Scrutiny Committee on 20th January, and in line with the Council’s petition scheme, will be afforded 3 minutes speaking time in which to address the Committee.
- 2.5** The Place Scrutiny Committee is therefore requested to debate and scrutinise the petition and the issues surrounding it, and to refer any recommendations on to Cabinet.
- 2.6** In response to the petition, the Director of Place, the Head of Service - Neighbourhood Services and County Ecologist - Regeneration Section have been requested to provide information regarding the Council’s position and proposals. These are set out in the following paragraphs.
- 2.7** In principle this location could be considered as a LNR but with the following points in mind:
 - 2.7.1** It would have to have sufficient wildlife value to warrant designation. An initial search on Aderyn reveals that there was about 20 or so species identified under section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 which are of conservation concern. Most of these are estuarine birds or birds of prey though there are a few butterflies and moths.
 - 2.7.2** The Bay also represents one of the only opportunities for Seagrass planting in the Vale, which is known for prodigious carbon capture. There have been discussions with the Seagrass Project about such opportunities as part of the Coastal Development project. However, it should be noted that due to lack of funds, the Coastal Project is in abeyance at this time.

- 2.7.3 The guidance is clear that the Council should have aims and objectives in declaring a LNR, an idea of how it will manage it, monitor it, engage the public, opportunities for education and what the costs are.
- 2.7.4 The potential for this location to be declared a LNR should be considered in conjunction with other possible locations within the County, which may, for various reasons, be considered to be a higher priority for such a designation, such as Rhoose Point.
- 2.7.5 Funding for the proposed LNR, and the challenges around it, needed to be considered. This would need to rely on potential sources of external funding, such as the Local Nature Partnership (LNP), although this could not be guaranteed. It should also be noted that funding for the current Vale LNP would only be secured until March 2027. This was due to both Place and Neighbourhood services being under severe budgetary pressures and therefore having to look for outside financial support to take this forward.
- 2.8** The Council currently faced several challenges in undertaking the proposal to declare the Old Harbour in Barry as an LNR. This broke down into:
 - 2.8.1 Resources – changes in staffing and workload. For example, the imminent retirement of the County Ecologist and his replacement by a new member of staff in this role, who although experienced would be inheriting and handling the ongoing workload which means that the Council could not commit to this proposal at this time.
 - 2.8.2 Funding. As outlined in 2.7.5. current budgetary pressures for the relevant Council directorates and departments meant that other sources of funding would need to be sought, but this would rely on external funding and support which could not be guaranteed.
 - 2.8.3 Due to the previous points raised, this proposal could not be pursued at this time and should be reconsidered in the next financial year.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1 The Petition Scheme contributes to the achievement of several aspects of the Council's Corporate Plan and Annual Delivery Plan. The Petition Scheme and subsequent Guide therefore sit under the continued 'Open' value and Objective 1: To work with and for our communities of the new plan which sets out that activities will reflect the importance of effective involvement, communication and engagement to understand and respond to the diverse needs of the community.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1 As set out in the body of the report.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

5.1 As set out in the body of the report.

Employment

5.2 None

Legal (Including Equalities)

5.3 As set out in the body of the report.

6. Background Papers

None.